

MUSLIM RESURGENCE IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

By Hafeez Malik

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There are reasons for concentrating in this essay especially upon Muslims in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Tajikistan is on the border of Afghanistan and it extends quite further up to the areas of Sinkiang, the Wakhah Corridor that separates the USSR from Afghanistan and Pakistan. This very small sliver of land is like a little finger that was stuck in there by the British in the 19th century in order to separate the Indian sub-continent from the Russian Empire. Tajikistan is a Persian (Farsi) speaking republic and is essentially an extension of Iran--Iranian culture, Iranian language, Iranian heritage. Uzbekistan is a Turkic area like the rest of the republics in Soviet Central Asia.

Basically, there are in Central Asia two cultural traditions which have over a period of time influenced this region: the Iranian culture and the Turkic culture. The third element which has deeply influenced this region and provides a visible thread of unity is Islam. So, in the selection of these two republics--Uzbekistan and Tajikistan--I was able to view three distinct traditions which have prevailed in Central Asia since the seventh century.

In Uzbekistan I spent time in Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand. These cities are the ancient centers of Islamic civilization in Central Asia. I spent some time in Dushambe which is the capital of Tajikistan. Before the CPSU's 20th Party Congress, Dushambe was known as Stalinabad. When de-Stalinization campaign got underway the name was changed to Dushambe. In ancient times it used to be a marketplace every Tuesday and that is how it got the name Dushambe. In addition to these two republics, there are four Muslim republics of Kirghizia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan.

A few comments about the last two republics are in order. Actually, the Soviet authorities do not look upon Kazakhstan as part of Soviet Central Asia. There are some reasons for it. Geographically Kazakhstan is contiguous to Russia. Also, it is the second largest republic of the 15 republics in the Soviet Union, the first largest republic being Russia itself. Kazakhstan has nearly three million square kilometers of area, a vast region. So, geography is one reason.

Secondly, since the 1940s, the Soviet Union has managed to bring about a demographic revolution in Kazakhstan. Today, the local Kazakh population is no more than 37% in their own republic; 52% of the population is Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and other European nationalities and the remaining are other nationalities. In the census of 1979,

the population of Kazakhstan was 14.7 million, while according to the census of 1989 the population of Kazakhstan was 16,538,000. Certainly during the last ten years the Kazakh population has grown, but nevertheless, the Kazakhs are no more than 37%.

How was this the demographic revolution in Kazakhstan brought about? It started during World War II. As the German forces began to advance against the Soviet Union and leadership in Moscow began to realize that they could not stop the German advance as quickly as they should have, they tried to remove the industries that were located in the Ukraine and other parts of Russia and physically transplanted them into Kazakhstan. This was really a heroic attempt on their part because they feared that if these industries were left behind, the Germans would either smash them or probably take them back to Germany or other areas which the Germans had already conquered. This war time effort started the process of industrialization in Kazakhstan. As the industries began to grow in this area, more population from the Slavic republics--Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia--was attracted to Kazakhstan for permanent settlement.

Today, one can see in this republic the Soviet space programs and nuclear installations and it has become a highly industrialized place. Kazakhstan is more or less lost to the Islamic world and particularly to the world of the Muslims in the Soviet Union. I doubt very seriously if a serious movement for independence or for secession could effectively take place in Kazakhstan.

Azerbaijan is classified by the Soviet authorities as part of the Caucasus, which means it belongs to a group of three states which includes Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. Azeri Turks in Azerbaijan and geographically Azerbaijan SSR are closest to the Turks in the Republic of Turkey. Azeri Turks are divided now into three states: (1) Azerbaijan SSR; (2) across the border in Iran is the province of Azerbaijan; (3) and the modern Turkish republic. What makes a distinction between the Azeri Turks in Azerbaijan and the Turkish Republic is not linguistic or ethnic but only that a vast majority of the Azeri Turks in Azerbaijan are Shi'a Muslims. Most of the Azeri population in the Republic of Turkey is Sunni.

