

STEPPES TO STATEHOOD:
NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY UZBEKISTAN

BY

NICHOLAS D. CORBETT

A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Political Studies
University of Manitoba
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To my parents

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ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes that the contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. The thesis brings together the theoretical literature on nationalism and the comparative literature on Uzbekistan. Ernest Gellner's model of nationalism, in particular, is used in understanding contemporary Uzbekistan. Four features of nationalism in contemporary Uzbekistan are explored: first, that modern political nationalism in Uzbekistan emulates the homogenising tendencies of the Soviet era; second, that Uzbekistani nationalism is an elite-driven process; third, that the invented Uzbekistani nation is actively rooted in the 'high culture' of Timurid history; and fourth, that Islamism acts in an entropy-resistant manner to secularism. This thesis determines that the bases of nations are arbitrary and therefore, the Uzbekistani nation need not be divisive and destabilising. Central Asian stability is an objective of the War on Terror. In order for Uzbekistani nationalism to be a stabilising influence in Central Asia, it must better accommodate non-ethnic Uzbek minority rights, and Uzbekistan's Islamic identity must be incorporated into the definition of the Uzbekistani nation.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On 1 September 1991, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic became the Republic of Uzbekistan. Before that date, a citizen from Tashkent, or Bukhara, or Samarqand was a citizen of the Soviet Union. No matter what language that person spoke; no matter whether that citizen was an Atheist, Christian, Jew, or Muslim; no matter that person's ethnicity, she or he was a Soviet citizen. On 1 September, 1991 that same citizen became an Uzbekistani; a nationality that had never previously existed. To the present day Uzbekistan has developed as a newly independent state. The forces of nationalism are at work in the newly independent states of Central Asia. Contemporary Uzbekistan is undergoing the state construction of nationalism.

As an administrative unit, Uzbekistan was created during the Soviet era and it retained its territorial integrity after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Since independence, the Uzbekistani political elite has actively undertaken a process of national consolidation. This involves inventing an Uzbekistani nation. As a country, Uzbekistan is ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse. There are within Uzbekistan numerous communities that can justifiably be considered nations. The fostering of a political Uzbekistani nationalism is proving to be a highly divisive process in Uzbekistan and throughout Central Asia. Uzbekistan's political nationalism objectives are infused with undercurrents of ethnic Uzbek nationalism, while the most dangerous characteristic of the Uzbekistani nation is the refusal by the ruling elite to incorporate an Islamic identity into the Uzbekistani identity. This has resulted in a clash between the forces of secularism and

of Islamism that has pushed moderate Muslims closer to extremist Muslims. In the post 9-11 context, the Uzbekistani administration has successfully internationalised this struggle as part of the War on Terror, and pursued what it considers to be its national interests beyond its borders. This is dangerous to Central Asian stability. Rather than accepting the enemies of Uzbekistan's authoritarian leadership and allowing it to stamp out Islamism within its own country and in neighbouring countries, the allies in the War on Terror should help diffuse the extremism by supporting an Uzbekistani national identity that includes Islam. The international community must not accept the current process of political nationalism that produces greater extremism, subversion, and terrorism in Uzbekistan and its neighbouring states. In order to preserve Central Asian stability, the process of political Uzbekistani nationalism must be more inclusive.

This thesis argues that the contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. The process need not be so divisive, considering the arbitrariness of nations. This thesis will review the theoretical literature on nationalism and the comparative literature on Uzbekistan. Using Uzbekistan as a case study, this paper brings both bodies of literature together. Though the literature is rarely connected, an analysis of the theoretical literature can be applied to the contemporary processes described in the comparative literature. This analysis allows for a better understanding of nationalism in Uzbekistan, and provides solutions for preventing the dangerous consequences. This thesis is derived primarily from secondary research. With the use of both bodies of

literature, it will be observed how the process of political nationalism is divisive in Uzbekistan, and how the dangerous implications of that process can be averted.

This thesis will examine the components of the thesis statement, put them into context, and explain their significance. The paper will define 'contemporary' as the ongoing post-Soviet period, 1991 to the present. It will understand the 'process of political nationalism' through a review of the theoretical literature on nationalism. The process of political nationalism means that state policy is formulated to promote a single unified nation that coincides with the state. This is in accordance with the model provided by Ernest Gellner: that the political and national unit should be congruent.¹ The post-Soviet political processes of nationalism in Uzbekistan seeks to create an Uzbekistani nation-state where none has previously existed. The Uzbekistani nation must first be invented before it can be a nation-state. As a result of this, the contemporary process of political nationalism in Uzbekistan has clear domestic, regional, and global consequences stemming from the process of defining the Uzbekistani nation. The processes as they relate to these three geographical levels of consequence are identified and discussed. The Uzbekistani nation is experiencing ethnic Uzbekification that emulates the Russification of the Soviet era. In addition, it is noted that the primary source of conflict in the current consolidation of an Uzbekistani national identity is the clash of secularism with Islamism. This thesis will determine that the 'Uzbekistani nation' is political in theory, but ethnic Uzbek in practice, and strictly secular. The thesis will demonstrate how the process of political nationalism 'fosters' that invented Uzbekistani nation through an application of

¹Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.

the theoretical literature on nationalism to the comparative literature on Uzbekistan. The paper will explain the consequences of this process as ethnically and religiously divisive in Uzbekistan and in the rest of Central Asia. From the theoretical literature, it will be observed that the process of political nationalism in Uzbekistan need not be divisive or dangerous. The composition of nations is arbitrary and can be based on varying characteristics. By 'arbitrary' it is meant that the nation can be based on a random choice. It suggests that the composition of nations can be capricious, or unpredictable, and subject to change. Furthermore, 'arbitrary' connotes the sense that the composition of nations can be determined despotically. Accordingly, Uzbekistan has the choice between being an inclusive or an exclusive nation. It is currently dictating the latter, which is the more dangerous of the choices. The former allows the greater opportunity to embody a pluralistic society, and to diffuse the tensions created by the nationalism process.

This thesis is written in four chapters. Chapter One is this introduction that sets the context of the thesis and explains the relevance of nationalism in contemporary Uzbekistan. Specifically, Uzbekistani nationalism is seen as emulating the Soviet-era political nationalism with strong undercurrents of ethnic Uzbek nationalism. This has domestic and regional implications. By denying the Islamic element of Uzbekistani identity, the current administration alienates moderate Muslims. As these Muslims are denied the incorporation into the Uzbekistani national identity, they are forced closer to the extremist elements. The extremist Islamists are able to capitalise on this. In the post 9-11 political environment, this process has global implications. The War on Terror is meant to defeat extremist forces, not aid them.

There are key facts and key themes that remain consistent throughout this thesis. The most important fact for this thesis is the distinction meant between an Uzbek and an Uzbekistani. Uzbek is a term related to an ethno-linguistic group of people. The Uzbeks are a historical tribal confederacy, dating to the fifteenth century CE. Uzbekistani, however, is the nationality of a person from Uzbekistan. It is a political national identity and is a far more contemporary term. For many Uzbekistanis—who prefer to base their identities on tribe, city, or religion—it is an alien term. At no point prior to the Soviet delimitations of 1924, did the concept of an Uzbekistani exist. The most important theme with respect to this thesis is the arbitrariness of nations, states, and nation-states, which shall be fully explored in the theoretical literature review. It is this arbitrariness that makes the current process of Uzbekistani nationalism inherently capable of being more inclusive and less divisive. The Uzbekistani nation, it should be understood, is an invention. It is a creation of the Stalinist era designed to build cognitive and administrative boundaries between the Central Asian peoples. A nation is typically formed by a group of people who perceive that they share a common attribute and have the will to acknowledge that attribute. The people relegated to the territory of Soviet Uzbekistan had no such impetus.

The Uzbekistani state is also an invention. It is a political unit of governance limited to a specific territory, drawn up by Soviet administrative fiat. It was conceived within the Soviet Union and born with Soviet dissolution. The notion of an Uzbekistani nation-state is meant as the Uzbekistani state that exists specifically for the Uzbekistani nation. It is a territorially defined administrative unit of governance that exists for a group

of people who perceive that they share a common attribute and have the will to acknowledge that attribute. Nationalism as a political movement is the political will for a nation to exist as a nation-state. This is the process underway in contemporary Uzbekistan. There is no Uzbekistani nation to exist as a nation-state. State policy must first define what exactly an Uzbekistani is, and this is proving to be a tremendous societal challenge. Nationalism can be both a unifying and a divisive process. In Uzbekistan, it is quite clearly divisive.

The terms specified above shall be defined and receive their due treatment in Chapter Two, which is a review of the theoretical literature on nationalism. Gellner, Benedict Anderson,² and Ernst Haas³ lend their definitions of the nation to the development of this argument. This thesis uses Gellner's model of nationalism as the most applicable choice for understanding Uzbekistan for the following reasons that will be explained in Chapters Two and Three:

1. Nationalism in Uzbekistan is a modern phenomenon. It came with the homogenising tendencies of Soviet-era industrialisation and the notion of the 'Soviet Man' which is now emulated by the 'Uzbekistani.'
2. It is an elite-driven process whereby the national identity is determined more by dictate than popular sentiment, and institutionally disseminated.
3. The invented Uzbekistani national identity is being actively rooted in the 'high culture' of Timurid history, considered to be what makes an Uzbekistani distinct.
4. The societal elements of Islamism act in an entropy-resistant manner to the forces of secularism.

²Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 1992).

³Ernst B. Haas, "What is nationalism and why should we study it?" *International Organisation* (Vol. 40, Num. 3, 1986).

As the literature review on nationalism continues, the philosophical development of nationalism is provided by Immanuel Kant while Anthony Smith⁴ treats the significance of self-determination. The equating of national self-determination with individual self-determination is challenged. The historic events of nationalism discussed cover the French Revolution, Jacobinism, the Romanticist movement (traditional nationalism), and the post-World War decolonisation. The bases of nations, including ethnicity, religion, language, and will are critiqued for their arbitrariness, while nationalism is argued to be an elite-driven process. Finally, the bases of states, as provided by William Pfaff⁵ and Monserrat Guibernau⁶ are presented. The purpose of breaking down the elements of the nationalism discourse and analysing its parts is to understand the thesis statement as it relates to the theoretical literature. The literature, and particularly Gellner, has a clear connection to the case study of Uzbekistan. With the theoretical literature written by these and other authors the thesis understands that the process of political nationalism in contemporary Uzbekistan is the political will for the Uzbekistani state to become a single unified nation, no matter how arbitrary or random the grounds. The comparative literature demonstrates that this process has serious implications.

⁴Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Company, Ltd., 1971).

⁵William Pfaff, *The Wrath of Nations: Civilisation and the Furies of Nationalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993).

⁶Monserrat Guibernau, *Nations without States: Political Communities in a Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

In Chapter Three the thesis turns to the comparative literature on Uzbekistan and applies the theoretical literature on nationalism to it. The purpose is to apply the theoretical literature on nationalism to a contemporary example of the nationalism process in progress. This chapter uses the terms Uzbekistan and Soviet Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is understood to be the independent state in Central Asia while Soviet Uzbekistan is the Republic in the Soviet Union that corresponds with today's independent state. The term Uzbek is the ethnonym based on a linguistic commonality and a historical tribal confederacy. In this thesis, Uzbek is often referred to as 'ethnic Uzbek' for clarification purposes only. Uzbekistani, however, is understood to be the new, post-Soviet national identity for a person from Uzbekistan and the entire nation of Uzbekistan. There is an extensive body of research utilised dealing with the political history of Uzbekistan. The case study requires its own historical overview. It reaches back to the Soviet-era territorial delimitation of Central Asia and discusses the process of Soviet nationalism. This chapter covers the most prominent English-language sources on Uzbekistan. These authors include, among others, Edward Allworth⁷ and James Critchlow⁸ who both write important histories of the steps leading up Uzbekistan's independence. This history is integral to the case study because in its post-independence period, Uzbekistan has emulated Soviet nationalism with its own Uzbekistani

⁷Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present, A Cultural History* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1990).

⁸James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan: A Soviet Republic's Road to Sovereignty* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991).

nationalism. Uzbekistan, it can be said, relies on its learned experience during the Soviet era to conduct its post-independence nationalism.

The purpose of examining the Soviet era of Uzbekistan's political history is to draw the parallel of the historic Soviet political nationalism with the current Uzbekistani political nationalism. The processes leading up to Uzbekistan's proto-nationalism will be shown to follow the modernising patterns of Gellner's agrarian and industrial societies.⁹ The bases of the Uzbekistani nation will also be critiqued in the same manner as in the literature review: along the arbitrary lines of ethnicity, religion, language, and will. Uzbekistan is an ethnically diverse country with a vast Muslim population speaking a range of languages and dialects. Yet the Uzbekistani nation is infused with undertones of ethnic Uzbek chauvinism, strict secularism, and the replacement of Russian with the Uzbek language. There is, understandably little will to associate with an invented nation that is so restrictive and that does not adequately reflect its population.

Nationalism in Uzbekistan will be demonstrated to be, in the model of Gellner, an elite driven process rooted in the high culture of the region's Timurid historic period. To understand this central component of contemporary Uzbekistani nationalism, it will be necessary to examine the legacy of the Timurid era, dated from the end of the fourteenth century, through the fifteenth century. Works by Beatrice Manz,¹⁰ a Timurid specialist, are indispensable when examining this historical period. The Timurid era is seen as a

⁹Gellner, 22, 39.

¹⁰Beatrice F. Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and "Tamerlane and Symbols of Administration," *Iranian Studies* (Vol. 21, 1988), 105-122.

commonality for the invented Uzbekistani nation. Indeed, it is a commonality for many Central Asian peoples. The Timurid era has particular resonance for the country's elite because it predates both the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire. The Timurid era left many of the artefacts and monuments in contemporary Uzbekistan that are considered national treasures. These attributes of the Uzbekistani state make the country the best culturally endowed in Central Asia. There are other characteristics that make Uzbekistan the best appointed state in the Central Asian region to attain a regional hegemonic status. A brief history is discussed of the role of the Bukhara Jadids and their efforts to secure an Uzbekistan that united the historic khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Qoqand. Together they represent the distinct regions of Mawarannahr, Khorezm, and Ferghana, respectively. These are historically the most important parts of Central Asia and they are today within Uzbekistan. The credit for this can largely be given to the Bukhara Jadid lobby led by Faizulla Khojaev.¹¹

The purpose of applying the literature of nationalism to Uzbekistan is to determine the local, regional, and international repercussions of the political movement of Uzbekistani nationalism. Other sources for this chapter deal with the current political and religious trends in Uzbekistan and discuss the real violence and potential for violence that these trends engender. The work by Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov¹² has provided particular insight into his vision for Uzbekistan's future. While President Karimov writes

¹¹See Donald S. Carlisle, "Soviet Uzbekistan: State and Nation in Historical Perspective," in Beatrice F. Manz (ed.) *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 103-126.

¹²Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1997).

of a pluralistic society that embodies its religious heritage, the reality of Uzbekistan is quite different. President Karimov heads a repressive government. The staunchly anti-Islamic government conduct has grave repercussions. When repercussions are referred to as domestic, it means that they are confined to Uzbekistan. When they are regional, it means that they are both domestic and extended to the newly independent Central Asian Republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) plus Afghanistan.

Islam clearly plays an important role in this thesis. Although Russian Orthodoxy also has its historic place in Uzbekistan, it is of less consequence to this thesis considering the War on Terror. The terminology surrounding Islam can become confusing as a result of post 9-11 word associations. For consistency, Islam is meant as the religion; Islamic is that which is of the religion; and Islamist is referred to as an active promoter of the religion. This last term causes the trouble. Islamists in Uzbekistan are considered to be enemies of the state, whether they are moderate or fundamentalist. An Islamist, however, is not inherently fundamentalist or extremist, so in the instance that the latter is meant in this thesis, it will be specified. In Gellner's terms, Islamism will be considered as an entropy-resistant force to secularism, meaning that it defies the homogenising tendencies of the secular Uzbekistani identity. Accordingly, a secularist is meant as the element in Uzbekistani society, usually communist relics, that disallows the association of Islam to the Uzbekistani national identity. To an Uzbekistani secularist, all Islamists seem extreme. This thesis, however, limits the application of the term extremist to those Islamists who use violence to promote Islam. Similarly, the term extremist or radical secularist refers to those secularists who use violence to promote secularism.

This chapter demonstrates that Uzbekistan's post-Soviet statehood has created the elite impetus for consolidating an Uzbekistani nation where none had previously existed. It discusses the domestic and regional consequences of contemporary Uzbekistani nationalism. Chapter Three continues with a discussion of the geopolitical challenges that Uzbekistan faces including its regional security issues. Its potential position as regional hegemon is complicated by the notion of a 'Greater Uzbekistan' that would come at the expense of its neighbouring countries. This views the Uzbek communities in neighbouring countries as potential Uzbekistanis. This vision contrasts with the potential for a greater regional unification, be it based on economics, politics, culture, or religion. The most relevant international repercussions of Uzbekistani nationalism for the international community pertain to matters of security. Of greatest concern is the Ferghana Valley (Uzbekistan's extremist Islamist stronghold) and the country's contiguity with Afghanistan. Both are sources of extremist Islamism for Uzbekistan. As Uzbekistan is faced with the challenge of extremist Islamism, it will be important for this thesis to characterise the country's official response. It is demonstrated to be a response that limits the very definition of Uzbekistani by advocating extreme secularism and rejecting even moderate Islamists. The Uzbekistani national identity, however, should embrace its Islamic character. Secularism was a Soviet-era policy that rejected religion on ideological grounds. Uzbekistan is no longer part of the communist Soviet Union. It is, in name, a democratic republic. In order to diffuse the impending confrontation between the forces of radical Islamism and radical secularism in

Uzbekistan, the country's policy-makers must incorporate Islam into the country's national identity.

