

The OSCE and Its Neighbourhood: The Case of Afghanistan

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The OSCE's Neighbourhood(s)

- The OSCE as a vast space from Vancouver to Vladivostok has many neighbours.
- Some are separated by natural divides, some not. E.g. the Mediterranean can be regarded a natural divide, the Turkish – Syrian or the Mongolian - Chinese border not. How do these appear in Afghanistan and its northern neighbourhood?

Map of greater Central Asia and (a part of) South Asia



Are the main problems of the region of security nature?

- It depends how we define security.
- The approach of the world at large is that the region can be built if there is more prosperity (fostered by economic interaction), more cooperation (both bilateral and multilateral), more democracy, and more security both internal and inter-state.
- The region has underperformed on many...

Does such a Region Exist?

- Geography does not support “a” region of Central and South Asia. Economic links between the two? Complementarity?
- What matters more – historical separation or geographical vicinity?
- Central Asia: internal disunity, external connectivity.
- Land-linked (rather than land-locked)? (FM Erlan Idrissov)

Central Asia's Contribution to the World or Why Does the Region Matter?

Positively

- Rich natural resources since independence,
- Vicinity of Afghanistan since 2001.

Negatively

- Instability, violation of human rights, Islamic radicalization (a myth?). Export of instability...
- Drug trade (northern route)

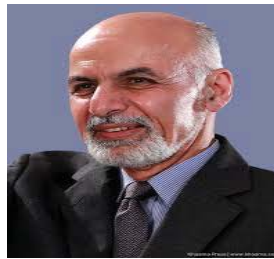
What is the basis of assessment?

Central Asia's Differentiated Afghan Relationship

- Potential of economic interaction (TAPI and CASA-1000).
- Retaining strategic importance (Uzbekistan),
- Pragmatism + pet project (Turkmenistan),
- Contribution to development (Kazakhstan),
- Concerns and international engagement (Tajikistan).

The Myth of the Consequences of ISAF's Withdrawal

- Difficult to get out...
- Phased departure...
- Nothing has happened, yet.
- Afghanistan 1989 – 1992...



Negative Peace – Positive Peace

- Removing foreign forces without removing conflict sources? (An ill-fated idea.)
- Unsustainable ASF and ANA.
- Strong legitimacy of leadership in Kabul?
- Statesmen and their entourage...
- Weak statehood – unsustainable economic base.

Afghanistan's Impact on Central Asia

- Is Afghanistan part of Central Asia? (Frederick Starr: Greater Central Asia...)
- Insulation is temporarily possible but volatile.
- From Great Game to Negative Great Game?
 - The U.S. is leaving (or has already left)
 - Europe: Too far, too bad.

Central Asia's Real Security Problems

- Focus on international issues – a blind alley.
- Weak statehood – inability to deliver.
- Strong statehood: Strong states do not have to be necessarily oppressive, authoritarian, dictatorial.
- The state both as a source of problem and only part of the solution.
- Often disillusioned population.

The Economic Foundations

- The success of natural resource exporters,
- No economic modernization in a quarter of a century,
- Tax base, subsidized economies,
- Corruption,
- How and where to break the cycle?
- “Flight” from Central Asia,
- Externally induced integration.

The Future: A Chinese – Russian Condominium?

- Great power dependence.
- Economic integration for political ends.
- Sovereignty – the legal and the real...
- Ukraine factor: Demonstration of a hegemonic regional subsystem (Alliance/Integration: less by invitation and more by imposition... - *mutatis mutandis* John Lewis Gaddis)
- The future is predictable though predictions are not particularly reassuring.