

Insecurity in "A New Silk Road"

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Abstract:

Withdrawal of US-NATO troops from Afghanistan, remains an issue for military operations of new-old participants in the process of further destabilization of the political situation in Central Asia. The process of political destabilization of the region raises many a questions about new relationship between interests of USA, China, Russia and India in this region. Pronounced influence of radical Islamic movements in the broader area of Asia makes this region tremendously important for the further development of global political relations in this part of the world. The crisis in relations between Russia and the West makes reconfiguration of global strategic interests in the region more complex.

Introduction Remarks

From the earliest days the Central Asia was a region in which strategic political, military, economic, cultural and religious interests of numerous conquering empires and Eastern warlike tribes, met each other. In this encounter strategic interests of the great powers have largely redefined the interests and identities of local communities, that will have a decisive role in the geo-political designing of this region in this millennium.

Inaugurated under the title "A NEW SILK ROAD" program of reintegration of Central Asia aimed to integrate war-torn Afghanistan and Pakistan into Central Asian market, and transform the region into area (region) of peace, development and stability. Transit routes linking Central Asia with global market, should to be the best guarantee that Afghanistan and Pakistan after the withdrawal of Western Alliance troops would emerge as a new model of multi-cultural co-operation and mutual respect in the region of Central Asia. The project in which has been invested enormous political will, ideas and financial resources will soon prove to be unsuccessful and will cause great social frustration and a new political realignment in the region. The failure of this project will quite clearly show that to create a new concept of regional peace only on premise of historical, ethnic and religious identity of local groups in the process of globalization, is almost impossible.

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Historical Identity and Cultural Diversity:

Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, make essential area of Central Asia where the political interests of great empires and Islamic, Hindu, Christian and Chinese culture meet each other for centuries. Each of these empires, with its own separate, and often mutually sharply conflicting interests and identities, constituted the tribes of this region (Turks, Tocharians, Persians, Scythians, Mongols ...) highly interconnected in their mutual trade with foreign invaders in their nomadic life.

The influence of the great empires from the earliest days of humankind history made region of Central Asia, space of permanent influence and conflicts of different cultures and civilizations. After creating the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, this region was in intense commercial, cultural and military contacts with the early civilizations of China and India, especially during the Chinese Han Dynasty (115-60 BC) and during existence of the Indo-Greek Kingdom. The great prosperity of this region is experiencing at the time of Turk-Mongol empire which included Central Asia, a part of China and Russia and the Middle East.¹ After the death of the Mongol ruler Timur (1405), penetration of Islam literally break trade links between China and Europe, that made region of Central Asia harshly isolated from the main trade roads. The old cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand are historical remnants of the early Islamic civilization which left a deep influence, in this region . Around these cities a number of Turkish nomadic tribes (Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Uyghur) had resisted to foreign invaders, combating and trading with many warlike tribes which were moving along the "Silk Road".²

At the end of the 19th century this region entered in orbit of Soviet industrialization in which had been gradual transformed from livestock-agricultural civilization to industrial civilization. The powerful influence of the centralized Soviet economy will significantly weaken influence of religion identity gradually imposing a new secular identity of the state within the Soviet empire in this region. After the break up of the Soviet Union, at the end of the 20th century, the identity of this region will remain in orbit of its ancient Islamic identity, but with many significant cultural and historical specificities, that will make this region significantly different from radical Islamic identity that spreads across Asia in 21st century. .

At the end of 20th and beginning of 21st century, because of rich natural resources, this region will attract big attention and interest of large multi-national Corporations (MNCs) and Transnational Commercial Banks (TCBs) which will make this area as a space of conflicts of interest of new non-state actors with their powerful influence on behavior of governments in these countries. Confronting interests of large MNCs and TCBs, neighboring nuclear powers (Russia, China, India, Pakistan), including influence of Hindu, Christian and Islamic civilization, this region grows up into the epicenter of cultural and social confrontations in Asia. This social and cultural confrontation will be a major determinant of the future of political and military conflicts in Asia in this century.

