

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S MILITARY POLICY IN CENTRAL  
ASIA: 1991-2001

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IŞIK KUŞÇU

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---

Prof.Dr. Bahattin Akşit  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of  
Master of Science.

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Prof.Dr.Atilla Eralp  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully  
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Prof.Dr.Süha Bölükbaşıođlu  
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof.Dr.Süha Bölükbaşıođlu

Assist.Prof.Dr. Oktay Tanrısever

Assist.Prof.Dr. Recep Boztemur

## **ABSTRACT**

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S MILITARY POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA IN:  
1991-2001

Kuşçu, Işık

M.S. Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Prof.Dr. Süha Bölükbaşıoğlu

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The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the Russian Federation's military Policy in Central Asia in 1991-2001. My main concern in this point is to figure out what is Moscow's real intention behind establishing military ties with the Central Asian states and to what extent is Moscow successful in accomplishing this aim? Does the Russian Federation perceive direct threats to its security from Central Asia? My argument is that the Russian Federation does not perceive direct threats to its national security from the region rather she uses these threats to be the main actor in the region by using military means. Throughout the thesis first the shift in the

Russian Federation's foreign policy course regarding the 'Near Abroad' and its reflections on the basic security documents of the Russian Federation, second the threat perceptions of the Russian Federation in these regions, third reflections of this shift on Russia's bilateral military ties with these states and finally the role of the changing perception in the formation of regional collective security formations are to be analyzed.

**Key Words:** The Russian Federation, Central Asia, military, security, cooperation, conflict, threat.

## ÖZ

### RUSYA FEDERASYONU'NUN ORTA ASYA'DAKİ ASKERİ POLİTİKALARI: 1991-2001

Kuşçu, Işık

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Rusya Federasyonu'nun Orta Asya'da 1991-2001 döneminde izlediği askeri politikaları analiz etmektir. Bu noktada ortaya çıkan birincil soru Moskova'nın Orta Asya'daki devletlerle askeri bağlar oluşturması arkasındaki gerçek nedenin ne olduğu ve Moskova'nın bu hedefini gerçekleştirmede ne dereceye kadar başarılı olduğudur. Rusya Federasyonu Orta Asya bölgesinden kendi güvenliğine yönelik doğrudan tehditler algılamakta mıdır? Benim argümanım Rusya Federasyonu'nun bölgeden milli güvenliğine yönelik doğrudan tehdit algılamadığı ancak bu tehditleri bölgede askeri araçları kullanarak ana aktör olmak için kullandığıdır. Bu çalışmada ilk olarak Rusya Federasyonu'nun 'Yakın Çevre' politikası odaklı dış politika süreçleri ve bunun temel güvenlik

belgelerine yansımaları, ikincil olarak Rusya Federasyonu'nun Orta Asya'ya yönelik tehdit algılamaları, üçüncül olarak bu değişimin Rusya'nın bölge devletleriyle olan ikili askeri ilişkilerine yansımaları ve son olarak bölgesel güvenlik oluşumlarında değişen algılamaların rolü incelenecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Rusya Federasyonu, Orta Asya, askeri, güvenlik, işbirliği, çatışma, tehdit.

**Anneme ve babama**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ÖZ .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	ix
CHAPTER	
1.INTRODUCTION .....	1
2.UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION’S MILITARY POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA .....	8
2.1 A Short Definition of the Russian Federation’s Foreign Policy in the Period of 1991-1999 .....	8
2.2 The Shift in the Direction of the Russian Federation’s Foreign Policy after 1993 .....	13
2.3 Reflections of the Shift in the Basic Security Documents .....	26
3.SECURITY THREATS FROM CENTRAL ASIA: RUSSIAN PERCEPTIONS .....	36
3.1 The Rights of the Russian Living in the Central Asian Republics .....	36

3.2 The Rise of the Fundamentalist Islam in Central Asia .....	43
3.3 Conflicts within the Territories of Central Asia .....	50
4.COOPERATION IN THE MILITARY FIELD THROUGH BILATERAL AGREEMENTS .....	58
4.1 Why Cooperation is Needed? .....	58
4.2 The Development of Central Asian Republics' Military Sphere .....	63
4.3 Bilateral Agreements in the Military Sphere .....	73
5.COLLECTIVE SECURITY EFFORTS IN CENTRAL ASIA .....	81
5.1 CIS Collective Security Treaty .....	81
5.2 The GUUAM Group .....	88
5.3 Shangai Cooperation Organization .....	92
6.CONCLUSIONS .....	96
REFERENCES .....	103



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The disintegration of the Soviet Union was very sudden and unexpected. But the utmost effect of this event was seen on the Russian Federation. This was a shock for not only the people living on these territories but also for those in the policy making apparatuses of these states. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, they faced many challenges in economy, politics and foreign policy. They had to adapt to the new changes within the state structure and to the new geopolitical environment that emerged after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

As adapting to the new conditions was not easy for the other former Soviet republics, it was not so easy for the Russian Federation either. One can say that this was more difficult for the Russian Federation considering its former status. It lost its superpower status, it lost the territories which once belonged to it, and thus found itself in a new geopolitical environment. Facing these problems, questions like “What is Russia?”, “What is her national interest?” started a new period of searching for identity.

The quest for identity played a very major role in the forming of the new state’s foreign policy course. The answers to the questions above were effective in defining the Russian Federation’s priorities in the foreign policy sphere. It is not very

easy for a state in the transformation period to define its national interests, its new identity in a short time. The experiences of the new state, a more clear evaluation of its status and a more clear definition of threats to its security all contribute to form a more stable view in defining its interests and shaping its foreign policy accordingly.

In the Russian Federation's case it was not so much different. If one observes the foreign policy course of the new state from 1991 up to now, the shifts due to the factors conducive to the defining of its priorities can easily be seen. In this thesis, the aim is to evaluate the Russian Federation's military policy in the Central Asian region. Since the military policy can not be thought separate from the general foreign policy course, the evolution of the foreign policy with its growing emphasis on the former Soviet republics will have significant bearing upon my view of the military policy of the Russian Federation.

In this thesis, the period under evaluation is the period of 1991-2001. Within this ten years of time, there occurred an important shift in the Russian Federation's foreign policy course. This shift can be best reflected as the changing priorities of the new state. In the first period of 1991-1993, the emphasis was on the relations with the West and integration into the global economy. President Yeltsin and foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev of the time were in favor of developing close relations with the West and their main priority was economic development with integration into the global economy.

However; later there emerged some factors conducive to changes in perceptions such as the disappointment with regard to the expected Western assistance, changing circumstances in the geopolitical environment, the fear that other powers may extend their influence over the post Soviet territories, and new

threat perceptions from the regions adjacent to the Russian Federation. With the criticism of particularly the opposition groups, the government felt the need to make changes in its foreign policy course.

The most apparent shift was seen on the state's policy towards the former Soviet republics. Even a so-called concept 'Near Abroad' was formulated to define these republics. The concept itself gives us clues about the changing Russian policy. After ignoring these republics for the period of 1991-1993, the Russian Federation felt the need to assert its influence in these territories. There were different means to accomplish this; political, economic and military. In this thesis, I will try to analyze the military means used by Russia to reestablish its former influence in Central Asia.

Here I rely on four factors in determining the scope of this thesis. First; the shift in the Russian Federation's foreign policy course regarding the 'Near Abroad' and its reflections on the basic security documents of the Russian Federation. Second; the reasons underlying such a shift particularly in Central Asia; in other words the threat perceptions of the Russian Federation in Central Asia. Third; the causes and consequences of the changes in Russia's bilateral military ties with these states. And lastly; the impact of these changing perceptions in the emergence of regional collective security formations.

My main concern in this thesis is to figure out what is Moscow's real intention behind establishing military ties with the Central Asian states and to what extent is Moscow successful in accomplishing this aim? Does the Russian Federation perceive direct threats to its security from Central Asia? My argument is that the Russian Federation does not perceive direct threats to its national security from the

region rather she uses these threats to be the main actor in the region by using military means.

The threat perceptions of the Russian Federation in Central Asia evolved in time and they are reflected in the basic security documents. National Security Concepts of 1997 and 2000, Foreign Policy Concepts of 1993 and 2000 and the Military Concepts of 1993 and 2000 are the basic security documents in which the emphasis on these threat perceptions can be found. One important quality of all these documents is that nearly all of them point out the fact that the Russian Federation is in a new security environment so that its priorities are shaped in line with the new environment. When the threat perceptions common in all these documents are analyzed, one can see that most of them are perceived in the Central Asian region. Thus; Central Asia occupies a unique place in the new state's security considerations.

The concern of the Russian Federation about the Russians living in the former Soviet republics is clearly reflected in these documents. The status and conditions of the Russians living outside the Russia Federation, the discriminatory policies against them are the problems which Russia can not ignore. Thus; a great emphasis was placed on this issue in these documents. Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, is a region where Russians live in mass numbers. Hence; the issue is a subject of concern in the bilateral relations between the Russian Federation and these Central Asian republics.

The second issue which Russia perceives as constituting a threat to its national security is the issue of existing or potential conflicts on the Central Asian territory. The most apparent example to these conflicts is the Tajik case, although it started in the form of an intra-state conflict, within a short span of time it became a

problem including other Central Asian states and Russia. The Russian peace-keeping efforts in the region and active involvement in the conflict point out to the fact that the Russian Federation still sees the Central Asian region as strategically very important. For this reason; with active involvement in conflicts, Russia thinks that it can still hold the control of the region.

The third issue is the rise of Islamic extremism in Central Asia. This is a very important concern for Russia. Since Russia itself has a large Muslim population in the territories of the Federation, the fear of spread of such movements to the Russian Federation itself is perceived as a great threat. Especially, after the Chechen struggle against Russia, the Russian Federation considers the issue as a greater form of terrorism. Thus; especially in the basic security documents of 2000, the experience of Russia is well reflected. In these documents Russia emphasizes the need to cooperate with the international community against terrorism.

The thesis consists of four main parts. After the introduction, the second chapter examines the Russian Federation's policy towards the 'Near Abroad', in particular Central Asia. In this chapter, Russian foreign policy in the periods of 1991-1993 and 1993-2001 will be analyzed with an emphasis on the shift towards the 'Near Abroad'. In this part, the basic security documents will also be analyzed in order to reflect these changes and the perceived threats.

The third chapter analyzes what the Russian Federation sees as threats to its national security in Central Asia. The Russians living in Central Asia, the existing and potential conflicts in the region and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism will be all analyzed in order to understand what factors made Russia to pursue such an alarmist policy in Central Asia. It is important to understand whether these threats

are just a perception of Russia or are they also viewed as threats by the Central Asian states. This point will help us understand whether cooperation is indeed needed in military issues.

The fourth chapter deals with the bilateral military agreements and treaties signed between the Russian Federation and each of the Central Asian states. Before analyzing the quality of these agreements, it is important to find out whether the cooperation is needed, if so why? Thus; the first part of this chapter deals with the reasons for cooperation. As the military formation status of the newly independent Central Asian states will help us to see the quality of the bilateral ties between them and the Russian Federation, a special part will be devoted to this issue. Finally, the bilateral agreements and treaties in the military sphere will be analyzed in order to see whether the relationship is based on dependency or interdependency.

In the last chapter, the collective security formations in the region will be analyzed. The CIS Collective Security Treaty, the GUUAM group and Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be matter of my concern here. How the idea of collective security has developed in the region, why it is needed, which country has the leading role in these collective security efforts will be evaluated throughout this chapter. More importantly, the question of to what extent these collective security efforts have been successful will be answered.

The sources used in thesis in analyzing the Russian Federation's foreign policy and military policy are, in general, books and articles. The translations of the National Security Concept, Foreign Policy Concept and the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation are also used in analyzing the threat perceptions of the Russian Federation and its policy regarding these threat perceptions. The Radio Free

Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and other internet sources are all used. Official website of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, other websites where the translations of the texts of military agreements and treaties between the Russian Federation and Central Asian republics are available, official websites of the collective security organizations are particularly useful in forming the core of the thesis.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S MILITARY POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA**

In order to understand the direction of Russian Federation's military policy in Central Asia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it is necessary to evaluate the different phases of Russian Federation's foreign policy in the period of 1991-2001. The military policy will be analyzed as part of the general framework of the foreign policy in the mentioned period.

#### **2.1 A Short Definition of the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy in the Period of 1991-1993**

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a new era had started for the Russian Federation in foreign policy issues like in many other issues important for the new state. Since the new state was seeking answers for the questions like "What is Russia?", "What is her national interest?", it was much more difficult to define a new foreign policy agenda in the period of 1991-1993. The new Russian identity, and the role and place of Russia in the world were still being discussed by the foreign policy making structures and political parties. The Russian Federation found itself in

a new geopolitical situation after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It lost its superpower status and it was deprived of large territories that once belonged to it. Thus it became necessary to define a new identity, to identify foreign policy priorities and at that stage there emerged many debates on what Russia's real national interests were.<sup>1</sup> There were, however factors which made the process of definition of the Russian foreign policy more difficult; Russia needed to shift from a mission oriented foreign policy to a more interest driven one. In the Soviet era, the idea that Russia had a special mission in the world was very central in Russian thinking.<sup>2</sup>

The first phase in the Russian Federation's foreign policy is the period between 1991 and 1993. In this period Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and President Boris Yeltsin thought that integration into global economy had paramount importance for the Russian Federation (RF). In their view the economic needs of the state largely determined the national interest. This economic imperative was the key factor in the initial stage of the shaping of Russian foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

A major group which influenced foreign policy in the early 1990s was the Atlanticist group. They shared the views of Kozyrev and Yeltsin. For them close relations with the West was very important and for the success of the economic reforms Western support was vital. Integration with the West in many fields; political, economic and military were necessary.<sup>4</sup> They also thought that the Russian

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<sup>1</sup> Aleksandr Chubarian, "A Decade of Russia's Foreign Policy", *International Affairs (Moscow)*, Vol 47, No 4, 2001, p.14

<sup>2</sup> Paul Goble, "Russia as a Eurasian Power: Moscow and Post-Soviet Successor States" in Stephen Sestanovich (ed.), *Rethinking Russia's National Interests*, (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies, 1994), pp.42-43

<sup>3</sup> Roger Kanet and Alexander Kozhiemiakin, *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Alvin Rubinstein and Nicolai Petro, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation State*, (New York: Longman, 1996), p.99

Federation's relations with the former Soviet Union republics should be shaped in line with these imperatives.<sup>5</sup>

Yeltsin's initial policy was criticized by pointing that it did not serve the Russian national interests. A competing school of thought to the Atlanticists, the Eurasianists' view was that Russian national interests should be based on the realities of Russia's political position at the center of Eurasian landmass. They defended the view that the Russian Federation ignored its interests in the post-Soviet space.<sup>6</sup>

All opposition groups had one thing in common. They criticized the foreign policy of Kozyrev saying that his policy failed to recognize that the main priority for the Russian Federation was not the relations with the West but the relations with the former Soviet republics.<sup>7</sup> All groups blamed the Russian leadership for paying insufficient attention to the Russian interests in the former Soviet Republics on the fringes of the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup>

When the issue is the Russian foreign policy towards the republics of the former Soviet Union, the debates on the Russian national interests acquired more urgency. The opposition groups attacked the official pro-Western orientation of the Russian foreign policy criticizing Yeltsin's neglect of the relations with the former Soviet Republics. The opposition used the rhetoric of national interest in its critique of the official policy.<sup>9</sup>

There is one important factor that affected the criticism of the opposition groups since 1991. There were many crises and conflicts in Russia's periphery, thus

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<sup>5</sup> Amin Saikal, "Russian Policy Towards Central Asia and the Middle East", in Peter Shearman (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p.268

<sup>6</sup> R.Kanet and A.Kozhiemiakin, *op.cit.*, p.8

<sup>7</sup> Alexei Arbatov, "Russian Foreign Policy Priorities for the 1990s, in Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven E Miller (eds.), *Russian Security After the Cold War: 7 Views from Moscow*, (Washington: CSIA Studies in International Security, 1994), p. 11

<sup>8</sup> R.Kanet and A.Kozhiemiakin, *op.cit.*, p. 9

Russian political elite were forced to come up with policies concerning the Russian 'Near Abroad'. They thought that the events in Russia's periphery form a threat to the political and military stability around Russia's borders, thus requiring immediate and drastic action. There were also other issues like the presence of Russian minorities in these unstable regions, the presence of Islamic radicalism and warfare near Russia's borders. So, all of these were the factors that gave the opposition groups the opportunities to attack the official foreign policy in this period.<sup>10</sup>

After this brief definition of the first phase of the Russian Federation's foreign policy, one can say that Russia's leadership especially in the initial stages of its independence seemed almost oblivious of the former Soviet republics. Later, within the framework of Commonwealth of Independent States, an attempt towards integration with them started. On 8 December 1991, the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine signed an Agreement on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On 21 December 1991, the leaders of the eleven states signed the Protocol to the above-mentioned Agreement, in which they stressed that the Azerbaijan Republic, the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan and Ukraine established the Commonwealth of Independent States.<sup>11</sup> Although the peripheral republics were also accepted into the CIS; in the period of 1991-1993, Russian political leaders ignored the integration process within the Commonwealth of Independent States.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

<sup>11</sup> Official Website of the CIS at [www.cis.minsk.by/english/engl\\_cis.htm](http://www.cis.minsk.by/english/engl_cis.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Irina Zviagelskaya, *Russian Policy Debate on Central Asia*, (London: The RIIA, 1995), p. 1

Kozyrev defined the foreign policy of the period as being based on new, non-imperial and non-totalitarian relations with the sovereign republics. From the point of view of Kozyrev, the relations with these states should be based on universal norms of international law and human rights. He thought that only such an approach would be the remedy for solving the republican and inter-ethnic conflicts in a civilized manner. The totalitarian approach would not solve anything, only aggravate the situation and suspend the conflicts which would later reemerge.<sup>13</sup>

In the first period, the government was mainly preoccupied with the development of close relations with the West; however the relations with new states were largely ignored. As time passed, due to the criticisms and due to the fear that the “power vacuum” in the regions, which once belonged to Russia would be filled by other powers, there occurred a shift in the official line of the Russian Federation’s foreign policy towards the former Soviet republics.<sup>14</sup> Thus Yeltsin and his foreign policy administration felt the need to redefine their foreign policy objectives which would be beneficial to the Russian state interests.<sup>15</sup>

Yeltsin and Kozyrev thought that it was necessary to embrace some of the ideas of their opponents. They tried to do this by emphasizing the need to adapt to new conditions. For them, this was necessary to maintain Russia’s status as a great power with global and regional interests. It was also essential to establish good relations with both the East and the West on the basis of what served “Russian

