THE PATH TO PEACE AND CONCORD IN AFGHANISTAN
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An Analytical and Programmatic Report

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The Path to Peace and Concord in Afghanistan Will Be Determined by the Position Russia Takes. An Analytical and Programmatic Report.

The present report, The Path to Peace and Concord in Afghanistan Will Be Determined by the Position Russia Takes, has been prepared by the Russian Institute for Demography, Migration and Regional Development in association with the Development Movement, an interregional public organization. The main goal of this report is to propose theses for discussion in order to elaborate a new policy on Afghanistan for Russia.

This report incorporates the results of discussions with Russian and Afghan experts, representing different opinions on the situation in Afghanistan. It is also based on data obtained from Afghan, Russian and foreign experts, the Regional Studies Center of Afghanistan (Kabul), analytical surveys done by the Modern Afghanistan Studies Center (Moscow), as well as the publications of Russian and foreign nongovernmental organizations and mass media.

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The Path to Peace and Concord in Afghanistan

The ongoing civil war in Afghanistan and the essential inability or unwillingness of a number of foreign states and their military contingents to bring peace and concord to the people of Afghanistan are the source of fundamental challenges, threats and aggression for Russia and other countries, namely:

- the drug threat and drug aggression, as a result of which the majority of Russian drug addicts are taking Afghan opiates and heroin, while the overall number of people addicted to these most dangerous drugs is steadily increasing; furthermore, over the past five years we have observed a drastic growth in the export of cannabis group drugs from Afghanistan to Russia;
- the threat from transnational criminal groups, closely connected to the drug business and drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Russia via the Middle (Central) Asian republics, gaining strength in Middle (Central) Asia;
- the threat from the presence of U.S. and NATO armed forces in Afghanistan and its neighbors in the form of a network of "military super-bases."

In general, due to the ongoing military actions and foreign interference in its affairs, Afghanistan has become a source of growing threats.
and aggression which affect the Russian Federation directly, as well as through the Middle Asian states, and increase general instability, undermining Russia’s overall capacities and strength.

At the same time, Russia at present does not possess proven methods and technologies to protect the country from the threats and aggression mentioned above. This has to do with the fundamentally new situation existing in Afghanistan, in which routine economic and military approaches and solutions are destined to be ineffective.

Analysis shows that only realistic way of eliminating the above-mentioned threats and aggression is the intensified development of the state in Afghanistan, transforming this country into a strong and self-sufficient nation. This challenge, in turn, requires the elaboration and implementation of totally new approaches, which will be comprehensive and relevant in the humanitarian, political-anthropological and socio-economic spheres, contributing to building a strong and prosperous Afghan state.

There need to be new approaches and development methods, which in their totality would allow Afghanistan to gain its independence, build up and strengthen its statehood, carry out an intensified transition from a ruined society and economy with an expanding drug business, accounting for over half of the country’s GDP, to a prosperous, stable and consolidated society, ensuring a worthy life for every single Afghan citizen and ethnic group.
The issue of Afghanistan is very difficult and painful for Russia. Russian society is still suffering from the "Afghan syndrome" - a result of the Soviet Armed Forces' tragic involvement in military actions in Afghanistan from December 1979 to February 1989 on the side of Afghanistan's government.

During the years of severe crisis and subsequent collapse of the USSR, this 10-year period was judged mainly in a negative and often insulting way. Such views stemmed from the emerging ideology of Russian federal state nationalism, which may be called *rossiysky* nationalism (different from traditional Russian ethnic, or *russky* nationalism.). As early as the 1980s, supporters of this concept promoted the idea that the borders of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) would be optimal for a new Russian state. They viewed Russia's having a presence even in Middle Asia, never mind Afghanistan which is further abroad, as unnecessary and harmful to Russia's national interests.

Viewpoints in Russian society regarding solution of the "Afghanistan problem"

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Today, this *rossiysky* nationalism remains the leading ideology of the majority of Russia's establishment. It is a kind of a doctrinal mainstream. However, its fundamental inefficiency for maintaining Russia's existence and place in world history has become obvious.

This has been unambiguously illustrated not only by the collapse of the USSR, which became "the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century" (Vladimir Putin), but also by the CIS crisis, disquiet in the Caucasus, as revealed most vividly during the South Ossetia conflict of August 2008, and also by the swift advance of Georgia and Ukraine towards NATO membership and the transformation of historical Russia from a superpower into one of many regional powers.