Ethnic divisions, religious divide, historical and cultural diversity and the impact of external state's and non-state factors, made this region highly politically unstable. Religious and ethnic exclusivity, often reaching mutual explosive hatred, clashes between Muslims and Hindus, historical conflict between Shia and Sunni Muslims, the conflict between the many tribals and religious communities, have a strong impact in this area. However, despite the large mutual animosity, peoples in this region could survive only thanks to the nature of interconnections their strategic common interests, which have been historically created by common external threat to region of Central Asia.

One of the least populated regions in Asia, where live more than 100 different ethnic and religious communities, which speak Turkmen, Kazakh, Turkish, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Uighur, Russian and Chinese language, makes Central Asia unique region on Asian continent.

Shared interests and a high degree of mutual dependence in survival, great potential of natural resources, economic and political influence of Russia, China and India will make this area as region of interests of great powers especially in the late 20th and early 21st century. Global structural changes will definitely inaugurate new mobile factors of production, and to open a large space for trade and business of MNCs, Transnational Commercial Bank (TKB) and global institutions, which will bring a new nature of influence in this region.

The new external influences will significantly change the interest and behavior of the state governments in this region. Especially great influence on the behavior of the governments in Central Asia will have the expansion of radical Islam in Asia. The strong influence of Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which strongly supports Taliban's radical movement, will make strong impact on political relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and other countries in Central Asia.

"A New Silk Road" Initiative:

Due to the extremely high level of Islamic radicalization of Taliban movement in Afghanistan and its strong influence in Pakistan as nuclear power, which threatened potential conflict with India, Afghanistan and Pakistan has grown into a major enigma for regimes in Central Asia.

With a population more than 180 million, with extremely unstable tribal structure (Punjabis, Pashtun, Sindhi, Saraikis, Mujahirs, Baloch), with high rates of women fertility and high population growth rate, Pakistan is increasingly entering into a threat to cooperation with the countries in Central Asia. The same or similar situation was regarding Afghanistan. With 42% of the Pashtun tribes, who directly support radicalized Taliban movement, with extremely complex ethnic structure of the population (Tajiks- 27% , Hazars - 9%, Uzbeks - 9%, Aimaks- 4% , Turkmen 3%, Baloch - 2%), with high degree of women fertility (5.1%) and the extremely low level of literacy (only 31% of the population can read and write), Afghanistan also appears more as a serious threat than as an economic partner to countries in Central Asia. The political situation is even more complicated by the long border line of Pakistan, Afghanistan and

Turkmenistan with Iran, which opens a wide space of confrontation between Sunni and Shia Islam, which creates additional problems in the region.

Program of integration of Afghanistan and Pakistan into the region of Central Asia and linking these countries with the broader market through the "A NEW SILK ROAD" project was focused on the reconstruction of transport infrastructure, liberalization of trade and investment, development of cross-border traffic and dynamic involvement of this region into global economy.³

Rich deposits of natural gas, petroleum, hydropower, with more than a billion and a half of potential consumers, makes the market of Central Asia, a very attractive place for foreign investment. Investment project of regional electricity grid (CASA) in value \$540 million and project for the reconstruction of hydroelectric network in Afghanistan and Pakistan worth \$ 1.7 billion were designed to supply electricity for more than 16 million people in this region.⁴ Under the program "A New Silk Road" was secured construction and reconstruction about 3000 km of roads in Afghanistan . Within this project an agreement on mutual trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as an agreement on cross-border transport between Kirghizstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, was signed . Program shortening of waiting times at the border crossings, the introduction of new and more effective transport of weapons and drugs control across the border crossing points, and the reduction of customs procedures in trade between Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, should provide major financial savings and increase in trade between the countries of the region.⁵

The program of mutual cooperation in the field of education, research, scholarship increase the mobility of students and highly-educated labour force, had a special significance. As part of the cultural and scientific cooperation important place was occupied by the development of civil society with the specific aim improving the position and rights of women. Development of transport, trade, business and communication within the region and establishing more intensive cultural, religious and traditional cooperation, should have to bring more pronounced mutual influence and understanding between government and people in the region.

However, it did not happen. Growing economic and democratic development of the region was not compatible with the interests of the ruling elites and the state bureaucracy in state of Central Asia, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. Political and religious elites supported by the state's bureaucracy in the forefront have installed their strategic interests of their own survival and their enrichment. Their strategic interests led to greater growth of corruption, nepotism and organized crime, which led to a further escalation of the conflict between the government and society and strengthening of terrorism in the region.