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<sup>13</sup> Dmitri Rurikov, “How It All Began: An Essay on New Russia’s Foreign Policy”, *Russian Security After Cold War: Seven Views from Moscow*, (Washington: CSIA Studies in International Security, 1994), pp.136-137

<sup>14</sup> Lena Johnson, *Russia and Central Asia : New Web of Relations*,( London: RIIA, 1998), pp. 17-18

<sup>15</sup> R.Kanet and A.Kozhiemiakin, *op.cit.*, p.9

national interests” best.<sup>16</sup> As they tried to define Russia’s national interests, they had to come to terms with new geopolitical environment.<sup>17</sup>

## **2.2 The Shift in the Direction of the Russian Federation’s Foreign Policy after 1993**

Due to criticism of the official foreign policy in the period of 1991-1993, a shift with a growing emphasis on the relations with the former Soviet Republics took place in the Russian Federation’s foreign policy. The then Foreign Minister Kozyrev began to soften his ‘Atlanticist’ approach and he began to talk about the major foreign policy goals of his ministry as the integration within the CIS and the protection of ethnic Russians abroad. Other factors like the forced resignation of the liberal acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar in 1992 and anti-Western speeches made in the Russian Congress of People’s Deputies also made pursuing an ‘Atlanticist’ approach more difficult.<sup>18</sup>

As seen through the lines, almost all the debates related to the Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet period were somehow focused on Russia’s relations with the former Soviet Republics. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union gave little time to the policy makers to formulate policy toward the former Soviet Republics. While different people in the Russian foreign policy making apparatus had different ideas at the beginning, later they all shared a common view, which is the development of close relations with the former Soviet republics. The policy is

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<sup>16</sup> A. Saikal *op.cit.*, p.269

<sup>17</sup> A. Rubinstein and N. Petro, *op.cit.*, p. 99

<sup>18</sup> Bruce Parrot and Karen Dawisha, *Russia and the new states of Eurasia : The Politics of Upheaval*, (Cambridge, New York : Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 200

focused on building close ties in all areas but especially in the military and the economic areas.<sup>19</sup> One can identify that for the Russian Federation developing military policies toward the former Soviet republics was just a part of this general foreign policy shift. Having understood the importance of these republics and the failures of the policy of neglect, the military policy was seen as a means of establishing dominance in these regions. The Russian Federation soon came to a conclusion that its core national interests were closely connected to its relations with the former Soviet republics. Providing the transfer to Russia of strategic nuclear elements of the former Soviet Union; preventing a Yugoslavia-style collapse around the periphery of the Russian state, preventing existing local conflicts in the southern republics from spilling over into Russia, and protecting the rights of the Russian speakers and Russian citizens living in the former Soviet republics considered as vitally important for the security of the Russian Federation.<sup>20</sup>

There were many signs indicating the shift in Russian Federation's foreign policy. In 1993, the Foreign Ministry declared its intention to create the post of a special envoy for the protection of the Russians living abroad.<sup>21</sup> Yeltsin also emphasized the role of Russia as a guarantor of stability in the former USSR's geographical space.<sup>22</sup> When the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation is examined, it seems that it evolved from liberal internationalism to a policy based on

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<sup>19</sup> Wynne Russell, "Russian Relations with the Near Abroad", in Peter Shearman (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p.54

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p.54

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.66

<sup>22</sup> R.Kanet and A.Kozhiemiakin, *op.cit.*,p.11

‘national interests’. Hence one can argue that Russia’s later strategy was to regain some politico-military control over the former USSR’s geographical space.<sup>23</sup>

The trends in the Russian foreign policy clearly point to the emergence of a trend of emphasis on relations with the CIS states. The replacement of Andrei Kozyrev with Yevgeni Primakov as foreign minister in January 1996 is also a sign of this trend.<sup>24</sup> The use of a new name for the former Soviet republics is another indicator of the shift in the Russian foreign policy. The term ‘Near Abroad’ was developed by Russia to refer to the fourteen states which were once republics within the USSR. This term was developed because of the necessity to differentiate among the former Soviet republics. Because each republic had a different conception of the continuation of the relations with the Russian Federation within an institutional framework. Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia did not want to be members of the CIS. Currently, eleven of the non Russian republics; Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are CIS members. Thus, instead of always using “former” or of trying to linguistically link together CIS and non-CIS members, Russians adopted the phrase “near abroad”<sup>25</sup>

However, the use of the term ‘near abroad’ created suspicions in the West about the Russian Federation’s real intentions and the term’s perceived neo-imperialist connotations.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand Russia complained about the claims on

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<sup>23</sup> Dmitri Trenin, “Russian and Western Interest in Preventing, Managing and Settling Conflicts in the Former Soviet Union”, *Commonwealth and Independence in post-Soviet Eurasia*, (London: Frank Cass, 1998), p.173

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.189

<sup>25</sup> W.Russell, *op.cit.*, p.53

<sup>26</sup> D. Trenin, *op.cit.*, p.175

itself, stating that such kind of claims were intend to divert attention from the real problem, that's to say CIS stability.<sup>27</sup>

Another important indicator of the shift is the calls by the opposition for Russia to adopt a “Monroe Doctrine” as the fundamental basis of its foreign policy in the ‘Near Abroad’. This means that Russia would base its foreign policy on a doctrine which considered the entire geopolitical space of the former Soviet Union as the sphere of its vital interests, just like the United States’ ‘Monroe Doctrine’ in Latin America. It would also mean that the world community would accept that Russia has special interests in the region and that Russia will act in the role of a political and military guarantor of stability there.<sup>28</sup> This doctrine would legitimize Russia’s intervention in the Near Abroad to protect its interests even by military means when necessary. Yeltsin also referred to ‘Near Abroad’ as ‘sphere of vital Russian interests’. Kozyrev also pointed out that Russia should have a military presence in the areas which for centuries had been Russia’s sphere of military interests. Yeltsin and Kozyrev wanted to have international recognition of Russia’s special rights in its ‘Near Abroad’, also in such a way that would legitimize Russia’s peace-keeping role in the context of international organizations like the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).<sup>29</sup>

In January 1996 Yeltsin appointed the director of Russian Foreign Intelligence Service Yevgeni Primakov to replace Andrei Kozyrev as foreign minister.<sup>30</sup> This appointment reinforced the emerging consensus on the priorities of the Russian foreign policy. Primakov provided a greater sense of self-confidence for

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<sup>27</sup> W.Russell, *op.cit.*,p. 66

<sup>28</sup> B. Parrot and K. Dawisha, *op.cit.*, p. 229

<sup>29</sup> R.Kanet and A.Kozhiemiakain ,*op.cit.*, p.11

<sup>30</sup> A. Rubinstein and N. Petro, *op.cit.*, p.102

the Russian elite who hoped that the Russian state's interests and status would be enhanced.<sup>31</sup>

The shift in Russian policy was due to the perceptions of threats to the state's vital interests. One can identify that most of the threats perceived by the Russian Federation are those closely connected with the issues in the 'Near Abroad'. These issues include: the development of relations with the states of the 'Near Abroad'; nuclear instability in the region; role and status of the conventional forces and Russian troops in the region; protection of the rights of Russian citizens in the region and resolution of potential territorial and border disputes.<sup>32</sup>

Thus Russian Federation has new foreign policy priorities. As mentioned earlier, ensuring the resolution of disputes and prevention of armed conflicts in the territory of the former USSR are those perceived closely related with the Russian Federation's self-security. As a result of the new threat perceptions, there emerged a shift in the Russian Federation's foreign policy priorities. The relations with the former Soviet republics were also a determinant of Russia's relation's with rest of the world and of its status in the world. The Russian Federation also perceived other extra-regional states as threats because it considered these states as trying to fill the 'power vacuum' left by Russia. Thus; Russia thought it should prevent this from happening. Russia should have been the only power that had a special role in the region. Russia's large population and economic links with the region, vast nuclear arsenal and its nuclear production and energy infrastructure, its great defense export

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<sup>31</sup>R.Kanet and A.Kozhiemiakain, *op.cit.*, p.12

<sup>32</sup>A. Rubinstein and N. Petro, *op.cit.*, p.100

potential and simultaneous physical presence in several important regions of Eurasia were considered to entitle it to this role.<sup>33</sup>

Russia's foreign policy course with respect to the countries of the former USSR was seen as an important test for the future direction of its foreign policy, because as understood from the intense debates on the issue, it was very important in internal politics. These relations were not just a determinant on its relations with other states but also a determinant in its behavior in international organizations, and its attitude towards such issues as arms control.<sup>34</sup> Russia wanted the West to understand that 'Near Abroad' is a zone of vital importance for Russia.<sup>35</sup>

As the main concern of this paper is the military policy of the Russian Federation, military security issues will be my focus. Though there are many other reasons for the Russian Federation to have its control in the area, the main emphasis would be on threat perceptions emanating from potential conflict zones, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the rights of the Russians in the 'Near Abroad'. In this context Russian methods used to protect itself against these threats are important.

Russia began to emphasize the importance of bilateral and collective security agreements for both its security and for the security of the countries in the region. Russia claimed that such an interaction between a strong country and its weak neighbors is nothing than a 'good neighbor' policy on its part and justified its claim on the ground that such an attitude is no different from the United States' action on the basis of agreements like the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. In the implementation of this policy, Russia would differentiate between the countries of the former Soviet

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<sup>33</sup> A.Arbatov, *op.cit.*,p.13

<sup>34</sup> A.Arbatov, *op.cit.*,pp. 19-20

Union on the basis of their importance to vital Russian security interests.<sup>36</sup> Considering the threats mentioned above, Central Asia is in the sphere of vital Russian security interests.

The Russian Federation claimed that it is wrong to consider its every step towards securing its vital interests or its attempts at cooperation in the area of security as ‘imperialist’ policies. Russia claimed that it just pursues policies to protect its interests; in other words, keeping the territory of the CIS stable through good-neighborliness and collective security, which was supposed to serve the security interests of Russia and those of its neighbors.<sup>37</sup>

By regional collective security arrangements, and by CIS-wide joint peace-keeping in trouble spots, Russia wanted to contain conflicts and minimize the threat of war. Russia claimed regional preeminence and an international role, expecting international acceptance of its role in the ‘Near Abroad’.<sup>38</sup>

When Primakov’s priorities in foreign policy making are examined, the factors making Russia to make a shift towards ‘Near Abroad’ can be easily seen. He believed that improving external conditions would strengthen Russia’s territorial integrity and encourage peaceful integrative processes among the CIS states through providing stability in regional conflicts in the CIS and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Thus the first thing that Primakov did after his appointment was a tour of the CIS capitals. Actually the Primakov period was a

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<sup>35</sup> Vladimir Lukin , “Russia and Its Interests”, in Stephen Sestanovich (ed.), *Rethinking Russia's National Interests* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies, 1994), p.18

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> A. Rubinstein and N. Petro, *op.cit.*, p.101

continuation of policies already adopted under Kozyrev, making closer relations with the CIS a key objective of the Russian foreign policy.<sup>39</sup>

One can see the attempt of an integration process under the CIS institutional framework by using military, economic and political means. In this study the military means are the subject of concern. For fostering the integration process among the CIS states, many interstate and inter-ministerial treaties were signed within the framework of CIS. Besides these multilateral treaties, many bilateral treaties in the military field were also signed between the Russian Federation and the former Soviet Republics. Such kinds of agreements were attractive to all sides, since they shared some common concerns or believed that an effective cooperation in the security area would be beneficial to all. In the case of the other states, the Russian Federation could provide them with necessary means to protect their interests in the security area.<sup>40</sup>

From the beginning, the military elite pressed for military integration with the former Soviet republics, because they perceived a need to keep a reliable defense system, including a defensible border. The Russian military preceded the politicians who began talking about Russia's vital interests in post-Soviet space only much later. The debate over foreign policy among the civilian elite in Russia produced a shift towards a position previously held by the military and this created a new accord between the civilian and the military leadership.<sup>41</sup>

The Primakov period can be described as a pragmatic period in Russian foreign policy, because Russia's policies could be described as a 'pragmatic search' for the solutions to the problems on the CIS territory. Primakov was representing

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.115

this pragmatic trend. His policy evolved towards integration efforts within the CIS but reflected an awareness of the existing restrictions on Russian capability for this.<sup>42</sup> Moscow evaluated military integration as a step towards the whole process of integration among the CIS.

When Yevgenii Primakov was appointed as foreign minister in 1996, he was able to assert his influence, and the power of the military was reduced. This was due not only to the change of foreign ministers but also as a result of the structural changes taking place as a consequence of the cutback in the military budget, which reduced the capability and influence of the armed forces in foreign policy. Also the collapse of the communist system and the transition to a market economy paved the way to economic interest groups to play a role in foreign policy-making.<sup>43</sup>

There is another factor contributing to the development of the Russian national security strategy, the practical experience in the 'near abroad'. This also helped to conceptualize the principal tasks of the Russian army in the post-Soviet space into a military doctrine. The Russian Foreign Ministry stated that Russia must continue its military presence in the regions where its military interests have existed for ages.<sup>44</sup>

After Primakov, Igor Ivanov was appointed as foreign minister in 1998.<sup>45</sup> But a more important change which was reflected in the basic security documents (National Security Concept, Foreign Policy Doctrine and Military Doctrine of the

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<sup>41</sup> I.Zviagelskaya, *op.cit.*, p. 30

<sup>42</sup> L.Johnson, *op.cit.*, p.19

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26

<sup>44</sup> I.Zvigelskia, *op.cit.*, p.32

<sup>45</sup> Christoph Bluth, "Russian Military Forces and Reform" in Mike Bowker and Cameron Ross (eds.) *Russia After the Cold War*, (London: Longman, 2000), p.223

Russian Federation) of 2000 had occurred with Vladimir Putin's Election as president in March 2000.<sup>46</sup>

For Putin, there is a direct connection between creating domestic order, strengthening the state and increasing international respect for Russia. For Putin, expansion of the Russian sphere of influence in the 'near abroad' is an important pillar of the foreign policy.<sup>47</sup> In other words, Putin has augmented the main trend in Russian foreign policy since 1992-1993; that's to preserve Russia's integrity and to restore Russian primacy in an exclusive sphere of influence across the CIS.<sup>48</sup> In the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, Putin has shown a firm commitment to placing the former Soviet republics first among other foreign policy priorities.

In this period, Putin focused more on the political and military side of cooperation. Moscow's attempts to revive the 1992 Tashkent Collective Security Treaty can be viewed as an indicator of this policy. At the Collective Security Council session held in May 2000, a significant 'Memo on Raising the Effectiveness of the Collective Security Treaty and Its Adaptation to the Country's Geopolitical Situation' as well as a number of other documents were adopted. The Council also approved the Model Regional System of Collective Security for providing help during crises.<sup>49</sup> In sum, the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation towards the near abroad countries did not change during the Putin era. Indeed as observed in

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<sup>46</sup> Micheal McFaul, "Putin in Power", *Current History*, Vol 99, No 639, October 2000, p.307

<sup>47</sup> Kim Holmes, 'Understanding Putin's Foreign Policy', July 12, 2001 at <http://www.heritage.org/shorts/20010712putin.html>

<sup>48</sup> Stephen Blank, "Putin's Twelve Step Programme", *Washington Quarterly*, Vol.25, No1, Winter 2002, p.147

<sup>49</sup> Aleksei Mareshenko, "Putin in the Post-Soviet Space Revisiting the Old? Starting New Relations?" at [www.pubs.Carnegie.ru/english/briefings/2000/issue07.00.asp](http://www.pubs.Carnegie.ru/english/briefings/2000/issue07.00.asp)

the basic security documents of 2000, the emphasis on the development of relations with the near abroad countries is very clear.

Since this study's primary concern is the Russian military policy in Central Asia, it is important to understand the place of Central Asia in Russian foreign policy. Parallel to the shift in Russian foreign policy towards 'Near Abroad', Russia perceived that it has vital interests in the Central Asian region. The factors perceived as threatening the Russian interests were the determinants in Russia's growing interests in the region.

The idea that the 'power vacuum' in the region can be filled by other powers was another concern for Russia. On Central Asia, there were two different approaches; one is that the Central Asia is an economic, political and military burden thus total withdrawal from Central Asia is needed and the other is that Russia keeps control of region by all possible means. If Russia leaves the region, Central Asia will be involved in alliances hostile to Russia.<sup>50</sup> The military means were perceived as a means of controlling the region. Thus with the growing importance of Central Asia in Russian foreign policy, the military means began to used as a means of controlling the region. However; as Russia was not capable of continuing an active and interventionist policy in the region; a gap developed between its ambitions and capability and between its rhetoric and actual behavior.<sup>51</sup> This formed the biggest dilemma in Russian policy towards the region.

When we have a look at the means of the Russian Federation for the enhancement of its control of the region, we see bilateral and multilateral treaties in the military field. From 1993 to 1995, as CIS economic integration efforts failed,

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<sup>50</sup> I.Zviagelskaya, *op.cit.*, p.35

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18

military cooperation was given greater emphasis in spite of Russian official statements that the former was to have a central role. This is because military agreements appeared more easy to implement and more effective in binding the states together. Already in 1992-3 Moscow signed bilateral friendship and cooperation treaties with all the Central Asian states, actively taking upon itself military obligations to end conflicts on the CIS territory in the hope that a multilateral defense organization would develop.<sup>52</sup>

There are various factors contributing to Russia's search for military integration in the former Soviet geopolitical space. The enlargement of NATO and increased penetration by other countries in the former Soviet republics in its southern flank are among those factors. The proposed enlargement of NATO increased Russian official rhetoric about the need to close ranks on CIS territory and to create a CIS defense alliance. Military integration was recommended by several voices in the government and in public debate. It was seen as the answer not only to NATO enlargement but also to what was perceived as an anti-Russian alliance developing from Ukraine through Georgia and Azerbaijan into Central Asia and Uzbekistan. As Moscow saw the geopolitical map of Central Asia changing at an increasing rate voices critical of the government's Central Asia policy were heard.<sup>53</sup>

In December 1996, the Minister of Defense Igor Rodinov proposed the creation of a CIS defense union and the pooling of CIS military forces. His speeches were emphasizing the common strategic interests of the CIS member states and were interpreted as a hard line approach. Rodinov's views echoed voices from within the Russian military demanding that military integration be given priority as the core of

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22

integration efforts. But of course on the issue of military integration, there were many different views. Some said this is not a feasible way thus other kind of integration means should be preferred.<sup>54</sup>

Russia's security interests in the Central Asian region are one of the most important factors in the Russian efforts to have a certain control in the region. For Russia preventing the instability in Central Asia to expand and preventing it from spilling over into Russia itself are very important. Russian peace-keeping efforts in the region were perceived by the West as the Russian projection of imperial power. Thus these efforts were also criticized.<sup>55</sup>

Despite some failures, The Yeltsin government had managed to pursue a somewhat consistent policy towards Central Asia. This policy has given a clearly recognizable direction to the conduct of Russian relations with the region. The policy was developed in line with Russia's changing national and international circumstances but with an emphasis on the need to define a long-term Central Asian policy. However, there were some anomalies in the policy, Moscow's approach to the region had some dilemmas and contained difficult foreign policy choices which might have been costly for Russia in terms of its regional and international interest if not managed properly.<sup>56</sup>

Russian and Central Asian leaders desired a lasting association. And many Russian policy makers thought that within the framework of the CIS, disputes could be solved easily. But contrary to the expectations the CIS did not provide a structure that would govern the relations of the Russian Federation with other members of the

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> P.Goble, *op.cit.*, p. 47

<sup>56</sup> A.Saikal, *op.cit.*, pp.281-282

CIS. The bilateral agreements were still more effective. This was also true for the bilateral military agreements between Russia and the Central Asian republics.<sup>57</sup>

The reason behind Russia's success in preserving military relations with the Central Asian republics was that these republics faced challenges after the disintegration of the Soviet Union including civil strifes. They were in need of help from Russia in preserving their stability and there were already established structures between the Central Asian Republics and Russia in the military field just as in other fields. That made the development of relations and signing of agreements in the military field easier.

