

# INFO SCO

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THE SCO SUMMIT  
IN BISHKEK  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2013

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It is impossible to ensure security and stability in the region  
without fulfilling tasks of economic development



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# FROM SECURITY TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION

*Almazbek Atambayev, President of Kyrgyzstan*



## REPUBLIC OF KYRGYZSTAN

The Republic of Kyrgyzstan, as one of the founders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, attaches primary importance to comprehensive cooperation within the SCO. As the presiding country, Kyrgyzstan, together with other member states, is taking effort to further strengthen the Organization, deepen interaction on regional security and counteraction to threats and challenges of the modern world, to intensify trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

The attractiveness of the SCO is due to the Organization's broad geographic reach and aggregate demographic potential, comprehensive

approach to the problems of security and cooperation; it unites states and nations that have time-tested friendly and good neighborly relations, and close partnership contacts. This predetermines the success of the SCO's gradual development, its huge potential for comprehensive development in line with the goals and tasks laid out in the Organization's founding documents. It is also important to note the open and non-confrontational nature of its activities that denies the bloc approach.

It is impossible to ensure security and stability in the region without fulfilling tasks of economic development and improving the population's living standards. Given the difficult situation in the global economy, demand for interaction in the trade and economic sphere is growing. In this connection,

I see one of the Organization's primary goals as increasing its economic attractiveness and making its activities practical. An early launch of big joint economic projects that are of regional importance seems especially relevant today. We hope that Kyrgyzstan's presidency in the SCO has allowed consolidating our joint efforts to achieve our common goals in areas ranging from security problems to regional integration.

The agenda of the Bishkek summit on September 13, 2013, inspires optimism and certainty about the SCO further growing as an international regional organization of a new format, increasing the efficiency of its mechanism and continuing work on major areas that have been announced recently.

# KYRGYZSTAN, MOUNTAINOUS LAND OF ALA-TOO...

*Chinara Asanova  
For InfoSHOS*

What could be easier than to talk about one's homeland, it may seem... But it is hidden labor of a soul – to find colorful and succinct words that would be worthy of your motherland. Kyrgyzstan is a stunningly beautiful mountainous country. Within it, the western and central ranges of the Tian Shan meet the northern part of the Pamir, and borders with neighboring states go across solemn peaks.

The spirit of mountaineers is freedom-loving and full of dignity. Our people are not only proud and free in their mentality, but also wise, kind, hospitable and hard-working.

## ROOTS

The roots of Kyrgyz forefathers go back to the ancient strata of civilization. Credible Chinese chroniclers maintain that the Kyrgyz were first mentioned in records in 201 BC. The history of the nation's establishment and development is filled with self-affirmation, struggle

for their place under the sun and for freedom.

We are as unique as our beautiful land. No, we are not perfect and our life is so far full of problems and troubles. But people of Kyrgyzstan believe in their inalienable right for

**a dignified and prosperous life. After all, it was God's will to give us the luxurious land lying above the clouds, Ala-Too...**

Yes, it is both easy and difficult to describe one's home country. You risk being partial. The country can be



blooming and prosperous or poor and struggling, but it is still the only one and you love it best. You are better aware of its shortcomings than any foreign expert. You resent certain things in your people's reality. But, if necessary, you will protect every foot of this land with all your might and shout yourself hoarse defending its honor and dignity. Thinking about it, is our motherland to blame for any of our troubles? Of course it is not, it is we that have failed to build a dignified and sensible society, to determine an efficient way of progress on the beautiful and generous land given to us by the Creator.

Our people are ancient. Credible Chinese chroniclers maintain that the Kyrgyz were first mentioned in records in 201 BC. At the end of the 15th century AD, our ancestors ousted Mongols from the territory of Naryn and Kashgar and spent another fifty years deflecting their attacks. By the 16th century, the Kyrgyz ethnicity had been formed completely. The contemporary borders of our country were determined two centuries

later, but afterwards the Kyrgyz had to survive the ruling of the Khanate of Kokand and they chose to join the Russian Empire.

During the Soviet era, our country got an opportunity for rapid development of industry, agriculture, culture and education. The population's literacy was 15% in 1926, but reached 82% by 1939. Yet even as part of the Soviet state, the Kyrgyz struggled for preserving their unique traditions, culture and historical legacy of their ancestors. Many statesmen and educators of Kyrgyzstan lost their lives to Stalin's repressions.

## IN SEARCH OF TRUE INDEPENDENCE

After the Soviet Union's breakup, Kyrgyzstan gained sovereignty. It was 1991. But it was still far from true independence. Kyrgyzstan was to live through the euphoria of democratic

freedoms, the difficult period of economic decline, power usurpation by the first president, people's protests that grew into a revolution, expectations from which never came true either.

The second president's term in office brought even more poverty, rampant corruption, economic stagnation and criminalization of society and authorities. All these processes together resulted in an almost complete loss of all democratic achievements in the country.

And once again, my freedom-loving people showed their intolerance of injustice and lawlessness. Revolutionary protests in April 2010 brought about another change of regime in Kyrgyzstan.

It took a lot of effort, patience and time to bring the country back to the constitutional path. The Kyrgyz society wants to live in a prosperous state governed by the rule of law, and we are willing to pay for this dream!

## MOUNTAINOUS LAND

Crossing our country from north southwards, you can see winter and summer, spring and autumn, travel through all climatic zones in just two or three days. "The mountainous land above the clouds," as it is often called, lies across the mountainous ranges of the Tian Shan and the Pamir-Altai. Mountains take up more than three fourths of the country's territory. There is not a single place that would go down to the sea level - the country lies at at least 500 m above it, with some peaks rising several thousands meters high.

The grand snowy peaks of Victory, Lenin and Khan Tengri, celebrated by poets, are truly fascinating. Our country has over 80 inaccessible mountain peaks. Mountains, supporting clouds and captured by huge glaciers, give birth to springs that gather into gushing streams that in turn form rivers with perfectly clear water. The south of the country is covered with grand old-growth hazel woods with trees that are over a thousand years old. And you can see nature-woven carpets of crimson poppies and tulips on Alpine meadows...

These crystal sources feed mountainous non-freezing Lake Issyk Kul, which is full of clear, slightly salty water. Issyk Kul is the invaluable blue gem of the Kyrgyz land, a feature of legends, the love and pride of Kyrgyz people.

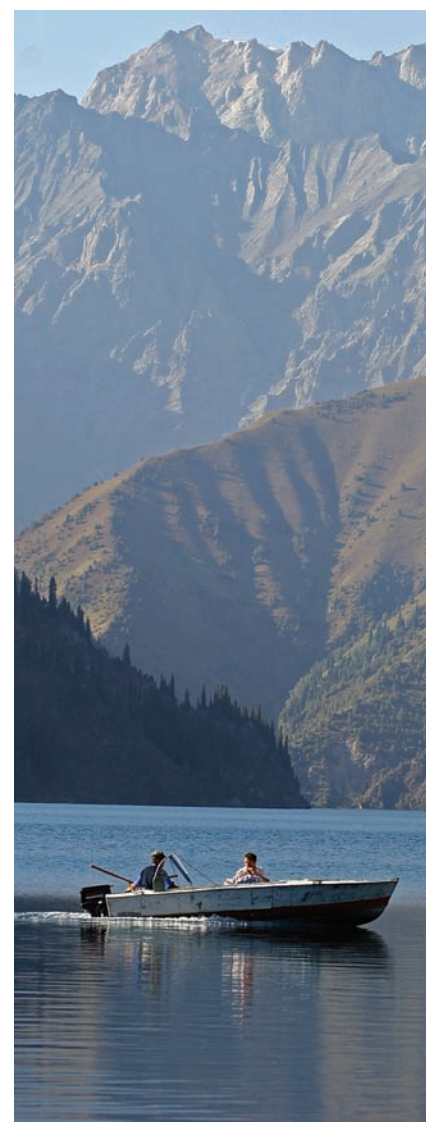


## KYRGYZ PEOPLE HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE POOR

Our country has a huge, not yet realized potential for development of environmentally clean agriculture. Plenty of warmth, light and water allow growing warm-weather crops - grapes, peaches, apricots, melons and gourds, as well as cotton.

Kyrgyzstan's reserves represent the entire Mendeleev Table, as professional geologists put it. There are huge reserves of coal, lead, molybdenum, wolfram, quicksilver, rare-earth, non-ferrous and precious metals. The country also has huge hydropower reserves: they are estimated at 142 billion kWh, and only 10% of it is being used. The country has discovered oil and natural gas fields, and its gold deposits could make it a leading global gold producer.

Moreover, we have significant intellectual riches: educated population, a strong class of researchers and intelligentsia and, of course, a solid cultural foundation. Here it is relevant to mention one well-known Kyrgyz name - Chinghiz Aitmatov, an internationally recognized literature classic, whose



books are published in millions of copies in tens of languages.

Given these starting conditions, the Kyrgyz simply have no right to be poor, as President Almazbek Atambayev correctly pointed out. So far, the country hasn't reached prosperity because it didn't have effective government that would enjoy people's trust and a common goal that would consolidate society.

We believe that we will succeed now; we now know that we need to work diligently and purposefully. Then we will be able to live beautifully and worthily, as our magnificent land calls for...

# THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION AHEAD OF BISHKEK SUMMIT: TASKS AT HAND



*Kirill Barsky  
The Russian president's envoy for SCO affairs  
Russia's national coordinator in the SCO  
Ambassador-at-large*

The specifics of the moment for the region are determined by several important factors. This is, first of all, the situation in Afghanistan. After years of foreign military presence in the country, problems have not diminished.

The current situation in the world is not especially optimistic. International relations are going through a rough patch caused by consequences of globalization on the one hand and more frequent uses of power politics and ignoring of the basic norms of the international law on the other.

Disorganization of global management objectively comes laden with a dangerous destabilizing charge. But subjective factors are also at play here, such as fixation on outdated bloc approaches, unwillingness to take into account a partner's interests, use of double standards, habitual reliance on force, excessive national ambitions and ill-considered moves. As a result, new crises keep breaking out one after another, and the foundations of established regimes come falling down both in the East and in the West. Meanwhile real security problems, both traditional threats and challenges of

the new generation, remain and are even growing stronger, requiring that the international community take collective action. But it is increasingly difficult to achieve this at the global level. These underlying processes increase the growing trend towards regionalization of international life.

The economic decline in industrially developed countries, financial problems and turbulence on global markets are pushing governments towards closer international cooperation to ensure sustainable social and economic development. This desire is combined with regional integration processes that have become stronger and increasingly require adequate regulation.

All this encourages regional organizations to take more responsibility for developments on their territories. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is not an exception.

## SPECIAL MOMENT

**The specifics of the moment for the region are determined by several important factors. This is, first of all, the situation in Afghanistan. After years of foreign military presence in the country, problems have not diminished.**

The territory of Afghanistan still emanates threats of terrorism and extremism, different separatist groups are active there and drug trafficking has not decreased. The forthcoming withdrawal of international security forces from Afghanistan, reformatting of the US and NATO military presence there, accelerated transfer of security functions to the Afghan army and police (which are obviously not ready to take over this overwhelming burden) raise a lot of questions in neighboring countries. They are first of all worried whether

This is understandable: threats of new generation are becoming increasingly interconnected, feeding each other. Terrorist groups are coalescing with drug lords, extremists and misanthropist hackers, financial swindlers and smugglers, engineers of color revolutions and criminals.

Afghanistan would again slide in the abyss of power vacuum, civil war, inter-ethnic split and free rein for terrorists and drug lords. Obviously, Central Asian states that border on Afghanistan are not excited about this prospect. Everyone understands that they should be ready for any turn of events.

Yet another factor is the consequence of the "Arab spring." It seems that there are forces in the world that are interested in Arab revolutions not calming down but spreading farther eastwards. Clearly, the SCO member states are concerned about developments in neighboring regions - North Africa and the Middle East, they are worried about the ongoing conflict in Syria, alarmed by the prospect of destabilization in other neighboring countries. This to a large extent explains their desire to use SCO mechanisms to ensure regional security.

The third factor is economic development of Central Asian countries that is becoming a priority. On the one hand, the SCO region has been doing fairly well and its members' performance is quite high. Nevertheless, the social and economic situation in some countries, first of all in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, is far from ideal. Their economies remain vulnerable due to their structure and the depth of the problems these countries are dealing with. This is why the SCO's emphasis

in the economy should be on ensuring sustainable social and economic development of its member states, first of all, those in Central Asia.

This is the global and regional background the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has to operate with. Of course, unexpected developments, new trends and changing conditions can bring necessary adjustments to the traditional algorithm. But in the SCO, these adjustments do not change the fundamentals of the organization's activities, they allow making its tasks more relevant to the present day.

## TASK No.1: SECURITY AND STABILITY

One of the SCO's key tasks in the current situation is strengthening of mechanisms for security cooperation. Someone may ask: what else needs to be done if the SCO has already shaped an extensive legal framework for counteracting terrorism, separatism and extremism, drug trafficking, organized crime, cyber terrorism and cyber crime? The SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure has been set up and is working actively, with headquarters in Tashkent. A system has been established for regular meetings of heads of law enforcement agencies, expert meetings, joint operations, exchange

of information and personnel training. The organization has adopted the Regulations on Political and Diplomatic Measures and Mechanism of Response to Events Jeopardizing Regional Peace, Security and Stability. This is true. But this is no longer enough, it is necessary to move forward.

At the SCO summit in Beijing in June 2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin came up with an initiative to set up a universal center for counteracting threats and challenges to SCO members' security on the basis of the RATS. The initiative was supported by Russia's partners: at its meeting in Tashkent on March 29, 2013, the RATS Council endorsed the proposal to submit for the SCO leaders' consideration a draft decision of the Council of SCO Heads of State on working out the concept of such a center.

What is a SCO universal center? It should be a body to ensure systemic work on the entire range of security issues, including anti-terrorism, anti-drug and anti-crime cooperation between defense ministries, international information security. To achieve this, the RATS Executive Committee is supposed to receive additional powers. At the same time, while the center is being set up, the RATS will function as usual. There are no plans to dismantle the existing, carefully built and well-proven constructs: the three-level pyramid of anti-drug cooperation, the mechanism of interior ministers' meetings and interaction on anti-crime efforts, the SCO working group on international information security.

The six SCO members agree that they need coordinated complex effort to quickly and adequately respond to potential emergencies and multiplying problems.

This is understandable: threats of new generation are becoming increasingly interconnected, feeding each other. Terrorist groups are coalescing with drug lords, extremists and misanthropist hackers, financial swindlers and smugglers, engineers of color revolutions and criminals.

On the other hand, past methods are not always suitable in today's situation. For example, it is becoming increasingly obvious that prevention of terrorism and extremism, of radicalization of the public mood is the task not only for law enforcers, but for society in the broadest meaning of the word. Under current circumstances, methods of "soft power" are especially relevant: involving public and non-government organizations, religious unions, youth movements, as well as educational establishments, mass media and the business community in these efforts.

The SCO has set itself the task of intensifying work on regional security. The practice of regular consultations between deputy foreign ministers of the SCO and observer countries should be continued and expanded, by complementing high-level meetings with expert meetings, establishing of cooperation on fight against terrorism and drugs and on Afghanistan's affairs with the Collective Security Treaty Organization and other foreign partners.

Obviously, the SCO will have to play first fiddle in assisting Afghanistan with issues ranging from security and national reconciliation to restoration of the country's economy. But it is in the organization's interests to ensure that stability and order return to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as soon as possible, that it no longer harbors Al Qaeda terrorists and militants. The Afghan authorities need help achieving

this, all the more so as Kabul is sincerely interested in cooperation with the SCO.

## AFGAN DRUGS: COMMON ENEMY

The most acute problem for the entire SCO is drugs smuggled from Afghanistan. It was discussed in detail at a regular meeting of heads of corresponding SCO agencies in Bishkek. Meticulous analysis of the current situation with drug production in Afghanistan and their export to Central Asia, Russia and China allowed heads of anti-drug agencies to reach important agreements on new measures for strengthening interaction among the six SCO members. They include improvement of mechanisms for cooperation and coordination, organization of joint operations, including between territorial anti-drug units in border areas, strengthening of the anti-drug potential of Central Asian states that are at the fore front of the struggle with this cunning enemy.

It was said at the meeting that in order to cope with the problem of Afghan drug, it was not enough to simply catch drug mules. It was necessary to consider replacing Afghanistan's established drug economy with a healthy economic model, ousting opium planting with development of normal agriculture, eliminating incentives for criminal activities. Efforts to destroy poppy fields and to find and destroy drug labs are definitely needed, but they should be complemented with forced industrialization of Afghanistan, upbeat economic construction and resolution of social problems. It is a common task for the entire global community, but regional countries, including the SCO members, can help Kabul as much as possible.

The SCO member states want more active mutual support in issues related to protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity, security and stability. The SCO is not alone in trying to deflect threats. There are several other efficient mechanisms in Eurasia, and they all have their strengths. This is first of all the CSTO, which maintains peace and security in its area of responsibility and, being a defense alliance, has an opportunity to ensure security with military means. Interaction between the SCO and the CSTO has become extremely relevant.

Central Asia has other interesting organizations that could become the SCO's potential partners: the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council, the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (the Shanghai Six has already established ties with the UN Office on Drug and Crime and CARICC, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center), CICMA, the Eurasian Group on combating money laundering and financing of terrorism (EAG). Useful projects are being implemented by the OSCE, and it would be helpful to establish cooperation with it, too.

Finally, the SCO is a member of the Istanbul Process for assistance to regional security and cooperation in the name of security and stable Afghanistan, which has received the metaphoric name of the Heart of Asia. The SCO has everything necessary to make a real contribution to implementing measures of trust developed within the Istanbul process and simultaneously invite the region to participate in its struggle against terrorism, drug trafficking and crime.

The SCO should more actively involve its observers - Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia - in efforts

Integration in Eurasia is being developed through the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union that is being set up, and these organizations should establish partnership relations with the SCO. The SCO, in its turn, needs to find a unique niche in the processes of regional economic life.

to strengthen security in the region. These countries have shown interest in joint work. The SCO needs to take more active steps to respond to this interest.

## ECONOMIC COOPERATION: SCO's SECOND PILLAR

Today, economy decides a lot. Hence new focuses in the SCO's activities: the Shanghai organization is paying increased attention and applying more effort to ensure economic stability and practical cooperation in implementation of mutually beneficial economic projects.

Cooperation between the SCO economies has been in the organization's sight virtually since its foundation in 2001. The program of economic cooperation between the member states was endorsed back in 2003. A lot of documents have been signed – inter-government and inter-departmental agreements, memorandums, programs and plans. There are mechanisms of meetings between ministers responsible for foreign politics and foreign trade, transport, science and research, agriculture, education, healthcare, culture, etc. The SCO has set up the Business Council and the Interbank Association, which are both quite successful. Each of these structures is

working to bring business communities of different SCO states closer to each other, find their common interests, initiate investment projects and assist with their implementation.

A remarkable characteristic of the recent time is the emergence of a significant number of feasible projects within the SCO. Overall, project development seems the most promising area of economic cooperation within the SCO, since the alliance has never set itself any integration goals.

Integration in Eurasia is being developed through the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union that is being set up, and these organizations should establish partnership relations with the SCO. The SCO, in its turn, needs to find a unique niche in the processes of regional economic life.

A new tool has appeared for working in the economic area, and that is the List of Events for project development. It was adopted at the meeting of the Council of SCO heads of government in Bishkek in December 2012. The list consists of about 30 different projects, from road construction to cooperation between individual research centers. They include the pilot project of trade in national currencies of the SCO member states on the Moscow Exchange without the US dollar's mediation, the setup

of the SCO high-speed data highway, development of geodynamic monitoring technology for forecasting dangerous geological processes on the basis of the International Geodynamic Testing Area in Bishkek, the setup of joint ventures for storage, processing and shipment of agricultural products on the basis of the logistics center in Saratov, etc. It might seem that the number of projects on the List is quite modest, but this is just a beginning. The list will be changing all the time, with new projects added and those completed excluded.

An increasing number of projects are being implemented on the corporate level as opposed to the inter-government format. Notably, a multimodal logistics center is being built in the south of the Chelyabinsk region, ideas are being considered to build industrial parks manufacturing LED light bulbs in Russia and Kyrgyzstan, to construct small and medium-sized hydropower plants in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, to set up platforms for electronic trade, to found an SCO high-tech center, etc.

To implement these projects, the Shanghai Six needs its own sources of financing. It expects to find them through the mechanism of financial support to project activities, something experts are working on at the moment. At present, they are considering several concepts: the setup of a special SCO account, a small financial institution to finance feasibility studies, a big SCO development bank that would provide loans for projects' implementation and broader use of the opportunities of the SCO Interbank Association.

Profitability of trade and economic cooperation to a significant extent depends on availability of convenient transport communication, optimal routes for cargos and passengers

that would encourage development of business ties and reduce costs. Transport is one of the pivotal fasteners that ensure the region's unity. A lot is already being done in this respect. At the summit in Bishkek, the parties are expected to sign the Agreement on ensuring favorable conditions for international car shipments.