In Chapter Four the conclusion summarises the findings from the thesis. There is an analysis of the international implications of this thesis. The greatest international state actor interests in the region are criticised for the post 9-11 approach to fostering the current trends of Uzbekistani nationalism. In contemporary Uzbekistan, the process of political nationalism is not a peace-promoting endeavour. The global actors involved with Uzbekistan must better understand this divisive process as counter to a stable Central Asia. Global is meant as the domestic, regional, external regional powers (Iran and Turkey), as well as global powers (United States, Russia, and China). All retain interests in Central Asia and Uzbekistan. Interests range from ideological, to economical, and geopolitical. A prominent source on the topic of global implications included in this chapter is edited by Boris Rumer.¹³ The main domestic challenge for Uzbekistan is to consolidate a national identity without subjecting non-Uzbeks to the process of Uzbekification or Muslims to secularism. Domestically and regionally there is a dangerous clash between extremist secularism and extremist Islamism which positions Uzbekistan as a regional bully, willing to pursue its national interests to stamp out Islamism beyond its borders. Globally, Uzbekistan is considered a key battleground in the post 9-11 War on Terror. The inclusion of an Islamic identity into the Uzbekistani national identity should not be seen as a loss in the War on Terror, but rather a victory. By making the process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation less

¹³Boris Rumer, ed., *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 2002).

divisive, policy-makers deprive the extremist forces of potential support. With the findings and implications of this thesis restated, new directions for future research are suggested.

This thesis states that the contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. It frames this hypothesis with the theoretical literature on nationalism in order to understand the very concepts of political nationalism and of a nation. The paper demonstrates the hypothesis through the use of comparative literature on Uzbekistan and the application of the theoretical literature on nationalism to illustrate how the process is divisive and dangerous. Nationalism in contemporary Uzbekistan is an issue of domestic, regional, and international relevance. The post 9-11 geopolitical reality lands squarely on Central Asia. As a product of Uzbekistani statehood, its political nationalism does not need to be a divisive process. The will for Uzbekistan to become a nation-state requires a greater openness and the incorporation of a pluralistic national identity. Because the Uzbekistani nation is still in its formation, now is the time to genuinely embody pluralism. The international community must encourage an Uzbekistani nation that is not divisive, and therefore, not dangerous to Central Asian stability.

Central Asia is not a well understood region, despite its growing political and economic relevance. Nationalism in all the newly independent Central Asian states, furthermore, is an ongoing process. This thesis is a contribution to the better understanding of the processes of nationalism in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. It is a part of the International Relations discourse. To better understand the forces of nationalism is to

better understand the requirements for peace and stability. Nationalism, in its political and ethnic forms, can produce dangerous consequences. It can also be an identity-affirming force for good. In September, 1991, the peoples of Soviet Uzbekistan realised their independence from the Soviet Union in a bloodless process. Since independence, the process of creating an Uzbekistani nation, however, has been marked by harassment, violence, torture, and murder. Uzbekistani democracy is an illusion and the national identity does not reflect the population. The Uzbekistani nation can be formed peacefully, but not by the terms of the current processes in Uzbekistan. This thesis states that the contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. It also asserts that the process need not be divisive or dangerous, and proposes alternatives to accomplish this.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW OF NATIONALISM CONCEPTS

The contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. In order to understand this statement it is necessary to frame the argument within the appropriate terminology from the theoretical literature on nationalism. The terminology is drawn from a review of the nationalism discourse. The discourse on nationalism is a component of International Relations theory, though not exclusively. Ernst Haas asks, why should international relations theorists study nations and nationalism at all?¹⁴ Therefore, the nation must be understood. An analysis of these concepts reveals a better understanding of International Relations theory. A better understanding of nationalism produces the conditions for a more peaceful regional order. The problem that arises in understanding nationalism is likened to Haas' proverbial elephant problem.¹⁵ Like an elephant touched by a group of blind people, one's description of it is entirely dependent on one's position. Benedict Anderson holds that the idea of the nation is the most universally legitimate value in politics today.¹⁶ Also, as Carlton Hayes asserts, the phenomenon of nationalism is so entrenched in the political psyche of the contemporary world that most people take nationalism for granted.¹⁷ That was not always the case. Indeed, some scholars, including

¹⁴Haas, 708.

¹⁵Ibid., 707.

¹⁶Anderson, 3.

¹⁷Carlton J. H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), 289.

E. J. Hobsbawm, find that the literature on the subject of nationalism has only entered an academically fruitful phase since the 1960s.¹⁸ This time period prompted an increase in the political discourse of nationalism. It comes in response to the World Wars, the rise of anti-colonial national sentiment, and national expression in the former Communist bloc countries. It is an appropriate time to call long-held assumptions about civilisation into question. The end of nationalism does not appear to be in sight. As Haas suggests, all humans as political beings must pass through the phase of nationalism.¹⁹ Nationalism is the political phase of a state that endeavours to create a nation-state by making the state one nation. The process of nationalism can be both a deeply unifying process, or a deeply divisive process. If the political movement of nationalism proves to be divisive and exclusionary, as it is in contemporary Uzbekistan, it has the potential to be a dangerous product of statehood. It is this potential for danger that threatens both domestic and international peace and stability, and justifies the discourse on nations and nationalism within International Relations theory.

The terminology of this debate first must be established and defined. Throughout this discourse on nationalism, the following base argument is maintained: that the nation is an invention designed to build cognitive boundaries. The definition of the nation provided by Gellner forms the most comprehensive basis to explore the case of Uzbekistan. The nation can be summarised as formed by a group of people who perceive a common attribute and have the will to acknowledge that attribute. Gellner has two

¹⁸E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3.

¹⁹Haas, 744.

criteria for the nation: First, two people are of the same nation if they share the same culture. Culture is the system of ideas and symbols, and the ways of behaving and communicating. Second, two people are of the same nation if they recognise each other as members of that nation.²⁰ The first criterium could allow for a nation to be determined by external forces, but the second establishes the onus of self-identification. Because of these broad and arbitrary criteria, Gellner admits that there exists an immense number of potential nations in the world. Accordingly, there are far more potential nations than potential states to see those nations into political fruition.²¹ Gellner's argument, however, is based on his definition of the state which he borrows from Max Weber: the state is that agency in society that has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence.²² If the state is not defined by the capacity to use violence externally, then potential nations can be seen through to political fruition. Even the smallest community can accommodate the necessity of internal policing. By removing external violence from the equation, the number of potential nations can equal the number of potential states.

The state, like the nation, is also an invention, but it takes a physical manifestation. That is, the state is a political unit of governance limited to a specific territory. The monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, as well as territoriality, are characteristics of the state. Nationalism, according to Gellner, is the political principle

²⁰Gellner, 7.

²¹Ibid., 2.

²²Ibid., 3.

which holds that the nation should coincide with the state.²³ Nationalism is, specifically, the political movement that attempts to form one nation for one nation-state. If there are more potential nations than states at any given time, there will always be unsatisfied nationalisms. The success of some may come at the expense of others.²⁴ Therein lies the potential for violence. The pursuit to create a state for a nation can lead to conflict, as can the perpetuation of a state for one nation. This is a consequence of the unwillingness to adapt and accommodate. Nations that seek their own states from within larger states are perceived as threats to the integrity of the state in which they exist. A state that advances the interests of a particular nation over others within its territory is also perceived as a threat to those other nations. It is not necessary to respond in either scenario with violence, but without some attempt at accommodation, violence is a common recourse.

Anderson poses an interesting definition of the nation. According to Anderson, the nation is “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”²⁵ Anderson’s nation is ‘imagined’ because it is virtually impossible even in the smallest nation to know all other members of the nation. Despite the anonymity, people share the common bond of their nation. The bond itself is more important than mutual acquaintance. The nation is ‘limited’ because even the largest nation has boundaries that are determined by the presence of other nations. Where one nation stops, another begins. The nation is imagined as ‘sovereign’ because it was conceptually born in

²³Ibid., 1.

²⁴Ibid., 2.

²⁵Anderson, 5-7.

an age when the legitimacy of hierarchical dynasties was being challenged. Lastly, the nation is considered to be a 'community' where fraternity and comradeship are fundamental principles. Anderson's contribution to the definition of the nation emphasises the importance of a perceived bond that governs action. It is the perceived bond of nationality that is a key component of the politics of identity. Anderson's understanding of the nation, however, would be more appropriate for understanding the Uzbek nation formed during Soviet times, while Gellner's invented nation is the more appropriate model for the post-Soviet Uzbekistani nation discussed here. It should be noted, however, that in both models there is a collective affirmation of national membership, whether invented or imagined.

The definition of a nation provided by Haas highlights the significance of perception. According to Haas, a nation "is a socially mobilised body of individuals, believing themselves to be united by some set of characteristics that differentiate them (in their own minds) from outsiders, striving to create or maintain their own state."²⁶ Haas clearly finds the basis of a nation to be far more psychological and subjective than tangible. His choice of the words 'believing themselves' and 'in their own minds' questions how natural the concept of the nation is. This is an important development in the discourse on nationalism. According to Haas, nationalism is the belief that a people should either form a nation, or already are one, while the nation-state is a political entity composed of people who consider themselves to be one nation and would like to remain

²⁶Haas, 726.

so.²⁷ Haas finds that there are degrees of nationalism. National sentiment is a belief held by the few who wish for self-determination at some time but do not have the appropriate conditions to mobilise themselves socially. Nationalist ideologies are the national sentiments activated by a political movement that take programmatic form. National myth exists when the ideologies in practise are accepted by all those socially mobilised.²⁸ These degrees are instructive of the political nature of nationalism and reflect the elite-initiated nationalism discussed below in this chapter. The definitions provided by Gellner, Anderson, and Haas frame this discussion, but Gellner's remains the best model for understanding the Uzbekistani nation. The nation is an arbitrary but perceived bond among people. It is, by its very definition, an entity that is exclusionary, yet potentially inclusive. The nation is ultimately a political identity. Gellner, Anderson, and Haas do not restrict the nation by its definition. The nation can be formed from broad or narrow criteria. It is only confined by the existence of other nations. That the nation is so malleable and arbitrary is integral to this argument.

The thesis statement references a process of political nationalism. Nationalism is the political pursuit of self-determination for a nation. A review of historical developments, philosophy and ideology is required. The development of nationalism has a traceable history. Gellner begins his review in the agrarian phase of human history. At this developmental stage, Gellner suggests that the existence of a state was an option.²⁹

²⁷Ibid., 727.

²⁸All three degrees of nationalism are defined at Ibid., 727-8.

²⁹Gellner, 5.

People concentrate on self-sufficiency and the presence of a state is unwarranted. Gellner also assesses that the level of sophistication required for a state may be lacking from agrarian society. However, now that humanity has moved past the agrarian phase to the industrial phase, Gellner argues, any reversion to agrarian society would bring mass starvation and poverty.³⁰ It is not entirely clear how Gellner can make such an assumption, considering that it was industrialisation and collectivisation that brought mass starvation to Central Asia. Furthermore, John Armstrong adds an important element to the agrarian phase: the antagonism between nomadic and sedentary agrarians.³¹ Often when one imagines an agrarian lifestyle, nomadism is conceptually neglected. However, there are clear differences between the nomad and the sedentary agrarian. They exist in a dichotomous relationship whereby each is defined against the other. A characteristic of the agrarian phase of history is the struggle between these two groups to maintain their identities. The potential for conflict arises when the terrain over which nomads range incorporates sedentary elements, regardless of whether the two share the same ethnicity, language, or religion.³² It is a clash of identities that has proven particularly important in the historical development of Central Asia between the nomadic steppe peoples and the sedentary oases peoples. Because of the antagonism between the nomads and the sedentary agrarians, the state was not an option in Central Asia. Sedentary agrarians could not simply concentrate on self-sufficiency. Gellner's assessment—that the state is an

³⁰Ibid., 39.

³¹John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 15.

³²Ibid., 38.

option in the agrarian phase—is not acceptable in the Central Asian context. Some form of administrative structure was vital to the preservation of the sedentary agrarian life, especially for protection from the raiding nomadic elements. Statehood, that is, territorially defined administrative control, was a part of Central Asia's agrarian history. Furthermore, Central Asian agrarians understood themselves as communities—nomadic and sedentary—distinct from one another. As a perceived bond distinguishing themselves from the other, they at least fulfilled the definition of nations, even if they did not consider themselves so.

Despite Gellner's neglect of the nomadic agrarian, his modernist approach remains valid for Uzbekistan. After the agrarian phase of history, claims Gellner, came the industrial phase. In Uzbekistan, industrialisation came with the Soviet Union. In the industrial phase, human expectations of life and society changed. Perpetual growth and continuous improvement were pursued.³³ Life is no longer the pursuit of needs, but rather wants. These wants cannot be fulfilled in the agrarian context, according to Gellner, so the industrial phase appears to be a historical progression. Gellner's understanding of the industrialisation is as a capitalist phase. Central Asia, however, underwent its industrialisation under the rubric of communism. Under communism, individual wants were suppressed for the sake of the collective need. The relationship between Moscow and Central Asia did, however, become a relationship of exploiter and exploited, despite the communist rhetoric. The industrial phase has been called a prerequisite for the

³³Gellner, 22.

ascendancy of nationalism.³⁴ Though commentators of the industrial age, such as Karl Marx, foresaw an age of internationalism based on class, an age of nationalism occurred instead.³⁵ Gellner quips that the “awakening message was intended for *classes*, but by some terrible postal error was delivered to *nations*” (author’s emphasis).³⁶ The late-eighteenth through nineteenth centuries saw a culmination of historical events that produced traditional nationalism as it is now known. Traditional nationalism, like the industrial phase, is a pursuit of wants, with the want being national self-determination.

The history of nationalism is a product of several combining factors. Anderson, who, like Gellner, is a modernist, identifies three key challenged assumptions that led to nationalism: first, that script-language offers privileged access to ontological truth; second, the divinity of rulers with a naturally organised society beneath the ruler; and third, a parallel between cosmological and actual history.³⁷ These challenges confronted long-established institutions of religion and monarchy. It represents the rise of the autonomy of the person. Though full autonomy is a perpetual pursuit, perhaps never to be achieved, it is the struggle for autonomy that characterises this political evolution.³⁸ The political philosopher Immanuel Kant made a substantial contribution to the notion of the autonomous person. Elie Kedourie acknowledges the influence of Kant’s work on the rise

³⁴Hayes, 233.

³⁵Gellner, 52.

³⁶Ibid., 129.

³⁷Anderson, 36.

³⁸Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, revised ed. (New York: Praeger, 1961), 32.

of nationalism. According to Kant, “the end of man was to determine himself as a free being, self-ruling and self-moved.”³⁹ To be good is to be autonomous, and to be autonomous is to be free. Fundamentally, Kant holds that the supreme political good is self-determination.⁴⁰ One must consider, however, that self-determination is an individualistic concept. Nationalism mistakenly uses this philosophy. It holds that if a nation is akin to an individual, then national self-determination is a supreme political objective. National self-determination would ideally recognise the rights of the individuals of the nation to choose their own government and their own state.⁴¹ There is a fault with the logic, however. A nation is not an individual, but rather a collection of individuals. The autonomy of the person does not equal the autonomy of the nation. In any state there can be a multitude of nations. As long as there are unsatisfied nations, there will be unsatisfied individuals. The personification of the nation, unfortunately, leads to a faulty nationalist doctrine. It also leads to the potential for violence. Kantian self-determination should remain the autonomy of the person and not be intuitively connected to the autonomy of the nation. It is this connection that leads to the pursuit of one nation for one state. It rejects the possibility of more than one nation accommodated in a single state.

³⁹Ibid., 25-6.

⁴⁰Ibid., 29.

⁴¹Hayes, 37.

Self-determination for the nation as the ultimate pursuit leads to divisive and dangerous conclusions. Smith outlines the propositions of the core nationalist doctrine that mistakenly equates nations with individuals along the Kantian model. They are:

1. Humanity is naturally divided into nations.
2. Each nation has its peculiar character.
3. The source of all political power is the nation, the whole collectivity.
4. For freedom and self-realisation, men must identify with a nation.
5. Nations can only be fulfilled in their own states.
6. Loyalty to the nation-state overrides other loyalties.
7. The primary condition of global freedom and harmony is the strengthening of the nation-state.⁴²

The ultimate political pursuits of humanity as suggested by Kant are adopted for the nation. The individual realises his or her own political self-identity through identifying with the nation. The nation as autonomous nation-state is self-determined. The people of the nation realise this ultimate freedom only through their membership with the nation-state. The political phenomenon of nationalism cannot exist but for the individuals of the nation it seeks to advance. These assumptions are substantial. First, that humanity is naturally divided into nations rejects the notion that the perceived bond of a nation is a choice, as determined by Gellner, Anderson, and Haas. Although each nation does have a peculiar character, the source of all political power is not the nation, but rather the people of the nation. The autonomy of the nation is placed above the autonomy of the person by requiring individuals to identify with a nation and elevating the whole collectivity. People are only autonomous once they are part of a nation. That overrides individual autonomy and removes the element of will that determines membership in a nation. Proposition five poses the gravest threat to international peace and security, yet it is possible for multiple

⁴²Smith, 20-21.

nations to be realised within a single state. The pursuit of the nation-state—one state for one nation—denies this possibility. It is here that the application of Gellner's model to Uzbekistan proves most dangerous. It will be discussed below how the pursuit of Gellner's ideal nation-state is divisive in contemporary practice in Uzbekistan. It is not, however, necessary for the autonomous nation to be fulfilled in the form of a nation-state. An individual's degree of self-determination is subjective. A nation's degree of self-determination is subjective to its constituents. As long as individuals are satisfied with their personal degree of autonomy, and their national autonomy, then it matters not to which nation they ascribe, or how many nations exist within the state of which they are a part. Strengthening the nation-state, therefore, does not produce the conditions for global harmony but divisively entrenches differences. If, however, peoples of multiple nations ascribe to an overarching nation and state determined by a perceived bond, then it is not necessary for each nation to be its own state. This philosophical contribution to the development of nationalism is as important to this thesis as the historical contributions.