### **2.3 The Reflections of the Shift in the Basic Security Documents**

Parallel to the shift in Russia's foreign policy, the reflections of this shift were also seen in the basic security documents of the Russian Federation. In the National Security Concepts of the Russian Federation, in the Foreign Policy Doctrines of the Russian Federation and finally in the Military Doctrines of the Russian Federation, one can see the growing importance that Russia gave to the 'Near Abroad' countries. In these documents Russian interests are redefined and accordingly the Russian interests in the 'Near Abroad' are emphasized. In these documents besides the traditional security concerns, the creation of a belt of friendly states along Russia's perimeter, the protection of the rights and interests of Russian citizens abroad, the promotion and support of Russian language and culture in

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<sup>57</sup> W.Russell, *op.cit.*, p.56

foreign countries, providing stability in the regions along Russia's perimeter are considered important issues for Russian interests.<sup>58</sup>

National Security Doctrine assesses internal and external threats and specific functions of the governmental bodies in this domain, foreign policy doctrine outlines general political purposes and priorities in the international arena and military doctrine defines external threats to the country and ways and means of national defense.<sup>59</sup>

I will begin with the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation since this document is a more comprehensive one that takes a broader view of security. The concept defines the most important state-policy guidelines and principles in the field of ensuring the Russian national security.<sup>60</sup>

In the 1997 document Russian national interests are defined as “the protection of the constitutional system, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia, the establishment of political, economic and social stability and the development of international cooperation.”<sup>61</sup> In the document it is also stated that the Russian Federation's national interests in the international sphere require the implementation of an active foreign policy course aimed at consolidating Russia's position as a great power—one of the influential centers of the developing multi-polar world. To accomplish this aim, great value was given to integration within the CIS and the

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<sup>58</sup> Igor Torbakov, 'Putin's Russia Defines its Foreign Policy Agenda', [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav6728.00.5html](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav6728.00.5html)

<sup>59</sup> Jakub Godzimirski, 'Russian National Security Concepts: 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis', *European Security*, Vol: 9, No:4, (Winter 2000), p.74

<sup>60</sup> Jyotsna Bakshi, "Russia's National Security Concepts and Military Doctrine: Continuity and Change", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol: XXIV, No:7, (Oct 2000), p.1268

<sup>61</sup> National Security Concept 1997, [www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html), p. 3

development of international cooperation in combating transnational crime and terrorism is regarded as important.<sup>62</sup>

Another point in the document emphasized was “Russia’s national interests in the international sphere also include the protection of the life, dignity and internationally recognized civil rights and freedoms of citizens of Russia and our compatriots abroad.”<sup>63</sup> This statement refers also to the rights of the Russians in the Central Asian republics.

In the document ethnic and national conflicts, deliberate interference of the foreign states and international organizations in the internal politics of the Russian Federation are defined as leading to the delimitation of Russia’s influence, the infringement of its most important national interests and weakening of its positions in Europe, the Near East, the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia.<sup>64</sup>

The most real threat to Russia in the defense sphere is defined as existing and potential hotbeds of local wars and armed conflicts close to its state border. The conservation or creation by major powers (and their coalitions) of powerful groupings of armed forces in regions adjacent to Russia’s territory is defined as a threat to Russia’s national security in the defense sphere. It is further explained in the document that even when there might be no aggressive intentions with regard to Russia, these groupings presented a potential military danger.<sup>65</sup>

In the foreign policy sphere the document states “Russia does not intend to enter into confrontation with any state or alliance of states whatsoever, nor does it pursue hegemonistic or expansionist goals. As an influential Eurasian power, it will

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10

support relations of partnerships with all interested world communities.”<sup>66</sup> This is an emphasis made in the document for those who claim that Russia has hegemonistic policies in the post Soviet space.

The statement “Russian Federation’s foreign policy gives priority to ensuring the most important national interests, developing Russia’s relations with leading states in the world, comprehensive cooperation and integration within the CIS framework, the deepening and development of relations with CIS member states is a most important factor promoting the settlement of ethno-political and inter-ethnic conflicts, ensuring socio-political stability along Russia’s borders, and ultimately preventing centrifugal phenomena within Russia itself ” makes it clear how important ‘Near Abroad’ is for Russia.<sup>67</sup>

On Russian role as an arbitrator in regional and local conflicts, there is a statement in the document which reads “one important avenue for the Russian Federation’s activity to ensure its national security in the foreign policy sphere is to assist in the settlement of regional and local conflicts through peace-keeping activity. In this process it is necessary to make maximum use of collective efforts along this avenue by the CIS, the UN and the OSCE in the long term.”<sup>68</sup>

“The safeguarding of the Russian Federation’s national interests and security on its state border and in the border area presupposes the improvement of the formalization of the Russian Federation’s state border in international law, the development of interstate border cooperation and the implementation of collective security measures on the external borders of the CIS member states” is another

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*,

sentence that emphasizes the importance of border protection and cooperation among CIS members on this issue.<sup>69</sup>

In the 2000 National Security Concept, we see that the basic principles and interests of the state are the same. But in the new document, there is a big emphasis on the issue of terrorism. It is obvious that the differences between the two documents are due to what happened between 1997-2000. The issue of terrorism is emphasized in the 2000 document as “transnational in nature and poses a threat to world stability. This issue has exacerbated sharply in many countries, including the Russian Federation and to fight it requires unification of efforts by the entire international community, increased effectiveness of existing ways of countering this threat, and also urgent action to neutralize it”.<sup>70</sup> The experience of Russia in the Chechen war seemed to be effective in its desire to fight against terrorism and to cooperate with the other states in the world community.

Again in the new document the importance of the ‘Near Abroad’ is emphasized within the institutional framework of the CIS. It is emphasized that the development of equal relations with the CIS member states is a priority for the Russian Federation.<sup>71</sup> The negative factors that can produce threats in the international sphere are defined in the document as the foreign military presence near Russian borders, the weakening of the integration process within the CIS and the conflicts near the border of the Russia or other CIS members’ territories.”<sup>72</sup>

With regard to the border issues the threats are defined as “the economic, demographic and cultural-religious expansion by neighboring states into Russian

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21

<sup>70</sup> National Security Concept 2000, [www3.itu.int/MISSISONS/Russia/russiastrat/2000.htm](http://www3.itu.int/MISSISONS/Russia/russiastrat/2000.htm) , p.2

<sup>71</sup> National Security Concept 1997 , [www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html), p.2

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5

territory and increased activity by cross-border organized crime and also by foreign terrorist organizations”<sup>73</sup>

Russian military presence in certain strategically important areas are seen important as the interests of ensuring Russia’s national security predetermine this requirement under appropriate circumstances Thus the stationing of limited military contingents(military bases, naval units) there on a treaty basis is explained as a must to ensure Russia’s readiness to fulfill its obligations and to assist in forming a stable military strategic balance of forces in regions, and to enable the Russian Federation to react to a crisis situation in its initial stage and achieve its foreign policy goals.<sup>74</sup>

As one can understand from the above mentioned quotations from the National Security Concepts of 1997 and 2000, Russia’s shift of attention towards the ‘Near Abroad’ is very clear since many issues in the documents outlines the importance of these regions for Russian national security.

Another important document reflecting the shift in Russia’s foreign policy in the ‘Near Abroad’ is the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation. In the document of 2000 the foreign policy concept is defined as “a system of views on the content and main areas in the foreign policy activities of Russia.”<sup>75</sup>

The main objectives in the foreign policy sphere are defined as ensuring the security of the country, achieving a prestigious position in the world community, forming a good-neighbor belt along Russia’s borders, promoting elimination of the conflicts in the regions adjacent to the Russian Federation, building a system of partnership and allied relations that improve the conditions and parameters of

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11

<sup>75</sup> Foreign Policy Concept 2000, [www.great.britain-mid.ru/GreatBritain/econc.htm](http://www.great.britain-mid.ru/GreatBritain/econc.htm), p.1

international cooperation, to upholding in every possible way the rights and interests of the Russian citizens and fellow countrymen abroad.”<sup>76</sup>

The threats mentioned in the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation are underlined in this document. In the document under the title of ‘Human rights and International Relations’ it is stated that protecting the rights and interests of Russian citizens and compatriots abroad on the basis of international law and operative bilateral agreements is very important.<sup>77</sup>

And the most important part of the document for this study is part of the section entitled: ‘Regional priorities’. It is stated that “A priority area in Russia’s foreign policy is ensuring bilateral and multilateral ties with the CIS states. Having good-neighborly relations is important also for protecting the interests of the Russians living there.”<sup>78</sup>

Finally, the military doctrines of the Russian Federation will be analyzed as a proof of the shift in policy. Since this study is to deal with the military policy of the Russian Federation, the analysis of the military doctrines will give much more insight to the study.

In the Military Doctrine of 1993, the document is described as constituting a system of views officially adopted on the prevention of wars and armed conflicts, on the country’s defense preparation, on the organization of countermeasures to threats to the state’s military security, and on the utilization of the Russian Federation

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<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, p.2

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, p.8

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9

Armed Forces and other troops for the defense of the Russian Federation's vitally important interests."<sup>79</sup>

In the part under the title of 'The Russian Federation's Attitude to Armed Conflicts and the Utilization of the Russian Federation Armed Forces and Other Troops', it is stated that Russian Federation respects the principle of noninterference of the other states' internal affairs and it will not employ its Armed Forces against any state other than for self-defense if an armed attack is made on the Russian Federation, its citizens, territory, Armed Forces, other troops, or its allies."<sup>80</sup>

In the document the basic guideline for safeguarding the military security of the Russian Federation is defined as forming collective security structures, forming bilateral military ties particularly with the CIS states, the coordination of military doctrines with allies and partners, the settlement of the status of the Russian troops and military bases on the territory of the other states on the basis of interstate agreements.<sup>81</sup>

The missions of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces are defined in the document as peacekeeping, the material/technical supply, instruction, training and operational command of the Russian contingents in accordance with the United Nations standards. The Border Guard Troops, securing the state border, help struggle against organized crime, terrorism, and the smuggling of weapons and narcotics, and in preventing internal armed conflicts from extending beyond the confines of the

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<sup>79</sup> Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation 1993, at [russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/security/russia/doctrine/991009-draft-doctrine.htm](http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/security/russia/doctrine/991009-draft-doctrine.htm), p.2

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6-7

Russian Federation. The importance of military-technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and CIS states is also underlined in the document.<sup>82</sup>

The Military Doctrine of 2000 bears the similar characteristics of the Military Doctrine of 1993, though there are differences due to the experiences of the state in those periods. The same kinds of threats and similar destabilizing factors are defined in this document. There is a very important statement in the document which states that “the priority importance will be given to strengthening of the collective security system within the framework of the CIS based on the development and strengthening of the Collective Security Treaty”<sup>83</sup>

In the document it is clearly defined that “The Russian Federation attaches priority importance to the development of military and military-technical cooperation with states which are parties to the CIS Collective Security Treaty, based on the need to consolidate efforts to establish a unified defense space and ensure collective military security.”<sup>84</sup>

In the light of these documents, we can conclude that with the evolution of the Russian Federation’s general policy towards the ‘Near Abroad’ states, there emerged a clear definition of threats related with the ‘Near Abroad’ countries. Thus; in the documents priority is given to cooperation with the CIS states in the defense of the basic Russian interests against these threats.

With the new definition of Russian national interests and reevaluation of the threats to state’s security, a clear shift was observed in the general policy course of the Russian Federation. The basic security documents are interrelated, the National

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.12-13

<sup>83</sup> Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2000, [www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/991009-draft-doctrine.htm](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/991009-draft-doctrine.htm), p.4

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18

Security Concept is an all encompassing one, Foreign Policy Concept and Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation evaluates the statements in the National Security Concept in more detail and with a special insight.

As the scope of this study is limited with ‘the Russian Federation’s Military Policy towards the Central Asian States’, in the second part the threat perceptions of the Russian Federation in Central Asian states will be analyzed. However, I thought that a definition of the Russian general foreign policy towards the ‘Near Abroad’ is necessary to make an overall assessment of the situation.

## CHAPTER 3

### SECURITY THREATS FROM CENTRAL ASIA: RUSSIAN PERCEPTIONS

#### 3.1 The Rights of the Russians Living in the Central Asian Republics

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Russians living in the former Soviet Union republics became a serious concern for the Russian Federation. The sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union left almost 30 million Russians outside the Russian Federation. Before the disintegration according to the 1989 census; the proportion of the Russian population in Kazakhstan was 38 percent, in Kyrgyzstan 22 percent, in Turkmenistan 10 percent, in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan was 8 percent.<sup>85</sup> Of the almost 30 millions Russians living in the former Soviet Republics, around 10 million were in Central Asia. Thus it is difficult for the Russian Federation to be indifferent to the well being of Russians in Central Asia or see the issue as an internal affair of the Central Asian Republics.<sup>86</sup> The situation formed a very difficult and large-scale problem of Russian expatriates. There appeared a lot of questions to

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<sup>85</sup> O. Brykin and V. Timofeev, "Russian Expatriates in the CIS", *International Affairs (Moscow)*, Vol. 44, No.4, p.128

<sup>86</sup> Roy Meena Singh, "Russia and Central Asia: Problems and Prospects", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXV, No.3, June 2001, p.461

answer like which state is responsible for those people, what are the objectives and directions of the Russian policy on this matter.<sup>87</sup>

It is apparent that the fate of Russians living in the near abroad forms an inseparable part of Russia's vital foreign interests. The aim of maintaining good relations with other republics may come into conflict with the protection of the rights of Russians living on their territory. This situation is further complicated by the presence of armed forces under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation in a number of countries. The slowness of their withdrawal feeds the anti-Russian feelings and aggravate the situation of the Russian speaking population. Thus, this in turn may lead to demands of retaining troops to provide the Russians' protection thus creating a vicious circle. The armed forces have frequently become the object of attacks by extremists, the forces have also become involved in internal conflicts.<sup>88</sup>

As a consequence of historic policies, the Russians living outside the Russian Federation are concentrated in industrial regions and comprise an important part of the population that possesses the skills for an industrial economy. However, they are seen as colonizers. Thus the resentment has developed into discrimination against Russian ethnic minorities during the independence phases, though the form, level and intensity differ among the non-Russian republics.<sup>89</sup>

There are many problems that the Russian expatriates face in the non-Russian republics. The political representation and participation of ethnic Russians have become abridged with direct and indirect discrimination among other reasons. The

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<sup>87</sup> O.Brykin and V.Timofeev , *op.cit.*, p.128

<sup>88</sup> Alexei Arbatov , "Russian Foreign Policy Priorities for the 1990s, in Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven E Miller (eds.), *Russian Security After the Cold War: 7 Views from Moscow*, (Washington: CSIA Studies in International Security, 1994), p. 15

<sup>89</sup> A.Chayes and A.H. Chayes , "Transition and Conflict: Russian and American Perspectives on the Former Soviet Union", in A. Arbatov, A. Chayes, A.H. Chayes and L. Olson (eds.), *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington: CSIA Studies in International Security, 1997), p.6

status of the Russian language has become another serious issue. Russian language is used as the official language in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the regions having a high density of Russian speaking population. It is used for communication between different peoples in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan passed a language law giving the Russian language “the status of a language of interethnic communication” until 2005. As for the Russian language education, Russian speaking day-care centers have been eliminated in non-Russian republics and also the number of higher schools teaching in Russian have been reduced everywhere. The number of people learning Russian in the former Soviet republics has fallen by 2.1 million since 1989. Also there are practices like the closure of Russian theatres, tearing down Russian cultural monuments, changes of the names of the streets. In addition to all these the duration of Russian television and radio broadcasting is being cut. There is also a clear decrease in the distribution of Russian publications such as newspapers and periodicals in the near abroad countries. Thus under these conditions many Russian parents see no future for their children in these countries and chose emigration.<sup>90</sup>

As for Central Asia particularly, an influx of Russian settlers arrived in the region in the wake of Russian troops in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They played an important role in agriculture, irrigation, the building of rail-roads and towns and the founding of heavy and mining industries. After the World War II, an influx of Russians continued particularly to Kazakhstan. During the Soviet Union period, Russians held

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<sup>90</sup> O.Brykin and V. Timofeev, *op.cit.*, p.135

privileged positions in society and were well represented in the politics, administration and sciences throughout the Central Asia.<sup>91</sup>

However the situation has changed after the disintegration of the Soviet Union; Russians are reported to be leaving Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in large numbers sensing local hostility and apprehending the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the near future. While the firm stance of Karimov against the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) has reduced the migration of Russians in Uzbekistan, the situation in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan does not seem well. Also the new economic situation in the Central Asia is another reason for Russians to emigrate. The conflicts within these republics as in the case of Tajikistan is another important factor for the Russians' leaving.

