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TAMING DICTATORS AND DEVELOPING SECURITY:

THE CASPIAN SEA REGION ARRIVES ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

By

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A paper submitted to the Provost, Naval War College, for the Jerome E. Levy Economic Geography and World Order Prize essay competition.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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White House consideration of the region is well articulated in both Clinton and Bush Administration's National Security Strategies. Assessment of the White House's diplomatic, economic, and military actions over the past few years is critical to determine what security assistance should be provided to deter regional internal and external threats. This paper examines these actions in light of current events and concludes with recommendations for U.S. assistance to ease the region's security integration into the international scene. American leadership must expand their understanding of this region's rich natural resources on the economy, current threats to nation-state existence both internally and externally, and the current and future risks to it people.

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Introduction

The United States of America needs to refocus its instruments of power to Caspian Sea region in support of the evolving nation-states. This region bordering the Caspian Sea is made up of Central Asia and the Caucasus. The area is rich in natural resources and history, representing a vast range of nationalities and languages, which dreams of social harmony, economic growth, and rule of law.

Containment strategy, patiently prosecuted against the former Soviet Union reunited Germany, freed Eastern Bloc countries to become players in NATO and the European Union (EU), tore apart the Balkans now occupied by NATO forces, while leaving the former southern colonies of the U.S.S.R. to defend and provide their own defense and economy. When the Berlin Wall fell, states immediately evolved, none of the new states had clearly defined territorial boundaries. Most states had no means to defend those boundary lines even if they had been defined. Also, this shared territory contained more than four million troops who had taken a oath to protect and defend a country that was neither sanctioned or legitimate. This created a hazardous situation where the control of the population, economy, and military was located. The transition from communism resulted in instability so appalling these emerging nation-states could deteriorate to a fate far worse than when it existed under the suppression of Moscow-led communism.

White House consideration of the region is well articulated in both Clinton and Bush Administration's National Security Strategies. Assessment of the White House's diplomatic, economic, and military actions over the past few years is critical to determine what security assistance should be provided to deter regional internal and external threats. This paper examines these actions in light of current events and concludes with recommendations for

U.S. assistance to ease the region's security integration into the international scene. American leadership must expand their understanding of this region's rich natural resources on the economy, current threats to nation-state existence both internally and externally, and the current and future risks to it people. This study may provide insight needed to consider the positive effects of security required to stabilize the region.

Caspian Sea Region Defined

The Caspian Sea is the world's largest body of inland water stretching over 700 miles from north to south, and approximately 170 miles at the widest point from east to west. At 86 feet below sea level, the water shallow in comparison with other seas of the world. The Volga River is the Caspian Sea's single, largest source of water. The Volga River flows into the Caspian Sea through a series of marshlands in a sparsely inhabited delta. These marshes act as a organic strainer which filters the water from pollutants dumped along the river in the north. The Caspian Sea connects the Caucasus states with Central Asia. The region's natural resources, although mostly untapped due to a shortage in economic and technological support, hold energy and freshwater hopes to the future the region and its allies. Further, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan all have topography that is a high, arid, desert environment. The people of these nations experience temperatures ranging from 140 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and 50 degrees below zero in the winter. Abundant energy resources are worthless if they cannot be refined and distributed within and from stable economic states.

Historical Analysis

The Caspian Sea region has the potential to become a melting pot or even an economic trade center of European, African, Asian, and Middle East commerce. Historically,

this region served as a central meeting place of numerous civilizations. It marked the crossroads of the ancient silk routes linking India, China, and Iran with the West. The region still marks the line between Christian and Muslim. Russia involvement goes back nearly a thousand years. In the 16th century, after Ivan the terrible defeated the Tartars, Russia moved by force into the region. In the 19 century, the Russian military occupied the Caspian Sea region to include Baku, where oil was discovered in 1848. Russia, in effect, controlled the region until the fall of the Berlin Wall in the early 1990's.

