

Whose Policy Mistakes Really Underlie the Central Asian Crisis?

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The Central Asian Republics are in the throes of an intensifying war against an “Islamist” insurgency, which threatens the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and stability of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan, and Turkmenistan.

This renewed, and most dangerous, round of insurgency broke out in early August. It marks the opening of the final phase of the strategy pursued by the imperial British-run grouping known as the “Gang of Five”: the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and their cohorts in the Wall Street financial oligarchy. This financial oligarchy is faced with the specter of its own demise, through the final collapse of its financial system. Rather than face the catastrophe by seeking solutions of reform, it is hysterically denying reality, and acting through sheer force to maintain political hegemony over a collapsing world.

The “Islamist” insurgency must be seen as a flank in a war—the war against Russia, over Central Asia. The troops in the war are deployed by the occupying forces in Afghanistan, known as the Taliban. The now-infamous Taliban are a New Dark Age insurgency, concocted and developed by the Anglo-American geopolitical circles, led by Bernard Lewis, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and others. The Taliban are being used as the warlord force, to destroy the nations of the region, and expand weapons- and drug-running operations throughout Eurasia.

From the standpoint of the financial oligarchy, wealth is the billions of dollars to be made in marketing heroin and opium. Wealth is also raw materials. Their thinking is, that once the nation-states of Central Asia have been broken, their devastated territories will be open to wholesale looting of raw materials and mineral resources, mediated through mercenary, warlord forces. It is their commitment to ensure that the governments and populations of Central Asia be denied control over their rich resources.

The “Islamist” insurgency is the final phase of the assault against the nation-states of Central Asia. To understand the shift into this phase, it is important to review the background to the fight for control over the region.

Democracy, IMF-Style

Initially, the strategy embraced by the Anglo-American oligarchy toward the Caucasus and Central Asia, was coher-

ent with the policy pursued vis-à-vis Russia and the formerly communist countries of eastern Europe. It aimed at dismantling the political structures of the former Soviet republics, and facilitating the introduction of comprador elements into government positions, who would organize the rape of raw materials and industrial and other resources. Ambitious pipeline projects were planned, with the promise of opening export channels, but in reality laying the basis for Anglo-American cartels to claim title to the vast oil and natural gas reserves.

The “good offices” of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, were to be utilized, to organize the privatization of state-controlled assets, especially raw materials. The IMF’s infamous “shock therapy” was to be imposed, to liberalize the economy, state subsidies were to be eliminated, protective tariffs cut, currencies rendered freely convertible (and appropriately devalued), and the “free market” would rule supreme.

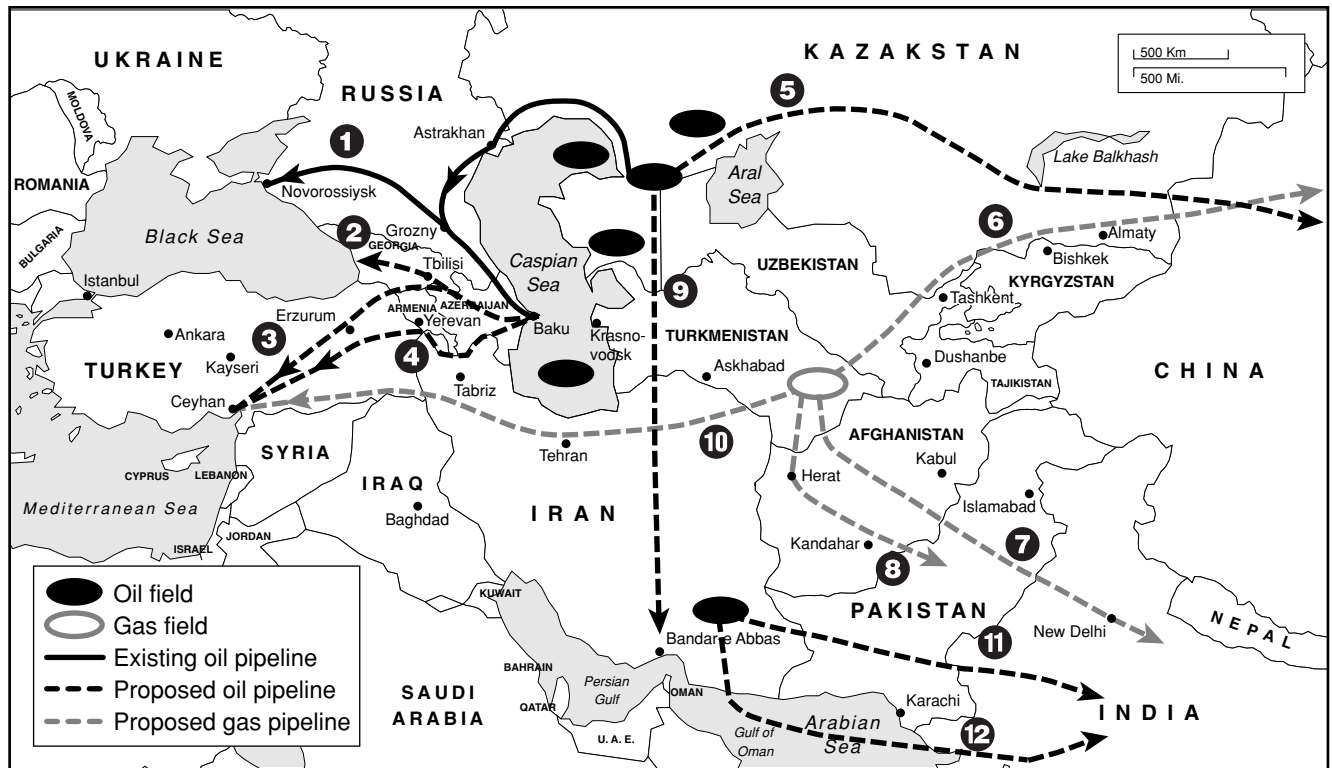
But in Central Asia, this did not work as planned.