Also outbreaks of ethnic violence as in Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley in 1989, contributed to the fear among Russians that they had no future in Central Asia, despite the fact that the ethnic violence was never directed at them. In 1996, Russian authorities reported that a total of about one million immigrants a year had been arriving in Russia, the majority of them from Central Asia. Across the region, Russian population is declining.<sup>92</sup>

In Kazakhstan the situation is more complicated, at the beginning of 1989 Kazakhstan is the only former republic of the USSR where the Kazakhs are a numerical minority, at that time Kazakhs made up about 40 percent of the population. Russian language remains culturally dominant and although most Kazakhs know Russian, there are almost no Russians who know Kazakh language. Russians came to Kazakhstan in three stages: as settlers in the late tsarist period, as

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<sup>91</sup> Ben Partridge, 'Central Asia: Ethnic Russian Population Decreases', *RFE/RL Newslines*, 7 January 1999

deported kulaks (private farmers) prior to and during collectivization and as volunteers during the Virgin Land agricultural campaign (1950s). Most Russians live in the northern part of Kazakhstan in the industrial regions.<sup>93</sup>

Kazakhstan president Nazarbayev has to have good relations with Russia for the sake of the national cohesion of the country. For this reason he has guaranteed all nationalities in Kazakhstan equal rights while even he concentrates power in the hands of strategically placed Kazakhs in the government. Kazakh language is supported as official language, recognition of Russian community organizations were prohibited in 1993. Russian city names are changed, Russian language education was curtailed.<sup>94</sup> As a result; great number of Russians were reported to have emigrated from Kazakhstan.

What is the Russian Federation's response faced with these challenges on the matter of Russians living in near abroad? How Russia sees the situation and in what directions has its policy evolved? Indeed there are different views on the issue, nationalist circles who are panicked by their country's population decline since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, are urging that these ethnic Russians be brought back "home". But some politicians in Moscow want the Russians to stay in Central Asia, they fear that the reduced Russian presence has allowed the region to slip out Moscow's sphere of influence.<sup>95</sup> Although there are different views on the matter, the official policy line can not stay indifferent to the situation of Russians in the non-Russian countries. Moscow has pursued a dual policy over the Russian minorities in

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<sup>92</sup> Ben Partridge, *op. cit.*, p.1-2

<sup>93</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "Kazakhstan", in Mesbahi M. (ed.), *Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union: Domestic and International Dynamics*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994) p.119

<sup>94</sup> Alvin Rubinstein, "The Geopolitical Pull on Russia", *Orbis*, Vol.38, Issue 4, Fall 94, p.8

<sup>95</sup> 'Ethnic Russians in Central Asia Reshape Their Role in a New Era', Johnson's Russia List, at [www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6026-7.cfm](http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6026-7.cfm)

Central Asia. On the one hand while the government stressed the rights of Russians in diaspora on the other hand fearing an influx of Russians from Central Asia has encouraged them to stay. A five point Russian government programme finalized in 1996 called for legal safeguards for the rights of the Russian populations abroad; for economic support for compatriots abroad, and for guarantees on the use of Russian language. However, Moscow faced difficulties in implementing the programme due to economic problems and difficulties in cooperating with the other countries.<sup>96</sup>

The desire to protect the rights and welfare of the civilians and military personnel not only stemmed from only humanitarian concerns but also from the fact that Russian economy could not absorb a huge flow of refugees due to lack of housing and high employment.<sup>97</sup> The Russian government has tried to use international pressure to secure the rights for Russians in the near abroad. Russian leaders have international organizations such as CSCE and the Council of Europe to put pressure on countries of the near abroad to respect the rights of the local Russians.<sup>98</sup>

In addition to this government programs of help to expatriates have been drafted, a government commission for expatriate affairs was set up to coordinate and monitor the efforts of ministries and departments to implement these programmes. A set of measures have been defined to provide conditions for normal life of expatriates, their voluntary integration into the political, social and economic life of the new independent states while preserving their distinct culture. Diplomatic measures, including the use of international legal mechanisms of protection the rights

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<sup>96</sup> Ben Partridge, *op.cit.*, p.2

<sup>97</sup> Wynne Russell, "Russian Relations with the Near Abroad", in Peter Shearman (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p.62

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65

of expatriates have been defined. Also on a bilateral basis treaties of friendship and cooperation have been signed, in these agreements there are separate articles dealing with the rights and interests of citizens of other countries. Russia signed accords on regulating dual citizenship with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, on a simplified citizenship acquisition procedure with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; on the legal status of citizens of one state who live on the territory of another state on a permanent basis with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.<sup>99</sup>

Also in the National Security Concepts of 1997 and 2000 the importance of the issue is emphasized. The 2000 version points out more specifically that one of the goals of Russian foreign policy is to ‘protect the lawful rights and interests of Russian citizens abroad, through the use of political, economic and other measures.’<sup>100</sup>

As seen in the above lines, Moscow on the one hand with the aim of protecting the rights of Russian citizens abroad and on the other hand with the aim of preventing emigration of those people back to Russia, gives great importance to the issue and takes some important measures. Bilateral agreements were signed with countries where the Russian citizens live and attempts at drawing the attention of the international community were continued.

As Central Asia is an area where the Russian population comprises a big proportion, Moscow gives great importance to the region on that matter also. Due to economic hardships, civil war in Tajikistan, other conflicts in the region and different practices towards the Russians in the region there have already been a clear decrease

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<sup>99</sup> O.Brykin and V.Timofeev , *op.cit.*, p.129

<sup>100</sup> Jakub Godzimirski , ‘Russian National Security Concepts: 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis’, *European Security*, Vol: 9, No:4, (Winter 2000), p.83

in the number of Russians living on these territories. Thus; Russian national interests and threat perceptions necessitate keeping the region under close observation in that matter and to take the necessary measures for preventing the unwanted results.

### **3.2 The Rise of Fundamentalist Islam in Central Asia**

Another threat perception of the Russian Federation is the rise of fundamentalist Islam in Central Asia. First of all, it is necessary to analyze the social and economic conditions conducive to the rise of fundamentalist Islam in Central Asia. Main factors for politicizing Islam lie in the difficulties faced during the economic transition and lowering of the status of social strata. All these factors contribute to the dissatisfaction of the society and look for other ways of betterment of these conditions via the old ethnic and religious values that were lost during the Soviet era. Here the point is the search for an 'Islamic alternative', more and more people in the Central Asian society look for such a solution to their problems.<sup>101</sup> Socio-economic roots of the problems should not be ignored, act of repression by the political leaders is a breeding ground for the rise of radical Islam.<sup>102</sup> Islam can grow as a vehicle of protest against Central Asian regimes when they are oppressive and incapable of meeting economic and social needs. Islam could emerge as a political force in the case of the existing regimes' economic and political failure, such a failure create an opportunity for an Islamic regime to emerge as an alternative to the

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<sup>101</sup> Aleksei Malashenko, "Islam and Politics in Central Asian States" at [www.cac.org/dataeng/02.malash.shtml](http://www.cac.org/dataeng/02.malash.shtml)

<sup>102</sup> Roland Dannreuther, 'Can Russia Sustain Its Dominance in Central Asia?', *Security Dialogue*, June 2001, Vol: 9, No:2, p. 256

existing system.<sup>103</sup> The growing popularity of Islam in Central Asia is related with the refusal of the Central Asian regimes to broaden the political base of their governments and lift bans on political activity, also growing unemployment and economic difficulties are the factors conducive to this trend.<sup>104</sup>

After the Central Asian states became independent, religion had been revived in the region. This revival was a natural and a stabilizing factor as it filled a void after the collapse of the communist value system. At first, the governments of the Central Asian states supported the building of mosques to restore the religion, on the other hand trying to keep religion under state supervision. During the Soviet era, Islam was largely de-intellectualized, surviving mainly in its traditional forms. With independence, the Central Asian states aimed to re-educate their people about the basic principles of their faith, understanding Islam's strength as an element of national rediscovery. This is reflected in the increase in mosque construction, Islamic schools and the observance of Islamic rituals. For example in Uzbekistan , the number of mosques had increased from 80 to 5000 in 1987.<sup>105</sup> However, later concerns about Islamic fundamentalism became a reality because Central Asian region borders two countries of Islamic radical movement; Iran and Afghanistan. These two countries became the center of Islamic radicalism in the 1990s. And shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan became a place of civil war that pitted the former communist elite against an opposition force containing strong

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<sup>103</sup> Gnoncheh Tazmini , 'The Islamic Revival in Central Asia: A Potent Force or a Misconception?', *Central Asian Survey*, 20(01), 2001, p.270

<sup>104</sup> Ahmed Rashid , 'The Fires of Faith in Central Asia', *World Policy Journal*, Spring 2001, p.55

<sup>105</sup> G.Tazmini , *op.cit.*, p.67

Islamic groups. The conflict led the other Central Asian countries to ban most opposition parties and movements in their countries.<sup>106</sup>

However every act of repression made these Islamic militants adopting more extreme positions, these militant ideologies are not fed with the indigenous Islam of Central Asia but on imported ideologies from Pakistan and the extreme Wahabbi doctrine of Saudi Arabia. The civil war in Tajikistan was the first ground for reinterpretation of Islam in Central Asia. Islamic movements such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir al Islami and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) pose great threats to the Central Asian regimes and stability in Central Asia.<sup>107</sup>

Among Islamic groups in Central Asia, IMU is the one which attracts most attention due to its actions. Aiming to establish an Islamic state in Ferghana Valley, the IMU launched military actions in 1999 and 2000. In August 1999 a group of militants from the IMU captured two villages in Southern Kyrgyzstan and held a number of Westerners as hostages and called for an Islamic Emirate in Ferghana Valley and overthrow of the Kerimov's regime. During 2000, the militants of IMU continued to strike at various points in north and southeastern Uzbekistan and along the Kyrgyz-Tajik border.<sup>108</sup>

The effect of Taliban regime in Afghanistan was also a very important factor in the rise of Central Asian Islam. The victory of radical Islam in Afghanistan has led to a spillover effect beyond Afghanistan's borders. The country had served as a training ground for Islamic militants. For Central Asia, IMU bases in Afghanistan had made Afghanistan a direct threat to the regional security. Founded in 1952 in the

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<sup>106</sup> S.Cornell and R.Spector , 'Central Asia: More than Islamic Extremists', *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2002, Vol.25, No:1, p. 194

<sup>107</sup> A.Rashid, *op.cit.*, p.45

<sup>108</sup> R.Dannreheuter , *op.cit.*, p.253

Middle East, Hizb-ut-Tahrir shares the stated aim of IMU, the establishment of an Islamic state across the borders in Central Asia. They have had a strong support in the Ferghana Valley especially as it offers an opposition voice to regional governments. While the IMU discredited itself for its violent actions in the eyes of the public, Hizb-ut-Tahrir is gradually presenting itself as the only possible opposition to the ruling regimes.<sup>109</sup>

After defining the main Islamic movements in the region, it is better to analyze the situation in the Central Asian states one by one. In Kazakhstan, President Nazarbayev is trying to check Islam under his administrative check. The government has provided constitutional provisions defining the parameters of religious activity. Both 1993 and the 1995 constitutions stipulate that Kazakhstan is a secular state. In Kazakhstan fundamentalist ideas have not become widespread. In Kyrgyzstan, President Akaev remains suspicious of religious activism and emphasizes the importance of secularism. In 1995 a presidential decree forbade the teaching of religion or atheism in public schools and a state body to monitor religious organizations was established. In Kyrgyzstan, there have been a few manifestations of Islamic militancy. As mentioned before in August 1999, IMU militants seized several Kyrgyz villages. That kind of incidents is a sign of existence of extremism in the region. In Turkmenistan, the government stresses its secular nature and its support of freedom of religious belief in the 1991 Law on Freedom and Conscience. Uzbekistan has become a very important place to observe the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. In view of the threat of politicized Islam, the government began to take repressive measures by eliminating the Islamic Renaissance Party in 1992 with article 57 of the constitution that prohibits the establishment of political parties with

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<sup>109</sup> S.Cornell and R.Spector , *op.cit.*, p.198

national or religious features. The government responded Islamic activities with harsh measures. This measures included arbitrary arrests, disappearances of Islamic leaders and such. In Tajikistan, after the end of the civil war the government launched a campaign of suppression and persecution towards the Islamic activities. The new version of Law on Political Parties which was drafted by a conciliatory Commission allows the legal functioning of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan. Tajikistan trying to co-opt Islamic elements in this fashion chooses a different way than that of repression.<sup>110</sup>

One can see that the activities of Islamic groups are prevalent in Central Asia and each country takes a set of measures-usually repression- to prevent the rise of fundamentalist Islam. Here the issue is why Russia perceives the rise of Islamic extremism as a threat to its security. In this part I will try to analyze the Russian perceptions on the issue. First of all for Russia the rise of 'Islamic factor' with ethno-nationalist aspirations may constitute a real danger to itself. In the Russian Federation more than 10 percent of the population are Muslims thus local wars and regional conflicts can cause serious threat to Russian national security interests.<sup>111</sup>

Also there is another threat perception by Russian Federation concerning to the problem of the rise of fundamentalist ideologies. There is an idea that some regimes in Central Asia may try to secure Russian military support to fight local opposition by labeling them as Muslim fundamentalists and actually pushing opposition to religious extremism. To some circles in Moscow this might involve Russia in hopeless conflicts that are against its foreign interests and domestic political preferences such as the case in Tajikistan. Indeed, radical Islam is a new

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<sup>110</sup> G.Tazmini , *op.cit.*, pp.71-74

phenomenon in both Russia and Central Asia. There is a risk that radical Islam may bring conflict and divisions in these societies<sup>112</sup>

Ensuring the security of the Russian population living in Central Asia is another concern for the Russian Federation. Securing the Russians from the dangerous effects of Islamic radicalism is very important for Russia. And as mentioned above, Russia has a large Muslim population. Islam's influence will grow as an issue because of centrifugal forces in Russia itself. Therefore, it is very important for Russia to take measures to ensure that radical elements do not infiltrate Russian society.<sup>113</sup> Fundamentalism has not become a strong and powerful movement in Russia. However, fundamentalism exists and its ideas and slogans are popular among a certain section of Russia's Muslims and under certain conditions it could acquire great significance as has already occurred in Chechnia and Tatarstan. Political Islam is a reality of Russian public life. The patterns of its presence is observed in the different Muslim territories of Russia. Its activity may increase or diminish. Political Islam in Russia is not on the same scale as its in Central Asia but Moscow thinks that it's a fact that can not be ignored.<sup>114</sup>

For Moscow there are some possible scenarios related to rise of Islamic movements. The presence of Islamic extremist forces in Central Asia is inherently destabilizing and they aim at overthrowing the existing regimes. Having these characteristics, the extremist will be the source of new conflicts. It is claimed that if not opposed by strong military forces, the Islamic movements can easily come into

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<sup>111</sup> J.Bakshi, "Russia's National Security Concepts and Military Doctrine: Continuity and Change", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol: XXIV, No:7, (Oct 2000), p.1293

<sup>112</sup> A.Arbatov, *op.cit.*, p.27

<sup>113</sup> Roy Meena Singh, "Russia and Central Asia: Problems and Prospects", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol XXV, No.3, June 2001, p.461

<sup>114</sup> Aleksei Mareshenko, "Does Islamic Fundamentalism Exist in Russia?", in Yacoov Ro'i (ed.), *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p.50

power. In this scenario, after coming to power in Tajikistan, Islamic extremism will spread to immediate neighboring countries Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and later to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Thus; for Moscow Tajik factor is considered crucial to the future development of the region. And also the radical Islamic threat should be prevented before it reaches Russian territory.<sup>115</sup>

The importance given to preventing the rise of radical Islam can be observed in the speeches of President Putin. In practically every speech that Putin has given, there has been a big emphasis on the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism and international terrorism.<sup>116</sup>

In sum; Russia perceives rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a great threat to its national security. And in their struggle with fundamentalist movements, Russian Federation and Central Asian countries cooperate. This serious concern prompts Russia and Central Asian states to cooperate in order to neutralize the growing religious and extremist tendencies connected with activities of militant Islamists in the region. Readiness to “coordinate efforts to oppose the spread of aggressive, religious and other extremism, attempts to use force from outside or inside to change the constitutional and social system, to violate territorial integrity of the sides” is written into the declaration of all around cooperation of the Russian Federation with the Central Asian republics.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Hansen Splidsboel Flemming, ‘The Official Russian Concept of Contemporary Central Asian Islam: The Security Dimension’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.49, Issue 8, December 1997, p.

<sup>116</sup> R. Dannheuter, *op.cit.*, p.253

<sup>117</sup> Taksubaev Anatolli, ‘Russia and Central Asia’, *International Affairs (Moscow)*, Vol 45, No:3, 1999, p. 101

### 3.3 Conflicts within the Territories of Central Asia

Russian Federation perceives the conflicts and instability in Central Asia as a threat to its security for a number of reasons. Before analyzing the Russian perspective on these conflicts and ways of preventing them, it is better to analyze the nature of these conflicts and its probable effects on the whole territory.

Fear of the ethnic conflicts within their territories is a very important security concern for the Central Asian states. A war between two Central Asian states may expand into other Central Asian states since the five regional ethnic groups can be found in each of them. The division of the region into five republics had prepared the conditions for ethnic conflicts in Central Asia.<sup>118</sup> The ethnic history of Central Asia has complex characteristics. Among its characteristics, there are considerable migrations of the population, permanent inflow of large groups of people from outside and such. And due to these factors and arbitrary drawing of the borders, there is a great ethnic mixture in Central Asia.<sup>119</sup>

The Central Asian countries have territorial disputes with each other since the borders determined during the Soviet period are mainly arbitrary.<sup>120</sup> The changing of borders, settlement of corresponding ethnic groups in the past and today, past changes in the status of autonomy, historical, ethnic or economic unity, revival or

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<sup>118</sup> Hooman Peimani, "Regional Security and the Future of Central Asia: The Competition of Iran, Turkey and Russia"; (Praege Publishers: Westport, 1998), p.28

<sup>119</sup> Viktor Porkhomovsky, "Historical Origins of Interethnic Conflicts in Central Asia, in Naumkin V. Vitaly (ed.) *Central Asia and Transcaucasia: Ethnicity and Conflict*, (Westport: Greenwood, 1994), p. 5

<sup>120</sup> Roy Singh Meena, *op.cit.*, p. 454

suppression of national consciousness can be counted as the main factors of conflict in the territory.<sup>121</sup>

Concerning the claims of each state on the other's territory and concerning the main disputed areas the situation is as such; for example Ferghana Valley was divided among Central Asian countries, excluding Turkmenistan. As a result Uzbekistan has territorial claims to the southern part of Kazakhstan, the city of Khojand in Tajikistan and part of Kyrgyz Osh Province. During the Soviet era, Kyrgyz government had settled many Kyrgyz in Osh, whose original inhabitants were Uzbeks. In 1990 a bloody ethnic conflict started leaving at least 320 dead. Such a conflict might easily become a conflict between two states; Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan since Uzbekistan may involve in the conflict to support the Uzbeks in the region. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan also have disagreements about their borders. Tajikistan has territorial claims to Uzbekistan for two historic Tajik cities; Samarkand and Buhara. This may also become a source of tension between the two states.<sup>122</sup>

There were other ethnic conflicts beginning in 1986 with clashes between Russians and Kazakhs in Almaty. In February 1990, riots between Tajiks and Armenians in Dushanbe over housing shortages and in 1991 clashes between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks. So the region becomes a region of hot conflicts.<sup>123</sup> Although these conflicts seem to have an inter-ethnic nature, the underlying factor behind these clashes is the economic one. For example; the economic rivalry can be seen in the

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<sup>121</sup> Donald S. Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbors" in Yacoov Ro'i (ed.), *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p.99

<sup>122</sup> Hooman Peimani, *op.cit.*, p.28

<sup>123</sup> Ahmed Rashid, 'The New Struggle in Central Asia: A Primer for the Baffled', *World Policy Journal*, Winter 2000/01, p. 37

Kirgiz-Uzbek clashes in Osh in 1990 and in the case of Meskhetian Turks in Fergana.<sup>124</sup>

In sum conflicts originating from different factors that have surfaced in various parts of Central Asia threaten the region's stability. The conflict in Tajikistan which can be defined as a conflict between the different factions of a single ethnic group is the one that deserves a special attention. The case is unique in terms of its protracted nature, its density and Russian role in it.

