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ERZHAN KAZYKHANOV

*Foreign Minister of the Republic
of Kazakhstan*

INTRODUCTORY WORD TO READERS OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE DEVOTED TO THE SCO 10TH ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT IN ASTANA

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is today an inalienable part of the regional security architecture. Making fight against the “forces of evil” - terrorism, extremism and separatism, drugs and transborder crime - its priority, the SCO member states have managed to create efficient mechanisms of cooperation over the ten years of the organization’s existence.

Presiding over this influential international organization, Kazakhstan focuses on intensifying its activities in major areas: the security sphere, economy and the humanitarian sector. Upon Astana’s initiative, the SCO adopted a new format for implementing joint decisions, the SCO Plan of Action for 2010-2011.

During our presidency in the SCO, about 100 serious events have taken place. Alongside traditional inter-ministry meetings, they included the anti-terrorist military exercise, Peace Mission 2010. For the first time, upon our country’s initiative, healthcare ministers met within the SCO. The climax of Kazakhstan’s presidency will be the meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council devoted to the organization’s tenth anniversary that will take place in Astana on June 15, 2011.

Kazakhstan sees the SCO as the main regional site for interaction on Afghanistan’s problems. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has said, “we are unanimous in our desire of Afghanistan’s sustainable and stable development... It is important to more actively involve Afghanistan in the integration processes within the SCO, in economic and humanitarian cooperation.”

We are satisfied to see that cooperation in fighting drug trafficking is gaining momentum. The summit in Astana is expected to sign the Anti-drug Strategy for 2010-2015.

Our region has enormous resources and a huge market, so the potential for development of trade and

economic cooperation is extremely high. The most important component of the SCO’s economic activities is the implementation of its long-term Program of multilateral trade and economic cooperation, which creates favorable conditions for trade and investment. In this connection, President Nazarbayev has repeatedly emphasized that “economic cooperation is among important areas of the SCO’s activities and requires more active work at meetings of industry ministers and special working groups to carry out the Plan of Action for the Program of the SCO’s trade and economic cooperation.”

The SCO member states account for about one fourth of the world’s oil reserves and output, from 33% to 50% of gas resources and 50% of discovered uranium deposits. “Given the impact the shortage of global energy resources will have on the energy future of our countries,” says Nazarbayev, “I am positive that the SCO has everything it needs to create an energy community that will be able to streamline the strategic interests of energy producers, transporters and consumers.”

Efficient cooperation within the SCO is based on the concept of the “Shanghai spirit,” its main values being mutual trust, equality, respect to different cultures and desire to develop together.

The member states have similar views of the trends of global development and are willing to search for coordinated approaches to resolution of international and regional problems. As President Nazarbayev has said, Kazakhstan is determined to “do everything we can to reinforce the coordination mechanisms of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to expand mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas and to ensure further growth of the organization’s influence on the international arena.”

Tatiana Kunina

THE SECRET OF SCO ALLIANCE

On June 14-15, 2011, Kazakhstan's capital Astana will be the focus of intense international attention: leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's member states will gather here for a summit. The organization has 6 full members, but there will be 12 participants, due to observers and dialog partners. It can be said with certainty that they will represent half of the world's population.



As an eyewitness and participant of the two latest summits, in Yekaterinburg and Tashkent, I can insist that such events, marking the anniversaries of the SCO's existence, are extremely attractive for the world. Anyway, several hundreds of journalists from different countries flock in to cover the event, and each "media bee" brings nectar to its hive. It doesn't matter what they write, it's their interest in the SCO that is important.

How can it be explained? Most probably, the reason is a certain secrecy that surrounds the organization. Foreign journalists admit that they cannot quite understand the image and goals of this "elusively strange" organization.

The abbreviation SCO emerged in the global politics ten years ago. As a Western journalist wrote, "in the muted chord of letters, it was easy to discern oriental, Asian symbols - wild winds of the steppe, subtle murmur of the desert, rustling wings of golden eagles... and hissing of a snake."

The metaphors were not without poison, of course. Indeed, the most widespread opinion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the West is that it is "an inscrutable and dangerous alliance." I remember Parisian Professor

Catherine Poujol speaking at an Issyk-Kul international expert conference devoted to the SCO and describing it as "powerful and terrible."

The former title - "powerful" - doesn't raise any doubts: the aggregate territory of the SCO member states makes up three fifths of Eurasia (30 million sq km), while their citizens make up one fourth of the world's population. Including the countries that have the status of an observer or dialog partner will easily embrace half of the planet's citizens.

As to the latter adjective - "terrible" - it is, no doubt, unfair and testifies to the lack of understanding of the SCO's idea and values, the lack of impartial information.

So what is the SCO? Which bundle of energy created this international alliance? Inter-government unions do not emerge out of nowhere; everything has its reasons.

Speaking of the SCO's genetic source, it goes back to the last years of the Soviet Union, when it began actively developing cooperation with China around their common border. Both countries then initiated drafting of measures of military trust and reduction of the armies on the border that were unique for Asia. This absolutely

What is the reason for the world's interest in the SCO? It is most probably the secrecy that surrounds the organization.

new for the continent process resulted in an important development: it created an atmosphere of mutual trust in a broader sense.

It stayed even after the Soviet Union broke up. Young sovereign nations emerged in Central Asia, and they were

The notion of “Shanghai spirit” defines the organization’s general atmosphere and ethical code.

also oriented towards cooperation and trust. This positive process contributed to reaching a new quality of inter-state relations in this part of the world in the post-Soviet political reality.

The SCO founding fathers met in Shanghai on June 15, 2001, and the organization was named after the city. The life-changing forces of the historical process gathered regional neighbors there - they were brought closer by the harsh reality. The predecessor of the SCO was a political union that was interested in joint efforts to prevent terrorist attacks, separatism and extremism on the border and within the young Central Asian countries.

In the beginning, it was a “Shanghai Five”, but next year, after Uzbekistan joined in, it became a “Six” and was renamed as the SCO. In June 2002, at the St Petersburg summit of the SCO heads of state, the organization’s Charter was signed, and it started its chronicles.

In 2006, the SCO announced its plans to fight international drug mafia as the financial backbone of terrorism, and in 2008, it said it was going to actively participate in resolving Afghanistan’s problem.

Simultaneously, the organization became active in the economic sector. Its long-term goal is to create free trade zones within the SCO, and in the near term, it wants to boost the process of creating favorable conditions for trade and investment.

The SCO headquarters are located in Beijing. The organization has six members (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China,

Uzbekistan, Russia and Tajikistan), four observers (India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan) and two dialog partners (Belarus and Sri Lanka). The SCO’s scope is the most of Eurasia.

At the same time as the SCO was born, the notion of “Shanghai spirit” emerged. It defines the general atmosphere and the ethical code of the organization. Its members chose consensus as their decision-making format and declared a high style of communication based on mutual respect, trust and tolerance. The countries are ready for mutual assistance and efficient cooperation; they are oriented towards joint development and exchange of humanitarian values.

The emergence of the SCO gave rise to the metaphor, “NATO in the East.” But the SCO is not a military bloc, it is not a clenched fist threatening someone or a political sect. It is an alliance of countries that “have joined hands” to counteract the challenges of their time. It is also an absolutely new tool for resolving current problems in the reality of the multipolar world.

Speaking of the SCO’s political philosophy, it is based on adherence to the international law and the UN Charter. The SCO is transparent and oriented towards broad international cooperation; it is ready to work with anyone willing to do so. It has two working languages (Russian and Chinese) and two perma-

The SCO is an alliance of countries that “have joined hands” to counteract the challenges of their time.

nent bodies, the Secretariat in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure in Tashkent. Economic cooperation within the organization is promoted by the Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium, both based in Moscow.

Today, cooperation within the SCO embraces the energy sector, transportation, agriculture, telecommunications and other industries. The member

states broadly interact in the research, technical, cultural, educational, tourist and humanitarian spheres, in environment protection and healthcare. Its “youth wing” has emerged, a discussion forum of the Energy Club has opened, and the SCO Network University is coming to life.

It is impossible not to recall the wonderful children’s exhibition “Children Painting Tales”, which has been travelling the SCO expanses with a great success. The unique project was designed and initiated by Irina Zakharova of the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum in Moscow, and was enthusiastically supported by

The SCO is not a military bloc, a clenched fist threatening someone or a political sect.

the SCO Secretariat and all the leaders. Looking at the exposition lit by the pure light of young souls and the vivid imagination of the “SCO children”, one understands that the alliance has powerful braces to ensure its future.

At first sight, the SCO is not designed equal: there are two great powers - China and Russia - and four relatively small young sovereign Central Asian states - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. But, in line with the “Shanghai spirit”, there are no “majors” here, and no decision depends on the political or economic power of one of the members. The opinions of China with its population of over billion people and of small Tajikistan are equally important when working on and making decisions.

The supreme body of the SCO - the Heads of State Council - meets once a year. The countries preside in the organization one after another, for a year, ending their term at the summit. This time, the leaders will be gathering in Astana.

Remarkably, the Western press has recently been complimenting the SCO. Notably, Richard Colas of the L’Essentiel des Relations Internationales magazine, published an article on the SCO, where



it is described as an “accomplished and influential international organization, attractive for many countries.”

The magazine says also that “based on mutual interest and trust, the SCO aspires for establishing a new economic and political order, balanced and sensible, both on the Asian continent and in the world, simultaneously working to maintain safety and stability in the region.” This is indeed a revolutionary assessment compared to the previous ones.

The joint declaration of cooperation between the secretariats of the SCO and the United Nations, which enriched the “Shanghai Six’s” international relations bank, was actually the act of recognition of the SCO on the part of the international community.

Of course, some UN divisions had been in contact with the SCO even before (the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia). But the Tashkent joint declaration built the legal framework for the relations, creating a new incentive for the SCO-UN dialog. This area has wonderful cooperation opportunities.

A serious problem of the SCO, a true headache, is the problem of Afghanistan. Russia as the organization’s presi-

dent in June 2008 - June 2009 seriously contributed to shaping new ideas about the SCO in Afghanistan. Notably, a significant part was played by the Moscow Afghanistan Conference, which was attended by all leading regional and world players engaged in the Afghanistan settlement, including the UN, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, NATO, OSCE and some more.

Even Tashkent made proposals related to Afghanistan. It suggested a “6+3” contact group that would act under the auspices of the UN. This means that it will comprise plenipotentiaries from Afghanistan’s neighboring states, as well as from Russia, the United States and NATO. Tashkent believes this advisory and diplomatic body would be able to achieve agreement both within and outside Afghanistan.

Sometimes, it seems that the Afghanistan problem, its notorious drug trafficking, is eternal: the poor Afghani peasants do need to survive and to feed their children, and there is no competitive alternative to poppy planting to ensure their earning their living. The problem is of extreme importance and requires a quick solution, which the entire world is trying to find. The SCO is also part of this global process. The solution is yet to be found, but, perhaps, some optimizing proposals will be voiced at the Astana summit.

What has the SCO succeeded with? First of all, it is security. Comparing the regional situation at the time when the SCO was being created with the current one, stabilization in the region in terms of security is obvious.

The future of the SCO is to a large extent determined by the draft resolution on admission of new members (there are quite a few aspirants). During its presidency, Tashkent drafted a resolution on admission of new members to the organization, and it is up to Astana to make the next step in this direction. The summit will show what it will be.

The Astana meeting of the SCO leaders will sum up the results of another SCO year, which lasts from June to June. The presidency will be taken over by China, and next year the SCO heads of state will gather in Beijing. Such is the life cycle of the SCO.

In today’s reality, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a powerful inter-state union that has a huge potential and has fit well in the global political architecture. It is growing, gaining authority and political weight, and this is doubtless. Still, the main reason of its attractiveness is in its “commandments” that reflect such values as parity, consensus, trust, team spirit and respect of each other’s interests. Aren’t these the traits of the ideal each international partnership strives to achieve?

“WORLD VESTS GREAT HOPES IN SCO”

Ahead of the 10th anniversary summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Leonid Moiseyev spoke to InfoSHOS editor-in-chief Tatiana Sinitsyna about the results of the organization's ten-year activities, its problems and outlook.



LEONID MOISEYEV

the Russian president's plenipotentiary for SCO affairs, Russia's SCO national coordinator and ambassador-at-large России, посол по особым поручениям

When an anniversary approaches, it is customary to talk about the phenomenon of its hero... Is ten years a lot or little for an international organization?

On the one hand, it is a lot; after all, it has been ten years of fairly intensive work. The structure of the organization has been shaped, a legal framework created for functioning, the structure has been made efficient, and finally, a unique philosophy has been worked out. Hence the phenomenon of the recent years: the SCO has

The SCO has become a popular organization that attracts ever more attention.

become a popular regional organization that attracts ever more attention. Recognition on the part of the UN General Assembly is worth its weight in gold, and it passed a resolution where the SCO is described as a key regional union that deals with maintaining security and stability in Central Asia. On the other hand, ten years is a good occasion to analyze what has not been done and to think about a strategy for the future, about ways to promote the ideas declared by the SCO, given the new developments in the world. In the new

international circumstances, and they have changed drastically, it is important to think about internal consolidation

Ten years is a good occasion to analyze what has not been done and to think about a strategy for the future.

within the organization and about how it will expand, since from the very beginning the SCO positioned itself as an open structure. There are already countries willing to become its full members. There are aspirants for the status of an observer or a dialog partner. These applications are being considered and they require decisions.

Many experts believe that the SCO will play the part of a stronghold of safe and fair world order. Do you think the SCO can cope with this mission?

We see a lot of hopes vested in the SCO and a lot of expectations connected to it. The global community sees our union as an alternative to the order that has shaped in the world in the recent decades, where powerful nations believe that

they can behave as they want, ignoring both the international law and the opinion of others.

There are attempts to project their own domestic legislation on other countries and to act without any consideration for others' opinion. This approach is absolutely alien to the SCO. We defend what our alliance is based on: all countries regardless of their size, history and cultural and national traditions have equal rights and an equal vote in resolving issues on the agenda. Hence the world's response to the SCO as to the real alternative and, therefore, huge expectations connected to it.

with everyone who shares our values.

This is why more and more countries turn to us, willing to join the SCO's orbit. We, in our turn, are ready to work

Any anniversary is a good occasion to sum up the results and demonstrate aggregate achievements. What are the SCO's main achievements and most important projects?

I would start with security and stability. Together, we have managed to organize counteraction to the most acute threats to security. Today, we are focusing on fighting drugs



that cross the SCO borders and get into our countries in an ever increasing amount.

We see the drug threat as a threat to security. We are taking important, drastic steps in this direction, adopting an anti-drug strategy, creating a real mechanism to fight drug trafficking. It will start functioning in the near future and add to the existing system of mechanisms built to counteract threats to stability and security.

Speaking of the economy, the SCO's achievements are more modest. And it is understandable, because it is an extremely difficult task to start close, mutually beneficial, promising economic cooperation between six countries that are very different in terms of their economic weight, size, resources and economic priorities. But something is being done nevertheless. We are finding niches where the SCO can cooperate on a multilateral basis. Gradually, our interaction will develop further, because it is geared towards improving the social and economic situation and the well-being of people in our countries. This task is becoming very relevant: we see what is happening in North Africa and the Middle East, how profoundly social and economic problems may affect the politics and the stability of the society. In this respect, the goal of improving the population's living standards is becoming even more important and relevant.

We have taken a number of important steps in spheres that are of interest for the entire global community, and we were pioneers there. I will first of all mention international information security, where the SCO is getting ready to come up with new initiatives and to offer its vision of how nations

should behave in the sphere that is intertwined with politics and economy.

So, we have achieved some serious things. I don't even mention the sphere of education (we have launched the SCO Network University) and the cultural sphere, where we have serious achievements in terms of developing an inter-civilization dialog and mutual cultural enrichment.

Our work is based on reality. The most important thing is to move forward, taking into account everyone's interests.

The SCO didn't emerge because life was too good. The region's states had to respond to threats that became more acute at the end of the 20th - the beginning of the 21st century. To what extent has the SCO justified its image as the region's guarantor of stability?

Speaking of stability and comparing what we saw in the region ten years ago to what we have now, the drastic improvement of the situation is obvious. But we will, of course, continue working on ensuring stability and counteracting terrorism and drug trafficking.

It is very important how the situation in Afghanistan will develop. For the SCO, it is a priority security issue.

The international coalition forces are expected to withdraw from the country's territory, delegating the main responsibility for supporting peace and stability within its borders to local authorities. It is hard to say how it will be managed in reality. We should be ready for any turn of events in Afghanistan and around it in order to take timely measures. This task is currently coming to the fore. It didn't exist when the SCO



was being created. At the time, we were more worried about instability problems that existed within our own countries. Now, however, the main threat to security comes from outside, namely, from Afghanistan and bordering Pakistan. Some countries outside the region are insisting on the SCO shouldering the main responsibility for managing the situation in Afghanistan. We are not going to do it, given the past experience, I mean, the Soviet Union's ten-year war in Afghanistan. The most important thing for the SCO is to preserve security around the Afghan border.

Will the SCO voice its opinion should the Americans, who have announced withdrawal of their forces, deploy them in neighboring countries, including the SCO member states, instead of sending them home?

First of all, experience shows that the Americans never leave anywhere for good. In this respect, Afghanistan is more likely to repeat the story of Iraq. Definitely, there is a desire to perpetuate their military presence outside Afghanistan as well. I think it will be a focal point for discussion within the SCO given the collective approach that was worked out in 2004. Its essence is that as military operations in Afghanistan are being scaled down, a need is arising to scale down foreign presence in the region as well. Perhaps, the current situation is not exactly what it was in 2004. But the general approach remains the same, and it says that the region's security should first of all be ensured by the region's countries.

The organization has come a long way of adjusting, establishing and bringing together parts of its organism. After the Tashkent summit, work began to create a legal framework for expanding the SCO. There is a queue to join the SCO, so to say. But the bigger the mass, the higher the turbulence. Won't the SCO be shaken by the expansion process?

Of course, there are certain doubts about the pace of the expansion. But I should say that we are moving forward quite orderly. In Tashkent, a resolution was adopted related to the admission of new members. In Astana, we expect to adopt a detailed document that will regulate the technical aspects of the admission. We envisage a consistent and fairly long procedure that will help a new member to adjust to the rules and forms of work customary for the SCO. This process will take a few years, but we hope that it won't be painful.

Last year, in Tashkent, the SCO Secretariat signed the Declaration on Cooperation with the UN Secretariat. Today, the West says NATO also needs a dialog with the organization. Do you think the SCO may move towards cooperation with NATO?

If there is a dialog with NATO, it will be very difficult. There is prejudice and long-time stereotypes that do not allow looking at the partner in a new way. This is true about the Collective Security Treaty Organization and about the SCO. Remarkably, the EU countries have already begun reconsidering and changing old stereotypes, showing interest in a dia-

log with the SCO. Just a few years ago, it was not so. As to NATO, it is a military and political structure, while the SCO is not military. If any dialog is possible at all, it will not happen in the near future.

Last year, in an interview with InfoSHOS, you said that “the SCO has outgrown the regional borders.” Can you please explain this statement from today’s position?

Take anti-terrorist efforts, which are among the SCO’s main goals, as an example. Obviously, fight against terrorism cannot be conducted on some narrow field. There are common problems and common methods of fighting this evil, which are interesting and relevant for everyone and to which every region can contribute with its know-how. Every region is now looking for different forms of cooperation. We believe that terrorism is a global threat and it should be fought jointly. Or take the topic of drugs. They come from Afghanistan en route the territory of the SCO. So we understand that drug trafficking should be fought not only within the narrow framework of our alliance, but together, and it is very important to learn from others’ experience. There is something to learn from Iran, an observer at the SCO, which has an efficient anti-drug system. Anti-drug efforts are a topic we are willing to cooperate on with different countries, including outside the SCO. Drugs produced in Afghanistan are not only a regional threat, it is a global challenge as the SCO sees it.

We envisage a consistent and fairly long procedure that will help a new member to adjust.

One cannot but mention Kyrgyzstan, the SCO’s tender point. The country’s domestic problems are yet to be resolved. What does the Shanghai Six do to help Kyrgyzstan, to promote civil peace in the country?

Not long ago, on May 14, 2011, at the meeting of the SCO Foreign Ministers Council in Almaty, the participants were unanimous in marking the significant role the SCO had played in normalizing the situation in Kyrgyzstan. They were referring not only to economic and humanitarian aid; the SCO played a political part as well, which is very important. We are willing to work with the Kyrgyz authorities, and they feel and appreciate it. I should mention that, despite all the events, there has been no pause in working with Kyrgyzstan within the SCO, there has been no questioning the value of Kyrgyzstan’s membership in the organization.

Individual member states continue regular close contacts with the Kyrgyz authorities in terms of providing aid. For example, Russia is now actively helping Kyrgyzstan in establishing an anti-drug service, which has not existed there previously. We are providing organizational and financial help.

How do you assess Kazakhstan’s presidency in the SCO? What new features have appeared? What innovations?

Kazakhstan has taken its presidency very scrupulously and

made it very saturated and intensive. The calendar for the past year was tightly scheduled, and all events were held impeccably, with an emphasis on organizational culture. The meetings and congresses enjoyed a wonderful friendly and business-like atmosphere, all contacts were very productive. I want to believe that the summit will also be held at a very high level.

Apart from the anniversary Declaration the summit will sign an Anti-drug strategy, the name of which speaks for itself. Another step in Astana will be a Memorandum that will serve as a mechanism to admit new members to the organization. Actually, it completes work on the legal framework for the expansion. It should also be mentioned that Kazakhstan, with participation of other countries, has for the first time prepared videos about the SCO’s life and activities to be shown on the backstage of the summit. It is a vivid and informative documentary able to enrich the PR element the SCO needs so badly. We have also issued a commemorative anniversary coin and a stamp for the summit.

Speaking of Russia, is the extent of its involvement in the SCO sufficient?

It is difficult to give an unequivocal assessment. It would be more accurate to say we work as we can. In some areas, we

There are certain doubts about the pace of the expansion. But we are moving forward quite orderly.

act very precisely and efficiently. I can point to the example of the customs group, which in the SCO is headed by a Russian representative. We have managed to do a lot in this direction. At present, the Russian Finance Ministry is actively promoting the concept of a mechanism for launching joint economic projects. Our financiers are willing to invest in these projects at the early stage in order for other investors to join in later.

Recalling Russia’s presidency in the SCO in 2009, I believe Russia’s initiative then played an important role and became kind of an example for others. We for the first time rationally and meticulously planned the entire program of joint activities for the year and this approach has now become a norm for other SCO presidents.

