Chapter – V

RELATIONS WITH CIS COUNTRIES
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After the dissolution of the USSR, in December 1991, Russia’s most immediate foreign policy concerns were with the other former Soviet Republics.¹ The CIS came as an organisation whose birth was accidental, while its future remained as uncertain as it did at its birth. Those who founded CIS really wanted a different type of the Union. Eleven former Soviet Republics are now joined with Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States, while some, like Russia constituted the core of the near abroad.

The base line for Russian foreign policy is the new foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, which was approved by President Vladimir Putin on 28 June 2000.² It replaces the previous concept of 1993,³ which was felt no longer to correspond to the realities of the contemporary international system. Perhaps the most significant feature of the concept is the emphasis it places on Russia’s limited foreign policy capabilities. It notes the limited resource support for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, making it difficult to uphold its foreign economic interests and narrowing down the framework of its information and cultural influence abroad. Elsewhere, the concept argues that a successful foreign policy must be based on maintaining a reasonable balance between its objectives and possibilities for attaining these objectives. Concentration of politico-diplomatic, military, economic, financial and other means on resolving foreign political tasks must be commensurate with their real significance for Russia’s national interests. The concept appears to be noting the danger of Russia, in her current weak state, assuming too many foreign policy commitments and becoming overstretched. It would appear to be arguing for a modest and restrained foreign policy. In both, his essay “Russia on the Threshold of the New Millennium”, published on the

² The concept can be found on http://www.mid.ru/scon.htm
³ See the abridged version of the 1993 concept in Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 29 April 1993.
Internet in December 1999, and his first state of the nation address, delivered to the Federal Assembly in July 2000, Putin underlined Russia's economic backwardness in relation to the advanced western states. In his address to the Federal Assembly, he warned that "the growing rift between the leading states and Russia is pushing us towards becoming a third world country. This weakness, which is evidently recognised by the Russian leadership, appears to have compelled the Putin leadership to accept that its foreign policy objectives must be correspondingly modest.

Putin's overriding objective since winning the presidential election in March 2000 is to ensure that the federal centre has effective control over territory of the Russian Federation. This means curbing the regions' tendency towards centrifugalism, so that the Russian Federation can be seen as a single, coherent, political, legal and economic space. Strengthening the statehood of the Russian Federation takes precedence over any foreign policy objective. Indeed the 2000 foreign policy concept sees its first foreign policy objective as "to ensure the reliable security of the country, to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The CIS appears to be an instrument of Russian foreign policy in two ways. It seems, first of all, that it is a means of co-ordination of policies among its members. It is also a mechanism for asserting Russian hegemony over other states. Both methods have been adopted simultaneously. Initially, prominence was given to the former, while with the passage of time the latter had become an important feature of Russian policy. According to the text of the original CIS agreement, the members agreed to co-ordinate foreign policy activities. They specifically committed themselves to creating a common military strategic space under a joint commander, including a unified control over nuclear weapons. That commitment, along with an agreement to create a common economic space \(^4\), was abandoned within two years.

\(^4\) The text of the CIS Agreement is in The CDPSP, vol. 43, no. 49 (1992), pp.10-11.
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The CIS is unique, among many existing international organisations. It is neither a political alliance nor an economic community, though its activities have elements of both. It is a loose federation with no independent powers of governance. There is of course provision for central institutions—principally a council of Heads of State and Council of Heads of Government—but these councils lack authority to impose CIS decisions on any member. President Nursultan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan, one of the most ardent supporters of integration, complained in 1994 that of 452 agreements signed within the CIS framework, most were never implemented.

By the late 1990’s, Russia’s previously influential role as regional security provider was being eroded. In April 1999, the Collective Security Treaty (CST) was extended for a further period of five years. However, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Azerbaijan withdrew from the treaty, primarily in order to reduce Moscow’s influence on their foreign and security policies. In turn, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan created the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) in October 2000, striving for economic security on the outer border of the community and a common energy market. Russia’s National Security Concept of January 2000 signaled a change in strategy in Central Asia, reflecting the altered strategic configuration in the region caused by Russia’s diminishing power and growing Western influence. Such influence was evidenced by increasing bilateral and multilateral ties with Western states and Western-based military co-operation.5

At the same time, Russian Federation’s Foreign Policy Concept of June 2000 also prioritized the CIS member-states in Russian foreign policy, viewing them as strategic partners and stressing the necessary of full integration of the CIS with Russia, in particular in the economic and military-security spheres. President Putin underlined this objective by

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choosing the Central Asian states as the destination of his first foreign visit by choosing the Central Asian states part in the destination of his first foreign visits. Although Central Asian states took part in the joint military command-and-staff exercises CIS Southern Shield-99 following the invasion of armed Islamic groups into Kyrgyzstan, existing co-operative security structure were largely considered to be ineffective prior to 11 September, 2001. Russian influence was waning, despite Russia's rhetoric of integration, while Western influence was on the increase.

Western influence was further strengthened and Russia's voice weakened, following the events of 11 September, as the region rose rapidly in strategic importance as a location for the staging of military and logistical operations. Russia's desire to maintain its regional influence was clearly expressed at the 11th meeting of the Council of the Chiefs of Security Bodies and Secret Services of the CIS states, which took place at the beginning of October 2001 in Dushanbe. Russia attempted unsuccessfully to persuade the Central Asian leaders to act strictly with Moscow in order to link as one Moscow–dominated echelon into the US-led operation. Uzbekistan allowed the USA access to its air bases, transport facilities and military capabilities to launch offensive strikes on Afghanistan. In return, the US Congress passed a bill in September 2001 granting Uzbekistan $25 million for weapons and other military purchases.6 In January 2002, Washington announced that Uzbekistan would receive $4 million of the $100 million that Congress had allocated for fighting terrorism. On 4 December 2001, Tajikistan's government officially allowed the coalition the use of its air base at Kulob, about 40 km from the Afghan border. Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, the parliament approved allowing coalition forces use of the international airport, the only airfield suitable for US military aircraft. As a result, Central Asian states have proven to be invaluable, particularly Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, to the United States and its

allies in providing a location for the staging of military operations and for logistical operations.

Some regional analysts suggested that the arrival of US troops in Central Asia would render a Russian-led CST irrelevant and demonstrate the extent to which 'the emperor has no clothes'. Indeed, it appears that despite Moscow's increased diplomatic activity in the region the CST and other existing co-operation structure have failed to adequately respond to the new geo-strategic context following 11 September and how this traumatic event highlighted political realities in the region. The fact that the CST members separately negotiated with the United States clearly demonstrates that the CST cannot fulfill its primary function--acting as a representative body for its members--as the interests of its member do not necessarily justify and legitimize their policies towards the USA as necessary for maintaining security and waging the struggle against terrorism.

However, General Valery Nikolayenko, secretary-general of the CST, has argued that fears of a permanent US military presence in the region are not justified' Nikolayenko emphasized that the CST viewed itself as an 'integral part of the European and Asian security system with China’s and India’s policies being in line with CST plans and courses of action. Furthermore, Nokolayenko announced that in 2002 the CST plans a series of military maneuvers. In April the CST held exercise, dubbed 'South-Anti-Terror', involving Kyrgyz and Tajik security forces. The same month, another joint training exercise, involving air defense commanders, was held by six CST states, along with Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Moscow’s determination to maintain it influence in Central Asia was clearly expressed in President Putin’s address to the Federal Meeting where he noted that Russian policy in Central Asia will become more pragmatic and will take into account the interests of Post-Soviet states-allies in the anti-terrorism coalition. Moreover, the geo-economic realities of energy dependence and the democratic dilemmas involved in subordinating support for democracy and
democratic civil-military relations and human rights to the central strategic goal of defeating global terror will soon prove unsustainable. Western tactical short-term aid for authoritarian regimes with poor human rights records cannot be balanced in the long term by the strategic necessity of promoting democratic peace.\textsuperscript{7}

After casting a quick glance over the genesis of CIS, we now turn to Russia’s relations with each CIS member during the period of our study.

**Russia and Kazakhstan**

Russo-Kazakh relations continue to remain stable. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev sees maintaining a good relationship with Russia as a central feature of his foreign policy. This was especially seen in his visit to Moscow in June 2000. At this meeting Nazarbayev and Putin signed a memorandum on the use of the Baykonur cosmodrome, and the problem of Russia’s rent payments for this appears to have been sorted out. They expressed agreement on enhancing the role and authority of the UN as the major international means of ensuring peace and security, and emphasised the importance of strengthening the regime of the 1972 ABM treaty. They also agreed to develop their cooperation the field of defence and military technology, and both presidents instructed their governments to form national sections within the Inter-State Commission for Military Economic Cooperation of the CIS. They will be charged with the duty of jointly drawing up proposals for the further integration of military enterprises. Both states also intend to consolidate cooperation within the CIS customs union and favour the development of a common economic space. Russia and Kazakhstan signed a 10 year economic cooperation agreement in 1998, and Putin and Nazarbayev expressed satisfaction with the fulfillment of

this agreement. Agreement was also reached in June 2000 on transporting Kazakh oil through Russia.\(^8\)

The Russo-Kazakh relationship appears to be developing smoothly under Putin. Many Russian and Kazakh foreign policy perspectives are similar; both states support the concept of a multipolar world, and favour enhancing the role of the United Nations. Nazarbayev favours close cooperation with Moscow within the framework of the CIS and Shanghai Five, and the perceived threat of terrorism that has emerged particularly since 1999 binds the two states closer together in a common security concern. Kazakhstan is unlikely to become the third member of the Russo-Belarusian union state, as she desires to maintain her sovereignty.

Kazakhstan will export some of her oil through Russia, via Novorossiysk, but she will also export via the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline; China, and is interested also in exporting via Iran.

Since the break up of the USSR, Nazarbayev has put strong emphasis on cooperation with Russia partly in order to prevent the possible break up of Kazakhstan. Russians comprise approximately one-third of Kazakhstan's population, and Nazarbayev probably sees maintaining good ties with Moscow as a means of ensuring that the Russian Federation will not raise any grievances (real or otherwise) about the situation of the Russian community in Kazakhstan. In April 2000 Oleg Mironov, the Russian presidential human rights commissioner, appealed to Nazarbayev to treat humanely the Russian citizens who were put on trial charged with terrorist crimes in Ust-Kamenogorsk.\(^9\) Those charged were accused of attempting to create a Russian republic in eastern Kazakhstan and were said to be members of a Russian nationalist organisation linked with similar organisations in the Russian Federation. It should not be ruled out that such actions may

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\(^8\) "Vladimir Putin: New Emphasis in Russian Foreign Policy", TheCDPSP (Ohio), vol. 52, no. 32 (2000), pp. 16-17.