From early 1990s, Tajikistan became Central Asia's hot spot. There are a set of conflict generating factors which contribute to trigger the conflict such as; contradictions between clans inside Tajikistan, inter-ethnic and quasi inter-ethnic tensions, ideological confrontations (between the conservatives versus the Democrats and Islamists).<sup>125</sup> As a prelude to the civil war, the Tajik Communist government led by Rakhmon Nabiyev was replaced by a coalition of democratic, nationalist and Muslim groups in 1992. The coalition members were the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, the Rastakhiz and the Islamic Renaissance Party. The Lali Badakhshan a group with the desire for greater autonomy for Pamiri peoples of Gorno Badakhstan Autonomous region, supported the coalition. The Tajik People's Front, a Kulabi organization supporting the Communist elite, controlled the south, while some local Khojandi leaders controlled the northern Khojand region. Unable to stop fighting between the coalition forces, the Popular Democratic Army and the Communist Opposition, Iskandarov resigned. Then, Imamali Rahmonov was appointed. The ousted leaders gathered around Rahmonov and conducted a military campaign that

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<sup>124</sup> Irina Zviagelskaya, "Central Asia and Transcaucasus: New Geopolitics" in Naumkin V. Vitaly (ed.) *Central Asia and Transcaucasia: Ethnicity and Conflict*, (Westport: Greenwood, 1994), p.131

<sup>125</sup> Lena Johnson, Introduction, in Zviagelskia I. and Esenov M. (eds.), "Political Islam and Conflict in Russia and Central Asia" at [www.ca-org/dataeng/01.jonson.shtml](http://www.ca-org/dataeng/01.jonson.shtml)

toppled the coalition government in December 1992.<sup>126</sup> At that time the Tajik Popular Front captured Dushanbe. Fearful of the growth of radical Islam and the spill over effect of the civil war, Uzbek leaders assisted this military campaign. Russia and other Central Asian countries assisted the Tajik communists to regain power. This political change initiated a bloody civil war, which continued until June 1997 when the parties to the conflict signed a peace treaty after a long process of negotiations facilitated by Iran, Russia and Pakistan under United Nations auspices.<sup>127</sup>

The conflicts threatening the security of Central Asia are outlined above. But why Russia also sees them as threats to its national security and what is the Russian response to that kind of conflicts in the post-Soviet sphere? Central Asian region is strategically very import for Russia especially given the fact that the Russian Federation considers this region as her 'soft underbelly'. This is exactly why Russia is not interested in fomenting inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes in the region and does not wish to spread the problem of artificial, relatively new and uncertain ethno-cultural borders between republics. It is in Russia's strategic interest to strengthen the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Central Asian states and to promote the regions defense potential. As long as the Central Asian states and the Russian Federation share the common threat perceptions, treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual military assistance will be signed.<sup>128</sup>

Russia became concerned with the new threats that it faced after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Fear of the probable results of the armed conflicts in

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<sup>126</sup> H. Peimani, *op.cit.*, p.30

<sup>127</sup> L.Johnson, *op.cit.*, p.2

the territory of the former Soviet Union was also reflected in the basic security documents of the Russian Federation. Such conflicts were considered as threats to Russia's security and its internal stability. As Russia was left with new and permeable state borders, it became more concerned with the problems of smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal trespassing across the borders. Thus; once again Central Asia gained importance for security reasons.<sup>129</sup>

Another reason for Russia's interest in containing the conflicts in Central Asia is the inability of its neighboring states to contain violence within their borders. The lack of barriers between the former Soviet republics that facilitates the spill-over of armed struggle; concern for the ethnic Russians living in the areas of conflict and the desire to avoid an influx of refugees are the other reasons for Russia's interest in the region's stability.<sup>130</sup>

Putin's rise to power is another factor contributing to a more active Russian policy with the aim of preventing these security threats. The developments on the former Soviet space put the anti-terrorist struggle into a central position in Putin's agenda. Thus, Putin made his agenda of fighting terrorism his political platform for offering military and security cooperation on bilateral and multilateral basis in Central Asia. Russia under Putin seems more willing to take the initiative and respond the crisis and conflicts on the former Soviet territory.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Oumerseric Kasenov, 'Military Aspects of Security in Central Asia: National and Regional Security Strategies', *Amu Derya-The Iranian Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Vol.1, No.2, 1996, p.241

<sup>129</sup> Lena Johnson , *Russia and Central Asia: A New Web of Relations*, (London: RIIA, 1998), p.18

<sup>130</sup> Dmitri Trenin, "Russian and Western Interests in Preventing, Managing and Settling Conflicts in the Former Soviet Union", in B. Coppieters, A. Zverev and D. Trenin (eds.), *Commonwealth and Independence in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, (London: Frank Cass, 1998), p.185

<sup>131</sup> Lena Johnson , 'Russia, NATO and the Handling of Conflicts at Russia's Southern Periphery: at a Crossroads', *European Security*, Vol.9, No.4, Winter 2000, p. 64

And Tajik case is a very good example which illustrates the Russian policy towards the region. There are shifts in Russian policy till the 1997 peace accord; from gradual involvement in Tajikistan, to full support of Rakhmonov regime and later to a more even-handed approach. Indeed Tajik civil war illustrates the problems faced by Russian policy-makers in adapting to new circumstances after the collapse of the Soviet Union. When the war broke out in 1992, Russian 201<sup>st</sup> Motorized Rifle Division in Tajikistan remaining since Soviet era was ordered to remain neutral. But acting as an independent political force, the division began to give weapons to pro-Communist forces. This support finally became official Russian policy. Russia's aim here is to clearly support a regime that would bring stability and guarantee the continued influence for Russia in Tajikistan. However; by its support to Rakhmonov regime, Russia deeply involved in the conflict. The 201<sup>st</sup> division became a target for attacks and in 1993, 24 Russian border guards were killed. After this event, Russia assumed primary responsibility in the conflict. Finally, Moscow began to revise its policy of support to the Rakhmonov regime to bring the United Tajik Opposition to a political compromise.<sup>132</sup>

Russia justifies its activity and involvement in Tajikistan by the principles of Chapter 51 of the UN Charter, and by multilateral and bilateral agreements within the CIS. On 3 September 1992, the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan issued a communiqué where they termed the conflict a threat to the entire CIS and stated their intention of intervening if the conflicts could not brought to an end. And also Tajikistan is among the states who signed the 1992 Tashkent Collective Security Treaty, thus Tajikistan was eligible for military assistance from

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<sup>132</sup> Ben Partridge, 'Tajikistan: Civil War Challenged Russian Policy', *RFE/RL Newswire*, 28 January 1999

the other members if the situation was assessed as a threat from external aggression.<sup>133</sup> In July 1992 a working protocol on CIS peacekeeping was signed. However, this was signed only by Central Asian republics, Moldova, Armenia and Russia not by the other CIS members. At the Russian-Central Asian summit of 1993, Russia applied strong pressure on Central Asian states to decide on a multilateral force to Tajikistan. A formal agreement was signed in September 1993, with Turkmenistan abstaining. All the Central Asian states other than Turkmenistan sent troops to Tajikistan. In 1993 the Coalition Peacekeeping Forces consisting of Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek troops was formed to maintain peace in Tajikistan under the leadership of Russia.<sup>134</sup>

Russia wants to take the main responsibility as a guarantor of peace and stability in the CIS. However Russia did not have any experience of peacekeeping and Russian actions under the name of ‘peacekeeping’ were heavily criticized by the international community. In Tajikistan Russian mission was closer to peace-enforcement rather than peacekeeping. Later Russian approach began to change in handling conflicts in the former Soviet Union. It began to resemble much like a traditional UN peacekeeping mission; a change towards less use of force, less siding with one party and much interest in finding a political compromise between the sides. And later Russia accepted a larger role for international organizations such as UN and OSCE. But here we see a dilemma in Russian policy; on one hand Russia can not handle the conflicts on its own so needs the help of international organizations and on the other hand it fears the consequences of greater international

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<sup>133</sup> I. Neumann and S. Solodovnik, “Russian and CIS Peace-enforcement in Tajikistan”, at [www.nupi.no/russland/pub/Notat530.htm](http://www.nupi.no/russland/pub/Notat530.htm)

<sup>134</sup> H. Peimani, *op.cit*, p.76

involvement since Russia thinks this may decrease its dominance in the former Soviet territory.<sup>135</sup>

As mentioned above, the disintegration of the Soviet Union brought many changes to the security environment of the former Soviet territories. And in this new security environment, Russian threat perceptions are reshaped in the whole territories of the former Soviet Union. And Central Asia becomes a region where the threat perceptions of Russia is mostly concentrated. The threats like the condition of the Russian citizens, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and different kind of conflicts all emphasized in the basic security documents of the Russian Federation. Faced with new challenges after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russian Federation tries to adopt to new security conditions with a shift in her policy direction towards the Central Asia. In the following chapter, after the initial policy of the Russian Federation towards the region is outlined, an emphasis will be given to the shift in her policies within the light of the basic security documents.

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<sup>135</sup> L.Johnson, *op.cit.*, pp. 51-53

**CHAPTER 4**  
**COOPERATION IN THE MILITARY FIELD THROUGH BILATERAL**  
**AGREEMENTS**

**4.1 Why Cooperation is Needed?**

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union both the Russian Federation and the new states of Central Asia felt the need to cooperate in the military sphere. Both sides have different reasons for this and they identify some common threats to their national security . Thus; in time cooperation in the military field between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian states was realized through bilateral agreements.

In the second chapter of this study the security threats that Russian Federation perceived in Central Asia are mentioned. These are emphasized for explaining the motive behind the Russian Federation in signing bilateral and multilateral agreements with the states of the Central Asian region. Some of these threats are perceived as common to the states of Central Asia. One of the key objectives of Russia's policy with regard to Central Asia is to expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation with its Central Asian partners on matters of security and stability in the region. This cooperation is based on the Russian Federation's treaties and agreements of different levels with Central Asian states on cooperation in military-political, military-technical, border, and law enforcement spheres and between their

special services.<sup>136</sup> In sum, as the strategic and security of Russia and the Central Asian states coalesce, the treaties on friendship, cooperation and mutual military assistance will be signed.<sup>137</sup>

In a geopolitical context like that of Central Asia, it's natural that Russia seeks all possible ways of establishing friendly relations with all Central Asian countries. Both sides have common security concerns like the prevention of the spread of military conflicts in Central Asia, and the possible growth of Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>138</sup> Through its military doctrines, Russia appeared to have taken upon itself the defense of external borders of the former Soviet Union. Russian security experts pointed out that the former Soviet borders were well fortified and guarded. Russia's new borders were not formalized through treaties. Several important radar bases and other facilities crucial for defense were located on the territory of the other Soviet republics. It was not easy to create such systems on Russian territory in a short period. Security of external borders of the CIS as well as the maintenance of peace and stability in the entire region came to be regarded as being crucial for the maintenance of Russian security.<sup>139</sup>

There have been many agreements and treaties signed in the military field since independence. The important thing is that both Russia and the Central Asia states are increasingly in favor of a deeper cooperation. Interest in prospects of

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<sup>136</sup> A. Taksubaev, 'Russia and Central Asia', *International Affairs (Moscow)*, Vol 45, No:3, 1999, p. 100

<sup>137</sup> Oumerseric Kasenov, 'Military Aspects of Security in Central Asia: National and Regional Security Strategies', *Amu Derya-The Iranian Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Vol.1, No.2, 1996, p.241-2

<sup>138</sup> Tatiana Shakliena, "Russian Foreign Policy Priorities for the 1990s, in Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven E Miller (eds.), *Russian Security After the Cold War: 7 Views from Moscow*, (Washington: CSIA Studies in International Security, 1994), p. 87

<sup>139</sup> Jyotsna Bakshi, "Russia's National Security Concepts and Military Doctrine: Continuity and Change", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol: XXIV, No:7, (Oct 2000), p.1272

cooperation is growing in more specific terms by the Central Asian states given Russia's influence in preventing the common security threats.<sup>140</sup>

For the Russian Federation it's important that the Central Asian states remain within CIS common military operational and technical standards: planning, codes, service regulations, military equipment and arms. In pursuing its strategic aims Russia is willing to offer support to Central Asian states. There is also a greater willingness on the part of Russia to implement policy on a bilateral basis rather than on a multilateral one.<sup>141</sup>

Moscow is interested in close cooperation with the Central Asian states. Moscow has argued that the perceived increase in the threat of Islamic extremism in Central Asia, supported by forces outside the former Soviet Union gives Moscow and Central Asian states a common security concern that serves as a basis for closer security cooperation. This policy has increasingly been pushed by Moscow since August 1999, when the Russian military operation began in Daghestan. The CIS military exercises Southern Shield-2000 took place in March-April 2000 in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan aimed at countering terrorist incursion.<sup>142</sup>

In May 2000, the first foreign visits made by Putin after his inauguration as president were to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan with the aim of reestablishing closer relations with the Central Asian countries. In his engagement with the region, Putin's key claim is that as demonstrated in Chechnia, only Russia has the capacity and will to battle the threats of international terrorism and Islamic extremism that have

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<sup>140</sup> A.Taksubaev , *op.cit.*, p.97

<sup>141</sup> Eurasia Insight, "Russia Rethinks Its Central Asia Strategy" at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032001.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032001.shtml)

<sup>142</sup> Micheal A.Smith, "Russian Foreign Policy 2000: The Near Abroad", Conflict Studies Research Center, 2000,p.13 at <http://www.csrc.ac.uk/pdfs/F71-mas.pdf>

become the dominant security concerns for the Central Asian governments.<sup>143</sup> Putin's strategy of focusing on the threat of international terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism has been well received in Central Asia.<sup>144</sup>

Another point that increases the importance of Central Asia for Russia is that the Central Asian zone of the CIS is located in the so called arc of instability that includes the southern borders of the Commonwealth and separates Russia from countries raising security concerns such as Afghanistan and China. Thus political-military cooperation with the countries of this “buffer region” in the interests of long-term prevention of real and potential threats along the southern borders is to Russia’s benefit. The necessity for joint efforts to settle the Tajik conflict was another reason for cooperation between the Russian Federation and Central Asian states. The issue of a Tajik settlement is a subject of constant consultation between Russia and Central Asian states at the highest political levels on the lines of ministries of foreign affairs defense, border guards and other departments.<sup>145</sup> In accordance with August 1992 agreement between Russia and four Central Asian states, a 25 thousand strong Russian-Central Asian force was created to protect the Tajik-Afghan border and protect Tajikistan from the threat of Islamic militants.<sup>146</sup>

As for the Central Asian states, close military dependence on Russia is in practice unavoidable. There are different reasons for this, firstly all states in the region possess very few trained officers of their own.<sup>147</sup> They rely on Russian officers to lead their forces, and the Russian Federation and Central Asian states have

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<sup>143</sup> Roland Dannreheuter, ‘Can Russia Sustain Its Dominance in Central Asia?’, *Security Dialogue*, June 2001, Vol: 9, No:2, p. 245

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, p.253

<sup>145</sup> Sergei Razov, “New Development in Central Asia”, *International Affairs (Moscow)*, Vol.43, No.3, 1997, p.60-1

<sup>146</sup> J.Bakshi., *op.cit.*, p.1272

mutual interests in having Russian officers serve in these armies: Russia does not have housing or jobs for them to return home, and Central Asian states need their expertise.<sup>148</sup>

Militarized conflicts near the borders have serious security implications for these new states. As mentioned in the previous chapters, Central Asian countries have territorial disputes with each other.<sup>149</sup> Also, for each of these states internal threats to regime stability are more immediate and challenging. Political and military links with Russia are viewed as stabilizing influences by current leaders in the Central Asian states. The perceived external military threats to the successor states are expressed in military doctrines.<sup>150</sup>

In sum, although, the Central Asian states have neither adopted a uniform approach in addressing security efforts nor perceived possible security threats in the same way; it is possible to identify certain commonalities in both their military development and security concerns.<sup>151</sup> And they have one thing in common that military dependence on Russia or even quasi-alliance is the likely course especially for Central Asian states. Such dependence is the reflection of uneven military potential of post-Soviet states. Weaker and economically more fragile Central Asian states need Russia in developing their military forces.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Roy Allison , “The Security Priorities and Military Ties of the CIS Central Asian States”, *Amu Derya-The Iranian Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Vol.1, No.2, 1996, p.263

<sup>148</sup> Susan Clark , “The Central Asian States: Defining Security Priorities and Developing Military Forces”, in Micheal Mandelbaum (ed.), *Central Asia and The World*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994,) p.199

<sup>149</sup> Roy Meena Singh , “Russia and Central Asia: Problems and Prospects”, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXV, No.3, June 2001, p.455

<sup>150</sup> Roy Allison , ‘Military Forces in the Soviet Successor States’, *Adelphi Paper*, No.280, October 1993, p.72