White House Strategy

In President William J. Clinton's National Security Strategy of 2000, he highlighted on this region's oil and gas reserves. This document specifically pointed out the need to provide regional security in the Caspian Sea area with U.S. commercial participation. His goal to enhance the stability and economy "from the Mediterranean to China" set the groundwork to smooth the progress of economic growth and connection to the markets of the global economy.[1]

President George W. Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy complemented President Clinton's focus on the Caspian Sea region. Both administrations articulated their understanding the Caspian Sea region is about the size of continental United States; the world's third largest oil and gas reserves; and in proximity to China, Russia, and Iran. Clinton's Administration pushed diplomacy to enforce the nuclear weapons removal, but invested very little into the region economy. Without the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the Bush Administration's interest in investing economically in this key region will never be known. After the 9/11 attack, investment in the region is a truly viable consideration to defeat global terrorism. President Bush highlighted "enhanced energy

security" as a vital interest of the United States. With specific reference to this region, President Bush's stated goal is to:

> Strengthen our own energy security and the shared prosperity of the global economy by working with our allies, trading partners, and energy produces to expand the sources and types of global energy supplied, especially in the Western Hemisphere, Africa, Central Asia, and the Caspian region.[2]

Additionally, White House involvement is necessary to this region's economic stability and nation-state survivability. Without a stable environment, economic energy exploration and refinement technology funding will remain at risk throughout the region.

Diplomacy and the Evolving Security Environment

In the mid-60s, the Southeast Asian Vietnam "domino theory" was popularized by the Johnson Administration. The fall of democratic South Vietnam to the communist regime of North Vietnam would result in the rapid fall of Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand to the aggressors. In the Caspian Sea region, just the opposite could occur, although in a positive sense of liberty, democracy, and freedom. As each strategic nation-state is stabilized, neighboring states in the region will gain confidence, encouraging economic and diplomatic momentum.

A review of the world scene today reveals U.S. troops providing troops in the Balkans, U.S. and coalition forces keeping Iraq in check enforcing the U.N. designated no-fly zone, India and Pakistan focused on Kashmir, and Afghanistan filled with U.S. coalition forces. The next logical region requiring stabilization is the Caspian Sea region. The coalition commander of forces in Afghanistan, Lieutenant General Dan K. McNeill found the "momentum of freedom" alive in various regions of Afghanistan.[3] Successful security in the

Balkans and in Afghanistan, coupled with U.S. diplomatic efforts in the region will gain momentum as each nation-state is stabilized economically and militarily.

In the past, weaker or emerging nation-states looked to stronger, more powerful nations in the international community to provide security or fight their wars. In most cases the sitting government required assistance to stabilize its sovereignty from enemies within or across its border. This assistance required building alliances to defeating the enemy. The power of an alliance often provided the nation-state leaders the sovereign power to lead, along with responsibility to provide security to its people. Peter Liotta, Professor and current Levy Chair, Naval War College, concluded "security extends downward from nations to individuals; conversely, the stable state extends upwards to influence the security of the international system."[4] Unfortunately, the southern colonies of the former U.S.S.R. have been unable to provide their citizens individual freedom from oppression, anxiety, or fear. Viewing future conflicts of emerging nation-states "internal" rather than between nations, Liotta offer the strategists the *effects base* option to focus security strategy, "If one considers the effect rather than the *focus* on a specific aspect of security, then environmental security has clear implications for both 'human' (or individual) as well as 'national' (state-centered) security."[5]

The White House team of diplomatic, economic, and military strategists must examine what effects each aspect of security in order to determine the implications of human security as well as national security in the region. Immediate White House action may reduce the time U.S. armed forces remain in the region. Liotta points out "the cost to not investing in the Balkans the right way and early enough is likely to be at least fifty years of military engagement."[6] Washington should encourage the rule of law, supporting humane security,

followed by additional free market and democratic reforms throughout the region building economic and diplomatic stability.

Internal Security Dilemmas

Without outside diplomatic, economic, and military assistance, the Caspian Sea region will continue on an azimuth of internal disintegration. At the top of the list is a myriad of issues that deal with terrorism, drug trafficking, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, mistrust of Moscow leadership, tariffs, and radical religious activity.[7] Each country in the region is different and complex in its own way. Many basic elements of open society such as democracy and rule of law are diverse and implemented in different ways, if at all.[8] Throughout the region, open society is struggling to take hold. For instance, crime is at an all time high, while drug trafficking is tolerated in many areas of the region, where it is the major source of income to landowners.

State Department officials are concerned that former Soviet scientists in the region may be convinced, even bribed, to provided technical input into building weapons of mass destruction. Additionally, international terrorism is known to train and live in outposts well hidden from the Western governments. Many dislocated Taliban and Al Qaeda operatives are thought to be reuniting in the Caspian Sea region after their defeat in Afghanistan. Until the threat of terrorism and crime is confronted, ethnic and civil unrest will certainly abound and expectations of state security will simply be a delusion.