The document will open up a number of important routes for carriers from the SCO, including the thoroughfare from the Atlantic (St Petersburg, Russia) to the Pacific (Lianyungang, China). This, in turn, will create conditions for creating the West Europe - China transport corridor. The E-40 highway is being built that will connect Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan with China. A program is being developed to coordinate road development in the SCO.

Power generation can become a promising area of economic cooperation in the SCO. At present, work is being completed to launch the Energy Club of the SCO member states, observers and dialog partners. It is expected to become an informal club for government officials and also businessmen and researchers that are interested in energy cooperation in the SCO.

Significant hopes are vested in innovation and high technology. On Kazakhstan's initiative, SCO experts are completing work on a draft agreement on cooperation on science and technology. One of the latest joint achievements of Russia and China that has attracted interest of a majority of the SCO countries is a project to create a mobile satellite communication system that envisages launch of several artificial satellites and construction of ground infrastructure. The work will give the SCO its own independent

center for signal transmission, telecom channels support and ground positioning of objects. A new promising area of cooperation is youth entrepreneurship. In November 2012, the Altai territory successfully hosted the International Forum on Entrepreneurship and Border Cooperation. It was initiated by the SCO Youth Council, a dynamic structure that is full of ideas and was founded in 2009 on President Putin's initiative. Issues discussed at the forum ranged from innovations and "green economy" to propaganda of good neighborly relations on the Internet and simplifying of the visa regime for young entrepreneurs and students.

Russia's regions and regions of other SCO members are showing increasing interest in the SCO. This opens great prospects for mounting inter-regional and border cooperation. The Russian Foreign Ministry has received different proposals from Bashkiria, the Saratov region, the Chelyabinsk region, the Altai territory, the Siberian Agreement inter-regional union and the Our Home Altai organization.

A real gold mine is the sphere of tourism, where the first sprouts of multilateral cooperation can already be seen. The Association of Tourist Operators of Russia, China, Kazakhstan and Mongolia involved in the Great Tea Way project has been set up. In other words, economy is becoming the SCO's second pillar after security.

## DIFFERENT CULTURES, BUT COMMON SPACE

The SCO is also a huge cultural realm. Nations in Eurasia have always

tended towards trying to understand other cultures and traditions, towards exchanges between the art people. Today, development of humanitarian cooperation needs a new level of tasks.

Talk should be not of simple interaction, but of movement towards a common educational, cultural, information and intellectual space. This is the way the European Union went, the way ASEAN and multilateral alliances in Latin America are going. Countries in our region have as many reasons to build alliances.

The SCO member states have numerous initiatives in the cultural and humanitarian sphere. Some are being implemented, while others are at the preparatory stage. Studies have begun at the SCO Network University, which unites a total of 69 universities in its member states and one observer state, Belarus. In May, the Russian People's Friendship University held another SCO Education Week titled "Education without Borders", during which representatives of key universities of the SCO University signed an agreement on joint master programs.

The SCO countries have been developing cultural ties for a long time, and they are yielding priceless results in form of broader contacts between people, learning about each other and spiritual development. Very interesting conferences titled "Dialog of CIS and SCO languages and cultures in the 21st centuries" have been organized for several years in the row. Russia has proposed holding regular culture festivals of SCO peoples.

An initiative is being discussed to establish an inter-civilization dialog between the SCO countries and their closest neighbors: after all, Russia, China, Central Asian states, the Middle Eastern states, India and Mongolia represent a significant part of world civilizations, and cooperation between them is of utmost importance for Eurasia.

One area in which the SCO member states are already cooperating actively is foreign politics. The current international situation requires increasingly close coordination between the six countries in international organizations and regional affairs. This is in line with both common interests and each member's interests. When countries speak together on the international stage, their voice acquires a new volume.

In the rapidly changing world, the SCO needs to further pursue its external connections... Such contacts are developing. Notably, SCO Secretary General Dmitry Mezentsev is very active in this area. In the last six months, he attended the open UN Security Council's meeting on Afghanistan, the OSCE Security Day in Vienna, and the third ministerial conference of the Istanbul Process in Alma-Ata. On the sidelines

of the latter, Mezentsev and the Turkish foreign minister signed a memorandum on giving Turkey the status of a SCO dialog partner.

Remarkably, not only its closes neighbors in the region, but even Azerbaijan, Armenia and Bangladesh are showing interest in the SCO; these countries have applied for an observer's status. Some time ago, Ukraine asked for the status of a dialog partner. This is a definite recognition of the SCO's success, attractiveness of its political philosophy and practical opportunities. At the same time, it is a chance to take yet another step towards shaping a new consortium of countries in Eurasia that would be united by a common goal - ensuring steady peace, security and stability.

There will be obvious dividends from cooperation with the SCO for countries seeking the dialog partner status: they would receive the Shanghai Six's guaranteed political support, get access to additional resources for their economic growth and find reliable footing for pursuing an independent foreign policy.

Of course, the SCO needs a proactive, even aggressive information policy - a policy that would be politically coordinated, professionally developed and equipped with adequate channels for spreading information. For the outside world to know about the SCO, information about it should appear in mass media frequently. The organization needs impartial and fair coverage. Information about its successes and problems should regularly and systemically reach not only political scientists and economists, but also general public in the member states and abroad.

It is important that people should know what the SCO is doing, what problems it is dealing with, what concerns its member states, what its place in the international power balance is. Responsibility for this vests with both the SCO member states, their corresponding agencies and state-owned mass media and with the SCO permanent bodies - the Secretariat and the RATS Executive Committee. It is unacceptable for the organization that has reason to claim a leading role in global and regional cooperation to keep a low profile in the information realm.

# INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY OPENS ITS DOORS

*Sultan Zhanaidarov*



Participants of the First School.  
Kuskovo, Moscow, July 2013.

## INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In the middle of July, the Moscow Humanitarian University held the first study course of the International Summer School of Public Diplomacy. It was organized for leaders of non-

government organizations of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and countries that have the status of an SCO observer or dialog partner.

The event was initiated and arranged by the Public Diplomacy Fund and the independent organization For Support of Civil Society, with assistance from the

Russian president's administration, the Russian Foreign Ministry, the Federal Agency for CIS affairs, the Gorchakov Fund for Public Diplomacy Support, the Russian Public Chamber, etc.

The school was designed to improve the competence of NGO leaders in the sphere of public diplomacy of the SCO member states, its observers and dialog

partners. The area of competence is first of all related to practical implementation of the principles of the "Shanghai spirit" proclaimed in the organization's fundamental documents.

The school's main goal is to give its students knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the mission of a public diplomat in the SCO and beyond. SCO public diplomats should

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, etc). They attended lectures and participated in training exercises, role play, project presentations and themed roundtable discussions. The school also organized a themed excursion, Diplomatic Moscow, and different cultural events. At lectures and meetings with experts, different topics were raised, including development of public diplomacy,

implementing answers to the new threats and challenges for the humankind. After the first cycle of studies at the school was over, its students were unanimous: the SCO is a unique association of different civilizations that is based on a new model of international relations. Further development of cooperation within the SCO, its members' common aspiration towards peace will make the Shanghai organization a truly strong and



be able to adequately and efficiently participate in establishing of close multilateral contacts between SCO countries and peoples, development of trade, economic, scientific, technical, humanitarian and cultural cooperation and creation of a stable atmosphere of sustainable peace and friendship, common prosperity and harmony in the region.

The first round of studies at the school gathered over 40 students from 13 countries (Russia,

Eurasia's cyber security, the problem of Afghanistan in the context of the SCO's regional security.

The emergence of the SCO in the global political architecture tipped the balance of power on the international stage in favor of peace and cooperation and changed the very paradigm of international relations, creating preconditions for making them more predictable, streamlined and stable, which has positively influenced the process of searching for and

progressive union of civilizations that will be able to come up with positive and feasible initiatives for shaping the future of the humankind.

The school's main goal is to give its students knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the mission of a public diplomat in the SCO and beyond.

# SCO FORUM: CRUCIAL, ESTABLISHED PUBLIC INSTITUTION

*Dmitry Mezentsev*  
*SCO Secretary General*



The SCO has to a large extent exceeded the expectations of the six countries' leaders that founded this unique organization, which is already seen as one of the most successful international regional projects of the 21st century.

## OVER THE PAST YEARS

The Organization's itinerary has included a lot of important and significant events, one of which was definitely the SCO summit in Beijing in 2012, which adopted the Declaration on Building a Region with Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity, as well as a set of documents on expanding cooperation within the organization.

These documents lay out principled opinions of the SCO member states about strengthening of inter-state relations on conditions of a new, fair and multi-polar world order, their desire to create a space of indivisible security, readiness to move towards innovative and sustainable development and assist the process of universal progress

based on their countries' reality. They also named specific measures taken to achieve their goals in the area of international cooperation.

The summit endorsed the main directions of the strategy for the organization's development, a conceptual view of the gradual move forward. At the previous, 7th, SCO Forum it was emphasized several times that the Organization had come a very long way from the initial concept proposed by its founding members in 2001 to the practical, broad, multilateral and beneficial cooperation we see today. The SCO has to a large extent exceeded the expectations of the six countries' leaders that founded this unique organization, which is already seen as one of the most successful international regional projects of the 21st century,

an organization that demonstrates unprecedented coalescence of its member states' national interests and the interests of the organization in general.

I am absolutely positive that assessments, proposals, initiatives and, perhaps, criticisms voiced at the forthcoming 8th SCO Forum will become a common legacy and will add to the organization's creativity bank.

The SCO has noted a trend towards aggravation of such threats as terrorism, separatism, extremism, illegal drug trafficking and trans-border crime, as well as problems related to destabilization and crime in different regions of the world. It would seem that development of high technology, improved comfort and living standards

of hundreds of millions of people brought about by implementation of the new technology and new engineering solutions should make the world both a more convenient place to live in and also a safer and fairer one. Unfortunately, this is not what we have been witnessing in the 21st century. This also presents a certain set of threats and challenges for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which has never forgotten about its fundamental priority - ensuring of regional security.

Given all this, active diplomatic efforts to prevent emergencies and jointly respond to them, with reliance on a common position on regional security, remain a relevant task.

A new version of the Regulations on Political and Diplomatic Measures and Mechanism of Response to Events Jeopardizing Regional Peace, Security and Stability was adopted at the Beijing summit. Also adopted was a program for cooperation between the SCO member states on fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism for 2013-2015, which significantly expands the legal framework for the countries' interaction in the security sphere.

Not long ago, Tashkent hosted a meeting of the Council of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure. It showed unity in approaches and unconditional confirmation of positions of all the six member states. It is an important indicator showing that the SCO's second permanent body, the RATS Executive Committee, has become a very efficient tool for the entire organization that allows analyzing, forecasting and responding to threats and challenges of regional security.

The SCO member states are still trying to find an adequate response to

a new type of international security - information security. Notably, the countries are actively working to promote rules of behavior in this sphere within the United Nations. Not long ago, a delegation of the SCO Secretariat attended the OSCE Security Day that was devoted to the problems of Afghanistan and also participated in an open debate at the UN Security Council that was chaired by the Russian Federation.

## OSCE SECURITY DAY

It should be noted that participation in the OSCE Security Day was definitely an important step for us, given that we do not have formal relations with this organization and do not always agree with assessments made by the OSCE.



SCO Summit

The SCO member states are still trying to find an adequate response to a new type of international security - information security.



Nevertheless, the Istanbul Process, which is gaining momentum, and the acuteness of the Afghan problem have allowed us to accept this invitation and to present our point of view in Vienna, which can be summed up as follows: the Afghan problem cannot be resolved by linear, simplified means, there can be no single recipe for it, and there should definitely be no military solution.

Using the example of Afghanistan and drawing upon the speech by Cheng Guoping, who comprehensively and wisely assessed the history, cultural traditions and mentalities of our countries, we also want to say that neither a unipolar world nor simplified schemes of resolving complicated conflicts and ways for resolving problems that have accumulated over a long time can be successful. It is important to

adopt a well-considered, weighted and consistent approach that will take into account the opinions of many parties.

This is the practice adopted by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It was discussed at a meeting of the UN Secretary General and the SCO Secretary General. Mr Ban Ki-moon said he knew the organization well and saw how efficiently many of the SCO mechanisms functioned. This is the result of our countries' joint effort. Mr Ban Ki-moon emphasized that he highly appreciated the SCO program designed to fight the real threat presented by illegal drug trafficking and supported the plan for the program's implementation in the next five years. We heard requests and proposals that will allow bringing new practical content to the earlier signed Memorandum between the SCO Secretariat and the UN Secretariat. As the UN Secretary General said, the SCO is definitely a promising and encouraging international regional organization. The decision made at the Beijing summit to

give the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan the status of an SCO observer is of crucial importance. The SCO gained praise for its approaches to the Afghan settlement spelled out in the Beijing Declaration, which emphasizes that the SCO members advocate building an independent, neutral, peaceful and prosperous state in Afghanistan, free of terrorism and drug trafficking. At the same time, it supports the United Nations' central organizing role in coordinating efforts aimed at the Afghan settlement.

As is well known, the International Security Assistance Force is expected to withdraw from the country by the end of 2014, leaving Afghanistan's executive authorities fully responsible for the country's security problems. The threats of terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime coming from this country remain serious challenges for all countries in the region. One of the crucial tools for resolving such conflicts seems to be the Istanbul Process, which is

gaining momentum and will soon hold a conference in Kazakhstan, an active participant in all SCO processes. The Foreign Ministries of Kazakhstan and Afghanistan have undertaken the key functions of organizers and chairmen of the 3rd Conference of the Istanbul Process in Alma-Ata.

The SCO countries are geographically and historically direct neighbors of Afghanistan, and this is a crucial factor that needs to be taken into account when working towards the settlement. The SCO member states advocate broader interaction within the organization, going practical in cooperation with the organization's observers - Afghanistan, India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan - and also with its dialog partners - Belarus, Sri Lanka and Turkey. It is important for the SCO to maintain partnership ties with international regional organizations - the United Nations, its specialized institutes and organizations, the CIS, Eurasec, ASEAN, etc.

Here, I believe, it is important to take into account the fact that this cooperation should be based on complete agreement about fundamental principles, we should be building relations only with those organizations that have demonstrated an understanding of international processes or global economic trends that coincides with that of the SCO. It is important to position the organization more broadly. It is important to use such contacts to popularize and promote our stands, proposals and initiatives, to present the organization in general.

We say that informal contacts with the OSCE, the European Union and other partners are ongoing. There shouldn't be any rush here, but working contacts, checks of each other's positions are definitely needed and important, as they help to shape the organization's



Dmitry Mezentsev and Xi Jinping

image, let the global community learn about our organization and allow using these platforms in the interests of strengthening the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's international authority.

Work is under way to coordinate the necessary legal and financial documents and administrative conditions for expanding the organization. Let me emphasize: the expansion terms are always adopted by heads of state on a consensus basis and the process should not be artificially rushed. On the other hand, it should not be stalled for no good reason.

The organization takes significant efforts to create favorable conditions for investment and boosting technical and economic cooperation in the SCO, including in non-commodities sectors, dealing with goods smuggling and protection of intellectual property. Practical measures are taken to develop multilateral cooperation in the financial and economic sphere. SCO heads of government have two times returned to an important and comprehensive document, the Program of Multilateral Economic Cooperation and plans for its implementation.

We have heard justified criticism from our leaders, but also instructions to ensure that work to carry out multilateral projects (involving not just two or three, but five or six parties) should become more loaded and substantial so that the SCO is able to show the world not only its proven unique schemes of interaction, but also similarly unique schemes of economic and financial cooperation. In this regard, it is important that experts have visibly intensified their work to develop efficient financial mechanisms, the SCO Special Account Development Fund and the SCO Development Bank.

Today, we can note and welcome the serious attention paid to economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in research and engineering, innovation, culture, tourism and healthcare, including for ensuring sanitary well-being in the SCO.

The concept of the SCO University is being implemented consistently, the SCO Youth Council is very enterprising, worthy proposals have been made by the Business Council and the Interbank Association, which plays an important part in development of the potential for economic cooperation. It is necessary to further mount interaction between these important institutions of the organization, as well as interactive work with the SCO's permanent bodies.

At the same time, there is a gap between the results and possibilities of the Business Council and the Interbank Association, these very important institutions of the SCO. I believe that it is worth noting the initiative that was voiced at the St Petersburg summit in 2011 and at the Bishkek summit in 2012 about setting up a permanent SCO United Business Cooperation Center that could function as a non-profit partnership.

Everything that will be said, all significant proposals will provide grounds for analysis, for making proposals to parties, for new initiatives and, perhaps, for a report to heads of state ahead of the forthcoming SCO summit in Bishkek. We speak of the Forum as of an established institution, indicator of mature non-government connections within the SCO.

At the same time, we have an opportunity to address the Forum's leaders, researchers and the Forum's organizers asking for serious expert research, because this dynamically developing organization needs to rely on



political science and on a solid expert base.

This is my request to the Forum's participants, even though it is not a formal one; the Forum is definitely our friend that helps us to see and shape a future model that will allow us to avoid potential stumbles and, perhaps, even mistakes, in our practical work.

We expect this SCO Forum to give us interesting proposals with regards to the organization's further development and hope to continue contacts with influential scientists, political scientists, analysts and diplomats that have gathered here and that are taking part in the work of other discussion platforms.

# CENTRAL ASIA: SECURITY THROUGH INTEGRATION



*Irina Dubovitskaya*  
*Staff correspondent for InfoSHOS, Tajikistan*



Given the ongoing crises in the international financial and economic system, integration processes acquire even greater relevance and importance.

## GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS IN CENTRAL EURASIA IN THE XXI CENTURY

In April 2013, the Russian-Tajik (Slavic) University in Dushanbe hosted an international conference titled Central Eurasia's Geopolitical Dynamics in Early 21st Century: Problems of Integration, Security, Interaction between Civilizations. It was initiated and organized by the University's Center of Geopolitical Studies and the International Eurasian Movement (Moscow).

The pool of participants was varied: the event was attended by ambassadors of Russia, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan, representatives of diplomatic missions of Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Belarus,

Turkey and China, representatives of several international organizations and NGOs, analysts, political scientists and economists from Tajikistan, Russia, China and Afghanistan, representatives of the peacekeeping troops, Tajikistan's National Security Committee and teachers and students of Tajik universities.

During the conference, the participants listened to over 30 research reports dealing with the military and political situation in the Greater Middle East and economic and cultural problems of Central Asian countries. Significant attention was paid to forecasts of regional developments after the ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan.

In his report, Interaction of the Republic of Tajikistan and CSTO Member States to Ensure Security in Central Eurasia in the Period of Major Threats' Transformation, Lieutenant General Ramil Nodirov, Chief of the General Staff of the Tajik Armed Forces, emphasized that the Collective Security Treaty Organization was ready for any development in the region after the ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan. Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Tajikistan Agybai Smagulov also shared his opinion on the issue. He pointed to the importance of implementing transport projects.

Today, the most promising projects for the region include construction of the railways Turugundi-Chabakhar and Kunduz-Shibirgan, with further extensions to Iran and Pakistan. The region's countries should not wait for foreign investment to cover the entire project, he said, it would be more productive to draw from their own budgets allocated for development of national railways.

Saifullo Safarov, deputy head of the Center of Strategic Studies under the president of Tajikistan, devoted his speech to The Geopolitical Situation in Central Asia after 2014: Myths and Plausible Developments; he emphasized that it was necessary for political scientists to understand ways to overcome disintegration of Central Asian countries. "The Americans believe that Russia and China currently dominate the region's geopolitical landscape," he said. "The US views itself as a too distant, but inevitable partner of Central Asia." Safarov described the US policy in the region as "steadily chaotic."

## PROSPECTS OF EURASIAN INTEGRATION

Analyzing the current situation and prospects of Eurasian integration from the global point of view, Dmitry Kabayev, counselor of the Russian embassy to Tajikistan, said that economic integration in Eurasia was a logical process in the global historical context. In the time of globalization and growing competition, the entire world is seeing a steady trend towards emergence and strengthening of regional economic unions.

Given the ongoing crises in the international financial and economic system, integration processes acquire even greater relevance and importance, so Eurasian integration has been and still is Russia's strategic choice, Kabayev emphasized. A priority for the country, he said, was development within the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. These three countries have become the core of Eurasian integration, he added.

Along with direct positive results from the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space, the general investment climate in the member states has improved, they have created more comfortable conditions for doing business, including small and medium-sized businesses, and created new jobs, Kabayev said.

"The Russian party views Eurasian economic integration as a definite priority of its work in the CIS. Promotion of integration processes within the trio does not mean that it is trying to distance itself from other countries. On the contrary, the Eurasian project was initially conceived as a structure open for other states, first of all members of Eurasec and the CIS," he said. "We sincerely want our closest neighbors not to face the difficult artificial choice between "western" and "eastern" ways of development, but to be able to participate in integration processes across entire Eurasia."