The process of political nationalism in Uzbekistan follows historic patterns. Up to the point of independence, Uzbekistani nationalism was an entropy-resistant response to the homogenising tendencies of Russian and Soviet dominance. It could also be considered a form of anti-colonialism. Since independence, Uzbekistani nationalism has followed what can be considered a Jacobin model. The French Revolution is a seminal historic event to the modernist conception of nationalism. The challenge to both the Church and the monarchy in France at the end of the eighteenth century produced what Hayes called Jacobin nationalism. Jacobin nationalism is characterised by four features:

first, suspicion and intolerance of internal dissent; second, reliance on force and militarism; third, religious fanaticism; and fourth, a missionary zeal.⁴³ It will be discussed below how contemporary Uzbekistani nationalism contains these elements of Jacobin nationalism. Jacobin nationalism imposed a political and national homogeneity on its French subjects and attempted to maintain its homogeneity through a Reign of Terror. What kept France from imploding was the outward focus of Napoleon Bonaparte. Described as the “evil flower of Jacobinism”⁴⁴ and the scourge of Europe, Napoleon expanded the ideals of the French Revolution throughout the Continent. This act of aggression led to the stage of traditional nationalism.

Traditional nationalism was a response to the universalising tendencies of eighteenth century French hegemony. In Gellner’s terms, it can be considered the rise of entropy-resistant traits throughout Europe. William Pfaff identifies the period of traditional nationalism’s rise with the Romanticist literary-intellectual movement.⁴⁵ It was a largely Central European philosophical response to the French Enlightenment values that had been spread throughout Europe by Napoleon. A component of the Romanticist movement involved self-identification and distinction from French authority. The period was marked by populations demanding governments exclusively of their own. The only legitimate form of government came to be seen as national self-government.⁴⁶ The

⁴³Hayes, 52.

⁴⁴Ibid., 87.

⁴⁵Pfaff, 14.

⁴⁶Kedourie, 9.

distinctions between 'us' and 'them' grew sharper as national identification became entrenched in Europe. Nationalism took on a xenophobic, chauvinist nature.⁴⁷ Traditional nationalism not only challenged French dominance but led to greater international rivalries between European countries, in part leading to the acquisition of colonial territory. Possession of an empire became a source of national pride and the European rivalries finally came to a head in World War I. This is, of course, a highly simplistic account of events.

The end of World War I witnessed a formal commitment to the principle of universal national self-determination. This commitment came in the form of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points.⁴⁸ Though his points dealt largely with the right of self-determination for the occupied nations of Europe, the principle had broad-reaching repercussions. This was the beginning of the dismantling of imperialism by the forces of nationalism. After World War II, the age of empire was effectively finished, except structurally in the Soviet Union. The decades to follow saw effective and victorious anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa based on nationalist terms.⁴⁹ As Partha Chatterjee points out, European imperialism set the script of colonial political values so that even anti-colonial resistance was set in the frame of a European ideology of nationalism. In response to Anderson's concept of imagined communities, Chatterjee laments on behalf

⁴⁷Hobsbawm, 121.

⁴⁸Pfaff, 31.

⁴⁹Partha Chatterjee, "Whose imagined community?" *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 20, 1991), 521.

of former colonies that “even our imaginations must remain forever colonised.”⁵⁰ The people of European colonies perceived the kinds of bonds amongst themselves by which a nation has come to be defined, and the nationalism discourse is, as Chatterjee calls it, derivative. However, in this case of Uzbekistan, the politicization of nationality was introduced by the Soviet Union and therefore followed the European historic models. While Chatterjee’s criticism of nationalism’s derivative discourse is valid, it is not helpful in understanding the nationalism process in contemporary Uzbekistan.

The role of nationalism in International Relations came under the review of Hobsbawm in the early 1990s. Hobsbawm identifies the peak period of nationalism as the era between the French Revolution and the end of imperialist colonialism after World War II.⁵¹ Nationalism remains an inescapable political phenomenon, although Hobsbawm considers it to be waning. Nationalism is no longer a global programme, but rather a politically localised complicating factor.⁵² Of course, this assumption is based on a universal acceptance of the world order *status quo*. It also assumes that nationalism is a political force that divides, rather than unites. Yet just as nationalism can turn one country into fifteen, it can also turn multiple nations into one unified nation. It is not possible to know if nationalism will one day be a greater force than it was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries until that day comes. Gellner instead suggests that nationalism can

⁵⁰Ibid., 522.

⁵¹Hobsbawm, 169.

⁵²Ibid., 191.

only wane when civilisation comes closer to a “completed industrialism.”⁵³ Gellner admits, however, that there appears to be no satiation of the craving for economic growth. The implication here is that so long as people yearn for perpetual prosperity, they will seek the benefits for themselves and for their nation. The primacy of the nation’s prosperity before other’s will allow nationalism to endure. Nationalism can also wane when people are satisfied that their state accords them and their nation a satisfactory degree of autonomy.

Nationalism, when it is a product of statehood, produces a political will for a nation to become, or continue to exist as, a nation-state. Nationalism has a philosophic and historic genesis, as described above, but the bases of the nation are completely arbitrary, unpredictable, or subject to change. The nation is an invention and its constituent parts are of a selective nature. Understanding of the nation requires an analysis of culture and will. Culture is represented by elements including, though not limited to, ethnicity, religion, and language, while will is the necessary additional component for the creation of a nation. Will is the recognition of a commonality among people and the acceptance that the commonality should have political consequences.

Language is an arbitrary measure of national status. Kedourie claims that language is the test by which a nation is known to exist.⁵⁴ Language is a visible and audible difference that serves to distinguish one nation from another. To have a nation based on

⁵³Gellner, 112.

⁵⁴Kedourie, 68.

language, suggests Kedourie, is to have the right to form a state of one's own.⁵⁵ This is logically absurd. As Pfaff somewhat inelegantly states, "languages die."⁵⁶ So too can languages live. They can evolve and even be resurrected. Languages are fluid. Cultures can acquire new languages or abandon their 'mother tongues,' and many people are multilingual. In Uzbekistan, literature is written in Uzbek, Persian, and Russian, while the language of Islam is Arabic. Language is only one method of asserting nationality, not the sole determinant for national status.⁵⁷ As Hobsbawm points out, "languages multiply with states; not the other way round."⁵⁸ This is taken to mean that a language receives official status when it is the language of a state. Serbian and Croatian, for example, are virtually the same language, but now each hold official language status of their respective countries. Smith summarises the debate on language quite succinctly: possession of a common language is not proof that two populations in different states belong to the same nation.⁵⁹ Neither are all the people in the same state who speak the same language necessarily of the same nation. Language groupings are ambiguous and imprecise. That does not render languages obsolete as a characteristic of nations, however. The point is to note the arbitrariness of nations. Language can be, but is not necessarily, the basis for a nation.

⁵⁵Ibid., 64 and Smith, 10.

⁵⁶Pfaff, 18.

⁵⁷Hobsbawm, 112.

⁵⁸Ibid., 63.

⁵⁹Smith, 182-3.

Ethnicity is an arbitrary ground for the basis of a nation. Ethnicity is commonly considered to be one's heritage. Gellner defined the purpose of nationalism as the congruence of political boundaries with ethnic boundaries.⁶⁰ As already mentioned, however, there is a vast number of potential nations. Ethnicity is but one factor that multiplies the number of nations in existence. Perhaps if ethnicity were the only basis for a nation, state boundaries could coincide with ethnic boundaries. However, as Armstrong argues, ethnic boundaries reflect group attitudes more than they do geographical divisions.⁶¹ Religion, a second element of ethnicity, can be considered a kind of group attitude that is not necessarily tied to geography. What is interesting about religion, as Hobsbawm points out, is that it may have provided the basis of a proto-nationalism while it continues today to vie for individual loyalties.⁶² Religion represents a group belief; a common faith. It cannot be so easily delineated by territorial boundaries. Ethnicity, culture, or religion can be, but are not necessarily, the basis for a nation.

The elements of culture that people perceive to share in common are not reasonable grounds on their own for nationality. The added element that defines the nation is the will to have a nation. It is what Hobsbawm calls to "be united in belief, if not blood."⁶³ Again, will alone cannot be considered a reasonable basis for the foundation of

⁶⁰Gellner, 1.

⁶¹Armstrong, 9.

⁶²Hobsbawm, 68.

⁶³Ibid., 65.

a state, but will is the basis of nationalism.⁶⁴ If the elements necessary to form a nation simply exist, it is will that serves to bring those elements together into a politically activated form of expression and drive for self-determination. If languages alone were the determining factor for nationhood, there would be an abundance of nations. Multiply that by a factor of the number of ethnic groups or religions, and the number explodes. There are countless attributes on which to arbitrarily base a nation, but it takes will to politically activate that perceived bond. The process of determining the bond for emphasis is frequently an elite-initiated process, as is the case in Uzbekistan. The societal elite play such an integral role in the establishment of a collective will, that the elite must come under review.

The process of political nationalism that fosters a nation, as in the Uzbekistani case, is championed by the elite. Nationalism as a political movement, in Gellner's model, is an elite-initiated process. There is a distinction between high (elite) culture and low (folk) culture. Gellner claims that the secret of nationalism is the ability for a high culture to pervade all of society, to define it, and to be sustained by the masses.⁶⁵ High culture is perceived to have the greater distinctive value in a society. The society thereby creates a system of access to the high culture through public education.⁶⁶ This elevates the status of high culture through public appreciation and protection by the state. Gellner considers high culture to be the basic deception practised by nationalism. It is, as he says,

⁶⁴Smith, 11.

⁶⁵Gellner, 18.

⁶⁶Haas, 721.

imposed on the low cultures which form the majority of a population.⁶⁷ The people are led to believe that their high culture is what makes them unique and distinctive, regardless of its bearing on their actual lives. This process will be demonstrated below by the use of Timurid history as high culture in Uzbekistan.

The anti-colonial nationalist movements are dependent on the elite. Anderson acknowledges the role of the *intelligentsia* in colonial territories where there did not exist a substantial native middle class of merchants, magnates, or entrepreneurs.⁶⁸ Instead, the educated elite of the colonies, who were often schooled in the traditions of the colonial master, drove the nationalist agenda. Anderson claims that bilingual *intelligentsia* accessed the turbulent histories of Europe and America and learned the concepts of nation, nationalism, and state.⁶⁹ The histories of the colonial masters served as the models for the colonial elite to duplicate. As Chatterjee earlier commented, the very terms of anti-colonialism were framed in European values.

It is commonly accepted by different nationalism scholars that the elite plays a fundamental role in the political phenomenon of nationalism. Smith agrees that the *intelligentsia* play a definitive part in the rise of nationalism everywhere.⁷⁰ The will of the elite must become the will of the masses. Montserrat Guibernau claims that nationalism cannot be successful unless it attracts people from all social classes. Though the will may

⁶⁷Gellner, 57.

⁶⁸Anderson, 116.

⁶⁹Ibid., 140.

⁷⁰Smith, 83.

originate with a core group of intellectuals, a nationalist movement must pass through three phases: first, a period of scholarly interest; second, a period of patriotic agitation; and third, the rise of a mass national movement.⁷¹ Gellner, somewhat more cynical of this mass appeal, counters the argument. Gellner believes that the masses are tricked into thinking that nationalist ideology defends their folk culture and imposes a high culture uniformly instead.⁷² In this manner, the elite can mould society in its image while pretending to advance national interests. Whether collective will is elite trickery or not, the nation cannot exist without a recognition of a commonality. Numerous commonalities exist, but there must be a motivation to recognise one specifically. An elite initiative cannot be sustained without public appeal, and public acknowledgment of a perceived bond is achieved willfully. In reference to the initial definitions of a nation, it is the perception of a common bond in actuality, or in myth, with a will to unite on that basis that leads to the phenomenon of political nationalism.

A nation does not simply exist. There must be a perceived commonality among people that they, as possessors of that attribute, wish to emphasise. A nation is invented. It must be designated and acknowledged. Guibernau calls the nation “one of the most contested concepts of our times.”⁷³ It is contested largely because of the arbitrary nature, and irrationality with which a nation can be legitimated. Gellner is more resigned to the current adherence to the nation. He does not find having a nation to be an inherent human

⁷¹Guibernau, 96.

⁷²Gellner, 124.

⁷³Guibernau, 13.

attribute, but that the reality of nations today implies that it is.⁷⁴ In other words, humans are actively making the nation a universal human attribute. This need not have negative consequences. The nation, by its very nature, can be a force of unity. Hobsbawm observes that nations are more often the consequence of states' policies and actions than states being the product of nations.⁷⁵ At issue is whether a nation develops nationalism to form a state, or whether a state develops nationalism to create a nation. Both occur. Nations can arise from states just as states can arise from nations. In the Uzbekistani case, however, the state preceded Uzbekistani nationalism. If the words of Kedourie are to be believed, were the people of the world to accept a common world government, they would form one nation.⁷⁶ His claim implies that the association of a body of people that decide on a governing structure, or state, creates the unified nation that adheres to it. His argument is valid at any level, not just the global level. If the people of Uzbekistan, the people of Central Asia, or the people of the Soviet Union were to accept a common government, they would form one nation. The challenge is in offering a common government that appeals to the people and accommodates their national differences.

A state claims to represent its people. To best unify the people of a state, as in Uzbekistan, nationalism imposes a common bond to which citizens can perceive their community. According to Hobsbawm's model, as a state represents the homogeneous nation it attempts to create, the nation and state become synonymous. In this manner, the

⁷⁴Gellner, 6.

⁷⁵Hobsbawm, 78.

⁷⁶Kedourie, 15.

state equals the nation which equals the people.⁷⁷ Because a state is physically defined by its territory, so too does the nation become attached to territory. However, despite the efforts of states to create homogeneous nations, there remain nations that do not identify with the state.⁷⁸ As Gellner indicated, based on the legitimate monopoly on the use of violence, there are far more nations than possibly viable states, and considering the modern demands that people put on their states, Hobsbawm suggests that the national self-determination objectives of some nations are simply fantasy.⁷⁹ Yet nations without states continue to provide a source of identity for many people and act as entropy-resistant traits. They often exist across state boundaries and are becoming ever-increasingly important global actors. Guibernau attributes this to two modern phenomena: first, the intensification of globalization, and second, the expectations of a state not to impose the values of one particular nation on all its people.⁸⁰ Assimilation is no longer possible. The role of the state is changing from one that imposes an identity, to the protection of plurality. This may not exist in Uzbekistan, as shall be seen in Chapter Three, but nationalist movements should herald this trend.

The state does not simply exist, and while it may be an invention, it has evolved. In the ancient world, the state or *polis* was conceived as a city-state. The *polis* was the

⁷⁷Hobsbawm, 19.

⁷⁸Guibernau, 16.

⁷⁹Hobsbawm, 46.

⁸⁰Guibernau, 17.

first focus of political identity.⁸¹ In fact, the city as a political focus continued beyond ancient times. The Hanseatic League was a collection of city-states with mutual economic interests. Central Asian oasis cities, such as Samarqand, Bukhara, and Urgench were the focus of political identity for sedentary agrarian peoples. Even today, the existence of Singapore and Monaco suggest that the city-state remains a viable state structure. Largely, however, the notion of the city-state yielded to the modern western conception of the state. Pfaff calls the modern state a practical affair. He argues, “[i]t provides defence, civil order, a system of justice, an economic structure, a framework for industry and for commercial transactions, systems of transportation and communications, and so on.”⁸² The first two responsibilities of the state, that of defence and order, stem from Weber’s definition of the state: that the state has the sole legitimate monopoly on the use of violence. It is a definition that assumes a violent state of nature. Only the political state retains the authority to prevent violence with violence. This definition has repercussions. Because a state retains the exclusive right to use violence, nations without states that do not accept the legitimacy of the state may resort to violence themselves as a direct challenge to the state.⁸³ A state that actively promotes one particular nation over others within it and retains the sole right to the use of violence potentially draws a violent response. Violent recourse becomes the means of rejecting the legitimacy of the state. In

⁸¹Armstrong, 102.

⁸²Pfaff, 23.

⁸³Guibernau, 123.

the case of Uzbekistan, this manifests in the opposing forces of extremist Islamism and extremist secularism.

Without recourse to violence, a nation can attain statehood by meeting certain criteria. There are established norms that determine when a state comes into existence. A large enough movement within a country can question the legitimacy of the state's rule over part of the population. External forces of the international community may also call the state's legitimacy into question. Guibernau outlines the established criteria for the genesis of a state.⁸⁴ The first criterium for statehood is recognition. A state exists by virtue of its membership in an international community based on mutual recognition of sovereignty. Recognition establishes what is 'internal' and what is 'external' to a political unit. This criterium is essentially the acceptance of one's peers. All other criteria are moot if a state does not have recognition. The next criterium is administrative control. A state must maintain a capacity to govern within a limited territory. That leads to the next criterium which is territoriality. A state must have a location. Typically, a state should also control the means of internal and external violence, though in today's context, there are states that depend on collective security. Lastly, a state should have a national identity wherein the population enjoys a feeling of solidarity. By these criteria, it is curious that some states exist while others do not. Uzbekistan became a recognised member of the international community with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Administrative control is often tenable in certain regions and the country's territoriality is contested. As shall be seen in Chapter Three, Uzbekistan's territory was determined by Stalinist delineation and

⁸⁴The following criteria is listed in Guibernau, 152.

the successful lobbying of the Bukhara Jadids. As for the issue of national identity and the feeling of solidarity, that is the core issue of this thesis. Despite Uzbekistan's questionable fulfilment of these criteria, one must remember that the ultimate benchmark for statehood is recognition. Uzbekistan was rewarded in the haste to dismantle the Soviet Union.

The principle of nationalism insists that the state and the nation should be one. This notion gives rise to the nation-state. Smith calls the nation-state the "norm of modern political organisation . . . the almost undisputed foundation of world order, the main object of individual loyalties, the chief definer of man's identity."⁸⁵ However, it is quite clear that the state's objective to create one nation is not always possible. The attempt at popular homogenisation and assimilation of a state's inhabitants invariably runs the risk of creating a backlash, or counter-nationalism.⁸⁶ It is what Gellner calls entropy-resistance.⁸⁷ As the state can be what defines its nation, entropy-resistance increases the risk of violent confrontation between the state and sub-national groups. A nation must either co-operate with the state to preserve its nationality, or secede from the state to create its own nation-state. If the state perceives a threat from plurality, the differing objectives of the state and of its constituent nations can lead to violence. Haas indicates that the very notion of the nation-state, defined by mutual exclusivity and

⁸⁵Smith, 2.