On the other hand two vital interests of the international coalition was primarily to prevent Taliban to back on power "that Afghanistan would not become a base for militants to attack the West and that it not become a base for destabilizing the country's neighbors", and to limit the political influence of

Russia, which came over Kazakhstan, and to reduce the economic penetration of China in this region.

In this otherwise well-focused initiative, was not sincere approach to solving real problems in Central Asia. Faced with mutual distrust and fear of mutual cheating, participants in "A NEW SILK ROAD" initiative could not count on a mutually satisfactory solution to the Afghan crisis.

Failure of "A New Silk Road":

To prevent Taliban to come into power in Afghanistan through policy of supporting unpopular and corrupt regime in Afghanistan and Pakistan increasingly led to the strengthening influence of Taliban and Al Qaeda in the region.. The Taliban made important progress in control land to remain viable military forces after withdrawal of NATO/USA forces. Corruption in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) has been visible and become part of the problem rather than solution for international coalition lead by USA. "The war will likely be deadlocked, grinding onward as long as someone pays the bills to keep the ANSF operating." ⁶ Get money to keep the ANSF formally operating become the main interest of political elites and the Afghan government bureaucracy, as well. Since the Taliban did not have big chance to win power in Kabul immediately after coalition combat troops leave, their interest is largely coincided with the interests of the ruling regime: Keep longer powerless international coalition in the country and negotiate own inclusion in the national parliament, was main goal of Taliban's movement.

From other side, increasing strength of Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan led to strengthening of Islamist movements in this region, what faces governments in Central Asian with numerous dilemmas and uncertainty.⁷ In this political environment governments in Central Asian countries were more interested in their own survival. Fear of internal strengthening of Islamic militant movements will lead to strengthening government's political repression. A growing conflict between the government and society has made process of democratization very difficult in these countries, that open new field for strengthening of Islamic radicalism.

The issue of survival of political regimes in these countries have been more important than democratization, respect for human rights or economic reform in these countries. Border security as well as the redistribution of direct economic benefit has been placed in the foreground by the regimes of Central Asian countries.

Political strengthening Talibans, strong position of Al Qaeda and other radical Islamist militant movement (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Salafism movement, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), increase terrorism actions, weakness and instability of political regimes in Kabul and Islamabad and a growing number of refugees due to instability of the government in Kabul and Islamabad , has convinced regimes in Central Asia that is better to become less prone to regional cooperation with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Cooperation with Afghanistan and Pakistan has been increasingly perceived as a direct threat to regimes in this

region. Afghanistan and Pakistan has been less and less considered as economic and political partners in Central Asia countries.⁸

Spreading and strengthening of the radical Islamist movements with prevalence of ultra-conservative practice of Islam (Salafism)⁹ with powerful financial support from Saudi Arabia, spreading of terrorist networks with the participation of many ethnic groups (Uighurs, Chechens, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tajiks) and frequent clashes between Uzbek-Kyrgyz-Tajik around water sources, gradually modify security paradigm of Central Asia.

Inability to create long-term economic and political interests and ensure the survival of the ruling regimes in the countries of Central Asia has dramatically opened issue of new security paradigm of Central Asia.

One of the possibilities to create a new security paradigm in Central Asia has appeared idea of political legalization of Taliban in political landscape of Afghanistan and Pakistan and supporting economic and security cooperation between China and Russia in this region. However, if Taliban were recognized as a political partner with the right to participate in political elections in Afghanistan and Pakistan with the possibility of improving their position in the decision-making process in national parliaments, the issue whether the political influence of the Taliban could change the policy of government in these countries from corruption to anti-corruption alternative, still remains open. It is also hard to imagine that political legalization of Taliban could change their "culture of militancy" into "culture of peace and cooperation". It would be also hard to assume that the Taliban will not continue to support Al Qaeda and radical Islamic militant groups in the region. Also, the impossibility of stable cooperation with the Taliban leaves open the problem of unstable border between India and Pakistan which is largely influenced by the policy of the Pakistani Taliban.¹⁰

Impasse and impossibility of successful negotiations with the Taliban still leaves whole region of Central Asia in a large political chaos that might have devastating consequences for peace in the region, and for human rights and freedoms, with strong reflections in Islamic world.¹¹

Suspicion to the Taliban's behaviour in the case of their political rehabilitation, get a completely different connotations in the light of a new concept of cooperation between China and Russia in region of Central Asia. Within this paradigm, cooperation with Afghanistan and Pakistan should be moved into a new tripartite concept of security paradigm including economic cooperation with China, security cooperation with Russia and economic and security cooperation between Russia and China. This tripartite security paradigm should create a new security paradigm in Central Asia.