<sup>151</sup> S.Clark ,*op.cit.*, p.198

<sup>152</sup> R.Allison, *op.cit.*, p.74

## 4.2 The Development of Central Asian Republics' Military Forces

After the disintegration of Soviet Union, Central Asian states recognized that national defense is an aspect of national sovereignty and all except Krygzstan in 1992 set up Ministries of defense and began assuming control of Soviet era military units in their territory at least on paper. None can assume the financial burden of fully independent military forces nor do they desire to do so. They have hopes that a common CIS Defense Force could lessen the burden of individual military forces on Commonwealth member states. However; in May 1992 Russia announced that it would start its own national army that would be autonomous from the structures of the CIS Supreme Command. As a result; the idea of integrated armed forces was put aside.<sup>153</sup> Thus, although the Central Asian states are unwilling to establish their own armies independent of a common structure, they are left with no other chance of establishing their own armies. The reluctance of the Central Asian states to undertake the creation of their own militaries is not surprising, given the lack of a significant ethnic officer corps, their interest in dedicating scarce economic resources to more pressing needs and their general appreciation that they can not effectively ensure their security independently.<sup>154</sup> Thus; Central Asian states turned to Russia as the primary heir of Soviet armed forces and they signed bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation providing training equipment, officer corps for their national defense establishments.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> T.Shakliena, *op.cit.*, p. 89

<sup>154</sup> S.Clark,*op.cit.*, p.177

<sup>155</sup> Bess Brown , “National Security and Military Issues in Central Asia”, in Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven E Miller (eds.), *Russian Security After the Cold War: 7 Views from Moscow*, (Washington: CSIA Studies in International Security, 1994), pp.234-5

Russian military involvement in the Central Asian states has been regarded by the latter as an opportunity to postpone the full development of their national armies. So; the Russian army holds a very strong position fully equal to that of the local armies. While highly expensive, this military presence presents Moscow with certain advantages in the realm of security policy, to impede the rise of local conflicts, and the rise of extremism.<sup>156</sup> The Central Asian military establishment remained heavily dependent on Russian support. Few Central Asian became officers in the Soviet Army, so officer corps of Central Asian armies is largely staffed by Russian officers.<sup>157</sup>

The armed forces of the Central Asian states are still in their development stage. Indeed they are fractured remnants of the former Soviet Army and so lack a consolidated command structure that would include control, communication, provision, mobilization, personnel training and military-industrial complex. A New system of military management has already been established in these states. Also new military doctrines and policies are being devised. In addition to all these, laws on national defense and military service have been adopted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.<sup>158</sup>

In order to examine the bilateral relationship between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian states in the military field, it is necessary to analyze the development of their armed forces and their dependency on Russia. Uzbekistan armed forces can be regarded as the best-equipped of Central Asian forces. One week after independence, Uzbekistan established a Ministry for Defense Affairs. In

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<sup>156</sup> Hansen Splidsboel Flemming, 'The Official Russian Concept of Contemporary Central Asian Islam: The Security Dimension', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.49, Issue 8, December 1997, p.8

<sup>157</sup> B.Brown, *op.cit.*, p.236

<sup>158</sup> O.Kasenov, *op.cit.*, p.241-2

1992 Uzbekistan took over much of the command structure and armaments of the Turkestan Military District, which was headquartered in Tashkent as the defense organization of the region of Central Asia under the Soviet system. With the abolition of that district in 1992, with the reduction and localization of military forces, Uzbekistan quickly built its own military establishment. That inheritance from the Soviet era has enabled post-Soviet Uzbekistan to assume a role as an important military player in Central Asia.<sup>159</sup>

President Karimov, who in the early 1990s seemed content to sustain a close strategic relationship with Russia, initiated a series of political steps which sought to reduce, if not eliminate dependency on Russia. In the military field significant resources were allocated to constructing a large national army, which currently numbers about 60.000 troops while all Russian forces had to withdraw from Uzbek territory.<sup>160</sup> The CIS Tashkent Agreement of May 15, 1992, distributed former Soviet troops and equipment among the former republics in which they were stationed. For the first two years, the command structure of the new force was dominated by the Russians and other Slav officers who had been in command in 1992. In 1992 some 85 percent of officers and ten of fifteen generals were Slavs. In the first year, Karimov appointed Uzbeks to the positions of assistant minister of defense and chief of staff. Lieutenant General Rustam Akhmedov, an Uzbek, has been minister of defense since the establishment of the ministry. In 1993 Uzbekistan nationalized the three former Soviet military schools in Tashkent.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> The Library of Congress Country Study: Uzbekistan, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+uz0011\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+uz0011))

<sup>160</sup> R.Dannreheuter, *op.cit.*, p.248

<sup>161</sup> The Library of Congress Country Study: Uzbekistan, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+uz0011\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+uz0011))

Uzbekistan moved most quickly to establish its own army in Central Asian states. In 1992 Karimov signed a decree to establish border guard units under the authority of Uzbek national security service and subordinated CIS border guards to this new authority.<sup>162</sup>

Since achieving independence, Uzbekistan's foreign policy toward Russia has fluctuated widely between cooperation and public condemnation of Russia for exacerbating Uzbekistan's internal problems. Uzbekistan has found it advantageous to preserve existing links with Russia and the other former Soviet republics. For that reason since the beginning of 1994, Uzbekistan has made particular efforts to improve relations with the other CIS countries. Between 1993 and early 1996, regional cooperation was most visible in Tajikistan, where Uzbekistani troops fought alongside Russian troops, largely because of the two countries' shared fear of Islamic fundamentalism as an ostensible threat to Central Asia and to Russia's southern border.<sup>163</sup> Karimov's increasing fears for his regime's internal security have resulted in a marked rapprochement with Russia, he has also stressed that the bilateral Uzbek -Russian relations must be founded on conditions of equality and on Russia's respecting the sovereignty of Central Asian states.<sup>164</sup> As for Karimov, Russia is the guarantor of stability in the region, two countries discussed possibilities as military-technical cooperation, joint use of military facilities and training of Uzbek personnel.<sup>165</sup>

Like the other Central Asian states, at independence Kazakstan had no army because defense and security needs had always been met by the Soviet Army. Even

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<sup>162</sup> S.Clark, *op.cit.*, p.195

<sup>163</sup> The Library of Congress Country Study: Uzbekistan, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+uz0011\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+uz0011))

<sup>164</sup> R.Dannreheuter, *op.cit.*, p.254

though Kazakhstan took the fortieth Combined Army under its jurisdiction in April 1992, Nazarbayev stressed that it would continue to be within the framework of the CIS forces as long as other states did not begin creating their own forces. Only after Russia had declared its intention of establishing separate Russian forces, did Kazakhstan follow suit. The abolition of the CIS joint command effectively removed any notion of unified control and forced Nazarbayev to realize the importance of maintaining a good working relationship with Russia for the sake of his country's stability.<sup>166</sup>

As common in other Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has a notable lack of officers of the indigenous nationality: only some two thousand to three thousand Kazakh officers served in the entire Soviet officer corps and a great percentage of all officers serving in Kazakhstan were Russian citizens. Since independence, the officer corps, which was overwhelmingly Slavic in the early 1990s, has suffered a severe loss of manpower. Between 1993 and 1995, nearly 70% of Slavic officers resigned from Kazakhstan's Military Forces.<sup>167</sup>

In addition to the Minister of Defense Sagadat Nurmagambetov, President Nazarbayev appointed two Kazakh colonels as deputy ministers of defense and a Kazakh general to head the Republic National Guard. Kazakhstan's first National Security Council consisted of seven Kazakhs, one Russian, and one Ukrainian. In October 1994, both Slavs left office and were replaced by ethnic Kazakhs.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> S. Clark, *op.cit.*, p.198

<sup>166</sup> S.Clark, *op.cit.*, p.178-179

<sup>167</sup> International Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research-Kazakhstan's Army: Non Smooth Formation, Vitaly Khluipin, Andrey Grozin at [http://iicas.org/english/publAK\\_16\\_01\\_00.htm](http://iicas.org/english/publAK_16_01_00.htm)

<sup>168</sup> Library of Congress Country Study: Kazakhstan at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+kz0011\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+kz0011))

After independence, Kazakhstan possessed 104 soviet era missiles, thousand more nuclear warheads and space rockets. The United States of America took the lead in dismantling the missiles, promising economic aid and compensation.<sup>169</sup> The other major Soviet military facility on Kazakstan soil was the Baikonur space launch facility, the home of the Soviet space exploration program and, until 1994, Russia's premier launch site for military and intelligence satellites. Kazakstan and Russia debated ownership of the facility, In 1994 Russia formally recognized Kazakstan's ownership of the facility, although a twenty-year lease ratified in 1995 guaranteed Russia continued use of Baikonur.<sup>170</sup>

In 1992 the Eastern Border Troops District of the former Soviet Union was dissolved; this action resulted in the formation of the Kazakstan Border Troops Command under a Kazak general. After this transition, overall control of border security remained with the National Security Committee. Cooperation with Russia, with which Kazakstan shares roughly half its borders, is the primary goal of border policy, and several agreements provide for Russian aid. Cooperative agreements also are in effect with the other four Central Asian republics in border security.<sup>171</sup>

Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Kazakstan was the most significant site of military-industrial activity in Central Asia. By 1994 most of Kazakstan's defense plants had ceased military production. All of them required component parts from inaccessible sources outside Kazakstan, principally in Russia. And also, the Russian military-industrial complex was itself in collapse, thus

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<sup>169</sup> A.Rashid, "The New Struggle in Central Asia: A Primer for the Baffled", *World Policy Journal*, Winter 2000/01, p.38

<sup>170</sup> Library of Congress Country Study: Kazakhstan at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+kz0011\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+kz0011))

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

Kazakstan's military enterprises no longer could rely on Russian customers. In addition, the great majority of key workers at all these facilities were ethnic Slavs, many of whom moved to Russia or other former Soviet republics.

Like the other four Central Asian republics, Kazakstan lacks the resources to create an independent military establishment or an effective internal security force. By 1995 policy makers had recognized the need to remain under the umbrella of Russian military protection, a status reinforced by a number of bilateral treaties and expected to become further institutionalized in future years. At the same time, Russia formally took up shared responsibility for patrol of Kazakstan's international borders (under a nominally joint command), which in practice meant the border with China.<sup>172</sup> Thus; as a result of lack of sufficient means to provide its own security, Kazakhstan chooses to cooperate with the Russian Federation on matters of security.

As Krgyzstan is located in a region of low strategic importance and surrounded by nations with major concerns in other directions, developing its own armed forces did not become a primary concern for Krgyzstan. During the first month of independence president Akayev was a strong supporter of a unified CIS command structure. However, these plans collapsed with Russia announcing that it would not finance CIS troops. After this in April 1992, Krgyzstan formed a State Committee for Defense Affairs, and in June the republic took control of all remnants of the former Soviet Army on its soil.<sup>173</sup>

Russian officers continued leaving Krgyzstan through 1993 because of low pay and poor living conditions. To prevent the out-migration, agreements signed in

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> Library of Congress Country Study: Krgyzstan at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+kg0011\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+kg0011))

1994 between Bishkek and Moscow obligating Kyrgyzstan to pay housing and relocation costs for Russian officers who agree to serve in the Kyrgyzstani army until 1999. A Kyrgyzstani command took over the republic's directorate of the KGB's Central Asian Border Troops District in 1992. Later in the same year a joint Kyrgyzstani-Russian Border Troop Command was established under Russian command. In 1994 Kyrgyzstan agreed to permit border troops of the Russian Army to assume the task of guarding Kyrgyzstan's border with China.<sup>174</sup>

Akayev has always been a supporter of the Russian presence in the republic. In fact, whereas the other Central Asian republics have sometimes complained of Russian interference, Kyrgyzstan has more often wished for more attention and support from Moscow. Akayev's invitation for Russian border guards to take charge of Kyrgyzstan's Chinese border was another sign of this willingness.<sup>175</sup> Although at the first years of independence Kyrgyzstan stated that it would remain as a neutral state, the rising threat of fundamentalist Islam made her more dependent on Moscow.<sup>176</sup>

During the Soviet era, Turkmenistan was regarded as a crucial border region because of its proximity to Iran and other strategic areas such as the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan. For this reason, a large number of Soviet army troops were stationed in the republic. Since independence and the formation of a national armed force, Turkmenistan has maintained a posture of neutrality and isolationism, while at the same time pursuing a bilateral military alliance with the Russian Federation. Turkmen President Niyazov maintains close ties with Moscow and Russian troops

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> A.Rashid, *op.cit.*, p.42

still guard the country's border with Iran.<sup>177</sup> At the same time, Russia continues to regard Turkmenistan as a key element in its sphere of military interests. Russia has signed agreements with Turkmenistan for stationing border guards and air defense forces in Turkmenistan. Russia also supports the building of the national armed forces by providing training for officers and sharing force maintenance costs.<sup>178</sup>

Under the agreement for shared command, the presidents of Turkmenistan and the Russian Federation act as joint commanders in chief. According to this agreement, troops under joint command cannot act without the consent of both ministries of defense. As Turkmenistan's insistence on remaining neutral and military dependence on Russia seems contradictory, the Niyazov regime prefers a bilateral military alliance with Russia while at the same time refusing to commit itself to substantial participation in regional military agreements.<sup>179</sup>

Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, as the other Central Asian states, Tajikistan had no army of its own. Following independence, the Nabyev government made efforts in the period between December 1991 and June 1992 to organize a national guard. There was a strong opposition from factions to those attempts fearing that an anti-reformist president would use the guard as a tool of repression. When his National Guard plans failed, Nabyev turned to private armies of his political supporters. In 1992 additional armed bands were organized in Tajikistan, some associated with opposition political groups and others simply

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40

<sup>178</sup> Library of Congress Country Study: Turkmenistan at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+tm0011](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+tm0011)

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

reflecting the breakdown of central authority in the country rather than loyalty to a political faction.<sup>180</sup>

The main regular military force in Tajikistan at independence was the former Soviet 201<sup>st</sup> Motorized Rifle Division, headquartered in Dushanbe. This division, whose personnel are ethnically heterogeneous, came under jurisdiction of the Russian Federation in 1992 and remained under Russian command in early 1996. In January 1993, a Russian, Colonel (later Major General) Aleksandr Shishlyannikov, was appointed as the minister of defense of Tajikistan then in 1995 he was replaced by Major General Sherali Khayrulloev, a Tajik. Meanwhile, in mid-1993 the joint CIS peacekeeping force was created. The force, which remained by far the largest armed presence in Tajikistan through 1995, included elements of the 201<sup>st</sup> Division, units of Russian border troops, and some Kazakstani, Kyrgyzstani, and Uzbekistani units.<sup>181</sup>

Border security is a key part of Russia's continued military role in Tajikistan. In June 1992, the formerly Soviet border guards stationed in Tajikistan came under the direct authority of Russia; in 1993 reorganization put all Russian border troops under the Russian Federal Border Service. By 1995 an estimated 16,500 troops of that force were in Tajikistan. Tajikistan began assembling its own army in February 1993.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup>Library of Congress Country Study: Tajikistan at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+tj0011\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+tj0011))

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

### **4.3 Bilateral Agreements in the Military Sphere**

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, one of the problems that the Central Asian states faced was forming their own military forces and defining their security priorities. As mentioned before, Central Asian countries had few trained military officers and they had no experience in forming their own military forces. They also perceived some threats to the security of the state of which are shared by the Russian Federation also. Thus; developing cooperation with the Russian Federation seemed as the best alternative for them in the military field. As bilateral agreements are very important in developing such ties, many of them signed between the Russian Federation and states of Central Asia.

As an example; the status of the former Soviet forces deployed in the Central Asian states and the relationship of these forces to the new national military units has been regulated in a series of bilateral treaties with Russia. These treaties help clarify the status of the former 40<sup>th</sup> army in Kazakhstan, the former 52<sup>nd</sup> army in Turkmenistan and divisions still deployed in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>183</sup>

To emphasize this bilateral relationship, important agreements and treaties between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian states are defined in the following part.

As defined before, due to economic hardships, lack of trained officers and increase in the perceived threats to security, Kyrgyzstan was very much in need of cooperation with Russia. Thus; several bilateral agreements related to the military issues such as the procedures for the use of Russian military installations in

Krgyzstan, status of servicemen from Russian armed forces serving in Krgyzstan, supplying the troops in Krgyzstan with weapons, equipment and basic living necessities and training of Krgyz officers were signed.<sup>184</sup>

For cooperation in border protection, an agreement was signed between the Russian Federation and Krgyzstan in 1992.<sup>185</sup> In 1993, Krgyzstan became a party to the agreement between Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to organize a common defense of the Tajik-Afghan border and border guards from Krgyzstan served there.<sup>186</sup> Also in 1992 two countries signed a “Friendship and Cooperation Treaty” confirming Russia’s role as a guarantor of Krgyzstan’s security.<sup>187</sup>

The incursion of Islamic extremists into Southern Krgyzstan in August 2000 for the second time in two years underlined Krgyzstan’s vulnerability and made her more receptive to Moscow’s call for close cooperation in countering terrorism. A cooperation agreement was signed between the security councils of the two states. Agreements were also signed in August 2000 on military-technical cooperation and the use by Russia of military facilities in Krgyzstan. Krgyzstan President Akayev visited Moscow in July 2000. During the visit a declaration of Eternal Friendship was signed which gives Krgyzstan a Russian security guarantee.<sup>188</sup>

Kazakhstan and Russia has concluded bilateral agreements on several points such as; Russian assistance in Kazakhstan’s development of its military, training for Kazak military personnel in Russia, cooperation between their border guards, the use

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<sup>183</sup> R.Allison, *op.cit.*, p. 265

<sup>184</sup> S.Clark, *op.cit.*, p.187

<sup>185</sup> B.Brown, *op.cit.*, p.244

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p.245

<sup>187</sup> B.Brown, *op.cit.*, p.289

<sup>188</sup> M A.Smith, *op.cit.*, pp.14-15

of Emba and Sary Shagan test sites by the Russian military for air defense and antiballistic missile activities and the creation of a common defense zone.<sup>189</sup>

On 25 May 1992 the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan signed the “Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance”. They agreed that the two countries would form a united military and strategic zone and would jointly use the military bases, test sites and other military infrastructures. On 26 February 1993 a communiqué issued after Yeltsin and Nazarbayev’s summit reiterated the commitment of both states of the implementation of the bilateral treaty signed in May 1992.<sup>190</sup>

Further bilateral agreements were signed to reinforce the treaty on logistic support of the armed forces of the two states and on the conduct of military Research and Development activities.<sup>191</sup> A second treaty on military cooperation signed in March 1994 confirmed that if the either party were under threat then they would consult and military assistance could be provided to the threatened state. The agreement also anticipated that the parties may form integrated military units under joint command.<sup>192</sup>

In the joint statement of Nazarbayev and Yeltsin declared after the visit of Nazarbayev to Moscow on July 6, 1998 further cooperation in the military sphere was committed. It is declared that the two states are planning to broaden and improve the links in defense and military spheres. Further commitment was made to ensure joint defense and security within the framework of common military and strategic

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<sup>189</sup> S.Clark, *op.cit.*, p.181

<sup>190</sup> Mohiaddin Mesbahi, “The Geopolitics of the Muslim South”, in Mohiaddin Mesbahi (ed.) *Central Asian and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), pp.288-9

<sup>191</sup> R.Allison, *op.cit.*, p.268

<sup>192</sup> Treaty between Republic of Kazakhstan and Russian Federation on Military Cooperation, signed in Moscow on 28 March, 1994 at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/940328.htm>

space on the basis of the Treaty on Collective Security of 1992. It is also declared that Kazakhstan and Russia will extend the interaction in their struggle against trans-frontier organized crime, international terrorism and such issues.<sup>193</sup>

And in Nazarbayev's visit to Moscow in June 2000, Nazarbayev and Putin signed a memorandum on the use of the Baikonur cosmodrome. They also agreed to develop their cooperation in the field of defense and military technology.<sup>194</sup>

As mentioned, Turkmen reliance on Russia was unavoidable for the financial and material upkeep of forces of the former Turkestan military district. By agreements between the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan, it's determined that Turkmen national armed forces would be formed and trained under the joint command of Russia and Turkmenistan while certain forces in Turkmenistan be left under direct Russian control.<sup>195</sup>

Turkmenistan has a unique manner among all the Central Asian states. It prefers bilateral agreements with Russia rather than any collective CIS security efforts. In 1992, Turkmenistan signed a bilateral agreement with Russia providing the Ministry of Defense of Russia assistance in setting up a Turkmen national army, providing equipment, training and funding. The army was to be under joint control of Russian-Turkmen command and could not be engaged in military actions without the consent of both sides.<sup>196</sup>

Now, of sixty thousand troops in Turkmenistan, fifteen thousand are under direct Russian command and the rest under joint bilateral command. Russia is to provide logistical support and general financing. In August 1992, another agreement

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<sup>193</sup> Analysis and Strategic Research Center (ASRC) of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. at [http://www.president.kz/articles/state/state\\_container.asp](http://www.president.kz/articles/state/state_container.asp)

<sup>194</sup> M.A Smith, *op.cit.*, p.14.