Although initially, some Central Asian countries began to adopt the free-market mechanisms, a combination of factors intervened, to cause a shift in thinking. First, the eastern European and Russian economies, which had been given the shock-therapy treatment earlier, showed signs of rapid deterioration. In particular, the case of Russia was a warning. The once-industrialized power was being reduced rapidly to the status of a Third World country, living off raw materials exports alone. A tiny number of compradors got fabulously rich by organizing the privatization of Russia’s real economic wealth, while the masses were plunged into poverty and the national currency was devastated, as the August 1998 crisis demonstrated.

The nations of Central Asia had also been subjected to looting under the Soviet system; they had been forced to provide raw materials to Russia, and to organize farming along monoculture lines, whereby one country produced cotton, another produced wheat, and so forth. What the Central Asian governments sought, on independence, was the means to break from this form of exploitation; specifically, to find the means to diversify their export markets for raw materials, and to use the foreign exchange revenues for developing national economies. This meant modern infrastructure, in transportation, energy, water management, edu-

FIGURE 5

The Contesting Oil and Gas Pipelines



Key to Figure 5

Conflicting schemes of oil and gas development of the Caucasus and Central Asia express the fight for control. Anglo-American geopolitical strategy—most stridently advanced by Zbigniew Brzezinski—has sought to deprive Russia and Iran of influence over oil and gas pipeline projects, by insurgencies and ethnic conflict; and to woo Central Asian governments with promised pipelines to the West. During this year, however, the tables have been turned in the “Great Game.”

Line 1 is an existing oil pipeline to Novorossiysk, Russia, from the Baku, Azerbaijan, Caspian Sea oil fields and the Tengiz fields in Kazakhstan. A parallel Tengiz-to-Novorossiysk pipeline is now under construction, which the Chechen insurgency against Russia hoped to block.

Line 2 is a pipeline running through Azerbaijan and Georgia, to Georgia’s port of Supsa. In April 1999, oil began flowing through the reworked Baku-Supsa line, after the route through Grozny in Chechnya had been sabotaged by warfare.

Lines 3 and 4 are proposed, to pump Baku oil to Turkey’s Ceyhan port, bypassing Russia. Turkey and Georgia want a somewhat different route (not shown) to Ceyhan, spending \$3-4 billion to bypass Russia.

Line 5 is a pipeline to pump natural gas from the Tengiz field in Kazakhstan to Japan, via China. In 1997, China National Petroleum Corp. signed an agreement to carry Kazak oil to China across the formidable Tianshan Mountain range; this is

where the Uighur insurgency would threaten. In June 2000, delivery began of 50,000 tons of oil per month by rail, from Kazakhstan’s Kumkol field, to China.

Line 6 is proposed, with a protocol signed in 1999, for transport of natural gas from Turkmenistan, through the Central Asian republics, to China, South Korea, and Japan.

Line 7 would have pumped natural gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India. But British, U.S., and Saudi interests have wanted Taliban control over Afghanistan to put the project through, and both Unocal and Russia’s Gazprom have now pulled out.

Lines 9 and 10 have been targets of intense Anglo-American sabotage. A tripartite agreement among Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey was signed in 1996, for a \$20 billion deal over 23 years, whereby Turkmenistan and Iran would supply Turkey with gas. In December 1997, a pipeline was opened by Iran and Turkmenistan for the flow of natural gas from Turkmenistan south to Iran.

To block this, the U.S. Trade Development Agency gave a grant announced by President Clinton, to study the feasibility of a gas pipeline under the Caspian Sea. This pipeline was hailed as a breakthrough, but collapsed without financing as the Iranian project made rapid progress. The Turkmenistan government declined to finalize arrangements, regardless of pressures from the United States, and Royal Dutch Shell and PSG shut their Baku offices down in June 2000.

cation, sanitation, and so forth.