To better understand the stalemate, most national leaders grew up in communist states until the early 1990's. During this time many leaders developed a deep seeded ambition to transform their economy into the global scene, *independent* from Moscow. Naturally, region leaders distrust Moscow. They doubt their former Kremlin conquerors would fairly invest

economically, nor build the financial base that is urgently needed to achieve a successful future throughout the region. Western economic advisors believe that the Caspian Sea region leaders must turn to the U.S. and the EU diplomatically and economically to attract effective cooperation. Various regime disagreements and power struggles throughout the region continue to agitate future security. Although the people of the region are crying out and requesting outside assistance, their "leaders jealously guard their national sovereignty while raising tariffs and competing with each other for the patronage of the international community."[9]

Anatol Lieven, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, believes U.S. policy makers may lose influence over these colonies if support is delayed. In nation-states like Turkmenistan, regime leadership is at odds with democratic progress. Lieven maintains that current tariffs are a barrier to trade which have been increasing rather than decreasing since the break up of the Soviet Union. Another contributing factor to this economic disconnect is that regime leaders use these controls to consolidate personal wealth and "power though the politics of permit patronage."[10] Policy makers will be forced to choose "between tolerantly fostering potentially long-standing relationships over the long haul, or be forced to pursue apparent interests such as economics."[11]

External Security Analysis

Russia. The U.S. is not alone in its assessment of this energy rich region. Russia's primary interest in the region is economics. In April 2002, Russian President Vladimir Putin took a step forward to develop a customs union comprised of Russia and the nation-states of the Caspian Sea region. This union is to be named the Eurasian Economic Community.

President Putin believes this is an initial step towards a Eurasian Union; nevertheless security interests and lack of regional support prevent the success of this economic organization.

Another attempt at tapping and organizing the region's economic potential, promoting mutual trade, and cooperation is the organization of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova (GUUAM) Group. The GUUAM Group leaders hope to develop this region into a free trade area with U.S. diplomatic and economic assistance.[12] Additionally, Russia is involved in the negotiating of redefining the boundaries of the oil rich Caspian Sea. President Putin's idea is not only share the riches of the seabed but that of the waterway's transportation system as well. According to the treaties of 1921, 1940, and 1970, Russia controls the greatest portion of the sea and Iran controls as little as 13% of the sea.[13] Russia is not seen as an aggressor by the nation-states of the region, but each government is very cautious of Moscow's intent at every negotiation table.

Iran. Over the past three decades, Iran has expressed the aspiration to expand its influence in the Caspian Sea basin. Iran has deployed over 30 ships into the Caspian Sea, threatening Azerbaijan's oil and gas exploration efforts at sea. The Bush Administration has joined Baku leadership in monitoring Tehran's plans to expand its territorial sector in the Caspian, obstruct agreement on delimiting the Caspian and dividing it among the littoral states. Additionally, international concern is growing as Tehran's signals support to global terrorism. Significant support to counter potential aggression from the south was provided by Congress as it repealed the Freedom of Support Act's section 907. This section previously prohibited U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan. The Act allows the White House to provide military backing and aid promoting state security on and off Caspian shores.[14]

Secretary Powell touched upon the region's right of self-determination and self-government during his appointment hearings with Congress' International Relations Committee. He was quick to caution the Russians not to proceed in an overbearing way with the nations of the former Soviet Union and not endeavor to reconstruct the former U.S.S.R. in some small way. He emphasized any attempt rebuild the Soviet Union in the south will not enhance Russian interests with White House. The State Department continues to send this clear message in public communications with Moscow. Russian diplomatic movement in the area or threatening activities, such as cutting off gas to Georgia, are uses of power not helpful to the Russian cause in the region and will not be tolerated by the Bush Administration.

China. To the East the region borders with the largest country in the world—China. Until 1991, the region's leadership had not diplomatically engaged with Peking, since Moscow's centralized government controlled all international affairs. There is a natural fear of a powerful China, which towers over the southern colonies. Many ethnic groups in the region have relatives across the border to include a large Turkish Muslim population in the Chinese province of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The Turkish Muslim population actually outnumbers the Chinese Han population in the providence, causing a rise in China's concern along the border.

