

# Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst

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*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute  
Silk Road Studies Program*



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# THE CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS ANALYST

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**IMPLICATIONS:** 400-600 words of analysis of the ramifications of this event or issue, including where applicable, implications for the local people's future.

**CONCLUSIONS:** 100-200 words that strongly state your conclusions about the impact of the event or issue.

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** provide a short bio of yourself in 20-50 words.

**Field Reports** focus on a particular news event and what local people think about the event. Field Reports address the implications the event or activity analyzed for peoples' lives and their communities. Field Reports do not have the rigid structure of Analytical Articles, and are shorter in length, averaging ca. 700-800 words.

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# UZBEKISTAN'S POST-SOVIET GENERATION LEAPFROGS INTO POWER

Nicklas Norling

*A series of senior-level appointments over the past two years suggest a generational shift in Uzbekistan's politics. Figures born in the 1970s now fill several deputy head positions in some of the most significant ministries and agencies – the intelligence organ (SNB), the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and others. Having entered their careers in the 1990s, this new post-Soviet generation of Uzbek politicians is on the doorstep of real political power. This generational change is inevitable but the President appears to be leapfrogging this younger generation into power.*

**BACKGROUND:** The present power holders in Uzbekistan are nearing or have passed retirement age, paving the way for a new generation of politicians in the not too distant future. President Islam Karimov has turned 75 and a professional career begun in the mid-1960s is soon coming to an end. The intelligence chief, Rustam Inoyatov, is seven years younger but his long KGB-SNB career is unlikely to last another decade. The Minister of Interior is 61 and his counterpart in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is 66. Most other ministers and heads of major state enterprises belong to the same Soviet-era generation born in the 1940s or 1950s.

A new generation of officials is soon replacing this one, but which generation? A slew of recent appointments suggest that the younger post-Soviet generation, who entered their professional careers in the 1990s, are increasingly being positioned to take charge.

For example, in the past two years the President has appointed two Deputy Foreign Ministers, Eldor Aripov and Murad Askarov, who still are in their thirties. Both were born in 1974, are graduates of the Institute of World Economy and Diplomacy, have served in the Embassy in Washington D.C., and are English and German speakers.

Other young Deputy Ministers could be pinpointed in the Ministry of Justice. The First Deputy Minister, Esemurat Kanyazov, was born in 1971 and is 42. Appointed Deputy Minister of Justice in 2005 at the age of 35, Kanyazov was subsequently promoted to First Deputy Minister in 2011 together with the installment of the then 35 year old Otabek Murodov as Deputy Minister.

It is noteworthy that three of the four Deputy Ministers in the Justice Ministry were born in 1956, 1962, and 1964 and are significantly older than First Deputy Minister Kanyazov, indicating how the younger generation is given preference.

Parallels could be drawn to the Ministry of Finance. Here, too, the position of First Deputy Minister is occupied by the young Western-educated Bakhrom Yusupov. A graduate of the Institute of World Economy and Diplomacy and Oklahoma State University, Yusupov was born in 1976.

This promotion of young officials extends into one of the most powerful organs of government – particularly the National Security Service (SNB). Rustam Eminkhanov, the new head of the SNB border troops and the intelligence organ's second-in-command, is merely 42.



Eminkhanov is a graduate of the Armed Forces Academy and began his career in 1992 in the Interior Ministry. He was appointed to his present position in July 2012, replacing the “security veteran” Ruslan Mirzaev. In that capacity, Eminkhanov is significantly younger than many senior-level SNB officers, e.g. Ravshanbek Shamshiev, born in 1948.

The appointments cited above are but a few examples of this general trend. Similar observations can be made elsewhere. For example, the head of the State Committee for Communication and Telecommunication Technologies, Khurshid Mirzakhimov, and the Deputy Chairman of Uzbekenergo, Muzaffardzhan Khakimov, are 42 and 40 respectively. Sarvar Otamuratov, the new party leader of *Milliy Tiklanish* elected in May 2013, is also 40.

**IMPLICATIONS:** If the footprint of the post-Soviet generation is further enlarged in the next few years and if the President continues to promote this generation of adjutants into power, these factors could become primary agents of reform. Georgia’s Rose Revolution in 2004 proved the dramatic effect of cultivating a new post-Soviet generation of leaders, even if the breathtaking pace of reform in that country may be inimitable elsewhere. Uzbekistan is still ruled by the “old generation” but appointments over the past couple of years

demonstrate the growing presence of the new post-Soviet generation.

Three main implications can be derived from this. First, it is probably an exaggeration to say that the middle generation has been “skipped” in recent appointments in favor of the younger post-Soviet generation. Several cases of the former exist alongside the latter. For example, the first deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Norov, appointed in 2010 was born in 1955 and is 57. Regional governors also tend to be of the “middle generation”, and have typically risen through the ranks of the provincial and district apparatuses. However, the fact that many first Deputy Ministers and the first Deputy Head of the SNB are significantly younger than their deputies reveals a desire to leapfrog the post-Soviet generation into politics.

Second, this new post-Soviet generation is likely to be more favorably disposed towards democratization and reform in general. Many of the young officials cited above have either been educated in the West or served in Western embassies earlier in their careers. They speak mainly Western languages in addition to Russian and Uzbek. This combination of English fluency and exposure to Western societies hold much promise for Western interests.

Third, this new post-Soviet generation hails from across the country in contrast to the older generation, who tend almost exclusively to be natives of Tashkent and Samarkand. Aripov and Askarov, the Deputy Foreign Ministers, hail from Tashkent and Khorezm; Kanyazov and Murodov in the Ministry of Justice are natives of the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan and Kashkadarya respectively; the deputy Minister of Finance, Yusupov, was also born in Kashkadarya; and

Eminkhanov is a native of Tashkent. The previous dominance of a few provinces, often referred ambiguously to as “clans,” is fading with the new generation whose ties and promotions primarily form on a professional and meritocratic basis. That the new post-Soviet generation has its origins in a diverse set of provinces testifies to this trend.