Second, the celebrated pipeline deals promised by oil cartels from the West, aimed also at blocking cooperation with Iran and Russia, did not materialize. In their stead, other pipeline and transportation infrastructure projects came into being, through cooperative arrangements with Asian partners — Iran and China in particular, and Russia (see **Figure 5**).

Third, as pressures from the Anglo-Americans were exerted to “democratize,” liberal political elements allied themselves with Western operations, such as the Soros Open Society Institute, in order to utilize political freedoms in a subversive direction. At the same time, sovereignty was being threatened from the outside, in the form of the growing Taliban-linked insurgencies. And, the would-be champions of democracy in the United States and Britain, were organizing one atrocity after another, in the foreign policy realm, for example, the war in Kosovo. The bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May 1999, was an unequivocal attack on the very notion of national sovereignty, and the message was not lost on observers from Central Asia.

Madeleine Albright, Agent Provocateur

A crucial inflection point in these interrelated processes, was the trip that U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright took to three Central Asian republics, on April 15-19 of this year. True to form, Albright attempted to dictate policies and to lecture governments on foreign relations. The net effect of her undiplomatic diplomacy, was to confirm the worst fears any of the host governments might have harbored, regarding Anglo-American intent, and to trigger a policy backlash, which was, in fact, against America’s true interests.

Kazakhstan was the first country on her tour, which also included Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. To appreciate the impact of Albright’s intervention, it is important to take into consideration certain economic and political factors of its recent history.

The largest of the Central Asian nations, Kazakhstan also has the proportionately largest Russian population, with about 48% Kazaks and 34% Russians. President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who had served as First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, became President in December 1991, after independence. Through a referendum in 1995, Nazarbayev’s term was extended until the year 2000.

On Oct. 10, 1999, parliamentary elections took place in the presence of international observers, led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). One issue raised by the democratic watchdog committees, was the exclusion from the election of Akezhan Kazhegeldin, a former prime minister. It was Kazhegeldin who had led a massive privatization process, which involved the sell-off of a majority of industrial groups to foreign investors, often at fire-sale prices, and amid an aura of corruption. After a conflict with Nazarbayev, Kazhegeldin left the country. In 1997, he reappeared in Switzerland, then returned to head up an opposition party, the Kazakstan Republican People’s Party. In July 1999, he travelled with other opposition figures to the United States, where he was received in the House Committee on International Affairs. Shortly thereafter, the Kazak Ambassador to the United States reportedly expressed his concern to Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) that briefings in Congress on alleged violations of human rights, might be viewed as an intrigue against his country.

Following the imposition of free market reforms, and privatization, the Kazak economy suffered significantly, but began to turn around in 1997, when a marked increase in industrial production was achieved in basic sectors (iron-forging, iron ore, gas, oil, agriculture). With the departure of Kazhegeldin in Autumn 1997, the pace of privatization was slowed down considerably.

Emphasis on Infrastructure

The economic policy outlook of the government, was then elaborated in a document, “Kazakhstan 2030.” In it, President Nazarbayev stressed the “high standard of scientific and creative potential of the population,” the abundance of natural resources, and vast, arable lands, as among the advantages for the country’s strategic goal of effecting economic transformation to a modern industrial nation. He emphasized that the opportunities for the country stem from its geographical position, “along the legendary Silk Route,” which, he said, opened the way to a market of 2 billion people. In his concept of “Eurasianism,” Nazarbayev projected that Kazakhstan in 2030, “being the center of Eurasia, would play the part of a connecting link between the three rapidly growing regions — China, Russia, and the Muslim world.” To achieve this, he outlined a series of investment priorities and projects, from

Key continued

The Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey pipeline that the Caspian project was to block, has proceeded apace. Turkmenistan has also begun pumping natural gas to Iran, delivering 5 billion cubic meters (bcm) this year. The Iranian pipeline to Turkey has been built, and the Turkish line is under construction. In August 2000, commissioning of the Iran-Turkey pipeline was announced for next year.

Meanwhile, Turkmenistan resumed oil exports to Ukraine in February 1998, via Russia’s pipeline. In May 2000, after

President Vladimir Putin’s visit to Turkmenistan, delivery was finalized of 50 bcm per year of natural gas from Turkmenistan to Russia, for 30 years. Some 20 bcm are being delivered this year.

Lines 11 and 12 are proposed pipelines from Iran to India, either overland, via Pakistan, or under the Arabian Sea. Memoranda have been initialled by the three countries, but India-Pakistan political uncertainties continue. If the direct, under-sea route is chosen, Russia will provide technical assistance.

Dramatic Shift Under Way Toward Russia, China

On Aug. 29, the turn of the Central Asian Republics toward Russian and China was noted in a series of dramatic developments. Uzbek President Islam Karimov announced both a strategic cooperation agreement with China, and a formal request by his government to Russia for military help against the “Islamist” rebel armies.