# UZBEKISTAN: WAGING WAR ON ILLEGAL POPPY

*Elpar Salimov*



## BURNING EVIL

Thanks to coordinated efforts of the Uzbek law enforcement structures, a huge number of drug-related crimes are prevented every year.

In the last 19 years, Uzbekistan has burned 50 metric tons of drug substances. It is a common practice in the country that drugs used as physical evidence in courts are destroyed in fire after a ruling comes into force. At the end of July 2013, ahead of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (celebrated on July 26), another 1.5 metric tons of heroin, opium, cannabis, marijuana and other harmful substances that destroy people physically and mentally were burned in furnaces.

This evil-fighting act took place at a plant in the Sergeliisky district of Tashkent. Instructed by the Uzbek

government, the National Security Service and other related agencies destroyed another lot of drugs confiscated during their fight against drug trafficking. The burning took place in the presence of representatives of the United Nations, government, public and international organizations, diplomats and mass media. A total of 1,537 kilograms of drugs was burned, including 198.2 kg of heroin, 760 kg of opium, 411 kg of marijuana, 140.7 kg of cannabis, 27 kg of dried poppy heads, about 20,000 hemp bushes and a significant amount of psychotropic substances. Every year, drug addiction causes death of hundreds of thousands of people in the world. In most cases, drug addicts are also

carriers of contagious diseases. Under the influence of deathly poison, they often become criminals. Uzbekistan makes a significant contribution to fight against drug trafficking. Since the first years of its independence, the country has been conducting targeted measures at the government level to fight drug trafficking, shut off smuggling channels, destroy crops of narcotic plants, prevent spread of drug addiction and develop inter-departmental interaction and international cooperation on the issue. In February 1995, Uzbekistan joined the UN Conventions on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, on Psychotropic Substances, 1971, and against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988. In 1999, the country adopted a law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Drug transit via Uzbekistan has declined recently. This has been achieved with the efforts of the Uzbek State Commission for Drug Control and its executive body, the National Information Center for Drug Control under Uzbek government, as well as with intense work of law enforcement structures and other competent ministries and agencies. Large-scale preventive efforts have been launched as part of the Program of Comprehensive Measures to Prevent Drug Addiction and Trafficking for 2011-2015.

Significant attention is paid to international cooperation, too. Uzbekistan is member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose goals include fight against illegal drug trafficking. The country is an active member of the Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Center

for Fight against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors. In Tashkent, there is a regional mission of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Central Asia. Uzbekistan also interacts with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the World Customs Organization, Interpol and other influential international structures.

## AFGAN DRUGS

The main factor that affects the drug situation in Uzbekistan is the proximity of Afghanistan, which remains the world's biggest drug producer. Areas under opium poppy in Afghanistan are growing; in 2012, they reached 154,000 hectares, up 23,000 hectares from 2011.

Afghan drugs come to Uzbekistan from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and also directly across the border river of Amudarya. Smugglers employ most cunning ways of hiding them: among fruit and vegetables, in caches made in vehicles, in articles of daily use, etc. Thanks to coordinated efforts of the Uzbek law enforcement structures, notably, the Interior Ministry, the National Security Service, the Border Troops of the National Security Council and the Uzbek State Customs Committee, a huge number of drug-related crimes are prevented every year.

Participants of the June drug burning were shown videos of arrests of drug criminals. In a joint operation in April

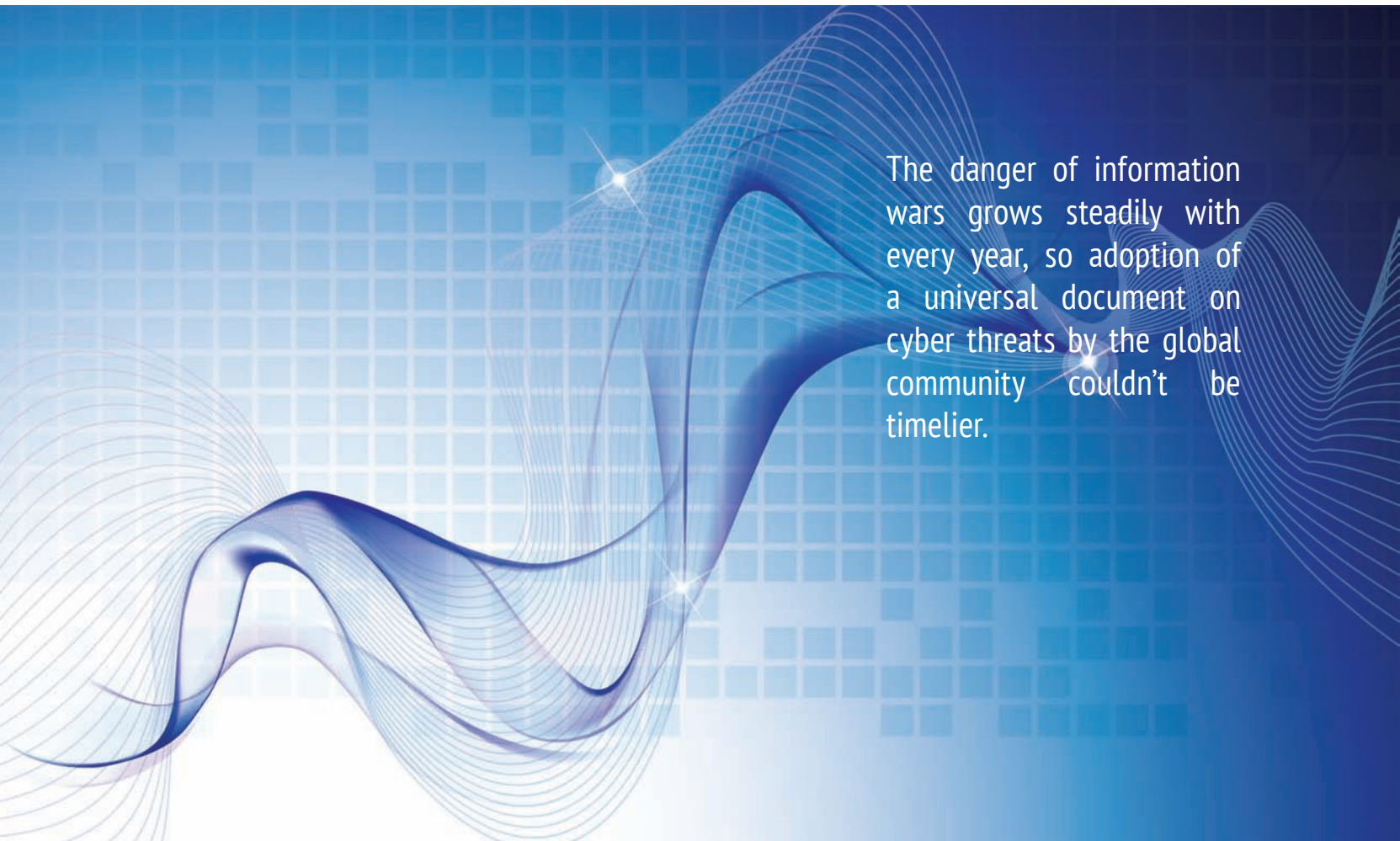
2012, servicemen of the National Security Council and border guards detained a certain Dzhallilov in the Urgutsky district, the Samarkand region, when he was trying to smuggle over 41 kg of opium. In August 2012, servicemen were examining driver Baratov's personal car in the Surkhandarya region and found a cache inside a gas tank that contained 18.9 kg of heroin and 29.3 kg of opium. Those detained in 2012 included 136 foreign citizens from Central Asia and the CIS, and also Europeans; they aggregately carried 109.5 kg of drugs, 1,948 psychotropic pills and 120 liters of precursors.

Azizbek Erkabayev, head of the international department of the National Information Center for Drug Control under the Uzbek government, said an extensive public campaign had been launched to prevent crimes related to use of drugs.



# SCO READY TO COUNTERACT NEW THREATS

*Mikhail Kirillov*



The danger of information wars grows steadily with every year, so adoption of a universal document on cyber threats by the global community couldn't be timelier.

Even at the early stage of its existence, the SCO focused on main threats to security - terrorism, separatism and extremism. So it was quite natural when the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) was set up in Tashkent in 2004. Numerous documents

were signed to create a legal framework for cooperation in different security spheres. Programs for counteracting terrorism, separatism and extremism are reviewed once in three years. Most importantly, these agreements have been transformed in practical activities

of the six countries' law enforcement bodies, which has helped to prevent hundreds of terrorist attacks and disarm thousands of terrorists.

As time went by, new threats to security emerged, and the SCO focused

on them. These are drug trafficking, money laundering, organized international crime, cyber terrorism, cyber crime, etc. It became obvious that all threats to security in the region are interrelated.

President Vladimir Putin has come up with an initiative to transform the existing SCO regional structure for fighting terrorism (which has proved efficient) into a universal center for fighting terrorist threats in the SCO. We see this future center as a full-fledged mechanism of coordinated and streamlined cooperation between the SCO members to counteract any threats to security and stability.

Security of information and cyberspace is a serious challenge for the entire international community, for every nation and also for the business community. The SCO member states were among the first to notice the problem.

The SCO set up an expert group on information security back in 2006. It came to the conclusion that the world needs a comprehensive approach to the problem, since global and national security of the cyberspace is threatened not only by terrorism and crime, but also by the possibility of using information and communication technology for military purposes.

Using this approach, experts have drafted an inter-government agreement for the SCO countries on cooperation on international information security. It defines threats to information security and lays out principles, areas, forms and mechanisms of cooperation, including how the member states should

coordinate their action and provide mutual support in this sphere. The agreement is not limited only to the SCO member states and can be joined by any other country.

The agreement has now come into force, and SCO experts have begun practical work to implement all of its aspects. The expert group met in Beijing in May, and the results of this meeting were quite substantial. But a lot remains to be done to protect the SCO member states from different cyber threats.

The issue of information security worries the entire world and is broadly discussed by different international organizations. BRICS and the SCO are also working on the issue, and their stands are fairly close. There are, however, countries and organizations that have their own view of the problem.

In order to work out a single approach to this complicated issue, the UN General Assembly has decided to set up a government expert group, which will for the first time meet in New York in August. As a contribution to the forthcoming meeting, the SCO has already shared its view of the problem with other UN member states. In April 2011, the six SCO member states released the advisory Code of Conduct for Governments in the Sphere of International Information Security. Its goal is to define the rights and liabilities of governments in the

information sphere, in order to make their conduct more constructive and responsible, as well as to encourage cooperation in counteraction of threats and difficulties, while at the same time helping to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

All governments were asked to make political commitments to jointly combat criminal and terrorist activities with the help of information and communication technology (ICT): in the name of guaranteeing human rights and freedoms in the information space and not using ICT and other similar technology for purposes of aggression and adversary activities or as an information weapon. There are many other aspects: it is, for example, necessary to ensure that management of the international web space is transparent; obviously, spread of information that encourages terrorism and extremism, destroys social stability and belittles other countries' cultural values should be limited by joint effort, and it is necessary to cooperate in counteracting criminal and terrorist activities that use ICT, and so on.

Representatives of the SCO member states at the United Nations have asked the UN Secretary General to publish the Rules and Norms as an official document of the 66th session of the UN General Assembly. We believe that the document can later be elaborated to receive the status of a General Assembly resolution or a convention on international security that has a legally binding force. The document will include provisions on use of information technology for military purpose and on counteraction of terrorism and crime in the information sphere.

# PEACE MISSION AS DEMONSTRATION OF FORCE

*Stanislav Maksimov*  
*Political commentator*

Cooperation between the two countries' armed forces is not limited to demonstration of power. The Russian and Chinese military meet in other formats, too, discussing possibilities for coordinating efforts in very different areas.

## PEACE MISSION – 2013

The joint Russian-Chinese anti-terrorist exercise Peace Mission 2013 was held at the Chebarkul testing area in the Chelyabinsk region and attracted attention of many foreign military analysts.

All the more so, as it was not this year's first big maneuver of the two countries' armed forces: less than a month before the exercise in the Urals, Russia and China had held a large-scale marine exercise near Vladivostok, which involved over 4,000 servicemen from both parties. "The scale of the exercise does not exceed that of the previous ones," the Xinhua news agency quoted Li Shuyin, an expert on Central

Asian and Russian military studies from China's Academy of Military Science, as saying. "But it is seldom that countries organize two exercises during a month." Indeed, it can be suggested that this was not a coincidence. It should be recalled that Russia and China have been holding such exercises since 2003. Bilateral and multilateral interaction in the sphere has been conducted in form of general maneuvers under code names Union 2003, Peace Mission 2005, Peace Mission 2007, Peace Mission 2009, Peace Shield 2009, Peace Mission 2010, Marine Interaction 2012 and Peace Mission 2012. Moreover, cooperation between the two countries' armed forces is not limited to demonstration of power and ability to interact on testing grounds. The Russian and Chinese military often meet in other formats, too, discussing possibilities for coordinating efforts in

very different areas. This has started some Western experts talking about how we may be witnessing the emergence of a new military alliance that could stand up to the United States' steadily growing geopolitical ambitions in Asia.

These ambitions are obvious. In 2001, the Barack Obama administration declared a new foreign political doctrine, Turn towards Asia. It essentially implies shifting of Washington's focus from Europe and the Middle East to Asia Pacific. Moreover, at the Asia Security Conference, which took place in Singapore in June 2013, US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said the White House intended to redeploy 60% of its marine and air forces currently stationed abroad to Asia Pacific before 2020. Obviously, neither Moscow nor Beijing is satisfied with this geopolitical situation,

to put it mildly. This is especially true for China, which has recently had territorial disputes with its neighbors – the Philippines, Japan and Vietnam. Clearly, an opportunity to flex muscles in the region comes in quite handy. All the more so, as it is done together with another neighbor, Russia.

It is handy for Russia, too: relations between Moscow and Washington are not progressing too well – there are disagreements on missile defense deployment in European countries bordering on Russia, complete incompatibility of positions on numerous international problems, including Iran and Syria, and finally, the high-profile Snowden case, which has made the White House announce a “pause in the reset,” which can last many years. It was also necessary to once again remind Tokyo about our stand with regard to the southern Kuril Islands...

As to the Russian-Chinese maneuver in Chebarkul, the two countries pursued a different strategic goal. In 2014, the International Security Assistance Force led by NATO, and actually by the US, will be withdrawn from Afghanistan. The danger is obvious: Muslim fundamentalists will definitely attempt to not only overthrow the incumbent authorities in Kabul, but also spread their influence to neighboring countries, first of all Central Asian states and the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region of China, where separatist moods are fairly strong. Viktor Litovkin, editor of *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*, says that both Russia and China have their unstable regions, but first of all, Moscow and Beijing are getting ready for the ISAF's final withdrawal from

Afghanistan. “If Americans and NATO are leaving Afghanistan, it will be first of all our headache, but it will also touch upon China. Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region – they are all close. It is unclear what will happen there after the troops' withdrawal.”

Moscow and Beijing are perfectly aware of this danger. It is no coincidence that President Vladimir Putin asked the government in May to minimize potential threats from Afghanistan after the ISAF withdrawal. “International terrorist and radical groups do not conceal their plans to export instability and will definitely attempt to move their disrupting activities to neighboring countries,” he said. “These developments imply serious risks for us, too: growing drug trafficking, trans-border crime, unmanaged flows of refugees and immigrants, fundamentalism.”

The Chinese leaders are also alarmed by the threat of “three evils” – the Chinese define them as terrorism, extremism and separatism. That is, the threat that is potentially and really carried by the Taliban. China's new president Xi Jinping has repeatedly spoken about it. “Bilateral military cooperation is an objective need given the terrorist threat Beijing and Moscow are encountering,” said Wang Xinjun, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Military Science, in a commentary published by *Renmin Ribao*.

At the latest joint military exercise in the Chelyabinsk region – which involved over 1,500 officers and soldiers and about 250 vehicles – Russian and Chinese units practiced counteracting

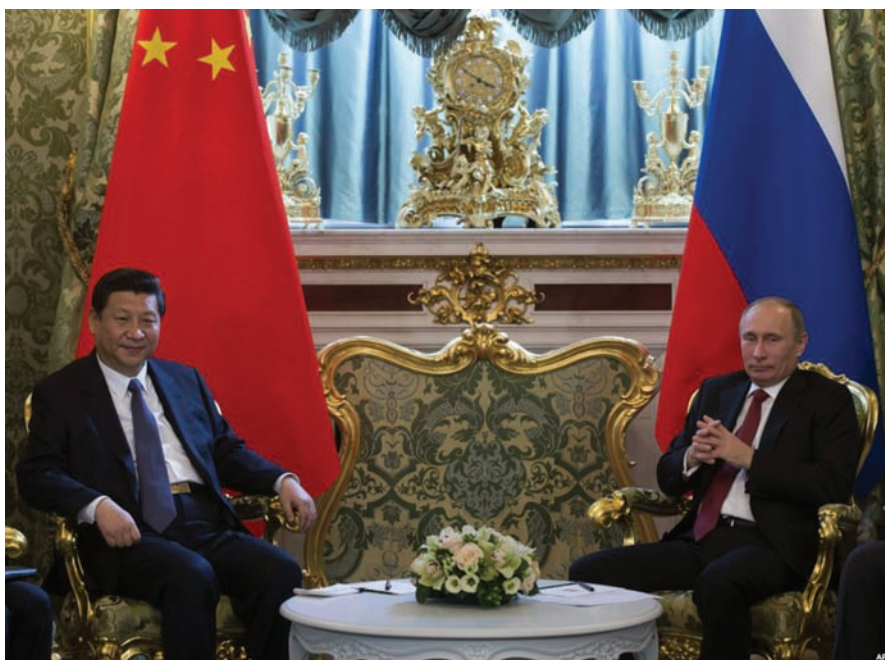
an external all-out terrorist attack. The legend of the exercise is quite transparent for those in the know. A country code-named A (could it be Afghanistan?) is in a crisis: extremists have destabilized the situation and are threatening neighboring countries code-named R and C (this could be any of the region's countries). On the SCO's request, the United Nations has allowed bringing troops to A to destroy the militants. As a result, says Ramil Gilyazov, head of combat training of the Central Military District, “Russian and Chinese troops eliminated the enemy after a combat shakedown.”

So, both Russian and Chinese experts believe that the rehearsal of a potential response to an unfavorable development of the military and political situation in Central Asia was successful. Now it is important to nail down this achievement. To ensure that Russia and China are ready for any quite predictable emergencies that may occur in the region, even if not as participants of a new military alliance, but as members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and, most importantly, as strategic partners that have common geopolitical interests in Eurasia.

# RUSSIA – CHINA: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



*Andrei Ilyashenko*  
*Political commentator*



In order to preserve the dynamics of strategic partnership it was necessary to focus on priority areas. One of them, which is in our people's vital interests, is development of economic relations.

## MULTI – FORMAT

The new Chinese leader's visit to Moscow in spring showed that Russia and China are becoming very close allies. Yet this alliance is unlikely to get a formal recognition: the parties prefer subtler, multilateral formats.

Despite an extensive list of economic agreements, the visit was rather political. A visit to Beijing was the

first thing Vladimir Putin did after his inauguration last summer. In his turn, Xi Jinping came to Moscow immediately after his endorsement as China's president.

Mutual recognition of crucial importance of bilateral relations is obvious. Their nature is proven at the very least by the following paragraph from the joint statement after the talks that took place in Moscow on March 22-24, "The parties will decisively support each other on issues touching upon their

key interests, including ensuring of their sovereignty, territorial integrity and security." Developing this idea, the Chinese leader said in his speech in front of students of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, "China and Russia need to mount their strategic interaction on the international stage." When visiting the Russian Defense Ministry and an operative command unit, he was even more specific, "My visit to the Russian military agency shows that the two countries' military, political and strategic relations will be

growing stronger. So will cooperation between the Armed Forces of China and Russia."

Apparently, Beijing is seriously concerned with the fact that Washington, in line with its doctrine released a year ago, immediately began reinforcing its presence in Asia Pacific. America's return to the region has coincided with drastic escalation of territorial disputes between China and Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei and, logically, with more active discussions of the Chinese threat, which is seen as not only military, but also economic, environmental and resource-related... In such circumstances, China needs if not an ally, than at least a like-minded partner.

Russia obviously fits this role. Strictly speaking, Russia also has military and strategic interests in enhancing relations with China, first of all in the area of missile defense. At Xi Jinping's meeting with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, the parties "noted their common concern about the missile defense issue. They decided that it was necessary to continue the dialog on the subject," Deputy Minister Anatoly Antonov told journalists.

Nevertheless, Moscow seems intent on keeping a balance between political interaction in the world and economic ties in bilateral relations. Opening talks in the Kremlin, President Vladimir Putin emphasized that in order to preserve the dynamics of strategic partnership it was «necessary to focus on priority areas. One of them, which is in our people's vital interests, is development of economic relations."