The Russian party came up with a number of initiatives, for example, to launch SCO cooperation in the sanitary and epidemiological sphere, which gained everyone’s support. At the same time, another area of cooperation emerged, it was between interior ministries.

Following suit, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan during their presidencies brought their own identities and their initiatives to programs of interaction. Each time, it contributed to a more efficient and harmonious work, bringing cooperation within the organization to a new level.

A photograph showing two men in dark blue suits and ties standing in front of a row of flags. The man on the left is older with grey hair, and the man on the right is younger with dark hair. They are both smiling and looking at each other. Behind them are several flags on poles, including the SCO flag and national flags of member states like China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan.

SCO GOAL: LEADERS' CLUB OR SERIOUS INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM?

Alexander Lukin, head of the East Asia and SCO Research Center, the International Research Institute, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO).

This year, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will celebrate its tenth anniversary. Since its emergence, the SCO has turned into an active and respected regional organization, with many countries showing their interest in it. It has achieved significant success in coordinating the efforts of its member states to ensure regional security. They cooperate in the military sphere, conduct multilateral antiterrorist exercises; their special services exchange sensitive information, coordinate a joint list of terrorist organizations and together fight drug trafficking. There are some achievements in such areas of cooperation as the economy, culture and education, although they are fewer.

At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that today sets new tasks for the organization. Its fate depends on whether it is able to respond

to current challenges and cope with existing problems, overhauling its work. In fact, the question the SCO is facing today is whether it will be developing as a club of leaders and ministers, where there is little real work done between meetings and high-profile statements or it will be able to become a serious international mechanism active in all spheres and with an influence comparable to that of such "big brothers" as ASEAN or APEC, or perhaps, even exceeding theirs.

PROBLEM OF SCO'S EXPANSION

Until recently, all members of the SCO and most experts believed that the number of its participants should not be increased for the time being, since it should first be established as it is, set straight its mechanisms and gain experience. There was an unspoken agree-

ment not to admit new members. It was unspoken because, in fact, it contradicted the SCO Charter, which declared that the organization was open.

Meanwhile, interest in the SCO in the world was growing. In 2006, Pakistan, which had the status of an observer, applied for accession as a full member. Another observer, Iran, followed suit in 2007 and 2008. In 2010, yet another observer, India, said it wanted to become a full member.

The meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council in Tashkent in June 2010 endorsed the Resolution on the procedure of admitting new members. The document clearly sets criteria a new member should meet.

The SCO summit in Astana is expected to adopt a standard memorandum, which will be the last step in creating the official framework for accepting

new members. After that, it will be difficult to reject aspirants, citing the absence of necessary documents.

Russia's position is related to its active support to India as a candidate for a full member in the SCO. It was spelled out in a joint Russian-Indian declaration on expanding strategic partnership, which was signed by the two countries' leaders during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's official visit to Russia upon invitation from President Dmitry Medvedev in December 2009.

Admission of such a big and generally successfully developing country as India would seriously increase the SCO's international authority and influence. The great power's international weight and scale would contribute to making the SCO the world's biggest international organization for the aggregate population of its members after the United Nations. It would significantly increase its political weight and economic attractiveness among developing countries, since the successful Chinese development model would be supplemented with the Indian one, which is perhaps no less successful.

It would also assist in resolving a number of problems the organization is facing. One of the SCO's main goals is

oriented towards the domestic market and has shown its advantages during the latest global crisis, could supplement other attractive development models of the SCO member states.

India's admission would seriously contribute to stabilizing the situation and accelerating economic development of Central Asian states. India has a long history of relations with the region. There was time when Central Asia, Afghanistan and northern parts of India were within one state. Today, India continues developing active trade and economic ties with Central Asia and makes solid investment here. Strengthening of its economic position in the region would not contradict the interests of other SCO members, but would serve the common purpose - the region's economic development, simultaneously balancing the growing economic influence of the West, especially, of the European Union.

India could make a big contribution to the SCO's efforts to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan and to resolve related problems. It has already invested over \$1 billion in Afghanistan reconstruction projects and could seriously support the SCO programs seeking to stabilize the Afghan economy.

all these problems can be resolved. Most probably, India will have a quota in the SCO's permanent bodies that will be equal to those of Russia and China, but it will also contribute a corresponding sum to the organization's budget.

On a broader scale, Russia and China that are seen as the SCO's leaders simply because of their size, will of course have to share their influence in the organization. But this requires a strategic decision. What is more important, one's own influence within the SCO or the growth of the organization's influence in the world? It would seem that the latter is much more important.

This was the train of thought followed by the most influential international alliances - NATO, EU and ASEAN - when deciding on expansion. Their expansions did bring about some problems, with bureaucracy increasing, the consensus being more difficult to achieve when making decisions, the level of manageability and pace of decision-making somewhat declining. The balance of forces within the organizations also changed, sometimes not in favor of their founders. Nevertheless, positive results surpassed the negative ones.

Similarly, admission of Pakistan, which officially applied for the SCO entry before India, should be welcome as well. Of course, its economic role within the SCO would not be as big as that of India. However, Pakistan is playing a key part in regulating the situation in Afghanistan and has a significant economic and political influence in the region.

Of course, bringing Indian-Pakistani disagreements to the SCO would be a challenge for the young organization. At the same time, it should be remembered that both India and Pakistan are members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which doesn't hinder its functioning.

Recently, the SCO has been actively involved in resolving problems related to Afghanistan. Naturally, these problems can hardly be considered without embracing Afghanistan itself. In this connection, it seems that the existing mechanism of the SCO - Afghanistan

Since its emergence, the SCO has turned into an active and respected regional organization, with many countries showing their interest in it.

to intensify cooperation in Central Asia. Russia actively cooperates with China within the SCO in achieving these goals, with Beijing acknowledging Russia's traditional interests in the region, and Moscow welcoming China's stabilizing economic presence.

India's interests in Central Asia fully coincide with those of the SCO member states, and its development goals are quite in line with the organization's tasks. India is a secular state that is actively fighting ethnic nationalism, separatism and religious extremism. It has experienced the threat of terrorism. In recent decades, India has been successfully developing its economy, and its unique economic model, which is ori-

At present, the country most opposed to India's admission to the SCO is China. It cites a number of arguments, first of all, that the fairly young SCO, after admitting such a large country, will face numerous organizational problems that will be difficult to resolve, its appearance will change drastically, and the decision-making process, which is already not easy, will become even more difficult. In the past, Russia agreed to this argument, by the way, but later reconsidered its position.

Overall, this is all true. Indeed, the organization will have to introduce a third language - English - and expand the Secretariat, RCTS, etc. But, given India's significant financial potential,

contact group is no longer sufficient, and it is time to think of giving Afghanistan at least the status of an observer.

EXPANSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL REFORM

Opponents of the SCO's expansion often argue that the more members, the more difficult it is to manage the organization and the less efficient its staff. This is not always so. The SCO staff has been prone to insufficient efficiency from the very beginning and the organization's expansion, paradoxically, may create an incentive for its reform. Admission of new members will already mean serious changes, and these members will look at the organization of the permanent bodies from a fresh perspective.

What is the perceived problem of the SCO's permanent bodies, first of all, its Secretariat? The Secretariat based in Beijing is not exactly an independent body of an international organization, pursuing its own policy. It is a conglomerate of representatives of its member states, with each country's foreign ministry able to send or withdraw any employee there at any time. Naturally, such employees are subordinated more to their own foreign ministries, often represented by the national coordinator, than to the Secretary General. Any minor issue like a trip to an event in another country or appropriation of a small sum from the budget has to be coordinated with the Council of foreign ministers.

However, the experience of the most efficient international organizations (UN, EU, ASEAN, etc) shows that employees of their permanent bodies should be international officials, they should not depend on their countries' governments. The SCO Secretariat urgently needs a reform in this area. The following measures are required to achieve this: 1) the SCO Secretariat should be given the right to dispose of the organization's budget without consulting the Foreign Ministers Council or the member states' foreign ministries; 2) all positions within the Secretariat should be filled on a competitive basis.

A special commission should be set up for this purpose. A contract with a person employed this way should be subject to cancelling only by the Secretariat as the employer if it is not satisfied with the worker, not by the desire of a member state's foreign ministry.

Another relevant organizational issue is the reform of the decision-making process. Already today, the formal understanding of consensus allows Uzbekistan to actually block cooperation in the economic and cultural spheres. Tashkent flatly refuses to participate in educational programs (notably, the SCO University) and in the SCO Youth Council. Of course, the positions of all SCO member states should be respected, but on the other hand, the lack of interest in joint projects on the part of one member, should not block the possibil-

eration within the SCO and to launch multilateral projects.

The main reason for stalled economic cooperation is the absence of a mechanism to finance multilateral projects. The SCO's budget is too modest and it is not meant for these purposes. Talk about setting up a SCO Fund or a Development Bank has been going on for a long time, but it is yet to be set up. Russia suggests a Development Fund (a special account) as a mechanism to finance pre-project work, first of all in such sectors as energy, transportation and high technology. It implies that the implementation of these projects will be financed by the SCO Interbank Consortium. This position comes from the belief of some Russian ministries that in case a bank is set up, China, which has huge financial possibilities, will domi-



ity of cooperation between the rest. Here it is possible to learn from the experience of other international organizations. For example, the EU history shows that expansion results in gradual abolition of the principle of consensus.

EXPANSION AND ECONOMY

Economic cooperation is the weakest area of the SCO's activities. There are virtually no multilateral economic projects. President Medvedev pointed to the need to intensify economic cooperation within the SCO both at the Yekaterinburg summit in 2009 and at the Tashkent summit in 2010.

Involvement of such big economies as India and Pakistan could become an incentive to develop economic coop-

erate it, while Russia would prefer to actively use the Eurasian Development Bank that was set up within the Eurasec and where Russia's share is significantly higher than that of other participants.

This position seems short-sighted. A SCO bank with China's participation would have far more financial possibilities than the Eurasian Development Bank (where the only other active member besides Russia is Kazakhstan), and part of its funds could go to projects in Russia. It seems that it is in Russia's interests to agree to the setup of a SCO Development Bank, making sure that China and Russia contribute equally to its capital (like they do to the SCO budget) and, consequently, have an equal number of votes.

ASTANA SUMMIT TO SUM UP TEN YEARS OF SCO ACTIVITIES

**PRESIDENT OF THE CHINA INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
QU XING GAVE AN INTERVIEW TO THE KAZINFORM NEWS AGENCY,
REPORTS THE WEBSITE OF KAZAKHSTAN'S PRESIDENCY IN THE SCO.**

What do you think of the SCO member states' activities in the sphere of international cooperation? What is the organization's role in maintaining regional security and stability?

In the last ten years, the SCO has become an influential, consolidated regional international organization. More and more countries are beginning to pay attention to the SCO. Based on the principle and spirit of openness, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has admitted Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran as observers and given the status of dialog partners to Belarus and Sri Lanka. Besides, the Resolution on admission of new members to the SCO, adopted at the organization's summit in Tashkent in 2010, laid down a legal framework for the observers and dialog partners, creating a prospect for them to become full members.

Today, however, the terms of admitting new members to the organization are not fully developed and are not sufficient. As a young international structure, the SCO is facing numerous problems. Notably, it has to adjust to the changing geopolitical and economic situation in Central Asia and in the entire world. It needs to be clearly aware of any developments.

The SCO is paying close attention to cooperation with the international community. Its member states have done a lot to cooperate with the observers and dialog partners in the security, economy and humanitarian sphere.

At the SCO summit in Tashkent, China's leader Hu Jintao said his country would support the organization's efforts to

expand cooperation with the observer countries, which will give them an opportunity, for example, to play a more active part in anti-terrorism and anti-drug efforts and also to cooperate in the energy sector, transportation and the humanitarian sphere. All this will eventually contribute to the region's stability and development.

The SCO conducts an active dialog on the Afghanistan issue, as well as on security issues in Central and South Asia, via the existing mechanism of the SCO - Afghanistan contact group. Notably, the organization held an international conference on Afghanistan in Moscow in order to ensure regional stability and to resolve the Afghan issue. The event was attended by representatives of such international organizations as the United Nations, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the CIS, the EU and NATO. All of the above proves that the SCO plays an important and constructive part in maintaining regional stability.

What can you say about the quality of trade and economic cooperation within the SCO?

In the past ten years, trade and economic cooperation within the SCO has risen to a fairly high level. This is proved by the vigorous growth of trade between China and other member states, and also by the number of trade operations and the progress of investment projects. According to statistics provided by Kazakhstan, its trade with China has reached \$14.09 billion, making China one of its biggest trade partners. It is also necessary to mention the scale of



QU XING

President of the China Institute of International Studies

commerce development ensured by the Chinese-Kazakh international center of border cooperation Khorgos. I believe it can serve as an example for other countries in terms of developing cooperation in Central Asia. Of course, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's state visit to Beijing last February also contributed to further promoting fast development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The SCO member states have taken active efforts in jointly fighting the global economic crisis and have started implementing a plan of multilateral trade and economic cooperation within the SCO. The memorandum on cooperation in construction of the high-speed railway express Astana-Almaty, which was signed between China and Kazakhstan in February 2011, will further promote cooperation in the transport sector within the organization.

The SCO's main goals are to maintain long-term stability in the region, to ensure the prosperity of its people and to improve their living standards. These goals force the SCO member states to develop mutually beneficial cooperation for the sake of sustainable economic development.

This year, Astana will host the SCO's 10th anniversary summit. What is the role of Kazakhstan in establishing and developing the organization, in your opinion?

The SCO summit in Astana, which will sum up the results of the organization's ten-year activities, has a special significance. In the past ten years, the SCO has achieved significant success thanks to cooperation in maintaining regional security, improving economic development mechanisms and humanitarian exchange. Its achievements provide a solid foundation for a promising outlook. The organization has witnessed numerous events that have seriously changed the region, it plays an important and indispensable part in maintaining stability and developing economic cooperation in the region.

As a SCO member state and an influential country in Central Asia, Kazakhstan plays an active part in the SCO's development and in promotion of its ideas. We believe that the Astana summit, held at the historic moment of the organization's tenth anniversary, will be vivid and successful. Personally, I expect the summit to sum up and comprehensively analyze the SCO's history and to work out a worthy plan for the future.

KAZAKH PERIOD IN LIFE OF SCO YOUTH WING

At the previous summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held in Tashkent last June, presidency in the SCO was taken over by Astana, in compliance with the rotation principle. Changes happened to the SCO's youth wing as well, which was headed by Kazakhstan's representative Nurlan Uteshev. Upon request of the InfoSHOS web portal, Nurlan Uteshev answered the questions of editor-in-chief Tatiana Sinitsyna.



NURLAN UTESHEV
Kazakh public and political figure, leader of the Zhas Otan youth wing of the People's Democratic Party Nur Otan

Nurlan, your country is currently presiding in the SCO, and you are the leader of the youth wing of the organization that is broadly recognized in the world. What does this period mean to you? What was the main idea you became president of the SCO Youth Council with? How the Kazakh period in the SCO's life will be different, especially, for the youth wing?

The Zhas Otan youth wing, which together with the Youth Congress of Kazakhstan, represents the national component in the SCO Youth Council, is determined to live up to the task. All members of Zhas Otan were enthusiastic about heading the organization's youth division. Kazakhstan and its young people are shouldering a special responsibility, since this year the SCO will be celebrating its tenth anniversary.

The youth wing of Zhas Otan is an active promoter of the idea of Eurasian cooperation, including between young people. The latest international events initiated and held by our organization include the youth section of the 3rd Astana Economic Forum, which was titled "The Role and Place of Young People in Ensuring Sustainable Economic Growth in the Post-Crisis Period."

The forum was attended by over 3,000 people from 65 countries and resulted in adopted recommendations, "The Outline of the Post-Crisis World: the Astana Consensus."

Considering the goals the SCO Youth Council in Yekaterinburg set as it was founded, one can definitely say that our country has an extensive experience of fulfilling such tasks on the national scale. This includes assistance to developing efficient regional cooperation between youth organizations, involving young people in humanitarian projects, drafting plans of cultural exchange, athletic and educational events, and so on. My country was one of the first among the SCO member states to adopt a law on government youth policy, which envisages consistent work with young people in all spheres of life, economic, social, educational, political, cultural and athletic. Since the law was adopted, the government has launched a

The Zhas Otan youth wing is an active promoter of the idea of Eurasian cooperation, including between young people.

program to support young families, which works on a crucial task of providing housing to young people.

In order to increase the role of young people in implementation of humanitarian projects, the budget regularly allocates money for the social order, which finances youth organizations. The money is used to carry out educational, humanitarian and environmental projects. Zhas Otan's youth wing plays a very active part in drafting and implementing all enactments and state programs related to young people.

If last year in the life of the SCO Youth Council can be seen as the period of emergence and establishment, this year, the Youth Council presided over by Kazakhstan, should fully demonstrate its work ability and carry out all the plans that were announced.

Any leader is a priori a personality. You must be an energetic, strong-willed and creative person. What do you think are your strong qualities and do you have any weaknesses?

I think the main criterion of a personality is the ability to make decisions independently. In these terms, I should say that any member of the SCO Youth Council is a personality. The decision to join a youth organization, to be creative within it, to adopt an active social position in one's country is a move that requires personality. In this respect, youth organizations like Zhas Otan are the true forge shops of young leaders. Its activities have an internal core that allow them not to fear changes, to build relations within their teams, to motivate other members and to guide their activities. The essence of the experience received when working with young people turns into leadership.

I want to emphasize a very important individual quality both in myself and in the team that works with me, and it is loyalty to the common cause. It is because of it that Zhas Otan, which has over 170,000 members, has a common understanding about the goals and tasks to be fulfilled. An organization leader has to be able to make quick decisions, not to fear



difficulties, to find common language with the others and, definitely, to have a sense of humor, in order to sometimes relieve tensions. In the past, I was captain of the Kazakh national KVN (Club of the Funny and Inventive) team that played in the Supreme League, and I understand well the uniting role of humor in shaping a viable team.

As to my weaknesses, it is the inability to fit in the format of a 24-hour day, I have an eternal deficit of time, and I don't have free time at all, so I have to give up many things that are usual for a young man.

To pursue the topic, tell us a little about yourself: your origin, your education, how did you come to youth politics?

I was born and grew up in the southern capital of the country, Almaty. As to my origins, we pay significant attention to them. Every Kazakh must be able to name at least seven direct male ancestors, and I can do that at any moment. Respect to one's ancestors, to the elderly and to the historical fate that has led us to independence is in our blood.

I graduated from the Kazakh State Law University in Almaty. I actively and easily participated in the life of my alma mater. I still have very fond memories of that period of my life, and I appreciate the experience acquired when studying and working at the academy. It was at that time that the solid knowledge foundation was laid and the main methods and principles I stick to when working with my team were formed. Then began the period of active work in youth politics, first on the city and then on the national scale, when I became co-chairman of the Vybor Molodykh youth movement. Later, the Youth Congress of Kazakhstan was set up, which united all of the country's leading youth organizations. I had the honor to be elected the organization's executive director and, in January 2005, director of the youth policy department of the

Kazakh Education and Science Ministry. And I also want to mention May 14, 2008, when the first congress of the Zhas Otan youth wing took place, taking up numerous tasks on the national scale. It was then that I was elected its executive secretary.

In May 2009, I witnessed the birth of the youth wing of the SCO that took place in Yekaterinburg. It is impossible to forget the vivid impression of that moment: waves of young energy embraced the space, ideas were flowing, everyone was eager to work for the prosperity of the SCO. Do you think these attitudes sustain?

This attitude has not only sustained, it has grown significantly. After the setup of the SCO Youth Council, each of its national divisions conducted systematic work in their respective countries. As a result, the number of participants in organizations that joined the Youth Council has grown.

What we saw at the first congress of the SCO Youth Council in Yekaterinburg and at subsequent meetings is just a minor part of the mosaic the Youth Council really is. Go to any regional office of Zhas Otan, and you will get an idea about the work of our activists, about the quantity (and, of course, quality) of ideas that young people suggest for implementing as part of cooperation within the Youth Council. Being in regular contact with my peers from other SCO member states, I see that they also have this feeling of solidarity in their hearts.

What are the results of a little more than a year of the SCO Youth Council's existence? What do you think important?

Our organization has shown that it is not going to exist only nominally. So we are making a lot of effort to draft a common strategy for resolving young people's problems. In this past short period, we held meetings that discussed educating

personnel reserves in our countries, supporting young entrepreneurs, fighting drug addiction among young people, which is a painful topic, and finding the best ways of humanitarian cooperation within the Youth Council.

This year has shown that young people in our countries are able to cooperate on the foreign political arena with their own initiatives. We managed to find a common language at once, despite the differences in our cultural and historical traditions, and it is yet another proof that borders do not create barriers for young people to jointly solve their problems.



Besides, as I have already said, the setup of the SCO Youth Council gave an impulse to national organizations, because the possibility of efficient cultural and educational exchange gave rise to new thoughts and ideas and for creative thinking.

Kazakh young people, inspired by the success of the society, exude special energy (at least, this is the impression an outside observer gets), they are full of ideas, determined to improve the present and the future of their country. What is a generalized image of your peers?

The new generation is first of all willing to serve their Fatherland and to use their energy for its prosperity, this is certain. Our young people have great respect for history and adopt the best they can find in the language, culture and traditions of our ancestors, in the work of Kazakh classics, Abai, Shokarim, Ibrai Altynsarin. On the other hand, the new generation of Kazakhs is very ambitious and wants to be part of the modern world's trends.

One of the top priorities for young Kazakhs is getting quality education in order to be able to fulfill one's dreams and to bring the most value to one's country.

Today, the SCO is engaged in carrying out the very complicated idea of its own network university, with the pilot launch scheduled for September. How viable and rational do you think the idea of the common SCO education space is?

I believe the idea of the SCO Network University is perhaps the biggest and most unique educational project in Eurasia's history. All countries are facing the need to reconcile national traditions in education with global standards. In Europe, for example, the process of integration in the global education

market began in the 1980s and is now known as the Bologna Process.

In our countries, the problem of raising competitive specialists is also very acute.

Due to different standards in the education system, diplomas of the SCO member states may not be recognized in other countries, and graduates of local universities may be left on the curb when competing with their European and American peers. Besides, now, as integration in the SCO is progressing intensively, a need has arisen for specialists that could work in the united economy of the SCO member states.

The idea of the SCO University is very simple and I believe this simplicity is its key advantage.

A student may, for example, enter the Eurasian National University in Astana, continue education at the Moscow State University and then graduate from a university in China.