Two days earlier, an incisive article entitled “Putin Lives in the Cold War,” appeared in the German paper *Welt am Sonntag*, by well-known journalist Peter Scholl-Latour. Scholl-Latour described how Russian President Vladimir Putin has been turning the West’s flank, on both strategic and petrochemical issues, in Central Asia:

“Between the Caspian Sea and the Chinese province of Xinjiang, there emerged an economic and strategic shift, which will trigger great alarm in Washington. Just one year ago, everybody believed that the big American energy companies had succeeded in pushing the Russians out of their spheres of influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. It seemed as if they had finally and fully grabbed the exploitation of the vast resources of oil and natural gas in this region, as well as the control over the transport lines via non-Russian territory. But in this reenactment of the ‘Great Game,’ Vladimir Putin has clearly won against the alleged omnipotence of the U.S. giants.

“Recently Moscow has signed an agreement with Kazakhstan, which secures it the lion’s share of the oil production there, as well as the export via Russian territory. With that the grandiose pipeline project of the Americans, which — by circumventing Russia — is planned to go from

Baku via Georgia and East Anatolia to the Turkic port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea, is supposed to have lost any chance of turning a profit. Almost at the same time, Turkmenistan’s President [Saparmurad] Niyazov has turned his back on the Americans and cancelled a pre-contract with an American consortium, which was only signed in 1999. Also here the Russians clearly gained a big advantage concerning the delivery of the vast natural gas reserves of Turkmenistan.

“Even more remarkable is the about-face of the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov. Until recently, the armed forces of this most powerful Central Asian state prepared for a military cooperation with the United States and NATO, and suddenly now a strategic partnership with Moscow is being looked for. On short notice, a meeting of Karimov with NATO’s Secretary General George Robertson was cancelled. Instead, the strongman of Tashkent, an ex-communist, who rules Uzbekistan like an Oriental despot, met several times with Vladimir Putin.

“This sensational shift of power in favor of Moscow, which the West hardly acknowledged, is certainly not a manifestation of mutual sympathy, and the time of merciless Soviet oppression is not at all forgotten here. But the new ‘emirs’ . . . are immediately threatened by the advances of a militant Islam. . . .

“CIA headquarters in Langley must have noticed with astonishment, that the so-called ‘Shanghai Forum’ — Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan — met in the beginning of July in Tajikistan’s capital, Dushanbe, in order to jointly discuss the containment of the ‘Islamic danger,’ which is also threatening Beijing in Xinjiang. Looked at from a global standpoint, Putin’s overall account is not as negative as was portrayed in the context of the tragedy in the Barents Sea, which explains the fact, that about 65% of the Russian population still supports him.”

massive rail and road infrastructure to pipelines and communications.

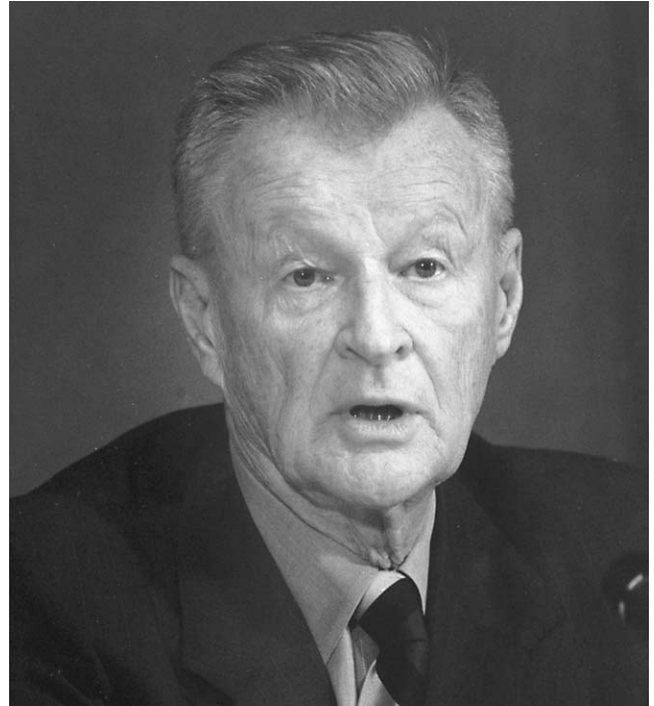
Enter Albright. Her themes were: democracy, human rights, free market economics, and the fight against terrorism. Her message was clearly understood as a direct attack on the sovereignty of the nations in question.