\(^9\) ITAR-TASS, 24 April 2000.
have the support of elements within the Russian security services, possibly interested in testing the waters by covertly encouraging a separatist movement in Kazakhstan.

Defense ministers of the "Shanghai Five Countries" met in Astana city on 30 March, 2000, in line with the Bishkek joint statement issued by the heads of state of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on 25th August 1999. Defense ministers of the five countries reiterated that the five countries have given consideration to the interests of all sides and neighbouring regions within the framework of the "Shanghai Five Countries" in developing their military-political relations, conducting co-operation featuring equality and mutual trust, and resolving disputes through friendly consultations, and that their friendly co-operations is open and not directed against any other country or group of countries.  

The consensus reached by the five countries in border affairs and military confidence-building has manifested the new type of security concept featuring mutual benefit consolidate mutual trust and good-neighborliness, and made constructive contributions to ensuring the stability of the entire region.

All sides agree to further study the feasibility of military confidence-building measures and ways to strengthen cooperation between the border defense departments of the five countries and crack down on trafficking of drugs, smuggling of arms and other cross-border criminal activities; to hold joint exercise on preventing dangerous military activities, cracking down on international terrorists, and carrying out disaster relief work, exchange the experience and to peace-keeping, and cooperate in peace-keeping action; and to hold symposiums, lectures, discussion meetings, and sport games.

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The defense ministers maintain that the international situation is experiencing a profound change, and the development trend of multipolarity has become increasingly evident. Promoting multi-polarity will help ensure stability in the international situation and balance between the interests of various countries, and will create more favourable conditions for the social and economic development of the various countries and regions in the world.

All sides point out: Hegemony and power politics are still threatening world peace and stability. All countries should strictly abide by the purpose and principles of the "UN Charter" and other acknowledged norms of the international law and resolutely oppose any country to intervene on the internal affairs of the countries on the excuses of protecting national and religious interests and human rights.

Only when a peaceful, stable, fair, and rational international political and economic new order is established, can sustained peace and prosperity be realized in the 21st century.

All sides emphasize the need to reinforce the system of non-proliferation of arms and promote the early validity of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The defense minister reiterate support to the resolution on "safeguarding and abiding by the anti-ballistic missile treaty" endorsed by the UN General Assemble in 1999. All sides emphasize that the treaty is the foundation for strategic stability and an important condition for global development in disarmament.

The Defense ministers point out that deployment of the Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) system in Asia-Pacific Region will possibly result in damage of regional stability and security.

All sides express support to the proposal for Central Asian countries to establish a nuclear-free zone in their region. They hope that future treaties on establishing nuclear-free zones will conform to the purpose
and goals of nuclear-free zones so that they will be acknowledge by the international community, including nuclear countries.

After an overall analysis of the situation in Central Asia and its surrounding areas, the defense ministers of the five countries point out: Positive factors have increased continuously, and peace and development remain the mainstream in the situation of this region, but destabilizing factors still exist, the general situation remain complicated, and religious extremism, ethnic separatism, international terrorism, and factors outside the region have posted a serious threat to the peace and stability of Central Asia and its surroundings areas.

All sides are determined to continue consolidating the security in Central Asia, which constitutes the foundation for security which is aimed at maintaining long-term peaceful co-operation, and which should not be undermined by the intervention of the forces outside the region. For this purpose the five countries will strengthen consultations and co-operation between their defense departments.

All sides express understanding of and support to China’s desire and efforts for national reunification and reaffirm that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s territory. They support the stance of the Chinese sides on opposing any country to include. Taiwan in the TMD plan in any form.

All sides express grave concern over the military confrontation that is still continued in Afghanistan which poses a serious threat on regional and international stability.

All sides unanimously maintain: As has been proven in history, the Afghanistan issue cannot possibly be settled through military means. Only a political settlement that gives consideration to the interests of all the major strata of the Afghanistan society can bring peace.

During meeting, all sides reiterated the central role of the United Nations in the international efforts to resolve Afghanistan conflict in a
peaceful manner and emphasized the need to strictly implement the relevant resolutions of the US Security Council and General Assembly.

All sides state that they will never tolerate national ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism, will resolutely oppose any activities directed against other countries carried out by these forces within their territory, and will adopt effective measures together to crack down on them in order to safeguard peace and stability in their regions.\textsuperscript{11}

The KTK pipeline joins the Tengiz deposit in Western Kazakhstan with the Russian port of Novorossiysk. At the initial stage the pipeline will have a capacity of 28.2m tonnes of oil per annum, which will gradually increase to 67m tonnes. The cost of the first section of the pipeline is estimated at 2.5bn dollars, and by 2015 investment should amount to 4.2bn dollars.

Russia has 24 per cent participation in Caspian Pipeline Consortium, Kazakhstan –19 per cent, Oman 7 per cent and another 50 per cent of the consortium is divided between Chevron Caspian Pipeline Consortium Co(15 Per cent ), Mobil Caspian Pipeline Co(7.5 per cent ), Oryx Caspian Pipeline LLC(1.75 per cent ), Russian-US Joint venture LUKArco BV (12.5 per cent ), Russian-British Joint venture Rosneft-Shell Caspian ventures Ltd.(7.5 per cent ), Italian Agip International (NA) NV (2 per cent ), British BG Overseas Holdings Ltd. (2 per cent ) and Kazakhstan Pipeline Ventures LLC (1.75 per cent).\textsuperscript{12}

Under a compensation programme, Russia is completing its delivery of military aircraft to Kazakhstan, which is to receive another eight made by the aircraft builder Sukhoi. Russia is supplying military technology to Kazakhstan to cover debts for the use of military testing grounds in the republic, and also in accordance with agreements concerning the supply of weapons in exchange for strategic bombers taken out of

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} SWB, SUW/0676 WF/1, 2 February 2001,
Kazakhstan into Russia in the early 1990s. All in all, Russia has now supplied Kazakhstan with 81 military aircraft among them 18 Su-27s, and one S-300 surface-to-air missile complex.\(^\text{13}\)

Russia and Kazakhstan have signed a package of agreements on space cooperation. On 9 January, 2004 Presidents Vladimir Putin and Nursultan Nazarbayev signed an extension of the Russian lease on the Baikonur cosmodrome to 2050. The agreement extends the initial deal struck in December 1994, when Russia was given a 20-year lease on the site for $115 million a year in rent and the obligation to spend another $50 million annually to keep the infrastructure intact.

The deal keeps its same financial parameters, but Russia wants to revise the terms. In a bid to put pressure on Kazakhstan, Russia threatened to move all military launches to the Plesetsk and Svobodny cosmodromes within its own territory, starting in 2005, and some commercial launches to Plesetsk and Kourou, French Fuiana as soon as new launch pads for the Angara and Soyuz boosters are completed.\(^\text{14}\)

A second agreement has been signed covering development of Kazakhstan’s first communications satellite by Russia’s Khrunichev. The television-broadcast and data-communications satellite, based on the Yakhta spacecraft bys, is due for launch from Baikonur in 2005. Khrunichev emerged as the winner after Kazakhstan studied proposals from France’s Alcatel Space and four Russian bidders.\(^\text{15}\)

Russian, Kazakh and Tajik military units, which continue to arrive in Kyrgyzstan, will take part in an exercise together with a Kirghiz trop contingent August 4-6. Codenamed Rubezh (Frontier)-2004 that exercise will involve elements of the collective rapid-deployment force serving with the Collective Treaty Organisation. This exercise mostly aims to organise political and military interaction for the sake of

\(^{13}\) SWB, SUW/0681 WF/1, 9 March 2001.


ensuring Central Asian security, Defence Ministry official said. Special units from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan will streamline the decision-making process, also ensuring cohesion in the course of simulated operations to fight international terrorism. 16

Russia and Kazakhstan intend together to establish a new space centre in Baiterek, Kazakhstan. The centre will launch heavy, medium and light rockets. Baiknur has no pads of such an extensive range.

Baiterek construction costs are estimated at more than US$220 million. Kazakhstan has also scheduled for other ambitious space – related endeavors to upgrade the land infrastructure. In particular, it will thoroughly modernise and re-commission a cluster of quantum optic stations in Priozersk, and establish a mission control centre in Alexyevka close to Astana.

The country had another venture in the year 2004 scheduled to orbit its first broadcasting and communication satellite on a $65 million project. Russia’s Khrunichev government space research-cum-production centre will manufacture the satellite, with a service life of ten to twelve years. The expenditures are expected to recoup within three years. 17

The foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization met on June 4, 2005 in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. The SCO is made up of six states – Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Mongolia has observer status, and India, Iran and Pakistan accorded the status during an SCO summit in Astana on July 5-6, 2005.

Ever since the events in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the leaders of the SCO countries and of neighboring states have been concerned primarily about extremism and so-called emergency situations. The six have decided that banding together is the best way to combat these

16 "Russia-Kazakhstan-Tajikistan" Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), vol.34, No.8, August 2004, p.1180.
17 "Kazakhstan-Russia: Kazakhstan, Russian for New Space Centre", Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi,), Vol. 34. No.9, September 2004, p. 1216.
problems. This certainly doesn't mean that the SCO is turning into a bloc intent on opposing color revolutions in the region. SCO officials maintain that their present task is to fight terrorism, and new cooperation mechanisms are being created within the organization to that end. 18

**Russia-Turkmenistan**

Turkmenistan has the smallest and most homogenous population in Central Asia – about 75 percent being Turkmen. Despite enormous reserves of oil and natural gas and a productive but expensive mono-agricultural based on cotton, it is under developed and one of the poorest countries in the region. Geographic location accounts for its importance – as a land bridge between Iran and the outside world on the one hand and Central Asia on the other. 19

Late in July 1998 a representative delegation of Russia’s natural gas monopoly, Gazprom, visited Turkmenistan. Gazprom Chairman Alexey Russia’s relations with Turkmenistan have been cool in recent years, due to Askhabad’s policy of neutrality, which means that Turkmenistan has remained aloof from cooperating with the CIS and Russia in many policy areas. However, the relationship appears to have significantly improved since Putin’s coming to power.