<sup>195</sup> R Allison, *op.cit.*, p.263

was reached on the deployment of Russian border troops in the republic for a five-year period, with an option to renew for another five years. According to an agreement signed in 1993, Turkmenistan would pay all costs of maintaining military forces on its soil. This agreement granted Russia the right to maintain an air force and air defense systems with limited control by Turkmenistan. It addressed the continuing majority of Russians in the command structure by permitting Russian citizens to perform military duty in Turkmenistan and by making allowance for the training of Turkmenistan officers in Russian military schools.<sup>197</sup>

One can say that Russia's bilateral security ties with Turkmenistan is one the most significant of all because they dealt with the future security of southern borders of the CIS. Bilateral relations in this sphere are very important for both sides. It's important for Turkmenistan because the financial burden of creating a national army seemed very heavy. Cooperation is also very important for Russia because; it strengthened Russia's southern flank and without committing additional forces and allowed Russia not to withdraw its defense lines to the South of the Urals.<sup>198</sup>

While in recent years Uzbekistan has tried to distance herself from Moscow by leaving the Collective Security Treaty in 1999 and her association with GUUAM group, Uzbekistan's perception of her security problems have driven her closer to Moscow again.<sup>199</sup> At present, in the face of potential threats, it seems once again admitting that Russia is a genuine source of aid. In any case, Russia is also trying to treat Uzbekistan as a military partner in Central Asia.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> B.Brown , *op.cit.*, p.247

<sup>197</sup> S.Clark, *op.cit.*, p.193-4

<sup>198</sup> M.Mesbahi, *op.cit.*, pp.290-291

<sup>199</sup> M.A Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 15

<sup>200</sup>UzbekistanDailyDigest, Justin Burke: "RFE-RL 03/05/01" at [www.eurasianet.org/resource/uzbekistan/hypermail/200103/0007.html](http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/uzbekistan/hypermail/200103/0007.html)

In 1992, Russia and Uzbekistan signed the treaty on the “Fundamentals of Interstate Relations, Friendship and Cooperation”. Two sides agreed that the territories of the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan will form a common military strategic area. They also granted each other “the right to use military facilities situated on their territories in case of necessity on the basis of mutual agreements”. In subsequent agreements two states have gradually moved toward planning and implementing the bilateral treaty. In February 1993 Ministry of Defense of Russia Pavel Grachev met with Karimov to discuss the integration of the two states’ positions in the spheres of military-technical cooperation, joint utilization of strategic anti-aircraft, intelligence-gathering and space monitoring facilities and joint plans for combat, mobilization, training and military exercises of the Russian Federation and Uzbek armed forces.<sup>201</sup> Also in 1994 another agreement between Tajikistan, Russia and Uzbekistan on protecting the southern borders of the CIS was signed.<sup>202</sup>

Under an accord signed in 2000 with Russia, it is agreed that the Uzbek side will send military servicemen to that country to undergo special education and training. On Putin’s visit in May 2000, the discussion of security matters was high on agenda during the visit and the incursion of Islamic extremist into southern Uzbekistan is likely to convince her further to develop closer cooperation with Moscow in the security field.<sup>203</sup>

Tajikistan knows the fact that on her own, it can only develop and sustain small paramilitary forces. Tajik defense officials have rejected a Turkmen style

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<sup>201</sup> M. Mesbahi, *op.cit.*, p.289

<sup>202</sup>“Tajik-Russian-Uzbek Border Protection Agreement Signed” July 18, 1994 at <http://www.uzland.uz/text017.htm>

<sup>203</sup> M.A Smith, *op.cit.*,p.5

double or joint command of troops with Russia but they signed a friendship and defense treaty with Moscow in May 1993 which envisages close military cooperation. Like in the other spheres close cooperation with Russia in the military sphere is receiving priority for Tajikistan. Russia is the main source of protection. Russia is to help train officers to supply mil equipment and weapons.<sup>204</sup>

While covering a ‘full spectrum’ of bilateral relations, the Russian-Tajik treaty is highly notable for its articles concerning military cooperation and the defense of the southern border. As for these articles, the two sides have agreed that Russian troops will stay in Tajikistan till the formation of a national Tajik army has been completed and that the Russian Federation will undertake the task of guarding the Tajik-Afghan border in this transitional period.<sup>205</sup>

Although Russia and Tajikistan have to pay for the presence of Russian troops in this country at the ratio of 50/50, Tajikistan has never paid more than 15% of its obligations, and recently this share decreased to 4%.<sup>206</sup> Indeed, Tajikistan remains a protectorate of Russia de facto. The regime of President Rahmonov owes its existence to the presence of the CIS peace keeping force namely the Russian 201<sup>st</sup> motorized rifle division based there plus Russian border guard forces deployed along the Tajik-Afghan border. Putin said that it would be easier to deal with Tajikistan on a bilateral basis rather than through the CIS. In June 2000, Rahmonov confirmed that a Russo-Tajik treaty had been signed giving Russia the right to establish military

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<sup>204</sup> R. Allison, *op.cit.*, p.262

<sup>205</sup> S.H Flemming, *op.cit.*, p. 8

<sup>206</sup> MariaBeloklokova, *Izvestia*, January 18, 2002 at <http://www.wps.ru:8101/chitalka/terror/en/0118.html>

bases in Tajikistan. At the Shangai Five summit in Dushanbe in July 2000 both Putin and Rahmonov spoke in favor of a Russian mil presence in Tajikistan.<sup>207</sup>

In sum, treaties of friendship and cooperation between the Russian Federation and Central Asia and agreements in the military sphere serve as the legal and institutional bases for cooperation in defense.<sup>208</sup> Also, the chances of collective security for survival and endurance have been greatly enhanced by these series of bilateral “friendship treaties” that Russia has signed with all of the Central Asian states. It is this bilateral level that provides the additional and real substance to the collective security level.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> M.A Smith, *op.cit*, p.16

<sup>208</sup> Rubinstein Alvin, “The Geopolitical Pull on Russia“, *Orbis*, Vol.38, Issue 4, Fall 94, p.5

<sup>209</sup> M. Mesbahi, *op.cit.*, p.288

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **COLLECTIVE SECURITY EFFORTS IN CENTRAL ASIA**

As newly-independent states with little experience in defense matters, it's very hard for the newly independent Central Asian states to ensure their own security alone. Thus; they are in the pursuit of collaboration with other states in the security field. This makes them to form collective security ties with other states in the region and especially with the Russian Federation with whom they have close bilateral ties. For the time being, it is hard to answer whether these collective security efforts are successful or not but since independence, attempts have been made towards securing the nation from the perceived threats.

In this chapter I will try to analyze the collective efforts in the field of security between the Central Asian states. CIS Collective Security Treaty, GUUAM group and Shanghai Cooperation Organization are the main formations on this issue.

#### **5.1 CIS Collective Security Treaty**

There are threats for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the CIS states. This is why the CIS countries think it is necessary that joint activities against these threats produce useful solutions to questions related to the security sphere. For this

reason, in early 1992, within the framework of agreements on friendship and mutual assistance, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan prepared the Draft Treaty on Collective Security. Then, three more states, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan agreed to sign a multilateral treaty on collective security. On 15 May 1992, in Tashkent, just six months after the CIS was formed, six states of the CIS Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed the Treaty on Collective Security. They also signed other agreements ranging from space launching facilities; use of air space to the financing of joint armed forces. All the Central Asian states except for Turkmenistan signed the document.<sup>210</sup> Later in 1993, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Belarus joined the pact. The signing of this Treaty has become a starting point for the development of collective security within the CIS.<sup>211</sup> The treaty, which came into effect in 1994 when it was ratified by all the signatory countries, stipulates that the member states may withdraw from it upon the expiration of a five-year term.<sup>212</sup>

The Tashkent Treaty is aimed at providing the foundation for addressing the security problems of its member states and also aimed at serving as a basis for cooperation and integration efforts to put in a place a new security system.<sup>213</sup> A key provision of the treaty is that the participating states agree to view aggression against one of them as aggression "against all participating states of the present Treaty". Another important point concerning the use of the armed forces of the participating

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<sup>210</sup> Zafar Imam, *New Russia*, (New Delhi: ABC Publications, 1995), p.109

<sup>211</sup> Alexander Yegorov, "Collective Security System of the CIS States and Measures Providing Peace on the Territory of the Former Soviet Union" at <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/94-6/yegorov/01.htm>

<sup>212</sup> "Six CIS States to Extend Collective Security Pact" Feb 2 1999, at [http://www.uzland.uz/news/02\\_06\\_99.htm](http://www.uzland.uz/news/02_06_99.htm)

<sup>213</sup> Vladimir Zemskii, "Collective Security in the CIS", *International Affairs (Moscow)*, Vol. 45, No.1, 1999, p.97

states, should be pointed out. The Tashkent Collective Security Treaty signatories regard the use of the armed forces outside the territory of the participating states as admissible, specifying that such a use "may be conducted exclusively in the interests of the international security in strict compliance with the UN Charter and the legislation of the other participating states of the present Treaty".<sup>214</sup> Signatory states had some attempts towards settling conflicts in CIS territory. They try to set up a mechanism of a prompt solution to peacekeeping issues within the CIS. Support of the United Nations Organization (UN) and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has also been demanded on solving these problems. Indeed, practical measures towards conflict settlement are mainly taken by Russia, with little support of the CIS countries. Practically, in all the conflicts, the leading role belongs to Russia. It acts as a mediator at the negotiations, as a party providing implementation of cease-fire agreements, contributes forces and resources, and provides the budget for peacemaking and peacekeeping operations.<sup>215</sup> The treaty also provides for holding consultations in the event of a threat emerging to one or more member states. Article 10 of the treaty specifies that the treaty does not imply the making of a closed military alliance or bloc and is open to accession by all states concerned, which share its aims and principles.<sup>216</sup>

When we analyze the organizational structure of the CIS collective security formation, we see that although in some respects the treaty is not successful enough, a body of legislation was evolved and organizational structures were created in time.

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<sup>214</sup>Alaxender Yegorov, "Collective Security System of the CIS States and Measures Providing Peace on the Territory of the Former Soviet Union" at <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/94-96/yegorov/01.htm>

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

The Collective Security Council is the highest political body providing coordination and joint activity of the member states aimed at implementation of the treaty. The Council incorporates Heads of States, ministers of foreign affairs, ministers of defense of the member states and the Council's Secretary General. The Secretariat headed by the Secretary General is the permanent working body.<sup>217</sup> The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is the highest consultative body on the matters of coordination of foreign policy. It incorporates ministers of foreign affairs of the member states. Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The Council of the Ministers of Defense is the highest consultative body on the matters of coordination of defense policy and military development. It incorporates ministers of defense of the member states. Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Defense is the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Army. The Chiefs of Staff Committee has been created under the Council of Ministers of Defense with the aim of collective defense command and realization of tasks on formation of the security system of the states of the Commonwealth in the military sphere on the basis of the Collective Security Treaty.<sup>218</sup>

There are two types of consultations mechanism in the system; immediate and regular ones. Immediate consultations are held on a level not below deputy foreign ministers and deputy defense ministers of the member states while the regular ones are conducted in the form of meetings between plenipotentiary representatives of the

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<sup>216</sup> Bakhtyar Khakimov, "Collective Security in the CIS", *International Affairs (Moscow)*, Vol. 47, No.5, 2001, p.99

<sup>217</sup> V.Zemskii, *op.cit.*, p.99

<sup>218</sup>Website of the Center for Political and International Studies (Moscow) at [http://isn.rsuh.ru/cpis/english/projects/col\\_sec.htm](http://isn.rsuh.ru/cpis/english/projects/col_sec.htm)

member states.<sup>219</sup> For the implementation of the treaty a number of documents have been adopted such as the Declaration of Signatories to the Collective Security Treaty, the Main Guidelines for Deepening Military Cooperation of Signatories to the Collective Security Treaty.<sup>220</sup>

The main obstacle to closer military partnership has been the differences in the international political orientation and views on prospects for such an integration in the CIS.<sup>221</sup> As mentioned before the treaty expires after a five year term. Thus in 1999 three of the member states Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia stated that this would not renew their membership at the end of this period. The reason behind Uzbekistan's withdrawal can be explained as Uzbek disagreement with Russian policy on deepening the integration of the 12 ex-Soviet republics that make up the CIS and opposition to Russia's military activity in some parts of the Commonwealth. Although this move is explained by Uzbekistan as having nothing to do with bilateral ties with Russia, the decision undermined Russia's influence.<sup>222</sup>

Out of growing dissatisfaction with Russian policies toward the Commonwealth of Independent States, Azerbaijan also announced that this country will not renew its membership in the CIS's Collective Security Treaty following the path of Uzbekistan and Georgian. Because the treaty expired in May 1999, the foreign ministers of signatory countries held a meeting on February 4 in Moscow in order to discuss the extension of the treaty. At the meeting, the remaining six

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<sup>219</sup> V. Zemskii, *op.cit.*, p.99

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> B.Khakimov, *op.cit.*, p.100

<sup>222</sup> Sergei Blagov, "Pullout from CIS Pact Undercuts Moscow's Clout" , IPS 16 February 1999 at <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/53/042.html>

countries; Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan confirmed their intention to renew their participation in the CIS security alliance.<sup>223</sup>

A second stage in the period of CIS Collective Security efforts has began after 1999. The first period can be evaluated as having produced a little. Cooperation lacked dynamism and the targeted aims could not be reached properly. In the period after 1999, one may say that cooperation has climbed to a higher level by the member states creating concrete mechanisms for the implementation of the treaty. Especially after some developments in the security context of Central Asia such as the rise of fundamentalist movements, more concrete steps were taken to make CIS Collective Security Treaty being implemented. The presidents of six member countries of the CIS Collective Security Council decided to unite their efforts to strengthen regional security and anti-terrorism cooperation.<sup>224</sup>

There have been many developments regarding strengthening the security of the member states. Following the invasion of armed Islamist groups into Kyrgyzstan in 1999, Russia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan took part in the joint military command and staff exercise CIS Southern Shield-99. In April 2000, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan agreed to create a CIS Anti-Terrorist Center, supported by the Russian Federal Security Service. In October 2000, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan signed an agreement to form a joint Rapid Reaction Force to respond to regional crises and fortify porous border areas against terrorist attacks and incursions.<sup>225</sup> Creating a collective Rapid Reaction force of the

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<sup>223</sup> “CIS Security Union Crumbles”, February 12, 1999 at <http://www.atimes.com/c-asia/AB12Ag02.html>

<sup>224</sup> “CIS States Push on to Strengthen Collective Security “ , *People’s daily-China*, Thursday, May 25, 2000 at [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200005/25/eng20000525\\_41583.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200005/25/eng20000525_41583.html)

<sup>225</sup> Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security- NATO Russia Archive <http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/CentralAsia.html>-Russia and Central Asia

Central Asian Collective Security Region is believed to assist further development of the anti-terrorist component of the activities of the Treaty's member states.<sup>226</sup> From the Russian perspective, Russian efforts to create a rapid reaction force in Central Asia constitutes the first concrete step Moscow has taken to establish regional forces within the framework of the CIS Collective Security Treaty. A Russian-led rapid reaction force in Central Asia will enable Russia to create a buffer zone against "international terrorism" and drug trafficking as well as preserve its military presence on the CIS's southern borders.<sup>227</sup>

As for the Central Asian states, since the newly independent states feel receptive to the threats in the region and since they find it difficult to overcome these alone, they need a collective security structure in which Russia plays the leading role besides their bilateral security ties with the Russian Federation. Tashkent Collective Security formation is the first step towards this aim. Although the treaty has not very effectively implemented, it is an important forum for the members to joint their efforts in fighting against the common threats.