In a joint press conference with President Nazarbayev, Albright announced the commitment of the U.S. government, to provide help in the fight against terrorism. But the help? — but \$3 million for enhancing border security, including “training and equipment for counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics,” and an invitation to Kazakhstan to attend a conference on counter-terrorism at the State Department in June of this year. Albright was to repeat her offer of \$3 million and the conference invitation, on her stops in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Albright’s Ulterior Motives

It became clear to journalists, that there was an ulterior motive to Albright’s anti-terror proposals: to thwart these countries’ growing cooperation with Russia and China, in that fight. One journalist asked Albright about Kazakhstan’s role in the Shanghai Five (now renamed the Shanghai Forum), the group which came together in 1996 to fight terrorism, and has since expanded to become a powerful regional arrangement for defense against terrorism, extremism, and separatism. The group includes Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, plus Russia and China, with Uzbekistan, India, and Iran ready to join. Albright pointedly did not mention the Shanghai Five in her answer.

Cooperation with Russia was raised by the press, whose representatives were well aware of what Albright’s mission



U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. On Aug. 18, 1999, Lyndon LaRouche wrote: "It is typical of Zbigniew Brzezinski's earlier roles, that he and his extended family connections, including Secretary Madeleine Albright, should be playing key supporting roles for the British monarchy's staging of the potential nuclear war over games currently played in Transcaucasia and Central Asia."

entailed. President Nazarbayev was asked whether Kazakstan were "looking more toward Russia," and, if so, "how successful has Secretary Albright's visit been in turning your attention more toward the West. . . ?" The Kazak President responded, in Russian, saying, "I am kind of surprised that we still have remnants, even back in the West, of some imperialists' kind of thinking." He explained: "The government has to face one direction or another, they say. You know, in the history of our people we have fought forever in trying to gain our independence, and our independence finally won. Now our major tasks are providing for the economic welfare of our people and for our own physical independence—that is number one." He added, "Russia is our God-given neighbor. . . . We have a common border with Russia of over 7,000 kilometers, and Russia is our economic, cultural, and political partner. And now that we're neighbors, geographically, we would like to establish with Russia a very fine partnership on an equal basis, so that we are equal partners in economics, politics, and just be good neighbors."

The Russia issue was further aggravated, when a journalist asked Albright to comment on Kazak sales of MiG fighter jets to North Korea, which the United States had strongly condemned. The journalist asked Nazarbayev why the government officials involved, who had been tried for the offense, were readmitted to government positions. Before the Secretary of State was allowed to reach the microphone, President

Nazarbayev set the record straight, detailing how the lower-level officials who violated the law, were duly tried and punished according to the law of the land, and the high-level officials, found innocent, were given back government positions, albeit on a lower level.

But the issue for the Kazak President was not one of legal niceties. It was the issue of sovereignty, the issue underlying every topic discussed with Albright. After explaining the legal case, he added pointedly, "However, it is not the place of the Secretary of State of the United States to decide which of the ministers or people, in any particular case, the government of Kazakstan is to reinstate or not to reinstate."

On democracy, Albright was blunt. "As you know," she said, "the United States has expressed its disappointment with the conduct of last year's elections and I discussed with President Nazarbayev the importance of implementing the OSCE election report recommendations and making possible a more inclusive and democratic political system."

Purportedly in the interests of enhancing democracy, the United States, she said, would increase its support for independent media. According to a fact sheet issued by the State Department, the U.S. government will fund four new public access Internet sites, and will provide "small grants and technical assistance to independent newspapers, TV, and radio stations." The United States will work with the George Soros-funded Open Society Institute, already expelled from a num-

Zbigniew Brzezinski's Dangerous Chessboard

In his 1997 book *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, former Carter National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski has revived the British colonialist religion known as “geopolitics,” as it was propounded by Halford Mackinder. This is the apocalyptic religion that led to World War I and II. In his book (and in his business dealings), Brzezinski promotes the idea that there is a “zone of instability” that encompasses the Transcaucasus and Central Asia in which the clever chessplayer can manipulate tribal, ethnic, or religious differences to his advantage (Figure 6). A central theme of his book, is to deny Russia any influence whatsoever over developments in these countries on its border. At the same time, Brzezinski and his family have made their services available to the Anglo-American oligarchy's grab for the region's extensive oil, natural gas, and mineral wealth.

Brzezinski writes: “Russia's loss of its dominant position on the Baltic Sea was replicated on the Black Sea not only because of Ukraine's independence, but also because the newly independent Caucasian states—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—enhanced the opportunities for Turkey to reestablish its once-lost influence in the region. . . . The emergence of the independent Central Asian states meant that in some places Russia's southeastern frontier had been pushed back northward more than 1,000 miles. The new states now controlled vast mineral and energy deposits that were bound to attract foreign interests. . . . Supported from the outside by Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, the Central Asian states have not been inclined to trade their new political sovereignty even for the sake of beneficial economic integration with Russia, as many Russians continued to hope they would. . . . For the Russians, the specter of a potential conflict with the Islamic

states along Russia's entire southern flank (which, adding in Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, account for more than 300 million people) has to be a source of serious concern.”