In 1996, three Caspian Sea region nation-states, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakstan, signed a border agreement with Russia and China during a meeting in Shanghai. The media originally labeled the group, the Shanghai Five. Today, the group's official name is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)[15]. The Chinese received a promise of non-support to Muslim separatist in XUAR in return for border respect and future trade agreements. A second meeting occurred this July in Tajikistan. Focus of this accord centered

on terrorism, Islam extremism, and Muslim separatism.[16] The SCO's organization is critical to Peking's interests in the region. India also desires membership in the SCO to improve its regional diplomatic and defense status while opening new markets to its industrial and technological business sectors. Mark Burles, RAND researcher, determined Chinese competition and relationships in the Caspian Sea region do not directly influence U.S. vital interests. His study narrows the geo-strategic issues influencing Peking's diplomacy towards their western Border States to four distinct factors:

- China's desire for stability on its frontier and border provinces;
- China's desire to enhance economic development of its inland regions;
- China's growing energy needs;
- China's position in the post Cold War strategic environment[17]

Economics and Rich Natural Resources

Economy. The region's basic economic security is critical to insure the stabilization of the entire Caspian Sea region and its neighbors. Today, Russia is up against many players in the challenge of gaining economically from the region's rich natural resources. Although the US and EU are not considered major players, their natural gas and oil companies are making headway into the region in a large way. Not only do the region's nation-states remain remote and hard to reach, but after seven decades of Soviet domination, they face a set of daunting developmental challenges unlike those in most other post colonial countries. This shared geography and history, in turn, have joined their fates to that of neighboring states. The futures of all the nations of this landlocked region ultimately depend on the stability and goodwill of the goodwill of the neighboring states of China, Turkey, Iran, and

Russia. The strength of these nations must begin to grow economically and militarily in order to deal with these powerful neighbors.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, western civilization's promise of hope, peace, harmony, technology, and wealth eluded these nations. Other former Russian colonies such as those in the former Eastern Bloc such as Poland and the Czech Republic have gradually experienced the benefits of democracy and capitalism. Without question, key natural resources of oil, gas and freshwater central to the economic success of the region. With technology and industry agreements, American corporations have the opportunity to enhance regional infrastructure to include highways, electrical power plants, and water purification, storage and distribution.

Oil Reserves. Oil is not a new discovery here. Marco Polo noted its abundance 700 years ago. As in other countries with valuable mineral resources, the prospect of billions of dollars in overseas investment is raising expectations among the region's citizens. Currently, outside funding is focused on development of alternate pipelines around Russia in some cases and away from Chechnya to avoid terrorist destruction. Multiple routes also encourage competition from the EU, U.S., Russia, Iran, China, and Turkey.

President Clinton's National Security Strategy designated the Caspian Basin as a priority in terms of the global energy. With over 200 billion barrels in oil reserves, a modernized region could compete on the world's market by matching Iraq and Iran's combined oil reserves barrel for barrel. The Clinton Administration believed the region was vital to meeting the world's energy requirements for the next few decades. This administration worked in the region to provide assistance in the development numerous pipeline endeavors. The Clinton Administration planned to work through the new,

democratic Russian leadership to increase world access to natural resources in the region. In support of the region, over $2.7 billion in U.S. assistance was provided to assist the Central Asian countries alone from 1992-2002.[18]

U.S. and Russian diplomatic interests in the region recently secured the confidence of several global energy giants. On February 20, 2002, British Petroleum hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the commencement of Azerbaijan's onshore Sangachal Terminal's upgrade. Once completed, the terminal's total capacity of approximately 140,000 tons of oil, or equivalent to 1.2 million barrels per day will make it the largest in the region, a major facility by international standards. British Petroleum's initial investment is estimated at about $345 million.[19] To assist the region's entrance into the global oil and gas economy, U.S. corporations provided design and development support of new East-West pipeline routes passing through the Caspian Sea to Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea.

Natural Gas Deposits. Many world leaders perceive the natural gas reserves to be a boom to economic growth in both the region and globally. When President Bush served as the Governor of Texas he was asked, by Enron officials, to meet with the President of Uzbekistan. Although Governor Bush was not available to personally attend the conference, the negotiations were carried out. The objective was to provide assistance in the negotiation of a $2 billion venture with NEFTGAS of Uzbekistan and Gazprom Corporation of Russia to develop Uzbekistan's natural gas and transport it to markets in Europe and Kazakhstan and Turkey.[20]

Turkmenistan is also rich in natural gas deposits. Planning continues to complete a transnational pipeline to connect these vast resources to the world. Civil unrest and perceived government support of the Al Qaeda currently hamper negotiations, keeping U.S. companies

out of these weaker, unstable nation-states. Afghanistan, as an emerging nation and border state, remains interested in Turkmenistan natural resources, as well as participating in the building of the projected pipeline to Pakistan.[21] Turkmenistan's natural gas deposits are within reach of Afghanistan and Pakistan, who may focus their country's diplomatic and economic relationships to access to these massive deposits.[22] The hope of the newly elected Afghanistan leadership is to rapidly rebuild the nation with U.S. and EU support while tapping Caspian Sea region natural resources to include energy and water.