However, Azerbaijan is another area which is very highly industrialized. It is an area which produces oil and natural gas in very large quantities. Throughout the 1950s Azerbaijan produced nearly fifty percent of the oil and natural gas of the Soviet Union. Since the 1950s, other areas in the Soviet Union have also produced natural gas and oil, but Azerbaijan has remained a very large producer of oil and natural gas. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Azerbaijan produced almost 40% of the natural gas production of the Soviet Union. This source of energy is funnelled from Azerbaijan into Armenia and Georgia. These two republics are basically dependent upon Azerbaijan for their energy. If the energy stopped from Azerbaijan, both Georgia's and Armenia's industry would come to a grinding halt. This shows the industrial importance of Azerbaijan.

There is a well-known conflict between Azerbaijanis and the Armenians. During the last three to four years there have been riots in the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, where majority of the population is Armenian but it is administered within the

jurisdiction of Azerbaijan. Why was this enclave created? To Stalin this was a very convenient way of making the area interdependent: the Armenians would be dependent on the Azerbaijanis and the Azerbaijanis would be dependent on the Armenians. This kind of gerrymandering was done deliberately by Stalin.

In 1989, when the riots were taking place Moscow decided that this enclave would not be returned to Armenia and they clamped an emergency on the area and took over the administration directly from Moscow. What has happened more recently, is that the sentiment for freedom, for some degree of secession, assertion of personality, became quite visible in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. There has been a great deal of speculation that these riots between the Armenians and the Azeri Turks were encouraged by the KGB for one very good reason: the Soviet Union simply cannot afford to let Azerbaijan go and become independent because the independence of Azerbaijan would be quite viable geographically. When the Azeris began to demonstrate for independence they simply smashed the boundaries between Azerbaijan SSR and the Province of Azerbaijan in Iran. It was like smashing another Berlin Wall in the Caucasus. Economically the Azerbaijan SSR, would be absolutely viable. It would not have much trouble to be an economically independent state. Later on, it is entirely possible that it may create a serious problem for Iran because the province of Azerbaijan has also been secessionist in temperament from the control of Tehran. In the long run, an Azerbaijani state might emerge which would emphasize the unity between the Azerbaijanis across the border. This will drive a wedge between Farsi speaking Iran and the Turkish speaking Iran.

Also, one needs to take into consideration the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Soviet Union which have been improving more recently. The Islamic Republic of Iran has not been particularly encouraging the Azerbaijanis living in Azerbaijan SSR, to ask for independence from Moscow. But, in the years to come one might hear more and more about self-assertion, autonomy, and probably the word independence would be the last one to come. Presently, the movement is for autonomy, for self-assertion, the rights of Azerbaijanis, their culture, and their economics.

If one were to take all of these republics together, the Muslim population in these republics in the 1980s was estimated to be around 50 million. By the end of this century, it is estimated that the Muslim population in these republics would be between 60-65 million or even 70 million. It is a very large population and that makes the Soviet Union one of the largest Islamic states in the world, coming after Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. All Arab states or all other states in Africa where the Muslim populations are located, come afterwards. There isn't a single Arab state in the world at the present time which has the population of 60 million, let alone the population of 70 million which is projected for Soviet Central Asia possibly at the end of this century.

The conflict between Russia and Central Asia, or shall I say the struggle for power and domination (probably a better descriptive term) is not new. This grand spectacle of struggle for power and domination between Russia and Central Asia goes back to the 13th century.

Between 13th and 15th centuries, Muslim Tatars ruled over Russia. Finally, in 1480, the Tatar rule was overthrown. In celebration three churches were built within the Kremlin in Moscow, where one can see the cross planted atop the crescent, symbolizing the defeat of the Muslim Tatars by Christian Russia. In the 16th century, two simultaneous developments occurred. By 1552, Russia, after it had overthrown the Tatar yoke (this is a term that the Russian historians like to use), began to expand in the direction of Central Asia and by the middle of the 19th century, had conquered most of Central Asia. By 1929, the Central Asian Republics had appeared as we see them today with further refinements, administrative and geographic.

However, by 1526, the people of Uzbekistan, instead of marching in the direction of Moscow began to march in the direction of Afghanistan and India. That is how the last Mughal Empire of India came into existence. Zahir-ud-Din Babar, who was the Founder of the Mughal Empire in India, originated from the Fraghna Valley in Uzbekistan. Any Uzbek in the Uzbek Republic would tell very proudly, "Oh, we were the rulers of India from 1526 until 1857, finally our rule was overthrown by the British!" If the Uzbeks, instead of marching in the direction of Afghanistan and then India, had moved in the direction of Moscow, the situation might have been different historically speaking. Most of the Uzbek creative activity, their energy and resources and their imagination and manpower was absorbed in India and this development created (using a term which John Foster Dulles was very fond of repeating in the 1950s) the vacuum of power which historically made it possible for Russia to move in the direction of Central Asia. This, of course, is purely a historical speculation.