He devotes a chapter to what he calls “The Eurasian Balkans”:

“In Europe, the word ‘Balkans’ conjures up images of ethnic conflicts and great-power regional rivalries. Eurasia, too, has its ‘Balkans,’ but the Eurasian Balkans are much larger, more populated, even more religiously and ethnically heterogeneous. They are located within that large geographic oblong that demarcates the central zone of instability . . . and that embraces portions of southeastern Europe, Central Asia and parts of South Asia, the Persian Gulf area, and the Middle East.

“The Eurasian Balkans form the inner core of that oblong. . . : not only are its political entities unstable, but they tempt and invite the intrusion of more powerful neighbors, each of whom is determined to oppose the region's domination by another. It is this familiar combination of a power vacuum and power suction that justifies the appellation ‘Eurasian Balkans.’ . . .

“The Eurasian Balkans . . . are of importance from the standpoint of security and historical ambitions to at least three of their most immediate and more powerful neighbors, namely, Russia, Turkey and Iran, with China also signaling an increasing political interest in the region. But the Eurasian Balkans are infinitely more important as a potential economic prize: an enormous concentration of natural gas and oil reserves is located in the region, in addition to important minerals, including gold. . . .

“A geostrategic issue of crucial importance is posed by China's emergence as a major power. The most appealing outcome would be to co-opt a democratising and free-marketing China into a larger Asian framework of cooperation. . . . Potentially, the most dangerous scenario would be a grand coalition of China, Russia, and perhaps Iran, an ‘anti-hegemonic coalition’ united not by ideology but by complementary grievances.”

ber of eastern European nations, to shape the minds of students, and teach them “democracy.” Finally, the United States will support non-governmental organization (NGO) development.

Silk Road Diplomacy

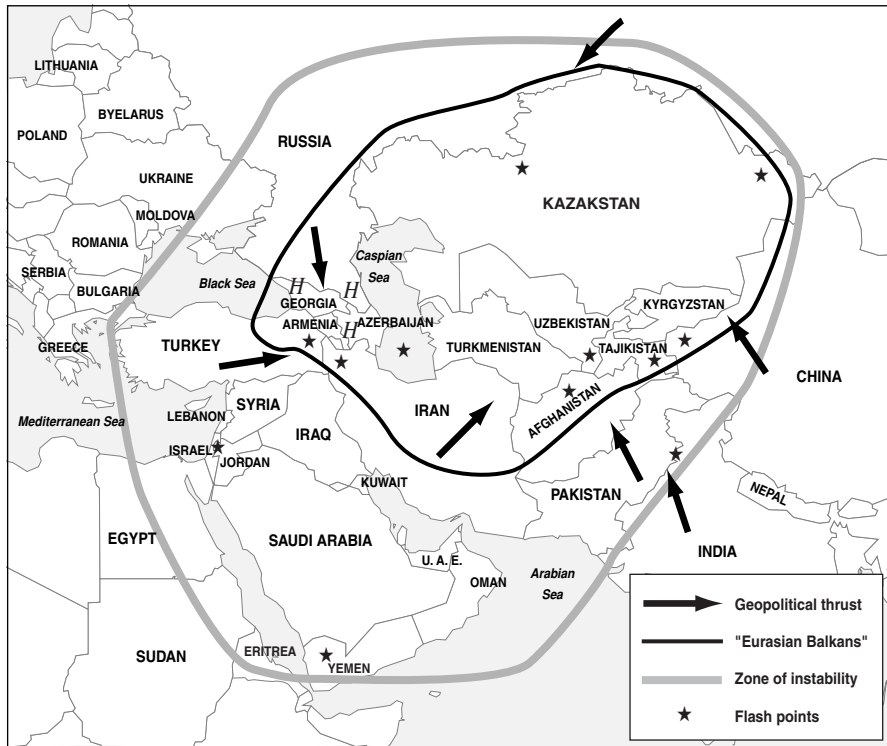
In Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Albright followed essentially the same script. Kyrgyzstan had been hailed as an “island of democracy” in the region, largely due to the fact that the post-independence leadership was not the same as in the earlier Soviet period. Kyrgyzstan also moved very quickly

with free market reforms, liberalizing prices, and cutting state subsidies. It also set up a stock market, with U.S. assistance. The rapid liberalization had a devastating social effect, as wide-ranging state programs, to provide a social safety net, were dismantled.

Thus, in 1994 and 1995, the government began to effect a shift, particularly in controlling the activities of opposition groups and publications. President Askar Akayev, whose term was not extended through a referendum, was reelected in December 1995 to the position he still holds. The next Presidential elections are scheduled for December 2000. The

FIGURE 6

Brzezinski's View of 'The Eurasian Balkans'



Source: *The Grand Chessboard*.

the last elections were flawed.”