Besides, the SCO University will offer the most relevant professions that are in high demand in all of the SCO member states - those in the energy sector, IT technology, nano technology, environment and regional studies. This way, it will educate top-notch professionals that will be able to successfully compete on the labor market and create competent personnel reserves for the SCO countries.

Giovanni Marizza

DIALOG WITH SCO: ONLY DIALOG NATO LACKS

An article published by the Italian L'Occidentale argues that the NATO leaders should establish closer ties with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This interaction would help to resolve numerous problems on both regional and global scale.



NATO has come up with numerous successful initiatives that contributed to strengthening international stability and mutual trust between different geopolitical groups. Considering all these initiatives makes it possible to say that in international organizations, NATO never plays a secondary part in the dialog and cooperation with countries that are outside its geographic borders. This makes one wonder why Asia has been left out of these external initiatives.

Meanwhile, Asia plays an extremely important role. It is the only continent where the direct and indirect consequences of the second world conflict are still felt today (you can recall the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Indian-Pakistani conflict and the North Korean problem). Besides, it is the only continent where countries have challenged global security (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea). There is piracy on this continent and mass destruction arms are being distributed here. It also has some of the world's biggest energy sources (Central Asia and the Persian Gulf).

Although some areas of this continent are embraced by NATO's initiatives to some degree, the most important countries in Asia (India and China) are left out. In other words, the most interesting and potentially meaningful dialog is yet to be developed, for example, with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This direction seems highly promising.

It is important to emphasize that the organization is very active and dynamic. Its members include two permanent Security Council members - Russia and China - and two nuclear powers, while another two (India and Pakistan) have the status of an observer. Iran, with its nuclear program under way, can also be included in the list. The SCO's orbit embraces two countries with the world's biggest population (China and India), and they are also two of the fastest developing nations in the world. Three out of four BRIC countries (Russia, India and China) are the SCO members. The aggregate area of the SCO states is 38 million sq km. Their aggregate population is over 3 billion people, i.e. 60% of the world's population. All this shows that such an organization should not be underestimated.

A reason for a potential and desirable dialog between NATO and the SCO, apart from the fact that dialog is positive and productive by definition, is the fact that the SCO has de facto managed to become one of the most promising regional organizations. It is impossible to say that NATO and the SCO have little in common, because the membership of Russia and Central Asian states in the EAPS (the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council) testifies otherwise. With this respect, the points of view of the two organizations overlap territorially.

A dialog between the two cannot bring any damage, while it could yield certain benefits. It would be in line with the spirit and letter of Chapter 8 of the UN Charter, which encourages creation of regional and subregional organizations that can interact with each other and support each other for the purpose of common security. Mutual learning of the East and West, sincerity and trust in relations could be the result of this dialog. Another short- and medium-term result could be exchange of information on common threats, local and global, posed by terrorism and extremism, in order to improve Eurasian security. The long-term positive result of the dialog could be seen in a potential solution of the old problem of reforming the UN Security Council, which has to do with regional organizations and not with national governments.

Without going into much detail, let us say that there is a clear trend in geopolitics with the role of national governments slowly declining, while the importance of international organizations is growing. Indeed, a national government is trying to survive under the pressure of globalization, but it cannot avoid giving up more and more chunks of its sovereignty to international organizations. The proofs of this statement are common markets, free exchange zones, the single currency, the supremacy of the alliance legislation over national, multinational military forces, etc. This inescapable trend may bring about the day when international organizations will replace national governments in the Security Council, and this day may not be that far away.

Yet another advantage could be the development of a useful dialog on reducing traditional and nuclear arms in Asia in order to promote security and stability, these inalienable common values. It is true that the SCO does not deal with these problems seriously, but the advantage of a dialog in general and between NATO and the SCO in particular cannot be underestimated.

Finally, the last, but not the least, advantage of the NATO-SCO dialog could be an adequate resolution of the Afghanistan issue and an efficient strategy of getting out of this crisis. Russia and China are not the only SCO members deeply interested in ensuring stability around Afghanistan.

The latest meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has already sent a positive signal, with its member states declaring their willingness to cooperate with NATO on special projects related to the security of their borders with Afghanistan. It is a very promising message that should be taken up, because profound and structured cooperation between the alliance and the SCO is something we need already today.



DZHENISBEK DZHUMANBEKOV

Head of the executive committee of the SCO Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure, Lieutenant General

FIGHTING THREE EVILS

Ahead of the SCO's tenth anniversary summit, Head of the RCTS talks about its activities.

Q.: What areas are the RCTS's priorities?

A.: Priority for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has always been maintaining and reinforcing peace, ensuring security and stability in the region, first of all, by organizing joint efforts against terrorism, separatism and extremism, or fighting the three evils, as we call it.

At the Tashkent SCO summit on June 11, 2010, the leaders of the organization's member states once again emphasized that terrorism, separatism and extremism, drug trafficking, illegal immigration, human trafficking, information security, natural calamities and industrial accidents remain the biggest threats and challenges for the SCO.

Processes ongoing in the global community show that the existing range of threats to national security is, unfortunately, expanding.

In this connection, given the analysis of the situation and its developments during Kazakhstan's presidency in the SCO, anti-terrorist efforts within the SCO Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure will definitely be improved and will envisage further combining the member states' efforts in this direction. In order to strengthen the United Nations' central coordinating role in international counteraction to the terrorism threats, measures will be taken to ensure close interaction with other interested international and regional organizations, in order to create a broad network of partners to counteract the threat of terrorism. At present the RCTS is participating in drafting a plan of action to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia.



Q.: What events does your committee plan for the period of Kazakhstan's presidency in the SCO?

A.: The events to be organized as part of Kazakhstan's SCO presidency are envisaged by the SCO plan of action for 2010-2011, and its main provisions were taken into account in the RCTS Executive Committee's plan for 2011.

An international research and practical conference was held on the basis of the RCTS together with the Anti-terrorist Center of the CIS on April 13-14, 2011. Its theme was "Activities of terrorist organizations in the SCO and CIS, measures to ensure anti-terrorist security and sabotage protection of high-importance, restricted access and military facilities." Given the relevance of the issues on the agenda, we invited representatives of other bodies, researchers from the SCO and the CIS, and also from the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

In compliance with the RCTS plan of work for 2011, we assisted in coordinating the interaction between relevant bodies of the SCO member states in order to prepare and conduct a regular joint anti-terrorist exercise in China last May.

Implementing the SCO program for 2010-2011, the Kazakh party together with the SCO Secretariat and RCTS conducted an international research and practical conference in Almaty on February 22-23, 2011, titled "Ten years along the road of security and cooperation. Successful experience of counteracting modern threats and challenges in the SCO." The main goal was to overview the organization's security activities since its emergence and to discuss the prospects of its future development. The conference worked out proposals and recommendations for the draft Astana declaration that is to be adopted at the SCO summit.

Q.: How are preparations for the forthcoming anniversary summit in Astana progressing?

A.: As I have already said, the international research and practical conference "Ten years along the road of security and cooperation," the main goal of which was to overview the organization's security activities over the ten years of its existence and to discuss the prospects of its further development, was one of the key preparatory events preceding the SCO anniversary summit. The RCTS has also held a Council meeting and a photo exhibition, issued a collection of fundamental documents related to fighting the three evils, an anniversary booklet devoted to the RCTS activities, etc.

Q.: Could you tell us about the main documents that will be discussed at the forthcoming SCO summit in Kazakhstan?

A.: At the anniversary summit in Astana, heads of SCO member states will consider and sign a number of documents. The adoption of the SCO Anti-drug Strategy for 2011-2016 will have a huge importance for counteracting terrorism financing in the RCTS activities.

In order to implement the Program of cooperation of the SCO member states in fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism for 2010-2012, the executive committee signed a protocol on cooperation between the RCTS and the Central Asian regional information coordination center to fight trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors in Almaty in September 2010. Besides, we are coordinating a protocol on cooperation between the RCTS and the UNODC Central Asia (the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for Central Asia).

The forthcoming summit will consider the Report of the Council of the SCO Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure to the SCO Heads of State Council on the RCTS's activities in 2010, which is devoted to our achievements last year and major prospects.

How is interaction organized between the SCO RCTS and international organizations?

A.: The SCO summits have repeatedly drawn attention to the need to establish close interaction with countries that have the status of an observer or a dialog partner, and also with other interested international organizations in order to build a broad network of partners to counteract present-day global threats and challenges, among which terrorism holds the first place.

In compliance with the Program of cooperation between the SCO member states in fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism for 2010-2012 and in order to reinforce and develop ties related to counteraction to terrorism, an RCTS delegation visited Pakistan and India, both SCO observers, where it held meetings and talks with representatives of these countries' structures fighting the three evils. They discussed joint efforts against international terrorist organizations.

As I have already said, close contacts have been established between the RCTS and the Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Center, and a protocol on cooperation has been signed. The document defines such forms of interaction as information exchange and joint activities, creating a consulting mechanism for problems that are of mutual interest, and so on.

The RCTS is actively developing interaction and coordinating the possibility of signing similar documents on cooperation with the UNODC Central Asia and the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee.

We have held talks with the Anti-terrorist division of the OSCE Secretariat, reaching an agreement on mutual invitations to international conferences and seminars devoted to this issue and on studying the EU experience in bringing to justice those responsible for public provocations and propaganda of terrorism; on mutual legal assistance and extradition of offenders in crimes related to terrorism; on

using mechanisms of preventing, controlling and eliminating terrorism financing by ensuring quick access to financial information.

In compliance with the memorandum of understanding between the SCO and ASEAN Secretariats, which names regional security among key areas of interaction, I held a meeting in Tashkent with Sayakane Sisouvong, ASEAN Deputy Secretary General for ASEAN Political and Security Community. We discussed issues of establishing contacts and prospects and forms of cooperation.

In February 2011, we went with a working visit to Semarang, Indonesia, and held meetings with the leaders of the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation, the director of the ASEAN Secretariat's Political and Security Community and also with the head of the Indonesian National Agency for Terrorism Prevention.

During the meetings, we exchanged opinions on preparing the legal framework to develop bilateral cooperation, create an efficient strategy to counteract terrorism and neutralize factors and conditions that radicalize the population and other aspects of regional and international security.

On February 21, 2011, ahead of the international research and practical conference devoted to the SCO's tenth anniversary, I had a working meeting in Astana with the executive director of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICMA). We discussed the possibility of signing a protocol of intention related to anti-terrorist efforts, forms and areas of interaction between the two organizations and holding a joint event devoted to fighting current threats and challenges in the CICMA and the SCO.

As you can see, work is under way, but there is still a lot to be done.

**TAHA TAHERI**

*Deputy Secretary General of
the Anti-Drug Headquarters
of Iran*

How serious is the drug threat to your country?

Iran has long borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan. From there, drugs are smuggled to my country and then transferred abroad. My country seriously fights this smuggling. Over 30 years, we have lost 3,700 law enforcement offices in this fight. Almost 12,000 were disabled. On the other hand, we have had serious achievements. Notably, 90% of opium confiscated in the world was deterred in Iran. But the number of drug addicts is growing. We currently have about 1.5 million of drug addicts.

Is Iran satisfied with the moves of the NATO forces in Afghanistan in relation to anti-drug efforts?

Every year, Iran confiscates more and more opium from Afghanistan. We have a question: with almost 200,000 NATO servicemen in Afghanistan, how is it possible to produce and smuggle almost 8,000 metric tons of opium a year? The equipment in opium-producing labs is being modernized. We are very concerned about the trend.

Afghan peasants should have an alternative to growing poppy. To do so, it is necessary to use those significant sums that come to Afghanistan for its economic recovery and fight against drug production. Besides, Western countries should purchase agricultural produce of Afghan peasants. For example, isn't it possible to organize serious imports of Afghan fruits? The strategy of the West is incorrect, if there is one at all.

“DRUG ADDICTION DOESN'T RECOGNIZE ANY RELIGION”

*says Taha Taheri, Deputy Secretary General of
the Anti-Drug Headquarters of Iran. Journalist
Boris Kaimakov talked to him in Moscow.*

Are there plantations to grow raw materials for drug substances in Iran?

No, there are none.

How can you explain the fact that drug consumption in Iran, which is a Muslim country, has become a national threat?

Drug addiction doesn't recognize any ideology or any religion. It is a bad habit, a disease. Those who make money on it are people of very different religions. There are mafia structures everywhere, both in Iran and in European countries. They do not care who will become a drug addict, a Muslim or a Christian. But I think that religious beliefs can influence a young person and prevent him from giving in to a bad habit.



Does practice prove your opinion?

In Iran, we view drug addiction as a disease, not as a crime. A young person develops a bad habit under certain circumstances. It is sad, and we treat such people. We have an extensive experience. The first thing that needs to be done is to change a patient's way of thinking. And we are willing to share our experience with interested countries, because we have serious medical know-how.

What is the government strategy in fighting this evil?

Iran has developed a concept for fighting drug addiction. It is called the Balance Strategy. Its idea is to reduce both supply and demand. That is, we should pursue a policy that will not create a temptation to grow, produce and sell drugs in the country. Secondly, we need to toughly control borders against smugglers. Our spending on border control amounts to \$600 million annually.

But is it possible to make the border impenetrable?

We are building fences along our entire border with Afghanistan. We are also building borders with Pakistan, and it's been a year since we have been building fortifications on the border with Turkey. Trespassing cement walls and check points on the border are quite difficult; besides, there are deep trenches dug out. Last year, we lost 78 border guards in combat operations against smugglers on the Afghan border alone.

How are the offenders punished?

With long prison sentences and also death sentences. The latter is for mafia chiefs and smugglers' leaders. It is also applied to foreign citizens. We do not make any allowances for them. There is almost no corruption among officials, because they can also be subjected to tough punishment.

Drug trafficking brings serious earnings to terrorists. What can be said in this respect with view to Iran?

This is not typical for my country. But we cannot conduct operative work in Pakistan and Afghanistan, so we believe that these moves should be more closely coordinated with our colleagues. To do so, we have set up a trilateral commission with representatives of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its headquarters is in Tehran. Our specialized divisions took part in joint operations with Afghan and Pakistani structures last year. Iran currently chairs the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Do you coordinate your efforts with Russia?

Russia is an important market for drug dealers. According to our information, it annually consumes 70 metric tons of heroin. The bulk of drugs come to Russia via Tajikistan. And we have a mutual understanding with Moscow that it is necessary to control drug routes more toughly. We have had a number of successful joint operations. And we have a plan of action.



“ENDURING FREEDOM”: CRISIS OF TRUST

Pyotr Goncharov, political commentator

The United States and NATO today are suffering a crisis of trust in Afghanistan not only on the part of Afghan civilians, but also on the part of the significant share of the international community. This makes them act. The US Congress has demanded that withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan should start immediately. The military campaign under the beautiful name of “Enduring Freedom” has suddenly entered its decisive stage.

The bill on US forces withdrawal from Afghanistan was initiated by Dennis Kucinich, an influential representative of the Democratic Party, participant of two presidential races. What are the chances of the project that changes Washington’s policy in Afghanistan, better known as Obama’s new strategy?

The Congressman made several arguments in favor of immediate withdrawal. In his opinion, ex president George W. Bush and incumbent president Barack Obama violated the War Powers Resolution of 1973, because they did not get a clear agreement of the Congress for escalation of military action in Afghanistan. Simultaneously, he demands that the opinion of American citizens should be taken into account, and 60% of them want the US to leave Afghanistan.

No wonder that sentiments in favor of ending the operation in Afghanistan

are growing stronger in America: losses continue. Moreover, they are growing with every year. Last year, 2010, was the bloodiest for the international coalition, with 711 soldiers and officers killed, as opposed to 521 in 2009. In 2008, losses were even smaller. Moreover, the bulk of the losses is incurred on the American forces. The statistics is as follows: out of 711 people killed in 2010, over 400 were American soldiers; and out of 521 killed in 2009, 317 were from the US forces.

The reality is such that everyone expects the intensity of combat to increase this year. This means that losses will grow as well. And there is no end in sight for the epic with the beautiful name.

Given all this, it seems that the bill requiring immediate withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan is guaranteed to succeed. Nevertheless, it stands no chance of being passed. Even if the Congress votes for it, which is unlikely, the president will not sign it, and the high brass will be strongly opposed to it, too.

US President Barack Obama has two strategies in Afghanistan: one is for US voters and the other is the real one. Under the former, which was endorsed by the Congress, Obama promises to bring US soldiers back home in 2014. Under the latter, it is unlikely to happen. The endorsed strategy envisages

that the withdrawal will start in July 2011 at the latest and end in 2014. Now, however, there are some reservations. The most important thing, of course, is to start the withdrawal. But its completion will depend on the circumstances. This is something US and NATO generals insist on.

It is a truism that war is started by politicians and lost by generals. This time, however, the US and NATO high brass have decided not to stick to the tradition, even if their position will disavow the declared policy of their heads of state and government.

Notably, General David Petraeus, Commander of the US Forces Afghanistan, says the timeframe of the final withdrawal should be determined based on the real situation. His position is supported by General David Richards, Chief of Britain’s Defense Staff, and Britain is America’s main ally in the Afghan campaign. The chiefs of the German Bundeswehr agree, having delegated to the ISAF the third biggest force after the US and Britain. This opinion is also shared by NATO leaders in general.

In order for the US and NATO to be able to leave Afghanistan (at all, not just in 2014), they need to resolve just two problems. The first one is to create and reinforce institutions of power and to expand the power of the center to provinces. The other one is to create

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a viable national army, police and security forces and then gradually transfer territories to their control.

So what do the generals doubt when they talk about the “real situation” in Afghanistan? They doubt one thing, the time-frame. The stated goals obviously cannot be achieved within the stated deadline.

The country still does not have a clear strategy of national security, and bodies of power are obviously weak. The central authorities that do not have the necessary power create a vacuum of local authorities at the level below administrative centers of provinces, which Talibs take advantage of. Desertion is widespread in the army and the police, and these two structures are getting dangerously politicized. All this together seriously hinders NATO and Afghan security forces from imposing their initiative on the Talibs and stabilizing the situation.

The situation in Afghanistan is far from appeasement also due to the high degree of polarization of the society, and the high level of the terrorism threat coming from the country poses a real danger for the entire region. This alone makes the announced deadline for the coalition’s withdrawal more than doubtful.

So the generals are most likely right when they say that the United States and NATO are unlikely to prepare the replacement for themselves in Afghanistan by 2014. But it will still be up to politicians to make the decision on withdrawal: after all, it was they who made the decision on military aid to Afghanistan some time ago.

Obviously, the US and NATO are suffering a crisis of trust in Afghanistan not only on the part of Afghan civilians (the war NATO is waging against the Talibs does nothing to improve ordinary people’s lives). There is also a crisis of trust on the part of the significant share of the international community. But even this does not mean that the US president and his administration are facing the dilemma: to leave or to stay.



ADILBEK DZHAKSYBEKOV

Kazakh statesman and defense minister, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Russia

By Andrei Vasilyev

KAZAKHSTAN-RUSSIA: FORMULA OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY

The balance of forces and consideration of mutual interests are the natural foundation of any security system. Defense Minister of Kazakhstan Adilbek Dzhaksybekov talks about the role of the SCO and CSTO in its building, about military and technical cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan and about today's Day of the Kazakh Military.

Our fathers and grandfathers that fought together in World War II laid the foundation for the comradeship of the Russian and Kazakh military...

On May 7, Kazakhstan celebrates the Day of Fatherland's Defender, and on May 9, the Victory Day. Symbolically, these two holidays are close, like Kazakhstan and Russia have been and will always be. The 65th anniversary of the Victory in World War II is of huge importance for us. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has said in this context, "We must demonstrate that there should be no reconsidering of the results of the war, when our fathers and grandfathers laid down their lives for our independence, for all of us." Out of 6.2 million people that lived in Kazakhstan in 1941, 1.2 million were drafted. A majority of them went to the army as reinforcement, and about one third went to formations and units that were set up in the republic. These were

Muscovites will never forget the heroic deed of the soldiers and officers from General Panfilov's division that defended the capital. Their deed will remain a legend...

I am very glad that recently the name of one of Panfilov's warriors, Hero of the Soviet Union Bauyrzhan Momyshula has been given to Moscow school No. 229. Under Rzhev, where the 100th and 101st separate Kazakh national rifle brigades fought, a monument to our fellow countrymen is being erected. This is the little we can and must do to commemorate their deeds.

The tradition of military friendship is maintained by grandchildren of those who fought together in World War II. Our countries' leaders have repeatedly pointed to the high level of Russian-Kazakh military and technical cooperation at their meetings.

facilities, interaction in protecting external borders, military and technical, military and economic, and research cooperation, cooperation in space exploration. In order to practice joint action, we regularly organize exercise, both within the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and on the bilateral basis.

Last year, a new abbreviation emerged in the language of the military, diplomats and politicians, CRRF, the Collective Rapid Response Force...

The emergence of the CRRF was the logical result of the ideas the CSTO had been based on. Let me recall that the CSTO has existed since 2002. A year before that, it was decided to set up a Collective Rapid Response Force for the Central Asian region. Its goals were quite ambitious: to maintain international peace and security, to localize armed



12 rifle and four cavalry divisions, seven rifle brigades and about 50 separate regiments and battalions. Three cavalry divisions and two rifle brigades were set up as Kazakh national formations. Out of those who went to the front, every second person was killed! As many as 497 people were awarded the title of the Hero of the Soviet Union.

Our relations are based on the principles of trust and maximum transparency. Kazakhstan is Russia's key partner in Central Asia and has become the first country in the CIS to sign the agreement on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance with Russia in May 1992. In the years that have passed, the law enforcement agencies of our countries have established strong ties, which include training of military personnel, joint use of military

and border conflicts, to prevent terrorist attacks, to counteract drug trafficking, to manage the consequences of natural calamities and industrial accidents. But they were unable to do it efficiently. I think leaders of the CSTO member states were fully aware of these problems. Nevertheless, they were in no hurry to start the discussion. The issue was so delicate that many preferred the status quo to any changes.

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Still, in December 2008, at an informal meeting of the presidents of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan in Borovoye, the issue was raised.

It was the initiative of Nursultan Nazarbayev to set up the CRRF. It was supported by other heads of state. Dmitry Medvedev showed a special understanding. In this connection, I want to emphasize that Astana and Moscow have always correctly estimated the scale and nature of challenges we are facing today. Because of that, Kazakhstan and Russia demonstrate the most responsible approach to problems, trying first of all to ensure practical interaction in the military sphere. Since common interest and mutual understanding dominate the two countries' relations, they inevitably resolve security issues together. In general, Kazakhstan and Russia again undertook the role of the engines of integration processes, as has often been the case.