**CONCLUSIONS:** A generation shift is underway in Uzbekistan, and it appears likely that the President is seeking to leapfrog a new generation into power. Whatever the President’s intentions, several senior officials born in the 1970s are in waiting to replace the present leadership and their prospects for doing so sooner rather than later is considerable.

Many of these are Western-educated and/or with diplomatic experience in the United States and Europe, which bodes well for

Western engagement in the future. Members of this new generation do not appear to have regional power bases but owe their careers to merit, professional ties, and what appears to be a conscious effort of nation-building by the President.

Western policy makers should recognize this emerging post-Soviet generation, build ties with these younger officials as well as their older counterparts, and thereby anchor their own strategies to this promising generation change.

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# IVANISHVILI AND THE GEORGIAN-ORTHODOX CHURCH: AN ALLIANCE STARTING TO SOUR?

*Ariela Shapiro*

*On May 17, 28 people were injured when an angry mob, led by Georgian clergymen, broke through police cordons and clashed with gay rights activists in Tbilisi, Georgia. The U.S. and EU condemned the events while Prime Minister Ivanishvili promised that those who instigated the violence would be prosecuted, including members of the clergy. Despite the government's harsh rhetoric, only four laypeople have been arrested while four individuals, two of whom are clergymen, have been charged with "encroachment of the right to assembly and manifestation".*

**BACKGROUND:** The May 17 events demonstrate the Georgian Orthodox Church's emergence as a cogent political force capable of en masse mobilization. Moreover, divisions are visible in the alliance between Ivanishvili and Patriarch Ilia II, borne from a desire to oust the UNM party from power, regarding Georgia's political future.

The Church's previous attempts to insert itself into the Georgian political milieu were curbed by Saakashvili, who sought to maintain a firm boundary between church and state interests. Many observers noted that Patriarch Ilia's November 2011 open support for Ivanishvili's right to Georgian citizenship indicated the church's backing for the Georgian Dream Coalition and helped Ivanishvili garner crucial electoral support, particularly in the regions, prior to the elections.

However, this partnership is straining due to differences in opinion regarding Georgia's political future: the government wants the country to become part of the West while the church would have Georgia align with Russia and adopt an anti-liberal value system.

Despite the church's calls to cancel the May 17 rally, Prime Minister Ivanishvili pledged the May 17 activists would receive full police

protection. In response, Patriarch Ilia issued a written statement stating that holding such a rally would be "...an insult..." to Georgian traditions while individual clergymen sought to influence churchgoers through daily and weekly sermons preaching the abominations of homosexuality.

The international community's reactions to the violence were swift with both American and European diplomats registering "shock" at the violence and that "such acts of intolerance have no place in democratic societies." Embarrassed by his failure to prevent the anti-gay violence, Ivanishvili issued a powerful condemnation of the attacks and their participants stating that, "being a member of the clergy cannot be an alibi for anyone." He added, "if any member of the clergy violated the law, he will be held responsible."

On the same day, Patriarch Ilia II issued a statement expressing regret for the violence and acknowledging that some clergy behaved "impolitely" in confronting demonstrators. He added, however, that the ideas of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activists "are completely unacceptable in Georgia."

Despite its rhetoric, the Georgian government remains more cautious in its



actions. It took the Interior Ministry four days to arrest four members of the mob, just to release them again after they paid a US\$62 fine. As an attempted show of potency, two clerics were also charged, but not arrested, with illegally impeding the right to assemble a week after the rally. However, the government has not charged or arrested additional clergymen, which questions Ivanishvili's ability to curb the encroachment of the church into the political sphere.

**IMPLICATIONS:** Both the anti-gay rally and the government's impotent reaction to the violence indicate Ivanishvili's realization that the church is gradually replacing the UNM as the new political counterpoint to the Georgian Dream Coalition.

The church is a wealthy, well-organized rival capable of politically mobilizing the Georgian populace more effectively than any political party. Following the May 17 violence, Bishop Jakob, a senior cleric, stated "You know very well that the United National Movement required two and a half months to gather five thousand people [for its April 19 rally] .... Today people came into [streets] on their own initiative... Several millions would have come [into the streets] if needed". Albeit a bit overconfident, Bishop Jakob's sentiments were echoed by Minister of Defense Irakli Alasania when he stated that the Patriarch "is very popular and has

united our society many times". According to Alasania, "...around 96-97 percent, trusts the Church, and the Church can greatly influence the society.

Recent polls also demonstrate the church's resurrected role as the key site of Georgian cultural and social creation. According to a recent Gorbi poll, 84 percent of Georgian people believe religion is either "important" or "very important" while a CRRC survey found that the church is the most trusted institution in Georgia.

The church's immense social capital explains both Ivanishvili's desire to align with the Patriarch prior to the October 2012 elections and his hesitancy to confront the church for its deep involvement in the anti-gay riot. At present, the government's reaction to the May 17 events will be a litmus test for the international community and the Georgian electorate. Ivanishvili risks losing international support if he does not distance his government from the church's anti-western position and address the clergy's involvement in the May 17 violence.