Putin’s visit to Turkmenistan in May 2000 appeared to have been very successful. Turkmenistan appears not to share Russian perspectives on the threat of extremism, and has good relations with the Taliban in Afghanistan. During Putin’s visit in May 2000, it was agreed that Russia would purchase more Turkmen gas. There will be an increase in Turkmen gas deliveries to Russia by 10bn cubic metres annually, to 50bn-60bn cubic metres. Russia will receive 30bn cubic metres in 2001 and 40bn cubic metres of gas in 2002. It was also agreed to set up the

18 The CDPSP (Ohio), vol. 57, no. 23, July 6, 2005, p. 5.
first session of the intergovernmental Turkmen-Russian commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation. The two leaders also agreed to coordinate principles of Russian-Turkmen trade and economic cooperation for the period between 2000 and 2005.

Disagreements remain over the Caspian Sea, and Turkmenistan is determined to maintain her neutral status, and will remain aloof from CIS military structures including the new anti-terrorism centre, and is also keen on developing economic ties with non-CIS trading partners. However the relationship appears to be much closer than before, and from the Russian standpoint must be considered an improvement.  

The agreement was signed in Moscow on April 10, 2003 along with a 25-year contract according to which Russia’s Gazexport will buy nearly 2 Trillion cubic meters of Turkmen gas. In 2007 Turkmen gas supplies would reach 60-70 billion cubic meters a year and in 2009-70-80 billion. Until 2007, Turkmen gas will be exported at a fixed price close to the gas price inside Russia. After four years of the contract’s fulfillment, Turkmenistan will raise the price given that Russia is exporting gas to Europe at international prices. According to the Turkmen-Russian agreement, Russia will pay for a half of the Turkmen gas supplies with hard currency and for the other half with commodities and services until 2008. These conditions are caused by the present reality. With its huge natural gas reserves, Turkmenistan is in a geo-political trap and has to sell its fuel in the low-solvent CIS market.  

Experts believe Gazprom’s delegation visited Ashgabat to confirm Russia’s participation in the distribution of Turkmen gas, as the Turkmen government has staked on a multi-vector gas export strategy. In the recent time Ashgabat has seen frequent visits of its present (Ukraine and Iran) and potential (Afghanistan and Pakistan) energy

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20 The CDPSP (Ohio), vol. 54, no. 10 (2002), pp. 15-16.
21 "Russia-Turkmenistan: Turkmen gas to flow to Russia", Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), vol. 33, no. 9, September 2003, pp.974-975.
partners. Along with the signing of the Russian contract Ashgabat has boosted its gas projects in the southern direction – increasing the gas export to Iran and gas delivery to Pakistan through the trans-Afghan gas pipeline. Turkmenistan is also supplying a guaranteed volume of gas to Ukraine and promised a certain volume of gas to Itera Corporation.

For the successful transit of Turkmen gas provided by the contact, Saparmurad Niyazov suggested to the Gazprom Chairman to take part in building a new Caspian gas pipeline with an annual capacity of 30 billion cubic meters and a length of 1,745 kilometers. Turkmenistan will finance the construction of the 600-kilometer Turkmen part of the new pipeline from Deryalyk gas-compressing station to the gas compressing station Bekdash on the Turkmen-Kazakh border. The importers of the Turkmen gas are planned to pay for building the Kazakh part of the pipeline. The pipeline is planned to complete in 2007. Kazakhstan would earn good money for the transit of Turkmen gas through the pipeline’s 1,140-kilometer part on the Kazakh territory.22

**Russia - Tajikistan**

Tajikistan remains a *de facto* Russian protectorate. The regime of President Imomali Rahmonov owes its existence to the presence of the CIS peacekeeping force, namely the Russian 201st motor-rifle division based there, plus Russian border guard forces deployed along the Tajik-Afghan border. It was decided at the CIS summit in June 2000 that the CIS peacekeeping force would be withdrawn from Tajikistan, but that Russian military bases would be set up in the country instead. Putin said that it would be easier to deal with Tajikistan on a bilateral basis rather than through the CIS.23 In June 2000, Rahmonov confirmed that a Russo-Tajik treaty had been signed, giving Russia the right to establish military bases in Tajikistan. At the Shanghai Five summit in

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22 Ibid.
23 Interfax, 21 June 2000.
Dushanbe in July 2000, both Putin and Rahmonov spoke out in favour of a Russian military presence in Tajikistan.

The June 4, 2004 meeting between Russian President, Vladimir Putin and his Tajik counterpart Emormali Rakhmonov in the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi brought about some certainty on the deployment of Russian border guard forces in Tajikistan and on the whole on the prospects of Russian military presence in the south of CIS. On June 7 Russian news agency Interfax quoted a source in the foreign Ministry as saying that a Russian military base would be set up in Tajikistan this year. This will be Russia’s second military base in Central Asia after the airbase in Kant Kyrgyzstan opened in October 2003.24

**Russia - Uzbekistan**

Uzbekistan has attempted in recent years to maintain her distance from Moscow. Her decision to leave the CIS Collective Security Treaty in 1999 and her association with the GUAM states (hence transforming it to GUUAM) made clear Uzbekistan’s desire to pursue an independent foreign policy no longer centered on Moscow, in contrast to the policies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

However Uzbekistan’s perception of her security problems have driven her closer to Moscow. The most notable indication of this was, as noted above, Uzbek President Islam Karimov’s decision to attend the Shanghai Five summit in Dushanbe in July 2000. Putin had a very successful visit to Uzbekistan in December 1999, when he was still prime minister. A military cooperation agreement was signed during this visit.

Putin undertook another visit in May 2000, when an agreement to supply Russia with Uzbek gas was signed. The discussion of security matters was high on the agenda during this visit, and the incursion of

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Islamic extremists into southern Uzbekistan in August 2000 is likely to convince Tashkent further of the need to develop closer cooperation with Moscow in the security field. Back in May 2000, Karimov was not shy in making clear Uzbekistan’s dependence on Moscow.\textsuperscript{25}

This viewpoint was expressed even more strongly in June when Karimov said that “we must openly accept Russia’s presence in the Central Asian region and admit that Russia has its interests in the Central Asian region, rather than play some game.”\textsuperscript{26}

The marked improvement in Russo-Uzbek relations under Putin could make Uzbekistan pivotal in the development of Russian policy towards Central Asia. Putin said in May that Uzbekistan “could become Russia’s foothold in developing international contacts with the Central Asian region.”\textsuperscript{27}

Two visits by Putin in four months definitely shows the importance Russia attaches to its relations with this important Central Asian state.\textsuperscript{28}

The head of the Russian Defense Ministry’s main directorate for international military cooperation, Leonid Ivashov, said that Uzbek participation in the Shanghai Five (which was renamed Shanghai Cooperation Organization) is essential “even though Uzbekistan does not do nor have a mutual border with China”.\textsuperscript{29}

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, paid a one-day visit to Uzbekistan rebuilt ties with the Central Asian dominant power, which in the post-9/11 scenario has been aligned closer to Washington than Moscow.

\textsuperscript{25} Russian Public TV, 19 May 2000.
\textsuperscript{26} Russia TV, 21 June 2000.
\textsuperscript{27} Russian Public TV, 19 May 2000.
\textsuperscript{28} SWB, SU/3846 G, 22 May 2000, pp.1-2.
\textsuperscript{29} SWB, SU/3806 B, 4 April 2000, p.7.
One the way asks from Malaysia, Mr. Putin made a stopover in the historic Silk Road town of Samarqand for talks with Uzbekistan's authoritative President, Islam Karimov. Mr. Putin met Mr. Karimov on the same day when their military began joint anti-terrorist exercise in the neighbouring Kazakhstan with China, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—all members of the Shanghai cooperation Organisation (SCO). This is the first time Uzbekistan has taken part in SCO war games. Earlier, it took a stand against adding a military component to the SCO and even threatened to suspend its membership if the group went ahead with such plans. It was also announced today that a regional anti-terrorist centre mooted by SCO be based in Tashkent in Uzbekistan, not in Kyrgyzstan as earlier planned. Speaking to reporters after talks with Mr. Karimov, Mr. Putin maintained the Military-technical sphere and defence production as priority areas of cooperation between the two countries.\(^{30}\)

For his part, the Uzbekistan leaders called for closer cooperation with Russia in the gas field. Mr. Karimov suggested that Russia's natural gas monopoly, Gazprom, be made operator of the Central Asian gas pipelines linking gas-rich Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Russia. This will promote Mr. Putin's plan to set up a Eurasian Gas Alliance and enhance Russia's control over the energy resources of Central Asia.

Uzbekistan was the first in Central Asia to offer military base facilities to the US for operations inside Afghanistan after September 11, and went to forge close economic and defence ties with Washington. However, faced with the West's reluctance to close its eyes to human rights violations and suppression of political opposition, Mr. Karimov has recently moved to rebuild relations with Russia.\(^{31}\)

At his presidential residence in Novo-Ogarevo, Vladimir Putin hosted Uzbek President Islam Karimov, who was in Moscow. For the first time

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\(^{30}\) The Hindu, (New Delhi), August 7, 2003.

\(^{31}\) "Russia-Uzbekistan: Putin meets Korimov to rebuild ties", Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi) vol. 33, No. 9 September 2003, p. 975.
in the month and a half since the tragic events in May 2005 in Andizhan (Uzbekistan), which officially claimed 176 victims and by other accounts several times that figure, the president of Russia spoke out publicly on this issue. Speaking on Andizhan, Vladimir Putin sought to sidestep making any judgments on the actions taken by the Uzbek authorities in suppressing the uprising. After offering his condolences to the victims and members of their families, the Russian president said, “I do not intend to delve into other aspects of these tragic events, but we can confirm that reports of an infiltration of militants from specially prepared bases in Afghanistan are true, and there were indeed concentrations of militants in contiguous territories.”

Not surprisingly, official Tashkent is grateful to Moscow for its support; the Uzbek foreign minister has even said so. And as an expert on Russian-Uzbek relations told Vremya novostei recently on condition of anonymity, "Tashkent will have to pay for this support." Exactly how Russia will restore its military presence in Uzbekistan, whether through joint military exercises or even by establishing a military base, is the question being decided in Moscow. 32

**Russia - Armenia**

Armenia remains a loyal ally of Moscow, as she sees Russia as the only possible protector against the potential threats of Azerbaijan and Turkey. On his visit to Georgia in March 2000, Armenian President Robert Kocharyan addressed the Armenian parliament, and emphasised the importance for Armenia of close ties with Russia, arguing that good relationships between Russia and all the Transcaucasian states were vital for stability in Transcaucasia.