Freshwater. The abundance of freshwater sources in the region is cause for concern. The technology to purify, store, protect, and distribute the water is not widely available in the region. In Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan, where extraordinary mountain ranges lead into the Afghan Hindu Kush, there is a great quantity of freshwater. In Tajikistan, with ample water resources, the ability to move the water to the people is limited by infrastructure and finances. This problem is coupled with the fact Tajikistan has one of the highest health risks in the world for typhoid. Understanding the situation, the Government of Tajikistan took the lead in bringing the issue to the U.N. General Assembly. Along with 148 other countries it gained assembly support of Resolution #55/196. This resolution proclaimed the year 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater. It encourages Governments, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of sustainable freshwater use, management and protection. Tajikistan calls upon governments, national and international organizations, non governmental organizations and the private sector to make voluntary contributions and to lend other forms of support to the international focus on freshwater.[23] Security of freshwater reserves is an immediate concern in the region and will require U.S. assistance in terms of military and diplomatic intervention.

The lack of water is critical in some areas of the region. In Uzbekistan, entire populations moved since of the demise of the Aral Sea. This is one of the most horrible ecological disasters in history. The rape of which has been going on since the Russians were led by the Tsars. Basically, Uzbekistan, despite being a desert environment, is the planet's second leading producer of cotton. The Uzbek's depended on its irrigation from the draining of the Aral Sea for the past two hundred years. Coupled with the industrialized toxins, impurities, and waste as well as biological weapons testing that went on at Vorozhdenya Island in the Aral.[24]

Military Dilemma

Before the 9/11 attack by Al Qaeda against Western civilization, many American leaders did not encourage the White House or the U.N. to increase emphasis or involvement in the failing states of the former Soviet Union. Until the attack, the Bush Administration had not truly applied its instruments of power in this region, since it was not high on the vulnerable vital interests' priority list. The White House hands off approach seemed prudent, since the Caspian Sea region was positioned well within the Peking, Moscow, and Tehran spheres of influence. It was commonplace to accept EU leadership would aggressively take the western lead to assist in the region. A presidential commission and the State Department were initially in support of limiting U.S. forces in this region.

Gary Hart, former presidential candidate and senator from Colorado, led a forum to develop recommendations to assist the newly elected Bush Administration. The committee presented a key proposal to thwart any initiative to deploy any foreign troops, including Russian or Chinese, to regions such as the southern Caucasus and Tajikistan.[25] After being confirmed by Congress as the Secretary of State, Colin Powell basically demoted the

ambassador to Azerbaijan's position from Special Envoy to Senior Advisor to the Caspian basin energy region. It remains unclear as to the specific reason the State Department downgraded this key political position. The intent may have been to de-emphasize Azerbaijan and to recognize these emerging identities and new states were gaining energy power in the region. At the time, this decision caused internal, if not immediate Azerbaijan concern over the new administration's focus on the region.[26]

State Department's B. Lynn Pascoe informed a conference at Yale University the United States maintained no aspiration to set up longstanding U.S. base structures in the region. He did provide insight to what the White House military goals were by adding,

> "We do, however, expect to use these facilities in Central Asia as long as conditions in Afghanistan require it and we will want access for future contingencies and to be involved in training and joint exercises with the armed forces of these countries for the long-term. The United States recognizes that Russia, China, Iran, Turkey and the countries of South Asia all have *natural interests* in the region. Our goal is to channel these interests, where possible, to benefit the entire region and to promote stability and prosperity in Central Asia."[27]

Taliban in Afghanistan. As the pressure mounted to forward deploy U.S. Armed Forces to the region after the 9/11 terrorist attack, Secretary Powell initially backed off sending troops and took the high road, declaring the Caspian Sea's nation-states were first and foremost considered Russia's neighborhood. Secretary Powell diplomatically sought Moscow's permission to deploy American troops in the Caspian Sea region, using various airfields to support in the antiterrorist campaign in Afghanistan. ***Moscow leadership rejected Secretary Powell's request with a resounding nyet, in turn, the Secretary lost no time***

reaching out to the Caspian Sea region countries directly.[28] The Kremlin's negative response prompted the White House to authorize American troop movement into Afghanistan through key Caspian Sea region air bases in the lines of communication. Bases in the region were rapidly built up to assist with theater reception of troops, equipment, and supplies. The White House diplomatic influence in the region gained the momentum reflecting the Bush and Clinton National Security Strategies.