On May 24, the Interior Ministry arrested former Prime Minister Vano Merabashvili and former Health Minister Zurab Tchiaberashvili for misappropriation of funds and embezzlement. While Tchiaberashvili was later released on bail, Merabashvili was sentenced to pre-trial detention. The juxtaposition of Merabashvili's and Tchiaberashvili's arrests with the recent violence is suspect and may be motivated by a desire to show potency in the face of Ivanishvili's inability to control the church. Their arrests establish a dangerous precedent for using politically motivated arrests to deflect international and domestic attention from critical social issues. In addition, the government's prosecution of these senior opposition members does not

compare well to its lack of legal action against the clergymen and laypeople responsible for the May 17 violence. Rather, Ivanishvili's policies imply his inability to effectively navigate a sustainable alliance with the church and rein in its political ambitions.

The Georgian opposition condemned the arrests as political persecutions and criticized the government for trying to "destroy their political opponents" as opposed to focusing on pressing civic and economic issues. In his May 21 statement, President Saakashvili drew a parallel between Merabashvili and Ukrainian former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, warning that these actions may lead to Georgia's "international isolation."

Moreover, arrests and their timing are not lost on the international community. On May 22, both EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and Patrick Ventrell, acting deputy spokesperson of the Department of State, commented that their respective governments would be closely following the legal proceedings. In addition to several U.S. Senators expressing concern over the arrests, the co-rapporteurs from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) stated that any "perception of ... political motivation" must be avoided. Given the circumstances, PACE President Jean-Claude Mignon will most likely utilize his May 28-29 visit to Georgia to discuss these concerns with relevant senior Georgian officials.

**CONCLUSIONS:** In conclusion, the anti-gay violence of May 17 and the Georgian government feeble response to these events

indicate that the church is replacing UNM as a counterpoint to the Georgian Dream Coalition. The scale of the mob and the government's weak response underscores a rift with the church. Moreover, the event questions Ivanishvili's ability, and desire, to curb the encroachment of the church into the political sphere. The church's increasingly vitriolic anti-western agenda and rhetoric also reflect poorly on Prime Minister Ivanishvili and his ostensible policies to join NATO and adopt western-oriented reforms. Given the Patriarch's preeminent role in Georgian society, Prime Minister Ivanishvili lacks the ability to curb the church's engagement in politics.

In addition, while the government was investigating both Merabashvili and Tchiaberashvili prior to the anti-gay rally, their prompt arrests indicate the government's willingness to use politically motivated arrests to deflect attention from pressing civil issues. However, these politically motivated arrests have garnered a great deal of international attention and domestic critique, especially given the lack of legal action taken against the rally's instigators. Prime Minister Ivanshvili must ensure the prosecution of both men is impartial and beyond reproach. Otherwise, he risks losing international credibility and re-galvanizing the UNM party.

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** Ariela Shapiro is an international development professional who has been living and working in the South Caucasus since 2010. She has worked and consulted for International Crisis Group, the International Republican Institute, Deloitte Overseas Consulting and UNDP.

# A NEW TURN IN RUSSIA'S MILITARY POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA?

Stephen Blank

*Russia is changing its defense policies in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Late last year, Russia sent the regular Army to deal with the North Caucasian insurgency while Ministry of Interior forces (VVMVD) are now conducting large-scale operations with Azerbaijani security forces on both sides of the common border, presumably against North Caucasian and Azerbaijani-based terrorists and insurgents. Russia has also recently created a Special Operations Command consisting of a Special Forces brigade, a training center, helicopter, and air transportation squadrons. Russia will assign its airborne forces (VDV) missions relating to peace-creating operations, while it also spends large sums of money to refurbish its bases in Kyrgyzstan and pressures Tajikistan to host a Russian base.*

**BACKGROUND:** There has been increased discussion in various circles that the wars growing out of the Arab Spring in Libya, Syria, and by Russia's accounting in Mali, portend a new development in contemporary conflict to which Russia must adjust. All these moves point to the potential for a significant modification in Russia's threat assessment and thinking about contemporary war as well as in its policies in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Several factors have coincided in time and space to force this rethinking and policy adjustment. The wars originating in the Arab revolutions have led some to believe that foreign interventions are again likely to become a predominant form of contemporary conflict, and that they could threaten the stability of Russia's Muslim neighbors if not Russia itself. The coinciding upsurge of terrorist threats in Central Asia since 2011 has added to Russia's concerns, as has the impending situation in Afghanistan. Russian officials call it alarming and believe that Afghanistan will not succeed in defending itself once NATO leaves next year.

At a May 8 meeting of the Security Council, President Putin expressed his alarm at future

terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan, expressed his concern that the Afghan army cannot defend the country, thereby exposing Russia and Central Asia to terrorist incursions, and decried the allied failure to stop Taliban and other terrorism and the drug trade. Putin called for a new, clear strategy in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Moscow is now selling helicopters to Afghanistan and Putin's first precept was reinforcing the southern strategic direction's security system.

He also urged the utilization of the full arsenal of preventive measures and the potential of the CSTO and SCO, enhanced protection of the Russian state borders, tightening migration policy, accelerated equipping of the CSTO's rapid reaction force with modern equipment, and a stronger campaign to suppress the drug trafficking. Third came intensified programs of economic, humanitarian, and military cooperation with neighbors to stabilize them and presumably further their integration with Russia in trade, energy, economics, and culture. Cynics will argue that this program of action merely conceals a policy to integrate Central Asia and the Caucasus around Russia. But while these are clear



goals, the threat assessment is real and well founded.

Beyond the Middle Eastern, Caucasus, and Central Asian/Afghan threats, the insurgency in the North Caucasus is still not under control and in 2012 spread, as Russian sources admit, to violence in Kazan and cells in Moscow and St. Petersburg as well as in the Ural-Volga Tatar and Bashkir communities. In light of the Boston bombing and the upcoming showcase Winter Olympics in Sochi, it is not surprising that we see a whole series of military moves taking shape as part of a considered policy package.