Armenia’s heavy dependence on Russia for energy supplies further strengthens the importance to Armenia of her strategic partnership with Russia. Armenia is a loyal member of the CIS collective security

treaty, and participates in military exercises with Russia, both bilaterally and within a CIS framework. Russo-Armenian command-staff exercises took place in spring 2000 in Armenia, and it was agreed in April 2000 that more Armenian officers would be trained in Russia. There has been some speculation over Armenia joining the Russo-Belarusian union state. This is currently unlikely, but does make clear Armenia's current closeness to Moscow.

At the January 2000 CIS summit, Putin made clear Russia's willingness to be guarantor if Armenia and Azerbaijan ever reach a settlement over Nagornyy Karabakh. It is possible that the USA and Russia could be joint guarantors.

Armenia is hostile to the American Goble Plan which envisages a territorial exchange between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a means of resolving the Nagornyy Karabakh dispute, and Moscow has supported Yerevan on this issue.

The two countries have signed a number of economic agreements. Under one agreement, Russia supplied to Armenia in 1999 up to 30,000 carats of diamonds for Jewellery making and up to 1m carats of technical diamonds through the Alrosa joint-stock company and (State exporter) Almazyuvelirtorge, a state unitary enterprise. The annual volume of deliveries will subsequently be considered after the Russian government's decision on export quotas of diamonds for each year and will be formulated under a bilateral protocol. Armenia's re-export of diamonds is not permitted.33

The government of Russian Federation has officially informed Yerevan that the Metsamor nuclear power station will not be given regular amount of nuclear fuel as Armenia has not repaid the debt of 16m US dollars accumulated over the past years. The government of Armenia is certainly nor refusing to repay the debt. The problem is that today it is impossible to find such a sum. Armenia relied on Russia, which

promised to advanced a credit of 11m US dollars which would be given to the Rusenergoatom enterprise, but now, according to Armenian Minister for Coordination of Production Infrastructures David Zadoyan it is refusing to advance the money. Due to the Armenia debt Russia also rejected a proposal to set up a joint stock company based on the Razadan municipal regional electronic power station (RMREPS). But earlier, according to unofficial information for the former head of Russia’s RAO EES (United Electronic Networks of Russia), Anatoliys Chubays was seriously interested is the Razdan municipal regional electronic power station and its is difficult to say why he backed down.34

Armenia intends to purchase 16m dollars worth of nuclear fuel for its nuclear power industry. Armenian Energy Minister Karen Galustyan and senior officials from the Russian Company TVEL met to discuss this purchase in Moscow at the end of January, the Armenia Energy Ministry’s press service reports. Armenia will also submit a debt payment schedule for earlier fuel supplies those weights in at other 16m dollars, the service says.35

During recent talks in Moscow an agreement was reached that Armenia would submit to the Russian side a debt repayment schedule with clear indications for a transfer of funds. The co-chairman of the Russian-Armenian commission for economic co-operation, Russian Nuclear Energy Minister Yevgeny Adamov is ready to make concession provided a realistic debt repayment schedule was submitted, Galustyan said.36

Vladimir Putin’s long-planned visit to Yerevan coincided with the collapse of Askar Akayev’s regime in Kyrgyzstan. And it was in Yerevan that the president articulated a new overall concept for Kremlin policy in the post-Soviet space.

Throughout the recent past, Moscow has been preoccupied with the matter of how to manage our future dealings with the CIS countries, which are spinning off in all different directions. Armenia, incidentally, is practically the only country that is still completely supportive of Russia. It is perhaps highly symbolic that it was in Yerevan, where Russian people are sincerely loved, that Putin told the former Soviet republics for the first time that the Commonwealth of Independent States has accomplished its mission and that those who wish to leave it are free to do so. The president made these extraordinary statements only a month and a half before an informal CIS summit in Moscow that is scheduled to coincide with Victory Day May 9.

The Kremlin’s attitude toward the events in Kyrgyzstan is just one brushstroke in Moscow’s almost completely retouched painting of the post-Soviet world. Even before a joint press conference held by the Russian and Armenian presidents, the decision the Kremlin had made about the Kyrgyz president was clear. Moscow decided to renounce Akayev. It appears that some lessons have finally been learned from the disgraceful Ukrainian saga, in which Moscow literally sought to take the old team by the ear and reinstate it. This time Putin quickly made it clear that Moscow was casting its lot with the new team.

As the press conference was drawing to a close, an Armenian journalist asked about the future of the CIS in the context of the "velvet and not-so-velvet revolutions" that have taken place. "Whereas in Europe, countries have worked together within the framework of the European Union to achieve unity, the CIS was created for the purpose of a civilized divorce," the Russian leader said unexpectedly. "That’s the difference; all the rest is a shell and idle chatter." It’s interesting to note that just eight months ago, at an expanded meeting of the Russian Security Council, the Russian president spoke of the Commonwealth’s significance quite differently. "We face a choice. Either we bring about

37 *The CDPSP* (Ohio), vol. 57, no. 12 (2005), pp. 7-8.
a qualitative strengthening of the CIS and turn it into a truly functioning regional structure that is influential in the world, or an 'erosion' of this geopolitical space inevitably awaits us. We must not allow such a turn of events," Putin said on July 19, 2004. 38

"All our disappointments stem from the fact that our expectations were too high," the Russian president said at the press conference in Yerevan. "And if anyone expected some particular achievements from the CIS, there weren't any because there could not be." The CIS has now become a "club for sharing information and clearing up problematic issues of a general nature." 39

**Russia - Belarus**

Under President Alexander Lukashenko, Belarus remains committed to close integration with Russia. 40 The formation of a single Russo-Belarusian union state has been a longstanding goal of Belarusian foreign policy. It is one to which Moscow has also been committed, although with less enthusiasm than Minsk. This objective was, however, finally achieved in December 1999, when the treaty on the creation of a union state was signed by Yeltsin and Lukashenko in Moscow, and then ratified by both chambers of the Federal Assembly. 41

The treaty was signed into law in Russia by Putin in January 2000. The treaty states that Belarus and Russia are creating a union state, which is a new state in the process of unifying the peoples of both countries in to a single democratic law governed state. This union state is a form of confederation that embraces two separate sovereign states.

It does go further than the CIS integration process, as it states that a directly elected union parliament will be established, with a union council of ministers. A Higher State Council acts as the effective

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39 "CIS Funeral in Yerevan", The CDPSP (Ohio), vol. 57, no. 13, April 27, 2005 , p. 2.
40 Lidiya Andrusenko and Yury Godin, 'The union of Russia and Belorussia becomes a reality', Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 8 December 1999.
41 The text of the treaty can be found at http://president.gov.by

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executive organ of the union states. It is headed by the heads of state of the member states on a rotational basis. There will ultimately be a single currency, and therefore a single economic space. However the foreign and defence policies of the two states remain distinct; they are variously described as being agreed, joint and coordinated policies rather than a single policy. The treaty does envisage the creation of a joint military grouping. Interestingly, there is no specific commitment that the signatories are bound to come to each other's assistance if one is attacked. The treaty declares that other states can apply to join. So far, only Yugoslavia has expressed any interest in doing so. Lukashenko has recommended that Armenia join. It is likely to be some time before Russia is willing to accept full integration with Belarus as envisaged in the treaty. Belarus is one of Russia's biggest debtors (largely over gas supplies), and this economic aspect, along with Russian concern over Lukashenko's authoritarian image may delay the integration process.

Currency unification will take place in 2008, when the Russian ruble will become the currency unit of the Russo-Belarusian union. In April 2000 Belarus was the first state to be visited by Putin after he was elected President. During this visit further measures to implement the union treaty were discussed. In 2000, trade turnover between the two countries was about 9bn US dollars, which is 40 per cent more than in the previous year. "We are happy to realize that the leadership of Russia at all levels -the president and the head of government- helps enhance our economic relations," the Foreign Minister Mikhail Khvastow said.42

Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has signed an edict abolishing control over export of goods to Russia, Belarusian radio reported.43

The senior managers of the Russian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonia energy systems signed an agreement on the parallel operation of their systems in Vilnius. The agreement will ensure reliable power supply in the signatory countries. Under the agreement the neighbouring countries will help one another in case of power failures and other emergencies. The parties signed a protocol pledging that they will discuss a Lithuanian proposal that a party may opt out of the agreement without risking sanctions.44

The Belarus-Russia integrated regional air defence agreement was signed in 2004. The agreement will provide legal form to the united regional air defence complex, now operating under the Belarus-Russia Union.45

Lukashenko has vowed to revive the old idea of building a Union State. That is the conclusion observers have drawn from statements the Belarusian president made at a meeting with Vladimir Putin. The harmony displayed between Moscow and Minsk at a meeting of the Supreme State Council of the Union of Russia and Belarus had not been seen for a long time. Analysts in Minsk saw this as an attempt to latch onto fraternal relations in the face of ubiquitous predictions that the next revolution to occur will be in Belarus. Nevertheless, Belarusian analysts doubt that Moscow is prepared to quarrel seriously with Washington in order to protect Lukashenko. As one expert noted, the most forceful statements about supporting Belarus were made by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Putin, by contrast, maintained a stony silence on this issue. Revolution in Belarus is a possibility, writes Poland’s Rzeczpospolita. Lukashenko wants to avert such a thing by working with Putin. But the Russian president can’t give him much in the way of guarantees.46

45 “Belarus-Russia: Belarus-Russia Integrated Air Defence Agreement to be linked this year”, Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi) vol.34 No.9 September 2004, p.1247.
Russia - Georgia

Russo-Georgian relations at the very end of the Yeltsin era were poor due to the Russian intervention in Chechnya in the autumn of 1999 and Russian claims that Chechen fighters were taking refuge in northern Georgia and crossing into Chechnya. Moscow has also asked that the Chechen information centre in Tbilisi be closed down. Russian concerns appear to have pushed Georgia towards adopting a very cautious policy that avoids antagonising Moscow unduly whilst avoiding kow-towing. Georgia is continuing to develop closer security relations with western states and NATO; Eduard Shevardnadze said in October 1999 that if reelected president, he would apply for NATO membership sometime in his second term.\textsuperscript{47} This is obviously unwelcome to Moscow; the head of the Russian MOD department for international military cooperation Col-Gen Leonid Ivashov made this clear in comments in May 2000.\textsuperscript{48}

Aside from Chechnya, Russo-Georgian relations have been concerned with Georgia's debt to Russia, Abkhazia, the Russian withdrawal from bases in Georgia in accordance with the CFE agreement signed at the OSCE summit in Istanbul in November 1999, and the introduction of a visa regime by Russia. In early September 2000 the Foreign Ministry announced that Russia would pull out of the 1992 CIS agreement on visa free travel in the CIS. Russia introduced a visa regime with Georgia in early December 2000, much to Tbilisi's chagrin. Moscow has exempted Abkhazia and South Osetia from the new visa regime, which is perceived by Tbilisi as a clear attempt to support Abkhaz and South Osetian separatism in order to undermine Georgian territorial integrity. This is probably aimed at signaling to Georgia that she will suffer if she defies Moscow over Chechnya and by developing closer security ties with the West. Georgia is heavily indebted to Russia for energy supplies, and it was agreed by Putin and Shevardnadze that the

\textsuperscript{47} See the interview with Eduard Shevardnadze Financial Times, 25 October 1999.
\textsuperscript{48} Arman Dzhilavyan, 'The USA's approach will not add to the security of the Caucasus,' Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 17 May 2000.
ministers of finance of both countries would discuss the restructuring of the debt. Interruptions in the supply of gas to Georgia have occurred and have aimed at reminding Tbilisi of her dependence on Moscow.