Implementation of the doctrine of *rossiysky* nationalism over the recent twenty years has resulted in a deep tendency of provincialism in Russia today. Consequently, on the one hand, the country found itself incorporated into the global political and economic systems, and became painfully dependent on them, as illustrated by the impact of the global financial crisis and other foreign-generated negative trends. On the other hand, it is only in the recent several years that Russia has made some first attempts at taking part in governing world processes.

One of the clearest and most illustrative examples of such provincialism is the Russian elites' disregard for the problems of Afghanistan, which they see as a "remote" country. Geography notwithstanding, however, Afghanistan has once again been drawing "closer" to the Russian Federation during the last 10 years.

The solution of the Afghanistan problem is becoming one of the key issues on the Russian foreign policy agenda.

On the one side, the last seven years have shown that it was unjustified to count on the efficacy of the Bonn process (implementation of the decisions of the December 2001 UN conference on Afghanistan, held in Bonn) and the presence of foreign troops and International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan. On the other side, neither Russia, nor any other developed country, nor the world community as a whole has a clear strategy and proven methods for rapid reconstruction and strengthening of this shattered state, gripped as it is by military conflicts and a flourishing shadow economy and drug business, which destabilize the situation in the whole region.

Thus, the problem of Afghanistan presents a direct challenge for Russian international and socioeconomic policy. It demands the generation of effective policy decisions of worldwide significance, for which the political ideology of an egoistical "national state" and the "free-market" economic ideology, adopted and implemented in Russia and the CIS countries since the 1980s, are of little value.
In this situation, it is of extraordinary importance to reveal and formulate the main viewpoints and approaches that Russian elites and society have towards Afghanistan.

There are currently three different and irreconcilable viewpoints concerning the "Afghanistan problem."

1st viewpoint: Non-interference
This viewpoint comes down to the idea that Russia's Afghanistan policy should rest on non-interference in Afghan affairs and be confined to individual humanitarian acts and small, cost-effective projects of symbolical significance. Therefore, Russia should continue to approve the presence of U.S., NATO and international coalition armed forces in Afghanistan, and support the so-called War on Terror of the USA and its allies.

2nd viewpoint: Realpolitik
The main idea of this position is that Russia is unable to influence the general situation in Afghanistan. Moreover, the level of ethnic confrontation in Afghanistan today has reached such a high point that there is almost no way to preserve this country as a united state. Therefore it is necessary to concentrate on establishing close ties with the northern provinces of Afghanistan and to create a buffer zone in that area. In case Afghanistan's government becomes weaker, Russia should advocate partition of the country into two new countries, one in the north and one in the south, with the border running along the dividing line between areas in which particular ethnic communities make up the majority of the population.
3rd viewpoint: Creation of a strong, united and independent Afghan state

The supporters of this opinion claim that Russia has a vital interest in a strong Afghan state within its contemporary borders, with the problem of recognition of the Durand Line as Afghanistan's state border being deferred into the indefinite future. Only a strong, united Afghan state can wipe out the drug economy and terrorism, thus destroying the conditions favorable for the activities of transnational criminal groups, and preventing foreign military bases from operating on its territory. Only a strong and independent Afghanistan can ensure peace for itself and its neighbors.

As one expert put it, "Afghanistan is the heart of the Central East." If you tear the heart in two, the whole organism dies."

A united independent Afghanistan

These three viewpoints define a serious split within the Russian political and expert community, preventing Russia from elaborating and implementing a single Afghan policy. Instead, we see only partial reactions and separate, uncoordinated, sometimes completely inappropriate measures.
Analysis shows that the only possible approach for Russia is to promote the creation of a united, independent and strong Afghan state. This is the only approach which will solve the "Afghan problem" and restore Russia as *mirovaya derzhava* (world power), i.e., a nation whose statehood is strong enough for it to be capable of solving world problems by organizing cooperative development - the co-development of Russia and other countries taking part in the solution of world problems.

The currently popular strategy of Russian non-interference in Afghan affairs actually encourages U.S. and NATO attempts to establish a military springboard and bridgehead in the very heart of Asia. At the same time, the past seven years have shown that the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan, led by the United States and NATO, is fundamentally inadequate to the task of bringing peace to the region. The goal of this presence is directly the opposite - to maintain and bolster permanent instability and provoke never-ending military actions, to justify the presence itself and the increase in the number of military bases in the region.