In the Fraghna Valley, particularly in the city of Andhejan, there are monuments raised to the Founder of the Mughal Empire, Zahir-ud-Din Babar. Every Uzbek today is proud of the fact that they were the dominant force in history and they find it emotionally very difficult to believe that now they are playing a subordinate role.

The Soviet religious and cultural policies once the republics were created followed a certain pattern. The whole of Central Asia was divided into six republics. There is speculation on the part of historians in the West, as well as nationalist historians of "Turkistan" that the unity of Turkistan, (and I'm using the word Turkistan to indicate all the republics without Tajikistan), was thwarted by dividing these republics into six and this was designed to smash the pan-Turkish or pan-Islamic dream in Central Asia. How did it happen?

Culturally, several steps were taken. The Turkish language in all these republics was written in the Arabic script. The Soviet authorities, forced the change to the Roman script and then made another switch to the Cyrillic alphabet, that is the Russian script. So, today all the various dialects of the Turkic language in Soviet Central Asia are written in the Russian script. This switch-over from the Arabic script to the Russian script has not enabled the Russians to read the Uzbek, Turkman, or the Kirghiz language. It facilitates, however, for an Uzbek or a Kirghiz or a Tajik to learn Russian faster. And it is amazing how many Russian words have been incorporated into these languages. It is unavoidable

because I think it is an universal phenomenon. Practically all languages in the world have adopted words either from the English language or from the French language, particularly, the language of science and art and also technology. But, I think the expectation was that once one forced these republics to switch over to the Russian script, they would forget about the past history. To some degree that has happened.

It became for the next generation pretty nearly impossible to read the past history of Uzbekistan, Turkmanistan or Tajikistan because the previous literature, whether it was history, art, poetry, or philosophy, or even religion, it was written in the Arabic script, and the younger generation that did not learn the Arabic script (and they were provided no opportunity to learn) became almost uneducated about their past almost overnight.

In addition to this, the Soviet state initiated an anti-Islam policy. While the focus will be on this theme by keeping these two Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in mind; the same observations can be replicated for the other republics. The city of Bukhara was a center of Islamic learning. In the Sunni Islamic world, after the Quran, the next most authentic source about Islam, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic laws, Islamic religion, is Imam Ismail al-Bukhari's compilation of the statements of the Prophet, Sahih al-Bukhari. Imam Bukhari was born in Bukhara, and that is where he was educated, and this is the place where the book was completed. The city of Bukhara even today contains a small number of old colleges (madressas) that have survived. They are absolutely beautiful. Bukhara at the peak of its glory contained literally hundreds of mosques and colleges.

When I landed at the Bukhara airport, I took a taxi and I started chatting with the taxi driver. The first thing he asked me, "Where are you from?" I said, "I'm from the United States." All of a sudden there was a pin-drop silence. There was no more conversation. We cruised along further five to ten minutes and I said, "You know, originally I come from Pakistan." So, he let his both hands go and he said, "Oh, Musselman, Musselman!" Muslim. I said, "Yes." He said, "You want to know something, now I'll tell you. Before the revolution in the city of Bukhara we had 540 mosques. Today we have only five. I'm now going to take you to the old madressas, three of them which have survived." They are absolutely beautiful places. They are unoccupied; one of them is used as a hostel, another as a dormitory. In one dormitory was a barbershop, and another one contained a bar. I asked the local liason officer to explain this situation. He answered: "You know, the repair works needed to be done and therefore these dormitories have been vacated." In other words, systematically the old madressas were depopulated; mosques were destroyed. In Bukhara there is still a beautiful astronomical tower that exists, but the liason officer said that it was useless, supposedly because the Amir of Bukhara at one time built it because he used to throw his wives down from the top!

The Soviet authorities forbade the pilgrimage to Mecca so the contacts with the outside world were cut off. This anti-Islamic policy and anti-religious policy was relaxed between 1941 and 1945 during the war years. Obviously, the Soviet Union needed the manpower from the area. A very large number of Central Asian Muslims were drafted into the armed forces of the Soviet Union. After the War, under Khrushchev, anti-

religious policy reappeared, but now under Gorbachev anti-religious policy has been totally abandoned.