They move with a different speed. But, judging by the speed of implementing the Kazakh president's proposal, this time everyone understood the relevance of setting up the CRRF.

Exactly. Already in February 2009, at the CSTO summit, the general decision on setting up the Collective Rapid Response Force was taken. As Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said at the time, "it will be serious formations, of a sufficient size, with state-of-the-art equipment and efficient. Their combat potential should not be lower than that of the North Atlantic alliance."

What forces will this comradeship in arms have in the end?

Well, we are nowhere near the end yet. The CRRF is a live and growing organism. The bulk of it will consist of the Russian military, an airborne division and an air assault brigade. Kazakhstan is represented by an air assault brigade, and other allies by a battalion each. Overall, the CRRF will have up to 20,000 servicemen from military formations equipped with compatible and cutting-edge weapons and equipment. These are the best units that have been tested in combat.

How does this strengthening of the military might correspond to reinforcing stability and security in the world, the main goal of Kazakhstan's presidency in the OSCE?

The cannons of Frederick the Great bore the inscription, "The king's last argument." Sometimes, the high combat readiness of the troops is indeed the best argument in diplomats' talks about preserving peace.



How ready are the Kazakh Armed Forces to use these arguments?

Last year, we completed shaping of the commanding structures of the troops. Today it is divided into three spheres of their deployment, land (the ground forces), air (the Air Force) and sea (the Navy). We have actually resolved one of the priority tasks, and that is strengthening of our combat ready units. Today, their manning level is 94% and equipment level is 100%. At the end of last year, foreign experts noted, "The Armed Forces of Kazakhstan is today one of the top three leading armies among post-Soviet republics and is definitely the best in Central Asia."

In 2010, the armed forces of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's member states held an anti-terrorist command-staff exercise, Peace Mission 2010.

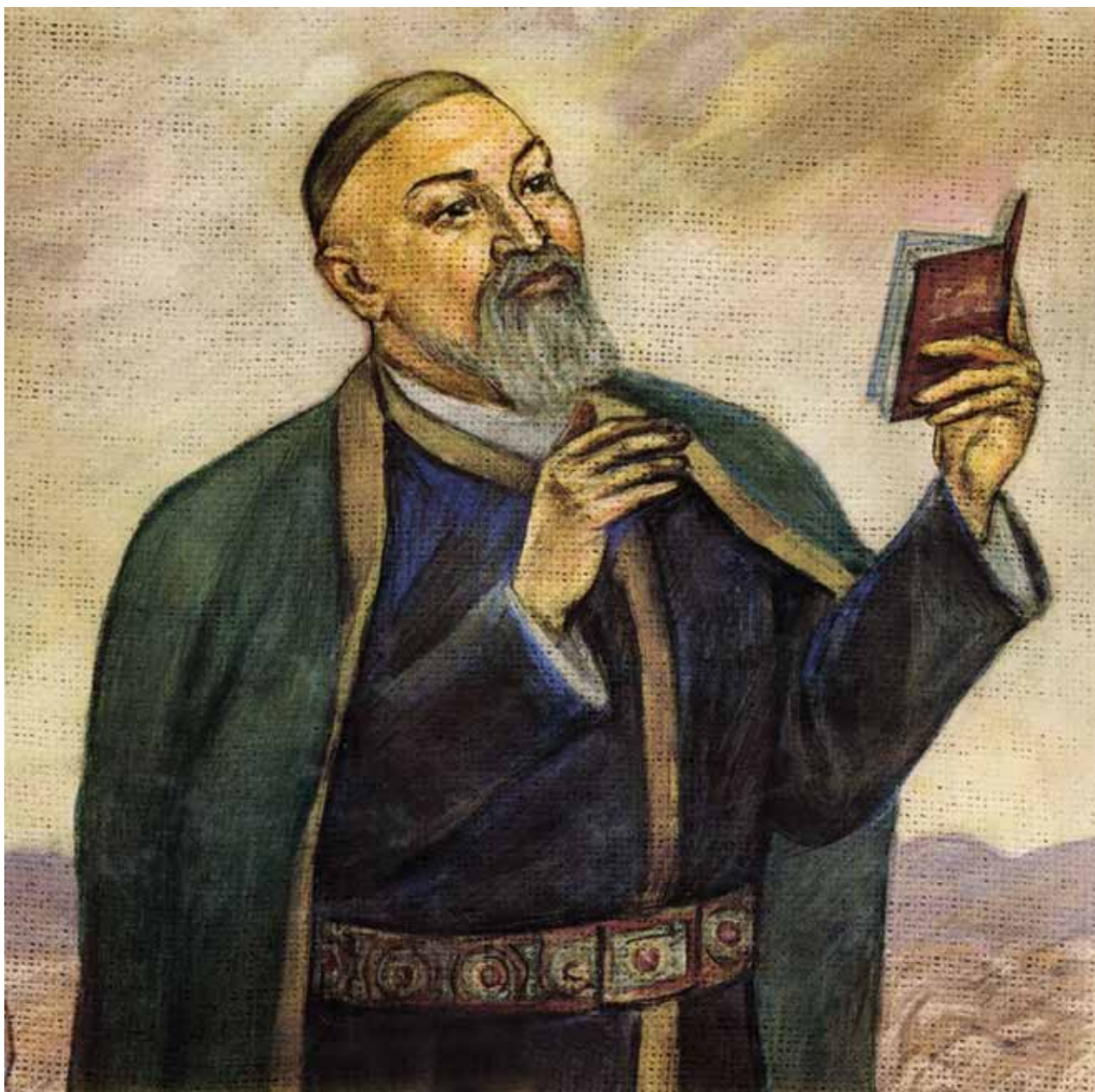
It took place in September in Kazakhstan. It was the third large-scale exercise within the organization. Similar maneuvers took place on the Taonan testing ground in northwest China in 2009, on the Chebarkulsky testing ground in Rus-

sia in 2007 and on the Shandong peninsula and in the Yellow Sea in China in 2005. The bulk of those exercises was conducted by the Russian and Chinese military and navy with participation of their tactical and strategic aviation. This time, Kazakh formations and units played an important part in the maneuvers. Russia, Kazakhstan and China each delegated 1,000 servicemen for taking part in the exercise.

The troops practices waging war in the Central Asian theater of operations, in the desert and mountainous desert. The joint exercise involved army, front-line and transport aviation. Russian and Chinese army aviation was deployed at the Kazakh aerodrome Atar. Russia's front-line and transport aviation was deployed at the Russian military base Kant, while Chinese front-line and transport aviation fulfilled their tasks from a Chinese aerodrome.

What tasks were set for the participants of Peace Mission 2010?

The idea of the joint anti-terrorist command-staff exercise of the SCO member states came from a potential variant of an armed conflict. The task of carrying out a joint anti-terrorist operation was given to a united group of troops within the tactic forces from each SCO member. A fictitious military and political situation allowed the participants' Armed Forces to coordinate in practice all mechanisms of acting in potential conflicts. This accelerated taking a SCO decision on providing practical aid by the organization's member states.



Olga Bessonova

ABAI KUNANBAYEV: TITAN OF CULTURE, PROPHET OF HIS PEOPLE

Kazakh Abai Kunanbayev was a unique personality of his era, worthy of unlimited admiration. The first truly Eurasian enlightener, he opened broadest European horizons for his national culture. Russia remembers how much he did to bring the two cultures closer.

It was Abai Kunanbayev who translated into Kazakh Ivan Krylov's tales, Alexander Pushkin's novel in verse Eugene Onegin and Mikhail Lermontov's poems. There is no wonder the Kazakh thinker loved Russian literature. He got the "taste" of the Russian language early in his childhood, going not only to a madrasah, but to a Russian school as well.

The noble family lived in the Chingiz mountains, the Semipalatinsk region. The parents gave their son a broad education, which predetermined his Eurasian world view and the fate of a cultural reformer. He had the gift of seeing for many years ahead; it was no coincidence that his mother called him Abai, that is, "thoughtful". Kunanbayev's broadest mind had no restrictions or borders; in his native country, the poet popularized the world's cultural heritage, and it was he who imported the treasures of the world's spiritual culture to Kazakhstan.

But he was twice as grateful to the Russian culture. It was it that gave it the key to Western masterpieces. Later, Kunanbayev would translate into Kazakh the works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and George Gordon Byron, the two Western intellectual titans, two European “regents of dreams”. “Knowledge of a foreign language and culture makes a person equal with these people, he feels free and if the concerns and fight of these people are close to his heart, he will never stay away,” Kunanbayev used to say. Oriental culture is unthinkable without Ferdowsi, Nava’i, Nezami. These great poets and humanists, wise men who thought in beautiful metaphors, became the pride of the East, its spirit and conscience, its unsurpassable self expression. Abai Kunanbayev perceived himself as the heir of the great poets of the past since his youth. He started writing verses when still a child, and was to write almost 170 poems (including Masgud and The Tale of Azim) and to give verse writing a new energy, introducing new forms and meters.

Absorbing the spirit of oriental poetry, Kunanbayev simultaneously since early age was drawn to the refreshing sources of the Russian culture - Pushkin, Lermontov, Krylov, and was under the powerful influence of the Russian literature. The Kazakh poet was certain that Russian science and culture helped “to understand the world.” In fact, he would do for the Kazakh language what Pushkin did for Russian, giving it a new, free and richer sounding.

Russia’s cultural heritage will help “make the life of Kazakh people easier,” Kunanbayev used to say. He witnessed the difficulties of that life since childhood. His father, Kunanbai, was the senior sultan of a district administration and began training his son in administrative work as soon as he turned 13. This is how the head of a clan was raised. However, all kinds of litigations, inter-clan quarrels and conspiracies disappointed Abai, who took it all to heart. He found salvation in self-education, constant enlightenment, and he immersed in that desirable and holy element. At the age of 40, Abai realized with certainty that the meaning of his life was enlightenment, poetry and translation, popularization of Russian and European cultures.

The nature gave Kunanbayev so many talents that they would be sufficient for at least three people. He had a perfect ear for music and so he took up composing. Twenty of his melodies are performed even today. His most famous song is written to his own lyrics, “You are the pupil of my eye”. Here are these well-known lines:

*You are the pupil of my eye,
The fire of golden souls,
The heart will never forget the torture
Which has left it scarred...*

Kunanbayev’s love lyrics is piercing, ardent and at the same time subtle and exquisite; it was cosmopolite and Eurasian in its nature. In it, you could hear the echo of oriental poetry, the song of the Kazakh steppe and, simultaneously, the melody of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

*My soul will never bloom again,
Let the sun shine, let the moon rise.
You are the only one I love in this world,
And you have lost count of your lovers...*

Kunanbayev was a university of a human, like Russia’s Mikhail Lomonosov. He generously shared his knowledge, took part in setting up a local museum and attracted all enlightened people. Polish traveler and geographer Januszkiewicz wrote about him, “Kunanbayev... is a big celebrity in the steppe. The nature has given him the gift of common sense, amazing memory and good speech. He cares about the prosperity of his fellow countrymen, he has a good knowledge of the steppe law and Koran’s instructions; he knows all Russian provisions related to Kazakhs. This is a judge of incorruptible honesty and an impeccable Muslim... Kunanbayev has earned the fame of a prophet, and the young and the old, the rich and the poor come from the most distant villages to ask for his advice...”

The moral and political lessons Kunanbayev daily taught to his contemporaries were translated into the poetic language in his poem Black Word. In it, he ponders about morality, history, upbringing of the young and law. He thought that the five enemies of the humankind were “gossip, deceit, guile, laziness and prodigality,” and celebrated “consistency, labor, deep thinking, moderation and kindness.” As a true enlightener, he said the measure of truth was a man’s mind and insisted that scientific research could make men “all-powerful.”

In reality, however, his moral, political and scientific work was quite difficult. The rigidity of society always resists renewal and sticks to outdated social customs. Sometimes Kunanbayev was the victim of envy, there were intrigues and malice targeting him. Towards the end of his life, the fate struck a hard blow: his sons died. Broken with grief, he quietly faded away...

Abai Kunanbayev died in 1904 and was buried near his native Chingiz mountains.

Anatoliy Korolev

RUSSIAN INSPIRATION'S FIRST TRAVEL EASTWARDS

"Ruslan and Lyudmila" was Alexander Pushkin's first poem, through which the Russian public discovered him in 1820 and which made the young poet famous. For a long time, until the publication of his novel in verse Eugene Onegin, Pushkin was called the singer of Ruslan and Lyudmila. Never again in his ardent life was he to have such a unanimous and broad success with readers. судьбы.



The debutante's poem had a stunning success even by present-day standards. Publisher Nikolai Gnedin hardly delivered a new batch of the book from the printing office to the stores, as it was snatched up. Moreover, when the entire circulation was sold out, speculators rose the price, offering the poem at 25 roubles! And fans who could not afford it, began copying the book by hand, and that is several thousands of verses!

Pushkin was not going to have such a unanimous and broad success with readers till the end of his ardent life.

Meanwhile, this is a young genius's test of pen. The poet started composing the poem by fits and snaps when still at the Lyceum, at the age of 17, and completed it three years later, in 1820, when he was a 20-year-old official of the Foreign Ministry. He completed the draft, and then elaborated on separate parts in South Russia, at the beginning of his exile in Chisinau, after he had caused Emperor Alexander I's anger with his Ode to Liberty, which the czar interpreted as a call for regicide.

Over the past two centuries, the fame of Pushkin's first long poem has only increased, and thinking of its phenomenon today, makes one wonder. The story of Ruslan and Lyudmila is far from perfection, it has a lot of student naivety, some things are superfluous, some things are obviously off, the poet learns as he goes, but still the poem is so charmingly delightful, full of so much beauty, so ethereal and captivating that it is impossible not to fall in love with Pushkin's verse.

Most importantly, Pushkin freed our language from the bonds of church phraseology. Before him, poetry was expected to be pretentious and affected. Suddenly, the sun was out, the spring came, the ice broke up, and the rigid language transformed, becoming the language of Pushkin...

Ruslan and Lyudmila is the Russian inspiration's first travel eastwards.

At the time, Pushkin worshipped Byron and, selecting a plot for his epic poem, he looked at the Englishman's oriental poems. But a genius cannot be another genius's servant, and Pushkin turned his plot towards the Russian epos, our national fairy tales.

He dreamed of creating a heroic and romantic epic, something in the spirit of The Song of Roland, therefore filling up the void in the history of our literature. Well, his dream came true!

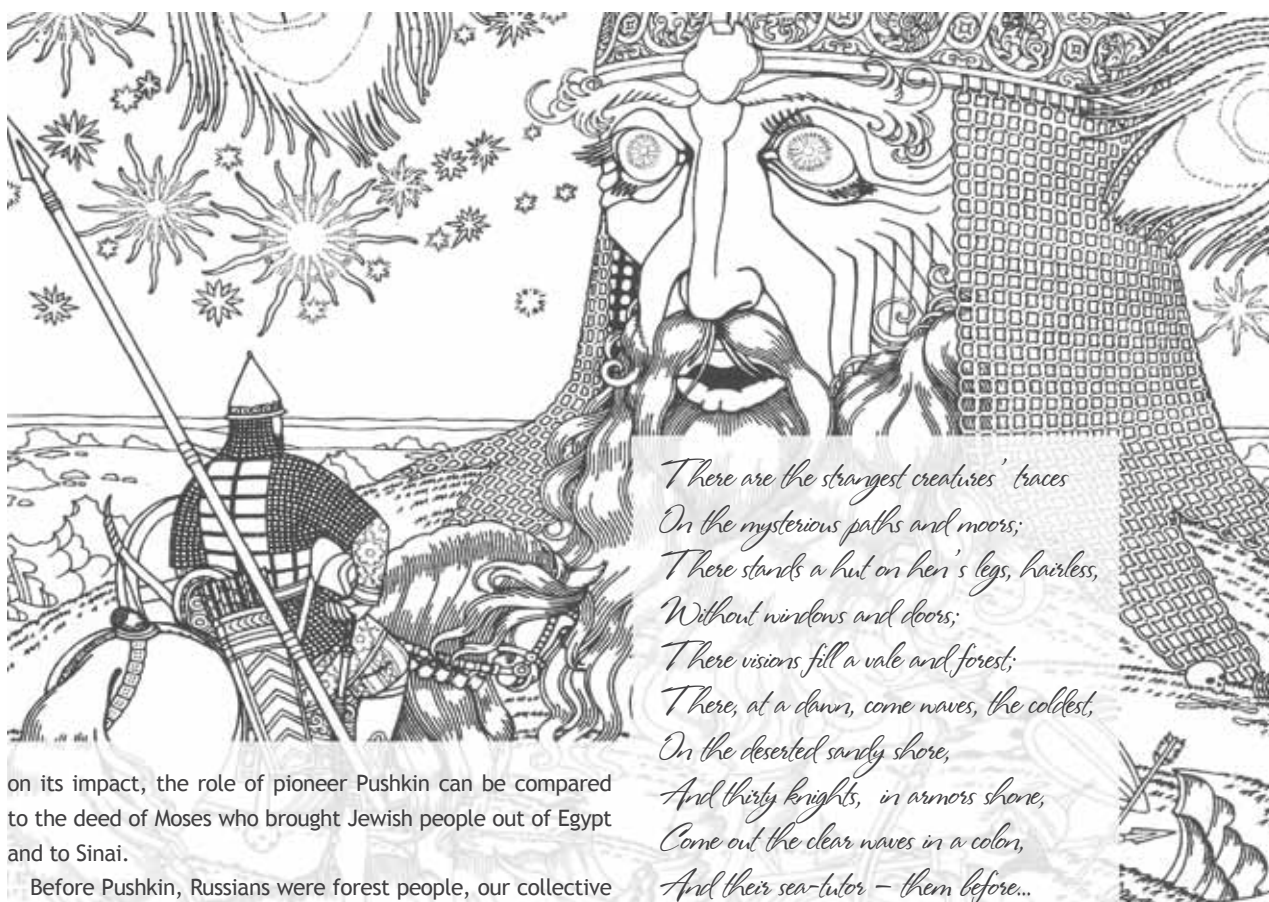
There is an intriguing secret in the poem, which should long have been disclosed.

The poem has a brilliant prologue, which all of us remember by heart since childhood.

*There's a green oak tree by the shores
Of the blue bay; on a gold chain,
The cat, learned in the fable stories,
Walks round the tree in ceaseless strain:
Moves to the right – a song it grows,
Moves to the left – it tells a tale...*

This prologue was written only three years after the first publication of the poem and was the result of the poet's travel in South Russia, first in the steppe, then along the seashore, and then at sea, along the Crimea peninsula towards the peaks of the Caucasus.

This prologue has become the flesh of our history. Pondering



on its impact, the role of pioneer Pushkin can be compared to the deed of Moses who brought Jewish people out of Egypt and to Sinai.

Before Pushkin, Russians were forest people, our collective unconscious, using Jung's terminology, knew nothing about the sea. The sea was far, far away, in a far way kingdom. Although Peter the Great's era brought the country to the Baltic Sea with the cannon smoke of battle, Russians took a subconscious dislike for the cold northern sea. The warm Black Sea, to which Russia got access after the endless and exhausting war with Turkey was a different thing.

Why was this piece of the coast so important to us? Because only here the Russian civilization finally met Hellas and the Balkans, the cradle of its religion, and got rid of the animal wilderness of the satyr forest. It was on this seacoast that Russia became part of the amazing Mediterranean culture, with its cult of harmony and proportion.

What cultural explosion was connected to the empire's southern borders! Pushkin's genius grew stronger in the southern exile, Lermontov's genius shaped in the south; it was in the Caucasus, in the village of Starogladkovskaya, that young Count Tolstoy created his first work, *Childhood*, and Chekhov was born in Taganrog at the sea. And there were also Valentin Katayev, Yuri Olesha, Eduard Bagritsky, Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov... a galaxy of Odessa talents that enriched the Russian culture during the Soviet era.

In short, travelling in the south for the first time, sailing around the Crimea, admiring the Caucasus, Pushkin intuitively felt the need to bring to these wild eastern expanses some Russian spirit and erected a formidable oak-tree on the sea-shore, the symbol of the endless forest, and with it, brought there the forest's invisible army of mermaids, satyrs, wolves and Baba-Yaga... In his poem, the Russian forest with its dark-

*There are the strangest creatures' traces
On the mysterious paths and moors;
There stands a hut on hen's legs, hairless,
Without windows and doors;
There visions fill a vale and forest;
There, at a dawn, come waves, the coldest,
On the deserted sandy shore,
And thirty knights, in armors shone,
Come out the clear waves in a column,
And their sea-lutor – them before...*

ness went out in the sun, to the longed-for shore of a warm sea.

Pushkin's oak on the sea shore tamed the spirit of the forest, calmed down the country's unconscious and lit the border with Hellas's light. This crystallization of darkness with a sunny contour touched even upon Pushkin himself.

Before him, there were no professional writers in St Petersburg, those who lived on earnings from their literary work. Pushkin put a decisive end to the past practice. Considering himself a writer of the new type, he did not want to be an amateur and demanded a "European" attitude towards poetry. This is just one example of the crystallization of Russia, which, finally, got a natural border along the seacoast.

There was another important consideration. Access to the Mediterranean meant for Russia the long-awaited link to the East. It was no coincidence that Pushkin chose lines from the great poem *Bustan* by the Persian poet Saadi as an epigraph for his new work, *Bakhchisarai Fountain*...

*Mary, just like myself,
Have visited this fountain;
But some are already gone,
Others travel farther still.*

At this symbolical moment of quenching thirst with water from the fountain we can start the count of cultural merger of two continents of spirit, Russia and the East.

Source: the Xinhua news agency

YEAR OF CHINESE LANGUAGE IN RUSSIA AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN CHINA: NEW BRACES OF FRIENDSHIP

In China, dozens of thousands of people have started singing Katyusha and other Russian songs, expressing their love for Russia with these ear-pleasing melodies. Many Russian families have got used to regularly watching the “Hello, China” educational TV programs devoted to the Chinese language... Based on the successful experience of the Year of Russia in China and the Year of China in Russia, the two countries organized a joint event, the Year of the Russian Language and the Year of the Chinese Language, in order to further expand bilateral exchange on all levels

“Eh, roads, it is dust and fog, cold, alarm and wild steppe grass...” With the Soviet song Roads, Wan Shouning stood out among the big number of Russian song lovers in an Internet competition. He won the gold medal of the contest “To Russia, with Love: China singing Russian songs”. In October 2010, at the closing ceremony of the Year of the Russian Language in China, the 26-year-old Chinese received the award from Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

Chinese Ambassador to Russia Li Hui says the title “To Russia, with Love” very accurately caught the idea of the event and transpired the friendly feelings Chinese people have for Russia.