The separation of the northern provinces will not solve the Afghanistan problem, either. Moreover, it would trigger the collapse of existing nation-states in the Central East and will bring new, great antagonisms and temptations to the post-Soviet Middle Asian states. The secession of the northern provinces would destabilize the situation there. Local authorities and law enforcement bodies would lose power, leading ultimately to a strengthening of transnational Tajik and Uzbek criminal networks and an increase of drug trafficking through those territories. The establishment of a "buffer zone" will not isolate Middle Asia from the instability of southern Afghanistan, as the supporters of the second opinion claim, but will lead to exactly the opposite result. With foreign countries' military forces actively engaged in the region, northern Afghanistan will soon be engulfed by riots and local conflicts, bringing the source of instability even closer to the borders of Middle Asia and Russia.

That is why the goal of creating a united and independent Afghanistan must become a point of doctrine for Russia, whereas the other two viewpoints appear erroneous in the circumstances which actually exist.

**Afghan national reconciliation**

The establishment of a united, independent and strong state of Afghanistan requires interethnic, intertribal and inter-territorial peace and concord in Afghan society.
This is impossible without the involvement of all of the country's peoples (ethnic groups) and political forces, including those who are now in the opposition, in the negotiation process regarding the future of Afghanistan and the Central East as a whole.

The failure of the 2001 Bonn conference decisions and utter inefficacy of the foreign presence in Afghanistan, from October 2001 to the present day, clearly indicates the need to convene another International Conference on Peace and Prosperity for Afghanistan, under the aegis of the UN. This conference should be organized with due account of the mistakes made in the format and organization of the Bonn conference, and its main goal should be the discussion of the measures required for ensuring peace in Afghanistan and the country's further peaceful development.

It would be reasonable to hold such a conference in Afghanistan itself, for example in Kabul. Representatives of all the peoples (ethnic groups), tribes and provinces of the country, as well as delegates from all active political forces who are ready to take part in a constructive dialogue, including the opposition, should be invited.

The following actors must take part from Afghanistan's side:
- representatives of the Afghan government;
- representatives of the armed opposition;
- representatives of institutions of civil society;
- representatives of academic institutions;
- persons with nationwide and international authority.

The following actors must take part on the part of the international community:
- UN delegation,
- delegation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization;
- delegations of the CIS and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization);
- delegation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference;
- delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement;
- delegations of the Afghanistan's neighbor countries;
- delegations of those countries in the region which play a significant role in the affairs of Afghanistan, including a Russian delegation;
- EU delegation;
- NATO delegation.

Participants in the conference must adopt a plan for restoring peace in Afghanistan and for its future development, determine the structure of Afghanistan's political system, and specify the time limits, conditions and goals of the presence of foreign troops in the country. It also makes sense to approve a Comprehensive Afghanistan Development Plan, which should be prepared by Russia and other interested countries in advance.
At the same time, a Loya Jirga (Grand Council of Afghanistan, serving as a legislative assembly) should be convened, to discuss the decisions made at the conference, and amend them as necessary, and then approve them.

Russia, as a country whose forces have not participated in the seven-year war in Afghanistan, can act as mediator between the opposing sides in the conflict.

It would also be reasonable for Russia to initiate the Afghanistan Peace and Prosperity Conference and submit this proposal to the UN.

What are the taliban?

It is impossible to achieve lasting peace in Afghanistan without solving the "Taliban problem". That is why we need to clarify what the taliban are, and how it is possible to engage them in the peace dialogue.

At present the following wrong ideas, mistaken beliefs and misconceptions about the taliban are common.

The first one is that the taliban (plural of "talib," meaning "student") form some kind of well-organized group coordinated from a single center, whose leader is Mullah Omar.

The second one is that the taliban support Al-Qaeda and are extremists and terrorists, responsible for terrorist attacks organized by Al-Qaeda.

The third misjudgment considers all Pashtuns to be taliban and declares them to be supporters of Al-Qaeda and terrorists.

In reality, the taliban movement consists of a large number of dispersed groups with different goals, with only weak and sporadic coordination of their joint activity.