China is Russia's biggest trade partner already. In 2012, its share in Russia's foreign trade was 10.5%, China's direct investment in the Russian economy grew by over 50% to \$4.4 billion, while Russia's investment in China exceeded \$1 billion. The two countries expect their mutual trade turnover to exceed \$100 billion by 2015 and to reach \$150 billion by 2020. These thresholds will be achieved with the help of over 30 agreements in different spheres that were signed during the Chinese leader's visit to Moscow.

The first document to be signed was a memorandum on encouraging investment in infrastructure projects in the Far East. The most important agreements cover an increase of Russian hydrocarbons supply to China and construction of new pipeline offshoots southwards.

Besides, the long-awaited memorandum on gas supply to China was signed on the sidelines of the summit. The talks progressed with difficulty and took almost ten years, because the parties were unable to agree on a gas price formula. "The signed document lays the foundation for a 30-year contract for gas supply from Russia to China," said Gazprom's CEO Alexei Miller.

Finally, China and Russia signed agreements on supply of 24 Su-35 fighters and joint construction of four Lada class diesel submarines for China, the central Chinese television reported. "It became China's first purchase of important armament systems from Russia in the last ten years," the report said. Obviously, this military and

technical cooperation, hydrocarbon trade and investment in Siberia are also in fact political projects, and not only because of their scale. They are creating or, rather, reinforcing the safety net for political cooperation, which, for example, Russian-American relations lack. However, Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov emphasized, "Our friendship with China is not aimed against anyone, it aims at improving regional cooperation, interaction, stability and global security."

A formalized union with China is not a priority for Russia. It is not that Moscow fears a response from abroad. Moscow, according to the Concept of Russia's foreign policy, which was adopted a month ago, is positive that the essence of international processes is linked to a polycentric international system.

There is no place for bilateral unions and axes of the 20th century. It requires collective leadership from the world's leading countries. This, first of all, implies the activities of informal structures without charters and permanent bodies, almost clubs, like G20, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), G8, etc.

Symbolically, after the talks in Moscow, the Russian and Chinese leaders went to a BRICS summit in South Africa.

# IRAN: NEW PRESIDENT AND NEW POLICY?

*Valery Aleksandrov*

For the first time since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the office has been confidently taken by a politician who is close to the reformist circles. An important factor in his victory was consolidation of all forces interested in the change.

Hassan Rouhani, 64, has become Iran's 7th elected president. For the first time since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the office has been confidently taken by a politician who is close to the reformist circles. Apparently, Rouhani's win was to a large extent caused by people's dissatisfaction with the country's economic and political difficulties. Economy-wise, these are inflation, growing prices and deficit of different goods. Politically, people are definitely depressed by Iran's international isolation that increased under Ahmadinejad and by constant expectation of war caused by the nuclear problem and confrontation with the United States. The society is tired of all this, and Iranians voted for a change they expect from Rouhani's presidency.

An important factor in his victory was consolidation of all forces interested in the change, in review of the state policy. For example, presidential candidate, reformist Mohammad Reza Aref withdrew in favor of Rouhani.

The winner was also supported by Iran's former presidents Khatami and Rafsanjani. Their votes tripped all pre-election estimates. Rouhani's victory was flawless: his closest rival, Tehran mayor Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf received three times less votes.

But who is Hassan Rouhani? He graduated from two universities, the University of Tehran and the Glasgow Caledonian University, is a doctor of philosophy and commands five foreign languages - Arab, English, French, German and Russian. Importantly, being a secular person and having received secular education, Rouhani is at the same time a Mujtahid, representative of the supreme category of Muslim clerics. He received religious education in Qom, the intellectual center of Iran's Shiites. He was one of the closest people of ayatollah Khomeini, was the first to call him Imam and accompanied the leader of the Iranian revolution when, after the toppling of the shah, he returned from Paris to Tehran in revolutionary 1979.

## HASSAN ROUHANI PRESIDENT OF IRAN





During the Iranian-Iraqi war, Rouhani held leading posts in the military command. For two decades, he was a Majlis deputy and in 1992-2000, its deputy speaker.

As head of the Supreme National Security Council (he held the position in 1989-2005), Rouhani was the chief negotiator on the Iranian nuclear problem; he has the reputation of a flexible diplomat and smart politician. He enjoys support of the country's supreme clergy and ran for presidency from the political religious organization Combatant Clergy Association.

It would be wrong to expect revolutionary reforms from him, but he is certain to introduce significant adjustments to Iran's foreign policy.

Understanding the need to end Iran's political isolation, Rouhani is trying to find compromises with the West, to end the sanctions regime that prevents the country's normal development. Ahead of the election, he said, "My goal is to restore the economy, ensure morality and interact with the rest of the world."

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of these words, and therefore we can expect a progress in the talks on the Iranian nuclear problem, even if not a quick one.

It can also be said with a significant degree of certainty that the threat of a US-Iranian military conflict, so feasible and expected not so long ago, has somewhat subsided. For how long? This will to a large extent depend on the success of the talks on the nuclear problem and on who gets the upper hand in the United States, Obama's peace party (with regard to Iran) or the war party of Republican hawks, people who were in power under Bush Sr. and Bush Jr. After Rouhani's election, Washington has already said it is ready for direct talks on the nuclear problem with the new Iranian authorities. Rouhani responded that "Tehran is willing to make its nuclear program more transparent and intends to work in constructive interaction with the rest of the world." However, emphasizing his readiness to cooperate with the IAEA, the new president made it clear that his country would not give up the uranium

enrichment program. Nevertheless, there is reason for cautious optimism and a desired compromise can still be found.

Moscow, as Tehran's partner that helps the country to develop the peaceful nuclear sector and other spheres and consistently opposes use of force for resolving the Iranian problem, welcomed the results of the presidential election in Iran with satisfaction. President Vladimir Putin congratulated Hassan Rouhani on his victory and said he was positive that "Rouhani's activities as president will promote prosperity of friendly Iran and further strengthen Russian-Iranian relations."

# EURASIA: RISING SPACE OF NEW WORLD

*Recep Tayyip Erdogan*  
*Prime minister of Turkey*



First of all, it is necessary to get rid of uncertainty on the Eurasian territory, to bring dialog between countries and nations to a higher level. If there is no peace and wellbeing in Eurasia, it will be extremely difficult to achieve peace and wellbeing in the rest of the world.

Eurasia – is the biggest center of global politics that to a large extent defines it.

This territory shapes important trade and cultural activities of the entire world, a significant share of global energy is produced and transported here.

Eurasia, which is crucially important for global politics and economics, as well as for Turkey's foreign policy, spreads in the center of the earth, embracing the historical and cultural areas of "the golden vein of humankind."

In the dynamic international developments since the end of the Cold war until now, the geopolitical depth and strategic importance of Eurasia has been felt increasingly strong.

Eurasia holds a central position, with its continental basins, economies and cultures in all their variety closely interacting and complementing each other. This situation gives Eurasia very broad advantages and opportunities.

This territory is characterized by high mobility, which allows it to play a leading part in the process of ensuring universal peace, stability and prosperity. And while the new world is being shaped, it is necessary to look at Eurasia with new eyes.

First of all, it is necessary to get rid of uncertainty on the Eurasian territory, to bring dialog between countries and

nations to a higher level. If there is no peace and wellbeing in Eurasia, it will be extremely difficult to achieve peace and wellbeing in the rest of the world.

The end of the Cold war generated the phenomenon of interdependence on the global scale, and the foundation for development, stability and peace on the geopolitical scale can be a common economic space. Today, no closed, isolated country has a chance of survival. We need an even greater integration and closer interaction.

We would like the political dialog in Eurasia to be conducted at the highest possible level, economic and cultural integration to develop. We would like long-time and permanent mechanisms to shape. We would like to bring relations in Eurasia out of the routine state, limited by bilateral contacts between countries, and to create a space of new, global relations. We are watching with satisfaction how political will is growing in this context. Turkey is setting itself the goal of contributing to this process with the help of fast developing relations with Russia, China, Central Asian states, Iran, India and Pakistan in every sphere.

We attach special importance to the creation of a common economic and cultural space in Eurasia. We view this as a preliminary condition for achieving peace and stability on the Eurasian expanses. We attach crucial importance to integration in this economic and cultural space of Central Asian states that do not have access to sea.

Alongside the development of the Asian Pacific region and its central role

in international politics, the importance of Central Asia as an inner part of Asia Pacific has become increasingly obvious in the last ten years. This peculiarity, on the one hand, puts Central Asia alongside such economically developed countries as China, Japan and South Korea (ASEAN), and on the other, allows it to serve as a bridge between Europe and Asia. We believe that a repeated meeting of two Eurasian centers through Central Asia will result in a great recovery of global politics and economics.



We are positive that the creation of a transport corridor with the help of air transport, railways and roads, similar to the establishment of economic and political relations with the help of the Silk Way in the past, will again connect the eastern and western ends of Eurasia.

Within this framework, we are taking great effort to implement the "middle corridor" project. When the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars

railway and the Marmaray project is completed, this will to a certain extent ensure unity of Eurasia. Trains from Urumqi and Islamabad will arrive to Europe without interruption. All Eurasian countries are our brothers and friends, and also countries with a huge strategic potential for cooperation. In this connection, we attach great importance to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The SCO unites six member states; geographically, it takes up three fifths of Eurasian territory; one fourth of the planet's population lives there.

The SCO, together with its observers and dialog partners, represents one half of the planet's population. This organization has become institutional in terms of regional security and economic cooperation, it also plays an important role in terms of Eurasian integration.

Turkey enjoys close relations with Eurasian countries, with which it is linked by time-tested historical and cultural ties. Our country, which lies

at the confluence of three continents, has a special geostrategic position and a multidimensional foreign policy. Due to its geopolitical situation, Turkey also acts as a bridge that connects the West and the East in international politics. In this context, Turkey has been a NATO member since 1952 and continues talks with the European Union about its full membership, but on the other hand, it chairs the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). In 2014, Turkey will be replaced as CICA president by China, which is a SCO member.

setup of institutional mechanisms of interaction together with organizations of regional cooperation. With this understanding, Turkey has become a SCO dialog partner. We wish to develop our contacts with the SCO, with members of which we are connected by close relations and which works in the region that is of interest for us.

Relations that we will be developing with the SCO will contribute to improving the efficiency and multi-vector nature of our foreign policy and will also allow watching changes

the SCO has taken upon itself an important role in counteraction to terrorism, separatism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, border security, illegal immigration and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In terms of entire Eurasia, the SCO has become one of the leading regional organizations.



We believe that cooperation that is being developed within the SCO will make an important contribution to security, stability and economic wellbeing of Eurasia. As a SCO dialog partner, we will actively assist the Organization in moving towards this important goal.

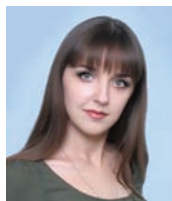
In our multi-vector foreign policy, we view Eurasia as a region of interest for us and pay special attention to sustaining peace, quiet and stability in the region. As in the past, Turkey will welcome and accept initiatives for cooperation in politics, economy, security and culture. As Eurasia's authority is growing in the globalization process and in compliance with the strategy of development of permanent and close cooperation in this region, we pay special attention to the

within the organization, exchange of information between states that are its members. So we have for the first time found ourselves on the same regional platform, under the same roof with Russia and China.

In reality, our view of issues of regional stability and security coincides with that of the SCO member states.

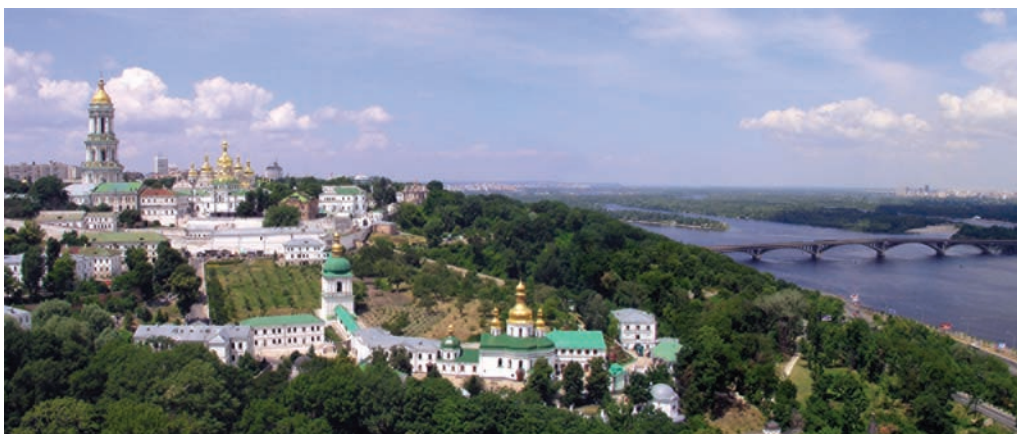
In the region that requires strengthening of regional, institutional and active mechanism of cooperation,

# DO UKRAINE AND SCO NEED EACH OTHER?



*Darya Shcherbatyuk*  
*Taras Shevchenko National University in Lugansk*

Ukraine's intention to interact with the SCO and participate in Eurasian integration is a logical process. The status of an SCO observer would allow Ukraine to both strengthen and expand its international ties and acquire strong allies.



## EASTERN VECTOR

In recent years, the Ukrainian foreign policy, in addition to its attempts for integration with the European Union, has also developed an eastern vector, which can be seen in growing bilateral cooperation with China and aspiration to get the status of an SCO observer. These trends are encouraged by the current political situation, which has opened for Ukraine prospects of eastern cooperation. Strengthening of this vector in the country's foreign policy testifies to the expansion of its geopolitical horizon and its greater importance on the international political stage, which

can improve the country's opportunities. Given the SCO's development pace, its resources, territorial and demographic potential and growing authority on the international political stage, it can be said with certainty that it will have a significant influence on international relations. Ukraine's intention to interact with the SCO and participate in Eurasian integration is a logical process. The status of an SCO observer would allow Ukraine to both strengthen and expand its international ties and acquire strong allies. The SCO is a generally recognized international organization; cooperation with it is prestigious for any state. For the SCO, partnership with Ukraine is also beneficial, because the country is interesting not only due to its industrial

and agricultural potential, but also because of the geopolitical one. Lying on traditional transit ways, on the border between the East and the West, Europe and Asia, Ukraine has access to other continents via the Black Sea.

At present, when Eurasian integration has become an obvious phenomenon in international relations, Ukraine is becoming a transit power, which can bring it serious benefits. Moreover, it could become a country that geographically connects the SCO to Europe. The SCO is currently working on building a system of collective security in Eurasia. Participation in such projects would give Ukraine an opportunity to be involved in military research and

exercises and, more importantly, would guarantee its entry to the Eurasian collective security system. The basic principles of the organization, namely, parity of all of its member states, the consensual principle of decision-making, combination of respect to various traditions and cultures with a clear organizational structure and cooperation in numerous aspects, are also attractive for Ukraine. It is the de-ideologized platform for cooperation that allows the SCO to position itself as a new type of organization that conforms to the principles of multi-polar world and pluralism.

Inna Bogoslovskaya, a well-known Ukrainian politician and entrepreneur, says that Ukraine needs to take into account the factor of the SCO, the organization that will pre-determine global processes in the next one hundred years. The SCO unites over 3 billion of people, it comprises some of the world's fastest growing economies, and Kiev needs to remember it. Besides, there are four nuclear powers among the participants of the SCO process.

Attractive prospects of cooperation between Ukraine and the SCO have been discussed since 2005. Now, however, the first steps have been taken towards interaction between the partners. In 2010, the Ukrainian government set up an inter-departmental working group on cooperation with the SCO. On August 25, 2012, at a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich said that Ukraine wanted to get the status of an observer of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and hoped for Russia's support. In autumn 2012, the SCO Business Club opened a mission in

Kiev. This will allow Ukraine to not only conduct a dialog with the SCO member states, but also turn a new page in its relations with Asian countries. The potential is definitely huge. Vitaly Kulik, head of the Center for Civil Society Studies, says that some Central Asian countries need to have a strong partner outside the SCO, but among former Soviet republics. Ukraine, in its turn, is interested in Central Asia, first of all, as a source of energy resources.

"The Shanghai project for Ukraine" is being broadly discussed in the country. This dialog is currently very important for Ukraine, because it is looking for its place and role in global integration processes. A state can become an active player on the international stage only if it participates not only in European, but also in inter-regional unions, one of which is the SCO. Eduard Prutnik, chairman of the board of the United World International Foundation, says, "Ukraine's development can be successful only if it actively participates not only in European integration processes, but also in Eurasia's trans-regional integration processes like the SCO."

Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Maiko believes that Ukraine and the SCO demonstrate similar approaches to regional security, drafting and implementation of measures to counteract terrorism, separatism and extremism, illegal migration, drug and weapons trafficking and other types of transnational criminal activities. In order to get an observer's status, Ukraine needs to submit an application to the SCO Secretariat and follow a certain procedure. Besides, it needs a dialog with the Organization's member

states and support from Russia and China. In recent years, Ukraine has been successfully cooperating with China, which has invested billions in the Ukrainian economy. This cooperation allows hoping that China will support Ukraine's accession to the SCO.

The SCO is important for Ukraine also because it is interested in establishing cooperation with all countries in the region. This will create a possibility for lobbying Ukrainian interests. China continues discussing the initiative of restoring the Great Silk Way on a new level, and it could go across Ukraine as well. So it is very important for Ukraine to obtain the status of an observer at the large international organization. The SCO is a promising development, which, unfortunately, has been neglected by Ukrainian politicians. Meanwhile, partnership with the SCO member states would be beneficial for Ukraine, because it provides an opportunity to develop economic cooperation, to interact with the member states in the security sphere, to receive huge investment, to claim new markets and to participate more actively in Asia's politics and economy.

Obtaining of the observer's status would give Ukraine an opportunity to keep its finger on the pulse of integration processes in Asia and would improve its political image on the international stage.



## IT'S REAL: SCO TO REMAIN ONE-ON-ONE WITH AFGHANISTAN NEXT YEAR



*Dmitry Kosyrev  
Political commentator  
RIA Novosti*

The country's President Khamid Karzai, who began his career in the simple role of a US minion, is no longer one. In recent years, he has acted with increasing independence, notably, developing relations with China. Under Barack Obama, America has fallen out of love with Karzai.

In 2014, Afghanistan and the entire Central Asian region will become different, left without the US and NATO military presence. Central Asians, Russia and China will have to deal with Afghanistan-related problems on their own.

## ART OF READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Reading between the lines of diplomatic documents is a difficult task, but it is not impossible. Let's look at the statement from the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that took place in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, on July 13, 2013. The Council is usually busy with elaborating the final scenario of the forthcoming SCO summit and general parameters of its main political statements. This is called "approving key documents in principle." At the summit, there may be arguments about some individual theses, but this is rare.

This is a common international practice: leaders come to such meetings already knowing who is going to say what. Instead, they may focus on some future problems on which they may improvise as much as they want.

In fact, the statement from this Council meeting is full of Afghanistan-related issues, both directly and indirectly. Its informative part starts with the following, "Tasks of efficient joint counteraction to global threats and challenges are coming to the fore." What are these threats and challenges? Those that are present in Afghanistan, like terrorism and drugs, or will become

especially prominent there after foreign troops' withdrawal.

In the next paragraph, the ministers express their "deep concern with the situation developing in the Middle East and in North Africa." Why this situation and not, say, the financial crisis? Because the toppling of secular and civilized regimes, even if corrupted ones, in the Middle East, which have been mainly replaced with Jihadist forces, is the scenario that should not take place in Afghanistan in 2014 or later, but it well may. Unless it is prevented.

Then they become more specific: "Heads of delegations noted that development of the situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan would affect peace and stability in the region." And "the SCO advocates establishment of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as an international, peaceful, neutral and prosperous state, free of terrorism and drug trafficking."

It so happens that new ideas on economic cooperation between the SCO member states have taken shape for this year's summit, even though they have been discussed for a long time. Nevertheless, the real prospect of the organization becoming the main, if not only, force in the world able to have at least some impact on developments in Afghanistan, is coming to the fore.

## SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE

Assessing the situation in Afghanistan, which will now be responsible for its own security, is extremely difficult.

The best known assessments are those that have been given by the United States in recent years. They boil down to a simple formula: the country's President Khamid Karzai, who began his career in the simple role of a US minion, is no longer one. In recent years, he has acted with increasing independence, notably, developing relations with China. Under Barack Obama, America has fallen out of love with Karzai. Instead, it has begun talks with the still unconquered Taliban. Naturally, Karzai and his circle are watching this diplomacy with horror and hatred, but it forces him to become an even more independent figure. Anyway, US assessments of the situation could be summed up as follows: Karzai and the Taliban are caught in a shaky balance - thanks to a certain extent to the US and NATO troops - and they can be forced to maintain peace.

And this is how Doctor Richard Weitz, an American researcher who writes for the bulletin of the US Central Asia-Caucasus Institute (which is overall fairly neutral), sees the situation. He says that chances for a peace agreement between

Karzai and the Taliban have grown. But this is an objective assessment. In reality, the Taliban still refuses to deal directly with the government and does not recognize it. The latter's conditions for achieving an agreement - recognizing the Karzai government as legitimate and severing all ties with terrorists of the Al Qaeda type - can hardly be considered feasible.