Cooperation with China is followed up with tangible economic interest for the ruling regimes and political elites in Central Asia states without any their obligation regarding of internal democratization and human rights. Cooperate with China as a potential long-term and stable partner, avoiding at the same time to enter into direct regional economic and political arrangements with Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are fraught with many uncertainties and

difficulties, have been more attractive option for governments in Central Asia. Considering that investment of China in Central Asia recorded a vast growth from \$527 million (in 1992) to \$ 40 billion (in 2012), the political survival of the regimes in Central Asia could get a higher level of guarantees. It would provide greater possibilities of gradual democratic changes and a higher degree of respect for human rights.¹²

However, merely growth of economic relations with China does not provide enough security stability in the region. New security paradigm of Central Asia could be seen merely in economic and security cooperation between China and Russia in this region. Region of Central Asia share a common Soviet political background which could create a number of common political interests with Russia. The legal and political space for new security paradigm in Central Asia has already been established by signing of the Shanghai agreement between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 1996.¹³

Preventing the spread of Islamic radicalism and major refugee crisis, neutralizing transnational Islamist movement Hizb ut-Tahrir, preventing the spread of ultraconservative "Salafist movement", which enjoys financial support from Saudi Arabia, the weakening of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, with significant influence on political situation in both, Russia (Chechnya) and China (Xinjiang Province), could open more space for security cooperation between China and Russia in the region, and governments in Central Asia, as well.¹⁴

Reliance on economic cooperation with China and security cooperation with Russia have exceptional significance for this region in the light of mutual long-term economic cooperation between Russia and China. In mid-2014, Russia and China signed a contract to build a gas pipeline worth \$ 400 billion, which could provide natural gas for Chinese industry and Russia could be less dependent on the European market, in the following 30 years.

This win-win agreement on economic cooperation between China and Russia could lead to more efficient harmonization of their military-political and economic interests in Central Asia, and make security paradigm in Central Asia more stable for a longer period. Strategy of their joint appearance at the UN Security Council on global security issues makes the impact of China and Russia increasingly important in this region, "Of particular importance is the agreement that China and Russia will deepen cooperation under the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building in Asia (CICA) and new security framework in Asia-Pacific that conveniently excludes the US and Japan."¹⁵

Mutation of the conflict in Central Asia:

In which direction mutation of security paradigm in Central Asia will depend on whether Russia and China move towards establishing a new multi-polar concept of global relations, which implies creation of a formal Russo-Chinese political alliance.

Is it possible to a form alliance between Russia and China remains an open issue. The absence of long-term overseas common threats, significant conflicts of their global strategic interests, low living standard of population, fear

of interfering of Russian-Chinese alliance into the conflicts in Asia, uncertainties about the internal structure of potential Russian-Chinese alliance, the risk of the limitation of the Alliance's relations with other Asian countries, ... calls into question the possibility of creating a Russian-Chinese Treaty. However, on the other hand, China and Russia, if want to change their own position in global relations, are forced into a formal strategic cooperation. As there is no trust between the West and Russia, because of their mutual nuclear rivalry, China and West, because appearance of China as one of the leading economic power in the world, neither China and Russia can count on membership in the Western alliance. However, Russia and China can not expect to improve their own position in global relations if acting independently, that leads to the necessity to establish a new multi-polar concept of global relations.

The real possibility of establishing a new global order has led to great political turbulence in the region. The initiative of Russia and China in this direction should be stopped.¹⁶ Central Asia has proven to be an excellent training ground for the creation of a number of sensitive issues of strategic interests of the great powers.