Over 12,000 lovers of Russian songs participated in the competition. It resulted in mass learning and spreading of Russian songs. Heartfelt performance by the contestants of Moscow Nights, Troika and other Russian songs moved the Russian members of the judge panel to tears.

The Year of the Russian Language in China made many young Chinese to fall in love with the Russian language and Russia. At present, over 100 Chinese universities teach Russian, and there are 7 centers teaching the language as well. According to preliminary statistics, over 10,000 students study Russian at universities. Besides, about 100,000 study Russian at secondary schools and about 3,000 at elementary schools.

During the Year of the Russian Language, 22 provinces, autonomous districts and cities of central subordination held over 260 events that embraced all society strata and attracted attention of a hundred-million audience.

For Yao Guangyan, 67, the Year of the Russian Language became a personal treat. In 1990, at the age of 47, the citizen of Dalian began studying Russian at the Dalian Institute of Foreign Languages and started compiling collections of Russian songs. His biggest ambition is to teach the Chinese to understand and sing present-day Russian songs instead of stopping at old Soviet ones.

He chose for himself the Russian name Vasily Ivanov. His business card says in Chinese and Russian, “I love the Russian language, I love Russian songs, Russian is my work.” By now, he has financed publishing of several collections of Russian songs and his efforts to popularize Russian songs have touched many of his friends in Russia.





HELLO, CHINA

"The basin of the Huang He river is the cradle of the Chinese civilization, the Chinese Hellas. China is the motherland of silk; its craftsmen make the best porcelain. The Chinese built the eighth wonder of the world, the Great Chinese Wall. China is the motherland of many discoveries and inventions," this is how China was presented in the Hello, China educational program devoted to the Chinese language, which was shown on the Russian TV channel Kultura.

The authors of the program selected 100 words that represent traditional Chinese culture, such as Beijing opera, spirits - gate guards, tai chi chuan, kite, panda, etc. Videos, sound records and texts were created about these words and they were shown, broadcast and/or published by the Kultura channel, the Itar Tass news agency, the Golos Rossii radio station and the Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper. It helped Russians to learn simple Chinese words and phrases and to get a deeper understanding of China and its culture.

The launch of the Hello, China educational program is only a fraction of the active events that took place during the Year of the Chinese Language. The entire Year included 87 events related to education, cul-

ture, mass media, cinema and news publications. There were language and song competitions, student meetings, learning seminars, letter exchanges between students, a music week, a cinema week, a culture week, theater competitions, and so on.

Chinese Education Minister Yuan Guiren, deputy chairman of the organization committee of the Years of the Russian and Chinese Languages, has said, "Moscow is the center of the events of the Year of the Chinese Language. They will take place across the entire Eurasian continent, from the Far East, to Siberia to the westernmost regions of Russia and will involve all big Russian cities."

Like the Year of the Russian Language in China, the Year of the Chinese Language in Russia has received huge response and increased interest in studying Chinese. More and more young and older people join these studies. At present, Russia has 12 Confucius institutes, 2 Confucius classes and one Confucius radio broadcasting class. About 100 Russian universities have programs related to the Chinese language, and about 10,000 Russians study Chinese. The language is also taught at 13 Moscow schools, where it is learned by over 2,000 students.

VOICE OF FRIENDSHIP

"I am Chinese and I invite you to China!", children from China's regions that had suffered from an earthquake, said these words, learned at a class, to their Russian friends when visiting the Okean children's center in Vladivostok. In summer 2009, a second group of over 500 Chinese schoolchildren from the provinces of Sichuan, Shanxi and Gansu spent three weeks here upon invitation of the Russian government. This way, the agreement between the two countries' leaders on inviting 1,570 pupils from elementary and secondary schools in Chinese regions that had suffered from an earthquake for a vacation in Russia, reached in May 2008, was fully executed.

In Russia, Chinese children learned not only simple dialogs in Russian, but also popular Russian songs, Scarlet Sails, Bird of Happiness, etc. They learned and played together with Russian children and made a lot of friends. When it was time to say goodbye, all of them didn't want to leave, and many children cried.

In summer 2010, as a friendly response, China invited the first group of Russian schoolchildren to a summer camp in China. In Beijing, Qingdao and Dalian, they, together with Chinese children, participated in concerts, spent quality time, helped each other and even made friends. Before leaving, many Russian children said, "I love China and I will miss it..."



Botagoz Seidakhmetova

WILL EAST AND WEST EVER MEET?

This trivial question has generated numerous theories. The best known one is that by Samuel Huntington about the clash of civilizations. The most popular answer is the quotation from Rudyard Kipling which goes that East is East and West is West. But the subject is still being debated...

VLADIMIR PLASTUN

*professor of the department
of oriental studies at the
Novosibirsk State University*



Our conversation with Doctor Vladimir Plastun, started with the well-known quotation from Kipling. But Plastun prefers the extended version:

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain
shall meet,*

Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;

*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed,
nor Birth,*

*When two strong men stand face to face tho' they come
from the ends of the earth.*

Recently, I was pleased to discover Muhammad Ali Islami Nadushan, an Iranian scientist and philosopher, who says that the East is Asia, and the West is Europe. Notably, he writes, "Asia is the land of treasures and gold, and because of it, the greedy eyes of Europe, which was after these treasures, have long been fastened to it. For people of the East, the West was the land of bigger equality and prosperity, and this was the reason for its attractiveness."

The Iranian scientist is positive that the Western people have very strong principles of the world outlook. In the East, they have less in common with regard to the world view. How true is this today, in your opinion?

If you understand the West and the East as mentality (the way of life, traditions, customs), they will never meet. And there is no such need. It has been so for centuries. This was not someone's whim, but it was brought about by the natural conditions of life. Notably, the purdah, the hijab, the turban, the ritual of circumcision, obligatory ablutions, etc. appeared in the Muslim world not as mullahs' caprice, but due to necessity.

Retarded Europeans, who hadn't washed for centuries, did not understand it until they learned it from Muslims during the Crusades. This is why, by the way, oriental incenses were so popular in Europe even before the Crusades. They turned Europeans' heads and made them want to conquer the East, where there was gold, spices and these incenses.

People in the East, in their turn, finally appreciated the price of gold, to which they had not attached much importance before. But offering its treasures, the East implied trade, while the West, which had better military equipment (invented by the Greeks), preferred to conquer, despising commercial simpletons. It was at that time that the confrontation arose and was actively supported by religions, Christianity against Islam, and vice versa.

But the East is not uniform: some have water and date trees and some don't. Hence the conclusion: common traits appear when there are common interests (domestic and foreign political) that reflect economic interests.

Let me repeat, I am positive that a world view emerges, develops and gets established depending on economic interests. Prophet Mohammad received the boding not for his personal use or for comforting the afflicted, but for uniting Arab tribes in order to, speaking in modern terms, improve their living standards. The rest is derivative.



Still, let us define the notions of East and West. How do you understand these terms? Where do we belong?

Pondering on Kipling's idea, one can come to mutually exclusive conclusions. First of all, Kipling is not the possessor of the ultimate truth. He just expressed his understanding of the situation. Secondly, the Russian translation is not quite accurate. Where he wrote *Border, Breed, Birth*, the Russian version says *Tribe, Motherland, Clan*. Overall, the idea of Kipling's poem is that when there is battle, it doesn't matter whether it is in the East or the West, neither borders, nor your clan and tribe, nor origin matters. He is trying to explain that "when two strong men stand face to face," war will go on till the Judgment Day.

And it was the West, the eternal colonizer of the East, which started this confrontation. The East awakened and is beginning to avenge the humiliation, robbery and murders.

Here is an example of differences in the world views of oriental societies: Islamic radicals prefer bombs, while Buddhists choose peaceful expansion. Isn't the clear statement made by German Chancellor Angela Merkel that the attempt at creating a multiculturalism has failed signally enough for you? I understand her. This summer I went to Germany, I saw it all with my own eyes and after talking to Germans I realized: immigrants do not want to "reconcile" with the West and to "fit" into a new culture, they demand a special status.



The Iranian scientist argues that the demarcation line between the world views of the East and the West dates back to the war between ancient Iran and Ancient Greece. Muhammad Ali Islami Nadushan says Iran's geographic location allowed it to always be in the epicenter of historic events, the guard of the gates to both Europe and Asia. Does today's Iran remain the guard between the two civilizations?

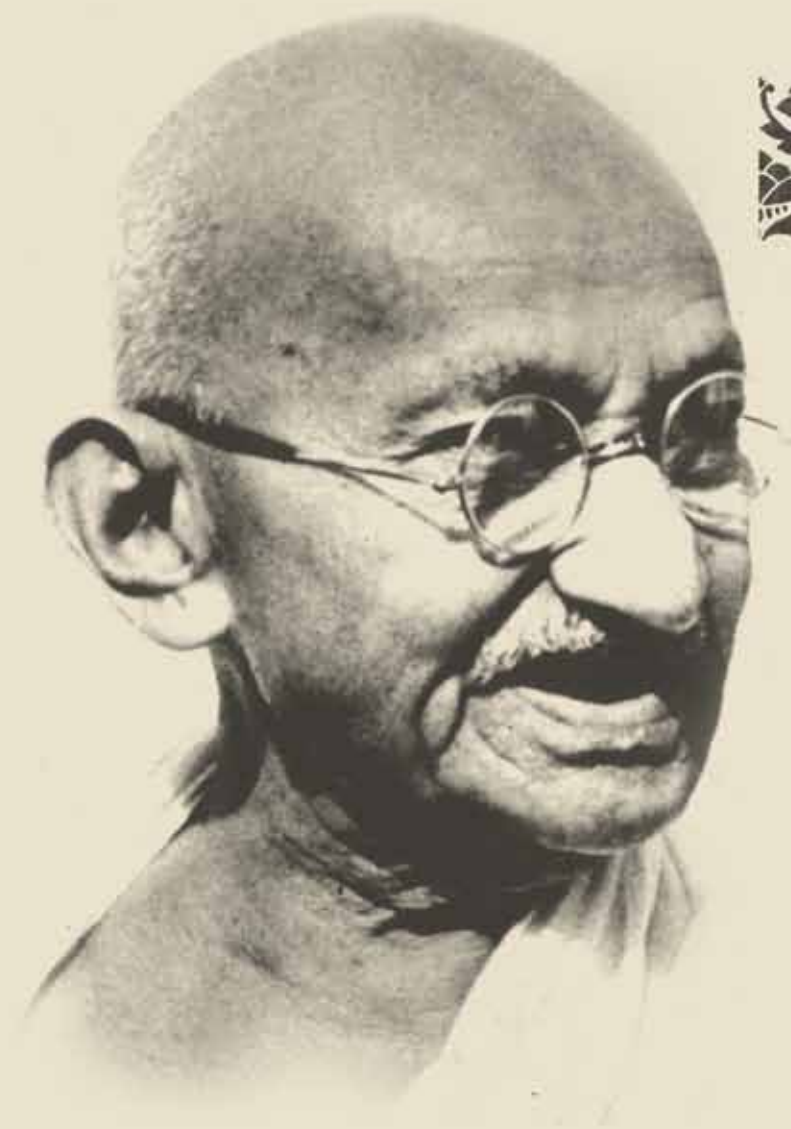
Remarkably, geopolitical demarcation now goes between the East and the West, but inside both Western and Eastern countries, it goes between the North and the South. Here we again go back to the Nature: when the once single continent called Earth broke up, natural resources for some reason remained in the north. The south got mountains and deserts. As a result, the mentality of northerners and southerners, defined once again by natural and climatic conditions, is significantly different, and this results in a confrontation.

Post-Soviet countries are not similar, too. All of them are Muslim, all are Sunni, but they are beginning the division process. In Tajikistan, they are not Turkic. Those who are Turkic, are each beginning to praise their respective nation as the best one.

Nazarbayev, who is bringing back the idea of Eurasian unity, is completely right. We are Eurasians. Speaking of Russia, you may recall the brilliant, in my opinion, saying by Vladimir Solovyev, "Russia is a bridge. Between two continents. If you feel European in Asia and Asian in Europe, it means you are Russian." This is a popular saying.

As to Iran, it really used to be at the crossroads of all routes to India (and they were several). This destroyed it, because it had to bow to each conqueror. But Iranians have survived and preserved their language and their culture. But, please, there is no need for threats. Don't be like Americans. Remain Iran and remember Persia.

Source: *Novoye Pokolenie* (Almaty).



Maksim Krans, InfoSHOS commentator

GANDHI, THE GREAT SOUL

"First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win."

These words, written by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, exhaustively describe the life of this great person. His was called "the conscience of the humankind," a prophet, a saint. But his contemporaries first of all saw him as India's spiritual leader in its struggle for liberation from British domination.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, also known as Mahatma - the Great Soul - was born on October 2, 1869, in the Gujarati princely state of Porbandar. Unlike the majority of Indian politicians, he did not belong to the upper society, but came from the cast of traders. Nevertheless, his ancestors managed to make successful careers and for several generations they had held fairly high positions. Mohandas's grandfather, Uttu Gandhi, became chief minister under the Prince of Porbandar. His father, Karamchand, also held this position for some time and later was appointed chief minister of the Rajkot princely state.

The family hoped that Mohandas would choose the same path and prepared him for the minister's position since childhood. The young man received a fairly good education at a local English school; he learned etiquette, to wear European clothes, to communicate with colonial officials and to respect the British crown. In 1888, he was sent to England to study law. Three years later, Gandhi returned home and took up a lawyer's practice in Bombay. In 1893, he went to South Africa as a lawyer with an Indian company.

It was there that Gandhi for the first time showed himself to be a successful political leader. Soon he led fight against racial discrimination and encroachment on the rights of Indians, who were already numerous in the south of the African continent. He organized peaceful demonstrations, sent petitions to the government and published a weekly newspaper. As a result, South African Indians managed to get some discriminating laws abolished.

In South Africa, Gandhi developed the tactic of non-violent resistance, which he called satyagraha. He limited social struggle to exclusively peaceful forms, condemning any violence, including between classes and during revolutions. "Be the change you want to see in the world." For conducting satyagraha campaigns he was often arrested, and in November 1913, when he led the



march of 2,000 Indian miners from Natal to Transvaal, he was jailed three times in four days. The campaign ended in an agreement with Jan Smuts, then South Africa's defense minister. In July 1914, Gandhi left the country.

Returning to India, Gandhi founded a new ashram near Ahmadabad. At that time, he became close to the Indian National Congress party. Not being its official head, he soon became its ideological and spiritual leaders, one of the leaders of the national liberation movement. In 1918, he held his first hunger strike - and there were to be many in his life!

In 1919, when the British adopted laws that extended the restrictions of Indians' civil freedoms, he announced the first All-Indian satyagraha. Thousands of the country's citizens expressed their protest peacefully, without resorting to violence, but there were mass riots in many places. The British response was tough. The events made Gandhi to reconsider his attitude towards the British Empire and made him a decisive opponent of the crown.

Gandhi started the second Indian satyagraha in 1920. He called on his compatriots to boycott British textile goods and to manufacture their own fabrics on hand looms. In 1922, he was arrested for sedition and sentenced to six years in jail.

In those years, Gandhi organized active campaigns against untouchability and in favor of Muslim and Hindu unity, for women's rights, improvement of elementary education, prohibition of alcohol and introduction of personal hygiene rules. In 1929, the leaders of the Indian National Congress declared January 26 the Day of National Independence, and Gandhi led the third All-Indian satyagraha. Next year, he protested against the raise of the salt tax.

At the beginning of 1932, he was arrested again and announced a six-day hunger strike. In 1933, his hunger strike lasted 21 days, and the rebel was let out of prison for fear that he would die and it would lead to accusations against the British authorities. At that time, his wife, Kasturbai, also took up politics. She was also jailed several times.

In 1942, the Indian National Congress adopted the resolution "Quit India!", and Gandhi led the last All-Indian satyagraha campaign. He was again arrested together with his wife and thrown to jail in Puna. Next year, Kasturbai died, and Gandhi's health significantly deteriorated. In May 1944, he was let out of prison.

In August 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru received a proposal from the British to form a government. Then, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League announced the Direct Action Day, which resulted in a confrontation between Hindus and Muslims. In November, Gandhi went around East Bengal and Bihar on foot, urging to end the fratricidal massacres. He decisively objected to India's breakup and when, on August 15, 1947, Pakistan was officially separated from India and the countries declared their independence, Gandhi held a hunger strike to express his grief and to try to stop clashes between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind," he said, but, unfortunately, no one listened to the wise man at the time.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "The value of the ideal is in it receding as you approach it." Nevertheless, he kept moving towards this ideal all his life. And he fought for it using methods he considered to be the only possible and correct ones.

Rabindranath Tagore thought it possible to compare Gandhi with Buddha, describing his impact on people as follows, "He stood on the doorstep of the cabins of thousands of the miserable, dressed like them. He addressed them in their language, and here, finally, was the live truth, not quotations from books... In response to Gandhi's call, India again opened up for great deeds."

The role of a person in history can be debated a lot, but most probably, no one will argue that the ideas of this great man became the stone that caused the avalanche of national liberation struggle in South Asia. It was due to a large extent to Mahatma Gandhi's self sacrifice that India became independent and "opened up for great deeds."

Tatiana Sinitsyna

LEV GUMILEV AND HIS PASSIONARY LIGHT

"I have done everything I wanted and I am dying with clean conscience..." These were the last words of Lev Gumilev, who died in Leningrad (now St Petersburg) on June 15, 1992. An outstanding Russian historian, ethnographer, philosopher and one of the most ingenious thinkers of the 20th century, his burial service took place in the Orthodox Alexander Nevsky Laura, but the Tartars put a Muslim praying felt under the coffin, and Mongols put Buddhist prayers at his feet that accompany the dead to the other side.



The almost 80 years of Lev Gumilev's life were filled with deep drama and hard labor, both literally and in terms of the enormous scientific search he conducted. Devoting himself to history and first of all the history of his motherland, Gumilev tried to conceive the complicated many-century-long journey of Russians in connection to all people of the Eurasian continent, in the context of the humankind's common destiny. As a result, a new light was shed on the world history.

The scientist's thought created a unique theory of the genesis of ethnoses. He was the first to not only lay it out, but to discover the moving force behind this genesis. He saw this force as biochemical energy brought to live organisms from the outer space. This phenomenon was discovered by the great Russian thinker Vladimir Vernadsky. Gumilev described the way energy acted as a "passionary impulse." The essence of this phenomenon, which means an irresistible urge for action, suggests that at different stages of history passionaries, or super activists, appeared among the humankind,

full of passion (sometimes fatal) to do something for the sake of the future and dominating others on the way to their goals.

Gumilev applied his theory to the facts of ancient history. His interpretation of Ancient Russia's history was especially shocking - he offered a new assessment of the three centuries of the Mongol-Tartar yoke, the biggest tragedy of the young Russian state. Gumilev, however, insisted that there had been no yoke. Under his theory, Russian princes found a common language with the comers from the East and even attracted their forces to their side when fighting for national independence. Mixed marriages were also telling - Russian and Golden Horde nobilities "exchanged" grooms and brides as a sign of friendship, reconciliation and kinship.

The scientist's paradoxical arguments challenged the well-established theories and confused mind. Some simply called him "insane." His point of view was not accepted officially, his books were not published. The innovator was simultaneously accused of Rus-

sophobia and chauvinism, racism and Mongolophilia; was called a "cocksure fictionist." But lecture halls, where he delivered lectures on history, were always full of those willing to listen to the courageous ideas overturning the rigid truths.

I was lucky to have once attended a Gumilev lecture at the Leningrad University. There was no room to move. Besides students, there were some quite famous people. It was then that I met Natalia Bekhterova, the outstanding neurophysiologist, researcher of the human brain, now dead. She was interested not only in Gumilev's passionarity theory, but also, professionally, in the fact that he had managed to preserve his brilliant intellect in the inhuman living conditions (16 years of Stalin-era labor camps and prisons).

Apart from the notion of passionarity, Gumilev introduced many other terms to science. For example, he proved that ethnoses have a subtle, invisible tie that alternately results in their like or dislike for each other. He called it "complimentarity", described its nature and made the conclusion,



“Ethnoses cannot be taught truths, the truths are always inside an ethnos, so attempting to manage it is the same as attempting to manage Vesuvius.” He called for tolerance, advocated a dialog between national cultures and warned against imposing on each other one’s way of life. Gumilev often scolded political leaders for their historic illiteracy and shortsightedness.

The researcher turned his knowledge into a new science, ethnology, which lies at the joint of several sciences.

known as the Silver Century). All three were outstanding personalities and brought fame to Russia. And all three were to have a terrible and tormented life.

Nikolay Gumilev was executed by Bolsheviks in 1921 on allegations of participation in a counter-revolution conspiracy. Anna Akhmatova was to be in disfavor with Soviet leaders for her “harmful” and “decadent” poems. And their son was to spend 16 years in prisons and labor camps under the totali-



His legacy included 200 scientific works and 10 books that testify to his great literary talent.

Lev Gumilev was called the last son of the Silver Century. He was the only child of Anna Akhmatova and Nikolay Gumilev, two famous Russian poets of the early 20th century (the period was

tarian regime, “for Mom and Dad,” as he jokingly used to say.

He was first arrested when still a student, but was discharged, though expelled from the university. He went to archaeological expeditions as a worker, continued self education and studied foreign languages. In addition

to German and French, which he studied when still a child, in the home of his noble grandmother and at a school in Bezhet'sk, the Tver region, Gumilev learned Arab, Farsi and Tajik.

Some time later, he was convicted and sent to work in the mines in the Polar region. Finding himself in barracks together with Tartars, Kyrgyzes and Kazakhs, he learned their languages. The latter (what a coincidence!) he learned from Omar Suleimenov, father of the well-known poet and linguist Olzhas Suleimenov. Having passed through thick and thin alive, Gumilev told Olzhas everything when they met.

In 1944, when the Great Patriotic War was driving to a close and warfare was on the German territory, Gumilev voluntarily joined a “suicide battalion” that consisted of prisoners. They were sent for breakthroughs. Gumilev’s last hell was the storming of Berlin. But the fate protected him, and the authorities thanked him with a release.

After the Victory, Gumilev graduated from the history department of the Leningrad University and began post-graduate studies. But in 1949, the Communist Party leaders once again publicly condemned his mother... and he was given a new sentence. “Lying on the bunk bed, in order not to go berserk, I again and again thought about the force that created and destroyed human civilizations; I wanted to discover the law that moves this force,” he remembered later. He wrote down his thoughts on scraps of paper prison inmates collected for him.