Today the taliban may be divided into three groups:

1) "The black taliban" are international mercenaries (Arabs and representatives of other nationalities), who came to Afghanistan from other countries. These people are not Afghan citizens, and they are fighting there for money. Their masters pay them to constantly fuel the war in southern Afghanistan and deliberately destabilize the situation inside the country. Terrorist attacks are mainly carried out by these groups, which have nothing to do with the peoples of Afghanistan.

2) "The grey taliban" are people living in Afghanistan, who have become professional soldiers and have almost completely abandoned peaceful labor. However, they have nothing to do with international terrorism, not to mention Al-Qaeda.
The "grey taliban" wage war because there has been no peace in Afghanistan throughout the last 30 years, the territory of the country is occupied by foreign troops, and all conditions have been created for waging warfare.

3) The "white taliban" are people who are occasionally forced to participate in military actions, because the national economy is in ruins, and they have no other way to support their families. They do not consider themselves to be taliban. The "white taliban" form the majority of the armed opposition, and they would prefer a peaceful way of life, provided there were jobs and the necessary conditions for a decent life.

In order to establish peace in Afghanistan, it is necessary to neutralize the "black taliban," put an end to the subversive and terrorist activities of the secret services of a number of countries, including neighboring ones, and create the economic and political conditions for a peaceful life, which will allow the "grey" and "white" taliban to stop fighting.

It should be taken into consideration that, by the time the U.S. and NATO military operation in Afghanistan began in October 2001, a special concept of "the Taliban," based on logical manipulations, had been manufactured. Its main point was to make people see the Pashtuns, the taliban and international terrorists as all the same.

This notion allowed, and still allows, the USA and NATO to count as "terrorists" almost all the opposition forces which are fighting against the official Afghan government and the U.S. and NATO troops stationed on Afghan territory, which are in effect an occupation force vis a vis the Afghan population, especially for the Pashtuns.

The word "talib" was turned into a synonym of "terrorist" thus providing what became the principal excuse for foreign troops to stay in Afghanistan. According to this excuse, "It is the Taliban who are fighting against us in Afghanistan; the Taliban are terrorists, and we are fighting terrorism all over the world; that is why our troops are in Afghanistan."

Through the exploitation of this notion, nearly all Pashtuns have come to be perceived as terrorists, though this is the most numerous ethnic group in Afghanistan, comprising the backbone of its statehood. The antiterrorist operation has been transformed into a war against half the country's population.

At the same time, the USA and NATO have no other option for the next year or two, than to begin negotiations with the taliban and other opposition forces. Thus, it could well turn out, that while Russian officials continue mechanically to excoriate "the Taliban" and "terrorists," the USA and other NATO countries will reach the agreements they seek with the so-called "Taliban."
The USA and NATO factor

The facts that the United States has been surreptitiously continuing its totally unfounded Operation Enduring Freedom over the past seven years, and that command of the ISAF forces was taken over by NATO in August 2003, force us to conclude that UN efforts to uphold stability in Afghanistan have failed. In effect, there has been a disguised handover of Afghanistan to the full disposal of the USA and NATO. A direct consequence has been the rapid growth of tensions and drug production in the country.

Analysis done by leading experts from different countries clearly reveals the real goals of the USA and NATO in Afghanistan: establishing their own military, geostrategic, geopolitical and geo-economic bridgehead in the heart of Eurasia, deploying a powerful network of military bases in Afghanistan and the Central East and Middle Asia as a whole. At the same time, the war on terror is being used as a pretext and excuse for building up the U.S. and NATO military and organizational machine in the region and maintaining its open-ended presence there.

The events of 9/11 and the launch of the "war against international terrorism" allowed the USA...
to create at least 19 new military bases in the Central East and Middle Asia. As a result, U.S. and NATO armed forces appeared on the territory of the post-Soviet states for the first time in history.

The projects for a "Greater Middle East" (embracing the Islamic world from Afghanistan to Morocco) and a "Greater Central Asia," which in combination imply total control over a macro-region extending from Russian Siberia to northern India, serve as the doctrinal basis for the U.S. presence in the region.