The main issue in 2000 has been that of the Russian military bases in Georgia. At the OSCE Istanbul summit in November 1999, Russia undertook to reduce, by 31 December 2000, the levels of its Treaty Limited Equipment (TLE) located within the territory of Georgia in such a way that it would not exceed 153 tanks, 241 ACVs and 140 artillery systems; and no later than 31 December 2000, to withdraw (dispose of) the TLE located at the Russian military bases at Vaziani and Gudauta and at the repair facilities in Tbilisi. The Russian military bases at Gudauta and Vaziani will be disbanded and withdrawn by 1 July 2001. Georgia undertook to grant to Russia the right to basic temporary deployment of its TLE at facilities of the Russian military bases at Batumi and Akhalkalaki. The Russian pullout began at the beginning of August 2000. Coincidentally this pullout coincided with the holding of the first US-Georgian naval exercises. However Russia will continue to use the airfield at Gudauta to maintain links with the bases at Batumi and Akhalkalaki. Russia will commence withdrawing from these latter two bases in July 2001.\(^{49}\)

Russian and Georgian views on Abkhazia and South Ossetia are sensibly very close. Putin has stated that he supports the territorial integrity of Georgia. Russia did not recognise the presidential election in Abkhazia in 1999, and the withdrawal of Russian forces from Gudauta in Abkhazia is taking place against the wishes of the Abkhaz leadership. Moscow thus prefers cooperation with Shevardnadze to that with the Abkhaz leadership of Vladislav Ardzinba. The CIS Heads of State June 2000 summit approved the mandate of CIS peacekeepers until 1 January 2001.

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Georgia appears to accept Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia, although she was previously opposed. In June 2000 at the summit of the Four a Russo-Georgian agreement on the economic reconstruction of South Osetia was signed. However these conflicts remain frozen and there seems little push from Moscow to move the settlement process forward.

Russia's relationship with Georgia is a delicate one. Shevardnadze seems keen to develop a good relationship with Putin; doubtless a desire not to antagonise Russia over Chechnya is a major factor. The visa issue and Chechnya serve to remind Georgia of the desirability of maintaining a good relationship with Moscow.

However this has not prevented Georgia from pursuing a policy of close integration into western security structures. This is a far cry from the tilt towards Moscow that Shevardnadze was forced to undertake in 1993-94. The development of closer ties with the West, particularly if membership of NATO is sought, could impose a severe test on Russo-Georgian relations. In such circumstances, it is not impossible that Russia could renew her interest in the rights of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in order to gain leverage over Georgia. Russian policy appears to aim at keeping Georgia off balance in the hope this will induce a degree of deference towards Moscow. The visa issue, lack of cooperation over Abkhazia and the energy weapon are all levers being used by Moscow to this end.

Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze sent letters to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov requesting them to take part in solving the issue of resuming Russian gas supplies to Georgia put on a hold on 1 January 2001.50

Russians cut the electricity supply to Georgia to 1m kilowatt-hours a day from 2.5m kilowatt-hours form Friday (26 January) after a new

accident on a Georgia transmission line, the Georgia Fuel and Energy Ministry has said.\textsuperscript{51}

Russia believes that the withdrawal of its two remaining bases in Georgia can begin only after a relevant agreement is signed with Georgia as an integral state (that is incorporating Adzharia and Abkhazia). Besides, Georgia should contribute financially to the construction of military settlements and weapons and hardware depots in Russia. In the opinion of Russian military this will take 11 years, though Georgia thinks six years will be enough.\textsuperscript{52}

Russia and Georgia edged closer to the brink of war as Tbilisi threatened to open fire on Russian ships calling on the breakaway region of Abkhazia in the Black Sea and Moscow vowed to hit back.

The populist leader, Mikhail Saakashvili, said that he had given orders to sink "all the ships" heading for the Sukhumi port in Abkhazia, including "Russian boats carrying tourists. Moscow responded by issuing its sternest yet warning to Georgia saying it will treat such a move as "hostile act with all the ensuing consequences." A Russian parliamentary delegation came under fire from Georgian positions in Georgia's second breakaway region, South Ossetia, on Wednesday when they tried to inspect the site of recent fire exchanges.\textsuperscript{53}

The Georgian Parliament adopted a resolution on Russian Federation military bases in Georgia. It sets a deadline, May 15, by which Moscow has to fix a date for withdrawing its troops. If no agreement on a timetable for removing the bases has been reached by that time, the parliamentarians say that the Georgian leadership must demand that the Russians dismantle the bases by Jan. 1, 2006. This is perhaps the hardest line that Tbilisi has taken toward Moscow in all the time the

\textsuperscript{51} SWB, SUW/0676 WF, 2 February 2001, p.1.
\textsuperscript{52} "Russia-Georgia: Russian Base in Georgia Discussed in Moscow," Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), vol. 34, no. 2, February 2004, p. 233.
\textsuperscript{53} "Russia-Georgia: Russia, Georgia on warpath," Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), vol. 34, no. 9, December 2004, p. 1352.
new leadership has been in power. Despite opposition demands, a point
calling for the removal of not just the Russian bases but also the
Russian peacekeeping forces which are stationed in Abkhazia and
South Ossetia was not included in the draft resolution. According to
the resolution’s authors, it’s too early to talk about withdrawing the
peacekeepers.54

The issue of removing Russian troops from Georgia is not just a bitter
dispute over a timetable for their withdrawal and over potential
compensation. The stakes in this dispute are much higher. At issue is
whether Russia will maintain or lose its presence and influence in the
Transcaucuses.

Moscow’s main strategic partner in the region is Armenia. There is a
large Russian military base there whose future is not cause for the
slightest concern, judging from the position taken by the Armenian
authorities. However, the path to the Russian base in Armenia lies
through Georgian territory and Moscow sees the presence of Russian
military personnel in Georgia as a kind of guarantee that this path will
not be blocked. On the other hand, Russia’s loss of effective means of
bringing influence to bear on Tbilisi would make its military presence
in Armenia virtually pointless. Links with the base would have to be
maintained through airspace – and once again, Georgian airspace –
which would make those, links highly unstable, and hence unreliable.

Therefore, Russia’s loss of influence in Georgia would inevitably lead
to a weakening of its position in the Transcaucuses as a whole. And
that, in turn, would finally put to rest the idea of Moscow’s regaining
its former influence in Central Asia. After all, the Central Asian
republics see the Transcaucuses as offering an alternative route for
exports of their strategic resources to the West, mainly in the form of
the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline.

54 The CDPSP (Ohio), vol.57, no. 10, April 10, 2005, pp 1-9.
For this reason, the Kremlin isn’t interested in a mere normalization of relations with Tbilisi, a key element of which would be the Russian bases’ future. Moscow would like to bring about a fundamental change in relations with its southern neighbor. And the main purpose of this change would be to preserve (or, better yet, reinforce) Russian influence in Georgia. It appears that Moscow isn’t going to settle for less, and that it is proceeding from the premise that either a normalization of Russian-Georgian relations will have the effect of strengthening the Russian presence in Georgia or there will be no normalization at all.

However, attempts to maintain the Russian military presence in Georgia at any price could backfire for Moscow and ultimately exact an even higher price from Russia. Moscow’s hard line toward Tbilisi is putting political elites in the post-Soviet space increasingly on their guard and making Russia’s positions there more and more precarious.

**Russia - Kyrgyzstan**

Bishkek remains heavily dependent on Moscow, both in economic and security terms. The incursion of Islamic extremists into southern Kyrgyzstan in August 2000, for the second time in two years, underlines Kyrgyzstan’s vulnerability, and is likely to make her receptive to Moscow’s call for close cooperation in countering terrorism. A cooperation agreement was signed between the Security Councils of the two states. Agreements were also signed in August 2000 on military-technical cooperation and the use by Russia of military facilities in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev visited Moscow in July 2000. This was the first bilateral presidential summit since Putin became president. Although Russo-Kyrgyz relations were slightly strained due to Kyrgyzstan entering the World Trade Organisation without the consent of the CIS Customs Union, this problem appeared to have been overcome by the time of Akayev’s visit. During the visit a Declaration
of Eternal Friendship was signed, which gives Kyrgyzstan a Russian security guarantee. Akayev stated that he regarded Russia as a guarantor of stability in Central Asia and the world. Just before his visit to Moscow, Akayev signed an edict making Russian the official language of Kyrgyzstan, a move which clearly pleased Putin. A further 25 agreements were also signed. An economic cooperation agreement for the period 2000-2009 was also signed, and it was agreed to restructure the Kyrgyz debt to Russia. Kyrgyzstan and Russia will also jointly mine uranium.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev have discussed on the phone the upcoming second phase of the Rubezh-2004 joint military exercises within the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) due in early August 2004 in Kyrgyzstan.

The press service noted that during their telephone conversation, the presidents also exchanged opinions on pressing bilateral issues and foreign policy interaction within international organizations, in particular the OSCE, in view of the recent statement of CIS the nations on the situation in this pan-European structure. 55

Russia - Moldova

There are three main issues in Russo-Moldovan relations:

- Gas Debts
- The status of Transdnestr
- The Withdrawal of Russian forces

Like Ukraine, Moldova is one of Gazprom's major debtors, and Moldova's gas debts have been a major problem for several years. The

55 "Russia-Kyrgyzstan: Russian, Kyrgyz presidents discuss joint military training", Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), vol.34, no.8, August 2004, pp.1179-1180.
gas issue was discussed when Moldovan President Petru Lucinschi attended the CIS Heads of State summit in Moscow in January 2000.