Two other cities in the republic of Uzbekistan, Samarkand and Tashkent, also contained old schools and colleges. They are absolutely remarkable and are still standing. The legendary Amir Taimur (Tamerlaine), as he is known in the Western world, has his mausoleum in Samarkand in the heart of the old city. The city probably existed in the same way in the 19th century, or in the 18th century, reminding one of some of the very old cities in Pakistan and the Middle East.

The Soviet claims that the local population now enjoys a better standard of living and that there has been a substantial change in their material environment is only partially correct, and should be taken with a grain of salt. Their life is not as beautiful and as bright as they make the rest of the world to believe. The common complaint in both cities is that new mosques cannot be build; the copies of the Quran are not available. However, the policies have now been relaxed under Gorbachev since 1985, but no radical change has occurred.

In all fairness a few positive things were achieved in this area by the Soviets. Some positive changes were made in the culture of this area; for example, certain reforms were introduced in the family structure. It is now forbidden to a man to marry more than one wife. Polygamy was allowed in the old system of Islam and that was forbidden. Early marriage for girls was forbidden, and jobs for women became available although most Uzbek women simply do not work. They stay at home and they generally raise very large families. Six to eight children are common among Uzbek families. The veil was abolished; Muslim women now go about without wearing the veil. It is really remarkable because the way most Uzbek women dress is the same way that most women in Pakistan would dress today--the same shalwar and the same kamiz except that Muslim women in Pakistan would always have a dupata or shawl over their shoulders in order to cover their head. Uzbek women do not. Modern technological education became available both to men and women in Uzbekistan and other republics, and the result was that an Uzbek intelligentsia has emerged in Uzbekistan and you could say the same thing for Tajikistan and other republics. Modern native intelligentsia has emerged.

The big issue really is that if the Soviet policy has been anti-religious and anti-Islamic and it has destroyed the old traditions of Islam and Islamic learning, then how has Islam survived in the Soviet Union, and what lies ahead? Six factors have been responsible for the survival and the preservation of Islam in the Soviet Union:

The first factor is official Islam, as it was reorganized and restructured by the Soviet Union itself. The Soviet Union created four religious boards in Soviet Central Asia. One is located in Tashkent, and it was supposed to look after the religious needs of the people in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Second was in Ufa, for European Russia and Siberia, and there is a very large and substantial population of Tatar Muslims that live in Russia and Siberia. The third, Makhach-Qala was for Northern Caucuses and in Daghistan, and the fourth, in Baku deals with Trans-Caucasia. These four religious boards were created and religious dignitaries were installed with a title of a mufti in each board, in order to

control the Muslim population through religion. That was the purpose of the Soviet policy. These boards were not created to promote Islam or to propagate Islam but to control the Muslim population in each area. One positive effect of this policy was that in order to preserve law and order and maintain Soviet peace, the perennial Shi'a--Sunni conflict was never allowed to appear. So, what happened in the course of time was that the Shi'a-Sunni conflict virtually disappeared from the Soviet Union.

The official Islam's propaganda was designed to convince the Muslim population that Islam's basic philosophy is an egalitarian philosophy. The objective of Islam was to create equality, and this is exactly what socialism does. In other words, the official Islam never presented Islam as a bunch of superstition and socialism as a superior creed. What the official Islam tried to attempt was to present Islam as a perfectly good and proper religion but not in conflict with the Soviet system. However, the Communist Party propaganda, on the other hand, presented Islam as a bunch of superstition.

People in Central Asia will testify that nobody believed the party propaganda that Islam was a superstition. What really made some impression on the population was the feeling that Islam is a good religion, but that it is not in contradiction with the aims of socialism. Even official Islam, which was sanctioned by the Soviet authorities, in a very strange way in the long run strengthened Islam.

The second factor which was responsible for the survival of Islam is the emergence of Sufi mystic orders throughout Central Asia. Two Sufi orders [mystic orders] are very popular in Soviet Central Asia, the Naqshbandiya and the Qaderiya. These two Sufi orders have thousands upon thousands of followers. Their practice is that a spiritual leader belonging either to the Naqshbandiya order or the Qadiriya order would go to cities, or to the villages, and in private homes their followers would come and meet them and they would engage in religious practice in the privacy of their homes. In the long run, this has preserved the spirit of religious Islam in the populations.