As S. Frederick Starr wrote in "A 'Greater Central Asia Partnership' for Afghanistan and Its Neighbors" (March, 2005), the main task of the geo-territorial doctrine of the Greater Central Asia is "to assist in the transformation of Afghanistan and the entire region of which it is the heart into a zone of secure sovereignties sharing viable market economies, secular and relatively open systems of governance, respecting citizens' rights, and maintaining positive relations with the U.S. The emergence of this zone, referred to herein as "Greater Central Asia," will roll back the forces that give rise to extremism and enhance continental security."

It is in this work that the problem of reorganizing U.S. government agencies was posed in the context of Washington's foreign policy goals in the region: "Geographical delineations within some U.S. government agencies impede recognition of the emerging zone of 'Greater Central Asia' of which Afghanistan is the heart."
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Thus, in the departments of Defense and State the five former Soviet states of Central Asia are grouped with Russia under 'Eurasia,' while Afghanistan is considered under the rubric 'South Asia.' Such arrangements make it all but impossible for U.S. agencies to perceive the many common interests among GCAP states, even as they prevent clear analysis of the most advantageous relations between GCAP countries and their many regional neighbors."

Analysis shows that the essence of the Greater Central Asia Partnership (GCAP) proposed by Starr is actually to unify the countries of Middle (Central) and South Asia under U.S. leadership, without participation in the process by Russia, China and Iran. The creation of GCAP would allow the United States not only to pull the Central Asian states out of the "embrace of Russia and China" and finally obtain a foothold in Central Asia, but also to turn the region into its own protectorate and Afghanistan into a kind of a huge, land-based aircraft carrier.

Thus, the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan has not destroyed the terrorist bases, but has resulted in the establishment of total external control over the country. Under the pretext of conflict resolution, American and NATO military bases have been placed in Afghanistan (Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Shindand, Bagram) and Middle Asia (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan). The U.S. and NATO military and organizational machines obtained a unique opportunity to monitor Russia, China and Iran from a
single location and, if necessary, to use the logistical features of their presence in this location for attacks on these and other countries in the region.

As a result, the United States and NATO have gotten a solid geostrategic grip on Central Eurasia, which Zbigniew Brzezinski ten years ago openly called "the main geopolitical prize for America."

Europe, which during the Cold War was on the cutting edge of American policy, is now gradually turning into its back garden. And the "front" is moving deep into Asia, which has become the world center of geopolitical tension today.

West of this center are oil giants like Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which was put under U.S. control as a result of the military campaign. To the South are the new nuclear superpowers India and Pakistan. To the North is Russia, and finally to the East - China, which is gaining strength and is viewed by the USA as its future primary rival. There are a number of potential conflict zones situated here, as well: Afghanistan, Kashmir, the former Soviet republics of Middle Asia, China's Xinjiang region, etc.

Today it is obvious that, under the pretext of fighting terrorism in Central Asia, the USA and NATO are pursuing the following goals in Afghanistan:
- establishing monitoring and influence positions vis a vis Russia, China and Iran;
- preventing the reintegration of the CIS countries;
- ensuring control over the energy resources of the Caucasus-Caspian and Central Asia region and the supply systems most convenient for transporting them;
- securing a strategic presence in China's rear;
- gaining a monitoring and influence position over "defiant" Iran.
- gaining possibilities to provoke a regional conflict, which could become a pretext for initiating global military actions.

It should be pointed out that the U.S. actions aimed at getting a grip on such an economically promising, as well as geopolitically and geostrategically important macro-region as Central Eurasia, fit perfectly into their concept of so-called globalization and building a unipolar world.

In this context, we must once again mention the doctrine of non-interference in events in Afghanistan, which is so popular within the Russian political class. The arguments of the majority of Russian diplomats, officers and their hired experts, to the effect that by keeping out of Afghanistan we contribute to the USA in terms of resources and political clout, and prevent it from carrying out subversive activities against Russia or destabilizing the situation in the Caucasus, are naive and unprofessional. Those who defend this pseudo-patriotic "conviction" are stubbornly ignoring a number of obvious facts.

First, the combat casualties sustained by the USA and NATO are very small. Suffice it to note that in the seven years of the
Afghanistan occupation they have lost only 546 U.S. soldiers (compare: 5,703 Soviet soldiers died in the first seven years of the Afghan war). It is indicative that all anti-war demonstrations in the USA demand the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq, where over 4,000 U.S. soldiers have died since 2003, whereas Afghanistan is not particularly in the American public eye. Moreover, the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, intends to withdraw part of the American contingent from Iraq and transfer it to Afghanistan.