**IMPLICATIONS:** This program of action, occurring alongside a military debate as to whether these manifestations of war in the Islamic world are materially changing the nature and character of contemporary conflict, occur under rather inauspicious conditions for the making of this new military policy. Officially the main threats are NATO and the unvoiced but ever-present Chinese threat, both of which lead to an inordinate emphasis on theater conventional force structures and procurement as well as nuclear deterrence and procurement of nuclear weapons. In this scheme procurement goes in order to nuclear, aerospace, air defense, naval, and lastly Army forces, precisely the opposite of what would be needed to fight any serious

contingency in either the Caucasus or Central Asia.

Moreover, despite Putin's talk of enhancing multilateral cooperation among CIS members and the regional security organizations, none of those security or defense organizations actually works in Central Asia. Although Moscow and Astana finally agreed upon an air defense scheme or so they say, it remains to be seen how it will operate and in any case it will not save either country from terrorist insurgencies. The CSTO has made clear that it will not intervene in countries to counter purely domestic upheavals, which are nevertheless the most likely manifestations of insurgency or terrorism should they occur. Furthermore, without Uzbekistan, which defected from the CSTO and now stands to receive British and American military assistance, the CSTO's strategic utility is not only untested but already seriously compromised. Lastly Tajikistan's resistance to Russian pressure for a base and flirtation with Washington and NATO further weakens any sign of regional cohesion.

Adding to the unfavorable situation is the fact that the Russian Army is almost incapable of serious power projection except by rail and certainly unable to move fast enough to meet these potential challenges. Its border forces are mired in corruption and their ability to police the borders effectively is open to serious doubt. Yet given the virtually universal lack of confidence in the post-2014 situation in Afghanistan and the real weaknesses plaguing efforts at a coordinated regional defense it is not easy to see how Russia can avoid getting entangled in protracted contingencies if Afghanistan falls to the terrorists after 2014. Despite Putin's orders, it is only now becoming clear to the Russian military-political

establishment that if terrorism and insurgency are the real threats they will have to contend with, there must be an immense strategic restructuring of the government, armed forces, defense industry, and state policy even as Putin has made clear his thorough opposition to any major reform. More of the same will clearly not suffice in the southern strategic direction.

The consequences for both Central Asia and Russia are serious, even profound. Whether it is warranted or not, there is a widespread and growing anxiety for the future throughout Central Asia and Afghanistan, notwithstanding Kazakhstan's professed optimism about Afghanistan. Yet there are no discernible moves to enhance genuine regional cooperation or to develop effective regional command and control structures in the event of a major crisis. This anxiety connects fears for the future of Afghanistan after 2014 with uncertainty concerning the situation in Central Asian states, none of which enjoys true stability. Even Kazakhstan's stability depends on Nazarbayev's health and has been challenged by increased terrorist activities since 2011. The other states are in worse shape, facing myriad domestic challenges. Meanwhile, the North Caucasus is out of control and the South Caucasus can hardly be described as a region at peace.

For Russia too, caught midway in an uncompleted defense reform that may be eclipsed because the threats facing Russia are utterly different than those enjoying policy priority, the consequences of these developments are immense. Should these conflicts grow or even continue, they may force a reevaluation of official thinking about the nature of the threats facing Russia, the nature of contemporary warfare, the

question of who are Russia's enemies, and the priorities of defense policy. This could force the government to come to terms with the need for fundamentally different governance throughout Russia, itself a change that would reverberate across Central Asia. All this is happening at a time when Moscow discerns a U.S. threat to retain military influence in the area through a network of bases and an Uzbek partner and sees an increasingly powerful China usurping Moscow's political and economic standing among Central Asian states, becoming a rival in energy policy, and developing an ever more powerful and modernized military. Indeed, some Russian analysts even believe the PLA already outclasses the Russian army.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Even as the competition in Central Asia continues to intensify among all involved actors, it is clear that although we might disagree with Russia's policies in the southern strategic direction and in the Middle East; and even with its threat assessment, the perceptions that form that assessment are hardly imaginary or unfounded. From Russia's viewpoint, these threats are real and may become actualized sooner rather than later and even catch Russia and allied governments by surprise. The current turn in Russian military policy represents Russia's effort to meet that challenge, but nobody should be complacent about the outcome should those challenges actually appear.

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# NORTH CAUCASUS INSURGENCY MAKES INROADS TO TATARSTAN, BASHKORTOSTAN

*Emil Souleimanov*

*Recently, a number of observers have pointed to the increasing threat of militant Salafism in the Volga-Ural region, namely, the republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan inhabited by a Muslim majority population. Whilst assessments of the severity of the present threat vary, most specialists admit that what is considered the spread of Jihadism to the Russian hinterland should be regarded in light of the ongoing insurgency in the North Caucasus. This article aims to explore the links of North Caucasian insurgents to the Volga-Ural region and the potential of “Wahhabi terrorism” particularly in Tatarstan.*

**BACKGROUND:** “The traditional Spiritual Administrations of Muslims are not able to cope with Wahhabism, only authorities can defeat it,” said Farid Salman at a recent conference held in Kazan and devoted to the threat of “Wahhabism.” The chairman of the Ulema Council of the Russian Association, himself a famous Islamic theologian, went on to assert that “[t]here is no scheme, apart from that of Ramzan Kadyrov, to fight Wahhabism.” In fact, the Tatar intellectual summarized a commonly held belief among representatives of the “traditionalist Islam” in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, which reflects the growing appeal of Salafist ideology to local youth. Is Salafism – or Jihadism for that matter – indeed a serious challenge to the region?