Consequently, chances that Western governments will sign any agreement with the Taliban are also very small: after all, they have actually lost the war, not least because players like Turkey and Saudi Arabia are also involved in peacekeeping efforts - each in their own interests - and this makes the Taliban too optimistic. However, Karzai has significant support from northern tribes, notably, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazara tribes, and there are fears that the president will after all manage to come to terms with his own tribesmen, Pashtuns in the south (and this is where the Taliban comes from), so certain maneuvers are undertaken.

The conclusion is that the process will take a lot of time and will definitely not be over before foreign troops' withdrawal. Moreover, it will not necessarily end peacefully.

But the SCO member states will have to join it, not in the least because the US and Europeans will not be able to influence the outcome of the inter-tribal conflict between Afghanistan's north and south that began decades ago. This creates a vacuum of regional influence that can and should be filled.

## LOOKING THROUGH A PIPE

As is well known, international diplomacy can be viewed as development of relations between suppliers and buyers of hydrocarbons, and this view will clarify a lot. Similarly helpful is the assessment from the point of view of military relations and arms sales and many other special angles. Anyway, several pipeline projects have played a special role in all Afghanistan-related events for the last twenty years or so. Some of them are considered to be among the key reasons of wars and other events in the country.

One of them is TAPI, a 1,700-km gas pipeline that goes from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan to Pakistan and on to India. Indian Gulshan Sachdeva, author of a short article on the subject (in the same bulletin), writes: all preliminary work is completed, prices of gas and its transit have been agreed upon. The project is obviously beneficial for all of its participants and will give a powerful impetus to economic development of all the four countries. The only thing that still needs to be done is to ensure stability of Afghanistan, the key transit area. The peculiarity of the situation is that TAPI has little bearing on the US or the European Union. Even its financing has so far been provided by the Asian Development Bank and later India will

The author concludes that the project should be launched after foreign troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan.

find money to invest in it. Games around pipelines bound to Europe show how important it is where gas comes from and where it goes, who receives it and who is left behind. There are known arguments about who will get Turkmen gas, up to attempts to prove that China and Russia are competing for Central Asian gas (in reality, they are negotiating). But let's look at the essence of the TAPI project. It will eliminate sources of hostility within Afghanistan, reduce animosity between India and Pakistan (the long-time patron of the Taliban). This is a project that requires regional stability. This means that it is beneficial for the SCO members, too. And they will have to take it into account in their diplomacy. And this is just one example of how politics in the region and at its borders is acquiring absolutely new qualities with the withdrawal of the Americans and Europeans. Such developments can even change the very concept of the SCO, a group of countries that borders on Afghanistan in the north. The price of instability in this country is unacceptably huge for the SCO. On the contrary, its stability may mean new approaches to regional politics and more cooperation with the countries that border on Afghanistan in the south. This is the task for the organization for the next several years.

## NO WEST, JUST EAST

It is no secret that the unstable Afghanistan and America's special role there, with the war launched in 2001, was the cement that initially shaped the SCO in its current form. It should be remembered that the general structure

The price of instability in this country is unacceptably huge for the SCO. On the contrary, its stability may mean new approaches to regional politics and more cooperation with the countries that border on Afghanistan in the south. This is the task for the organization for the next several years.

of the regional alliance of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and – later – Uzbekistan developed from a prototype of the SCO at a meeting of foreign ministers in Beijing in early 2002. Then it became clear that the US powerful military presence in the region was serious and for the long haul and this reality should be dealt with together. Does this mean that the SCO is an anti-American organization, busy only with ousting the US from Central Asia, something it has often been accused of? Remarkably, the SCO does not have a single openly anti-American state among its ranks. All of its members are trying to balance their foreign policy between the West and the East, and even the South. Russia and China are establishing cooperation with

each other and – even more proactively – with the United States and with numerous regional neighbors. It is the United States that can rather be called an anti-Chinese country, since it keeps alive the talk of China being America's new global rival after the Soviet Union. Even the situation of 2001-2002 was not about "fighting America", it was about ensuring one's independence in one's own region. The experience of war in Indo-China, later confirmed in Afghanistan, showed that the US, with their numerous military bases and serious scale of war, would try to create pro-American regimes in Central Asia. This way, they would weaken the influence of both Russia and China.

But Central Asian countries were also threatened with domestic disturbances. So the SCO ideology was not about "ousting" the US from the region, but about remaining the architect of its fortune despite America's powerful presence in the region. Honestly, a success of the US war against the Taliban would be beneficial for Afghanistan's neighbors, and this is the reason for numerous cases when the SCO countries (Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Uzbekistan) cooperated with America. Anyway, this page is turned over. A new one is beginning. Here we need to recall Vladimir Putin's visit to Kyrgyzstan on May 28-29, 2013, where he attended the informal summit of the Collective

Security Treaty Organization. It was after this event that Kyrgyzstan made the final decision to shut down the US military base Manas on its territory, to restructure and improve management of Russia's military presence in the country in the future and to consider Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Customs Union of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus.

It is not so widely known that on June 13-14, during Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Tashkent, he and his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov signed an agreement on strategic partnership. It has eased tension in one of the more unpleasant regional episodes related to rivalry that weakens all Central Asian countries. These diplomatic episodes do not seem to have a bearing on the SCO, but they do. As regards the CSTO, it is already clear that at the summit in Bishkek a lot will be said about the six countries being unable and unwilling to cope with the burden of Afghanistan that is going to fall on them.

The SCO is an example of open regionalism, with a maximum emphasis on cooperation with the United Nations and other regional organization (including the CSTO). And even with the United States and its allies. Of course, the US and Europe have yet to choose a new policy in the region after the current one is over. And the SCO will either accept this future policy or not; before that, it will have to adjust to the new reality of becoming the leader in the region. This is a huge burden for the countries' budgets and increased responsibility for their security. But if they had behaved differently in 2002 and had not set up the SCO, their situation today would be far worse.



# AMERICA'S AFPAK PROJECT: COUNTERBALANCE TO SCO, CSTO



*Alexei Fenenko*  
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The Americans fear that after the withdrawal of the NATO main body, the leading role in the region will belong to China, perhaps, together with Russia. Therefore, the US AfPak project serves as a counterbalance to the influence of the SCO and the CSTO.

## AFPAK PROJECT

America's AfPak project sees Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single battle theater within the NATO's anti-terrorist operation. Washington fears that after the NATO troops' withdrawal

the leading role in the region will go over to China and Russia. AfPak is a counterbalance to the influence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. In the middle of 2013, US journalists revived the term AfPak. The Barack Obama administration prefers not to use it officially yet. However, US

experts use it to describe Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single battle theater within the NATO anti-terrorist operation. This popularization of AfPak as a notion is not accidental. Apparently, the White House is considering a scenario of ending the Afghan war by signing double agreements with both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Islamabad has been involved in the Afghan conflict since 1979 when the Soviet troops were brought in Afghanistan. Still, the view of Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single military and political space developed under George W. Bush. In autumn 2011, the White House feared that unrest in Pakistani cities would prevent it from using the country as a base for its operations against the Taliban. Since spring 2004, the Pentagon helped Pervez Musharraf's government to conduct military operations in the northeastern province of Waziristan, where the Taliban members from Afghanistan had created their "quasi-state." On September 27, 2006, the presidents of the United States, Afghanistan and Pakistan held a summit in an attempt to settle border disputes between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The White House also acted as a mediator in the Afghan-Pakistani military conflict in May 2007.

The emergence of the term AfPak was the result of this process. It is believed to be created by the outstanding US diplomat Richard Holbrooke. In spring 2009, American analysts began using the word AfPak to analyze military operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, this approach caused resentment of Islamabad and Delhi. On January 24, 2009, the Indian government announced its rejection of the term. In June 2009, the notion was criticized by Pakistan's ex president Pervez Musharraf. The objections of the two adversaries made the US adjust its stand. On January 21, 2010, Holbrooke announced that the Obama administration decided not to use the term AfPak. A new wave of interest in AfPak came to the United States at the end of 2012 – beginning of 2013. US experts' return to it was caused by three circumstances. In autumn 2012, talks within the Dushanbe Four on signing

of a four-party agreement between Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan failed. The US wants to use Pakistan as a territory for withdrawing NATO troops from Afghanistan. Washington fears that Islamabad may start independent talks with a certain segment of the Taliban. The situation is complicated by America's intention to contact the Taliban on its own. This intention was proved by a visit of US diplomat James Dobbins to the recently opened Qatari office of the Taliban movement on June 21.

However, the new wave of Americans' interest in AfPak has displeased Pakistan. First of all, Islamabad fears that establishment of the notion of AfPak will legitimize NATO's military operations on the Pakistani territory. At present, the alliance attacks the Taliban on the Afghan-Pakistani border as part of its assistance to Pakistan. Within AfPak, the alliance will be able to conduct such operations without Islamabad's request.

Second, the use of the term may create difficulties on the Afghan-Pakistani border. At present, it goes along the Durand Line of 1893. This line is recognized by Islamabad, but is disputed by all Afghan leaders.

Third, for the last twelve years, US experts have often described Afghanistan and Pakistan as "failed states." With regard to Pakistan, this meant doubt in the ability of its government to keep control over its nuclear sites. The Pakistani leaders fear that introduction of the term AfPak will legitimize discussions about Afghanistan and Pakistan being equally "failed states."

Fourth, the Pakistani government has certain concerns with regard to the "tribal areas." In 1970, they received

the status of Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Islamabad suspects that representatives of the Areas will require more autonomy under the pretext of AfPak discussions. India does not accept the term for different reasons. Delhi does not recognize Pakistan in its present borders, maintaining that Islamabad has occupied part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Introduction of the term AfPak will mean that the US and Afghanistan indirectly recognize Pakistan's current borders, India believes.

Yet for the Obama administration, the AfPak project remains the best option of regional policy. The Democrats are trying to build a regional security system on the basis of an agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Americans fear that after the withdrawal of the NATO main body, the leading role in the region will belong to China, perhaps, together with Russia. Therefore, the US AfPak project serves as a counterbalance to the influence of the SCO and the CSTO.

America as an "emergency stabilizer" would be acceptable for both Pakistan and India. However, America as the "setter of rules of the game" makes both countries wary. So to move on with their AfPak project, the Obama administration will have to find an acceptable compromise with both India and Pakistan. Otherwise, Islamabad and Delhi will stay away from the Afghanistan settlement, which will hardly be beneficial for the United States.

# CLUSTERS OF THE FUTURE



*Maksim Krans*  
*Political commentator*



The document underlines that responses to global challenges should be searched for in high-tech material production, where financial institutions are not a self-sufficing factor, but a tool ensuring development.



## THE 14th INTERNATIONAL FORUM HIGH TECHNOLOGY OF THE 21st CENTURY

In April 2013, Expo Center in Moscow hosted the 14th international forum High Technology of the 21st Century. Its goal was to promote competitive Russian technology on the market, to reduce the gap between ideas, design and production of innovative products. For the first time, the forum was held with participation of the Business Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which organized a conference titled High Technology: Strategy of Cooperation in the SCO.

Participants of the conference adopted a statement that acknowledges the need to concentrate the SCO member

states' intellectual, technological and investment resources on priority areas of innovative development. The document underlines that responses to global challenges should be searched for in high-tech material production, where financial institutions are not a self-sufficing factor, but a tool ensuring development. In this connection, the forum's participants supported practical steps towards setting up the organizational structure of the Center of High Technology and launch of several innovative pilot projects, attracting investment from the SCO structures. Intensified work in these areas will allow creating grounds for successful development of a regional market of science-driven products and, eventually, ensure technological independence of the SCO countries. The forum's program also included a conference titled Prospects of Russian

Petrochemical Clusters' Development: Experience of SCO Member States. The topic could seem quite enigmatic for those not in the know. First of all, what exactly is a cluster? The notion was put into use by Harvard Professor Michael Porter, one of the most respected authors of the concept of strategy of competitiveness. In his book *On Competition*, he defines clusters as an organizational form for consolidation of efforts of interested parties aimed at achieving competitive advantages, under conditions of postindustrial economic development. In other words, it is when efforts of several enterprises specializing in a certain sector and geographically localized are united to carry out an innovative program.

Today, cluster technology or, rather, psychology dominates strategic programs of many states that think of

their future. It is especially true for those that have so far lived on their oil and gas reserves. Of course, smaller countries can continue striving on rent from development of their natural riches for some more time. But not great powers that expect to remain such in the future. The need to set up petrochemical clusters in Russia has been discussed since the 1990s. But specific steps in this direction were taken only last year, when a list of innovative territorial clusters of the petrochemical industry was endorsed in different regions of the country in compliance with the prime minister's instruction. Initially, these regions were Tatarstan, Bashkiria and Nizhni Novgorod; later, clusters can be set up in the Irkutsk region, the Stavropol territory and the Primorye territory.

Apparently, to implement this ambitious program it is necessary to study other countries' experience of setting up such clusters. This was the goal of the Moscow conference. It was attended by representatives of government agencies responsible for the program's implementation, of the SCO Business Council and Business Club, public organizations, business community and research centers from Russia and other SCO member states. Greeting participants of the conference High Technology: Strategy of Cooperation in the SCO, Igor Yurgens, chairman of the board of the Institute of Contemporary Development, said that two years before a number of research institutes had meticulously studied the possibilities and prospects for petrochemical clusters in the country. The conclusion was unanimous: this principle of production location would minimize logistic, manufacturing, infrastructure and other costs and allow organizing cooperation along the entire

chain, from processing of commodities to manufacturing of finished products. This would maximize the economic effect. Cluster development of the oil and gas industry, the scientist said, should become a powerful driver of Russia's economic growth, an engine moving its economy along the innovative rail. Vladimir Feigin, head of the Institute for Energy and Finance, elaborated this idea in his speech. Russia has huge hydrocarbon reserves, but global competition in the sphere is growing and is escalated by active development of shale gas fields by the United States, he said. So there is a danger that there will be a surplus of commodities on the global market. Setup of clusters will allow using these excesses to manufacture finished products needed by consumers, both domestic and foreign ones. Clusters are a new method of economic organization for our country, Feigin emphasized. They can drastically spur development of oil and gas refining. This task should actively involve government agencies and the business community, including small and medium-sized businesses. It should be said that both the cabinet and agencies responsible for the industry's planning are perfectly aware of it. A year ago, the Russian Energy Ministry endorsed a plan for the sector's development to 2030, which initiated the setup of six inter-regional petrochemical clusters – West Siberian, Volga, Caspian, Northwestern, East Siberian and Far Eastern. Yevgenia Pilipenko, head of corporate development projects with Sibur Holding, said that "the cluster approach revitalizes our sector, which in this case not only supplies raw materials to the domestic and foreign markets, but uses them to manufacture finished products. This approach significantly improves its competitiveness in the world." It is no secret that Russia's high economic

performance in recent years, its huge gold and foreign currency reserves and the stabilization fund have been made possible thanks to hydrocarbon exports, which account for half of budget revenues. Long-term programs of economic and social development, which are currently drafted to 2030, are also to a large extent based on them. If we don't have the energy trump card, all these achievements and ambitious plans will be threatened. To say nothing about advance payments we bravely give out to our foreign partners. This is why it is vitally important to not just produce as much hydrocarbons as possible, but to organize a full processing cycle from commodities to finished products in our country, and this was mentioned by many of the speakers.

The final resolution of the conference Prospects of Russian Petrochemical Clusters' Development: Experience of SCO Member States asks the governments of the SCO members, notably, China, India and Iran, which have experience of setting up such clusters, to consider participation of their national companies in development of such production chains in Russia and to share their experience of encouraging investment in development and setup of new petrochemical facilities, reducing obstacles for entering markets of the SCO member states and third countries. It was generally agreed that such steps will allow Russia to make its economic system competitive on global markets and to move forward, to a society oriented towards state-of-the-art economic models.

# LONELY VIOLIN'S CALL FOR THE ORCHESTRA...



*Tatiana Sinitsyna*  
*Editor-in-chief, the InfoSHOS web portal*

The unique project of the SCO needs comprehensive media service. The Organization can no longer do with a schematic genre piece presented to the world.

## INFOSHOS.RU

For half of its life, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been covered by the Russian web portal InfoSHOS, which is focused on the Organization's activities. So far, it is the world's only media structure devoted to the Shanghai Six. The sum of values declared in the SCO Charter initially defined the general tone, style format and paradigm of the portal. The portal has three language versions (Russian, English and Chinese), which are being consistently developed. I believe it would be fair to describe InfoSHOS as the SCO's interactive PR tool.

Day after day we provide information coverage of the SCO, describing its daily routine, key events and the process of its establishment on the international political stage in different genres. The portal works to popularize the SCO's values and ideas and, of course, talks about countries that are its members.

Who gave us this task? How did the portal come to be? The initiative did not come from the Kremlin, but from the depth of civil society. It was born and developed within the Inforos company, in the collective mind of its energetic creative team, which seized the day and understood the historical importance of the emergence of the new type of international alliance which the SCO is.

Structurally, InfoSHOS is a division of Inforos. But what is this company? It was set up at the beginning of the 21st century by young graduates of the Moscow State University and is the product of the innovation boom, which created a high demand for intellectual products and services in Russia.

In 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin asked the company as the owner of the InfoSHOS portal to provide information coverage of Russia's presidency in the SCO in 2008-2009. InfoSHOS then received the Kremlin's special gratitude for its work. When the SCO celebrated its 10th anniversary, the portal was awarded with an anniversary medal.

However, it is necessary to admit that, despite all its activity, InfoSHOS is a separate phenomenon, a lonely violin. Overall, information coverage that the SCO receives cannot be considered full, because there is no proper PR system.

Indeed, at its early stages, the SCO had other things than PR to worry about - the Organization focused on counteracting terrorist and separatist activity in the region. Information reached the global community sporadically, and the atmosphere of obscurity shrouded the SCO in a veil of myths. The West was positive that the East had created a new, alarming military union. "An obscure, dangerous unit," "a sectarian union," "a mix of the Russian bear with the Chinese dragon," etc. - this rhetoric is still in use. And this is logical: as we all know, myths are born when there is lack of information.

Developing, the unique project felt the need for media service only in the fifth year of its existence. Information issues were among priorities at the meeting in Shanghai in 2006. But where to start? An official SCO website was set up under the SCO Secretariat with headquarters in Beijing to report on the Organization's events. But there was still no live creative body. Meanwhile, the SCO needed not only an information platform, but also a platform for confessions - it wanted to talk about itself, to promote its values and to be understood correctly.

Shaping of a correct positive image is a natural and crucial thing. But today, the SCO can no longer do with a sketchy genre piece presented to the world. The Organization is still little known in the world, wary attitudes towards it persist, and its opponents are active. In these circumstances, it should be ready to preempt the moves of its critics, to create a certain methodology for protecting its values and to adequately promote its image, activities and achievements.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that the InfoSHOS portal has played a significant role in popularizing the SCO's image, consistently covering the Organization's activities. The meaningful goal of the project is to shape an integral image of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a progressive and dynamic international organization, to demonstrate its peaceful nature, fundamental principles and ideology. The portal covers cooperation between the SCO member states on ensuring peace and stability in Central Asia, counteraction to terrorism, extremism, separatism, cyber terrorism and illicit drug and weapons trafficking.

The portal has run articles by SCO secretaries general, heads of the RATS, ambassadors from different SCO member states to Russia, as well as by scientists and political analysts from the Organization's member states. The InfoSHOS also focuses on covering economic, scientific and educational aspects of cooperation, interaction in such sectors as energy, transport and communication, projects in the social and humanitarian spheres. A special place in the website's activities belongs to coverage of the SCO Business Council and the Organization's other business institutions.

The website's potential as an open discussion platform allows gathering various opinions on the essence of "the new type of international relations" and prospects of their further development, which may give rise to new ideas and provide an additional impetus to the ideology of the Shanghai partnership.

In the 12 years since its foundation, the SCO has created too much to allow anyone to disavow or overthrow its achievements. The political will, significant intellectual, material and other resources invested by the SCO member states in the Organization's infrastructure and development should

be transformed in the energy of successful movement, establishment on the international stage. But who will tell the world all this unless the SCO sets up a contemporary, highly professional system of PR coverage? Today, the SCO needs not just an information and analytical format, but assertive propaganda of its ideology.

Understanding the need to boost the SCO's information system, we are contributing to the process. Based on the portal's best web publications, we have begun publishing a contemporary glossy magazine of the same name, InfoSHOS, a new issue of which you are now holding.

Successfully developing, we do not get selfishly isolated in our activities and as experienced professionals, we help to develop a network of websites devoted to the SCO. Notably, the company's creative team set up and has for several years supported a portal of the SCO Youth Council and a website of the SCO Business Council; as a friendly act and support to the activities of the SCO Forum, we have initiated a special web portal for this structure.

As InfoSHOS's editor-in-chief, I invite everyone who works for the Shanghai idea to cooperate creatively with our portal, I call for beneficial interaction in the interests of the SCO's wellbeing and prosperity. For partnership conforming with the SCO's values - productive, civil, mutually interesting and awakening passionate forces for the sake of human unity.