Russia has, along with Ukraine and the OSCE, been involved in attempting to mediate a settlement between Moldova and the Transdnestrian Republic since 1992. A major step forward in the search for a settlement was the Moscow memorandum, signed in May 1997 by the presidents of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Transdnestr. The memorandum outlines the basic principles for a settlement in Moldova. It affirms that Transdnestr will have special status within Moldova, and that Moldova will therefore be a "common state", a term used in the memorandum. Both sides pledge not to use force, but to negotiate agreements with Russia and Ukraine as guarantors with the assistance of the OSCE and CIS. The agreement does not however mention the presence of foreign troops within Moldova, or how power is to be shared between Chisinau and Tiraspol. Transdnestr will have the right to establish economic and cultural relations with other nations. In 1997, Russian forces were reduced by 40 per cent to around 3,000.

However, since May 1997 little progress has been made in reaching an overall settlement. Russia and Moldova are still at loggerheads over gas repayments, and the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova. Furthermore, the Moldovan and Transdnestrian leaderships have been unable to reach agreement on the status of Transdnestr within Moldova. At the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999, it was agreed that all Russian forces would be withdrawn by 2002.\(^{56}\) In 1994 it had been agreed that they would be withdrawn by 1997.

Putin appears interested in giving a new impetus to Russo-Moldovan relations and to reaching a settlement of the Transdnestr issue. On 17 June 2000, Putin visited Moldova. He discussed the issue of gas payments with Moldovan president Petru Lucinschi. Putin also affirmed

\(^{56}\) See the supplement Sodruzhestvo in Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 24 November 1999, which has an article on Russian troops in Moldova.
Russia's acceptance of Moldova's territorial integrity, and the creation of a special state commission headed by former Russian prime minister Yevgenny Primakov to find a resolution to the Transdnestr problem. Other economic issues discussed concern Moldova's desire that Russia ratify the 1994 CIS free trade agreement. Moldova is also concerned that Moscow is trying to exclude from this agreement wine, other alcoholic products, tobacco and sugar, which make up 55% of Moldova's exports to Russia. During his visit Putin said that a new Russo-Moldovan treaty would soon be ready. Virtually nothing is known about this treaty. There is concern by rightist politicians in Moldova over the appointment of Primakov and fear that the concept of a common state will be used to weaken Chisinau's control over Transdnestr.

Work on this process is likely to be tortuous, and could remain deadlocked for many years. Transdnestr probably remains concerned that Moldova could move towards closer ties with Romania, even to possible eventual unification. This could prompt closer Russian support for Transdnestr. The term common state is being interpreted differently by Chisinau and Tiraspol, and any move towards closer ties between Bucharest and Chisinau could lead to Tiraspol arguing that the common state should allow a high degree of autonomy for Transdnestr, and Moscow may well back this stance.

However, so far the Russo-Moldovan relationship is a relatively good one, although Chisinau remains concerned about possible Russian leverage. The first ever Russo-Moldovan peacekeeping exercises took place in August 2000 in Moldova, with Transdnestr refusing to take part.

The Prime Ministers of Russia and Moldova have decided for the moment not to sign an agreement on cooperation in the gas sector. ‘Russia is pursuing a pragmatic policy in its financial and economical relations with other countries”, Mikhail Kasyanov explained. “This is
why we do not want sign a document which is not going to work or will cease to work within six months”.57

In Moscow, Moldovan Prime Minister Dumitru Braghis and Gazprom Vice-President Aleksandar Pushkin agreed on March 2001 to reschedule the debts and keep the gas delivery contract between Moldovagaz (Moldovan Gas Company) and Gazprom. The Moldovan government said in a press release that the debts would be paid back in food products worth 10m dollars and to negotiate with Gazprom the conditions and deadline of delivery.58

Russia – Ukraine

Ukraine remains desirous of maintaining her distance from Moscow. Kiev still resists full integration into CIS military structures, and made clear at the CIS June summit that she did not want to become fully involved in the creation of a CIS antiterrorist centre.

The relationship with the Russian Federation was put on a firmer footing with the signing of the Russo-Ukrainian Friendship and Cooperation Treaty in May 1997, when then Russian President Boris Yeltsin visited Ukraine.59 It took several years for the negotiations on this treaty to be concluded, due to differences over the Black Sea Fleet, and the division of the debts and assets of the former USSR. The treaty can be regarded as the legal foundation of the Russo-Ukrainian relationship. An economic cooperation programme was also agreed during Yeltsin's visit, and the Russian and Ukrainian prime ministers also reached agreement on the Black Sea Fleet. Russia will rent base facilities in Sevastopol for 20 years.

In July 1997 in Madrid, Ukraine signed a Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with NATO, which defines the basic principles of NATO-

59 See the discussion of the treaty and other agreements signed in May 1997 in James Sherr, Russia And Ukraine: Towards Compromise Or Convergence?, Conflict Studies Research Centre, RMA Sandhurst, F60, August 1997
Ukraine relations. The signing of this agreement, just six weeks after the Russo-Ukrainian Treaty, signaled Kiev's intention that the treaty concluded with Moscow did not signify any desire by Ukraine to become closely integrated with Russia. The basic features of Russo-Ukrainian relations remain as they have been since the formal end of the USSR in December 1991, namely Ukraine's desire to chart a course independent of that of Moscow, and Russia's desire that Kiev become more closely oriented to Moscow geopolitically.

In February 1998, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma visited Moscow, and signed an economic cooperation agreement to cover the period up to 2007. Kuchma said that a strategic partnership was developing between the two states. This concept of strategic partnership was repeated by Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Ivanov in Moscow when he met his Ukrainian counterpart Yevhen Marchuk in January 2000. The term "strategic partnership" is used frequently by Moscow to describe relations with certain states. It appears to signify close cooperation and agreement on a broad number of areas, but falls short of being an alliance or quasi-alliance.

From her perspective, Ukraine will be anxious to ensure that "strategic partnership" with Moscow does not compromise her neutrality, and her desire to develop close relations with NATO, EU, individual western states, and other former Soviet states that also wish to maintain a geopolitical distance from Moscow (i.e. the other states in the GUUAM grouping). 60

The most important event in Russo-Ukrainian relations in 2000 was the visit of new Russian President Vladimir Putin to Ukraine in April 2000. This visit formed part of his first visit abroad (to Belarus, Britain and Ukraine) since becoming head of state in December 1999. The two presidents visited the naval facilities in Sevastopol. The visit

60 GUUAM refers to Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova, a loose formation of these states which desire to maintain distance from Moscow. It was known as GUAM until Uzbekistan joined it in 1999. For a discussion of GUUAM, see Taras Kuzio, 'Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The emergence of GUUAM,' European Security, Vol 9, No. 2 summer 2000, pp81-114.
appears overall to have been a success; both presidents underlined their commitment to strategic partnership. However, negotiations between the two leaders were problematic in three major areas, notably the economy, Russian language status and the Black Sea Fleet.

Russia remains Ukraine's main trade partner and creditor, but trade levels have fallen. In 1998 the trade turnover was $12.5 billion, but fell in 1999 to $10.35 billion. Ukraine's overall indebtedness to Russia is around $3.74 billion. Ukraine is Russia's biggest debtor. The main issues in contemporary Russo-Ukrainian relations are as follows:

Energy is a major problem in Russo-Ukrainian relations. Ukraine is heavily dependent on Russia for energy, particularly the supply of gas. At the end of February 2000, Ukraine's gas debt to Gazprom was around $1.9 billion. Russian gas is also being siphoned off illegally in Ukraine. As 90 per cent of Gazprom's exports to Western Europe pass through Ukraine, this is a major problem. Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma estimated in June that in the first five months of 2000, $700 million worth of Russian gas was illegally siphoned off from pipelines.\(^\text{61}\) This has prompted Gazprom to threaten to build pipelines bypassing Ukraine.

At talks in Ukraine in early August 2000, Ukrainian prime minister Viktor Yushchenko proposed the possibility of settling the gas debt to Russia by granting Russia part of its gas transportation system as a concession. A similar process has already been taking place elsewhere in Ukraine. Lukoil owns an Odessa oil refinery, and Ukrainian Aluminium, a subsidiary of Siberian Aluminium, has a controlling share of the Nikolayev alumina plant. TNK-Ukraine, a filial of Tyumen Oil Company, has 64.7% of the shares of Lisichansknefteorgsintez. In August Yushchenko said the Ukrainian government proposed passing part of its assets over to Russia, including Tu-95MS and Tu-160 strategic bombers. At the end of 1999, Russia had already acquired

eight Tu-160, three Tu-95MS and about 600 X-22 cruise missiles from Ukraine, which settled 285 million dollars' worth of the Ukrainian debt.  

Ukraine remains interested in diversifying her sources of energy, in order to reduce dependence on Russia. When Kuchma visited Azerbaijan in March 2000, he accused Moscow of imposing an energy blockade on Ukraine. His visit to Baku aimed at developing Ukrainian-Azeri cooperation in the energy sector. The chairman of Ukrresursy, Viktor Rzhatskevich, said that the Ukrainian company was interested in joint ventures to exploit Azeri oil reserves and export them to Europe via Ukraine. Ukraine is also planning to build a pipeline from Odessa to Brodi in western Ukraine to connect with the Polish pipeline system and so enable Azeri, Kazakh and Turkmen oil to be exported to Europe via Ukraine.

Russia has argued that attempts by the Ukrainian authorities to extend the status of Ukrainian as a state language have resulted in discrimination against Russian speakers in Ukraine. In February 2000, the Russian presidential human rights commissioner Oleg Mironov complained that this was indeed happening. The ratification of the European Charter on minority languages by the Ukrainian parliament contains some alterations from the original text of the Charter, and this permits the extension of Ukrainianisation to the detriment of the status of the Russian language.

There are some relatively minor territorial issues still outstanding. Russia and Ukraine still have to determine the border running across the Sea of Azov and the Kerch straits. This matter was discussed by the Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministers in Kiev in April 2000.