According to some sources, there are as many as 5,000 Salafi Muslims in Tatarstan alone; in Bashkortostan, their estimates are slightly lower. Yet it should be stated that not every adherent of Salafism takes on its militarist interpretation, for which the term Jihadism has recently been established. The vast majority of Salafis profess their religion in a peaceful manner. Unlike, for instance, adherents of Sufi brotherhoods, they claim allegiance to the purist and utterly monotheistic interpretation of Islam,

inasmuch as they attempt to purify what is considered “folk Islam” from proto-Islamic (jahiliya – relics of pagan cults) and post-Islamic (bid’ah – innovations in Islam, non-Islamic in their essence) elements, regarding God, Allah, as the only source of holiness.

Yet the sources of support for Salafism have had little to do with theology and much with sociology. Like elsewhere in the Islamic world, Salafi Islam started gaining adherents in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan in recent years due to a combination of key factors: first, the official clergy has been discredited by its close cooperation with and support for local unpopular regimes accused of corruption and clientelism. Second, the absence of credible secular opposition that would be capable of changing the regime by means of free and transparent elections; third, the deteriorating economic situation and gap between the rich and the poor, amplified by the urban-rural divide; fourth, support from foreign Salafi groups or some form of ideological indoctrination, for instance by local Muslims who obtained Salafi-styled religious training in some Middle Eastern country; and fifth, the global appeal of Jihadism as a potent revolutionary ideology.



So far, the local Salafi community has been rather low-profile, refraining from entering politics or using violence. The notable exception was the assassination of mufti Ildus Faizov and the murder of his deputy Valiulla Yakupov in July 2012, which was most likely carried out by local jihadists who detested Faizov's active efforts to rid Tatarstan of "Wahhabism."

**IMPLICATIONS:** During the recent decade, local and federal authorities have increasingly reinforced their control over Muslim mosques and communities, pushing Tatar and Bashkir Salafis out of the public space into little cells on the periphery of towns. Instead of open gatherings in the mosques in Kazan, Nizhnekamsk, Naberezhnie Chelny and elsewhere, which was the case in the 1990s and partially also in the 2000s, the adherents of Salafism now usually meet for prayers and social activities in local private prayer rooms, dozens of which are scattered across Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. This, in turn, has somewhat complicated the control over Salafi communities in these republics.

Another factor is that in a series of waves, the last one coming up in the aftermath of the July 2012 assassination of Faizov and Yakupov, the local Salafi communities have found themselves under serious pressure from local law enforcement units that have treated them in an indiscriminate manner as

a threat to national security, failing to distinguish between peaceful adherents of Salafism and Jihadists. According to local sources, this has contributed to the radicalization of a certain segment of local Salafis, particularly from the ranks of semi-criminal groups from Kazan's Vysokaya Gora district and Nizhnekamsk.

In the meantime, sources in Tatarstan's Ministry of Interior have alleged that contacts have been developed by representatives of the Caucasus Emirate, particularly some Dagestan-based jamaats, and local Salafi communities over the course of the recent year or two. Interestingly, the leaders of the Caucasus Emirate, notably Doku Umarov, have long threatened Moscow to extend the insurgency into Moscow's backyard, particularly to the Muslim-dominated republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, yet due to the lack of an ideological, personal and logistic base in this area and the lack of capacities on the part of Chechnya-based insurgents who have recently suffered significant losses in resources and manpower, this has never materialized. By contrast, Dagestani jamaats have recently broadened their operational range deep into the Russian hinterland, carrying out lethal terrorist attacks in the Russian capital and elsewhere.

Sources in Kazan further state that agents of Tatar and Dagestani jihadists have recently met in a number of Russian cities, particularly in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, resulting in extended financial support to Tatarstan-based Salafi communities in order to ensure their survival and attempts to arrange basic training for Tatarstani jihadists in manufacturing explosives, etc. This could be considered the first step for radicalized Salafi communities with inclinations to Jihadism to prepare deadly attacks in the

Russian hinterland, possibly also in the Sochi area on the eve of the forthcoming Olympics. In fact, observers speculate that because of the established focus of intelligence services on natives of the North Caucasus, it would take less effort for the Jihadists to implement a terrorist attack in a Russian town like Sochi, should it be carried out by an ethnic Tatar, Bashkir, or Russian.

According to Tatarstani sources, an inflow of militant Salafis from Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia, as well as some Central Asian republics (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), has recently boosted local Salafi communities. Unlike in their home republics, where they have been subjected to persecution, the environment in the Volga-Ural region enables them to profess their faith in a relatively open manner. This, in turn, has further contributed to the radicalization of a segment of Volga-Ural Salafis, helping to establish personal links with the North Caucasian insurgency.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Most observers point out that the compelling differences between Tatarstan and Bashkortostan on the one hand, and the North Caucasus on the other, reduce the risk that of effective terrorist group, let alone an insurgency, emerging in this part of Russia. First off, both republics are situated deep in the Russian heartland with relatively flat terrain, with populations that are secular, rich, and with some

significant exceptions largely unwilling to challenge the republics' status as part of the Russian federation. Importantly, heavily modernized local societies lack archaic patterns of social organization based on clans and traditions including concepts of honor, blood feud, etc., that have accounted for a swift mobilization and spread of violence in the Northeast Caucasus. Last but not least, this has allowed the authorities to infiltrate agents into the Volga-Ural-based Salafi communities in a much more effective way than in the North Caucasus, which has so far helped Moscow to act preemptively. Yet even so, the establishment of links between radicalized Salafi communities in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, and North Caucasian insurgents creates a risk of deadly terrorist attacks carried out in the Russian hinterland, contributing to the overall worsening of the situation in another of Russia's predominantly Muslim regions.