The third factor is the family and social networks. Families are very strong in Soviet Central Asia. As an example an Uzbek engineer in Tashkent told this author,

I work here as an engineer. I am here because my father wrote me a letter and said you are now twenty-four years old and it is time for you to get married and here is an address. I have talked to people. There is a very beautiful young girl, and you go and visit with the family. In our judgement the girl is the best girl for you. You go and try to present yourself in a decent way to the family. Yesterday, I had a visit with them and I must say that my father has a tremendous wisdom. I think that the girl is very nice, very attractive.

I said to him, "You never saw the girl before in your life and now basically this marriage is being arranged by your father. It's a good thing that you like the girl, but supposing that you didn't like the girl, then what would you do?" He said, "You know, you are right. It's possible that I might have found the girl unpleasing or not particularly likeable, but I would have married her nonetheless." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, you see, for the

simple reason that if I did not have the blessings of my father, it would be like a curse that would hang over my head for the rest of my life."

Now, this is a modern man, so called modern man, a graduate of Tashkent University, has a degree in Engineering, and he makes a very good living; he was staying in the Tashkent Hotel, a rather expensive hotel for the Soviets and is rather successful. This is his feeling as he told me: "You know, this is not only me. This is just the way it is. Our marriages are arranged by the families. Of course, when the family says so and so is a girl that is just right for you, we go and visit them and introduce ourselves, and then tell our parents what our reactions are and that's how we get married."

Families have transmitted Islamic values, Islamic faith, and Islamic traditions to the children and the social network that the families create has been a most powerful force in the preservation of Islamic culture in the Soviet Union.

The fourth factor is, and this may come as a surprise, that the local Communist parties have been responsible for the preservation of Islam. If I had made these comments three to four years ago, especially before the Gorbachev era, people would have said that I have become a mouthpiece of the Soviet Union. But, the fact of the matter is that the local Communist parties have done a remarkably good job in preserving Islamic culture and Islamic traditions. Most Communist leaders and most members of the Communist Party accepted Marxism-Leninism merely as a technique of bureaucratic and political management. They did not accept it as an ideology that would transform them or would change their convictions or would drive a wedge between them and Islam. This is not the way the overwhelming majority of the Communist Party members and the leaders espoused Marxism-Leninism. They accepted it merely as the bureaucratic technique of political management.

The Soviet Communist Party presented in Soviet Central Asia the ideal of what they called "the Soviet Man." "The Soviet Man," by definition, was supposed to be totally deculturized. An Uzbek and a Tajik were not supposed to remain a Tajik or an Uzbek but was supposed to become a Soviet. How? Firstly, by severing links with traditional culture. Secondly, by becoming Russified, adopting the Russian language, writing in the Russian language, speaking the Russian language, and pretending of being "Russian." Thirdly, one should be an atheist. If one is an atheist and a member of the Communist Party one has open doors of opportunity. Fourthly, one should be vocally anti-Islamic and present Islam as a bunch of superstition. This is the famous and standard phrase that has been used for religion.

What is the reality? The reality is that the leaders of the Communist Party went to the offices to work for the Communist Party and they became "the Soviet Man." They came home and they became a Muslim. Upon retirement, this is the most remarkable thing, some Communist leaders and CPSU workers became full-time Islamic preachers. If one picked up the Soviet Press during the last five-ten years, innumerable examples have been given when the Soviet party leaders and the average members of the Party became Islamic preachers after retirement. For the simple reason that upon retirement, a man does

not have to worry about what the government is going to do to him/her, whether they are going to think if he is a Soviet Man or not. In either case he can say to hell with you! I am free now! And I am going to serve the cause of Islam!

In both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and this may come as a surprise, the Communist Party leaders funnelled the state funds for religious education, Islamic education, and they built mosques. They justified it by saying that this is a cultural activity. According to state policy every nationality has the right to preserve its own culture, although not religion. They made a distinction between culture and religion, a culture without religion. In the name of culture, they said yes, for a party member being a Muslim is part of his culture; therefore, what is wrong if a mosque is built where people learn about their culture? What is wrong if they are given training in the religious education and they know what the Islamic faith is? This is part of the culture!