Second, it can be widely heard said that "the Americans and NATO do not control the situation outside their bases anyway, and cannot defeat the drug mafia." But no one asks the simple question: do the USA and NATO want to control anything in Afghanistan apart from the areas where their military contingents are located? NATO propaganda has repeatedly emphasized in the leaflets and radio programs distributed in Afghan provinces that the foreign forces' sole mission is to fight terrorism, whereas the issues of fighting opium poppy cultivation, and other "sovereign" problems of Afghanistan, do not concern them.

Third, the bulk of military expenditures on Afghanistan are deliberately overstated for the purpose of covertly subsidizing the U.S. defense industry. In this respect, American taxpayers' money does not leave the U.S. economy. Moreover, maintaining extreme instability and tension in Afghanistan, and the presence of constant threats, are literally, a "present" for the Pentagon, allowing it to demand annual planned increases in military expenditures, which keep key defense industry firms afloat. This certainly corresponds fully to U.S. interests, especially in deep financial crisis, which the USA itself created over the last 30 years.

Fourth, because of its geographical position Afghanistan is a unique area for deployment of U.S. and NATO strategic military facilities and strike groups; it is like a huge, land-based aircraft carrier. It is indicative that, from the outset of the U.S. and NATO intervention, intensive construction work was launched around the Shindand and Bagram airfields, including the construction of numerous surface and underground facilities, suggesting that the main goal of the American and NATO presence in Afghanistan is the creation of super-bases with some kind of underground cities. The Shindand and Bagram airfields have been turned into multipurpose military airbases, equipped with air and space surveillance systems, making it possible to monitor air traffic over most of Eurasia.

Fifth, instability in Afghanistan allows the United States to maintain constant tension on the borders of China, India and Iran and to destabilize Pakistan and the countries of Middle Asia, thus creating a permanent, growing threat to Russia, and all this at little cost.

Sixth, the transformation of Afghanistan into the world’s biggest producer of opiates and heroin provides a financial basis for the
existence and activity of transnational financial and political groups and meta-groups, which use funds from the drug business to finance all sorts of "colored revolutions," coups d'etat, and extremist and terrorist organizations all over the world. Meanwhile, The United States, protected from the Afghan drug threat by its geographical remoteness, is shifting the costs of the export of tensions, narco-terrorism, the drug economy and drug-related corruption onto Afghanistan and its neighbor countries, causes direct damage to Russia and eroding its relations with the Middle Asian countries.

Finally, none of the Russian "ultra-patriots" who are waiting for the United States and NATO to experience a fiasco realize (or they do not want to admit it, for various reasons) that the counterterrorist operation in Afghanistan, which lacks definite limits or goals, serves as justification for NATO's existence as a military and political alliance, especially in the context of the crisis the bloc experienced in 2000-2001.

Consequently, expectations of a U.S. and NATO fiasco in Afghanistan are incompetent and unprofessional. However, the following consequences for Russia of the strengthened U.S. and NATO presence in the Afghan region have become evident.

First, the United States has succeeded in its plans to gain access to the military infrastructure of the former Soviet Middle Asian republics. As a result, it became possible to modernize the airfield network to U.S. standards, to study the special features of the region and turn it to practical advantage, as well as to gain the capability of monitoring the air navigation space of almost all of Eurasia.

Second, the relevant deployments made on the region's rented bases have provided the ability for surveillance of strategically important Russian facilities. Military and industrial facilities in the Urals and Siberia are now within reach of the American Air Force. As a result, militarized Afghanistan poses the same kind of danger to Russia as Cuba did to the USA in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Third, these negative factors represent a challenge not only for Russia. Missile test ranges and other strategic and economic facilities in the Chinese hinterland are also being monitored from the Manas military base near Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

U.S. military bases in Japan, South Korea and several other countries of the Asia-Pacific region, together with those in Central Asia, allow the United States to monitor the main strategic facilities of almost all Asian countries simultaneously from within continental Asia and from the directions of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Under certain conditions, American military bases in Central Asia, combined with U.S. army groupings in South Korea and Japan, could become a factor of heavy military pressure on Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and India, especially in case of an exacerbation
of the geopolitical situation. The United States can also use its military presence for manipulating regional antagonisms and supporting various organizations in order to influence the governments of the region’s countries. Therefore, the long-term presence of an external military power in the region damages the existing balance of power and creates fundamental security threats for the countries situated here. This should encourage the countries to have closer contacts, unite their efforts to oppose such a presence, and restore the balance of power.