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## FIELD REPORTS

### TURKMENISTAN ADOPTS ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

*Tavus Rejepova*

On April 12, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov approved a new Concept of Electric Power Industry Development of Turkmenistan for 2013-2020 and promised to invest US\$ 5 billion into the sector to boost electricity exports by a factor of five.

The new seven-year power generation plan was prepared jointly by the Ministry of Economy and Development and the Institute of Strategic Planning and Economic Development of Turkmenistan and was presented to the President by the Energy Minister Myrat Artykov. The energy minister mentioned that Turkmenistan currently has ten power plants and a total of 32 turbines including 14 steam, 15 gas and 3 water-run turbines.

The new power industry development plan will be implemented in two phases, 2013-2016 and 2017-2020. The first phase includes the construction of new eight gas turbine-run power plants in Akhal, Mary and Lebap provinces, the reconstruction of existing power plants in the cities of Seydi, Balkanabat and Abadan, and the installation of high voltage power transmission lines across the country. As per the first phase of this plan, Turkmenistan plans to double its current electricity production by 2016. The second phase covering 2017-2020 envisions the construction of six additional major

plants and switching from gas turbine plants to a combined cycle that will increase the power supply without consuming any extra natural gas.

The country's power system renovation plan also includes a complete modernization of Ashgabat's electricity system in three stages within five years through close to 60 new substations to be constructed by the Turkish consortium Calik Holding. As the country re-builds the capital city Ashgabat and modernizes its power system, blackouts are still frequent during both winter and summer in older parts of the city and rural areas of the provinces.

The Turkmen government's decision to invest US\$ 5 billion in developing its electricity infrastructure is also a consequence of the sudden and massive power disruptions over the past winter in several provinces of Turkmenistan due to a serious malfunction at Mary DES, the main state power generation station in the country. President Berdimuhamedov then fired the chief of the Mary DES for failing to address the deficiencies in the plant and its substations in Lebap province. Frequent disruptions in the provinces also occur because the majority of substations around the country, built during the Soviet era, are worn out.

President Berdimuhamedov stated that once the new electricity plan is implemented, Turkmenistan expects to export electricity to Armenia, Pakistan and other countries in the region. Turkmenistan currently exports electricity to neighboring Afghanistan and Iran. In addition to the existing Mary-Serhetabat-Gerat power line, Turkmenistan is currently building a new 500 KW power transmission line between Mary-Atamyrat in Turkmenistan and Andhoy in Afghanistan to increase the electricity supply to Afghanistan.

In 2007, Berdimuhamedov absolved Afghanistan's US\$ 4.2 million electricity debt and plans to continue electricity supply at a reduced price. The Turkmen government also intends to resume electricity supply to Tajikistan, which was interrupted in January 2009 when

neighboring Uzbekistan withdrew from the Central Asian power grid. In 2011, Turkmenistan produced 18.27 billion kWh of electricity, of which it exported 2.523 billion kWh to neighboring countries like Afghanistan and Iran. Domestic consumption in the same year was 15.796 billion.

Turkmenistan's investment into its electricity industry is part of the country's general policy of diversifying its energy export routes in the region. If the general concept is successfully implemented within the given time frame, Turkmenistan is expected to fully provide all of its provinces with uninterrupted power supply during all seasons of the year and to generate additional income through the growth of exports to other countries.

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## KAZAKHSTAN PREPARES FOR “INNOVATION REVOLUTION”

*Georgiy Voloshin*

On May 22 and 23, Kazakhstan's capital hosted two high-level annual events that have already become a local tradition. On Wednesday, President Nazarbayev chaired the 26th meeting of the Foreign Investors Council which is comprised of representatives of government bodies in charge of the country's economic development and foreign companies actively investing in Kazakhstan. It was established in 1998 and initially included only 11 permanent members. Fifteen years later, the Council has expanded to 27 permanent members and also counts several observers on its board, such as the CEO of Glencore International plc Ivan Glasenberg. While

Kazakhstan's economy has attracted massive investment from hundreds of foreign entities during the past twenty years, the Council is open exclusively to the largest investors whose gross input is measured at US\$ 500 million for those operating in the energy sector and at least US\$ 125 million for non-extractive fields.

In line with the “Kazakhstan-2050” strategy unveiled by Kazakhstan's president in December 2012, this year's gathering was dedicated to the issue of innovative development, with foreign investors expected to play a leading role in the promotion of technological transfers and joint high-caliber R&D programs. Moreover,

Kazakhstan is now actively engaged in the implementation of a broad set of measures aimed at enabling the birth of a “green economy” that would be based on the wide use of environmentally-friendly technologies and energy-saving schemes. In this vein, President Nazarbayev brought up a string of new initiatives, such as his idea of the “three 7s.” He thus instructed the government to sponsor the relocation of the world’s seven brightest researchers to Kazakhstan not only to boost local scientific activities but also, and more importantly, to endow them with high-quality content.

The Kazakhstani government is also entrusted with the task of ensuring the availability of technology-intensive orders from industries for at least seven Kazakhstan-based companies. This strategy aims primarily to substitute local knowledge for imported technological solutions and would therefore permit to test the efficiency of national research laboratories and innovative entities confronted with real-life challenges. Finally, the country’s executive should also support the establishment of not fewer than seven start-up companies specialized in the most competitive fields. The idea of creating a special territory for innovations modeled on the California-based Silicon Valley has lately gained ground not only in Kazakhstan but also in neighboring Russia which now has its Skolkovo innovation center.