Under the influence of confrontation strategic interests of Russia, China, USA, India, a new security challenges in this region emerge once again. Creating a pro-Pakistani government in Afghanistan, increases the pressure on India regarding unresolved issue of Kashmir. The destructive conflicts between political parties and religious factions in Pakistan and Afghanistan are creating new political and security difficulties in this region. The influence of Saudi Arabia in the region creates a new political and religious divisions. The Pakistani government is under increasing pressure from Saudi Arabia to get directly involved in the conflict between different factions in Islam.¹⁷ Increasingly powerful influence of conservative interpretation of Islam, which comes from Saudi Arabia, creates new religious and cultural partition in this region, that makes this region extremely unstable and dangerous for global peace.

Growing influence of Saudi Arabia (dominated by USA strategic interest) over the radical Islamist "Salafist movement" in the region, seriously signaled that conflict in this region could mutate into intra-Islamic conflict in the shadow of the conflict between the strategic interests of the United States, Russia, China and India in this region. This strategy includes destabilization of cohabitation of strategic interests China and Russia in the region, and thus the impossibility of establishing a new multi-polar concept of international relations.

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- ¹ Christoph Baumer "The History of Central Asia - The Age of the Silk Roads (Volume 2); PART I: EARLY EMPIRES AND KINGDOMS IN EAST CENTRAL ASIA 1. The Xiongnu, the First Steppe Nomad Empire"
 - ² Shepherd, William (1923). *Historical Atlas*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
 - ³ The New Silk Road initiative was first envisioned in 2011 as a means for Afghanistan to integrate further into the region by resuming traditional trading routes and reconstructing significant infrastructure links broken by decades of conflict. Afghanistan and its neighbors are leading the way in key areas, creating new North-South transit and trade routes that complement vibrant East-West connections across Eurasia. The region is reducing barriers to trade, investing in each other's economies, and supporting international development and cross-border projects.
 - ⁴ Support for CASA-1000 regional electricity grid, including a \$15 million contribution following the March 2014 World Bank commitment of \$526 million and support for the CASA Secretariat; More than \$1.7 billion in support of energy transmission lines, hydropower plants, and associated reforms in Afghanistan since 2010; Adding 1,000 megawatts to Pakistan's power grid, supplying power to more than 16 million people.
 - ⁵ Since 2009, intraregional trade in Central Asia has increased by 49 percent; Since 2011, the average cost of crossing regional borders decreased by 15 percent; Customs procedures have been streamlined at seven Afghan border crossing points, resulting in

expedited trade with average release time down from eight days in 2009 to three and a half hours in 2013, saving \$38 million annually.

6 Stephen Biddle, *Ending the War Afghanistan*, Foreign Affairs, September/October 2013

7 "A report published by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group claimed that up to 4,000 recruits from Central Asia had joined ISIL in Syria and Iraq. Many of these new recruits are inhabitants of the Fergana Valley, an ethnically diverse region spanning Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and eastern Uzbekistan. The ICG report also claimed that the region's enduring problems of poor governance and repression could create the conditions for a resurgence of radical groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, an organisation that claimed allegiance to ISIL last October. According to some Central Asian governments, there is a growing danger that returning ISIL fighters will stir internal disaffection against local secular governments. Such an assumption is questionable given evidence that extremist religious movements are most likely to emerge as a result of conflicts that stem from other causes. ISIL emerged from the chaos of post-Saddam Iraq and the civil war in Syria. Similarly, Libya is now seeing the emergence of radicals given the lack of a strong central government. On this evidence, unless there is a case of "state failure" in Central Asia, there is little likelihood of a radical movement emerging."

8 Kathleen Collins, "Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes:

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9 Salafism - a militant group of extremist Sunnis who believe themselves the only correct interpreters of the Koran and consider moderate Muslims to be infidels; seek to convert all Muslims and to insure that its own fundamentalist version of Islam will dominate the world (Webster Dictionary)

10 "From Washington's perspective, this outcome would be far from ideal...Such a deal could at least preserve the two most vital U.S. national interests at stake in Afghanistan: that Afghanistan not become a base for militants to attack the West and that it not become a base for destabilizing the country's neighbors... A compromise with the Taliban would be a bitter pill to swallow, but at this point, it would sacrifice less than the alternatives... Some might see the Obama administration's current policy as a hedged version of such disengagement already. The U.S. military presence in Afghanistan will soon shrink to perhaps 8,000–12,000 advisers and trainers, and U.S. aid might decline to \$4–\$5 billion a year for the ANSF and \$2–\$3 billion in economic assistance, with the advisory presence costing perhaps another \$8–\$12 billion a year. This commitment is far smaller than the 100,000 U.S. troops and over \$100 billion of 2011, and it offers some chance of muddling through to an acceptable outcome while discreetly concealing the United States' probable eventual failure behind a veil of continuing modest effort." (Stephen Biddle, *Ending the War Afghanistan*, Foreign Affairs, September/October 2013)

11 Gilles Dorronsoro, "The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2009,

12 Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008).