The measures which the United States has introduced, in the interests of “promoting democracy” are far-reaching. Most important are the measures introduced to directly shape the election process. The U.S. government fact sheet described it as follows:

“Small grants for Election-Related Activities: Prior to the February 2000 parliamentary elections, USAID [the U.S. Agency for International Development] funded a \$175,000 small grants program to help NGOs, civic organizations, and media entities educate citizens about the local and parliamentary elections, and encourage transparency, citizen oversight, and participation. . . . USAID will conduct a \$150,000 small-grants competition to help NGOs, civic organizations, and media entities inform voters and monitor the elections.” In addition, the U.S. government “is providing small grants and technical assistance to independent newspapers, TV and radio stations . . . as well as training seminars.”

official strategic doctrine of Kyrgyzstan is the doctrine of the new Silk Road. (See “President of Kyrgyzstan: Our Foreign Policy Doctrine Is the Great Silk Road,” *EIR*, April 9, 1999, for the foreign policy document of the Kyrgyz government.)

As in Kazakstan, Albright announced her \$3 million in aid and her invitation to Washington for counter-terrorism conferences. But the main political thrust, was on democracy. Here, according to the joint statement issued following her talks with President Akayev, Albright “agreed with the assessment of the OSCE that [the parliamentary] elections did not fully meet OSCE and international standards. The Secretary noted the need to further strengthen the democratic process in Kyrgyzstan and correct the electoral irregularities detailed in the OSCE final report.”

In his statement to the press, President Akayev reported that he had “stated several times that the OSCE’s remarks and recommendations on the recent elections would be taken into consideration by the Kyrgyz government in the upcoming elections.”

In an interview with *Pyramida* on April 16, Albright stressed, “What is important now is that the next elections in Kyrgyzstan be free and fair and open and transparent. Because

Don't Count This Chicken, Either

Albright took the same agenda to her last stop, which was Uzbekistan, a state with a strong centralized government. Uzbekistan has been characterized in the United States as the closest country in the region, to America. Albright’s visit demonstrated the fallacy of that assumption.

Starting with assistance to fight terrorism, Albright went on to catalogue her complaints regarding lack of democracy. In Uzbekistan, more than in the other two countries, she explicitly said that the government should abandon its dirigistic approach, both in the economy, and in the crackdown on terrorist elements. On the economic front, her specific demand was that Uzbekistan should establish “full currency convertibility,” which the government is not planning to do. Regarding law enforcement, she was asked by the press, whether she were satisfied with the Uzbek government’s response to her “concerns” about “crackdowns on Muslim fundamentalists.” Foreign Minister Kamilov stated clearly, “If these are fundamentalists, if these are extremists involved in terrorism, no doubt, they must be persecuted in any state.”

Albright, for her part, said she had discussed the matter with President Karimov, and told him “that it was necessary

that the government of Uzbekistan distinguish very carefully between peaceful devout believers and those who advocate terrorism or violent political change.” Albright graciously acknowledged that “there are genuine terrorist threats in this region,” but failed even to mention that President Karimov himself had been the target of a vicious assassination attempt just a year earlier. Her pious refrain was that one should respond “through the rule of law, and not over-reaction.”

The discussion on democracy led to an open clash in Tashkent. In the joint press conference, Foreign Minister Kamilov was asked to comment on the Annual Human Rights 1999 World Report, issued by the U.S. State Department, which criticized Uzbekistan. Kamilov said bluntly, a “certain part of the report raises doubts in us . . . and I will state frankly, we cannot accept it.” Albright confirmed that there had been a clash on the human rights question in her talks with President Karimov, saying: “He disagreed with me, and I disagree with him.”

Albright unveiled a number of new U.S.-funded initiatives to “support democracy, human rights, and the growth of civil society in Uzbekistan,” among them, the usual Internet access and training programs, and public-access Internet sites. However, as the U.S. fact sheet detailed, U.S. government support “for previously existing USG-funded sites (including the University of World Economy and Diplomacy) was withdrawn due to Government of Uzbekistan attempts to control Internet traffic. The new sites will be connected to the Internet via satellite *through the U.S. Embassy*” (emphasis added).

Albright summed up the sense of her mission, in a lengthy speech delivered at the university at the conclusion of her tour. She began by offering her view of the geopolitical significance of the Central Asian states. Saying that she tries to focus her efforts on regions where “success in one country or region will have an influence on surrounding areas,” she explained that she had just been in Ukraine, whose economic and political development will influence Russia and eastern Europe. “I am here in Central Asia for similar reasons,” she began. “Your neighbors in the broader region include Russia, China, Turkey, and Iran. You can have an impact on Afghanistan and thus Pakistan and India as well. And the future of the Caucasus is also linked to yours. So while you are geographically distant from the United States, you are very closely

connected to some of our most vital national interests.”