During his meeting with the Foreign Investors Council, President Nazarbayev also ordered the establishment of a special venture capital fund worth US\$ 200 million, which can potentially be increased up to US\$ 1 billion. This fund will be sustained by annual 1-percent tax payments introduced on January 1, 2013 for all subsoil users who are hence required to pay more attention to the

R&D dimension of their lucrative businesses. Kazakhstan’s president furthermore suggested awarding on a yearly basis US\$ 100,000 grants to seven researchers and scientists whose work is deemed to be of particular value for the country’s “innovation revolution”. Thus, the “three 7s” strategy is due to acquire an additional fourth prong.

Finally, Nazarbayev mentioned the need to set up a new world-class university, alongside the Nazarbayev University of Astana. This new educational institution should develop teaching and research expertise in agriculture and will be created on the basis of the Kazakh Agro-technical University. Contrary to classical universities, it will operate in close cooperation with territorial units in every agricultural region as well as private farms in order to share the best technological solutions with producers.

On May 23, President Nazarbayev opened the sixth annual session of the Astana Economic Forum. This high-level gathering saw participation from several Nobel Prize laureates in economics, former and acting political leaders, such as Italy’s former Prime Minister Romano Prodi, and UN officials, including the chairman of the 67th session of the UN General Assembly, Vuk Jeremic. Although former U.S. President Bill Clinton was initially expected to attend, his name never appeared on the distinguished speakers’ list. This year’s novelty was the organization of a special panel dubbed the World Anti-crisis Conference, held for the first time on the margins of the Astana Forum. It featured, among other famous guests, the disgraced ex-chief of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who delivered a lecture regarding the current economic and debt crisis in Europe. As in previous years, Nazarbayev called on world leaders to

implement deep reforms of their countries' financial sectors. He also proposed to expand the activities of the Astana Economic

Forum's G-Global online platform to ensure a better exchange of ideas on how to improve global economic governance.

## UNCERTAIN APPLICATION OF JUSTICE AFTER GEORGIA'S MAY 17 DEMONSTRATIONS

*Eka Janashia*

On May 24, several hundred people gathered in the Deda Ena square of downtown Tbilisi under the slogan "No to Theocracy," to protest the violence in central Tbilisi a week earlier on the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO). Activists of the NGO National Front and its supporters held a simultaneous counter-demonstration in the same square, demanding a ban on [lesbian](#), [gay](#), [bisexual](#), and [transgender](#) (LGBT) propaganda in Georgia. The two rallies were conducted peacefully without any serious incident, thanks to the hundreds of law enforcement personnel standing between the groups to prevent an anticipated clash.

Nevertheless, dedicated supporters of the Georgian Orthodox Church with strong anti-LGBT sentiments verbally insulted anti-theocrats during the rallies, to which the latter did not respond. Famous singers, journalists, photographers, politicians, students and public activists carrying posters stating "Don't beat us on behalf of God" and "I don't want to be ruled by the church," insisted that offenders involved in the May 17 violence be punished.

On that day, several thousand anti-gay protesters, led by Orthodox clergy, attacked a few dozen gay-rights advocates from the organization Identoba aiming to hold an IDAHO rally in the center of Tbilisi. The anti-homophobia rally was scheduled for May 17 at 1pm, outside the former parliament

building at Rustaveli Avenue. An hour earlier, the anti-gay demonstrators equipped with icons and banners stating "Stop Homosexual Propaganda in Georgia" occupied the space, compelling LGBT defenders to move to the Freedom Square located in an adjacent area.

Although police blocked the avenue to prevent anti-gay protesters from relocating to the square, groups led by radical Orthodox priests broke the fragile line of law enforcement officers and rushed towards the LGBT demonstration. As the chaos started, police hurried to escort gay rights activists to several municipal buses and evacuated them from the scene. The exalted crowd, however, flooded Freedom Square and then ran to nearby streets in the hope of finding LGBT representatives. Individuals allegedly affiliated with the gay activists were verbally and physically abused by the radicals. 28 persons, including one journalist, were injured as a result of the violence.

The clash received strong reactions from representatives of the NGO sector, who categorically demanded the immediate punishment of offenders and criticized the ineffectiveness of police, which they say should have done more than evacuating the anti-homophobia activists. An online petition initiated by human rights activists and public figures attracted more than 13,000 signatures.

Addressing President Mikheil Saakashvili, Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili and Parliamentary Chairman David Usupashvili, the petition declared that the violence affected not only IDAHO demonstrators but also Georgian statehood. The signatories of the document claimed that a number of criminal offenses including hooliganism, attacks on police, and infringement on the rights to assembly, speech and equality were committed during the May 17 developments. Ivanishvili was quick to strongly condemn the violence and pledged that the perpetrators “will be dealt with according to the law.”

A few days later, four men were arrested for petty hooliganism and disobeying police and another four individuals, including two Orthodox priests, were charged with encroachment on the right to assembly and manifestation.

The Georgian Dream (GD) parliamentary majority, however, did not provide a unified reaction to the May 17 developments. The chairman of the GD parliamentary majority group, MP Davit Saganelidze blamed the IDAHO rally organizers for performing and intentional provocation while Tina Khidasheli, another GD MP, termed the attack on gay activists an act of vandalism that cannot be justified.

The EU’s special adviser for legal and constitutional reform and human rights in Georgia Thomas Hammarberg said on May 17 that he was disappointed that this right of expression was violently blocked and appealed to the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Ilia II, to use his influence to calm the situation.

On May 16 Patriarch Ilia II [called](#) on the authorities to ban the planned gay rights rally, which he termed a manifestation of “anomaly and disease.” After the events, however, he expressed regret of the “impolite” behavior displayed by the priests.