⁸⁶Hobsbawm, 93.

⁸⁷Gellner, 64.

outright hostility, is a threat to international harmony.⁸⁸ The dichotomy of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ presents the grave potential for conflict. Haas would assume this based on an understanding that people are more likely to divide than unite. It is worth repeating, however, that the nation on which a nation-state may be based, need not be exclusive. It can be inclusive and accommodating.

The existence of autonomous nation-states is not inherently at odds with international harmony if they are integrated within a larger political institution with which all can identify. The grounds for nationality are already deemed to be arbitrary. That people can pick and choose the common bonds they wish to emphasise for political objectives suggests that there may exist a universal common bond to which all people can ascribe. In the following case study of Uzbekistan, the entire country’s population can be considered one nation, under one governing institution, that is not based on assimilation, but rather, in theory, acknowledges diversity and plurality of voice. Individual and group identity need not be compromised. There simply would have to be a general acceptance of ‘us’ without a ‘them.’ As Haas indicates, nationalism is a “convergence of territorial and political loyalty irrespective of competing foci of affiliation, such as kinship, profession, religion, economic interest, race, or even language.”⁸⁹ In this case study, the territory is Uzbekistan, and the political loyalty is to the central governing structure, particularly the office of the President. As Hans Kohn states, nationalism is “our identification with the life and aspirations of uncounted millions whom we shall never know, with a territory

⁸⁸Haas, 711.

⁸⁹Ibid., 708.

which we shall never visit in its entirety.”⁹⁰ If the idea of nationalism is already a cognitive artefact, than it is entirely adaptable and transformable.

A satisfactory summation of the material presented thus far can be found in a quote by Hugh Seton-Watson:

States can exist without a nation, or with several nations among their subjects; and a nation can be coterminous with the population of one state, or be included together with other nations within one state, or be divided between several states. There were states long before there were nations, and there are some nations that are older than most states which exist today. The belief that every state is a nation, or that all sovereign states are national states, has done much to obfuscate human understanding of political realities . . . The frequently heard cliché that ‘we live in an age of nation-states’ is at most a half-truth. What is arguably true is that we live in an age of sovereign states.⁹¹

This chapter sought to establish the terms of the nationalism debate and review the works of some of the discourse’s scholars. It traced the philosophic and political history of nationalism and assessed the bases upon which nations are conceived. The debate is not finished. Nationalism has not yet completed its political repercussions in the world as can be seen in the following case study. As the number of states and nation-states increases, so too does interdependence. As an element of the politics of identity, the nation remains an idea and the nation-state remains an objective. Only when diversity is genuinely accepted within states, will the pursuit of national self-determination fade into obscurity. Nationality must not be imposed as it was in the Soviet Union and is in contemporary Uzbekistan. In order to avoid the potential for violence that results from clashing nations, people must find the common bond that they all share, and voluntarily

⁹⁰Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1961), 9.

⁹¹As cited in Carlisle in Manz, (1994), 103.

establish a governing order to represent that interest. The contemporary process of political nationalism in Uzbekistan that produces a political will for the Uzbekistani nation to become a nation-state is divisive and dangerous. Gellner's model proves to be the most appropriate for understanding this process. The process of political nationalism is understood as the active promotion of one particular nation. The concept of the nation is understood to be arbitrary. To demonstrate how this process is divisive and dangerous requires an examination of the comparative literature on Uzbekistan and an understanding of what the Uzbekistani nation is.

CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL LITERATURE APPLIED TO
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE ON UZBEKISTAN

With the terminological framework of the nationalism discourse set, this thesis endeavours to apply the theoretical literature to a contemporary state example. For this, Uzbekistan is a worthy candidate. The Uzbekistani nation is an invention. It came about with the invention of the Uzbekistani state. The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, with its Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic neighbours, was a creation of the Stalinist era in the Soviet Union designed to build actual boundaries among the peoples of Central Asia. Josef Stalin knew of the common bond shared among these peoples and he sought to divide them. The Soviet Union instead conducted its own nationalism movement that attempted to forge a ‘Soviet Man’ (*Sovetskiy chelovek*). The ‘Soviet Man’ was meant to take the Soviet Union as his nation-state based on the common bond of communism. This idealistic pursuit, however, merely resulted in statewide Russification. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Uzbekistani nation was subsequently propagated by a governing *intelligentsia* led by President Islam Karimov. The governing elite is emulating the Soviet model of the ‘Soviet Man’ and is currently attempting to forge the homogenous Uzbekistani citizen. This process, however, is taking the form of ethnic and linguistic Uzbekification and utterly rejects the inclusion of an Islamic identity within the Uzbekistani political identity. The Uzbekistani citizen is meant to take Uzbekistan as his or her nation-state based on the common bond of territory, secularism, and a national myth rooted in the high culture of the country’s

Timurid history. The eponymous ethnic group for which Uzbekistan was created is the Uzbeks; however, Uzbekistan is by no means a nation-state. There is a difference between an Uzbek and an Uzbekistani. The former relates to the ethnic group, the latter to the newly invented nation that is being formed to accord with its state. Nationalism is the policy product of Uzbekistan's statehood that produces a political movement for the Uzbekistani state to become a nation-state. The most intriguing aspect in this case study is that the Uzbekistani nation is currently undergoing its formation. Following Gellner's definition, Uzbekistanis are not of the same culture, nor do they recognise each other as being of the same culture. The Uzbekistani state exists, but not yet the nation. The contemporary process of nationalism in Uzbekistan is a significant challenge for the country, the region, and the geopolitical rivals in Central Asia. The terminology of the discourse on nationalism has been discussed. The purpose of this case study is to apply the theoretical literature to a contemporary example.

In the case of Uzbekistan, nationalism as a political movement is a dangerously exclusionary and divisive phase of its post-Soviet, independent statehood. James Critchlow argues that as a nationality, Uzbeks are a product of early Soviet jurisdictional delineations.⁹² Critchlow asserts that the very idea of nationality was an alien European concept imported to Central Asia by the institutional architects of the Soviet regime.⁹³ Initially, the Soviet Union's territorial possessions in Central Asia were divided into two jurisdictions: Kazakhstan and Turkestan. In 1924-25, fearing a general uprising among

⁹²Critchlow, 3.

⁹³Ibid., 4.

The Caucasus and Central Asia



Figure 1 - Source: Central Intelligence Agency

the Central Asian peoples, the Soviets divided Turkestan further.⁹⁴ Five autonomous republics would eventually be carved out of Turkestan, including one for Karakalpakistan (within present-day Uzbekistan).⁹⁵ The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic came into existence on 27 October 1924, while Karakalpakistan first became an Autonomous Region on 16 February 1925, then an Autonomous Republic after 1936.⁹⁶ The 1925 deference to the Uzbek, Kyrgyz, or Turkmen nations was more representative of Soviet

⁹⁴Nazokat A. Kasymova, "Uzbekistan and the Challenges of Creating a Regional System Within Central Asia," *Occasional Paper #279* (Washington D.C.: Kennan Institute, 2001), 2.

⁹⁵Critchlow, 4.

⁹⁶Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (London: Croom Held Ltd., 1983), 42.

objectives, rather than a reflection of the local political reality. The Bolsheviks established state units “in order to encourage *emergent* or *artificial* nations” (author’s emphasis).⁹⁷ It was not a reaction to already-formed or imagined national consciousness among the Central Asian peoples. The purpose was to divide the peoples of Turkestan. Soviet policy thereafter was to assimilate the non-Russian peoples of the Union into a single Soviet nationality that resulted in Russification.⁹⁸ Ironically, and despite the artificiality of its founding, the federal institutions of the Soviet system served to foster a proto-Uzbekistani nationality.⁹⁹ In other words, Soviet national administrative policy created the foundation for what Anderson calls an ‘imagined community.’ Anderson’s criteria of a limited and sovereign community with a perceived common bond was realised. The Soviet Union created, quite literally, a land of the Uzbeks.

Edward Allworth claims that the ethnic Uzbek community posed a distinct threat to the Russians for three reasons: first, they lived in much of Central Asia in numbers significant enough to participate in the cultures and society of the entire region; second, Uzbek participation in politics in the areas they inhabited gave them strong potential for influence in local affairs; and third, more than any other national group of Central Asia, Uzbek culture exerted a ‘pull’ of assimilation on others that expanded the Uzbek population and enhanced their reach in nearly every field.¹⁰⁰ Soviet society posed a

⁹⁷Carlisle in Manz, (1994), 114.

⁹⁸Critchlow, 18.

⁹⁹Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁰Allworth, 196.

nationalist paradox. While the Soviets sought to create loyalty to the centre, they encouraged minority education but restricted the occupational mobility of the educated Uzbeks and other Muslims to the centre.¹⁰¹ This created a native elite whose most vested interest lay within their personal advancement at the Republic level, giving them greater incentive to improve the position of the Republic itself.¹⁰² Rogers Brubaker describes this process as being “not the struggles of nations, but the struggles of institutionally constituted national elites.”¹⁰³ The developing Soviet Uzbek nation had little choice but to pursue self-determination. In essence, this fostered a national sentiment toward the Uzbek Soviet Republic. As it was Vladimir I. Lenin who proposed the right of the peoples to self-determination within the Union, it became common practice to quote him in Uzbek political writing to support arguments for increased national rights.¹⁰⁴ In this manner Lenin mirrors Kant’s argument. An individual’s ultimate pursuit is autonomy or self-determination. One’s nation has the same ultimate goal. Yet, it must be noted again, neither Soviet Uzbekistan nor contemporary Uzbekistan is an individual or a nation. Although there developed an Uzbek nationalism in the Anderson model prior to independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, it was statehood that stimulated the development of an Uzbekistani nationalism in the Gellner model and the pursuit of unity

¹⁰¹Anderson discusses the national awareness developed through bureaucratic pilgrimages from the periphery to the centre and the effect of the denial of vertical administrative mobility, 57.

¹⁰²Critchlow, 29.

¹⁰³Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1996), 25.

¹⁰⁴Critchlow, 33.

within Uzbekistan.¹⁰⁵ The situation in Soviet Central Asia leads Allworth to question: “How will the creation of a corporate, retrospective nationality where none existed before affect people when it is politically motivated and applied and executed by outsiders?”¹⁰⁶ Uzbekistan’s reaction today is to deny the Stalinist invention of the proto-Uzbekistani nation, and instead reach to its period of Timurid history for high culture and to find an indigenous precedent justifying the existence of the Uzbekistani nation.

The peoples of Uzbekistan share much in common with their Central Asian neighbours. Culturally, religiously, and linguistically, the region is a melting pot of influences. While the history of the region is long, the idea of a national identity, or of nation-state building is entirely new. None of the Central Asian republics existed as nation-states before or during Russian or Soviet domination.¹⁰⁷ Some supporters of Turkestan’s dissection believe that the borders define legitimate national groups, but should have been laid in different places. Others suggest that to attempt to divide the Muslim populations of Central Asia is a fruitless endeavour.¹⁰⁸ Stalin’s definition of the nation is “a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.”¹⁰⁹ The ethnic Uzbek

¹⁰⁵Kasymova, 2.

¹⁰⁶Allworth, 4.

¹⁰⁷Nozar Alaolmolki, *Life After the Soviet Union: The Newly Independent Republics of the Transcaucasus and Central Asia* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 1.

¹⁰⁸Beatrice F. Manz, “Historical Background” in Beatrice Manz, ed. *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), 9-10.

¹⁰⁹Cited in Hobsbawm, 5 (n11).

community is defined in Russian sources as a nation. While the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia* refers to the Uzbeks as a 'nation' (*natsiya*), it indicates that its formation was incomplete prior to the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.¹¹⁰ However, the 1924 national delimitation set out by Stalin was, according to Critchlow, "in many ways a giant ethnic oversimplification."¹¹¹ Uzbeks were actually more apt to identify themselves according to their tribes, or as inhabitants of particular towns and cities. These were the communities in which they imagined themselves. They did not satisfy Haas' definition of a nation because Uzbeks within the Soviet delimitation did not believe themselves to be united by a set of characteristics that differentiated them from outsiders. Uzbeks did not, at this time, strive to create or maintain their own state. In fact, the peoples of Soviet Uzbekistan at this time had no precedent for a national identity. This is noted by Akmal Ikramov, Soviet Uzbekistan's Communist leader, who celebrated the achievements of the Soviet nationalities policy in 1937. He demonstrated how confusing the situation was before the 1924 national delineation:

The Uzbek people up to the October socialist revolution were not yet fully developed and consolidated as a nation. The Uzbek toiling masses had not then recognized themselves as a single nationality. The Ferghana [U]zbeks usually were called [K]okandists, according to the name of the khanate; the Zarafshan, Kashka Darya, and Surkhan Darya peoples were not considered [U]zbeks (by the Uzbeks of that time). Khorezmians, for example, when travelling elsewhere were for some reason called Tajiks. And the Russian colonialists called all of them Sarts.¹¹²

¹¹⁰Critchlow, 4.

¹¹¹Ibid., 11.

¹¹²Carlisle in Manz (1994), 115.

The Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic allowed for all these Uzbeks to be united under one federal institution, and the process of Soviet homogenisation and nation-building began. The contemporary challenge of nationalism since independence from the Soviet Union is the creation of an Uzbekistani nation. According to Gellner's earlier criteria for a nation, two people are of the same nation if they share the same culture, and if two people recognise each other as members of that nation. Uzbekistan, however, is made up of many cultures, and there is little mutual recognition of an Uzbekistani nationality. When the national delineation of 1924 occurred, it was enough of a challenge to create a Soviet national identity and the 'Soviet Man.' Since independence, the new challenge is to create a poly-ethnic Uzbekistani national identity.

The current effort to form an Uzbekistani nation emulates the Soviet effort to form a Soviet nation. The Soviet government did not intend for their dividing of Turkestan to lead to sub-nationalist movements. In fact, the Soviets conducted their policies with the intent to produce a new '*homo sovieticus*' who pledged a primary allegiance to the Union itself, with only a secondary identification to a constituent nationality.¹¹³ Differences in religion, culture, socialisation, and history would disappear with the installment of a new Soviet culture. The 'Soviet Man' would rise above these differences, liberated from his past, free and happy.¹¹⁴ The irony of the nationalities policy would be that Soviet Uzbek nationhood would become one of the most successful Soviet

¹¹³Manz in Manz (1994), 17.

¹¹⁴Bennigsen and Broxup, 3.

inventions.¹¹⁵ Now, a similar process to the 'Soviet Man' is underway in Uzbekistan with the creation of the Uzbekistani. They are both examples of Gellner's invented nations. The supreme bond of the 'Soviet Man' was communism. The emphasised common bonds of the Uzbekistani is Uzbekistan's territory and government, secularism, their Soviet experience, and a reinvented national history based on the high culture of the Timurid era. The Uzbekistani national experiment is no less a challenge than the Soviet one, and it remains to be seen whether this invented nation will succeed in developing as a nation-state. To satisfy Haas' definition of the nation-state, Uzbekistanis should consider themselves to be one nation and strive to remain so. Uzbekistanis have an actual bond through their common territory and central government, but little much of a perceived bond among the people to unite them within this most artificial of nation-states.

It is possible to follow Gellner's argument of historic phases of nationality with respect to Uzbekistan. It is also appropriate to revisit Armstrong's point about the agrarian phase of nationalist history. He noted the antagonism between nomadic and sedentary agrarians. The history of Central Asia is replete with conflict between settled and steppe nomadic peoples. The historic Uzbek tribes were steppe nomadic peoples that were the last of the significant invaders in the fifteenth century to settle in and mix with the indigenous population, already a conglomeration of settled and nomadic descendants. Eventually a synthesis of cultures occurred, yet the Uzbek name remained attached to the resultant community.¹¹⁶ There has been a historic clash of steppe nomadic and sedentary

¹¹⁵Neil J. Melvin, *Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), 1.

¹¹⁶Alaolmolki, 75-76.

identities in Central Asia, but the resultant fusion drew influences from both identities. So integrated became the Turkic (nomadic) and Tajik/Persian (sedentary) communities of the region, it gave credence to the Turkic proverb: “Just as there is no cap without a head, there is no Turk [nomadic] without an Iranian [sedentary].”¹¹⁷ Both communities reinforce each other’s identities while living together, not necessarily in an antagonistic relationship, but often in a co-operative relationship. The vast majority of this region’s history can be considered to fall under Gellner’s agrarian phase. Gellner’s modernist prerequisite for nationalism—that is, industrialisation—came with the Soviet Union.

The Soviets worked strenuously to industrialise Central Asia. Uzbekistan became an industrial complex, while at the same time it grew into a cotton monoculture. Uzbekistan is a prime example of Soviet economic mismanagement and deleterious environmental policy. The demand on water resources for the thirsty cotton production led in part to the degradation and disappearance of the Aral Sea. Given that this region is largely in the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, environmental negligence and the resulting health problems complicates the nationalism question in contemporary Uzbekistan. It was with *glasnost*¹¹⁸ that Soviet Uzbeks became most aware of their own economic exploitation by central powers, and of the damage to the environment in their homeland by leaders in Moscow who were indifferent to the human toll it would exact.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷Maria Eva Subtelny, “The Symbiosis of Turk and Tajik” in Beatrice Manz, ed. *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), 45.

¹¹⁸Literally translated as ‘publicity,’ or ‘openness.’ *Glasnost* was the Soviet policy of information liberalisation during the 1980s under the Presidential tenure of Mikhail Gorbachev.

¹¹⁹Critchlow, 61.

Glasnost was the nationalist point of no return. The lines of 'us' and 'them,' or 'exploiter' and 'exploited,' were drawn, and like a prime example of Gellner's nationalist theory, industrialisation begot nationalism in Soviet Uzbekistan.