The fifth factor is the role of Muslim intelligentsia in these republics, i.e., engineers, doctors, scientists, writers, professors, lawyers. One would be surprised how religious the intellectuals have become. I happened to be in Tashkent on Friday. There is a big mosque in Tashkent and I went there for the services. First of all, I have never seen a Friday service as long as this one anywhere in the world. It lasted about three hours, and the mosque was absolutely packed. The people who could not be contained inside were sitting out in the street participating in the services. When the service finally ended, one could notice in the parking lot car after car, the most shiny cars that you could imagine parked there. Owning a car in the Soviet Union means one is somebody, the members of intelligentsia--young people, bureaucrats, engineers etc. There were old people, even young children--ten to twelve years old, and also men who came for the services with their chests bedecked with medals that they had won fighting in the Soviet Army during World War II. The members of the intelligentsia are the ones who are now the religious spearhead of religious and cultural consciousness in Soviet Central Asia.

The sixth element is the Soviet contact with the Islamic world. Between the 1950s and the 1980s Soviet contacts with the Islamic world increased tremendously, with the Middle East, with Asia, and Africa. They started to exchange delegations, including religious dignitaries, and began to send their own religious leaders to the Islamic world, and they began to receive religious dignitaries from the Islamic world. People came to Soviet Central Asia. The Soviet Union began to realize that Soviet Central Asia plays a very crucial link between the Soviet Union and the Islamic world. If these foreign delegates come into contact with the local population, and if the local population constantly griped that the Soviet system is miserable and that they are persecuted and religious freedom is denied to them, then that griping would obviously create a very bad impression in the rest of the world. So, the result was that these contacts were also a moderating influence on the Soviet anti-religious, anti-Islamic policy in Soviet Central Asia.

In the year 1980, 1400 years of Islamic celebration was held widely in Soviet Central Asia. They arranged a major conference to celebrate the 1400 years of Islam. They invited dignitaries and other scholars from the rest of the world; although it is also true

that in 1979 they had moved into Afghanistan and, by and large, there was a tremendous dissatisfaction and anger in the Islamic world against the Soviet Union, so the conference was not as well attended as it could have been, if the Soviet Union had not intervened in Afghanistan. But, nevertheless, they celebrated it.

These things raised Islamic consciousness in the population. Between the years 1980 and 1989, Imam Khomeini established a powerful radio stations in Iran, which beamed day in and day out propaganda which was anti-atheistic and anti-Soviet. Pro-Islamic religious broadcasts were made into Soviet Central Asia, both in Farsi language and the Turkic language and they made a tremendous impact. One could hear people saying that in order to learn Islam, "Oh, yes, I listen to the radio of Iran where the religious instruction is given."

Islam is alive and well in the Soviet Union. It is not dead. It has not lost its vitality.

What lies ahead for this area?

The current scholarly view in the United States of those American specialists who have written on Soviet Central Asia is that the leaders of national movements in the Central Asian republics are not mobilizing around Islam. It is not Islam that is galvanizing the people. They say the reason is that the Soviet rule has created deep ruptures with the Islamic past. Western scholars are telling that these deep ruptures have created tremendous gap between the "Soviet Man" and the "Islamic Man." In fact, one specialist has gone to the extent of saying that religious thinking has been virtually extinguished from Soviet Central Asia. Another scholar has also said that Islamic life in Central Asia is totally secularized.

This is a very gross oversimplification. For a Tajik or for an Uzbek, being an Uzbek means being a Muslim, and being a Muslim, either means being a Tajik or an Uzbek. They do not see a dialectical contradiction between the two. By the year 2000 some of these Central Asian republics may achieve the status of independence. I am not sure what lies ahead for Kazakhstan. But in the next twenty or twenty-five years, Turkey and Iran may be able to play a very crucial role in Soviet Central Asia. Turkey, in fact, would play a much greater role if somehow Turkey could shed the pretensions of being a European country. During the next twenty-five years, Turkish diplomacy, Turkish policy, and Turkish political power could play an immeasurable role in Central Asia. The Turkic republics of the Soviet Union would need Turkish help in cultural matters, in educational matters, and they could also contribute a great deal to the economic strength of the Republic of Turkey.

I see the emergence of a new balance of power in Central Asia and the Middle East by the end of this century. What shape exactly, concrete shape it would take, it is difficult to predict.