It was only in 1956 that Lev Gumilev, at the age of 44, returned to his native Leningrad. All his possessions were a cardboard box full of scraps of paper, his future books *The Hsiung-nu* and *Ancient Turks*. At the age of 55, he found love and started a family.

Like any other man, Gumilev had his own partialities: he admired the military glory of the Romans, Arabs, Chinese, Mongols and, of course, Russians. And he also respected the wisdom of the ancient Iranian divinity Mithra, the god of consent, patron of peaceful interpersonal relations.

Maksim Krans, InfoSHOS commentator

ZHU DE, MARSHAL “RED VIRTUE”

The life of the prominent Chinese military and political figure, Zhu De, is still surrounded by numerous legends. One thing is definite: he truly was an extraordinary, courageous and talented person. Zhu De was one of the founders of the People's Liberation Army of China and an active fighter against Japanese aggression, who became one of modern China's founding fathers. However, there were not only ups in his life, but also downs.

One of Mao Zedong's associates, he was not afraid to make a stand against the “big jump” policy and was repressed. But his achievements were so great that he nevertheless kept a high official position.

According to official historiography, Zhu De, whose name is translated from Chinese as “red virtue,” was born in 1886 in the village of Maanchang, the Yilong county, the Sichuan province, to a family of peasants.

He recalled later that, besides him, there had been 12 children in the family, and the parents had to drown some of them, since they were not able to feed them. According to another version, voiced, notably, by Soviet military intelligence officer Pyotr Vlasov, who was an agent of the Communist International under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and served in the Yan'an “special district” under the alias Vladimirov, the future military leader was born to a landowner's family.

It is known that the boy was raised by his uncle, who sent him to a village school where he learned the basics of sciences and passed state exams.

In 1905, he was sent to study in Shunqing, and then at the physical training school in Chengdu. Then the young man returned to his native district to teach physical education. However, his progressive views were disliked by local officials and he was forced to leave. It took Zhu De 70 days to get to Yunnan-fu (now Kunming), the capital of the Yunnan province, on foot. There he joined the army as a company clerk, and in a few months was admitted to the local military school. This was the beginning of his military career.

The school became the turning point in his life. There he became a devotee of Sun Yat-sen's ideas and joined a revolutionary organization. In 1911, he graduated from the school as one of the best students and was appointed platoon commander in the Yunnan army.

In 1911, the Sinhai revolution took place in China that overthrew the Manchurian dynasty Qing and declared a republic. Zhu De, who was a company commander at the time, participated actively in the revolution. His unit took by storm the residence of the local governor-general, and then helped revolutionaries in the neighboring province of Sichuan.

Next year he joined the Guomindang party and was sent to fight bandits on the border with Vietnam. Later, as a regiment and then brigade commander, Zhu De did a lot to end the feud between regional groups of militarists. In 1916-1920, his brigade actually controlled the situation in several counties of the provinces Yunnan and Sichuan, but eventually it lost and was disbanded.

The future marshal left for Shanghai and then went to Europe to study the basics of Marxism and Leninism and became student of the philosophy department at the Gottingen University. Simultaneously, he worked on improving his knowledge of the military science, read books on military theory and history of World War I, met German generals and officers. In Germany, he met Zhou Enlai and joined the Communist Party of China. Because of his active political engagement, Zhu De was jailed twice, was expelled from Ger-



many and came to the Soviet Union. Here he studied at the Communist University of Oriental Workers. In 1926, he went to Vladivostok and then to Shanghai...

Upon instruction from the Communist Party's Central Committee, Zhu De undertook “Bolshevization” of the Guomindang troops and was quite successful. After the counter-revolutionary coup in 1927, he became one of the organizers of the guerrilla war against Jiang Jieshi. His successful actions allowed him to seize several towns and gather up to ten thousand people to his detachment.

In May 1928, Zhu De headed the newly founded 4th corps of the Red Army of China, the commissary of which was the future “great helmsman.” Two years later, he was appointed commander-in-chief and elected candidate to the Communist Party's Central Committee at the 3rd plenum.

In September 1931, the Chinese Soviet Republic was declared and a transitional central government led by Mao Zedong was set up a couple of months later. Zhu De headed the republic's revolutionary military council and directly addressed reorganization of the Workers and Peasants' Army.

Under his leadership, the Communist troops fought off four punitive campaigns by Guomindang, and in 1934, he developed a plan to break through the enemy encirclement. As a result, the Communist



Party's troops covered 9,600 km and relocated to the northwest of the country, the so-called "special area" with the center in Yan'an. This breakthrough came down in China's history as the Long March.

A turn in the relations between the adversaries was brought about by the Xian incident: in December 1936, Guomindang generals Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng, who advocated the end of the civil war and creation of a single front with the Communists to fight off the Japanese aggression (Japan had invaded China five years before, occupying Manchuria), arrested their commander-in-chief Jiang Jieshi near the town of Xian. Thanks to mediation from Zhou Enlai and a telegram from Stalin, the Communist Party of China and Guomindang reconciled and signed an agreement on setting up a single front.

On July 7, 1937, a large-scale war between Japan and China broke out, starting with a conflict at the Lugouqiao bridge near Beijing. According to official statistics, the war killed over 20mn Chinese, both soldiers and civilians.

During World War II, Zhu De fully revealed his talent as a military leader. Under his leadership, the troops struck serious blows against the Japanese aggressors. Notably, in September 1937, during a battle near the Pingxing mountain pass, the Chinese forces destroyed a Japanese brigade. For eight years, Zhu De led all military moves. After the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on

August 11, 1945, the commander-in-chief ordered a general onslaught on northern and northeastern areas of China that were occupied by the Japanese. Three days later, he refused to follow the order by Jiang Jieshi about ceasing independent action. After that, his troops began counteracting the Guomindang army.

Speaking of the commander's political views, it should be pointed out that at first he tried not to interfere with the party's internal life that was controlled by Mao Zedong. But at the beginning of the 1940s, Zhu De became one of his leading associates. In 1945, he was elected member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Communist Party's Central Committee. When the peace between the Communists and Guomindang was broken and Jiang Jieshi's troops unleashed a civil war in June 1946, he was again selected to lead the Communist army.

Once again, Zhu De showed himself to be a brilliant leader. He developed a new strategic course of "deploying in the north, defending in the south." It was under his leadership that the famous crossing of the Yangtze river took place and such big centers as Nanking, Shanghai, Wuchang and Guangzhou were liberated.

After the People's Republic of China was declared on October 1, 1949, Zhu De was again appointed commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Army of China and was loaded with honors. He became deputy chairman of the People's Revolu-

tionary Military Council and, later, deputy president of China. In 1995, he was promoted to marshal and was awarded with the country's highest orders.

In 1959, Zhu De was elected chairman of the Standing Committee of the All-Chinese Assembly of People's Representatives. In this position, counteracting the failed "big jump" policy, he advocated a realistic policy in the economy, sharply criticizing subjectivism and the command approach. In the years of the "cultural revolution," he was not afraid to publicly speak in favor of repressed political and military figures. For this, he was punished: Mao Zedong's wife sent Red Guards after him, and the 83-year-old marshal was sent to exile to the town of Zunghua, the Guandong province, where he lived under constant supervision till July 1970.

In five years after his return to the Chinese capital, Zhu De was again elected chairman of the Standing Committee of the All-Chinese Assembly of People's Representatives. He remained active in this position till the last days of his life. The marshal died on July 6, 1976, at the age of 90.

Today's China cherishes the memories of Zhu De. The Memory House in the Tiananmen Square has a special room devoted to the outstanding military leader. In his native area, there is a house museum that tells visitors about the glorious life and military career of the country's first marshal.

Irina Dubovitskaya

REMEMBERING BROKEN DREAM

His dream of seizing Berlin didn't come true. Abdullo Gaibov was knocked out of action by another blow he would receive when liberating Minsk.

"For me, the war is a bundle of physical suffering and pain, death of my friends and... dirt. Not so much physical, as spiritual... But, of course, it is also memories of the Great Victory, which was "one for all" and which was given to us after innumerable losses and trials," says the former soldier.



ABDULLO GAIBOV
honorary doctor of medical sciences, professor of the forensic medicine department at the Tajik State University and professor of the law department at the Russian-Tajik (Slavic) University

Abdullo for the first time fully realized what war is and what was his place in it near Morshansk, where the 67th rifle division of the 99th guard regiment was deployed at the time another batch of Central Asian draftees arrived. One usually remembers one's baptism by fire till the end of one's life...

"It all began with a shell attack. Blinding flares and the thunder of rocket launchers filled everything around us. Katyushas' salvos shook the earth and the air. The fire was so intense that the Germans couldn't raise their heads: 320 shells in 10 seconds were to be reckoned with!

"I don't remember how long it was going on. But then we heard the command, "Over the top!" Blinded and deafened, our infantry rose from the trenches. And dashed forward all at once. I, too, started running. The dispatch case was bleeding against my leg, hurting it and opening again and again; the white canvas cloak tangled my arms, interfering with my firing; a cough was gnawing at my throat; my eyes were teary because of the smoke

hollows in the snow seemed to come one after another. Stumbling, I saw through the corner of my eye how my fellow soldiers fell down, sprinkling the snow with their blood... And an enemy trench at last! I jump down. Touch land, barely dodging a machine gun. Mechanically press the trigger of my sub-machine gun, and a German falls at my feet. In my mind, I understand that if I hadn't killed him, he would have killed me. But it doesn't make it easier. Everything within me stops in tracks, realizing the proximity of death.

It was the first, but, unfortunately, not the last time Abdullo met an "old woman" often came very close to him, and it was not always like it was near Morshansk.

"West of Moscow, the troops of the Kalinin front, which included our 99th regiment, went into the offensive.

"...Somewhere beyond the forest battle is going on for Staraya Rusa. Cannons are moaning, shells exploding. For me, it is already over. Deaf and motionless, I am lying under snow in

an unknown ravine until my comrades find me and, thinking that I am dead, take me to a common grave. I spend another night there, unconscious, shell-shocked, on the snow, in the cold. And then the burial starts. Soldiers are taking the boots off the dead (the living have nothing to do). They are in a hurry. It doesn't go easily. Suddenly, a boot goes off at once. And then the other one. "He must be alive," an astonished soldier leaned over me.

"I would learn all this much later. At the time, I was quickly sent to hospital. But the death notice had already been sent to the remote Tajik town of Urd-Tyube, and my family thought me dead till the end of the war."

Well... Everyone has their own path. Abdullo Gaibov has his in this great liberating war of the Soviet people. It led him further westward.

"Honestly, for us, Tajiks, waging war was difficult. The climate was different; we didn't know Russian. By that time, I already was a qualified teacher. But a majority hadn't completed even secondary education. Moreover, many



had never held a rifle in their hands before. But mutual help and everyone's desperate courage saved us. I still remember the names of my compatriots that fought with me: Safar Baratov from Garm (he died of wounds after returning home from war), Makhmad-said Bobokalonov from the Rokhi Nav collective farm in the Dangarinsky district (he also died of wounds after the war), Makhmad Niyozov... Sharing the last piece of bread and defending each other's back, we travelled the paths of war together. In 1944, they brought us to Minsk.

"Fighting was intense at the time. Our troops alternately went into the offensive and then into the defensive. Dirt, mosquitoes, impassable roads. We felled trees in order to make way for tanks and artillery. On July 3, we finally reached Minsk, which, all surrounded by block obstacles and trenches, from distance seemed an inaccessible fortress. At a closer distance, it was indeed well protected; we had to fight to each house. It is difficult to say how long our counterattack lasted. I will say


only one thing, for me it was short. I remember putting my greatcoat over the barbed wire of the fence, rolling over it to the enemy territory and... something exploding in front of my eyes. The last thing I remember from that battle is the rumble of a shell that exploded nearby...

"The medical unit and the hospital train were like in a fog. Like scraps of pain, thought and feeling, I remember the words of the orderlies, "He has lost much blood, unlikely to survive," the narrow passage of the last car, where they put me up with difficulty, and bombing, in which my car was the only one that remained intact... Compared to this hell I went through hardly realizing that I was at death's door, the hospital near Ivanovo seemed a paradise: all around it, there was forest, silence and new milk every morning... Only one thing was bad: my leg turned black. Fearing gangrene, the surgeons insisted on amputation." Abdullo refused out of what strength he had left. The doctors shrugged, "What will you do with this stubborn beggar?" And

then the leg revived. "Gradually, I went over to crutches. I even was going to return to my unit, but I didn't get the chance, as I was invalided out of the army."

"There is no saying how my old mother, who had already "buried" me, welcomed me home: everyone can easily imagine what it is like to get back a loved one you thought gone for good.

"I am often asked how I see that great battle from the distance of all these years. What memories did it leave besides the signs of valor the country awarded me with (the order of the Great Patriotic war and eight medals, including the medal "For Courage")? I always answer honestly, and I can repeat it now: for me, the war was endless physical suffering and pain, death of my friends and... dirt. Not so much physical, as spiritual. The one you can never wash off. The past you cannot strike out. But at the same time, it is the memory of the Great Victory, which was "one and for all" for our country and which was given to us after innumerable losses and trials..."



Svetlana Tivanova

MINSK SMILING

Returning from long journeys, I love to drive into Minsk in the early morning, when the city is awakening with half-opened eyes. But then, recognizing me, it opens towards me, kindly smiling with its broad mouth of avenues. Each time, peering at my home town, I am trying to see something new: a business center is being built here, a parking lot has been demolished there, the opera theater has finally been repaired, the sports arena glassed, a new square has appeared, and the old house in the corner is no longer there... Life goes on. It has always been so and it will always be. Century after century.

Minsk is my destiny. My love to everything that fills my life with meaning walks along its broad avenues and crooked lanes, through arches of Stalin-era apartment buildings, around luxurious hotels, between the rigid columns of theaters and universities, along the shadowed alleys of its parks. Legends say that many centuries ago, a hero named Menesk settled down on a great trade route that connected northern and southern seas. He built a big seven-wheel mill on the Svisloch river. No one had seen this Menesk, but fantastic stories about his might - he allegedly made flour of stones instead of rye and visited villages at night to find courageous and strong men for his retinue - were told around the place. These people gave rise to a race with a good soul and clear thoughts, Belarusians (the root "belo" meant "clear" in the ancient Slavic language). History made this strong branch of Slavic ethnos a nation.

Belarusians built a city and named it after the hero: Menesk - Mensk - Minsk. Researchers, however, believe that the Belarusian capital was named after a small river, Menka, which has long disappeared. Ancient settlements of today's Minsk residents are still discovered here and there, providing scientists with new food for thought.

It is known for certain that Minsk was first mentioned in the ancient Russian Primary Chronicle (or The Tale of Bygone Years), which describes a big battle on the Nemiga river in 1067. Battles, wars, destruction, captures... They kept rolling across this land as a wheel of fire. Only a lazy or cowardly warrior did not leave his trace here. The blood of Krivichs and Dregovichs mixed here with the blood of Normans, Mongols and many others.

There is not a single spot on the Belarusian land that is not covered with the bones of its sons. Their mothers bore their cross century after century, preserving our gene pool in this spontaneous blending of blood. Today, this blood, these genes, this ancient brotherhood push us towards the Union State of Russia and Belarus, to the Eurasec, to the Eastern Partnership and to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in which Belarus has the status of a dialog partner. We are willing to take part in all of this, to watch everything, to cooperate with everyone - this is our national character, the tone of my country's foreign policy.

CITY'S LANGUAGE

Minsk is often described as a center of transit. It must be so, but only in terms of the economy. In people's souls, however, there is no transit, because the West and the East have settled here together for good. This is the genius loci, the protective spirit of the place. And the language? It is an original mixture of Polish and Russian borrowings. I have often noticed how the melodic Belarusian language impresses foreigners: it pleases the ear like folklore, awakens imagination, appeals to one's ancestors. Linguists call our language authentic. I once read that the Belarusian language reminds of a "horse in a team", i.e. the authentic speech of the ancestors, but "in the Polish rein". It is even reflected in the name of the city. The original Mensk became Mińsk under early Polish influence, and then Russian czarist officials confirmed its name as Minsk. However, Belarusian intelligentsia called it Mensk-Belorussky until the late 1930s.

Today, Minsk is Russian-speaking. The president, the radio and television speak Russian. Intelligentsia most often prefers Belarusian. On a bus and on the market, you will hear "trasyanka", a social dialect with mostly Russian words and Belarusian pronunciation and grammar. Use of the two languages is natural, everyone understands each other, but, unfortunately, is not always ready to listen... The two languages are reflected even in the country's traditional name. In Russian, it should be spelled Belorussiya, which Russia does, but the Belarusian constitution spells it as the Republic of Belarus. It also envisages two state languages, Belarusian and Russian.

Psychologists insist that if a person uses at least two languages for communication, the same as two hands, both hemispheres of his brain develop harmoniously, making them balanced, calm and wise. Hence, tolerance, even towards religions.. Minsk, with its population of two million people, has representatives of 130 nations and 26 different religious denominations peacefully coexisting, with Orthodoxy and Catholicism traditionally being the dominant.

This historically imbued tolerance and ability to accept everything sensible on the planet results in Minsk's policy towards a multi-vector and multi-polar world and good neighborly relations. No wonder that China and Venezuela, both situated so far from us, are Belarus's strategic partners, to say nothing of Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, other CIS states and the Baltic countries. Minsk has diplomatic relations with 164 nations and executes over 3,000 international agreements. It is no coincidence that Minsk is the official capital of the CIS. There were numerous reasons for this decision, including the geographical one, since it's in the center of Europe.

“GENIUS LOCI”

Everyone will agree that Minsk is very European, comfortable and well-sized. It is a place to live in. In the UN human development index, it is ranked 64th, which is the best result in the CIS. Indeed, Minsk has a special social climate. People enjoy coming here to warm their souls at a calm and hospitable Belarusian fire and share the simple and clear - and hence, real and human - values.

My city does not have the fuss usual for many present-day cities with a population of over million people. It does not have poverty or beggars, either on the markets or at the railway stations. At the same time, luxury and wealth don't jump out at you either. Our megalopolis is simple and dignified, it respects itself and its guests and doesn't accept envy or anger. Minsk is well washed and cut, it smells of freshness and flowers. Once, a fellow companion on a train asked me with certainty, “You are from Minsk, aren't you?” “Yes,” I said. “How do you know?” “That's simple. You get on the train and don't look out of the window, because you are used to the view. But I cannot tear myself away from it. You know, I have never seen such a beautiful station and so much order. I don't even feel at ease in this sterility, it's like at a pharmacy...” Of course, I don't share these pharmacy associations: we perceive our city as a well looked after house, where it is warm and cozy.

Strangers often say that Minsk gives them a feeling of home. Lots of things combine to create this impression: for example, the delicious smell of our favorite “draniks” - we eat more potato than any other na-

tion in the world - and roast meat. Even the soft night lighting contributes to making the city look more like a home. It is decorated with numerous monuments, rivers and lakes, the luxurious green lace of parks and boulevards. And like in any modern-day house, we have a lot of high-tech, metal and mirror gloss, which has been brought to our life by Turkish and Iranian builders. They constructed the National library, a football stadium, the Minsk-Arena bicycle track, business centers and hypermarkets.

But without global achievements, without investment and innovation, without energy resources, we cannot move forward. This is why we cherish the idea of creating a most favorable investment climate. Minsk is the city of modern science and high-tech production, it became such back in the Soviet era. But today's High Tech Park is already designing software and developing information, communication and other new technology.

This year, the world celebrated the 66th anniversary of the Victory over Nazism, the end of the history's most devastating World War II, which in the former Soviet Union is called the Great Patriotic war. So much has been said about Belarus's deed in the horrible battle of the last century that I don't have anything to add. I know one thing, this is a holy topic for us, it is our pride and our pain, our national idea. Over the years of independence we have finally recognized ourselves as a nation, a family. Like any family, we do have certain problems, but we also have some unshakable fundamental values the Belarusian people stand by.





Andrey Kislyakov

BOW TO THIS MAN, EARTH

Yuri Gagarin tops the list of the world's most popular people in the 20th century. This year, his name has been mentioned especially often: 50 years ago he was the first to open the "door to the outer space." However, the word "popular" doesn't fully describe either the scale of the event related to his name or, all the more so, his dramatic life. "Legendary", "mysterious", "tragic" - these are the adjective we need when talking about Gagarin.

The famous line from Olzhas Su-leimenov's poem, "Bow to this man, Earth!", was broadcast across the country on the day when Yuri Gagarin flew to the outer space and is inscribed on the monument put in the place where his life ended. But there is an important detail: instead of the joyous exclamation point, there is a full stop at the end. As a symbol of the finale of this extraordinary life, wrapped in glory and legends.

No wonder that the first space flight, as well as the personality of the space pioneer, are gradually turning into a myth. This is what has happened to Gagarin. His life, the climax of which was the space flight that made him immortal, ended with a mysterious death in spring 1968. The country was shocked. Information in the press was short and dry; anyway, no one believed it. People discussed it in whisper till the middle of the 1990s, when the perestroika democratized the press.

No matter what was said, the bright image of the man who opened the space era remained untarnished. Gagarin was the hero, the favorite of his people, and his tragic death also gave him the wreath of a martyr.

After numerous publications in mass media related to the mysterious accident of the MiG-15 UTI trainer piloted by Gagarin and his friend Seregin, the

perception of the cosmonaut somewhat transformed, with the image of a victim coming to the fore. Gagarin's name was more often connected not to the triumphant start from Baikonur in April 1961, but to the gloomy forest under Kirzhach, where the beautiful space legend came to an abrupt end and where today there is a monument.

The change in the perception of Gagarin can first of all be explained through human psychology. Unfortunately, we are more likely to be drawn to all kinds of negative and criminal stories than to real facts. Besides, during the Soviet era, people learned not to trust the policy of silencing, lies and search of enemies. The space industry, which was always the core of the country's defense doctrine, was the field where grains of doubt grew very easily.

Half words and deliberate lies accompanied the entire Gagarin epic. "On April 12, 1961, the Soviet Union put the world's first spacecraft, Vostok, with a man onboard on a circumterrestrial orbit. The pilot of the spacecraft Vostok is citizen of the Soviet Union, Major Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin..."

The TASS announcement from fifty years ago even today fascinates one with its calmness and unshakable belief in success: it was released even before the flight was over, i.e. the hero had not yet returned to the Earth. How-

ever, journalists had several versions of texts related to the man's first flight to the outer space on hand, including a grave and majestic obituary.