The theoretical review of nationalism determined the components on which the nation is typically built. They are a common culture (ethnicity, religion, language) and the perception of a common bond. Gellner defined the purpose of nationalism as the congruence of political boundaries with ethnic boundaries. The political boundaries, in the case of Uzbekistan, were set by the Soviet Union. Mohiaddin Mesbahi argues that the Soviet nationality policy that was imposed on the peoples of Central Asia left a structure that formed the basis of a sovereign national structure. The Soviet method enshrined ethnic identity as nationality. With the demise of the Soviet Union, however, this nationality is developing into a nation-state. The significance of ethnicity should wane as Uzbekistan attempts to accommodate the minority ethnicities within its borders to an Uzbekistani nationality.¹²⁰ Ethnicity cannot be considered the basis for the Uzbekistani nation because there is no Uzbekistani ethnicity. It is a poly-ethnic society, including Uzbeks, Tajiks, Russians, and others. Furthermore, by its very name, as Allworth points out, even the idea of an Uzbek nation is built upon the conglomeration of Turkic tribes, using the term Uzbek as a tribal distinction, rather than ethnicity.¹²¹ Since independence from the Soviet Union, Uzbekistani authorities have launched an impressive drive to

¹²⁰Eden Naby, "The Emerging Central Asia: Ethnic and Religious Factions" in Mohiaddin Mesbahi, ed., *Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union: Domestic and International Dynamics* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1994), 49.

¹²¹As quoted in Melvin, 6.

create a mono-ethnic vision of their nation-state through ethnic Uzbekification, notwithstanding the official rhetoric about pluralism.¹²² Yet Uzbekistan remains the most ethnically diverse republic in the region, consisting of 120 nationalities.¹²³ Despite this, ethnic Uzbeks make up seventy-five percent of the total population of Uzbekistan, making it also the most ethnically homogenous state in Central Asia.¹²⁴ One must remember that it was the Soviet nationality policies that defined the Uzbek and Tajik communities as separate ethnicities. This distinction became institutionalised and actualised by decades of the Soviet bureaucratic mechanisms.¹²⁵ Prior to this, however, the ethno-linguistic situation in the region had become confused and quite complex. In some areas, Uzbeks and Tajiks became so intermixed that it was difficult to distinguish between them. There was no strong sense of national identity and inhabitants often did not know what ethnic group they were from, preferring to identify themselves only by their tribal name, their town ('Bukharli,' etc.), or simply as Muslim.¹²⁶ Although the theoretical literature determined that ethnicity can be a basis for a nation, it is difficult to do so in a poly-ethnic society. It is difficult unless there is an active policy to emphasise one ethnic group above the others, as is the case in Uzbekistan with ethnic Uzbeks.

¹²²Melvin, 43.

¹²³Alaolmolki, 75.

¹²⁴Kasymova, 4.

¹²⁵Melvin, 49.

¹²⁶Subtelny in Manz (1994), 51.

The Soviet Union's language policy in Central Asia was based on the assumption that homogeneity would occur and that eventually everyone would be speaking Russian.¹²⁷ However, in Uzbekistan, as with other non-Russian republics, the national language became a focal point around which the population opposed Russification and promoted nationalism.¹²⁸ Uzbek authorities went about 'de-Russifying' their language and place names.¹²⁹ Russians, however, had not previously sought to learn the indigenous languages of Central Asia, preferring instead to rule through native surrogates. This policy helped to create a new class of indigenous elites whose status depended on Russian power. This class was often feared or despised by their fellow countrymen.¹³⁰ Currently Uzbekistan is undergoing a process of linguistic Uzbekification. The term *yerlilashdirish*, meaning localising or indigenising in conjunction with *ishlarni o'zbek tilida yorgozish* (conducting business in Uzbek), means that the language of administration and government is now Uzbek. Those Russians and other non-ethnic Uzbeks working in the civil service have to learn Uzbek or resign.¹³¹ This policy is propelling a Russian emigration from Uzbekistan.¹³² Language, as an element of Uzbekistani nationalism, has proven a divisive issue. Language is a basis to measure the existence of a nation, but

¹²⁷Critchlow, 101.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid., 104-112.

¹³⁰Ibid., 8.

¹³¹Allworth, 219.

¹³²Alaolmolki, 41.

Uzbekistan is a poly-lingual society. The Uzbekistani nation, however, elevates the language status of Uzbek to the exclusion of other languages.

The status of religion is the most divisive issue for the nascent Uzbekistani nation. Islam is the dominant religion of Central Asia. It was under the reign of the Russian Tsar Feodor that Muscovy created its 'nationality problem' that was handed on to Imperial Russia and to the Soviet Union. No longer was Muscovy a purely Russian Orthodox nation-state. It became a multinational empire, wherein the Orthodox Christians enjoyed privileged rights while all others were relegated to second class citizenry.¹³³ In Central Asia, the most basic unit of a system of government is the *mahalla* or communal government, and Islam was their creed.¹³⁴ Tsarina Catherine II is said to have taken a personal interest in Islam and believed it was a 'reasonable' religion, better fitted 'to civilise' the 'wild Asian populations' than Christianity. She, like her distant predecessor, Ivan the Terrible, took an imperial approach towards Russia. A multinational empire wherein the population of non-Russians continued to grow against that of Russians, could only survive if all imperial subjects were treated equally. This must extend to religion, culture, and creed.¹³⁵ The Soviet policy towards the Muslim populations differed in that it blended Marxism with some of the pre-revolutionary Tsarist ideas. It is worth restating the relevant sections of Bennigsen and Broxup's summary of this policy:

¹³³Bennigsen and Broxup, 13.

¹³⁴Annette Bohr, *Uzbekistan: Politics and Foreign Policy* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998), 21-22.

¹³⁵Bennigsen and Broxup, 17-18.

1. All Soviet citizens are equal. They are 'citizens of the USSR' enjoying the same personal rights and bound by the same duties. There is no religious discrimination. In the case of Soviet Muslims, there is no longer any difference between former Russian citizens (such as Tatars and Bashkirs) and former *inorodtsy* (Turkestanis, Kazakhs, North Caucasians).
2. The Russians represent the 'Elder Brother,' the guide, the model for all Soviet nations. They provide the basis of 'Soviet' culture. Russian patriotism is the basis of Soviet patriotism.
3. All nationalities of the USSR are equal and enjoy the same collective rights. This equality is, however, more theoretical than real; the more important groups such as Uzbeks, Tatars and Azeris enjoy some measure of equality with the Russians, but some of the lesser groups are deprived of literary written languages, which mean, among other things, that they can be submitted to a relatively rapid assimilation by the Russians or by some other strong nationality. Some of these groups are also deprived a national territory.
4. Religion in the USSR is a private affair and not a criterion for national determination. Therefore there cannot be such a thing as a 'Muslim nation.'
5. Soviet society is dynamic, engaged in building socialism and straining towards Communism amidst constant change and evolution. This process draws the different Soviet nationalities closer to each other (*sblizhenie*) and the final stage of this evolution will be the merging of all nationalities (*sliyanie*) into one 'Soviet' nationality with one 'Soviet' culture. A new human being, the 'Soviet man' (*Sovetskiy chelovek*) will emerge with a 'Soviet,' 'international,' 'proletarian' supranational consciousness. National differences will disappear, national cultures will survive only as folklore. All Soviet citizens will have - as prophesised by Kalinin in the 1920s - 'the Weltanschauung of the Petrograd worker.'¹³⁶

Contemporary Uzbekistani nationalism emulates these Soviet policies in all aspects except communism. All Uzbekistani citizens are constitutionally equal. The ethnic Uzbeks represent the 'elder brother' who provides the basis for Uzbekistani culture. Uzbek patriotism is the basis of Uzbekistani patriotism. All the nationalities of Uzbekistan are equal in theory, but only the Karakalpakistanis enjoy a degree of administrative self-determination. All other nationalities, including the Russians and

¹³⁶Ibid., 25-26.

Tajiks, are subjected to the assimilating tendencies (Uzbekification) of Uzbekistani nationalism. Uzbekistani national policy seeks to merge the nationalities within its territorial control into one Uzbekistani nationality with one Uzbekistani culture. The most critical identifying feature of this culture is the strict adherence to secularism and the exclusion of an Islamic identity.

The policies of both the former Soviet Union and of contemporary Uzbekistan very much deny the Muslim reality of Central Asia. There are essentially three levels of Muslim consciousness in Central Asia: a sub-national, clan or tribal consciousness, a national consciousness (Uzbek, Kyrgyz, etc.), and a supranational religious (Islamic) or ethnic (Turkic) consciousness.¹³⁷ The sub-national and the supranational are both recognised in the indigenous culture. The middle, national consciousness, however, came about only with the 1924 Soviet divisions of the region, aimed at separating Muslim territories and identities. Today, President Karimov claims to regard the post-Soviet revival of spiritual values as a natural component of Uzbek national self-awareness.¹³⁸ The reality of Uzbekistani nationalism, however, is that active Islamic practise is not a welcome component of the Uzbekistani national identity. This important point shall be returned to later in this chapter.

Uzbekistan is meant to foster and develop the Uzbekistani nation. The country's leaders have promoted Uzbekistani nationalism as a means of uniting their society.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Ibid., 135.

¹³⁸ Karimov, 85.

¹³⁹ Melvin, 29.

President Karimov states that the most important result of Uzbekistan's independence is the laying of a foundation of a 'common home' for all Uzbek peoples and the emergence of a new poly-ethnic Uzbekistani community. This, he claims, is the common philosophy of Uzbekistanis, without loss of originality.¹⁴⁰ It is a rhetoric that is not actualised. In the context of the state-making process in Central Asia, Ro'i calls to mind the nineteenth century Italian politician's quip: 'We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians.'¹⁴¹ Equally true is: 'We have made Uzbekistan. Now we must make Uzbekistanis.' However, one must caution against the assumption that state-making is identical to nation-building. The former is more concrete while the latter can be problematic. To achieve victory in state-making does not necessarily result in victory in nation-building. They are not reinforcing processes.¹⁴² The purpose of the political movement of Uzbekistani nationalism is to impose one vision of a nation on the unified state. Interestingly, men serving in the armed forces of Uzbekistan who already swore their oaths during the USSR, were not required to swear another one to Uzbekistan. Only new personnel swear an oath of loyalty to the people and the president of Uzbekistan, though not to the state itself.¹⁴³ In this manner, as previously described by Hobsbawm, the people are the nation. The nation exists as a state and the state is tied to its territory.

¹⁴⁰Karimov, 88.

¹⁴¹Donald S. Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours," in Yaacov Ro'i, ed., *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 73.

¹⁴²Carlisle in Manz (1994), 103.

¹⁴³Susan Clark, "The Central Asian States: Defining Security Priorities and Developing Military Forces," in Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994), 195.

The territorial basis of national identity in Uzbekistan is a relatively recent development that is a subject of contention. As Allworth states, the notion of a place called Central Asia implies a mixture of people sharing a common territory rather than a homogeneous ethnic homeland for one particular nationality.¹⁴⁴ The name Uzbekistan, on the other hand, implies a homeland specifically for the Uzbek ethnicity. The current geographic location of Uzbekistan was determined by administrative fiat during the Stalinist era.

The principle instigators and main beneficiaries of the 1924 national delimitation were the Bukhara Jadids, particularly Faizulla Khojaev and his supporters. Donald Carlisle argues that through the successful lobbying of the Bukhara Jadids, the creation of Uzbekistan was actually the expansion of a Greater Bukhara.¹⁴⁵ Bukhara absorbed the territories of the former Qoqand and Khivan Khanates. Bukhara is the region of Mawarannahr with its cities Bukhara and Samarqand. Qoqand is the region of the Ferghana valley with its cities Quqon, Andijan, and Namangan. Khiva is the region of Khorezm in the Amu Darya delta with its cities Khiva, Urganch, and Nukus. Soviet Bukhara, the successor state to the long-established Bukharan Emirate, was established in September 1920 with the assistance of the Soviet Red Army. It was here that Moscow found its primary native allies. Faizulla Khojaev was chief among them.¹⁴⁶ After the 1925 state delineations, most of old Bukhara lay within Uzbekistan, except for a part of its west

¹⁴⁴ Allworth, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Carlisle in Manz (1994), 104-105.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 110.



Figure 2 - Source: United Nations, Cartographic Department

which was allotted to Turkmenistan. The more isolated and mountainous regions of Bukhara - East Bukhara and the Pamirs - were renamed Tajikistan. Initially this remained intact with the rest of Bukhara within Uzbekistan.¹⁴⁷ Khojaev had effectively achieved, through allying himself with the Russians, what the Bukharan Emirs had failed at for centuries. Although Bukhara officially disappeared as an independent unit after the 1924-25 redrawing of the map, Bukhara actually became a Greater Bukhara and was renamed Uzbekistan.¹⁴⁸ Khojaev's Uzbekistan resembled a political entity which harkened back to

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 111.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

much earlier times.¹⁴⁹ Although the proponents of a united Turkestan lost during the 1924-25 national delineations, Bukhara and its local Jadid leaders were major beneficiaries.¹⁵⁰ Khojaev was rewarded for his loyalty and became Chairman of Uzbekistan's Government while the capital was at Samarqand (1925-30). An anti-Bukhara wing of Uzbekistan's Communist party grew up, however, under the leadership of Akmal Ikramov.¹⁵¹ Ikramov would eventually become the preferred indigenous leader for Moscow. At the Party Congress of 1986, however, Uzbek co-operation with the Russians turned into a backlash against them. Gorbachev took the offensive against the native elite, threatening them and putting them on the defensive. The Moscow *apparatus* turned their allies into determined adversaries through botched diplomacy.¹⁵² This marked the beginning of the decline of Moscow's authority in Uzbekistan.

The intellectuals and leaders of Uzbekistan today are attempting to establish an Uzbekistani national identity rooted in its pre-Soviet period through reviving its cultural and historical background. This is being attempted without fuelling the existing ethnic and tribal rivalries. To do so requires emphasis of a commonality. As previously noted, according to Gellner the secret of nationalism is the ability for a high culture to pervade all of society and to be sustained by the masses. The commonality of the people's Soviet experience is not the preferred candidate. In this case, the elite are using Uzbekistan's

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 114.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 121.

¹⁵²Critchlow, 52.

Timurid history to consolidate the national identity. Timurid history is the high culture that is today publically disseminated through education. In Tashkent, statues of Lenin and Marx are replaced by Timur. Lenin College is now Timur College.¹⁵³ It is important to know who Timur is and why his legacy is being considered the appropriate basis for the high culture of an Uzbekistani national identity. This will require a brief overview of Timurid history.

Timur was born April 8, 1336 CE, at Kesh, in Mawarannahr (in current-day Uzbekistan), into the Barlas tribe: a tribe of Mongol origin, with a Turkic tongue, and of the Islamic faith.¹⁵⁴ Until the day of his death on January 19, 1405, the Asian continent was his to conquer. Harold Lamb identifies three great conquerors in Asian history: Iskander (Alexander the Great), Chingiz Khan (Genghis Khan), and Amir Timur (Tamerlane).¹⁵⁵ Timur was most effective at destroying and caused the deaths of millions. Yet Timur was a man of contradiction and his reign ushered in an era of cultural flourishing. With respect to its demography, architecture, religion, and royal succession, the impact of Timur and his legacy is deep and enduring on the history of Central Asia, its surrounding regions, and especially current-day Uzbekistan. It is estimated that Timur was responsible for the deaths of up to seventeen million people, while those who submitted were absorbed into his fold. Of those who followed Timur, the settled

¹⁵³Alaolmolki, 76.

¹⁵⁴David Morgan, *Medieval Persia: 1040-1797* (London: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd., 1997), 85.

¹⁵⁵Harold Lamb, *Tamerlane, The Earth Shaker* (New York: Robert M. McBride Co., 1928), 258.

Persians/Tajiks were among the most actively involved in administration.¹⁵⁶ Timur acted as a power broker placing those who would be subordinate to him in positions of leadership. In order to restrict the manpower these local leaders had to draw upon, Timur conscripted a high number of foreign troops from their lands.¹⁵⁷ Not only did this serve to strengthen his forces, but weakened those who might oppose him.

During his conquests, Timur often spared the local artists and sent them to his capital, Samarqand, in order to beautify it. The extravagance and opulence of his city earned it the nicknames: the 'Mirror of the World,' the 'Garden of the Blessed,' and 'The Fourth Paradise.'¹⁵⁸ The Castilian ambassador to Samarqand, Don Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo proclaimed "[t]he richness and abundance of this great capital and its district is such as is indeed a wonder to behold."¹⁵⁹ Among some of the most famous architectural accomplishments are the Shah Zindeh complex, which includes a mosque and mausoleums; the Bibi Khanum mosque and madrasa, which was built to celebrate Timur's successful military campaign in India; and the Gur Emir, a mausoleum originally built for Timur's favourite grandson, but which would eventually become his own tomb. Timur spared no expense in the glorifying of Samarqand. The unique fluted dome, created for Timur's monuments, was adopted in Russian constructs such as St. Basel's Cathedral, and in Mughal India (a Timurid successor dynasty), most famously in the Taj

¹⁵⁶Manz (1999), 91.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 98.

¹⁵⁸Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 163.

¹⁵⁹Don Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*. Translated by Guy le Strange (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 287.

Mahal. During its peak, Samarqand was one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Many of Timur's constructs still stand today and are the national pride of Uzbekistan.

René Grousset suggests that Timur represents a synthesis of Mongol barbarity and Muslim fanaticism wherein killing is undertaken as an ideological duty or sacred mission.¹⁶⁰ This is a harsh assessment of Timur's religious approach both personally and institutionally, and may prove to be exaggerated. It is not actually clear where Timur's religious preferences lay. It certainly can be said that he adhered to Islam and its Sufi practices, but his steppe nomadic religious traditions also played a role in his piety. With respect to Islam, the Tunisian scholar ibn Khaldun noted that Timur revealed Shi'ite tendencies through his preference for 'members of the House,' that is, 'Ali and others of the Prophet's family.' This should be regarded as an indication of his preferences for his own succession, for Timur was not necessarily consistent in his religious leanings. While he fought against the Christians of Georgia and the Hindus of India with religious zeal, he also invoked elements of Shi'ism to fight his fellow-Muslim Ottomans, and elements of Sunnism in his fight against the Shi'ites of Mazandaran.¹⁶¹ There is also evidence that he allowed Jewish and Christian places of worship for their communities in Samarqand.¹⁶²

Elements of Timur's nomadic shamanistic religion were also invoked. In his attempt to retain the nomadic religious guidelines of the *yasa* and combine them with the Islamic guidelines of *shari'a*, conflict resulted. For example, the washing of the feet

¹⁶⁰René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, Translated by Naomi Walword (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 434.