Albright promoted the United States’ pittance of assistance in the fight against terrorism, but added: “But at the same time the United States will not support any and all measures taken in the name of fighting drugs and terrorism or restoring stability. One of the most dangerous temptations for a government facing violent threats is to respond in a heavy-handed way that violates the rights of innocent citizens.” Albright related this to state intervention in the economy: “It is particularly ironic that the temptation to use a heavy hand should come at just the moment when—on the economic front—the right strategy is to limit government intervention.” Furthermore, she said, “by any modern standard, it is clear that, throughout Central Asia, governments remain too involved in the economy and the daily lives of individuals.”

A clearer demand for the weakening—and destabilization—of the power of the governments in the region, could not be stated in diplomatese.

Summing up her discussions on the questions of democracy, human rights, and the like, Albright reiterated the demand that the three countries abide by the OSCE recommendations for elections. She said that the issues of democracy and a free press, were things she discussed with governments everywhere, “but there is a growing sense . . . that when it comes to these issues, Uzbekistan and its neighbors in Central Asia are falling behind.”

Significantly, Albright’s itinerary did not include Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, two of the Central Asian states she included in her sweeping generalizations and criticisms. This may have to do with Tajikistan’s close military cooperation with Russia. Turkmenistan is not only officially neutral, rejecting any military alliance, but is also uninterested in IMF reforms. State subsidies have remained intact, major budget expenditures are allocated for education and health, and basic utilities are free.

Regional Cooperation Strengthened

In mid-July, a summit of the Shanghai Five took place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, which greatly deepened and expanded the cooperation among Central Asians, not only in the fight against terrorism, narcotics, and extremism, but also in forging closer economic links. President Karimov of Uzbekistan personally attended, while Iran and India requested membership.

In early August, the Taliban-centered “Islamist” insurgency controlling Afghanistan, escalated dramatically, targeting Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Emergency meetings of state leaders took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; in Sochi, with Russian President Putin; and in a summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Central Asian leaders vowed to “annihilate” the insurgents. The fighting is intensifying, in what is effectively an invasion of the Central Asian Republics. One battle, on the border of Kyrgyzstan, has already involved Russian border police troops.

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Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

In order that society might enjoy the benefits of discovered universal physical principles, it is essential to engage cooperation among the higher, cognitive processes of individual persons. The modern concept of "information," embedded in today's educational and scientific practice, makes such further advancement of cognition, and therefore of science, impossible. Such are the kind of underlying matters which must be addressed, to grasp the flaw in the arguments surrounding today's missile-defense debate.

■ It's Time to Tell the Truth About the Health Benefits of Low-Dose Radiation

James Muckerheide

Low-dose radiation is documented to be beneficial for human health but, for political reasons, radiation is assumed to be harmful at any dose. Radiation-protection scientists, and others, who cover up the data that contradict present policy should be investigated for misconduct.

■ Discovery Challenges Existence of 'Absolute Time'

Jonathan Tennenbaum

Russian scientists have discovered unexpected regularities in radioactive decay, linked to astronomical cycles.

■ AIDS and Infectious Diseases Declared Threat to U.S. National Security

Colin Lowry

■ Yes, the Ocean Has Warmed; No, It's Not 'Global Warming'

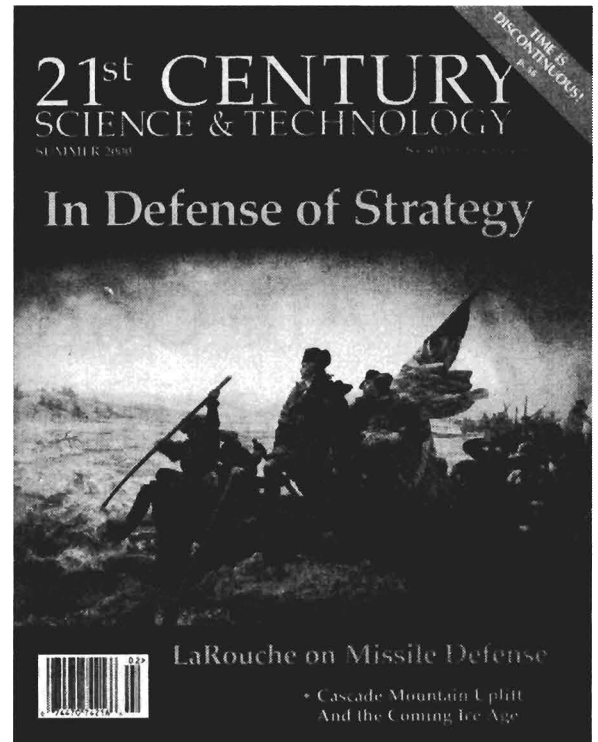
Dr. Robert E. Stevenson

■ Cascade Mountain Uplift May Explain Strengthening Ice Age Cycle

Jack Sauers

■ Genetically Engineered Crops Can Feed the World!

Dr. C.S. Prakash



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