With diplomatic support, U.S. military forces defeated the Taliban from the land, sea, and air. Support from various coalition forces and allies, to include many in the Caspian Sea region proved helpful in the counterattack. Air and sea forces operating in the Middle East region expanded their security area. The U.S. Central Command combatant commander designated Diego Garcia as the region sustainment location from the region. The U.S. Departments of State and Defense regional diplomacy proved valuable as ground troops from the XVIII Airborne Corps, stationed in North Carolina, New York, and Kentucky, as well as key military supplies were rapidly routed through the Caspian Sea region. Most notably, U.S. forces and their equipment were allowed entry into Georgia, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan as they moved towards their objectives in Afghanistan.

Troops to Georgia. SECDEF Rumsfield dispatched U.S. soldiers to Georgia to assist the local army as they locate and neutralize terrorists in the Pankisi Gorge area. Several political analysts have pondered the political consequences of the American military presence. The immediate changes American soldiers and dollars made in the lives of depressed Georgian civilians included morale, enthusiasm, and hope.[29] Georgian Defense Minister David Tevzadze signed a pact on cooperation with Fred Rasmussen, U.S. European Command, which included U.S. basing rights and logistics coordination. This pact is

considered a standard agreement between the NATO member-states and the NATO partner-states. The SECDEF envisions additional cooperation between the countries as this action sends a positive signal of U.S. confidence in the region. U.S. military instructors, including 200 special operations forces are training around 2,000 Georgians, most assigned to the Commandos Battalion of the Georgian Army, over the next 18 months.[30]

Troops in Kyrgyzstan. American forces landed at Manas International Airport, about 19 miles from the Kyrgyzstan capital of Bishkek. During the summer of 2002, this was the fastest growing base hosting U.S. troops in the Caspian Sea region. Manas is strategically located 400 miles from the Afghanistan border and 300 miles from China's western border. A one-year Status of Forces agreement was signed between the Kyrgyz government and State Department officials.[31] The Americans are making a positive impact on the nation-state's security, self-assurance and economy. Locals accustomed to Russian soldiers patrolling their region informed reporters the American Soldiers were:

> "well-groomed, smart, confident; they carry assault rifles and portable radio sets. They are making themselves at home, going to cafes, exchanging money, leafing through the newspapers. The United States soldiers, they are the good guys, who beat the terrorists. They go to the village to stock up on goods. Local people hope for dollar opportunities."[32]

In addition to U.S. basing troops in Manas International Airport and Bishkek, the Russian military opened an air base at Kant while providing advisors to strengthen the Kyrgyzstan government's security within its borders. The Kremlin's action, according to Martha Brill Olcott, Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, "demonstrates that the increased level of Russian activity involves more than talk."[33]

Troops in Uzbekistan. During the initial phases of military operations in northern Afghanistan, the leadership of Uzbekistan allowed American forces base troops and major supply stockpiles at Hanabad Airbase. The Airbase proved invaluable to the initial battles against the Taliban. Many military observers expect the U.S. presence on Hanabad Airbase is open-ended. Uzbek President Islam Karimov signed a far-reaching security agreement with the State Department. Although most Caspian Sea region countries experience the threat of terrorism, Uzbekistan remains the country with the highest probability of terrorist activity. The use of Hanabad Airbase and the security agreement with the President Karimov may produce positive results in stabilizing this nation-state.[34]

Although the leader of the Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, was not captured during the first phases of the Afghanistan operation, a theme of security and hope spread across the Caspian Sea region. This momentum cannot be lost. The global war on terrorism will require the U.S. military assistance to allies and friends to increase strategically. As DOD refines plans to develop forward U.S. basing, the Caspian Sea region provides a logical option. Restlessness in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over continued U.S. basing of military provides additional rationale to repositioning forces. The DOD role of projecting U.S. military power to and from the Caspian Sea region must be clarified. Secretary Powell told the House International Relations Committee he agrees with a continued American military presence in the region, a presence that "we could not have dreamed of before."[35]

The White House has the opportunity to build on the dream and bring economic and human security to the former southern colonies of the Soviet Union. Each nation-state has made progress working towards sovereignty. For these nation-states to secure status as a

contributing partner in the international arena, they must work towards democratic and economic reform and in settling regional conflicts.