¹⁶¹Manz (1988), 112.

¹⁶²Lamb, 306.

before prayer as a necessary component of *shari'a* is a strictly forbidden practice under the *yasa*.¹⁶³ It is quite significant that Timur never adopted the *shari'a* in favour of the *yasa*.¹⁶⁴ Timur was a Muslim, but he sacked all the capitals of the Muslim world.¹⁶⁵ Timur was bent on conquest and he crushed those who were in his way. It seemed to matter little of which religion his enemy was. Timur's religious legacy in Central Asia was one of synthesis between Turko-Mongol nomadic traditions and Islam. However, Timur was not governed by religion and he manipulated it to suit his purposes, be they economic, military, or in dealing with matters of succession.

Timur's death resulted in a power struggle and after a period of infighting, Timur's fourth son, Shah Rukh succeeded his father. Shah Rukh is represented as humane, fair, a great builder, and a benefactor of poets and artists. He was arguably one of Asia's greatest leaders in history.¹⁶⁶ Shah Rukh and his son Ulugh-beg ushered in what is known as the Timurid renaissance of high culture, or the golden age of Persian/Tajik literature and art. Shah Rukh became one of the most active protectors of Persian/Tajik high culture, causing painting, calligraphy, architecture, poetry, and the writing of history to flourish under his patronage. While Shah Rukh moved his capital to Herat, in current-day Afghanistan, Ulugh beg remained in Samarqand where he built a great astronomical

¹⁶³Jean-Paul Roux, *Tamerlan* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 231.

¹⁶⁴Grousset, 416.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 431.

¹⁶⁶Grousset, 457.

observatory and sparked an age of scientific inquiry.¹⁶⁷ Timur can be credited with two aspects of this high cultural renaissance. First, Timur had a great respect for all things intellectual. Furthermore, Timur's devastating conquests meant his successors had no formidable enemy to face, for he effectively destroyed all those of significance.¹⁶⁸

Without the threat of enemies, the Timurids were able to concentrate on the advancement of Persian/Tajik culture which was regionally the ultimate in high culture. The most appropriate description of Timur would be to call him a cruel genius. He was capable of granting amnesty and preparing for combat in the same command. He was a man of extraordinary intelligence and proved himself to be one of the greatest military generals the world has ever seen. He defeated every major enemy he faced, making him the last of the great nomad conquerors.¹⁶⁹ Timur lived by the adage of the Turko-Mongol nomad: struggle and victory and the glory of possession.¹⁷⁰

In the end, Timur left a lasting legacy in Central Asia and its surroundings. He had a devastating impact on the demographics of the region, both through the mass slaughter of its inhabitants and of the forced migration of the skilled labour in order to contribute to his architectural legacy and capital, Samarqand. Uzbekistan's current poly-ethnic demography and its stunning historic architecture are largely owed to the Timurid period of history. Timur's religious legacy was one of syncretism between Islam and his

¹⁶⁷Lamb, 256.

¹⁶⁸Morgan, 99.

¹⁶⁹Morgan, 92.

¹⁷⁰Lamb, 205.

nomadic shamanistic religious traditions. His military successes allowed for the intellectual and cultural pursuits of the Timurid renaissance undertaken by his son, Shah Rukh, and grandson, Ulugh beg. Timur followed in the footsteps of Chingiz Khan. No one else followed in the footsteps of Timur until the Uzbek tribes forced the Timurids out of Central Asia and conquered the Timurid territorial base in Mawarannahr in 1501, in current-day Uzbekistan. This gave the Uzbek tribal confederation from the eastern regions of the Golden Horde a quasi-homeland.¹⁷¹ It was a quasi-homeland because at that point the ethnic Uzbeks were still a nomadic people. Yet the nomadic Uzbeks inherited all the high culture that the Timurids developed.

Today, the Uzbekistani state promotes ethnic Uzbek culture and has formulated a national history revolving around a cult of Timur.¹⁷² Uzbekistan's Timurid history is its high culture. Gellner's critique of high culture remains relevant. Uzbekistanis are led to believe that the high cultural legacy of Timurid history is what makes them distinct. Uzbekistan's elite is today attempting to get that high culture accepted among the Uzbekistani masses. Most significantly, Timurid history is not exclusively Islamic, it demonstrates an appreciation for science and modernity, and it long predates Central Asia's Soviet era. The elite are using Timurid history to justify the existence of the Uzbekistani nation. In Gellner's terms, Timurid high culture is what Uzbekistanis should see as what makes them distinct. By drawing the connection between the Timurid period of the region with present-day Uzbekistan, the current leadership seeks to disprove the

¹⁷¹Manz in Manz (1994), 7.

¹⁷²Melvin, 43.

assertion that the country's sole legitimacy for existence stems from the artificial construct of the Leninist-Stalinist period.¹⁷³ Not only is Timur revered, but in many ways, his practices are emulated. Uzbekistan's religious heritage does not receive the same official patronage. Though Uzbekistan's rediscovery of its religious heritage has been growing, President Karimov's transformation has been less pronounced. This is because he, like the leaders of Uzbekistan's neighbours, is a relic of the communist era and he faces the threat of religious opposition. Karimov has made symbolic gestures toward Islam, such as swearing his presidential oath of office on the Qur'an and making the *hajj* to Mecca.¹⁷⁴ However, President Karimov uses Islam for his political benefit. His tolerance toward Islam, as shall be seen, is thin.

After the 1924 delimitation, Soviet Uzbekistan emerged the strongest unit in Central Asia. Whether this was because of the diplomatic finesse of Faizulla Khojaev, the Bukhara Jadid lobby, or simply coincident with Stalin's objectives, present-day Uzbekistan gained. This was true in terms of population, resources, and territory.¹⁷⁵ Uzbekistan incorporated the most prized area of the region: the fertile Ferghana Valley (of the former Qoqand Khanate). The ancient historical and cultural centres of Bukhara and Samarqand (the former Bukhara Khanate) were given to Uzbekistan, despite their being mostly Persian/Tajik cities. The Amu Darya delta (the former Khiva Khanate) as the Karakalpak administrative unit was absorbed by Uzbekistan. The Russian and Kazakh

¹⁷³Bohr, 21.

¹⁷⁴Martha Brill Olcott, "Islam and Fundamentalism in Independent Central Asia," in Yaacov Ro'i, ed., *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 22.

¹⁷⁵Carlisle in Manz (1994), 119.

strategic centre and stronghold of Tashkent was allocated to the Uzbeks, eventually to become the capital of Uzbekistan. Moscow recognised Uzbekistan's preeminent position within Central Asia. This was made abundantly clear in February 1925 by Kalinin in a speech at Bukhara when he addressed the First Congress of the Republic's Communist Party:

Naturally, Uzbekistan must play a large role in Central Asia, a role, one might even say, of hegemony. This role must not be lost sight of, Comrades, leaders of the Central Committee of Uzbekistan. I consider this proper. Certainly, Uzbekistan has available sufficiently large cultural forces, it has available great material possibilities, a large population, it has the most wealthy cities. I consider it a fully valid and natural desire to play first violin in Central Asia. But, if comrades want to play first violin, then it is reasonable that this will be achieved in the Soviet Union only by increased labours, great generosity, huge work, and sacrifices for the neighbouring republics, which will come in contact with you. For when you are strong, because you are mighty, then from you will be demanded great compliance toward these republics. In a word, you must be related to them as Moscow is related to you.¹⁷⁶

Soviet Uzbekistan was bestowed the most prized territory of Central Asia. It was placed in the most strategic position to assume regional hegemony. The Bukhara Jadids secured a Greater Bukhara in the form of Soviet Uzbekistan. The Soviet national policy and federal administrative structure laid the foundations for a governing structure and attempted to create a Soviet national identity. Through economic and environmental exploitation of Central Asia, active Russification, and chauvinistically denying the Soviet Uzbek elite from being promoted beyond Tashkent, the Soviet Russians fostered a proto-Uzbekistani nationalism based on Soviet Uzbekistan. A clear distinction between the Uzbekistani 'us' and the Russian 'them' was drawn. Soviet Uzbekistanis may not have considered themselves of the same culture, but they began to fulfill Gellner's definition of

¹⁷⁶Carlisle in Manz (1994), 119.

the nation as recognising a common uniting element. They began to see themselves as a community, bound by common territory, common government, and with the common purpose of statehood.

In the post-independence period Uzbekistan retains the most prized territory in Central Asia and it remains in the most strategic position to assume regional hegemony. Among five newly independent states, however, these matters become regionally more complex. Uzbekistan is today undergoing a period of nationalism in which a new nation, the Uzbekistani nation, is developing. The elite promote the high culture of Uzbekistan's Timurid history to justify the Uzbekistani nation's existence. Uzbekistani nationalism, however, emulates Soviet nationalism in its homogenisation. It is marked by economic and environmental exploitation of its regions, especially in Karakalpakistan, and its national policy actively promotes ethnic Uzbekification. The most critical issue of Uzbekistani nationalism is defining what exactly the Uzbekistani nation is. This problem has the widest domestic and international repercussions which is why nationalism in contemporary Uzbekistan is of such geopolitical relevance.

Uzbekistan faces unique geopolitical challenges. First, it is noteworthy that Uzbekistan is landlocked and dependent on its neighbours for transport. Uzbekistan is, in fact, one of only two countries in the world, along with Liechtenstein, that is doubly landlocked. Uzbekistan faces the issue of pipeline routes. States are the necessary brokers for the export of their resources, or as may be the case, when a neighbour's resources require transit. The narcotics trade that is based on neighbouring Afghani agriculture helps to fund the terrorist organisations that operate in and across Uzbekistan's borders.

Uzbekistan faces numerous domestic challenges. It is ethnically Turkic, Muslim, has a mono-economic culture with an overemphasis on cotton, and it is authoritarian.¹⁷⁷ With the rise of ethnic Uzbek chauvinism, in part connected to the Uzbekistani leadership's emphasis on blaming previous leaders (that is, Russians), for the country's economic and ecological devastation, the republic has witnessed a drain of the Slavic population.¹⁷⁸

Since the Soviet era, Uzbekistan has shown a trend toward de-modernisation, cultural regression, and a general intellectual decline. The patterns of this decline are outlined by

Boris Rumer:

1. The population has adapted, but in differing degrees and ways, to the changes in the social and economic situation.
2. The *mahallah* (local community) plays an enormous role in the social life of post-Soviet Uzbekistan.
3. The exodus of the non-indigenous population - Slavs, Jews, Germans, Crimean Tatars - from the cities of Uzbekistan is still underway.
4. The Uzbek elite is undergoing qualitative changes in composition, cultural orientation, and cultural level.
5. Traditionalism and nationalism are used as a means to consolidate society and to bolster the regime's power.
6. During the post-Soviet era, Uzbekistan underwent a transformation from traditionalism to totalitarianism.
7. Anti-modernisation has become manifest in all spheres of cultural and economic life.¹⁷⁹

The business environment is also in a desperate condition. One anecdote has an American businessman saying: "We studied the situation here, but we cannot foretell what will happen . . . In Uzbekistan we felt we could predict the future only in terms of days, not

¹⁷⁷Rustam Burnashev, "Regional Security in Central Asia: Military Aspects," in Boris Rumer, ed., *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (Armonk, New York: Sharpe, 2002), 140.

¹⁷⁸Clark in Mandelbaum, 197.

¹⁷⁹Boris Rumer, "The Search for Stability in Central Asia," in Boris Rumer, ed., *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (Armonk, New York: Sharpe, 2002), 26-30.

years. The political situation is simply unknown.”¹⁸⁰ Zbigniew Brzezinski notes that the viability of Uzbekistan will remain uncertain unless America supports its efforts at national consolidation.¹⁸¹ That is, Uzbekistan has the potential to be a viable and prosperous state if Uzbekistani nationalism serves as a unifying process. America and the international community can use its influence in the region to promote this end, rather than the divisive process of Uzbekistani nationalism currently underway.

Uzbekistan is forced to contend with regional security issues. Hooman Peimani points to Barry Buzan’s concept of the ‘security complex’ as an appropriate analytical tool for the study of Central Asia. Buzan’s structural breakdown contains five sectors: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental.¹⁸² Military security concerns the offensive and defensive capabilities of states and the state’s perception of other states’ intentions. Political security concerns the stability of states and their systems of government as well as their legitimizing ideologies. Economic security concerns the accessibility to the state of major economic factors such as the resources, finances, and markets that are necessary to sustain the state’s desired levels of welfare and power. Societal security concerns the sustainability of factors that form the identity of the state: language, culture, religion, custom, and national identity. Finally, environmental security concerns the protection ‘of the local and the planetary biosphere.’

¹⁸⁰Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, “Islamic Revivalism in Uzbekistan,” in Dale F. Eickelman, ed., *Russia’s Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), 90.

¹⁸¹Zbigniew Brzezinski, “A Geostrategy for Eurasia,” *Foreign Affairs* (Vol. 76, No. 5, Sept/Oct. 1997), 52.

¹⁸²Hooman Peimani, *Regional Security and the Future of Central Asia: The Competition of Iran, Turkey, and Russia* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 15.

When Uzbekistan was first created, it could be conceptualised as a Greater Bukhara. Now, in its post-independence era, it is becoming increasingly evident that there are those who would see a Greater Uzbekistan. Bennigsen and Broxup point out that it is ironic that the most artificial of the Central Asian nations - the Uzbeks - should be emerging as a real 'nation' with strong 'imperialistic' tendencies.¹⁸³ Uzbekistan contains, as previously noted, all the cultural and historical capitals of Central Asia - Bukhara, Samarqand, Qoqand, Urgench, Shahrisabz and Khiva. The best Central Asian universities (Tashkent and Samarqand) and scientific institutions (the Uzbek Academy of Science in Tashkent) are in Uzbekistan, and so is the seat of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate and the only working *madrassahs* (in Tashkent and Bukhara). Now too Tashkent is home to the regional anti-terrorism centre of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, also charged with the task of increasing economic ties among its members.

The current regime of President Karimov has set up an ideological apparatus that propagates the idea of a Greater Uzbekistan, relying on patriotic and nationalist mythologies rooted in the cult of Timur, as already discussed. Rumer notes that propaganda about the 'national idea,' which has given rise to nationalistic and even national-radical attitudes, seeks to fuse regional sub-units into a single society and to fashion a homogenous Uzbekistani nation.¹⁸⁴ By and large Uzbekistanis, however, continue to associate their identities more with their cities, than the country as a whole. As a result, the people of Qoqand, or Samarqand, or Tashkent continue to regard

¹⁸³Bennigsen and Broxup, 139.

¹⁸⁴Rumer in Rumer, 29.

themselves as separate groups. Not only do they claim to be distinct, but superior to the others.¹⁸⁵ The desire in Tashkent to construct a Greater Uzbekistan has not gone unnoticed by Uzbekistan's neighbours. There is palpable and justifiable concern, especially between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, whose relations are tense enough to threaten open confrontation.¹⁸⁶ Uzbekistan has such played the role as regional hegemon, it led Bennigsen and Broxup to predict in the early 1980s that Uzbeks would increasingly be recognised as the leaders of Central Asia by most other Central Asians. While this may be more psychological than economic or political, Uzbeks would take the lead of Central Asia, and eventually maybe of all Soviet Islam.¹⁸⁷ Bennigsen and Broxup claim that:

[i]t is probable that by the turn of the century the Uzbek nation, some 25 million strong, will act as the pole around which other nationalities of Central Asia will federate. If Turkestan is to be united again, as in the time of Timur, it will be around the great cities of Tashkent, Samarqand and Bukhara once more, and under Uzbek leadership.¹⁸⁸

This was their view before the demise of the Soviet Union. If there is any doubt that the Uzbek leadership has abandoned this pretense, one need only observe the words of President Karimov when he says, "Uzbekistan has the potential to become the initiator of the cultural integration of the Central Asian states."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 30.

¹⁸⁶Burnashev in Rumer, 156.

¹⁸⁷Bennigsen and Broxup, 140.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹Karimov, 89.

The nationalistic entrenchments that Stalin intended to occur in Central Asia have become even more pronounced since the independence of the Central Asian republics. Rumer notes that the Central Asian states have become increasingly disunified, as each acts to defend its own interests and ensure its survival.¹⁹⁰ A key component of this self-interest is the armed forces. Uzbekistan is swiftly expanding its military forces, and is now regarded as the most combat-ready in the region.¹⁹¹ If events in Central Asia led to open conflict between two states, Peimani suggests that such a war would likely expand to other Central Asian states, since the five regional ethnic groups can be found in each of the states.¹⁹² This may be a pessimistic conclusion; however, the point is important. Though actual identities, as in Uzbekistan, are most closely affiliated to city or tribe, it is in the state's best interest of its nationalist policy to extend its sovereignty to what it views as its ethnic diaspora. The very ethnic and linguistic connections that allow Central Asians the potential to unite, also make them aware of the vulnerability that instability in one country threatens the stability of the others.¹⁹³ The exclusionary process of the nationalistic agenda in Uzbekistan means that the rise of Uzbek nationalism has given its Central Asian neighbours cause for concern about the future designs of Uzbekistan,

¹⁹⁰Rumer in Rumer, 4.

¹⁹¹Burnashev in Rumer, 159.

¹⁹²Peimani, 42.

¹⁹³Ibid.

which has a reputation as the regional bully.¹⁹⁴ Uzbekistan has clearly demonstrated its interest in playing a role of leadership in the region.