Moscow's aim remains a Ukraine that is more closely tied to it. Ukraine remains determined to maintain her neutral status. Her avoidance of

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64 Lyudmila Romanova, 'The struggle for "Druzhba",' Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 30 December 1999.
close military cooperation within the CIS, but her willingness to continue to cooperate with NATO through PFP along with the pursuit of military cooperation with other GUUAM states makes clear her desired foreign policy orientation. This is at odds with Moscow's aim of full CIS integration. There is speculation that Ukraine's economic difficulties could force her towards Moscow. Her energy crisis is acute, and this could in the long-term impose limitations on her desired foreign policy orientation.

The chairman of the Kharkov state administration Oleg Demin said in June 2000 that Kharkovskaya, Poltavskaya and Sumskaya oblasts are aiming to create an energy island, and unite with the Russian energy system. Similar developments could seriously undermine Ukraine's independence in the long term, and result in her pursuing a more pro-Russian foreign policy orientation. This could mean a shift away from pursuing any policy in Transcaucasia deemed to be anti-Russian by Moscow, or the development of closer ties with NATO and the EU.

The Russian aircraft-making corporation MiG and the Tupolev public joint-stock company and their Ukrainian partners have coordinated a scheme for the co-operation of a new passenger airline Tu-334, an official in the MIG press service told ITAR-TASS on February 2, 2001. According to MIG press service data, the scheme provides that the Kiev-based Avian aircraft factory is to manufacture and deliver a wing, a tail fin, and a central fuselage section of the new aircraft while engines for the TU-334, devised by the Progress design bureau, are to be supplied by the Motor Switch plant (both factories are Zaporizhzhya-based). The aircraft engine manufactured is also planned to be organized at the Ufa-based aircraft making amalgamation.

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Ukrainian Fuel and Energy Minister Serhiy Yermilov and the Chairman of the board of the United Energy System of Russia, Anatoliy Chubays, signed a memorandum which says that the energy system of the two countries will work in parallel. It will require a treaty on the transit of electrical power to Russia's Unified Energy Systems through Ukraine's electrical networks. The sides also reiterated the priority of joining projects to export electrical power to third countries.\(^{67}\)

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov has told ITAR-TASS that Ukraine is interested in developing cooperation with Russia in the fields of aerospace industry, in particular in the development of the An-70 cargo plane. He said it was necessary to "make decisive steps" towards advancing the An-70 project.\(^{68}\)

Oil and gas account for a sizable share of imports from Russia, 12 per cent and 38.5 per cent, respectively. Imports from Russia totaled 5.82bn dollars in 2000, the State Statistics Committee reports. They increased by 4.2 per cent, or 232.7m dollars, on the previous year. Ukraine exports to Russia increased in 200 by 1.12bn dollars, or 46.7 per cent, to 5.55bn dollars. Russia accounted for 24.1 per cent of Ukraine's exports and 41.7 per cent of its imports in 2000.\(^{69}\)

The major topic during the visit of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov was the presence of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine. Moscow's misgivings regarding an intention on Kiev's part to reconsider the principles and duration of the fleet's basing rights in Crimea were allayed by Yevgeny Marchuk. Meanwhile, observers have noted that Marchuk's remarks clearly implied his confidence in Ukraine's continuing integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Addressing this subject, Marchuk assured Ivanov that Kiev's pursuit of

\(^{67}\) *SWB, SUW/0678 WF, 16 February 2001, p. 1.*

\(^{68}\) *SWB, SUW/0682 WF, 16 March 2001, p. 1.*

\(^{69}\) *SWB, SUW/0683 WF, 23 March 2001, p. 1.*
NATO membership would not entail any re-negotiation of signed documents on Russia’s naval presence in Crimea.\(^70\)

An international conference in Kiev celebrated the 10\(^\text{th}\) anniversary of the Tacis Nuclear safety Program. Tacis stands for Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States. About 250 officials from the EC, the government of Ukraine, and executive nuclear bodies from Russia, Armenia, and Kazakhstan took part. During the past decade, the European Union (EU) has allocated some Euro 721-million for nuclear safety improvements in the CIS. The funds were used to either complete or launch 650 projects, nearly 200 of which are in progress. Another Euro 319-million is to be allocated for safety improvement programs in the years 2002-2003. Russia has received 61 per cent of the aid so far, with Ukraine receiving 30 per cent and other countries 9 per cent. Some 83 projects have been completed in Ukraine and another 45 projects are ongoing for a total cost of Euro 110-million. In Ukraine, Tacis assistance was aimed foremost at alleviating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, including remediation of contaminated areas, mitigating the accident’s health impact, managing waste, and stabilizing the Chernobyl-4 shelter”. More than 20 projects on Chernobyl and nuclear waste management were carried out in Ukraine under Tacis funding.\(^71\)

Ukraine’s parliament November 22 ratified the agreement between the Ukrainian the cabinet and the Russian government on a Russia state credit for completion of Revno-2 and Khmelnitski-4 (the K2/R4 project). Under the agreement, signed in Kharko June 21, 2002 Russia was to provide a $44-million credit covering Russian equipment, goods and services for completion of the two nuclear units. However, Ukraine is continuing the search for other sources of financing K2/R4. Former Ukrainian Prime Minister Anatoliy Kinakh said last month that his

\(^70\) The CDPSP (Ohio), vol.55, no.26 (2003), p.17.
\(^71\) “Russia and Ukraine criticize Tacis Nuclear Programme, but Want More” Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), vol. 32, no. 8, August 2002, pp. 1070-1071.
government wanted to convince the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD) to relax credit conditions and abandon its insistence on a sharp rise in electricity rates, as well as to reduce the amount of borrowing.72

Russia has beefed up its strategic arsenals with the purchase from Ukraine of 30 long range missiles. The RS-18 missiles, called SS-19 by NATO, are capable of carrying six nuclear warheads each. They were part of 160 nuclear-tipped strategic missiles Ukraine inherited after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Ukraine, which renounced its nuclear status, handed over the warheads to Russia and destroyed 130 missiles, but retained 30 for use as space boosters. Russia has bought the missiles from Ukraine over the past two years. The acquisition came closely on the heels of Moscow’s decision to retain its multiple-warhead missiles in response to the US withdrawal last year from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. This would allow Russia to maintain an overall strategic balance with the US even if the latter succeeds in building a missile shield over its territory in the foreseeable future.73

The missiles purchased from Ukraine will be kept as backup reserve to replace similar Russian missiles that are being decommissioned due to their old age. Experts believe that the Ukrainians missiles can be kept in service for another 30 years.74

The so called ‘Orange Revolution’ in Ukraine was a big challenge to the bilateral relations between the two countries. The Russian president Vladimir Putin’s, who had previously congratulated Yanukovich twice on winning the elections, congratulated Viktor Yushchenko and expressed the firm belief that continuity in deepening strategic partnership is fully in keeping with the long-term interests of the two

73 The Hindu, (New Delhi), July 31, 2003.
74 “Russia-Ukraine: Russia boosts strategic arsenal” Strategic Digest (IDSA: New Delhi), vol. 33, no. 8 August 2003, p. 749.
countries. He called attention to the special importance of Russia and Ukraine's continued active participation in the creation of a Single Economic Space in the CIS. Those words were obviously intended to allay the mutual distrust that had clouded relations between the Russian leadership and the victorious Ukrainian opposition for the past several months. On his part Yushchenko had decided to make Moscow the destination of his first trip abroad on Jan. 24, 2005. So the emotions will give way to sober calculation and economic pragmatism. The new Ukrainian leader must be given credit: He will be visiting Moscow just one day after his inauguration. Only later will he leave for a major European tour.75

Russian President Vladimir Putin received Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko at the Kremlin as soon as Viktor Yushchenko's plane touched down in Moscow yesterday, his new personnel appointments became known. Yulia Timoshenko became acting prime minister Aleksandr Zinchenko was put in charge of the secretariat. Pyotr Poroshenko became secretary of the National Security and Defense Council.

Just before his visit to Moscow Viktor Yushchenko appointed Yulia Timoshenko as the acting prime minister It seemed quite provocative. In Russia, there are still active criminal proceedings against her. But Vladimir Putin had to endure this too. He really had no choice.

The meeting between Vladimir Putin and Viktor Yushchenko began in an unexpected way. The Russian president started trying to make amends with his Ukrainian counterpart. He said that Mr. Yushchenko should know that Russia has never acted behind the scenes in the post-Soviet space, including with opposition forces. "That goes for Ukraine too," the Russian president continued. "We have worked only with the incumbent leadership and have done only what it asked us to do. And you know this. We hope that we and you will establish an equally trusting relationship."

75 The CDPSP (Ohio), vol. 57, no. 3, February 16, 2005, pp. 1-2.
Chapter V

Viktor Yushchenko’s statement showed that he did not share that view. "We proceed from the premise," he said, "that our relations with Russia must be formalized to the greatest possible extent. Everything having to do with the movement of capital is in need of formal settlement. For example, we do not reject the idea of the Single Economic Space (SES), but we will be guided by two principles. First, all aspects must be adequate to our national interests. Second, the principles enshrined in this document must not block our movement toward other markets (i.e., chiefly those of the European Union)." 76

In effect, Viktor Yushchenko was indicating that Ukraine is unlikely to participate in the SES, because combining two free economic zones in a single country isn’t feasible.

The Russian reporters asked, not surprisingly, about the natural gas transportation consortium that Vladimir Putin and Leonid Kuchma had worked to create for several years without ever really succeeding. This question proved to be an advantageous platform for both presidents. Vladimir Putin said that, as he understood his Ukrainian colleagues, they intended to ensure continuity in this matter, and he indicated that not only the Germans, as contemplated earlier, but also other foreigners might be brought into the consortium. He said that Russia was unique for its natural gas fields and Ukraine for its transit potential. So this, it turns out, is where Russia and Ukraine find each other.

Viktor Yushchenko said on relations with Russia. — "We have always taken and will continue to take the position that Russia is our eternal strategic partner. I would like to cast off various myths and legends that have been served up in political kitchens regarding certain nuances of the strategy of our future relations. We are a country that wants to impart a rational character to our relations. I would like to make the

fundamental point that this is my first visit outside Ukraine. This is a
token of deep respect for our relationship.\textsuperscript{77}

After his meeting with Vladimir Putin, new Ukrainian President Viktor
Yushchenko went to the Danilov Monastery to meet with Patriarch
Aleksy II. After congratulating Mr. Yushchenko on his victory in the
election, the patriarch expressed hope that "the people of Ukraine, who
were, perhaps, divided during the election, will be united under your
rule." "We respect the will of the Ukrainian people," he said, adding
that many parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the
Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) also voted for Mr. Yushchenko.\textsuperscript{78}

**Russia-CIS Relation: An Overall View**

At this stage we attempt at summarizing Russia's relation, with each
members of CIS. The years 1997-99 were problematic for CIS as well
as Russia with pressure mounting up on Russia after expansion of
NATO in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the CIS members
particularly, Georgia, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan were afflicted with
recurring civil war when Russian troops became more active
participants for one side or the other. Russia seriously endeavored in
reasserting its domination over CIS, while CIS members with a few
notable exceptions like Kazakhstan showed no desire to respond
favorably to such efforts. By the end of the period we do find that
Russia had settled down to a bilateral relationship, particularly in
defence and security matters, with individual members of CIS under
the general umbrella of CIS.