# WORLD WELCOMES SCO UNIVERSITY AS NEW EDUCATION EXPERIENCE



*Alexei Maslov  
PhD, head of Oriental studies,  
the Higher School of Economics national research university*

The SCO University is definitely one of the most successful and promising projects of humanitarian cooperation that are being implemented in the SCO. Even though the university is at the pilot launch stage, over one hundred students from Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are getting master's degrees at each other's universities.

## SCO UNIVERSITY— A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT OF HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION

Several years ago, few people believed that this initiative would develop so rapidly, as there had been no experience of setting up such universities. But coordinated effort has allowed launching the project.

Discussions of the SCO University setup began with an initiative that was voiced by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the SCO summit in Bishkek in 2007. It suggested creating an SCO University as a network of existing universities.

It should be said that the idea of an SCO university in some or other form has been "in the air" for a long time; different proposals were made

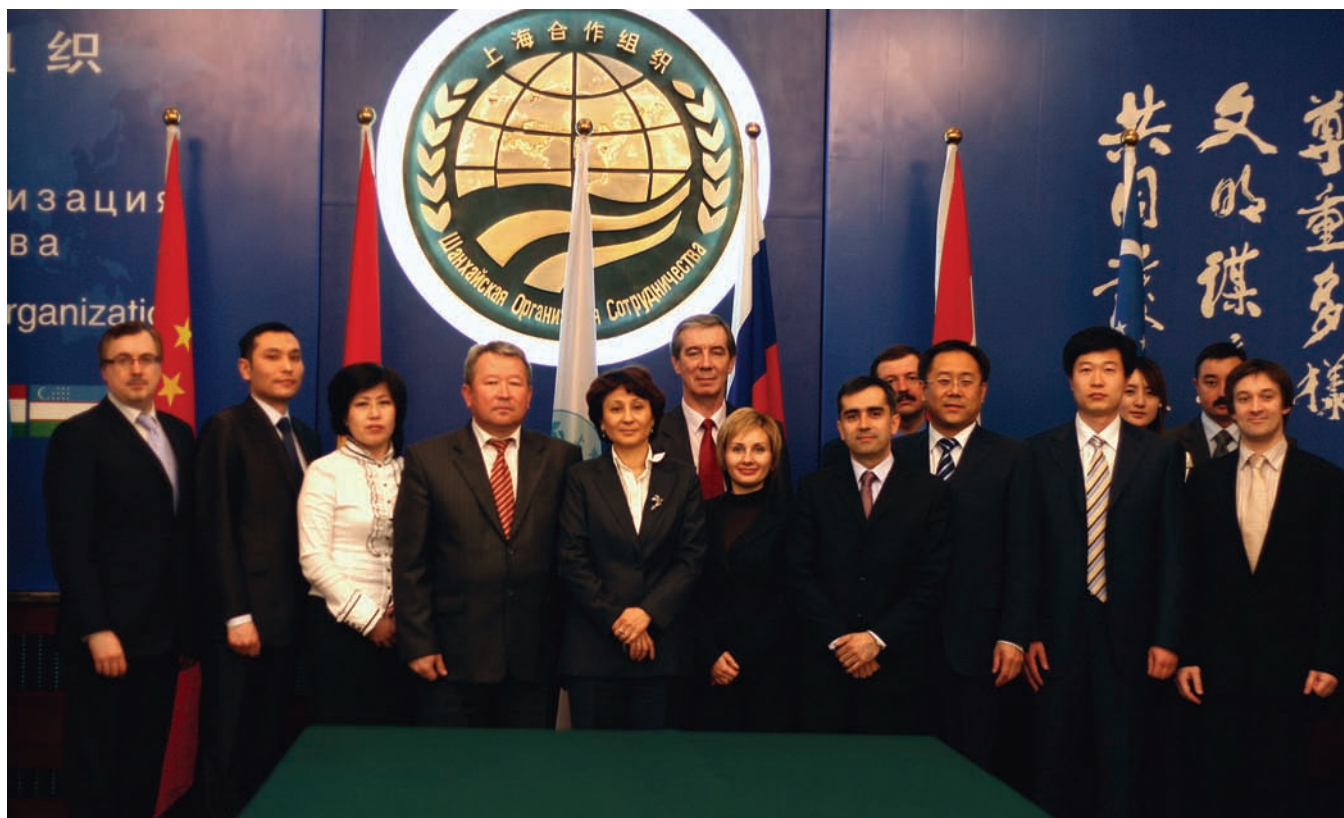
by Russian and Chinese educational establishments, but all of them boiled down to the same scheme: setting up an SCO University on the basis of an existing university that would invite students from the region. But this model did not make sense, since the main goal was to exchange experience and knowledge between the region's leading research and educational establishments.

Consequently, it was necessary to look for new approaches, but the task was complicated by a number of factors. First of all, even though national universities and education bodies were willing to develop such a project, Asia Pacific did not have experience of setting up similar universities.

There had been network university projects, but all of them followed the same model - a university or a group of universities acted as a "knowledge donor", providing curriculums, teachers

and online lectures, while other universities were recipients of this knowledge. This is, for example, how universities of the British Commonwealth function; this is how universities within the EduNet network in APEC support each other.

But in case with the SCO University, it was necessary to set up a network of equal universities that would exchange students and teachers and, most importantly, their best experience and knowledge. All these requirements were taken into account in the Concept of the SCO University that was drafted by Russian experts and was repeatedly discussed at meetings of the permanent working group on SCO education. The concept was adopted at the meeting of SCO education ministers in Astana, Kazakhstan, on October 24, 2008; its new version was adopted at the meeting of SCO education ministers in Novosibirsk on September 23, 2010.



## SCO UNIVERSITY CONCEPT

The concept envisages that the SCO university functions as a network of leading universities in the SCO member states that act as head (basic) universities.

Each of them offers its best curriculums that best present the university's research schools and teachers. Initially, each country selected several such universities that suggested their own curriculums.

At first it was proposed to offer studies in five areas: energy, regional studies, environment, information technology and nanotechnology. This choice meets the demand for education of national professionals that would be able to work even on international projects within the SCO. Later, the range was expanded by adding economics and pedagogy.

Head universities teach coordinated programs, and their methodology was taken into account when setting up the SCO University. It was important not to bring everything to a common denominator, robbing national schools of their characteristic features, but to creatively interweave the existing and tested programs. To do so, expert groups were set up at the national level to discuss and propose programs that were later coordinated by international expert groups. This method is unique for a network university.

## UNIVERSITY BIRTHDAY

The memorandum on cooperation between universities of Kazakhstan, China, Russia and Tajikistan on the setup of the University of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was signed on April 26, 2010, in Moscow by 53 universities from the SCO member states. This was how the university came

to be. In November 2011, Moscow hosted the 4th Education Week for SCO member states that was attended by heads of SCO education bodies, representatives of SCO observers and dialog partners, as well as heads of basic universities of the SCO University. As a result, the University Charter was signed, which spelled out the rights and obligations of its participants, mechanisms of inter-university exchange within the created format and other aspects of the university's functioning. The study process on master's programs at the SCO University was launched in the pilot format at the beginning of 2010. In 2010-2011, Russian universities admitted 81 students, and 101 students were admitted in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. Then the process started gaining momentum.

At the meeting of SCO education ministers in Bishkek in 2011, a set of fundamental documents was adopted that actually completed shaping of the SCO University as a full-fledged

educational establishment. First of all, the ministers endorsed the provisions on the Council of the SCOU rectors, the university's representative and coordinating body. They also endorsed the provisions on the board of trustees that is comprised from leading public figures and businessmen of the SCO member states, those committed to development of education and science and to humanitarian values. The board of trustees has four representatives from each SCO member state whose universities are part of the SCOU. The board first of all ensures shaping of the university's positive image both in the member states and in the international educational community. It also attracts business structures for joint training of professionals and assistance in employment of graduates. It promotes the SCO University's interests in different international, government and non-government structures, foundations and organizations.

## UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATE

At the meeting in Bishkek, the ministers also endorsed the unified form of certificate issued to students upon graduation from the SCO University.



Apart from it, students also receive a national diploma of higher education.

To streamline master's programs, the Provisions on preparation and defense of a master's thesis within the network University of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization were adopted. It allowed setting common criteria for assessing the quality of master's theses, requirements for knowledge level and research components and the term for writing theses.

The SCO University is gradually unfolding its management system. In

compliance with the concept, these bodies are being set up in a dialog with all parties to the project. In 2012, the setup of main administrative bodies of the University was formalized.

Many aspects have to be adjusted as the project develops. To do so, the activities of universities that have joined the SCOU and their curriculums are monitored regularly. This allows flexibly responding to certain excesses that inevitably emerge when implementing a flagship project. The system of permanent monitoring and feedback is one of the most efficient tools for the University's development. Remarkably, several monitoring centers have been set up in the region. Russia has founded the Center of SCO University Studies with support from the Education and Science Ministry. There is a similar center in China.

Today, the SCO University faces a number of goals, including the launch of master's programs, of coordinated postgraduate studies, of joint research projects, and many others. While developing the SCOU, member universities are learning to work in a multilateral format, when it is necessary to take into account the opinion of all participants. Universities from SCO observers and dialog partners already want to join the project. As to the University's reception in the world, educational communities of different countries definitely welcome the new study experience initiated by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.



# CHINGHIZ AITMATOV: “GIVER SHALL NEVER LACK”



*Bolot Dzhunusov*

*Kyrgyzstan's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Russia*

Wealth and dialog between different cultures on the planet form a buffer against terrorism, conflicts between civilizations and denominations. Variety of cultures is not an abyss that divides people, but a field for interaction and finding common points.

December 2013 will mark the 85th anniversary since the birth of Chinghiz Aitmatov, a literary classic, wise man and thinker, public figure and diplomat, the great son of the Kyrgyz people. Kyrgyzstan, Russia, all post-Soviet republics and many other countries will celebrate the anniversary on a grand scale.



## IS CHINGHIZ AITMATOV A KYRGYZ, SOVIET OR RUSSIAN WRITER?

Today it is impossible to answer the question, “Is Chinghiz Aitmatov a Kyrgyz, Soviet or Russian writer?” But it can be said with certainty that Aitmatov is a Eurasian genius and an international classic, who brought priceless riches of Spirit and Word to the treasury of civilizations, which allowed the world to discover our motherland, Kyrgyzstan.

Aitmatov was the first to start speaking about the need to preserve cultural

values, to restore native languages and native cultures. The world listens to the words of such grand figures, to renowned literary figures like Aitmatov, to moral lessons he taught us, his compatriots, and his readers in different countries.

Aitmatov's works raise acute philosophic, ethical and social problems of the present day. His prose combines psychological analysis with elements of folklore and mythology. With a great artistic power, it shows collisions related to acceptance or rejection of universal and national cultural values.

His last works create a sense of catastrophe. The Scaffold is a novel

about a deathly downfall, loss of moral and ethical values, everything that has until now contained the destructive power of the humankind. The downfall is in drug addiction, people's degradation, their cruelty towards nature and other people, their lack of belief and fear of terror. Like a great prophet, Aitmatov anticipated and foresaw a lot.

Will people preserve the traditions and spiritual values of their ancestors, will they preserve their unique land?.. We can say with certainty that, as the philosopher and writer, he made us see the world differently. He allowed all people in the 20th century to discover the nomadic world view with its

pantheism and worship of ancestors and their wisdom.

"The meaning and importance of cultural heritage," Aitmatov wrote, "is in that heritage of a nation being spread generously, shared with others, embracing the values of other people's cultures and therefore encouraging the process of spiritual interference. This is the case when the giver does not lose, but gains, does not lack, but gets richer." Wealth and dialog between different cultures on the planet form a buffer against terrorism, conflicts between civilizations and denominations. Variety of cultures is not an abyss that divides people, but a field for interaction and finding common points.

For thousands of years, Kyrgyz people have been able to maintain an adequate and beneficial dialog with all nations and civilizations of Eurasia thanks to their culture dating back to the dawn of times. Aitmatov's legacy teaches us: culture cannot live on a single tradition, it is preserved by new generations that join society in new historical circumstances. Yet another wisdom the writer armed us with is that the feeling of belonging to one's family, religion and nation should be expanded to include your planet. Violence, vulgarity, drug addiction, he says, should be counteracted with the ethical potential of all traditions, cultures and religions. Politicians that understand the importance of culture in today's world have every chance of being remembered with gratitude. And this is also a lesson taught by Aitmatov.

In the global community, our mountainous country can stand apart from others only with its unique, authentic culture. Both the government and people of art recognize that culture can first of all help the nation's

self identification and shaping of its ideology. All kinds of traditional crafts and people's pedagogic have recently seen a revival. They receive significant attention as cultural values. New works appear that are related to mythology and rituals, being spiritual art in the broad meaning of the world, with spirituality understood as a high moral goal, "the long road to Mecca." This is first of all the essence of the literary and journalistic prose of our great contemporary and compatriot, our colleague diplomat, Chinghiz Aitmatov. It is in the aspiration to find an internal connection between the contrasts in our life, "the world's harmony," to determine the purely moral as opposed to military road to the future (the soft power approach) is the meaning of man's cultural and humanitarian activities. And this is also Aitmatov's spiritual will.

Speaking of Aitmatov as a diplomat, employees of the Kyrgyzstan embassy in Belgium say that serving as the Soviet Union's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Luxembourg and then, after Kyrgyzstan gained independence, the Kyrgyzstan ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Benelux countries and France and its permanent representative to NATO, permanent representative to the European Community and other international organizations with accreditation in Brussels, Paris and the Hague, he was very simple, had huge credibility, was very attentive to the embassy's employees and eager to help his country as much as he could. Of course, his global recognition as a writer helped him in his diplomatic career. It is said that Ambassador Chinghiz Aitmatov was once put last on the list for a presentation of credentials ceremony because the King of Belgium wanted to talk to him without any time

restrictions. When new tasks came from Bishkek or were initiated by the embassy, like the conference on electricity exports from Central Asia to South Asia, Aitmatov directly participated in their implementation.

For many years, Aitmatov was obsessed with a project to develop horse breeding in Kyrgyzstan to export the wonderful Kyrgyz horses. To achieve this, he obtained an animal exports certificate from the European Union for the Issyk-Kul region, the only one issued for the CIS. Promoting the horse breeding project, he was in regular contact with French businessmen who were willing to attract significant direct investment in the sphere, which would have created the necessary infrastructure and jobs in one of Kyrgyzstan's most beautiful areas, Lake Issyk-Kul. Aitmatov could talk about this project in great detail and with great pleasure. It should be remembered that, when young, the future writer had studied at an agricultural institute.

Unfortunately, bureaucracy and political developments in Kyrgyzstan did not let the project to go through. Aitmatov was very upset about it. "I am so positive that the project would bring a lot to Kyrgyzstan," he said. "I can say as an expert, as an animal technician, that a horse is of great value for a Kyrgyz, we have been good at it since ancient times."

Attaching special importance to the personality and works of Chinghiz Aitmatov, the Kyrgyzstan Embassy in Russia, with support from the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism and from the Russian Culture Ministry, together with the All-Russian State Foreign Literature Rudomino Library, the Moscow State Linguistic

University, the Russian People's Friendship University, which elected Aitmatov its honorary professor in 1979, the plenipotentiary mission of the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia and other Russian government agencies, is organizing a number of events devoted to the 85th anniversary since the great writer's birth in Moscow, Kazan, Voronezh, Rostov-on-Don and other Russian cities.

launch the campaign "Chinghiz Aitmatov to Russian Libraries". Around the same time in October, a big delegation from Moscow and Bishkek - on the initiative of the Kyrgyzstan Embassy in Russia and with financial support from Tatarstan's plenipotentiary mission - will attend events in Kazan. The guests will visit a Book Fair at the National Library of Tatarstan, a photo exhibition at the Palace of People's Friendship exhibition

University, which elected Aitmatov is honorary professor in 1979, will hold an international research conference, Aitmatov Readings, together with the embassy. Other events will also be held in connection to the anniversary. We are extremely happy that in December, Moscow's public libraries will organize literary evenings, readers' conferences, video presentations, literary and music meetings and other events devoted to



The celebrations will start on October 24 at the Rudomino Library, which will gather the two countries' culture ministers, prominent political and public figures, representatives of the literary and cinema circles, the writer's colleagues and relatives, students and representatives of the Kyrgyz diaspora. The itinerary includes a news conference, screening of a documentary about Chinghiz Aitmatov's work, opening of a photo exhibition, demonstration of the writer's books published in numerous languages, opening of Days of Cinema at the Rudomino Library with screening of a feature film after an Aitmatov work and presentation of an anniversary edition of his select works, which will

center, attend the opening of Days of Cinema at the Mir cinema and a research conference that will take place at one of Kazan's universities and will also go to the home village of the writer's mother.

On October 28, 2013, the Moscow State Linguistic University will host a research literary conference titled Aitmatov's Universe, which will be attended by renowned Aitmatov experts, including Abdyldazhan Akmataliyev, who for a long time headed the Institute of Kyrgyz Language and Literature and prepared an 8-volume collection of Aitmatov's works for publication in Russian. On December 12, on Aitmatov's birthday, the People's Friendship

the anniversary of Aitmatov, a globally renowned writer and our compatriot, the pride of the Kyrgyz people.

Similar events will be held not only in Kyrgyzstan and Russia, but also in other CIS countries. Notably, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan will celebrate the writer's anniversary at the state level. All this will be a tribute to Chinghiz Aitmatov, who came into this world to brighten it with his wise words and to support humankind in its eternal pursuit of morality.

# ASTANA: GENIUS LOCI



*Tatiana Sinitsyna*

## Urban miracle: Kazakhstan's capital city turns 15

Both creators were unbelievably brave. Both President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who conceived this city, and the Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, who agreed to take up the improbable project. But there was one thing they disagreed about: the former believed in the new city, the latter didn't.

Ancient Romans believed that there is no place without a "genie," a kind protective spirit that decides the fate of each square foot of land.

Astana, Kazakhstan's capital city, has definitely emerged from the benevolence of its genius loci. It was it who drew the capital to the shores of the solemn Yesil, the epicenter of Eurasia, sent the energy of the idea into the universe, skillfully put

circumstances together and, finally, joined the passionate will of a leader with the delicate world of inspired muses whose mother is believed to be architecture. This is how the unique city, whose real-life appearance makes one's heart flutter, came to be. The state-of-the-art megalopolis has turned 15. Just 15! When you look at this urban development, you can hardly believe your eyes. Astana has won numerous international prizes

for its unique architecture and gained a reputation of one the world's most exquisite capital cities, received prestigious medals and the status of a World Heritage City from UNESCO. We should not forget about the state functions and the role Astana plays as the essence of the nation's spirit, the political, scientific and cultural center of the dynamically developing Kazakh state.

## TENGRISTS DON'T GIVE UP

...Of God's largesse, the Kazakhs received the steppe, harsh and endless. Nomads gratefully fell in love with their solemn land in the center of Asia, the tilting yard of winds. Their wise men found a formula for harmonious coexistence with the nature, and the people became one with the endless expanses. "Flying" on their strong horses, the Kazakhs didn't know then that their hooves were drumming on a "treasure chest..."

The Kazakh gave their land the energy of numerous generations, their toil, dreams, joy and grief. They conceived the wisdom of their ancestors' Tengrist mind, which worshipped life as an absolute blessing and didn't allow spirits to sink. This way, with rises and downfalls, they lived for many centuries. On the brink of the new millennium, the life of the Great Kazakh Steppe did a tight turn, having changed drastically. It was necessary to survive in the moon landscape of the collapsed Soviet power, and the Kazakhs had a stroke of luck at this dramatic turn of history. They were saved not only by their Tengrist philosophy, but also by the fact that the nation was led by a charismatic leader with extensive political experience and immense intuition, a person who knew where to lead his people and what exactly to do. Nursultan Nazarbayev felt the coming Kazakh luck and strained all his will and character to take advantage of it.

## CREATORS

...Both creators were unbelievably brave. Both President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who conceived this city, and



the Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, who agreed to take up the improbable project. But there was one thing they disagreed about: the former believed in the new city, the latter didn't.

Then why did he participate in the competition of designs for the future city? Most probably, the architect was led by his professional intuition, which appreciated the daring task. The goal was to create a unique city with a Eurasian look in the steppe, a symbol, an argument, a spiritual backbone for the young sovereign state, its unique face.

It is also possible that the Master suddenly heard his swan song and got caught in its magic... Astana was to become the final chord in the genius's brilliant architectural symphony, the last beat of his unbelievable imagination's wing.

Anyway, the political will, economic opportunities and architectural temperament came together at a historical moment and under lucky circumstances. But of course, the process was initiated by the one who saw the features of this city in his mind.