Islamic Fundamentalism Challenge

The people of the Caspian Sea region primarily practice Islam as their religion. Religion is not inculcated into the governments as it is in its neighbor to the south—Iran. Islam does not threaten security of any nation-state in the Caspian Sea region; in fact, this may be the most westernized region of the Islamic society. Islam is more of a cultural label, not so much an ideology.[36] In this region, Christianity and Islam intersect. The entrance of the Caspian Sea nation-states into western culture could prove to be a conduit connecting Islamic government led states and Western democracies.

Although conventional thought predicted an immediate rise in radical Islam fundamentalism after the fall of the Soviet Union, so far, Islamic radicals have not done well in the region, even in Tajikistan. Possibly, seven decades of communism in the region have retarded but not permanently preclude the potential revival of radical or fundamental Islam. Iran has behaved with considerable caution, not pushing radical Islam in the region although; Saudi Arabia contributes large sums of money covertly throughout the region to revive Muslim clergy and mosques.

U.S Intervention: A Recommendation and Caution

Recommendation. The center of gravity for U.S. vital interests in the world could easily swing towards this region in subsequent years. With the development of the EU's Rapid Deployment Force, U.S. military presently stationed in Europe could supply the SECDEF the forces necessary to calm the region. Failing to take full advantage of this time in history could prove devastating to the region and possibly to the world. Without a more

permanent U.S. commitment to the peoples of this region, a regional struggle to gain natural and refined energy resources may lead to a series of territorial wars. Without intervention, the world might wake up to find this region re-adapting into communism, fascism, or radical Islam fundamentalism. Failing to provide security could allow shifts in power with weapons of mass destruction on the loose, reappearing in small groups of non-nation state players who could, if they wanted, overthrow governments and fight the U.S. in our own back yard. An evil, yet very powerful dictator could rise out of the ashes. Already cruel dictators remain in control throughout the Caspian Sea region which includes: Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan, Saparmurat Niyasov in Turkmenistan, Nursultan Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan, Askar Akayev in Kyrgyzstan, Heydar Aliev in Azerbaijan, and Emomali Rahmonov in Tajikistan. [37]

Caution. On the other end of the spectrum, there is a risk of over supporting dictators in the region in order to gain basing right and a strategic advantage over American peer competitors such as Russia, China, and the EU. A strategy which encourages the groundwork to achieve human rights and democracy could significantly raise the region's citizens potential to achieve peace, prosperity, and liberty. As the White House authorizes increased U.S. petroleum acquisition in the region, caution must be taken to not cause financial anxiety to Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Nigeria and Russia, the later who truly desires to become a major player in the world oil market. The worst case scenario would find the U.S. military deploying its forces from around the globe to respond to a large, protracted war in the Caspian Sea region.

Conclusion

The White House goal is to build trust with our allies in the region.[38] Nations, which achieve or at least commit to democratic reforms will benefit through economic and

diplomatic affairs as part of the international system. U.S. assistance in supporting key benefits to the Caspian Sea region's emerging nation-states include:

- Voting in the U.N.;
- Receiving financial backing from the World Trade Organization;
- Free trade with the EU, U.S., and Japan

Regional nation-states currently sustain a fine-line of survivability, maintaining their governments on the brink of internal civil strife and civil security. **White House actions in the post-cold war era must include a defense policy decision provide security to deter internal and external threats to the people of this promising region's stabilization.** Now is the time to act. Western civilization, led by the U.S. must move without delay to assist the last frontier of U.S.S.R. remnants.

The Bush Administration possesses the historical opportunity to refocus its instruments of power to shape the future of the Caspian Sea region nation-states. Stabilizing this strategic region is essential to its peoples' future in the global economy. Enhanced White House economic, military, and diplomatic support to the region provides a powerful hand in free market and democratic reforms. U.S. support to the region offers protection from potential Chinese aggression, while keeping Russia and Iran in check.[39] The independence gained from the former U.S.S.R. is a gigantic stride forward; nevertheless, without U.S. intervention, benefits remain out of the reach of the ordinary citizen of the region.

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