The May 17 events highlighted the prevalence of anti-gay sentiments and radical Orthodox views in Georgian society. It also demonstrated the weakness of state institutions, which not only failed to prevent the disorder but have also so far been unsuccessful in punishing most of the perpetrators engaging in violence. Despite the extensive breach of the law, only 8 people were found guilty while a significant amount of video footage highlighting the dramatic incident was available to the investigation.

Although human rights activists and the civil sector vigorously challenge the Church’s dominance and seek to maintain Georgia’s secular statehood, the Orthodox Church is increasing its influence in the country’s political life. It annually receives around US\$15 million from the state budget and additionally takes advantage of tax-exempt trade. More importantly, according to various polls, the church enjoys the highest public trust rating among all institutions in Georgia. Thus, restricting the church’s influence is a highly sensitive issue to the Georgian government. The activation of Orthodox doctrines, especially in light of the high unemployment rate and social-economic discontent, undermines liberal and democratic values in Georgia and contributes to further polarization of the public.

## RUSSIA ACCUSES AZERBAIJAN OF FRAUDULENT EUROVISION VOTE

*Mina Muradova*

A diplomatic row has emerged between Russia and Azerbaijan over "stolen" points that Azerbaijan allegedly gave to its northern neighbor during the Eurovision song contest held in Malmo, Sweden, on May 18. This year, the talk of politicization of the annual competition of European pop music reached its peak. Turkey refused to participate in the contest by claiming that the latest rules in the voting system, the 50%-50% combination of jury voting and phone voting, are unfair and that the involvement of a jury would negatively affect Turkey's points.

However, this year's main scandal involved Azerbaijan and Russia. During the presentation of Azerbaijan's votes, a Russian female anchor could not hide her amazement at the list of countries receiving points from Azerbaijan: "It is impossible, no point to Russia?! We should check it." Later, some well-known Russian artists summing up the results said that Azerbaijan would regret this. Russia's entry in this year's Eurovision, "What If," sung by Dina Garipova, came in fifth.

Azerbaijan came in second and received the most "12 points" this year, from ten countries including Russia. In addition, Azeri singer Farid Mammadov won an Artistic Award given to the best artist after a vote by Eurovision commentators.

Immediately after the contest Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev ordered an investigation and the national broadcaster Ictimai revealed that viewers' votes put Garipova in second place in Azerbaijan's list in addition to the jury's support. According to this data, Russia should have received 10

points from Azerbaijan. "We sincerely hope that this incident, possibly initiated by certain interest groups, will not cast a shadow over the brotherly relations of the Russian and Azerbaijani peoples," said Camil Guliyev, Head of Ictimai TV.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov slammed the "outrageous" incident at a press conference in Moscow with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov on May 21: "Russia became outraged over how Eurovision votes for its entrant disappeared during a voting process in Azerbaijan." Yet, he noted that any deterioration in relations between the two countries is out of the question. "When 10 points are stolen from our participant, there is cause for concern," Lavrov said, adding that "this outrageous action will not remain without a response." He also stressed that he would decide on a proper course of action after receiving the results of an investigation into the matter.

Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Russia Polad Bulbuloglu noted that the incident is "either a technical failure or elementary provocation." In an interview to Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, he noted that three of Azerbaijan's mobile phone operators registered the Russian singer as receiving among the highest votes. Bulbuloglu said that all three operators opened their data under a court decision, showing that the companies Azercell, Bakcell and Narmobile respectively received 1,677, 380, and 112 votes for Garipova. "I am a creative person; I can tell you it cannot be possible that Azerbaijan gave no vote for the singer from Russia. We have common

cultural roots. Many people in Azerbaijan were outraged,” Bulbuloglu told News.az. “I want to stress that every call is money. Why should one call cost nearly 1.5 dollars? Azerbaijan gave Dina more than 2,000 votes. Where are this money and these voices? Let the European Broadcasting Union respond!”

An executive supervisor of the Eurovision Song Contest, Jon Ola Sand, ended all the discussions about the accuracy of the final result with an official statement published on eurovision.tv: “We believe that the Song Contest’s apolitical spirit is a cornerstone of its enduring success, and we will do all we can to protect it.” The combination of phone and jury votes actually did not result in a top 10 position for Russia in the overall result from Azerbaijan, he noted. “Therefore, Azerbaijan awarded Russia no points – a result confirmed by a notary onsite, by our voting partner Digame and by an independent observer from PwC. This now means that the Azeri Jury placed Russia so low down in their rankings that despite Russia being second in the televote they did not come overall in the Azeri Top 10.”

Despite the complaints, the extra 10 points that Russia may have lost would not have made a difference in the final results, as Russia finished 17 points behind Norway. Many Azerbaijanis, terming the investigation “ridiculous” and “silly,”

preferred to calmly ignore it. “Why should they [the authorities] do this? It is just a song contest. We have to keep silent and not politicize the issue ... It is a shame,” said 38-year-old Nigar Guliyeva.

Amid the scandal with Russia, the Azerbaijani public has generally ignored another brewing scandal – an online report from a Lithuanian news outlet report that Azerbaijan allegedly bought votes for Eurovision. The news agency said it had videotaped a meeting where two Russian-speaking men offered money to Lithuanians for their votes in favor of the Azerbaijan contestant. A group of students also claimed to have been approached by men who offered them €20 each to vote multiple times for a contestant. Those recruited were given SIM-cards to vote as many times as possible within 15 minutes. A supervisor was assigned to every group to check the results and give the payment.

Jon Ola Sand responded on this video that there is no proof that this took place, but the European Broadcasting Union says in a press release that they will investigate whether Azerbaijan really did buy votes from other participating countries. “EBU will look further into these specific allegations to see if there is substance to it and if any specific measures have to be taken in the future.”