Despite the huge number of books and articles written about this first flight, not everything is known about this historic event. It turns out, Gagarin's life during the flight hung by a thread. The spaceship entered an orbit bigger than the one calculated on the ground. The difference was significant, 80 km. The apogee altitude was 327 km against 247 km. If the orbit coincided with the calculated one, in case the brake system broke down, the ship would leave it in five to seven days, thanks to aerodynamic slowdown in the upper atmosphere. Provisions on board were made with view to this timeframe. But the situation was unexpected, and Gagarin was all close to sentenced to death.

One can only guess what those in the Mission Control Center felt when they found out the ship's real orbit. Should the brake system break down, the cosmonaut would be left in the outer space for 15-20 days, which meant he was doomed. But, as we know, it all ended well. The system worked properly, the spaceship left the orbit, and at an altitude of 1,500 m the cosmonaut ejected himself and landed successfully, thus turning the first page in

the history of manned space flights.

The triumph, almost godlike worship, the zenith of glory - these are the well-known sides of Yuri Gagarin's life. But some things were classified. For example, the circumstances of his landing were wrapped in mystery: how exactly he landed, inside the cabin or separately, with a parachute.

It would seem that it didn't mat-

No. 2, and so on. The first space flight was no exception.

Absolute secrecy generated a lot of rumors, even before Gagarin's flight, that the Soviet Union was concealing the deaths of several brave pilots who had tried to reach the outer space.

In December 1959, the Italian news agency Continental quoted a well-known Czech Communist as saying that

scenario found for each of them.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, who loved public effects, also added oil to the flame. Encouraged by Soviet announcements, America expected something outstanding to happen on September 27, 1960. The date was singled out both by a CIA report and by the testimonial of an escaped Soviet sailor, who spoke about a space launch that was being prepared. But no official announcement by TASS followed. The conclusion was unanimous: the Soviet space program claimed another life.

In reality, the loss was in the form of two Molniya carrier rockets that exploded during the ascent phase when trying to launch the first 1M automated station in the space to study the Mars.



ter. But Kremlin ideologists decided that ejecting himself undermined the heroism of the first flight. Gagarin was ordered to say that he had landed inside the cabin. The truth came out only in 1964, when, after the flight of the three-man ship Voskhod, the press reported that the crew for the first time landed inside the spacecraft. And till the end of his life, Gagarin was asked the unfortunate question at innumerable international news conferences. And every time he was caught at his initial lie.

HOW MANY COSMONAUTS WERE THERE?

If someone does something outstanding or becomes first in a deed of global importance, sooner or later someone else will emerge who has done it better and earlier. I.e. Pseudo First No.1,

three cosmonauts had died in the Soviet Union during the period of November 1957 - June 1959. Yet neither this sensation nor others, such as the one about the explosion of a moon ship at the cradle of the launching site Sputnikgrad in Siberia, have never been corroborated even in a smallest detail, so they can be classified as paramount lies, work of someone's sick imagination.

Sometimes, however, imagination ran wild around quite real facts. In October 1959, the Ogonyok magazine published the photos of five test pilots, Alexei Belokonev, Ivan Kachur, Alexei Grachev, Viktor Zavatsky and Yevgeny Mikhailov. A reporter with Associated Press who commented on the article decided for some reason that these were the photos of cosmonauts-to-be. But since none of the names appeared in the Soviet press again, it was decided that all five of them had died, and there was a separate blood-curdling

STEEP SPIRAL

It was characteristic that Gagarin's death in spring 1968, for lack of any official explanation, was soon wrapped in all kinds of rumors and guesses, where the dominating scenario was, of course, the image of a cunning enemy that killed the Soviet Union's main hero.

The bare facts related to the tragedy that happened not far from Moscow on March 27, 1968, have been known to the public for a long time. Gagarin and his instructor Vladimir Seregin were performing an ordinary test flight on a MiG-15 in bad weather. They successfully completed the planned maneuvers and were already heading towards the landing strip, when radio communication with the plane ceased. Later, rescuers found the remains of the MiG at the bottom of a deep crater in the forest. Both pilots were dead, their bodies disfigured. Gagarin was just 34, and at the time of his early death he was the most likely candidate to lead the Soviet crew in a Moon landing expedition.

It seemed that the plane entered a "black nosedive", a steep deadly spiral, and the pilots lost control. A government commission was set up to investigate the tragedy. But no official information was released. Moreover,

Leonid Brezhnev personally banned any mention of an equipment breakdown or a mistake of the crew.

Naturally, there emerged absurd stories like alien schemes, etc. It was said that after his triumphant return to the Earth Gagarin had difficulty with getting used to the glory that descended upon him like an avalanche and took to alcohol. But the official report says no traces of alcohol were found in the blood of both pilots.

It was said also that the hero cosmonaut survived the accident and died in a Soviet asylum in 1990; that Seregin killed himself and Gagarin because he envied him; that Gagarin staged his own death and underwent plastic surgery; that the plane was brought down by the CIA. Investigators speculated that the plane could have collided with a foreign object, a weather balloon or even a flock of birds, but there were no traces on the plane body to support the theory. No failure of the engines or the control system was found either. In other words, the accident remained a mystery.

commonly accepted. Most officials that are still alive insist that the air traffic control at the local aerodrome, from which Gagarin's plane started on the day of the accident, was in a poor state. However, airman Igor Kuznetsov, one of those who demand a new investigation of Gagarin's death, came up with a new theory in his book *Investigation: 40 Years Later*, published in 2007.

"I was finally able to get to the core," he told Russian mass media. "Using state-of-the-art computer software, I was able to reconstruct the plane's trajectory and exact movements during its last minutes."

"I fully reconstructed the events of 37 years ago and I believe I have found the real reason of the accident." Someone, he says, forgot to shut the ventilation panel in the cabin; as a result, pressure went down, and the pilots lost conscience. "By all appearances, the reason of the tragedy was the human factor, the incompetence of a mechanic that prepared the plane for that flight," he said.

Everything that is a little more com-



No one could understand why the two experienced pilots had not ejected themselves from the plane. Russian mass media wrote at the time that Gagarin stayed at the steering wheel to prevent the plan from running into a school nearby, but no proofs were offered to support this theory. The investigation conducted in 1986 suggested that the MiG-15 had been thrown off its course by turbulence caused by a supersonic aircraft in the district.

This theory and the theory that the plane went off its course to avoid colliding with a weather balloon became

plicated than a metal bar can break down. And aircraft even more so. Someone on the ground could have forgotten or missed something. Technically, however, it is unlikely that the plane's control system did not react to the open panel. It would have been different had the unfortunate MiG carried a flight recorder. Alas...

Live or dead, Yuri Gagarin symbolizes the humankind's terrestrial dream, the strength of human spirit and ultimate heroism. No one can strip him of the high title of the world's first man in space and of his planet-wide fame.

Andrei Vasilyev

EURASIA CANAL: LOOKING FOR ARGUMENTS

A Russian-Kazakh working group will soon have to evaluate the advantages and potential negative consequences of the plan to connect the Caspian and Azov Seas with a new canal.

The idea is definitely among the mega projects the implementation of which sometimes changed the world's geopolitical map beyond recognition. They put into movement so many factors that it was impossible for builders to take them all into account, and they often had to act based on guesses instead of scientific forecasts.

So there is no wonder that history knows or, more often, hushes up numerous examples when a grand plan to change a country or a region, when implemented, resulted in an economic or natural calamity.

Yet no matter how many questions a new mega project raised, two were always the main ones, a convenient location and the best time for its implementation.

Whether the idea was to move river waters, to connect seas, to build transportation or irrigation channels, to lay transcontinental roads, to fell forests or to develop deserts, one could not act without getting those answers. Ignoring even one of the factors is the reason that Suez was actually built three times over 3,000 years, the channel built in West Siberia upon Stolypin's initiative was never used, Stalin's irrigation plan for Central Asia resulted in the drying of Lake Aral and intensive development of Kazakhstan's steppes brought about exhausted land, eroded soil and strong dust storms.

The plan to build a canal between the Caspian and Azov Seas has been around for over 80 years. Still, there are more questions than answers. In the 1930s, there were attempts to carry it out, but they were never finished. In the 1970s and 1980s, the idea was again debated actively, but, with the green movement rising, it was discarded due

to unpredictable environmental consequences and unclear economic effect.

In 2007, Vladimir Putin, active proponent of developing trade and economic relations with Kazakhstan, proposed reviving the project, in which he saw huge opportunities for the two countries' economies, and in 2009, the Eurasian Development Bank allocated \$3.9mn for studying two options, the construction of the Eurasia canal and building the second Volga-Don canal.

It would seem the dividends the new route from Asia to Europe would bring were so obvious that there was nothing to discuss. Russia and Kazakhstan would strengthen their political and economic union. Kazakh and Turkmen hydrocarbons, which make up 6%-10% of the world's reserves, would get a new, cheaper transportation route. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan would get a way to the Mediterranean Sea and, consequently, the world ocean, via the Black Sea. Besides, it has long been proved that water transport is one of the cheapest and most efficient, which means the economy would develop faster. So the advantages are numerous.

It should be remembered, though, that experts estimate the basic variant of the Eurasia canal to cost about 500 billion roubles, and Volga-Don will be approximately as expensive. This is a lot of money, and it will be included in the cost of hydrocarbons carried by tankers. It is no coincidence that Viktor Danilov-Danilyan, correspondent member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said recently, "As long as the existing cargo flow easily passes along the existing routes, the Volga-Don canal cannot be described as a bottleneck."

"The capacity of Russia's Caspian

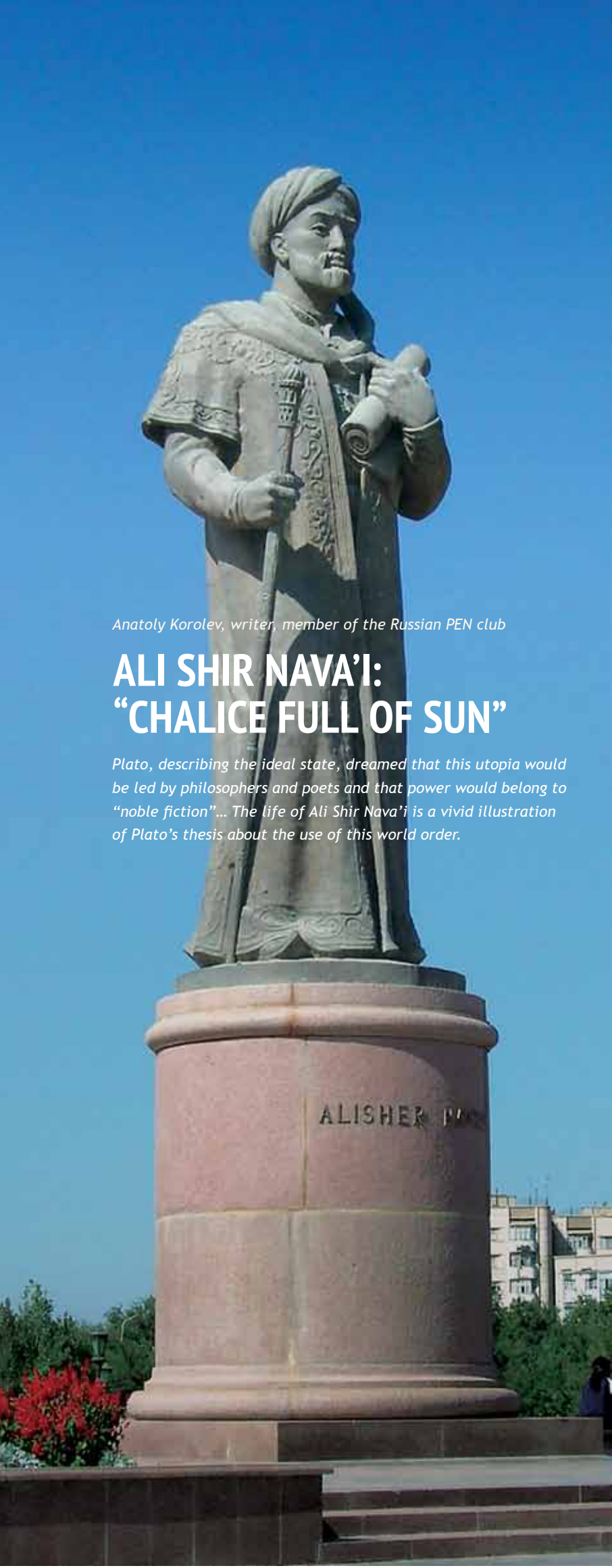
ports that receive cargo from the East (from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan) is not exhausted, they are loaded to 70% only. Since the question is mainly about oil and petrochemicals, the possibility of successful competition on the part of pipeline transport, which is more efficient and environment-friendly, is obvious."

Scientists have another concern. The territory, where Eurasia or Volga-Don is to be built, has mainly the arid climate, characterized with high temperatures and little precipitation. In other words, water here is not ample. Actually, there is a shortage of it. So it will be a problem to fill up the channel, floodgates and the reservoirs necessary for its functioning. Not to mention that the appearance of so many big water bodies may seriously affect the natural balance.

Taking all risks into account is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, it should be the goal, since the price is very high. Moreover, it has grown further after the Customs Union came into being. One of the main areas of the Union's activities is organization of transcontinental shipments. The emergence of a new water route will significantly expand the opportunities of the transport network, first of all, for Kazakhstan and Russia and to a certain extent for Belarus.

This answers one of the most relevant questions, what will the route carry? Even if oil and gas remain the dominating cargo for some time, as the route develops, it will be filled with goods produced not only in the Customs Union's member states, but also in other countries, for which the water route will turn out preferable due to its low cost.





Anatoly Korolev, writer, member of the Russian PEN club

ALI SHIR NAVA'I: “CHALICE FULL OF SUN”

Plato, describing the ideal state, dreamed that this utopia would be led by philosophers and poets and that power would belong to “noble fiction”... The life of Ali Shir Nava'i is a vivid illustration of Plato's thesis about the use of this world order.

For several years, Nava'i was the right hand of Husayn Bayqarah, the ruler of Khorasan, who was also a poet and wrote under the pseudonym of Husayni. Nava'i stood too close to the throne and it is worth pondering what came out of this dramatic rapprochement.

His true name was Nizam-al-Din Mir Ali Shir. Nava'i is a pseudonym, which in Farsi means “melodic.” He also had another pen name, Fani. Unlike the former, it is translated as “perishable, mortal.” The righteous Time has established the one that was true, Nava'i.

He was born to a noble family in the blessed Herat, an influential cultural center of the Medieval East, the motherland of fine arts - music, calligraphy, Persian miniatures, ornament, court poetry and fancy architecture. His father was a high-ranking official from the Timurid elite (the descendants of Emir Timur) and he raised his son among Khorasan's crown princes. It was there that the two boys, Ali Shir and Husayn, the future shah, became friends.



The talent of Nava'i blossomed early; at the age of 15 he already was recognized as a poet and was expected to become famous. But the sweet-voiced bard was since his young years concerned with the philosophy of existence, problems of life and death, and because of that he chose the most ascetic out of the philosophical trends of his era, the path of a dervish, a Sufi school of pauper prophets from the Naqshbandi order. And he lived at court sticking to the austere ethics of abstinence - he observed the vow of chastity and didn't have a harem.

Ali Shir Nava'i spent his young years in the solitude of soul and thought, first in Herat, then in Mashhad and Samarqand. The purpose of his life was creation and his poetic legacy is huge - thousands of verses, dozens of big poems and poem collections. To this abundance, we should add several big philosophic treatises and linguistic works on the problems of poem composing, as well as historical treatises on the history of Iranian kings and the lives of oriental prophets.

It seemed that his entire life would pass in the solitude of the paradise of his imagination, but in April 1472, Samarqand was seized by the army of Sultan Husayn, the one who had been the poet's friend since childhood, and he asked Nava'i to stand by him at his throne. The victorious ruler appointed the poet keeper of the seal, gave him the title of emir and the position of

vizier. In fact, he became the ruler's right hand. Judging by the documents that have remained from those times, Ali Shir Nava'i coped with the state affairs fairly well and ruled Khorasan alongside Shah Husayn for almost 15 years, focusing on developing culture, supporting poetry and art, glorifying Herat, where he supervised the construction of madrasahs, mosques, libraries,

baths and caravanserais. And, of course, support was offered to musicians, calligraphers, artists, translators, writers and historians...

It would seem that everything proved Plato's thesis - power held by the "noble fiction" was for the good of a state. However, in 1487, the relation between the shah and the vizier broke off. The reason has not survived till our day. According to some vague rumors, Ali Shir was defamed by jealous court nobilities. Punishment at the oriental court was extremely cruel, but the sultan spared his friend and sent him to honorable exile, making him the ruler of the remote province of Astarabad. Ali Shir returned from there in a year, fully gave up power and received from the shah a firman on his discharge and permission to live in Herat without carrying out court functions.

The great poet and dervish spent the rest of his life in the solitude of sweet-voiced poetry and gloomy temporality of thought, focusing on his last poems and treatises, "Instructions of the Old Age", "Collection of the Genteel", "Lover of the Heart" and "The Language of Birds."

A wise man's spiritual life is complicated and huge. Nava'i made a true language revolution. Before him, Farsi - Persian - was considered the only language worth a poet. Nava'i, however, refuted this dogma and created sweet-voiced verses in his native Turkic, Cha-

gatay (ancient Uzbek), which before him had never been thought of as suitable for poetry. Similarly, in the time of Mozart, the German language fought for the right to sing opera, where Italian dominated.

Here we need to take a break and look at the language landscape of that time.

Before Islam, the entire nomadic culture of Central Asia spoke in Turkic languages. It was the speech of cavalry, the folklore of night marches, its earliest written monument being The Penitential Prayer of the Manichaeans written in ancient Uyghur. Further development of literature was sporadic and chaotic. The arrival of Islam was marked not only by the victory of Timur, who became the leader of Ma Wara'un-Nahr, the union of Muslim states and peoples of Central Asia, but also by the complete triumph of Farsi, the Persian language that became the main language of the new empire and a model for all other tongues, whose "low" speech was deemed harsh, brutal and void of any poetic qualities.

Samarqand became the first center of the new empire, and Herat -- the native town of Ali Shir Nava'i - the second. Having perfectly mastered Farsi, Ali Shir created a lot of wonderful works in Persian, such as the poem collection Treasury of Thought in the genre of gazal. The poet included four periods of life in it, childhood, youth, manhood and old age: "Wonders of Childhood," "Rarities of Youth," "Wonders of Manhood" and "Instructions of Old Age." He celebrated the ordinary feelings of love, loyalty and friendship with a Sufi pressure, turning poetry into mystic ecstasy of a spiritual confession.

Still, the crown of his poetry were masterpieces written in Chagatay. It is the Hamsa, or The Quintet, a collection of five epic poems. It includes the moral didactic poem Wonders of Good People, the heroic action dastans Layli and Majnun, Farhad and Shirin, Seven Planets and The Wall of Iskander.

Moreover, Ali Shir Nava'i chose an unusual way to prove that Chagatay was melodic and suitable for poetry: he re-wrote Nezami's great poems in

it! This fact later made some philologists to doubt the value of The Quintet, and some researches even decided that Nava'i was just a Nezami translator.

But they were wrong. On the contrary, accepting his great predecessor's challenge, Ali Shir Nava'i chose the most intricate way to prove his point - he wrote a new text above the original, where the beauty of Farsi was molded in Turkic. The poet dipped his hands in the Golestan waterfall and drank the ambrosia. Repeating the plot outline of the original, he introduced his own accents, reinterpreting the story or giving another meaning to events and characters. The best example of such a change is the poem Farhad and Shirin. In Nezami's work, the events center around Shah Khosrau, but Nava'i makes Farhad, an ideal epic athlete, the embodiment of Allah's righteous force, his poem's main character.

Nava'i finished his Quintet with the poem The Wall of Iskander, in which with the bitterness of a prophet he described the ideal image of a ruler (as if taking up from Plato!) who follows the rules of justice, thus setting off the injustice of the existing mundane authorities.

As a result, the poet won: Turkic was recognized as equal to Farsi for the richness of its vocabulary and flexibility. But

even the winner, the poet, which stood so close to the throne, was unable to found a just kingdom. Pondering on the life of the court poet, thinking of the linguistic problems of his work, one cannot but wonder what worried Europe or, for example, Russia in that distant 15th century?

Well, the answer is not far away... In 1441, when Nava'i was born, in Europe began the era of Guttenberg, the dawn of book printing; at the same time, Italian Fra Angelico painted the fresco Deposition of Christ, philosopher Nicholas of Cusa completed the treatise De Docta Ignorantia (On Learned Ignorance), in which he proved the supremacy of dark intuition over rational cognition, and Brunelleschi built his masterpiece, Palazzo Pitti, in Florence. And Russia... alas, it was sinking in the mire of feuds, with Princes of Galicia fighting those of Muscovy, Vasily Kosoy against Vasily II. The only memorable historic event was the return to Moscow of Metropolitan Isidor, who was invited to the Florentine convocation and brought to the Grand Prince its decision on uniting the Catholic and Orthodox churches under the Pope. Moscow rejected the decision and banished the metropolitan.

Given this, the exquisite intellectual tasks of developing Turkic, the issues

of verse composing Nava'i raised in his treatise Scales of Meters would seem a cloud of golden dreams to Moscow.

But by the end of his life in 1501, at the beginning of the new, 16th, century, Russia already had something to boast and could offer the humankind an equally exquisite fruit. It was monk Dionisius, a genius icon painter, who at the same time painted the Our Lady's Church in the Ferapont Monastery (now protected by UNESCO) on the other end of the world. The great artist used the language of painting to express his ingenious opinion of the fate of Christ and Virgin Mary: he celebrated only joy and happiness, discarding the suffering!

Dionisius's sunny note was close to the Ali Shir's perception of the world. Himself an ascetic and dervish, he praised the joys of life in his verses:

*The chalice, reflecting the sun,
showed me the right path.*

*And I heard a voice speaking, "Your
friend is reflected in wine."*

*In the chalice of my heart, there is
the image of my friend, but also the
rust of sadness,*

*Pour generously moisture in the chal-
ice, and I will be cured.*

*If there is such a chalice, it is worth a
hundred worlds.*

These lines by Nava'i surprisingly fit the general movement of human spirit in the Middle Ages. Thinker Nicholas of Cusa reflected on the supremacy of simple truths above fruitless philosophizing, a Russian icon painter celebrates the happiness of Christ and paints the sunny world of Palestine in a winter cathedral on the verge of a snowy desert, and an oriental poet and Sufi dervish praises "wine of wisdom."