Initially, Nazarbayev was lonely in his dream of a new capital he decided to build in the northern part of the

country, where the biggest transport routes connecting Europe and Asia meet and where there was enough space for architects to implement their plans. The society quietly grumbled, confused by the president's odd decision, and viewed his initiative as an ambitious whim, untimely and dubious. Why would you need to spend billions on switching capitals, when society is demoralized and everything is in ruins? At first, only the president's power allowed him to move forward, but soon a creative team of supporters emerged that were willing to do their best to implement the Astana project.

The leader imagined the future of the new capital city in great detail, understanding its meaning - geopolitical, practical, humanitarian and moral. Later, recalling how the historical decision about the new capital was made and implemented in his book *The Kazakh Way*, Nazarbayev explained that the issue of moving the capital was not accidental. Even though Kazakhstan, separated from the Soviet parent state, was in ruins, the treasury empty and the population beyond poor, the head of the newborn state understood that his people, shocked and demoralized by the loss of the traditional reference point in life, needed a new prospect, moving the "hands of their mind clock forward to a new sovereign time." To do this, it was



necessary to “shake” people, to “air their minds.” Otherwise, there could be no breakthrough into the future. In his other book, *In the Heart of Eurasia*, the president wrote the following dramatic lines, “Leaning towards the necessity of moving the capital, I understood that I was putting everything at stake – my political career and maybe even life. Of course, I don’t mean the tragedy of real loss of life, but rather a philosophic one, the failure to fulfill my life obligation to society.” So he gave all his personal treasures to the new capital.

## ONE OF ASTANA'S 47 LOOKS

The classic ensemble of nine ancient muses does not include a Muse of Architecture; nevertheless, architecture is traditionally considered the mother of all arts. It must have blessed this city; otherwise, you cannot explain the harmony that connects such unexpected ideas of different architects who participated in its creation and who still continue sculpting its face.

The ultramodern architecture of the young Kazakh capital combines different styles. The Western one definitely prevails, but Asian motives are gently woven into it. The key targets are environmental friendliness, technology,

intellect and free use of space. Almost all global experience, both positive and negative, was taken into account when creating Astana.

Some believe that Astana is somewhat eclectic: architects of different styles and from different countries – Germany, Britain, Bulgaria, Switzerland and some oriental states – contributed to its look. A mix of oriental and Western design was inevitable – the city declared itself as a Eurasian one, so it needed its own unique face. On the other hand, even eclectic can be harmonious. The main thing in architecture is proportion and unity of composition.

**The mythical poplar tree, Baiterek, originates from the Kazakh’s cosmogony: it is a tree of life growing in the center of the world, its roots go down to the heart of the earth and its crown touches the sky.**

...I have seen Astana both in winter and in summer. In February, there was snow on the ground and the sparkling capital looked like a charming young woman in a white mink fur coat. In June, during

an SCO summit, I saw the same beautiful young lady, but this time in exquisitely colored silk...

...President Nazarbayev announced his authoritarian decision to build the new capital at the end of 1997, as a New Year gift for his nation. Work began immediately. The biggest support to the initiative came from young people who flooded the shores of the Yesil. It was necessary to prepare the left shore for development, and this area was wild, swampy and virtually primeval. The battle of architects was grand. A total of 47 creative teams competed for the right to design the city and came up with lots of innovative ideas. An international jury made a difficult choice and settled on three proposals, from Russia, Kazakhstan and Japan. These were presented to Nazarbayev, and he chose the project designed by the outstanding Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa.

Well-known Kazakh architect Amanzhol Chikanayev, who also participated in this competition of giants together with Italian master Frederico Marconi, acknowledged in a conversation with journalists that Kurokawa’s project was truly the most outstanding. His design included truly revolutionary urban ideas of the 21st century based on the belief that Astana should not repeat solutions tested in other countries and cities and should be absolutely unique.

Kurokawa is one of the founders of the Metabolist Movement in architecture and, of course, he saw the future city through the prism of abstract symbiosis. The language of metabolism implies incompleteness and understatement. All this envisages openness of buildings’ structure for the dialog with the city environment, its changing architectural, cultural and technological face. A lot

of air, exquisite green landscaping, fountains and fountainlets that ionize the environment, alleys and parks - everything for the sophisticated taste, for capricious humans.

The Kurokawa project included several fixed points. They were to be created by internationally renowned architects who were given the opportunity to express themselves walking a fine line.

The snow-white radial ensemble of the presidential culture center, the circus building in form of a flying saucer, the grand Ak-Orda, the presidential residence that is bigger than the White House in Washington, the Nur-Astana mosque, unexpected in its solutions and surprisingly harmonious... True masterpieces of architecture are the Kazakhstan cinema hall with a changeable interior configuration, designed by Italian Manfredi Nicoletti, the Singing Fountains Alley and the Oceanarium, one of the world's best.

Materialized ideas of different architects have become Astana's brands. But special recognition has been given to Englishman Norman Foster, the master of high tech. He designed the pyramid of the Palace of Peace and Concord, which hosts many big international Eurasian events.

Foster's pyramid also accommodates the Culture Museum, the University of Civilizations and an opera theater with 1,500 seats. This grandeur is held by four strong pillars, symbolical "hands of peace." The panoramic elevator allows a visitor to admire the beauty of green terraces, Astana's hanging gardens, and the play of light coming from its dome. "Everything in the world is afraid of time, and only time is afraid of pyramids..."

Other projects are no less fantastic. For example, Forster suggested covering an entire housing development with a glass roof that would be lifted in summer, while in winter it would create a comfortable climate for the residents. He designed the grand Khan Shatyry shopping and entertainment center on the Millenium Alley, which has everything a person may ever need under its 100-meter-high dome.

## BAITEREK CONNECTS EARTH AND SPACE

The Greate Kazakh Steppe opened up under the unbelievable pressure of human labor and creative passion. In 2002, Norman Foster created the inimitable Baiterek, a symbol of Kazakhstan's sovereignty and renewal. The look of this grand monument is connected to national history. The mythical poplar tree, Baiterek, originates from the Kazakh's cosmogony: it is a tree of life growing in the center of the world, its roots go down to the heart of the earth and its crown touches the sky. In the branches of the sacred poplar, the mythical bird Samruk, the ancestor of the Kazakhs, lays golden eggs... Obviously, the thought to create an architectural incarnation of Baiterek in the center of the capital city could be born only "within the nation." Symbolically, Baiterek is the center of the world; geographically, it is the exact center of Eurasia. I enjoyed a bird's eye view of the city from the 105-meter height of its shining steel body. The city lay open, emanating strong young energy, giving a feeling of unbelievable beauty and serious promise. From Baiterek, the building of the Nazarbayev University looked like a landed airliner; I could see the pagoda-like roofs of the Pekin Palace hotel and shining domes of

mosques and churches. And there was also the recognizable look of Moscow's Stalin-era high-rise buildings, a housing development in the Russian style.

...The place for Astana was not chosen accidentally. It was well loved by ancestors very long ago, a proof of which is the ancient settlement of Bozok found in the center of Astana. In the past, the famous Silk Way passed near this area. One of Astana's avenues is called Syganak, commemorating a town that stood here in ancient times.

Artifacts found in burial mounds in the steppe date back to different times - from the Bronze Age to early Middle Ages (the 7th and 8th centuries) to the era of the Kazakh Khanate (the 15th-16th centuries).

## WISE MAN AND HIS CHANCE

History is made by passionate actors. I like this thought of Lev Gumilev, an outstanding Russian ethnologist, "the last child of the Silver Century", the son of the great Russian poets Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev. Lev Gumilev gave all the energy of his mind and the passion of his heart to studying historical relations between the continent's nomads and settled peoples, which gave birth to the Eurasian idea. Gumilev's name is broadly known is Kazakhstan, and the Eurasian National University in Astana is named after him. In the past, the Kazakhs were ruled by khans, a horse's saddle was their throne and a white nomadic yurt their residence. These were smart people, who worked a lot on creation of the state and its ethical code. They managed to preserve their ethnicity, to lead their people through historical dangers. The



art of the latter was demonstrated by Nursultan Nazarbayev during the period of gaining independence.

## KUROSAWA'S MISTAKE

A creator kissed by God, Kisho Kurokawa gave Astana, his last symphony, everything his mature talent has accumulated. He dreamed to live long enough to see the city in all its beauty. But his life ended before that. Astana quickly and by large exceeded all forecasts included in its master plan. Well, even great architects can make mistakes...

Kurokawa did not believe in the city he was building and openly acknowledged this. Intuition and foresight failed the master. He did not sense the prospects and attractiveness of the project and underestimated the financial possibilities that were available. However, he was viewing the city in the dark – the country's economy had not risen yet (the treasure chest was opened later). Based on the gross regional product, Kurokawa believed that the city population would be small and the streets did not need to be broad. He did not expect the city to have more than 600,000 residents.

But Astana is now moving towards the 1-million threshold in seven-league strides. It is general practice in the world to review cities' master plans every five years to see if they fit the new reality, trends and financial situation. This is needed to avoid stagnation. Astana's master plan is also reviewed regularly and creatively; Kurosawa's mistakes have been corrected. The streets are being broadened, optimal logistics is being ensured to avoid traffic jams, these clots that paralyze a city's living organism. Underground railway? No, it won't be built; instead, there will be light-rail, high-speed trams. But Amonzhul Chikanayev asks not to blame Kurokawa, since adjustment is a natural process. He recalls that all of the great architect's main ideas, his theory of abstract symbiosis were implemented and are being developed. In compliance with initial city-planning testaments, Astana's architecture is focused on environment, being in gracious harmony with the nature. Its main goal is plenty of comfort, shaded alleys, fountains, quiet and peace. Now the city is getting ready to implement another of Foster's grand ideas, the Abu Dhabi Plaza center. It will be a city within the city with an 88-storey building, the highest in Central Asia, hotels, a traditional Kazakh bazaar and a huge conservatory the size of a football field. The creation of this

dream city will cost almost \$2 billion; it will become an international model of eco design, since it will function on solar power.

The steppe is an empire of winds. To protect Astana from them, over 50,000 hectares of forest has been planted around the city, with wedges of it cutting into the urban landscape. When the trees grow bigger, winds will get lost in their thick crowns that will break their brazen flight.

## DAWN ABOVE GREAT STEPPE

...The heavy reddish-golden moon was looking down from the blue pre-dawn sky, shining on the sweetly sleeping beauty of Astana. We were going to the airport, across the city, from the left shore to the right. The live view of the wonderful, daring, miraculous creation, young and ambitious, couldn't fail to impress. Tens of thousands of builders are still working in the city around the clock: after all, Astana is so young! And it is with great astonishment that the Yesil, which carries its waters to the Irtysh and on to the Ob and the world ocean, looks at the fantastic transformation of its shores...

# BISHKEK: DARLING OF THE SUN

*Yekaterina Muromtseva*

From the historical perspective, the city is young – it is 136 years old, but the place where it stands is ancient and full of legends.

One of them says that a wonderful hero called Pishpek, or Bishkek, lived there long ago.



Kyrgyzstan is believed to have three miracles: Issyk-Kul, Manas and Chinghiz Aitmatov. The first is an amazing lake in the mountains, non-freezing and full of crystal clear water. The second is an ancient epic, the eternal muse of the Kyrgyz people. The third is their great compatriot, the nation's spiritual tuning fork. All three have miraculously come together in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

But there are other interpretations of the word "bishkek." It also means a churn for whipping kumis. It is a traditional national tool, always kept impeccably clean, almost sacred, since it is used to prepare the healing and delicious drink made of mare's milk. At the same time, historians maintain that "bishkek" also means the front part of the beautiful Baitik mountain, which symbolizes happiness.

Anyway, coming to this blessed and unique city is always pleasant. First of all, this is an amazing natural tanning parlor, where you can enjoy the sun 322 days a year. Another inalienable brand of the Kyrgyz capital and the country in general is fantastic hospitality. Anyone who comes to this land with peace will be surrounded with warmth and respect, treated to food and drink. The Kyrgyz are kind, trusting and tolerant,

extremely hard-working and talented.

The world discovered Bishkek, the heart and soul of Kyrgyzstan, through Chinghiz Aitmatov's books. The city is situated in the middle of the Chuyskaya valley, at the foot of the white Ala-Too mountains, 750 meters above the sea level. It is the country's political, economic, scientific and cultural center, its main transport hub. The city is beautiful already because it is different from any other city. Its features, miraculously combining architectural styles of many eras, have remained unique.

Bishkek was designed and planned so that all streets are laid only along meridians and parallels, like in New York, so it is impossible to get lost. Green boulevards and parks, broad squares, grave residential districts... One of the city's remarkable characteristics

is its wonderful green attire. For the number of parks, shadowed boulevards, trees and flowers Bishkek still remains the leader among other Central Asian capitals. It has 20 national parks, 4 artificial water bodies, 10 theaters, 5 open-air memorial museums. There is a unique oak park, where it is always cool and where tame squirrels are coming down to passers-by looking for a treat. It is also an open-air sculpture museum. Made of stone, metal and wood, sculptures are situated alone and in groups along the park's alleys or simply under trees.

The doors to Bishkek are opened by the legendary hero Manas, the main character of the Kyrgyz epic – the city's international airport is named after him. Bishkek was the home of the famous writer Chinghiz Aitmatov. In a country house on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul,

he created his immortal masterpieces that have been translated into forty languages. Issyk-Kul is a non-freezing mountainous lake, the second biggest in the world after Titicaca, and it is the gem of Kyrgyzstan's nature. It became widely known even during the writer's life and now, after his death, has become a destination for international cultural pilgrimage.

Yet even if a traveler is in a great hurry to reach Issyk-Kul, he cannot but go through Bishkek. Looking southwards from any point in the city, one can see the snowy tops of the Great Kyrgyz Range, which is part of the Tian Shan system. The Kyrgyz call this range Ala-Too, which means "spotty mountains." Covered with fir and juniper forests, they are really spotty. In the winter, their snow-covered slopes are freckled with numerous skiers and snowboarders. After all, there are over 20 skiing bases of a good international level, with lifts, in the city's vicinity. The relatively small territory of Kyrgyzstan has everything: fertile valleys, Alpine meadows, snowy mountains with the famous 7,000-meter high peaks - Peak Pobeda and Khan Tengri.

In an hour's drive from Bishkek, in the upper part of the extremely beautiful Ala-Archinskoye gorge, there is an international Alpine camp that gathers athletes from many countries during the season. The names of the peaks - Korona (4,860m), Komsomolets (4,526 m), Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky (4,875 m), Svobodnaya Koreya (4,740 m) - reflect the area's history and to a certain extent the world's geography.

There is a curious episode Bishkek is proud of. About three years ago, some Swedish mathematicians were studying Santa Klaus's movements around the world for fun's sake and came to the

conclusion that his winter residence should be situated in the Tian Shan and not in Lapland. This was a joke, of course, but Bishkek took it seriously and now Kyrgyzstan also has Peak Santa Klaus.

The central square in the city is also named Ala-Too. Surrounded with white marble palaces and numerous fountains, it is one of the most beautiful places in Bishkek. Here you will find the historical museum and the local "White House," where the president and his team work. In the center of the square, there is a grand statue called Erkindik, or Freedom. In the ancient Oak Park, an eternal fire commemorates heroes of the past, warriors that died in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

Despite urbanization, the city's 135-year history is still reflected on its streets. You can find a mud dwelling from the early 20th century alongside an 18-story skyscraper. But there are fewer and fewer such "patriarchs" left: Bishkek with its 1-million population is growing and changing fast.

"...If a man cannot imagine himself in secrete as a god fighting for others, as you would have to fight for people, then You, God, would also cease to exist. And I don't want You to disappear without a trace. That is all I'm sad about..." Perhaps, this quote from Aitmatov can best describe the current mood in the Kyrgyz society. The country is going back to its ancestors' values, but at the same time is aspiring to live in the present day. Aitmatov is buried in the south of the Kyrgyz capital. Here, his favorite city spreads before the eyes. Like the great writer, the city has seen high rises and difficult times of disappointment. And both had enough wisdom and courage to accept the reality with dignity and to continue their way in the hope of a better tomorrow.



# VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY'S "STARLESS ORDEAL"



Jana Novikova

## VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

In his young years, which coincided with the period of revolutions, Mayakovsky, the passionate herald of new ideals, called for consigning Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and other masters of Russian literature to the dustbin of history. He believed that the new life should create everything, including literature, anew.

He thought that only Nikolai Gogol was worth the revolutionary time. But the brilliant master of mockery, Gogol played a cruel trick on his follower from beyond the veil. At the end of the 20th century, Mayakovsky was on the brink of being thrown away from Russian poetry; at least, he was almost forgotten and no longer appreciated. However, giving up Mayakovsky's poetic heritage would mean robbing Russian poetry and our own souls.

Discussing Mayakovsky's poetic mission and his extremely complicated personality is like touching upon the Universe. Perhaps, it is from its deepest depth that the finger of God reaches out from time to time (and not too frequently!) and puts its mark on an infant's forehead. Vladimir Mayakovsky was given the gift of a unique verse technique, the ability to hear and understand the melody of the world around him in overtones not heard by others and to express the nature of things and feelings in metaphors that caused either admiration, falling as golden grains on the soil of one's soul, or indignation with their openly rough style,

and that sometimes even bit as venomous snakes.

...Vladimir Mayakovsky was born on July 19, 1893, in a blessed area of Georgia, the village of Bagdadi, the Kutaisi province, to a family of senior forester Vladimir Mayakovsky. "My father is a nobleman, the skin on my hands is thin...", Mayakovsky wrote in the poem "About This." The position of senior forester was an important one. Thanks to it, the impoverished noble family was fairly well off, raising their daughters and son in the spirit of their class and in Russian cultural traditions.

The future poet studied at the Kutaisi gymnasium when his father died suddenly and absurdly, of a prick of a needle he used to stitch up business files. Blood contamination killed him almost instantly. Having lost their breadwinner, the family moved down in the society. In 1906, 13-year-old Vladimir and his mother moved to Moscow, where his sister Lyudmila was studying applied art at the Strogonavskoye vocational school.

Their life in Moscow was difficult, full of labor and deprivation. In order to make both ends meet, Mayakovsky's mother rented out rooms and desperately fought for survival. To support his family, Vladimir painted pictures and made pyrogravures for sale. He was unable to complete studies at the gymnasium as there wasn't money to pay for it. The big

Throughout the Soviet era, Mayakovsky was presented as a "herald of revolution," while his precious lyrical verses and high notes of "civil lyrics," so appreciated in Russian poetry, were ignored.



city caught him in the net of revolutionary activities that resulted in his arrest; he spent 11 months in the Butyrskaya prison and was discharged due to his being underage. The young prisoner solaced himself by writing poems, which were then taken away by prison wardens. But it was this first notebook of poems that Mayakovsky saw as the start of his poetic career.

Youth maximalism, captivated with ideas of changing the world, did not tamper his strong desire to study art and crafts, to which he felt a strong inclination. Mayakovsky was admitted to the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and was considered a promising student, but his true calling, the poetic one, was manifesting itself with increasing power. At the school, Mayakovsky met David Burlyuk, the futurist poet, who saw "a poet genius" in his young friend. It is easy to tempt a young, easily carried away soul: Vladimir joined a community of futurists, who openly denied any past art and were searching for new forms.

The first poems by 19-year-old Mayakovsky, *Night and Morning*, were published in the futurist anthology *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*. At the age of 20, he published his first collection of poems with the laconic name *Me*, as if announcing his arrival in the poetic world. The turbulence of the October revolution of 1917, which ended monarchy in Russia, was enthusiastically welcomed by 24-year-old Mayakovsky, who saw himself as a "drummer-boy of the revolution." In his poem *Left March*, he addresses masses from a platform. In the first years after the revolution, Mayakovsky worked actively at the Russian State Telegraph Agency (ROSTA), composing propagandist poems and painting posters after current events. He also wrote big poems.

Throughout the Soviet era, Mayakovsky was presented as a "herald of revolution," while his precious lyrical verses and high

notes of "civil lyrics," so appreciated in Russian poetry, were ignored. But if you put aside everything he wrote under the euphoria of revolutionary pressure and romantic and Utopian ideas about building a society of "supreme justice" and "absolute happiness," can you not see an inspired lyricist? Does the tragic poem *About This*, in which Mayakovsky showed the lyrical hero's struggle for the perfect, reciprocated love, without which there is no life, not demonstrate the lyrical side of his unique talent? Aren't the famous lines from his *Listen!* poem a true gem of lyricism?

"Listen,  
if stars are lit,  
it means - there is someone  
who needs it.  
It means it is essential  
that every evening  
at least one star should ascend  
over the crest of the building."  
In this poem, the poet seems  
to swear that he would  
not "stand that starless ordeal."

Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetry swept across the early 20th-century Russia as a lightning ball, conquering human imagination with its power, shaking its emotional world. The poet's temperament matched the spirit of revolutionary life, and his popularity was absolute. He knew fame and envy, merciless criticism of fellow poets and the cunning affection of the authorities. And he always remained true to himself.