Another group in the former Soviet territory which has a security dimension is the GUUAM group. This group consists of five states; Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. The CIS is divided into two main strategic foreign policy orientations; pro-Westernism and Russophilism. GUUAM represents the former group and the latter is represented by the Russian Federation, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> B.Khakimov *op.cit.*, p.102

<sup>227</sup> "Central Asian rapid reaction force support gathered" at <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/digest/vol6/ed0607.html#centasia>

<sup>228</sup> Taras Kuzio, 81-83 "Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM", *European Security*, vol.9 no.2, Summer 2000

## 5.2 The GUUAM Group

GUUAM group was formally founded as a political, economic and strategic alliance designed to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of these former Soviet Union republics within the group. On October 10, 1997 during the summit of the Council of Europe the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine met and stated their interest in developing bilateral and regional cooperation. The governments of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova decided to pool their diplomatic resources to oppose Russia's efforts to station its weaponry in or near the territory of the organization's member states.<sup>229</sup>

The first GUUAM meeting was held in Baku in late 1997 and deputy foreign ministers attended the meeting. They agreed to coordinate their efforts in peacekeeping, conflict resolution, energy, international organizations and closer ties with the West.<sup>230</sup> On April 24, 1999, GUUAM was enlarged by one more member; Uzbekistan, which joined the group at GUUAM summit held during NATO/EAPC Summit in Washington D.C.<sup>231</sup> In the same summit, they issued a joint statement expressing readiness to expand cooperation with NATO in the framework of the Partnership for Peace program and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, thus

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<sup>229</sup>Tomas Valasek, "Military Cooperation between Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova in the GUUAM Framework." Cambridge, MA: Caspian Studies Program, December 2000 at <http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/BCSIA/Library.nsf/pubs/ValasekGUUAM>

<sup>230</sup> T. Kuzio, *op.cit.*, p.92

<sup>231</sup> Official Website of the GUUAM at <http://www.guuam.org/general/browse.html>

distancing themselves from Moscow. The five presidents' statement asserted that GUUAM is "not directed against any particular country or group of countries".<sup>232</sup>

GUUAM has sought security cooperation beyond the CIS. GUUAM defense ministers regularly meet. In March 1999 the defense ministers of Azerbaijan and Georgia concluded a memorandum on military cooperation within the framework of integration into NATO and the European Union. Georgia and Azerbaijan have attended exercises in PFP (Partnership for Peace) states, hosted exercises on their own territories and openly proclaimed their desire to join NATO some time after 2005. However, NATO's reluctance to recognize GUUAM within the Alliance's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council forced Uzbekistan to find common cause with Moscow to fight "Islamic terrorism". The Uzbek government concluded a bilateral security treaty with Russia in May 2000 and has participated in CIS military meetings and exercises.<sup>233</sup>

In the military sphere GUUAM countries try to find a way out of the Russian dominated security structures. All five GUUAM members either refused to join or quit CIS security arrangements. Military cooperation in the GUUAM is expected to serve as a stepping stone to establishing institutional ties with NATO or joining NATO. However not all the GUUAM countries have the same perspectives in military issues. And also for many states in the GUUAM group, it is not possible for them to be objective actors in Nagorno-Karabagh, Abkhazia and Transdnierster conflicts for they are parties in these conflicts.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> 7 May 1999, The Jamestown Foundation Prism, A Bi-Weekly on the Post Soviet States, 517199 No.9 Part 1 at <http://www.guam.org/general/browse.html>

<sup>233</sup> Official Website of the GUUAM at <http://www.guam.org/general/browse.html>

<sup>234</sup> T.Valasek, *op.cit.*, p.2

GUUAM has other problems also. The scarce resources of the member states will affect the depth of their cooperation. As mentioned, Uzbekistan finally concluded a bilateral treaty with Russia in 2000 because no GUUAM member is in a position to provide the military equipment to help Uzbekistan in its fighting against insurgency. Without Western assistance, money and material, many of the proposed activities of GUUAM will remain on paper.<sup>235</sup>

After the September 11 attacks in the USA, GUUAM members and the United States issued a joint statement on terrorism. It is stated that the United States and the GUUAM member states will cooperate in their struggle against terrorism. During the meeting, the possibilities for increased cooperation on counter-terrorism between the United States and GUUAM were explored.<sup>236</sup>

In this part, I will try to define how the GUUAM and the Russian Federation sees each other respectively. As for the GUUAM view of Russia, a major factor uniting the member states is their distrust of Russia as a country which has not abandoned its imperialistic tendencies towards them. As for the CIS Collective Security Treaty and CIS military cooperation, their view of Russian domination in these structures made them to turn away from these structures. GUUAM members oppose participation in the Collective Security Treaty because they see it as part of Russia's strategic policy of the reintegration of the former Soviet space.<sup>237</sup>

Also in their negative view of Russia the fact that Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova have suffered from Moscow backed secessionist movements has played a

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<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> "Joint Statement on Terrorism", 15 November 2001 at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/prsr1/6162.htm>

<sup>237</sup> T. Kuzio, *op.cit.*, pp.101-103

great role. All hoped that Russia might help them in solving these conflicts, but they were all disappointed. But there is the problem whether GUUAM can evolve from a negative anti-Russian grouping to a serious group of economic and security cooperation.<sup>238</sup>

How does the Russian Federation evaluate the GUUAM formation? The loss of GUUAM is seen as a failure in Russia's policy of CIS integration.<sup>239</sup> Russian Federation perceives GUUAM as threatening its military cooperation influence. First the region level efforts of GUUAM is seen as threatening the Russian influence within the CIS space, an influence exercised through the Tashkent Treaty. Second the Western assistance serves to increase the political, economic and military capabilities of the GUUAM states. The less dependent of these states are on Russia, the easier for the West is to provide assistance. The more assistance is provided, the easier it is for the GUUAM states to challenge Moscow.<sup>240</sup>

The GUUAM group, which is formed with the member states' common interest in getting out of the Russian sphere of influence, has a security dimension. Backed by the West with assistance in different forms, this group forms a challenge to the Russian dominated collective security efforts in the region. Russia evaluates this formation as a loss in its efforts of integration within the CIS. Although, the security dimension of the group has not developed fully due to the deficiencies mentioned above, the group can still be evaluated as an opposing block to the Moscow led one.

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<sup>238</sup> Anotol Lieven, "GUUAM what is it and what it is for?", Eurasia Insight, 18 November 2000, at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav121800.shtml>

<sup>239</sup> T.Kuzio, *op.cit.*, p.100

### 5.3 Shanghai Cooperation Organization

In 1993, China, Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan started a diplomatic dialogue concerning their common borders. Originally formed to involve China in strategic cooperation in Central Asia on matters related to China's border regions to the area, the forum has become a means for Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to discuss broad proposals for Central Asian security and details needs in the unstable border regions adjoining China and other states.<sup>241</sup>

On 26 April 1996 the presidents of the five border countries met in Shanghai to sign a package of 14 agreements on border issues. This accord constituted a breakthrough in establishing a framework for border normalization.<sup>242</sup> As a formal multilateral forum, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (originally called as Shanghai 5) owes its origin to these agreements. This accord committed the leaders of these nations to establish collectively a range of confidence building measures in the field of military cooperation along their common borders. In the accord it is emphasized that "the strengthening of security, maintenance of calm and stability in the border area between Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China is an important contribution to maintenance of peace in the Asian-Pacific region."<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Hansen Flemming, "GUUAM and the Future of CIS Military Cooperation" *European Security*, Vol.9, No.4, Winter 2000, p.105

<sup>241</sup> Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security- NATO Russia Archive  
<http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/CentralAsia.html>-Russia and Central Asia

<sup>242</sup> Gregory Gleason, "Interstate Cooperation in Central Asia from the CIS to the Shanghai Forum" *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.53, No.7, 2001, p.1091

<sup>243</sup> "Russian Federation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan and People's Republic of China on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area" at [http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/shangai\\_19960426](http://russia.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/shangai_19960426)

There are other documents signed in the course of the meetings in Almaty (1998), Bishkek (1999) and Dushanbe (2000). Fear of secessionism is the main reason behind Shanghai Five's objective of regional cooperation in the military sphere.<sup>244</sup> The group's security emphasis was outlined in the 1999 Bishkek summit, which emphasized collective efforts to combat religious and separatist extremism and the international flow of drugs as well as the protection of problematic parts of their joint borders. The Bishkek group was set up which would meet annually to coordinate activities. The group's importance was extended at the 2000 Dushanbe summit with Uzbekistan attending and expressing a wish to join with and an emphasis on economic cooperation as a key to strengthening regional security.<sup>245</sup> At the summit, the Sides confirmed their resolve to wage a joint struggle against international terrorism, religious extremism and national separatism, as well as against such criminal activities as illegal drug and arms trafficking, and illegal migration. The five states planned that they would draw up shortly a relevant multilateral Program and sign the necessary multilateral treaties and agreements on cooperation.<sup>246</sup>

On 20 June 2001, five plus Uzbekistan signed the declaration on the creation of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The member states stated that the transition of the Shanghai five mechanisms to a higher level of cooperation would contribute to more effective joint use of the possibilities to fight against the mentioned threats. The goals of the Organization are defined as strengthening mutual confidence, friendship

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<sup>244</sup> Misra Amalendu, "Shanghai 5 and the Emerging Alliance in Central Asia: The Closed society and Its Enemies", *Central Asian Survey*, 20(3), 2002, p.306

<sup>245</sup> Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security- NATO Russia Archive  
<http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/CentralAsia.html>-Russia and Central Asia

<sup>246</sup> Web site of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation  
<http://www.in.mid.ru/website/Bl.nsf/arh/A69BB7197B47EC174325699C003B5F9D?OpenDocument>

and good neighborly relations between the participating states; encouraging effective cooperation between them in the political, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, educational, energy, transportation, ecological and other areas; joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region, to build a new democratic, just and rational political and economic international order.<sup>247</sup> It is also emphasized that “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is not an alliance directed against any other state and region and it adheres to the principle of openness.” Within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization annual official meetings of the heads of state and regular meetings of heads of government of the participating states are held alternately in each of the participating states.<sup>248</sup>

At the heart of this formation, there stands Russia and China. Faced with common threats, two states have entered into a dynamic partnership. The inclusion of both Russia and China in a regional cooperative grouping has had broader political repercussions. Chinese presence diminishes Russian efforts to impose aspects of its integration agenda on the Central Asian states, while the Russian presence reassures the Central Asian states about Chinese policies.<sup>249</sup>

Common threats as secessionism, separatism, extremist nationalism, radical Islamism, terrorism, drug trafficking made the four Central Asian states, Russia and China to cooperate their efforts in the struggle against this within a regional security

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<sup>247</sup> ‘Declaration on the Creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’ at <http://www.in.mid.ru/website.brp.4>

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security- NATO Russia Archive <http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/CentralAsia.html>-Russia and Central Asia

framework.<sup>250</sup> The important point is that Russia and China decide to coordinate their efforts; it seems that against such threats they see cooperation as the best way to secure their interests. As for the Central Asian states, a regional organization where both Russia and China is included is more secure and advantageous for them since the two have a balancing effect on each other's policies in the region.

Throughout this chapter, the collective security efforts within the CIS are analyzed. Although it's not a very long period to evaluate whether these efforts have been successful or not, analyzing these attempts is useful in terms of determining the participant states' aim in these formations. Since the thesis' concern is to determine the Russian Federation's military policy towards the Central Asia, it is an important point that the Russian Federation has a leading role in two of these security formations; CIS Collective Security Treaty and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Another formation in this field, the GUUAM group aims to establish a security formation other than that of Russian leading ones. It is important to note that the GUUAM group and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is not formed only on the basis of the security considerations. But in time, the security dimension has gained magnitude.

All in all; fighting against the common threats within a collective security framework seemed a functional way both for the Central Asian states and the Russian Federation. It is a good alternative for the Central Asian states given their shortfalls regarding their military formations and a functional instrument for Russia to establish its military influence and control in the region.

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<sup>250</sup> A. Misra, *op.cit.*, p.314

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, forming a stable foreign policy for the Russian Federation towards the ‘Near Abroad’ countries, the former Soviet republics, took time. The period of 1991-1993 was a period during which the integration into the global economy and development of relations with the West were the main foreign policy priorities. With the failure of this initial policy and criticism many Russian political parties, a new foreign policy approach with an emphasis on the ‘Near Abroad’ was developed.

The shift in the foreign policy after 1993 can best be reflected in the basic security documents such as the National Security Concept, Foreign Policy Concept and the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation. In these documents the rights of the Russian minorities in the ‘Near Abroad’, the existing or potential conflicts adjacent to the territories of the Russian Federation and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism were all emphasized as threatening the security of the state. With the Russian Federation’s experience in the Chechnia war, the issue of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism acquired urgency: Islamic fundemantalism began to be equated as terrorism. This was reflected amply in these basic security documents of 2000.

One can see that the most basic threats perceived by the Russian Federation has its roots in the former territories of the Soviet Union. Central Asia in this respect

is a region where all these perceived threats can be observed. In time the Russian Federation developed policies towards the region with the aim of eliminating these threats. In line with the general foreign policy framework, Russian Federation designated a special military policy towards the region. In order to understand whether Moscow uses such kinds of military policies to establish its former dominance again, it is necessary to determine if the threats are real. On this point, the question is whether these alleged threats a pretext for Russia to be used as a means in reestablishing its former dominance in Central Asia.

There are many Russians living in Central Asia. Especially in Kazakhstan, where there are Russians in mass numbers in the north of the country. After the Central Asian states became independent, many Russians tried to find out ways of immigrating to the Russian Federation. There are factors conducive to their choice to immigrate. These include deteriorating economic conditions and feeling as second class citizens, due to citizenship and language laws. Moscow was very concerned with the issue because immigration might create economic and social problems for the state. Thus, Moscow tried to overcome this problem by putting the issue on a central place in its bilateral relations with the Central Asian republics and by concluding bilateral treaties with them.

Central Asia is a region where military conflict and potential conflicts exist. The Tajik war is a good example of this. Although the war had an intra-state nature, it affected all the other Central Asian states in the region. The Russian Federation was also actively involved in this conflict and it undertook the role of a 'peace-keeper' with the participation of other countries in the region. Since Moscow sees the borders of the former Soviet Union as its own borders to be protected, especially the

strategically important ones, its very natural for her to get involved in such kinds of conflicts. Such kinds of conflicts also give opportunity to Russia to gain a foothold in the region. One can see that such occasions enable Russia to pursue its policy of intervening in such kinds of regional conflicts.

Does the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia present a real threat to the Russian Federation? If the Muslim population living in the territories of the Russian Federation is considered, it may be possible to think that taking root of such a movement among this population forms a real threat to the integrity of Russia. However; it's wrong to think that all the Muslim population in Central Asia would have fundamentalist potential. The experience of Russia in the Chechen issue made her more receptive to the issue of rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The Russian Federation may be right to perceive in the rise of Islamic extremism in Central Asia a threat, which is due to the fear of losing a strategically important region. Yet, whether this forms a direct threat to the security of the state is debatable.

It's apparent that the perceived threats of Russia regarding Central Asia are to some extent real threats to the security of the state. However, not all of them are real threats, and this leads one to consider Russia uses them as a means to establish its former influence and control in the region. By examining Russia's military policy, I tried to illustrate how the Russian Federation tries to exert its influence by using these threats as a means.

In the period of 1991-2001, the Russian Federation has concluded many bilateral treaties with the Central Asian states in the military sphere. The scope and quality of the treaties differ from republic to republic, but there is one thing in common. These treaties contributed to the continuation of the former military ties

between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian Republics. After independence, Central Asian republics faced the challenge of forming their own armies. Due to lack of trained officers and lack of economic resources, they see the Russian assistance as the best alternative to provide their own security.

Bilateral agreements provide the Central Asian countries with training of the officers, joint protection of the borders, providing military equipment on a treaty basis. While struggling with many economic, political and social problems, the assistance of the Russian Federation provided them with managing their security problems. Although sometimes, the military policies of the Russian Federation are criticized by these republics for intervening in their internal affairs, the Russian military assistance through bilateral ties has generally been welcomed.

For the Russian Federation providing military assistance to these states has been a good lever for establishing its former influence in the region. Making the Central Asian republics militarily dependent on itself is an important part of Moscow's policy of gaining a foothold in the Central Asian region. Bilateral treaties are more concrete and more functional in achieving Moscow's aim rather than collective security efforts in the region.

Efforts through collective security formations in Central Asia has evolved in the period of 1991-2001. This is not a long period for determining whether these collective security efforts have been functional and successful. But the important point here is what the member states aim at participating in such kinds of collective security efforts. The aim of collaboration against common threats can be taken as leading one for the Central Asian states. Since they do not have enough capacity to

fight against these threats, the best way to do this is struggling against them within a collective security framework.

In the collective security sphere, we see three main formations within the Commonwealth of Independent States. The first one is the CIS Collective Security Treaty. This one is a treaty signed in 1992 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan with the participation of the Russian Federation, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Later three more states; Azerbaijan, Georgia and Belarus signed the treaty. The treaty is aimed at addressing the common security problems of the member states within a collective security framework. The treaty was ratified in the parliaments of the member states in 1994. The treaty's expiration date was 1999. In 1999 Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia declared that they would not renew their membership. The real reason behind the decision was their opposition to the Moscow's dominant role in this security formation. It is important to note that Moscow had the leading role in the decisions and activities taken by this group of states.

Another group which has a security dimension besides economic and political ones is the GUUAM group. Member states Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova have one thing in common: they all see this formation as an alternative to the Moscow led security formations within the CIS. Although the group declared that their activities are not directed against any state, with the Western support they seek, it is clear that they are in pursuit of a more independent stance than that of the Moscow leading one. The Russian Federation also sees this group as a deviation from the general CIS integration efforts.

The third group is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which has a security dimension regarding Central Asia. The group consists of the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Started as a dialogue regarding the security of their common borders, this forum has become a means for the member states to discuss broad proposals for Central Asian security. Uzbekistan joined the group in 2000. In June 2001 the group, together with Uzbekistan, signed the declaration on the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The importance of this organization depends on the fact that it involves both China and Russia. Chinese presence diminishes Russian efforts to impose aspects of its integration agenda on the Central Asian states, while the Russian presence reassures the Central Asian states about Chinese policies.

One can see that in two of the security formations in Central Asia, Russia has a dominant role. This means collective security efforts in Central Asia serves Moscow's policy of regaining its former influence in the region by using the collective security framework as a means. In addition, whenever possible, Russia also seeks bilateral security ties with the Central Asian republics.

Since 1991, the Russian Federation has developed bilateral military ties with the Central Asian republics. Besides the bilateral ties, it also assumed the leading role in establishing regional collective security formations which include the Central Asian republics. All these efforts can be evaluated as the reflection of Moscow's policy of establishing its former influence in the region via military means. This policy has been successful to some extent. Yet, the real question is whether there is a gap between Moscow's rhetoric and capability to act. It is apparent that the global

period of Russian history has come to an end. Russia no longer possesses the resources to continue its former policies towards the former Soviet Republics.

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