The above trend continued under new President Vladimir Putin. He
places the relations with CIS on a very important position, which will
be a powerful basis and strategic backbone for stabilizing
neighbourhood, balance against NATO and rebuilding Russia's major
power status. The cooperation with CIS was, is, and will be the

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} The CDPSP (Ohio), vol. 57, no. 4, February 23, 2005, pp. 9.
absolute top priority, he said. The first 20 years of the 21st century will be a key decade in establishing a modern CIS organization and promoting the prosperity and cooperation in the Post-Soviet space.

On 10 October 2000, in Kazakhstan’s capital of Astana, leaders of the five nations – Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Belarus – making up the CIS Customs Union formally changed the name of their group to the Eurasian Economic Community. A major aim of the exercise seems to be to create a weightier economic bloc more acceptable to international trade organizations.

The members of the Eurasian Economic Community pledged to form a common foreign trade border, create a unified foreign economic policy and collectively regulate export-import tariffs and prices. The only important substantive change among the group’s five members in that more weight has been given to Russia. In principle, in the members of the CIS Customs Union had equal voices in the management of the group’s affairs. But now in making collective decision, Russia will have four votes, Kazakhstan and Belarus two votes each, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will each have one vote. The new organization is to work towards the establishment of common customs, fiscal, monetary, and employment policies.

On 11 October 2000, i.e., the day after the formation of the Eurasian Economic Community, the presidents of this group of five plus Armenia met in Bishkek to draw up a five-year regional security plan. These signatories of the CIS Collective Security Agreement discussed increasing their military and political integration up to and including the possible formation of regional armed forces.

On 21 June 2000 the leaders of the commonwealth of Independent States met to discuss establishing a free-trade zone and an anti-terrorism programme at a summit in Moscow being attended by the leaders of the 12 CIS states. The summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, or CIS, was the first since Russia’s President
Vladimir Putin was unanimously voted to head the alliance in January 2000.

The government is doing much the same. A preliminary agreement on a single economic space for the CIS pushes Russia further from Europe's economic embrace though it will take ages and may never happen at all. Russia is unlikely to replace the Middle East as the West's main source of oil, but when Russia eventually builds a Far East pipeline, it will forge closer ties with Asia. UES has bought electricity companies in Georgia and Armenia, and Gazprom owns stakes in firms all across the CIS and in much of Europe. 79

The broad strategic goals of the Putin leadership towards the CIS remain the same as those of the previous Yeltsin leadership. Like Yeltsin, Putin desires to see a closely integrated CIS, united around a Russian core. There is however an awareness that Russia lacks the policy instruments to be able to bring about such a state of affairs. The failure so far to carry out an effective economic reform in Russia means that the Russian Federation is unlikely to become a pole of attraction for other CIS members. At the CIS Council of Heads of State summit in January 2000, the participants agreed to develop a programme for CIS development up to 2005. However, this programme will depend on the fate of economic reform in Russia and the development of intra-CIS trade.

The failure so far to establish a free trade zone considerably hinders economic integration, and makes impossible the development of a form of integration akin to the EU. Intra-CIS trade only accounts for about one-third of the overall volume of CIS foreign trade; by comparison intra-EU trade accounts for more than 60% of the overall volume of EU foreign trade. It is estimated that Russia loses about $780 million annually from not being part of the CIS free trade zone. Some estimates claim that Russia's losses could be even higher.

79 "Here today, where tomorrow?" The Economist, May 22nd 2004, p.16.
In January 2000 Yury Godin, who has worked in the Interstate Economic Committee of the Economic Union of the CIS claimed that since the formation of the CIS about 1300 agreements have been signed, but only a handful work effectively.

The CIS has been unable to restore even the levels of trade that existed between the members when they were union-republics in the USSR. The trade turnover has fallen every year since the CIS was formed, when the most effective indicator of the success of integration is an increase in trade. 80

The CIS' success in becoming a viable and dynamic bloc will largely depend on the success or otherwise of Russian economic reform. In one sense the energy dependency of many states on Russia does force many member states to look toward Moscow, which some elements in the Russian leadership may favour, as it arguably prevents these states from straying too far.

In the security sphere, there has been some progress from Moscow’s perspective, first of all in developing a unified air defence system. The threat posed by Islamic extremists to the existing regimes in Central Asia increases the value of security ties to Moscow for these states, and the Putin leadership’s strong emphasis on countering terrorism appears to be going some way towards strengthening relations with the states of Central Asia. The incursion of terrorists into Uzbekistan has resulted in a significant improvement in Tashkent’s relations with Moscow. Relations have also improved with Turkmenistan, which is also a significant and welcome development from Moscow’s standpoint. Significant differences remain however over the Caspian Sea with Ashkhabad. The importance of security issues will enable Russia to maintain influence in Central Asia.

80 Viktor Timoshenko, ‘The period of romanticism in the CIS is overcome’, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 4 April 2000.
However whilst energy dependency and the threat of Islamic terrorism enables Moscow to bind some states closer to her, she lacks the resources to create an exclusive sphere of influence. States such as Georgia and Azerbaijan are likely to continue to look toward NATO. Outside of the CIS, all three Baltic states will continue to look westwards despite Moscow's disapproval. All the states of the near abroad (with the exception of Belarus) will also seek economic partners other than Russia if such partnerships offer more benefits than can be offered by Russia and by Russian companies. The Russian leadership is undoubtedly sincere in its desire to encourage investment by Russian companies in the near abroad; the support for energy companies being a case in point, but Russian companies are unlikely to ensure that the near abroad will be an area dominated by Russian capital.

Nevertheless, Russia has had some success in enhancing her influence in the CIS. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan now look to Moscow more than they did previously, and Ukraine now seems inclined to pursue a more deferential policy due to her energy problems. Covert support for the unrecognized states of Transdnestr, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Adjaria and Nagornyy Karabakh can always be used as a means of pressurising Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Whilst Moscow has to live with the emergence of the GUUAM quasi-bloc in the former Soviet Union, she does have the means to make life difficult for these states if they choose to adopt a geopolitical orientation away from Moscow. It is not impossible that other separatist movements encouraged by Russian special services may emerge in states such as Azerbaijan if they stray too far from Moscow, or even amongst the Russian communities in Estonia and Latvia.

The usefulness and / or irrelevance of CIS was debated during an informal CIS summit on May 8, 2005, in Moscow, as part of Russia's anniversary celebrations of victory in the Second World War. Russian President Vladimir Putin and the presidents of nine other CIS member countries attended. Presidents Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia and Ilham Aliev of Azerbaijan stayed away from the summit.
Saakashvili did so because of Russian stonewalling on an agreement (or presidential joint declaration) on the withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia. Aliev stayed away because the CIS summit's date coincided with that of the 1993 capture of the Azeri-inhabited town of Shusha in Karabakh by Armenian forces. \(^1\)

In an inauspicious curtain-raiser for the summit, Russian Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov publicly described the recent political changes in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan as "coups" (pereveroryt), whereby power changed hands in "unconstitutional" ways, with "violations of basic democratic principles". Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenka, who is on record as sharing that assessment, remarked sarcastically that this CIS summit, "the first since those notorious events, will acquaint us with somebody or other" -- i.e., the new presidents of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. As regards the absent Georgian president, Lukashenka termed him "too immature to understand the essence" of the Moscow anniversary.

Commenting on this CIS summit -- the first he attended as president of Ukraine -- Viktor Yushchenko pointed out that the organization was "of little use" to anyone and that the "CIS is history." The organization, he observed, lacked a project that could become the basis for economic cooperation. Summing up Ukraine's familiar position, Yushchenko noted that only a Free Trade Zone, devoid of political connotations, can begin to lay the foundation for cooperation within the CIS.

Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin termed the CIS in its present form a mere "discussion club." Moldova, he told Russian state radio, has irreversibly chosen the European orientation as its top priority. The country values its "historically constituted" relations with Russia, but the relations are adversely affected by Russia's support for the Tiraspol secessionist regime, Voronin remarked. He referred to the GUAM summit, recently held in Chisinau, as an indicator of the European orientation of that group's participant countries.

Armenia's Ambassador to Russia, Armen Smbatian, described the CIS in the run-up to the summit as "a transitional organization, gradually descending into history, making

\(^1\) Vladimir Socor, "CIS Summit: Decorative, yet Acrimonious", May 12, 2005, Eurasia Daily Monitor.
room for direct bilateral relations among member states". His statement reflects Armenia’s traditional policy (predating the CIS’ eclipse) of shunning multilateral CIS undertakings and emphasizing instead its purely bilateral ties with Russia.

Turkmen President Saparmurad Niyazov, who very rarely attends CIS summits, made an exception in this case to honor the memory of his father, who was killed in combat in the Second World War. While in Moscow, Niyazov joined Yushchenko to finalize a Ukrainian-Turkmen proposal regarding a tripartite consortium with Russia on the transport of Turkmen natural gas. Putin took delivery of the document during the summit for early consideration.

Kyrgyz Acting President Kurmanbek Bakyiev used the occasion to solicit Russian assistance in overhauling Soviet-era industrial enterprises, idle for more than a decade in Kyrgyzstan. Bakyiev proposed transferring such enterprises to Russian ownership in lieu of repayment of Kyrgyz debts to Russia. Putin seemed open to the proposal, citing the 2002 Russia-Armenia agreements on debt-for-property swaps as a model for to be followed in Kyrgyzstan's case.

It was Uzbek President Islam Karimov who publicly offered the most scathing assessment, both retrospective and current, of the CIS: "cooperation in name only," "shallow ideas," "all sorts of cooperation organizations that have been set up during more than 10 years, these ill-thought games that have today brought a major crisis to the CIS. ... This time, too, the [Moscow] meeting is likely to fail to resolve any serious issues". 82

82 Ibid.