One of the regions that most sharply raises concern over conflict is the Ferghana Valley.¹⁹⁵ The fertile valley was divided among the Central Asian countries, excluding Turkmenistan, by the Soviet Union. As Uzbekistan received the largest share, it now feels justified in its territorial claims to the remainder of Ferghana: a southern part of Kazakhstan, the city of Khojand in Tajikistan, and part of Osh Province in Kyrgyzstan.¹⁹⁶ The borders in the Ferghana Valley, however, are rigid. For Uzbekistan to open the border question in the Ferghana reopens the entire Soviet delimitations to scrutiny. As Alaolmolki points out, the Uzbek ethnic minority in Kyrgyzstan's regions of Osh and Jalalabad remain a concern for both republics. The same is true of the Tajik minority in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. These ethnic tensions present an arena for the overall existing problem of armed extremist Islamists in the Ferghana Valley.¹⁹⁷ Especially in this area, the potential exists for the region to become fragmented along deep lines of division, leading states to turn to different regional powers for partnership or alignment.¹⁹⁸ The cities of Samarqand and Bukhara are also examples of potential conflict in the post-Soviet era. The populations of these towns have historically been Tajik, but both cities are

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 66.

¹⁹⁵Lena Jonson and Roy Allison, "Central Asian Security: Internal and External Dynamics," in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson, eds., *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001), 7.

¹⁹⁶Peimani, 28.

¹⁹⁷Alaolmolki, 6.

¹⁹⁸Jonson and Allison in Allison and Jonson, 18.

within Uzbekistan. These populations have been culturally and politically suppressed because in both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, the tendency has been to force Uzbek identities upon the Tajik minorities, through the process of Uzbekification.¹⁹⁹

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan pay especial attention to their relationships with their Central Asian neighbours, as each of their leaders (President Karimov and President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan) believes that his nation's rightful position is that of the dominant regional force.²⁰⁰ Historically that role has been played by the power that controls the lands between the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya—the region's two major rivers—which is now Uzbekistan. As Uzbekistan grows stronger, it is alienating its neighbours with its evolving security agenda. Uzbekistan now reserves the right of intervention in neighbouring states if its own interests are perceived as threatened, despite President's Karimov co-operative rhetoric.²⁰¹ He states that the problems of inter-ethnic and sub-ethnic interactions are of strategic significance, making the interstate relationships in the region particularly important.²⁰² The potential for Central Asian integration is based on this new philosophy of mutual co-operation among the Central Asian republics which will ensure political, economic, and social stability within the region.²⁰³ Nazokat Kasymova believes that “despite their unique histories and

¹⁹⁹Naby in Mesbahi, 45.

²⁰⁰Martha Brill Olcott, “Central Asia: Common Legacies and Conflicts,” in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson, eds., *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001), 33.

²⁰¹*Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰²Karimov, 45.

²⁰³Kasymova, 1.

experiences, these countries historically have been united spiritually, culturally, and ethnically, which encourages further regional co-operation and creates greater security.”²⁰⁴

An Uzbek poet and a leader of the Erk opposition party in Uzbekistan, Muhammad Salih, questions the feasibility of this proposal as he characterises the ethnic situation in Central Asia: “A unified Turkestan today is a ‘political dream.’ The peoples of Turkestan are already divided into five republics, and in each a national identity has been formed. One can’t deny this process that began even during the colonial period some hundred years ago.”²⁰⁵ Furthermore, as Ro’i notes,

[t]he increased role of Uzbekistan in Central Asia generally is an ongoing trend and, assuming Uzbekistan contains its internal problems, its increased role in Central Asia is likely to continue for some time to come; this should produce a reaction from its neighbours. For this reason, pan-Turkic unity or a Turkestan/Central Asia confederation is a very distant prospect; other leaders hesitate to risk taking any steps toward regional unity because of the fear that Uzbek hegemony will follow.²⁰⁶

Indeed, Uzbekistan’s willingness to send its forces beyond its borders implies an interest in pursuing interventionist policies and capabilities to reinforce its assertive role in the region, and perhaps even outside Central Asia.²⁰⁷

An ever-present source of concern for Uzbekistan’s security is its contiguity with Afghanistan. The two countries share a border and there is a significant ethnic Uzbek minority living in northern Afghanistan. Sultan Akimbekov notes that conflict in

²⁰⁴Ibid.

²⁰⁵A. M. Khazanov, “Underdevelopment and Ethnic Relations in Central Asia” in Beatrice Manz ed., *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), 147.

²⁰⁶Carlisle in Ro’i, 91.

²⁰⁷Clark in Mandelbaum, 196-197.

Afghanistan will continue to be a major concern for Central Asia for a long time.²⁰⁸

Uzbekistan's interest in Afghanistan can be observed in its co-ordinated activities with Russia and Iran in supporting the former anti-Taliban Northern Alliance.²⁰⁹ This was more than simply a country backing its ethnic kinsmen in a neighbouring country.

Uzbekistan has a direct security concern with keeping Islamic fundamentalism at bay.

While Afghanistan was once a force that contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union through its defeat of the Red Army, it also serves as a source of fundamentalist Islam. An unopposed Taliban-led Afghanistan would have posed a security concern especially for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.²¹⁰ That was the justification behind supporting the former Northern Alliance and the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

The issue of Uzbekistan's own Islamists poses a challenge to its national identity.

Of all the entropy-resistant traits opposing the homogenising tendencies of a secular Uzbekistani nationalism, Islam is the most significant. An important moment in Uzbekistan's struggle against extremist Islamism occurred during the 'Batken events' in the summer 1999. Armed units of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), under the leadership of Juma Namangani, launched attacks from Tajikistani territory on the mountain districts of Kyrgyzstan and seized several villages. The IMU sought to reach the Uzbekistani section of the Ferghana Valley so that they might start a rebellion against the Karimov regime. The events lasted more than two months, and more than anything,

²⁰⁸Sultan Akimbekov, "The Conflict in Afghanistan: Conditions, Problems, and Prospects," in Boris Rumer, ed., *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (Armonk, New York: Sharpe, 2002), 69.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 83.

²¹⁰*Ibid.*, 95.

demonstrated Kyrgyzstan's lack of ability to deal with the challenge.²¹¹ However, having a strong armed forces to deal with Islamist insurgency could pose a new problem. There is the possibility that a stronger army will seek an independent, decisive, political role, as happened in Pakistan and Turkey.²¹²

Uzbekistan has created a firm national policy that opposes Islamism. An Islamic identity does not fit the elite's vision of an Uzbekistani. This national policy, however, creates problems with Uzbekistan's neighbouring states as when, for example, Uzbekistani forces pursue Islamists beyond the country's territory.²¹³ Regardless, Uzbekistani policy seeks to "protect the region against the growing influence of Islamic extremism and the terrorist acts associated with it."²¹⁴ As a result, in 1998, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Russia agreed to co-operate to prevent extremist Islamists from destabilising the region.²¹⁵ The group now includes China, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Only Turkmenistan remains a holdout.

Islam is by far the dominant religion in Central Asia, but it has faced systemic repression since the Soviet era. Once the Bolsheviks came to power and consolidated their power, they launched a broad ideological campaign to eradicate religion. Islam no longer had any political or legal status by the 1930s. The majority of Muslim theologians

²¹¹Ibid., 93.

²¹²Rumer in Rumer, 16.

²¹³Jonson and Allison in Allison and Jonson, 14.

²¹⁴Kasymova, 3.

²¹⁵Ibid., 6.

were either shot or were exiled to Siberia and other regions of the Soviet Union.²¹⁶ Due to its strategic location, the Ferghana Valley was once the religious centre of Central Asia. The Communists under Stalin decided to partition the valley amongst the newly created republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan to foster division among the Muslims along ethnic lines.²¹⁷ Tajikistan has already endured a civil war between its Islamists and its secularists. Alaolmolki suggests that Central Asia's next flash point is likely to be in Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley where a combination of looming economic collapse and persistent ethnic nationalism are threatening the survival of President Karimov's regime.²¹⁸

The Soviet Union acted repressively against Islam. However, Rumer notes that even in the Brezhnev era, the Soviet regime did not exercise the level of control over public opinion and information that now prevails in Uzbekistan.²¹⁹ President Karimov conducts a form of repressive Jacobin nationalism that has pushed Islamism underground. Contemporary Uzbekistani nationalism fits the four characteristics of Jacobin nationalism. Uzbekistan maintains suspicion and intolerance of internal dissent. The government relies on force and militarism. While Jacobin nationalism acted with religious fanaticism, Uzbekistani nationalism can be said to act with secular fanaticism. Lastly, Uzbekistani nationalism undertakes a missionary zeal among its neighbouring

²¹⁶Bakhtiar Babadzhanov, "Islam in Uzbekistan: From the Struggle for 'Religious Purity' to Political Activism," in Boris Rumer, ed., *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (Armonk, New York: Sharpe, 2002), 303.

²¹⁷Alaolmolki, 76.

²¹⁸Ibid.

²¹⁹Rumer in Rumer, 4.

countries. The aim of the entropy-resistant Islamist opposition to President Karimov is to establish an Islamic state in the Ferghana Valley.²²⁰ The Namangan district is the historical centre of Islam in Central Asia and so the Uzbekistani authorities have been particularly active against the Islamist movements in that area.²²¹ The Ferghana Valley is considered the 'educational centre' for Central Asia's fundamentalists.²²² Faced with an Islamist opposition, Karimov has branded the extremists as Wahhabis. He has subsequently extended this title to any Muslim perceived as a threat to the government. If the Islamist threat is as tangible as it is perceived, the responsibility must in part lay with the exclusionary nationalist policies that do not accord Islam with the Uzbekistani national identity. The Islamist militia has capitalised on Kyrgyzstan's weakness by exploiting their territory with the aim of moving into Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley to establish an Islamic state there and conduct offensives against the Karimov regime.²²³ Karimov has thus far preserved a semblance of peace in Uzbekistan. That is, the country has not yet descended into civil war. This stability has been at the cost of democracy. Opposition parties are banned, while dissidents are imprisoned, tortured, or forced into exile.²²⁴ The government's crackdown on Islamists has resulted in the harassment of non-threatening, practising Muslims. This conduct has allowed the extremists to use Islam as

²²⁰Alaolmolki, 6.

²²¹Melvin, 55, and Abduvakhitov in Eickelman, 89.

²²²Olcott in Ro'i, 33.

²²³Alaolmolki, 80.

²²⁴Ibid., 81.

a vehicle for opposition to the secular regime. This self-reinforcing cycle presents any Muslim as a threat to the regime, and the regime as the enemy of all Islam. Despite the actual numbers of Muslims living in Uzbekistan, President Karimov will not declare the country a Muslim society, nor is it ranked among those countries conforming to Islamic standards.²²⁵

The policy of nationalism that Karimov conducts contains both policies of inclusion and of exclusion. Included in the Uzbekistani nation are those people of Uzbekistan that identify themselves with the secular state, and potentially any ethnic Uzbek beyond the borders of Uzbekistan. This is a combination of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*, meaning, law of the soil and law of the blood. Potentially, anyone in Uzbekistan can be part of the Uzbekistani nation. To be born on Uzbekistan's soil is to make one Uzbekistani. In addition, the law of the blood allows for any member of the Uzbek ethnic group in the diaspora to be part of the Uzbekistani nation. This national policy of inclusion both justifies Uzbekistan's current territorial composition, and the vision of a Greater Uzbekistan.

Excluded from the Uzbekistani nation are those who are considered to threaten the secular state. President Karimov sees political extremism, including religion, sub-ethnic nationalism, and sub-national self-isolation as threats to the state. Additional threats are conflicts of an ethnic, inter-ethnic, local, and tribal nature.²²⁶ The conflicts are emblematic of allegiances other than to the state of Uzbekistan, and therefore the Uzbekistani nation.

²²⁵Alexei Malashenko, "Islam in Central Asia," in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson, eds., *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001), 49.

²²⁶Karimov, 7.

Nationalism itself is a threat if it is other than Uzbekistani nationalism, for example, Karakalpak nationalism. The greatest threat to Karimov's vision of an Uzbekistani nation, however, is the religious opposition. First among these enemies are the militant Islamists, especially the IMU. Given Karimov's dichotomous interpretation of secularism and Islamism, even the self-proclaimed non-violent Hizb-ut-Tahrir are excluded and considered Wahhabis. Karimov eliminated the secular opposition to his rule in the early 1990s, leaving the mosque as the most important centre for political opposition to his policies.²²⁷ Now he is attempting to eliminate the religious opposition. It is quite dangerous for Karimov to categorise all Muslims as potential enemies of the state. He risks pushing mainstream Muslims closer to the radical forces. It would be far shrewder of him to incorporate moderate Muslim forces into his vision of the Uzbekistani nation, so as to deny sympathisers to the fringe extremists.

The theoretical literature on nationalism applied to the comparative literature on Uzbekistan is used to understand the significant local, regional, and international implications of Uzbekistani nationalism. There are those within Uzbekistan who do not see themselves as Uzbekistanis, as there are those without who do. The process of ethnic and linguistic Uzbekification coupled with a strict adherence to secularism alienates a substantial segment of Uzbekistan's population. Uzbekistan's self-image as regional hegemon and the existence of ethnic Uzbek communities in neighbouring Central Asian Republics, raises the ire of those states. The geo-strategic location of Central Asia and its resources vests the interests of the continent's great powers in the region. Furthermore,

²²⁷Melvin, 53.

the post 9-11 War on Terror brings the United States of America to the region as the most influential state actor. The process of Uzbekistani nationalism and all that it entails has repercussions for all of these aspects. Uzbekistani nationalism matters because a better understanding of this political movement can help to maintain a more peaceful regional order. Uzbekistani nationalism can be fostered by international actors with a balanced approach to form a more inclusive and unified Uzbekistan. The approach to date, however, has merely encouraged the process of division.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLICATIONS OF THESIS AND CONCLUSION

11 September 2001 changed the geopolitical reality of Central Asia, and places the relevance of the nationalism process in Uzbekistan within a grander scheme. The United States keeps a 'black list' of terror organisations, to which it adds groups after the regular biennial review, required of the State Department by the Congress. On 11 September the list contained twenty-eight groups.²²⁸ In order that they may have achieved swift co-operation from Uzbekistan during America's offensive against Afghanistan, the Americans did not wait to add the IMU to the list of international terrorist organisations. In an extraordinary action, the United States became the enemy of Karimov's chief political threat, the IMU. During the assault on Kunduz, in Afghanistan, American forces reportedly assassinated Juma Namangani, the leader of the IMU.²²⁹ After playing the religious-terrorist card, the secular President Karimov successfully convinced the West that there could be no co-operative alternative to his leadership in Uzbekistan, and Uzbekistani leadership in Central Asia.²³⁰

Nationalism in Uzbekistan is important in a wider context. The Caspian and Central Asian regions have a long history of geopolitical significance, which continues today.²³¹ This is due to the numerous external players that give Uzbekistan a more

²²⁸Akimbekov in Rumer, 99.

²²⁹Christian Caryl, "Collateral Victory," *The Washington Monthly* (November 2002), 21.

²³⁰Burnashev in Rumer, 156.

²³¹Alaolmolki, 15.

significant geopolitical status. They can be considered to lie in three circles: the inner, second, and third circle.²³² The inner circle includes Uzbekistan's most immediate neighbours—its fellow Central Asian republics, plus Afghanistan. The second circle includes the regional players of Turkey and Iran. The third circle is the Great Power circle, and includes Russia, China, and the United States. Each has a role to play in the nationalism process of Uzbekistan. The challenge of nationalism is a perceived threat among the newly independent states of Central Asia. Mesbahi notes that geopolitically, Central Asia now constitutes an expanded part of the new Middle East, due to its strategic natural resources. Geoculturally, however, he states that few other regions entail a nation-state border system that is so arbitrary and potentially transparent. Common cross-border religious, ethnic, linguistic, and collective memories can act both as destabilising or integrating factors.²³³ If not handled carefully, however, Central Asia threatens to become a “caldron of ethnic conflicts and great-power rivalries.”²³⁴

In the post-Soviet period, both Turkey and Iran sought to re-establish or to redefine long-standing, or even long-severed, ties based on ethnicity, language, culture, religion, geography, history, and economics.²³⁵ They have become the most active Islamic countries in pursuing new opportunities in Central Asia to build on those ties to the region. Turkey is key to the West's interest in the region, and if Turkey feels like a

²³²Burnashev in Rumer, 115.

²³³Mohiaddin Mesbahi, “Introduction: The Emerging ‘Muslim’ States of Central Asia and the Caucasus” in Mohiaddin Mesbahi, ed., *Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union: Domestic and International Dynamics* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1994), 2.

²³⁴Brzezinski, 51.

²³⁵Rumer in Rumer, 34.

European outcast, it may become more Islamist and less likely to co-operate in integrating Central Asia into the world community.²³⁶ The question remains whether Pan-Turkism is a genuine pursuit of the Turkic people for political unity, or if it is a grand strategy of the United States using Turkey as an ideological surrogate.²³⁷ It should be noted that Pan-Turkism is a political ideal that envisions an Ottoman-esque empire with a renewed Caliphate. The IMU seeks to establish this and base such an empire in the Ferghana Valley.

Russia is the most obvious key historical player in the region. There exists a concept of Eurasianism which is of considerable contemporary significance. Central to this political idea is an ideological justification for a Slavic-Turkic integration, or now reintegration.²³⁸ It is successfully becoming the ideology of the ruling class of Russia, and is essentially a neo-imperialist ideology whose goal it is to seek the reintegration of the former Russian empire around Moscow.²³⁹ Uzbekistan, along with Turkmenistan, is moving away from any potential candidacy for a Eurasian association headed by Moscow.²⁴⁰ This distancing, coupled with Uzbekistan's movement toward the United

²³⁶Brzezinski, 57.

²³⁷Hafeez Malik, ed., *Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), x.

²³⁸Rumer in Rumer, 48.

²³⁹Ibid., 50-51.

²⁴⁰Ibid., 51.