13 In June 2001, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan established the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). While the immediate

focus of the organization was to combat the so-called ‘three evils’—ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and international terrorism—the SCO's long-term viability and effectiveness in promoting regional stability and economic development depend on how member states build up common identity and cooperate on issues of mutual concern. This article looks at China's role in initiating the Shanghai-5/SCO structure within the broader framework of Beijing's foreign and security policy interests and priorities in Central Asia and seeks to examine both the prospects for and the potential obstacles to its efforts in achieving key objectives for this new regional organization: management of ethnic and religious unrest, including the fight against terrorism and separatism; maintenance of stable borders; development of energy resources; and promotion of economic prosperity. In addition, the article will also examine the extent to which Beijing has used the opportunity to exercise leadership and whether or not China can extend its influence to Central Asia using the SCO as a vehicle. (Journal of Contemporary China, Volume 19, Issue 67, 2010)

14 “Russia Fears for Afghan Border Security after 2014—Paper,” BBC Monitoring South Asia, August 19, 2013.

15 The Diplomat, May 30, 2014

16 “The group of emerging economies signed the long-anticipated document to create the \$100 bn BRICS Development Bank and a reserve currency pool worth over another \$100 bn. Both will counter the influence of Western-based lending institutions and the dollar. The new bank will provide money for infrastructure and development projects in BRICS countries, and unlike the IMF or World Bank, each nation has equal say, regardless of GDP size. Each BRICS member is expected to put an equal share into establishing the startup capital of \$50 billion with a goal to reach \$100 billion. The BRICS bank will be headquartered in Shanghai, India will preside as president the first year, and Russia will be the chairman of the representatives. The big launch of the BRICS bank is seen as a first step to break the dominance of the US dollar in global trade, as well as dollar-backed institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, both US-based institutions BRICS countries have little influence within. Russia, Brazil, India, China and South Africa account for 11 percent of global capital investment, and trade turnover almost doubled in the last 5 years, the president reminded. Each country will send either their finance minister or Central Bank chair to the bank’s representative board. BRICS represents 42 percent of the world’s population and roughly 20 percent of the world’s economy based on GDP, and 30 percent of the world’s GDP based on PPP, a more accurate reading of the real economy. Total trade between the countries is \$6.14 trillion, or nearly 17 percent of the world’s total. The \$100 billion crisis lending fund, called the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), was also established. China will contribute the lion’s share, about \$41 billion, Russia, Brazil and India will chip in \$18 billion, and South Africa, the newest member of the economic bloc, will contribute \$5 billion. The group has already created the BRICS Stock Alliance an initiative to cross list derivatives to smooth the path for international investors interested in emerging markets. Russia has also proposed the countries come together under an energy alliance that will include a fuel reserve, as well as an institute for energy policy.”

17 The possibility of Pakistan, a non-Arab South Asian country becoming embroiled in Yemen’s civil war is very high, as Saudi Arabia has been leaning heavily on Pakistan to join its military coalition there. Pakistani involvement could include the

deployment of land forces. There are already hundreds of Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia conducting joint exercises with Saudi forces and Pakistan has voiced support for Saudi airstrikes in Yemen. Explicit Pakistani involvement in Yemen could be dangerous for it, both militarily and politically. Although Pakistan's population is majority Sunni, unlike Saudi Arabia or Iran, Pakistan was not founded on the basis of any particular understanding of Islam. Rather, Pakistan was founded on the more general basis of Islam as a whole, in order to serve as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims, whether Sunni or Shia. Around a fifth of Pakistan's population, or some 30-40 million people, are Shia, giving it (or neighboring India) the second largest Shiite population in the world outside of Iran."