Mayakovsky was a dandy, he wore expensive suits by Parisian couturiers, owned a car, often travelled abroad, drank good wines, "ate pineapples" and "chewed grouses," for which he reproached bourgeoisie in his poems. He sincerely worked for the revolution, believed that its purifying power was able to take away everything negative from the Russian life and make people happy. When he realized he was deeply mistaken and "sang about the wrong

things," he shot himself. He didn't live to be 37.

Communist Party bureaucrats, exposed in the poet's play *The Bathhouse*, sighed with relief. The Stalin era did not need "passionate heralds." Perhaps, Mayakovsky's suicide saved him from repressions that were gaining momentum.

Many believe that the reason for his suicide was unhappy love. This version of his death was promoted by his "fatal" lover Lilya Brik, who lived almost 90 years and often mystified his image. Yet it would be too shallow for Mayakovsky to "shoot himself because of a woman"...

Reassessing the Soviet legacy, our democratic society still cannot forgive the poet for his enthusiastic praising of the revolution. The list of complaints against Mayakovsky includes his famous propagandist poems - Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 150,000,000, Good! But it would be fair to recall another poem, *Bad!*, which equally passionately opposed its antipode and, obviously, was not published - it was found in the poet's archives. This unknown poem is a witness of the deep internal drama that was tearing apart Mayakovsky's soul at the end of his life and was caused by his disappointment in ideals he had so passionately dressed in the precious garments of his talent.

...It appears that his poetry is justified by stars that are lit because "there is someone who needs it". Who knows, perhaps, one of them was lit by Mayakovsky's passionate, exuberant soul.

# CYRILLIC ALPHABET: UNFAIRLY UNFAVORED IN POST-SOVIET STATES

*Lyubov Slovyakova*

The great contribution of works encoded in Cyrillic to the treasury of civilization is undeniable. And this grand creative process is ongoing.



The thirty-three letters of the Cyrillic alphabet were given to the Slavs by philosopher brothers Cyril and Methodius at the beginning of the last millennium. With the help of these linguistic notes, Russians, in creative cooperation with other peoples of Russia, have created great symphonies of spirit and thought, expressed their understanding of life,

man's purpose and beauty of the living world. The great contribution of works encoded in Cyrillic to the treasury of civilization is undeniable. And this grand creative process is ongoing.

But the question now is not about the greatness and importance of the Russian language. It doesn't need PR; this goal

was once and forever brilliantly achieved by Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Bunin... We are now talking about the post-Soviet fate of the Russian language, about the Cyrillic alphabet, ungratefully persecuted and unfairly unfavored.

But first I would like to recall a recent and pleasant episode, when I was

fascinated by the crystal clear Russian speech of a young Tajik girl, Sakhnoz Benazir. True gems of my native language were falling down from her lips. Hardly believing my ears, I went in a kind of blessed stupor. It is not often today that you can enjoy the impeccable language of a young person, especially a non-native speaker. It was with amazement and joy that I realized that more than two decades after the Soviet Union's breakup there is a girl living in Tajikistan who commands Russian as a noble student of the Smolny Institute for young ladies.

It was at an SCO youth forum, and Sakhnoz was addressing the audience in Russian because the majority of people there understood it. Listening to the exquisite sounds of the Russian speech coming from the lips of the young Tajik girl, I understood that our language would live on the expanses of the former great power for a long time to come, because there were people who understood the range of its possibilities and its "tender taste," as Bella Akhmadulina wrote. And also because its role as a tool of international communication in post-Soviet countries is virtually monopolistic.

Of course, Russian has now found a serious rival in English, which is increasingly becoming a global language. It is being introduced in the lives of young sovereign states very actively and with a political bias. Still, you will agree with me that it is difficult to imagine a Kazakh and Uzbek or a Kyrgyz and Tajik speaking to each other in English...

Remarkably, the Russian language has demonstrated greater resilience in post-Soviet countries than it was expected in the early 1990s. The majority of population of the new states that emerged after the Soviet Union's breakup (about 70%) still commands it fairly well. The Russian language remains a powerful brace in the construct of relations Russia is building with young post-Soviet republics. The high and mighty are taking significant effort to oust the "imperial

language" out of their territory, citing the need for national self-identification via cultural self-awareness and ancestors' legacy. But how can you oust a free bird from its natural habitat?

The Russian language doesn't expect other nations to prefer it to their mother tongue. It is just a tool that serves people's communication needs. And, of course, it is also a golden key to the treasure chest of knowledge, because in more than one thousand years of its existence the Cyrillic alphabet has encoded such a huge amount of cultural values, scientific thoughts and all kinds of information that no national language can possibly create anything comparable in the foreseeable future.

...I was flying from Bishkek, and a pleasant young man sitting next to me, dressed to the nines, turned out to be a philologist. We started talking and I was surprised to find out that he hadn't read Dante's Divine Comedy. "This book has not been translated into our language," he excused himself. "But there are great Russian translations," I said and recommended reading it, adding that a humanitarian scholar cannot do without knowledge of cultural foundations. "I'm afraid I won't understand it correctly in Russian," the young man said. "I know only spoken Russian." "And there is also Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, and Cervantes's Don Quixote, which are not translated in Kyrgyz yet, and this is not easy to do," I added oil to the fire... In response, I got a polite, smiling, oriental silence. And I recalled how the great Chinghiz Aitmatov had once said in an interview, "The small stream of my Kyrgyz language joined the great river of the Russian language and the latter brought my word to the world ocean."

Unfortunately, people seldom listen to wise men... In the early 1990s, it seemed that the centrifugal force of the Soviet Union's breakup, the nationalist euphoria encouraged by local elites would soon destroy everything Soviet,

and first of all Russian. However, Russia's years-long humanitarian mission, the strength of its spirit and deeds ensured a certain durability of its influence and, as Dostoyevsky put it, "excited curiosity in blood," - towards new standards of life, unknown strata of knowledge, possibilities of progress. Russia's long presence created a taste for the Russian speech.

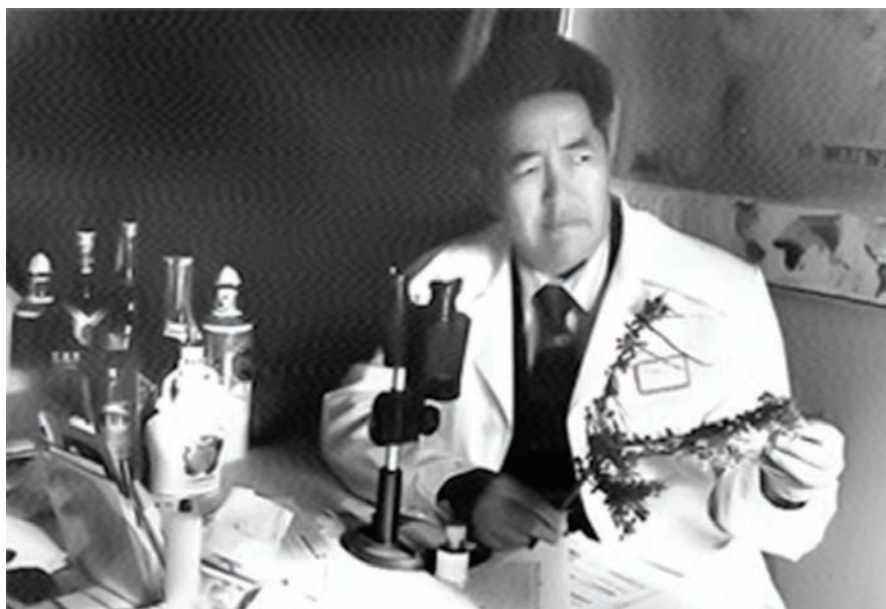
However, life goes on, and change of generations may prove a serious test for the Russian language in post-Soviet republics. The process of ousting the Russian language is ongoing. Concern about their own ethnic and cultural sovereignty makes power elites resort to every measure to strengthen national languages in their states.

So far, persecutions of the Russian language are prevented by visa-free travels, close economic ties and administrative pragmatism, for which the best language policy is the one that doesn't require too much additional investment. These objective factors give us hope that every CIS member state may remain bilingual. Still, analysts forecast that the Russian language may fully lose its dominating position in the CIS within the next two decades.

Yet the Russian language will not be the one to suffer; it will always remain the member of the global languages club, which comprises merely six languages whose influence on the global civilization has been recognized as biggest. But I am sorry for those who thoughtlessly reject Russian, robbing themselves. Meanwhile, socially, the language serves a human society that there is, and there is nothing to do about it.

# ARASHAN: NOBLE SON OF POISON

*Tatiana Kunina*



Story Poisons and Antidotes has a personal flavor, hence its magic. The researcher worked on it not only driven by a strong scientific passion, but also tempted by a secret from his outstanding life.

## WHAT A LIFE! WHAT DEEDS!

Arstanbek Altymyshev's legacy includes his unique books - treatises of a talented professional who worked at the confluence of biology, medicine and chemistry, specializing in pharmaceutical and toxicological studies of physiologically active substances, both natural and synthetic ones.

Almost all of his works have been translated into European languages: Tea, Coffee and Balms; Kharu-fot (Longevity); Natural Healing Means; Essays on Mumijo; Poisons and Antidotes. The latter appeared not only from the researcher's interest in the subject, but was his

offering to fate. But no one knew about this till the academician's death hour.

Poisons and Antidotes has a personal flavor, hence its magic. The researcher worked on it not only driven by a strong scientific passion, but also tempted by a secret from his outstanding life, reliving in his mind an almost unbelievable episode from this youth. It was that adventure that influenced his scientific choice and determined his professional interests.

...Leaving Bishkek, I bought an elegant bottle of the Arashan balm, academician

Altymyshev's famous creation, at a Duty Free. The curative drink is created with primeval mountainous herbs and endemic plants of the Issyk-Kul region that have a pronounced biostimulating effect.

A happy, life-giving union of highland herbs, the setting of a purest gem, Lake Issyk-Kul! The scientist embodied the blessing of this natural wonder in the formula of Arashan. The balm's creator discovered the floristic mysteries of his land little by little. Extracts of unique ingredients are combined to create a wonderful aroma, and the balm is a trove

What a life! What deeds! This is what comes to mind when you hear about the improbable fate of academician Arstanbek Altymyshev, the creator of powerful adaptogenes, the famous researcher of mumijo, academician of the Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences and laureate of the State Prize. “Life of outstanding people” – these words by Alexei Gorky perfectly fit late Altymyshev’s brilliant life, who perpetuated his name with his deeds.

of components that are good for human body. It was academician Altymyshev who was the first in the Soviet Union to theoretically justify and introduce to practical healthcare use of healing balms, which represented natural complexes of biologically active substances that were selectively received from environmentally clean raw materials and had curative effect.

Not long ago, the Kyrgyz balm Arashan was presented at the international fair All-Russian Brand (3rd Millennium) and was awarded a Gold Sign. This was not its first award. Before, it had been awarded

with honorary diplomas at international fairs in Poznan and Damask, with gold medals of international fairs in Leipzig and Moscow; the balm is patented in many countries.

## BUT WHAT WAS THE SECRET KEPT BY ARSTANBEK ALTMYSHEV?

It was something he could not tell everyone. But if you know that your days are numbered and a deathly secret is gnawing at your soul, a secret you have been hiding all your life, how strong is the desire to let it out! For people, for chronicles.... All the more so as the remoteness of the deed is giving you a free hand.

And then he called someone he trusted. The dying scientist revealed his secret to his colleague, Alexander Zelinchenko. Our life journeys crossed on the shore of Issyk-Kul, where an SCO international conference took place, and Alexander shared with me the story he had heard from Arstanbek Altymyshev.

“It was in the 1970s. The world was suffocating from terror. Basques, Red brigades, the IRA, Palestinians... Alongside usual explosions and shootings, they began actively using poisons for individual killings. A prick of umbrella in the crowd, and it’s done. But death did not come at once, only in a day or two, and no trace of poison was left in the body. Obviously, the poison was not created by amateurs.

Once, the young and promising Kyrgyz pharmacologist was invited to Moscow

and offered a study trip all the way to Latin America. There, in a town lost in the Chilean rainforest, a former sponsor of Hitler’s military industry – one of those who after the war had changed his face, his continent and his masters – had built a gigantic serpentarium where he was believed to have gathered reptiles from all over the world. And not only them, but also insects, poisonous fishes, exotic mushrooms and plants. And all this dangerous force of nature was used to produce poisons. On an industrial scale!

Altymyshev was asked to engage in scientific and industrial espionage. Naturally, it would be done in the name of supreme goals. To say that the young researcher was shocked is to say nothing. He hesitated, refused, but was pressured and persuaded...

He began to study Spanish. It was easy, because the language is based on Latin, which he had studied at the medical institute and continued to improve throughout his life – a pharmacologist cannot do without it. Soon Altymyshev could speak and even write fairly decent Spanish. His departure was postponed several times. Finally, he was invited to the Soviet Academy of Sciences, allegedly, for a conference.

There he was told that everything was ready. The legend made Kyrgyz Altymyshev a Japanese! But the one born and living far from his historical motherland. Luckily, he had a corresponding appearance. It was suggested that Spanish would be enough for the “Japanese” in the strange country, since he had mastered it well by that time. But, to be on the safe side, he intensively studied Japanese for six months, and also not without success.

He departed from Amsterdam and arrived at the destination (in Chile) in a day. It felt awful: it was 40 degrees below zero in Moscow when he left, and here in the tropics it was 30 above zero. And he was scared, after all. But he was met nicely, driven 60 miles and settled at a luxurious house among virgin forests. He was astounded at how sensibly and conveniently everything was organized here, far from civilization, and how well the labs were equipped. Life was full of comfort, void of any everyday problems, one on one with his favorite cause -- what else could a scientist dream of?

He was given a lab and personnel and he immersed himself into work. He had free access to the entire serpentarium and studied its inhabitants. It seemed to have all poisonous monsters created by nature. He saw the coral snake, the green mamba, the Egyptian cobra and the black widow. And he didn't just see them, but also worked with these extremely poisonous reptiles.

There was a middle-aged woman with the Polish name Helen living in a cottage nearby. Charming, well-groomed and well-dressed, with a nice haircut and figure, she looked attractive for her age. Arstanbek would exchange a couple of words with her from time to time.

On weekends, he went - as he was ordered to - to a town nearby where he

met a courier. He submitted his report and received money - the contract with the serpentarium implied covering his own expenses. Everything progressed as planned. He even invented a new cholagogic medication with a Polish colleague.

...But then a military coup began in Chile. The news found Altymyshev experimenting at the lab. His brief from Moscow did not have provisions for such a scenario. He went to meet the courier, but didn't get any instructions. Absent-minded like any scientist, he did not pay much attention to the news of the junta coming to power and enthusiastically continued his research. Meanwhile, the generals were playing the master in the country and initiating mass repressions. As it turned out later, they came to power not without finances of the serpentarium's owner, a former Nazi.

Several days passed. Altymyshev was alone, concentrating on a retort, when the door creaked. Not a professional in the cloak and dagger games, he involuntarily shuddered when he heard Helen speaking broken Russian. "Don't be surprised. My father was Ukrainian and fled to America in the 1920s. Now listen: leave as soon as you can. There is a secret rule: anyone who surrenders a Communist to the authorities in this poor country will get a color TV set; for two Communists, they give a car. A Bolshevik from Russia would make one unbelievably rich. I am leaving now, but here is something for you..." And she disappeared.

She left an envelop with some money and a copy of a fax message with all details about the Japanese employee - who and where from he was. It was suggested that the owner watch him until "the final

decision is made." Without returning to his house, Altymyshev ran through the jungle to the nearest village. There he hired a boat and found himself far from the serpentarium, in a town where there was a Soviet consulate. He was knocking on the gate, but they didn't let him in: Who are you? What serpentarium? Desperate, Altymyshev began cursing, and this immediately proved his story - no Japanese could master exclusive Russian curses that well! When the situation was cleared, the secret agent was given a ticket to Havana where he was to board a flight for Moscow. But the plane had a stopover in Lima, the capital of Peru. There, the police entered the airplane, looking for a "Russian professor." Looking as a "descendant of Samurais", Altymyshev didn't catch their attention... He was lucky!

## IN HAVANA, A CAR WAS WAITING FOR HIM AT THE AIRPORT...

That was his breathtaking adventure. Had he not found himself in a bind, had he not come in contact with the hellish poison factory, perhaps he wouldn't have written his Poisons and Antidotes and created the wonderful Arashan balm, which can be seen as a noble descendant of poison.



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## We invite You to participate!

International Forum and Exhibition "High Technology of XXI.  
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Under support of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Business Council, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Moscow City Government, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation, the Federal Space Agency, State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom, the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation, Skolkovo Fund, Rusnano JSC.

Participants – SCO Member States, SCO dialog observers and partners.

We invite representatives of SCO organizational structures, the Russian and foreign public authorities creating a policy in the sphere of technological development, scientific organizations and industrial enterprises, state research centers, academic institutions, higher education institutions, small innovation business enterprises, institutes for development, venture funds, financial and consulting structures.

## FORUM PROGRAM

International Exhibition "HT of XXI–SCO'2014"

### Topics:

Nanotechnologies and new materials, Smart City Project, energy efficiency and energy saving, nuclear technology, biotechnology, medical devices, "green" technology and ecology, aerospace technology, radio electronics, IT-technology and telecommunications, machine building, etc.

### Congress Events "High Technology on SCO Space":

Plenary session, panel discussions, round tables, focused events.

### General Directions:

Innovation strategy and investment policy, energy strategy, city infrastructure development, transport and logistics, medicine and biotechnology, agricultural sector, food processing industry, industrial technology and new materials, IT-technology.

### Topics under discussion:

- ways and forms of consolidation of technology and investment resources within the framework of SCO, arrangement of a dialog of experts from SCO countries on issues of short-term and long-term forecasting, implementation of breakthrough innovative solutions;
- presentation and selection of technologies for the SCO Register of High Technology Center;
- creation of engineering structures for the implementation of breakthrough technologies within the framework of SCO transnational projects.

### Expected Results:

- Positioning of the Forum and Exhibition "High Technology of XXI. Innovations on SCO Space" as a special-purpose exhibition and congress area of high technology of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- Formulation of proposals for the inclusion of technologies and projects in the SCO Register of High Technologies;
- Conclusion of framework agreements on the creation of engineering structures for the implementation of joint high technology projects.



### Organizers:

- SCO Business Council
- Institute of Economics and Complex Communication Problems, JSC
- Russian High-Tech Development Fund
- EXPO-ECOS, LLC

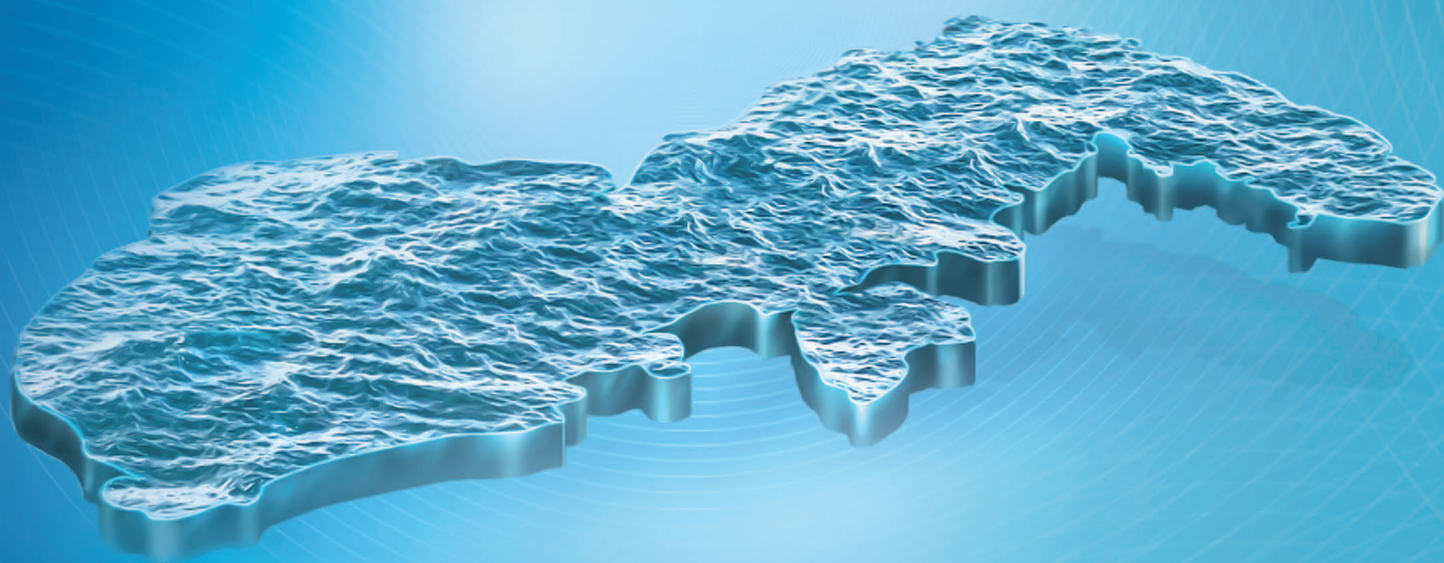
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- Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation,
- Moscow City Government,
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