States, forces Russians to realise the final collapse of its great power status and ambitions that remain in the minds of many Russian people.²⁴¹

The United States is now a key regional player. President Karimov has clearly established two main foreign policy objectives: first, to quash attempts by Islamist radicals to overthrow his regime; and second, to establish his dominance as the principal leader of Central Asia. In order to best accomplish both these objectives, Karimov requires America's consent and support.²⁴² He assigns top priority to joining Washington's circle of client states and to establishing close ties with NATO. Karimov has supported Washington in virtually all of its military actions, including the operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Karimov not only endorses American policy in the Middle East, but he has established close economic and political ties with Israel.²⁴³ Karimov committed his country to the Coalition of the Willing in the war against Iraq begun in 2003. He touts Uzbekistan as an ally in the War on Terror, even though his divisive policies are counterproductive to the War.

Before 9-11, Washington attempted to ensure that none of its geopolitical rivals, that is, Russia and China, enhanced its influence at the expense of the states of Central Asia.²⁴⁴ China is the final great power of the third circle. China is playing a part in the new Great Game in Central Asia, with a particular eye for Central Asian oil and gas

²⁴¹Ibid., 60.

²⁴²Ibid., 45.

²⁴³Ibid.

²⁴⁴Ibid., 57.

resources. American policy in the region could best be described by the Latin phrase, *tertius gaudens* ('the third party smiles').²⁴⁵ The US was pleased to let events unfold in Central Asia, certain that they would ultimately lead to America's advantage. However, Washington could not ignore the competition between Beijing and Moscow for dominance in the region. When it was clear that China would eventually gain ascendancy, pushing Russia to a subsidiary position, America had to face the question of whether it could accept Chinese hegemony in Central Asia.²⁴⁶ 9-11 changed the equation and the consequences for the balance of power in the region. America would have to become the hegemon in Central Asia, and Russia and China would have to accept that. Russia and America managed to compromise their interests with respect to Afghanistan, and were able to reduce the negative impact the Afghan conflict would have on Central Asia, especially on Uzbekistan.²⁴⁷ This was a strategic goal of America, which sees the enormous significance of Uzbekistan in the larger picture of political forces and interests in Central Asia. Uzbekistan is a key to the regional system of security. As a result of the new US relationship with Uzbekistan, human rights are replaced by economic and security issues.²⁴⁸ Uzbekistan's partnership with America is tenuous at best, however, and American investment in the country remains reluctant. In order for Uzbekistan to fit in accordance to America's security complex in Central Asia, the Uzbekistani national

²⁴⁵Ibid.

²⁴⁶Ibid.

²⁴⁷Akimbekov in Rumer, 95-96.

²⁴⁸Melvin, 108.

identity cannot give ground to the Islamists. These are the external realities that affect the process of nationalism in Uzbekistan. The process of political nationalism in contemporary Uzbekistan has consequences beyond the borders of Uzbekistan and beyond the reaches of Central Asia. In the post 9-11 context, the struggle to define the Uzbekistani nation is an international security concern. It must be treated accordingly. Uzbekistan should not be rewarded for its anti-Islamism, but should be encouraged to foster an Uzbekistani nation that is genuinely poly-ethnic and religiously tolerant.

It is probable that the Uzbekistani elite do not see the contemporary process of political nationalism as a cause of instability. Like the Soviet Russians before them, they believe that sub-national differences will fade away and be replaced by loyalty to the state. Islam, furthermore, has no place in a modern secular democracy. The current assault on Muslims is a necessary evil to achieve the vision of an Uzbekistani nation. Those of Uzbekistan's neighbours that accommodate the Islamic identity are weak. The elite must believe that their vision of the Uzbekistani state and nation is the only way to create unity in Uzbekistan and stability in Central Asia. Uzbekistan's allies must also agree. A unified, homogeneous, secular Uzbekistan is the preferred Central Asian ally. It is easier to conduct business with such a country, and it is easier to form a military alliance with such a country. Those who believe that the current process of political nationalism in Uzbekistan is a long-term solution for stability are wrong. The pursuit of an Uzbekistani nation on the model of Gellner can be a force for stability, but not in its current manifestation. The long-term effects of forced assimilation and rejection of religious identity contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union. Uzbekistan is adept at emulating

Soviet policy, but the elite should realise the lesson from this. Soviet nationality policy led to dissolution. Uzbekistan seeks unity. The current process that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is not the path to unity.

This thesis opens many avenues for further research. The specific methodology of applying the theoretical literature on nationalism to a case study presents the opportunity to use the same technique on the other newly independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus. It would be useful to do so to determine whether the processes of political nationalism in those countries are a force of stability or instability. Considering that the literature on nationalism is available to all of academia, it would also be interesting to determine whether the elite in Uzbekistan, or elsewhere, is aware of the literature and if it affects their nationalism programs. Furthermore, considering the arbitrary nature of the nation, it would be interesting to assess the theoretical and practical viability of a pan-Turkic confederation, or a pan-Islamic union. A particularly intriguing avenue for future research stemming from this thesis is to determine the level of outreach from the Uzbekistani state to the Uzbek communities living in neighbouring states. The level of personal affinity those Uzbeks feel to Uzbekistan should also be measured. It would be worth researching what role ethnic Uzbeks see for themselves in Central Asia and if it matches the former Russian perception of the Russian role in the Soviet Union. The application of the theoretical literature on nationalism to the comparative literature on Central Asian politics has numerous unexplored avenues of future research. This thesis is but one contribution.

This thesis sought to demonstrate that the contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. To explore this argument required a review of the theoretical literature on nationalism and of the comparative literature on Uzbekistan. The two bodies of literature were brought together to explain the terminology, to understand the processes of nationalism, to demonstrate how they are divisive and dangerous in Uzbekistan, and to suggest unifying and stabilising alternatives. Chapter One introduced the problem, revealed the path that the thesis would take, and explained the research methodology. It clarified the terminology of the thesis statement. ‘Contemporary’ was understood to be the ongoing post-Soviet period. The ‘process of political nationalism’ was explained as the state policy that is formulated to promote a single unified nation that coincides with the state that it is in. Gellner’s model for the nation was proposed as the most effective way to comprehend the contemporary Uzbekistani nation. The Uzbekistani nation was defined as a strictly secular political identity infused with ethnic Uzbekification. It was important to note that the pursuit of the Uzbekistani national identity need not be a divisive process. It can serve as a unifying force. To understand how required a review of the theoretical literature on the nationalism discourse.

Chapter Two was the review of the theoretical literature. It sought to understand what a nation is and what nationalism is. The nation is a group of people with a common attribute and the will to acknowledge their bond. Gellner defined the nation by culture and recognition of membership.²⁴⁹ Nationalism is the political principle that the nation

²⁴⁹Gellner, 7.

should coincide with the state. Consequently, a discussion on what a nation is and what nationalism is required an understanding of what the state is. Gellner's understanding of the arbitrariness of nations led him to believe that there cannot be enough states for the potential number of nations. This, it was pointed out, is contingent upon Weber's definition of the state: the agency in society that has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence.²⁵⁰ Remove the element of violence and nations can potentially be satisfied with their own states. Without violence, nationalisms can be satisfied. The problem is that violence is a common recourse of action. States use violence rather than accommodation when they perceive their nations to be threatened by entropy-resistance. Nations without their own states use violence to attack the legitimacy of the states they are in. Violence becomes the tool of both preservation and change.

The nation was clearly demonstrated to be based on arbitrary grounds. Anderson contributed the unique notion of an imagined community to the discussion.²⁵¹ He emphasised that there is nothing tangible about the nation. Its members cannot even know each other, yet they perceive the bond of community and comradeship. Anderson's imagined community was considered to be more appropriate for understanding the Soviet-era Uzbek nation. Haas found the nation to be entirely subjective and psychological.²⁵² The nation can be whatever people wish to imagine as their common bond. The process of determining which element to emphasise in the formation of the

²⁵⁰Ibid., 3.

²⁵¹Anderson, 5-7.

²⁵²Haas, 726.

nation was demonstrated to be largely an elite-initiated process. Language was demonstrated to be a basis for a nation, but a rather fluid one. Ethnicity, culture, and religion, are tied to heritage, but not necessarily to territory. Also, some peoples, as in the case of Central Asia, are an ethnic and cultural melting pot. Religion too can be changed. Evidently the arbitrary bases of the nation are reasonable grounds on which to form a nation, but they should never be considered permanent. Furthermore, even if nationalism is an elite-driven process, it must be accepted and sustained by the public. Therefore, people must be willing to accept some attribute as a commonality worthy of political consequences.

The thesis reviewed the historical legacy of political nationalism. Gellner's discussion on the agrarian and industrial phases of society was useful, although his agrarian phase did not account for the nomadic element that was so integral to the development of Central Asian political nationalism.²⁵³ Armstrong instead drew the important connection between the dichotomous relationship of nomadic and sedentary peoples.²⁵⁴ It was this relationship in Central Asia that provided both an impetus for statehood, but also proto-national identities. Gellner's industrial phase appeared to be a capitalist interpretation that did not account for communist industrialisation.²⁵⁵ He was correct, however, in that the modernising industrial phase in Central Asia led to the ascendancy of nationalism. It had a specifically anti-Russification characteristic, though.

²⁵³Gellner, 5.

²⁵⁴Armstrong, 15.

²⁵⁵Gellner, 22.

The events in the history of political nationalism also proved relevant to the thesis. Jacobin nationalism in particular has resonance with the contemporary processes in Uzbekistan. Hayes characterised Jacobin nationalism by its intolerance of dissent, reliance on force, fanaticism, and missionary zeal.²⁵⁶ By these criteria, contemporary Uzbekistani nationalism can be considered Jacobin in nature. The discussion of historical nationalism, both in theory and in events, bears a relevance to this thesis.

The thesis reviewed the philosophical legacy of political nationalism. Kant's notion of the autonomous man is mistakenly applied to the nation. Smith takes Kant's philosophy and critiques its application to the nation.²⁵⁷ Smith discusses the possibility that multiple nations can exist in the same state, and the argument that ultimate autonomy in the form of the nation-state is the goal of nations. Given that nations are arbitrarily perceived bonds that can be subject to change, so too should the administration for those nations. The nation-state is governed by the principle of advancing one particular nation over others. Yet new nations can form. The perceived bonds of nationhood can change. The nation-state must not be so rigid. A state that exists for one particular bond should also be able to accommodate competing affiliations within it. A nation cannot perceive its degree of autonomy. People can. Individuals must first believe that they are self-determined and free within their states. Nations will change, grow, and pose new challenges to the state. It is the responsibility of the state administration to accommodate the changes, or respond with suppression and violence. Violence is the more likely choice

²⁵⁶Hayes, 52.

²⁵⁷Smith, 20-21.

to result in individuals feeling less free. Violence is the choice of action in Uzbekistan. The purpose of this theoretical literature review was to note the arbitrariness of nations and to understand the processes of political nationalism.

Chapter Three was a review of the comparative literature on Uzbekistan. Given that the nature of the nation is arbitrary, the composition of the Uzbekistani nation is a choice made by the Uzbekistani ruling elite. It is not a naturally occurring nation. The invention and emphasis of the Uzbekistani nation above other nations in the country and region is the process of political nationalism. The Uzbekistani leadership has chosen not to accommodate demands for an inclusive national identity. It has chosen violence over conciliation. This has proven divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. This thesis required a review of both the theoretical literature on nationalism and the comparative literature on Uzbekistan to determine how the contemporary process of political nationalism in Uzbekistan can instead be a force for unity and stability.

Uzbekistan was demonstrated to be a product of Soviet-era jurisdictional delineations. Central Asia was divided according to Stalinist administrative fiat.²⁵⁸ It was not a reflection of entrenched national identities, but rather it intentionally sought to divide the peoples of Central Asia. The territory of Uzbekistan was determined with the influence of the Bukhara Jadid lobby, led by Khojaev. It effectively annexed the khanates of Khiva and Qoqand to create a Greater Bukhara.²⁵⁹ The historic Qoqand Khanate in the Ferghana Valley was divided among multiple Republics. Uzbekistan received the largest

²⁵⁸Critchlow, 3.

²⁵⁹Carlisle in Manz (1994), 104-105.

portion. Uzbekistan became the best appointed Republic in Central Asia, leading to Uzbekistan's assertion of a regional hegemony to the disdain of its neighbours.²⁶⁰ The Soviet era effectively created the basis for both a dominant Uzbekistani state and Uzbekistani nation. By denying the indigenous elite promotion to the Soviet centre, Uzbekistanis were left to improve the position of the Uzbek Republic itself.²⁶¹ Uzbekistan became the main interest of the elite. Greater self-determination for the Republic was sought and Uzbekistanis became connected to the state and territory assigned to it, despite the artificiality of its creation.

The Soviet era saw the formation of a proto-Uzbekistani nation, despite the fact that most Central Asians never previously identified themselves this way. The identity of tribe, city, or religion had a long precedent. The identity of nation was entirely new. As the national identity developed, the Soviet policy was to erase differences in religion, culture, and history. The Soviets pursued the notion of the 'Soviet Man.'²⁶² This concept can be considered to be a Soviet national identity based on Russification. In Uzbekistan's post-independence period, the national identity is the Uzbekistani. It is a national identity based on ethnic Uzbekification, very much emulating the model provided by the 'Soviet Man.' Neither identity reflects the historically entrenched notions of Central Asian identity. Both erased identities based on tribe, city, and religion. The Uzbekistani is a political national identity. The Soviet identity was cast off with dissolution only to be

²⁶⁰Karimov, 89.

²⁶¹Critchlow, 29.

²⁶²Bennigsen and Broxup, 3.

replaced by the Uzbekistani identity. To a Muslim, or a Tajik, or a Karakalpak, little has changed. Only now, Russification has been replaced by Uzbekification, the elite promote a high culture based on the cult of Timur, and the perceived threat of Islamism has accelerated the Jacobin nationalist program in Uzbekistan.

Islam is the key entropy-resistant trait that makes the process of political nationalism divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. Islam was initially acceptable to the Russian Empire, then officially suppressed by the Soviet Union. Soviet policy abjectly denied the existence of a Muslim nation.²⁶³ Religion was a strictly private affair. In contemporary Uzbekistan, religion is expected to remain a private affair with no political consequence. The administration perceives Islamism as a threat to the Uzbekistani nation. Even moderate Muslims are branded Wahhabis. In Uzbekistan, nationalism and Islamism cannot mix. This dichotomy has been sold to the world. The choice is either Uzbekistani political nationalism, or Islamism. In the post 9-11 context, Islamism is perceived as a threat. President Karimov has successfully characterised his struggle with Islamist political opponents as a battle in the War on Terror, and the Ferghana Valley is the key battleground. There is no alternative to secular leadership in Uzbekistan, and no alternative to Uzbekistani leadership in Central Asia. The international community must not accept this dichotomy. Islam is a part of Uzbekistani identity. Moderate Islamists must have their say in the formation of the Uzbekistani national identity. The elite cannot produce a unified nation on the basis of a repackaged Soviet identity. Unity requires accommodation. Genuine Uzbekistani leadership in

²⁶³Ibid., 17.

Central Asia must be an example of tolerance, plurality, and democracy. Political nationalism can be a force for good in Central Asia so long as it is an inclusive process.

This thesis demonstrated that the contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. The process of Uzbekistani nationalism need not be divisive. To reverse this process, Uzbekistan must cease the ethnic Uzbekification of the state's minority groups. Uzbekification runs counter to the efforts of disseminating Timurid high culture. The Timurid period is common to all peoples of the region. It is not exclusive to the Uzbeks. Indeed, it predates the ethnic Uzbeks. The national pride of the Timurid legacy is an appropriate starting point for unifying an Uzbekistani nation. It should not, however, be used to erase the contribution to the Uzbekistani nation of the Soviet territorial delimitations. It was, after all, the Soviet-era delimitation that established the boundaries for the modern Uzbekistani nation and the Soviet experience itself was shared by all Uzbekistanis. The sub-national minorities in Uzbekistan must be accommodated for their distinct cultures and languages. Uzbekistan's neighbours can do the same for Uzbek minority groups living in their countries so as to preempt any Uzbekistani intervention on their behalf. With the appropriate treatment of sub-national minorities and the cessation of ethnic Uzbekification, Uzbekistan would better consolidate its citizenry and improve co-operative relations with its neighbours. The group most vital to Uzbekistan's viability is the Muslim population. The current tendency to deny the Islamic element of Uzbekistani identity pushes moderate Muslims closer to extremist Islamists. This runs counter to the objectives of peace. The War on Terror must not be a Jacobin-style Reign

of Terror. Uzbekistan's allies in its war against radical Islamists must insist that the Uzbekistani regime allow for the Uzbekistani national identity to include Muslims. Only then can those moderate Muslims who identify with the Uzbekistani state ostracise the extremists and deny them their support. This would be a tangible victory in the War on Terror. There exists, ultimately, the potential for a Central Asian Confederation of Turkestan rooted in the precedent of Timurid history, and the shared Soviet experience. The arbitrary nature of the nation also confirms the potential for such a union. Though the process of nationalism in the region is actively creating barriers for an eventual union, such an initiative has a precedent and a purpose. Its purpose is to establish an ever more peaceful Central Asia. A more peaceful Central Asia allows its deeper integration with the international community. Uzbekistani nationalism is in its infancy. As it matures, an inclusive Uzbekistani nation will serve as a model to others for broader and deeper unification.

On 1 September 1991, twenty-five million Soviet citizens became Uzbekistani citizens. Their political identities changed overnight, regardless of whether their personal identities changed not at all. The years since Uzbekistani independence have been dedicated to defining what the Uzbekistani nation is. It has not been an entirely peaceful process, but it serves as an example to other states of how, or how not to consolidate a national identity. Nationalism as a political movement is a process. It has the potential to unify and it has the potential to divide. A state can be successful at either method, but to take the path of division increases the likelihood for violence. For the International Relations theorist, this point is instructive. In order to pursue the objective of a more

peaceful order in Central Asia, it must be understood how the contemporary process of political nationalism that fosters an Uzbekistani nation is divisive in Uzbekistan and dangerous to Central Asian stability. Now that it is understood, the process must be altered. A more inclusive Uzbekistani nation is unifying in Uzbekistan, and a force for stability in Central Asia.

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