After Nava'i's death, his fame grew only stronger; 500 years later, a city was named after him in Uzbekistan. There are monuments to him in Moscow, Navoi, Tashkent and Tokyo, and new ones will soon be built in Baku and Washington. His name was given to a crater on Mercury, the planet that is closest to the sun. It was not for nothing that he wrote, "The sun poured fire in my cup... It must want something from me..."



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OAO NIKTISK

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The Research, Development and Design Institute of Steelwork

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Niktisk is a leading supplier of construction steelwork to the Moscow region's construction sites. It is situated in the town of Shchyolkovo, the Moscow region, near the Sokolovskaya railway station. Owns 8,000 sq m of production facilities. Its monthly capacity is 200 steel frames

Has the following equipment:

- overhead crane with a bearing capacity of 15;
- guillotine shears (with a width of up to 20 mm);
- endmilling machine;
- three-roll assembly;
- bandsawing machine
- oxygen machine cutting station
- station for machine welding in a mixture of argon and carbon dioxide;
- drilling, milling and turning machines

Has vehicles for shipping frames of up to 12 m.

The company produces steelwork for the following:

- frames for industrial and administrative buildings, housing, schools, sports facilities;
- beams, masts;
- water towers;
- chimneys;
- fuel and water storage facilities;
- silo towers for bulk materials.

The company has supplied steel frames for the following customers in Moscow: the planetarium, the Audit Chamber, the Arbitration Court, the Forensic Medicine building, warehouses in Lobnya, Shchyolkovo and Mytishchi.

The company has cooperated with foreign firms:

Skanska (Finland) and EFN-MSZ (Austria).

The main types of building structures have certificates of conformity to state standards issued by the state unitary enterprise Mostroysertifikatsia.

The company's CEO: Galina Petrova, PhD in Technical Sciences, 15 years of experience in managing steelwork production. Tel.: +7 (496) 566 40 16, +7 (496) 566 99 68.

Steelwork production manager: Konstantin Ilyukovich, PhD in Technical Sciences, 25 years of experience with the Molodechno steelwork plant, the Sokolovsky steelwork plant and Niktisk; 15 years of experience in research on steelwork welding.

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Commercial director: Nikolai Volkhin, 10 years of experience in managing steelwork production. Tel.: +7 (496) 566 40 18. Mobile: +7 926 171 45 76.

e-mail: niktisk@mail.ru
www.niktisk.net



OAO NIKTISK

www.niktisk.net

OAO Niktisk specializes in production and assembly of construction steelwork: frames for industrial and administrative buildings, housing, schools, sports facilities; beams, masts; chimneys; fuel and water storage facilities; silo towers for bulk materials.

The company owns a plant equipped with everything necessary to produce 2,500 metric tons of steelwork a year.

The company supplies steelwork for construction and reconstruction of facilities to all regions of Russia, mostly to Moscow and the Moscow region.

We welcome cooperation with::

Investors and customers for design, production and assembly of steelwork

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Can be installed in window openings, on balconies, roofs, facade walls and floor decks at a height of 100 m and up.

Breaking weight: **at least 15,000 kgf.**

Pass-through capacity: **up to 20 people per minute.**

Functions in any weather and a wind velocity of up to 10 m/s.

Can be put in the working position very quickly (10 to 120 seconds depending on the modification).

Doesn't require preliminary training or special equipment for rescues.

Allows rescuing people of any weight, age and sex regardless of their physical condition.

Descending in the pipe, rescues have almost no fear of height.

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ZAO NPP MAGRATEP

www.magratep.ru

ZAO NPP Magratep designs and manufactures **SHF electronic equipment**, including powerful generating electric vacuum devices – magnetrons, and industrial units with them.

SHF energy is one of the young types of energy that have unique qualities: a high penetration capability, dimensional instantaneous heating and high manageability. SHF units for processing materials can be created with significant capacities; they are energy-saving and environmentally friendly.

At present, the company is designing industrial units for processing organic and mineral materials in three areas:

- 1. Units for microwave processing of mineral raw materials** (drying of close-bodied concentrates that contain rare-earth elements; phlogopite raw materials of industrial origin, peat processing).
- 2. Units for microwave** high-intensity heat treatment of grain products (preparing fodder, disinsectization, disinfection and stimulation of grain).
- 3. Units for microwave warming-up of thickened petrochemicals in railway cisterns.**

Required cooperation

Business contacts in investment development with all interested organizations.

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OOO TERRA-SV

www.terrasv.ru

OOO Terra-SV has been producing and selling hard landscaping since 2003.

It has offices in Moscow and St Petersburg.

Required cooperation:

Due to a growing demand in plastic street children's play and sports equipment, the company plans to establish direct contacts with Chinese factories, manufacturers of street children's play and sports equipment (playgrounds), and to organize an assembly factory of street children's play and sports equipment (street training facilities) out of plastic spare parts manufactured in China. We hope for mutually beneficial cooperation.

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TeppaCB

ООО Terra-SV is a leading Russian producer of hard landscaping and steel frames for gardens and parks.

Everything we plan, design and manufacture is centered around the goal of landscaping cities and towns. We currently have our own state-of-the-art production facilities equipped with cutting-edge equipment and supply our products not only to St Petersburg, but also to Moscow and other regions. The company's mission is to improve the quality of life.

We can manufacture items with your custom pattern. Our designer will help you to choose the suitable color scheme and offer some design solutions. Upon your request, our products can be delivered to and installed at any address in any city.

We accept orders for manufacturing of **NON-STANDARD** concrete products. Our products have been endorsed by the St Petersburg and Moscow city-planning and architecture committees.

We give warranty for all of our products.

The company has a license for the construction of buildings and structures of responsibility levels I and II and is successfully engaged in comprehensive landscaping.

We offer:

- decorative figures for playgrounds;
- street benches, planters and litter-boxes;
- decorative borders, fences and fountains;
- equipment for vertical gardening;
- sports game equipment;
- metal fences
- and a lot more.



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«PROTEC»

PROTEC is a company, located in FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA at the North-East of Italy, that has been established by a group of professional engineers, who collected together the complementary experiences in process plant design and production of steel components to offer engineering, consulting and procurement services for process equipment and piping components employed in the oil and gas, petrochemical, chemical and power generation industry.

The technicians, joining the company, are chemical and mechanical engineers with a wide background in the process design of petroleum refining and petrochemical units, in the production of steel castings and forgings and in the manufacturing of equipment and components for the above mentioned industrial sectors.

PROTEC can provide procurement operations, including expediting, final inspection and testing on behalf of the customer for the above mentioned equipment and piping components. Manufacturers are primary Italian companies, with whom the company holds technical cooperation supplying engineering services, metallurgy consulting and procurement of high integrity castings and forgings from top quality steel foundries and forging shops, where some of our technicians spent over 20 years of their working life.

PROTEC is in the position to offer the best technical and economical solutions to the Customer's inquiries, providing top quality combined with competitive price and on time delivery.

DESIRED COOPERATION

PROTEC is in the position to offer the best technical and economical solutions to the Customer's inquiries, providing top quality combined with competitive price and on time delivery. The equipment (vessels, heat exchangers, coolers, distillation towers, reactors) on the process data sheet and specification of the customer and referenced codes (API-ASME, ASME Boiler code section VIII, TEMA, PED 97/23, EN 13445, etc.).

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Татьяна Синицына

FRAGRANT DETECTIVE

The life-giving union of high-land herbs that serve as a setting for the clean diamond of Lake Issyk-Kul... The blessing of this natural wonder has been expressed in a unique formula of a balm that has become one of Kyrgyzstan's assets. Its creator already lies in the ground of the land he loved and studied all his life, solving the nature's riddles little by little. Academician Arstanbek Altymyshev was a laureate of the State Award, author of a research on shilajit, creator of most powerful adaptogenes. All this conceals not only the forces of nature, but also a human's story that may be worth attention.

"If you know your days are numbered, and there is a "fatal secret" living in the soul that you have had to conceal, how strong is the desire to let it out! For people, for chronicles. Then you find a soul that accepts the mysterious confession that is breaking out of your soul. Dying academician entrusted his friend, Alexander Zelinchenko, with this secret.

"It was in the 1970s. The world was flooded with terror. Basques, "Red brigades", the IRA, Palestinians... And, alongside the traditional explosions and shooting, they began using poisons for individual killings. A "prick of an umbrella" (or something else) in the crowd, and it is over. But the death didn't come at once, only in a day or two, and no traces of the poison were left in the organism. It was obvious that it was made not by amateurs, but by talented connoisseurs.

"Once I was invited to Moscow and offered a long trip, all the way to Latin America. There, in a town lost in the selva, a former industrial sponsor of Hitler - one of those who after the war had changed the face, the continent and the master - built a huge serpentarium. The rumour had it that he had gathered there poisonous reptiles from all over the world. And all this natural force was used to produce poisons. On an industrial scale! In short, I was asked to undertake industrial espionage. In the name of the highest possible goals, of course. To say that, as a scientist, I was shocked is to say nothing. But, after some pressure, I gave in...

"I began to actively study Spanish. It was easy, since I studied Latin at the university and had been improving it all


my life - a pharmacologist cannot do without it. Soon I was able to speak and even write fairly decent Spanish.

"My departure was postponed three times. Finally, I was invited to the Soviet Academy of Sciences, allegedly, for a conference. There I was told that everything was ready. The legend made me, a Kyrgyz, a Japanese! But the one born and living far from his historical motherland. Luckily, I had a suitable appearance. It was suggested that Spanish would be enough for me in the mysterious country I was going to, since I had mastered it well by the time. But, to be on the safe side, I studied Japanese for six months, and also not without success.

"I departed from Amsterdam and arrived at the destination (in Chile) in a day. I felt awful: it was 40 degrees below zero in Moscow when I left, and here in the tropics it was 30 above zero. And I was scared. But I was met nicely, driven 60 miles and settled at a luxurious house among virgin forests. I walked and watched. I was astounded at how everything here, far from civilization, was sensible and convenient. Life full of comfort, without any everyday problems, one on one with your favorite cause, what else can a scientist dream of?

"I was given a lab and personnel. And immersed myself into work. I had free access to the entire serpentarium. It had all monsters created by nature. I saw the coral snake, the green mamba, the Egyptian cobra and the black widow. And didn't just see, I worked with these extremely poisonous reptiles, conducting laboratory experiments.

"Nearby, a middle-aged woman with the Polish name Helen lived. Well-groomed and well-dressed, with a nice hair-



cut and figure, she looked attractive for her age. Sometimes we would exchange a couple of words, but nothing more.

“On the weekend, I often went to a town nearby where I met the courier. I submitted my report and took money - the contract with the serpentarium implied covering my own expenses. Everything progressed as planned. I even invented a new cholagogic medication with a Pole that lived here.

“It was the third month of my work in Chile. The news of the military coup and the president’s assassination found me at the lab. My scenario did not have provisions for such events. I went to meet the courier, but didn’t get any instructions. Absent-minded like any scientist, I did not pay much attention to the news of the coup and enthusiastically continued my research. Meanwhile, the junta that came to power (not without my serpentarium’s owner, as it turned out later) was playing the master in the country.

“Several days passed. I was alone, concentrating on a report, when the door creaked. Not a professional in the cloak and dagger games, I involuntarily shuddered when I heard Helen speaking broken Russian. “Don’t be surprised. My father was Ukrainian and fled to America in the 1920s. Listen to my advice, leave as soon as you can. There is an unspoken rule: anyone who surrenders a Communist to the authorities in this poor country will get a color TV set; for two Communists, they give a car. A Bolshevik from Russia will make you unbelievably rich. I am leaving now, but here is something for you...”

“She left an envelop with some money and the copy of a fax message with all my details - who and where from I was. It was suggested that I should be watched until “the final

decision is made.” Not going to the house, I ran through the jungle to the nearest village. There I hired a boat.

“...At the Soviet consulate, they initially met me wide-eyed. Who? What serpentarium? Then, realizing that my Russian is too vivid and fruity for a Japanese, they did what had to be done. I received a ticket to Cuba via Lima. In Peru, the police entered the airplane, looking for a “Russian professor.” Looking as a “descendant of Samurais”, I didn’t catch their attention.

“In Havana, a car was waiting for me at the airport...

“This is my story...”

From InfoSHOS dossier: Academician Arstanbek Altymyshev (1930-2000), a big expert in pharmacological and toxicological research of physiologically active substances, both natural and synthetic, on the joint of biology, medicine and chemistry, and their theoretical validation; author of 40 inventions. He theoretically justified and put into medical practice healing balms that represent natural combinations of biologically active substances, selectively received from ecologically clean raw materials, and that have healing and biostimulating effect. Laureate of numerous national and international state awards.



SCO Business Club

The SCO Business Club is a virtual facility of the InfoSCO website that provides organizational and information support of business projects and initiatives within the SCO framework.

Relying on the assistance of the SCO Business Council, Interbank Consortium and Public Coordination Council in support of the SCO, the SCO Business Club is involved in development of business relations, confidence-building measures and active exchange of experience and ideas between the SCO states.

Priority tasks of the Business Club include:

- conduct issue-related conferences and roundtables with representatives of Russian state authorities and business communities;
- prepare analysis and expert reports in various branches of economy, monitor media outlets;
- provide business-communications (presentations, exhibitions and other events);
- conduct information & advertizing campaigns in mass media and Internet;
- develop databases of commercial entities, select potential partners and investors, provide for telemarketing.

Businessmen of the SCO states interested in promotion of their products and services, establishment of contacts with the Russian business communities and state authorities are most welcome to the Club.

www.infosco.biz



«GREENWOOD»: INVESTMENTS IN RUSSIA



«Greenwood» Business Park is an international wholesale trade and exhibition center opened in 2011 in Krasnogorsk district of Moscow region. The main task of «Greenwood» Business Park is to create a modern, convenient and efficiently functioning business platform for the development of trade and bilateral economic relations between Russia and China. «Greenwood» Business Park realizes this important and ambitious goal successfully, creating the unique conditions for rational conduct of business and building up partnership for entrepreneurs of the both countries. «Greenwood» Business Park not only provides comfortable office premises, elegant exhibition halls and showrooms, but also a complex of logistic, legal and financial services, including search for business partners, reliable supplier of high-grade goods, as well as measures intended for expansion of market outlets.

«Greenwood» Business Park has no parallel in Russia:

Cai Guiru, the President of the Chinese Entrepreneurs Union in Russia, the director of «Greenwood» Business Park, says: «This year is particular for the relations between Russia and China: we celebrate 10 years from the date of signing of the agreement about good neighborliness, friendship and cooperation between our countries. This is a serious milestone: now we may summarize interim results, estimate the scale of the work done and shape plans for the future. Political trust between our countries is growing, strategic cooperation is developing. Russia and China intend to continue to follow the principles of the cooperation agreement for the sake of creation of a bright future for peoples of the both countries».

it combines office premises and permanent exhibition of goods supplied directly by producers, offering simultaneously the opportunity to purchase those goods right there and then. There are 15 freestanding buildings with office

«Greenwood» Business Park in figures:

20 hectares - the total area

15 modern freestanding buildings

The total floor space of trade and office premises is

132 000 square meters

The parking area floor space is **110 000** square meters



and trading premises in the territory of «Greenwood». The buildings are intended for specific production branches, including high-tech products, clothes, textiles, furniture, building materials, electronics. The Business Park realizes a complex approach: the best consumer goods, high quality equipment and machines, high technology and medicine will be presented in its territory.

«Greenwood» placed its stake on the segment of high-end goods and the assortment width: the task of the Business Park is to open for Russian wholesalers, which means for the final customer also, high quality and high-tech Chinese goods, to ensure simple and easier access to high-ranked products at international market outlets. Now «Greenwood» is the largest platform for wholesale international trade.

PROJECT OF NATIONWIDE SCALE

Creation of «Greenwood» Business Park became a logical continuation and implementation of fundamental ideas of the Agreement on bilateral cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. Mutually profitable development and permanent advancement of economical mutual relations: the management of the Business Park considers realization of those tasks resulting from the agreement signed between our countries as its objective. «Greenwood» Business Park was created under the aegis of the Center for Development of Trade and Man-

Li Feng, the commercial director of «Greenwood» Business Park, has said: «Trade relations between China and Russia are distinguished with stable dynamics of intensive growth during many years. The trade turnover between the two countries reached the pre-crisis level amounting. USD 8.5 billion trade contracts were signed, Russian ruble was allowed to be traded at the currency exchange of China, and China became the main trade partner of Russia. This is only a part of our bilateral achievements in this decade».

agement of Investments in Europe and «Chengtong» group of companies, a commercial and industrial conglomerate with state capital. As of today, «Greenwood» is the largest investment project of the People's Republic of China in the territory of the Russian Federation. One of the tasks of the Business Park is to create a platform, a base for further growth of Chinese investments in the economy of Russia.

Opening of «Greenwood» positively affects the growth of investment attractiveness of Moscow region, the activities of the Business Park is directly connected with the prospects of strategic development of the economy of Moscow



region. The work of «Greenwood» will facilitate a marked increase in tax revenues to both the regional budget and the federal budget: the growth of receipts will ensure economic activity of large Chinese and multinational companies, on a conservative estimate their number will exceed 1000. The purpose of «Greenwood» is to facilitate creation of about 10 000 new jobs in its territory, which will affect positively both economic and social climate of Moscow region. Experts are convinced that the strategy of complex promotion of well-known Chinese brands will strongly stimulate development of the economy of Moscow region.

UNIQUE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

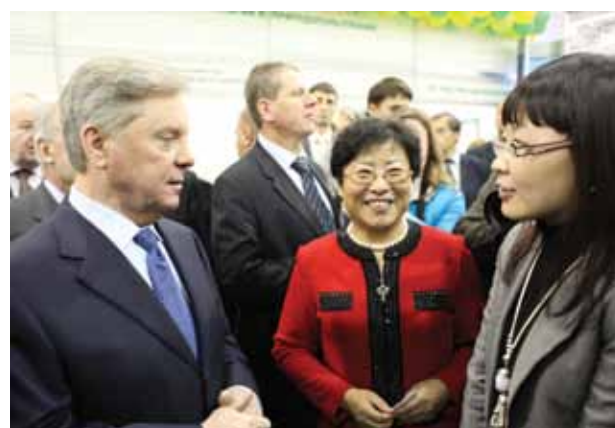
The uniqueness of the Business Park is in the fact that «Greenwood» works for the purpose of establishment and support of partnership economic links between businessmen of China and Russia. If you wish to come to a new, international level, to open up the emerging markets, if you need reliable suppliers of high-quality goods, if you wish to enlarge assortment or to find new customers, then the possibilities, obtained results and commercial resources of «Greenwood» Business Park are the optimal solution of those tasks.

The motto of «Greenwood» is «Giving The Green Light

«Chengtong» (China Chengtong Group) is a state giant company, trade and logistic conglomerate created in 1992. «Chengtong» group of companies is among the top 500 enterprises in China.

for Your Business». Owing to a system of showrooms acting as permanent exhibitions of diversified commodities with permanently renovated assortment, it is always possible to select products meeting the highest quality standards in «Greenwood». With the logistic and customs advantages of the Business Park, goods delivery is timely and doesn't give rise to unfavorable criticism. Owing to well-developed infrastructure and a wide range of additional services, it is comfortable and simple to do business in «Greenwood». The Business Park is one of the most efficient channels for wholesale selling of Chinese and Russian goods of high quality.

Unlike most of hypermarkets, «Greenwood» Business Park provides not only ready-to-use offices and showrooms. The Business Park implements practically the "one-stop service" idea: entrepreneurs merely place goods at a show-room, and «Greenwood» takes upon oneself any and all concerns and complexities: juridical, logistic and customs, personnel, even some issues of financing. For example, owing to a separate customs terminal, complex approach and its business standing «Greenwood» can speed up and optimize considerably customs clearance of goods.



Aspiring to create the most comfortable conditions for the work of leaseholders, «Greenwood» pays great attention to the issues of security and protection of both office and trading premises.

«Greenwood» may be named «a business town», the Business Park's infrastructure impresses really and truly: an excellent hotel is built for convenience of clients in its territory, banks and insurance companies operate, there are cafes and restaurants, public service establishments and shops, a printing house, Chinese medical center, fitness club and beauty parlor, enormous parking area, free transportation from «Skhodnenskaya» underground station. «Greenwood» may boast with excellent location: several convenient approach roads, the 69th kilometer of Moscow Circular Road in the vicinity of large satellite towns of Moscow, not far from Sheremetyevo International Airport.

Comfortable and modern office premises of the Business Park, as well as the level of consumer services and complex approach to solution various business and daily tasks of leaseholders, were appreciated deservedly by «CRE», a magazine dedicated to commercial real estate. «Greenwood» Business Park ranked first in its category in the annual competition conducted by the magazine among commercial real estate object in 2011 and was awarded with «The Golden Brick», a symbol of high quality and responsible attitude towards own business.

PROJECT OF DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

The strategic objective of «Greenwood» Business Park is to facilitate the permanent growth of exchange of goods between China and Russia. On the one hand, it is necessary to increase the sales volume, on the other hand, it is required to market in Russia new and interesting goods produced in China, to make commodity circulation more differentiated, diversified, to expand cooperation in all branches of production. Besides trade, logistic and office infrastructure, the Business Park possesses also other resources for implementing this goal.

«Greenwood» Business Park is an active member and an integral part of the Chinese Entrepreneurs Union in Russia, owing to which it possesses special possibilities for strengthening of mutually profitable bilateral cooperation. The Business Park put into effect a number of measures, which stimulate establishment of strong trading relations and economic links between entrepreneurs of Russia and China helping them to solve topical problems of strategic and tactical development of business.

One of the tasks of «Greenwood» is to reveal and show to Russian entrepreneurs the modern business China: China of high-quality products and reliable customer service, China of innovative technologies, China of unique economic prospects. In the context of solving that problem «Greenwood» arranges regularly business trips of Russian entrepreneurs

to China, in the course of which it helps the Russians to find new suppliers and business partners.

Possessing a unique base of Chinese producers, experts find out individual solution for the problems facing your business, whether it is a start-up or an enterprise existing in the market for a long time. As for the search for partners and suppliers, diversification and the conquest of new outlets, production cheapening and complex cost reduction, business standing and resources of «Greenwood» permit to do this quickly, safely and efficiently. In the first place, the Business Park pays attention to the guarantee of quality of goods and reliability of partnership relations.

IDEAS AND PROSPECTS

«Greenwood» Business Park constitutes a breakthrough in the cause of strengthening bilateral economic cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. On account of government support of the two states, as well as orientation towards the urgent needs of wholesale establishments, «Greenwood» creates in Moscow region the largest international business park for entrepreneurs working in various branches of economy, a business park with the most up-to-date and high-tech infrastructure, the most perfect range of services and the highest quality of the offered products.