That is why there is an urgent need to discuss time limits for the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan, as well as for thoroughly reviewing their goals and objectives. The conditions and time limits for the presence of the foreign military forces in Afghanistan should be regulated both by the international community and by Afghan governing bodies, including the parliament.

**Novy Sredny Vostok (The New Central East)**

The doctrines of the Greater Middle East and Greater Central Asia, introduced by Anglo-Saxon experts and politicians over the last 15 years, are unacceptable for Russia, China, Iran, India and Turkey, as is the concept of "new, fair borders."

Combined with the so-called "nation-building" method, which has proved to be ineffective, these doctrines lead to the fragmentation and disintegration of the existing Middle East nation states, damaging the interests of the peoples living there, and can only be used to the benefit of the outside forces.

The most explicit are the "forecasts" made by Ralph Peters in his article "Blood borders. How a better Middle East would look" (Armed Forces Journal, № 6, 2006), which are actually a proposed project. According to these proposals, the existing state borders in the entire region should be amended in order to make them "more just" and "bring peace in the region."

The fragmentation of the Middle East will not, however, under any circumstances, make the borders more just or peace in the region more secure. This kind of strategy can and will be played out in order to solve a number of individual foreign-policy issues, such as gaining control over Iraqi oil deposits by dividing that country into several supposedly more controllable parts, or preventing China from getting access to the Persian Gulf through Pakistan and Pakistani port of Gwadar.

Therefore the most important geopolitical and diplomatic goal for Russia in the next 20 years must be the transformation of Middle Asia
and the Central East, from Kazakhstan to northern India and the Persian Gulf, into a totally new macro-region and geographical reality, notable for being stable and experiencing an industrial boom based on the rapid industrialization of Afghanistan and the entire region, as well as on systematic cooperation among Russia, India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The fundamental idea of such macro-region, which may be called the New Central East (in Russian: "Novy Sredny Vostok", NSV), will be the establishment of a united and integrated geo-economic and geo-cultural area, free from any kind of repartitions and divisions, as well as from selfish geostrategic goals of individual countries. From a staging area for geopolitical clashes and a tool for the pursuit of selfish interests of individual countries, the region should be transformed into the core of the Central Eurasian common market and a place for dialogue among the civilizations and nations which have deep roots here.

Only the Novy Sredny Vostok (NSV) project makes it possible to achieve the following goals, which are critical for Russia and neighboring countries:
- restoring Afghanistan as a united, sovereign and economically successful state, which will not only bring the export of instability, drugs and terrorism to a halt, but will become a model of rapid industrialization and development;
- ensuring firm cooperative security and stability;
- demilitarizing the region from the presence of "overseas" foreign troops;
- organizing a unified economic and transport-logistical space, which would connect Russian Siberia with the "South Seas" (the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf), and, with time, creating a land bridge between the Arctic and Indian oceans;
- establishing a unified water supply infrastructure for the southern countries of the region in order to solve the critical water problem;
- preventing the creation of a U.S. and NATO bridgehead in Afghanistan and Middle Asia aimed at China, Iran, Russia from their "underbellies";
- establishing a fundamental geographical structure which would avert the split of Russia along the Urals and the detachment of Eastern Siberia and the Far East from European Russia;
- preventing a U.S. and NATO war with Iran, one of participants of the Novy Sredny Vostok project.

Geo-culture and geo-economy will be the top priorities in implementation of the NSV project.

First, Novy Sredny Vostok begins with the cultivation of a new system of values, which would emerge around the principle of a dialogue of civilizations and nations in the name of co-development.

Second, the implementation of the Novy Sredny Vostok project requires establishing a "common market" - a unified economic community carrying out programs of complex industrialization and developing living standards of a new quality for a population of around
400 million (comparable to the population of the European Union).

Furthermore, only a rapid industrialization of Afghanistan and development of the other NSV countries on the basis of Russia’s scientific and industrial achievements provide an opportunity for Siberia and its scientific, industrial and educational centers to fulfill their mission. Industrial Siberia needs access to the "warm" seas and vast markets in the South. Apart from developing the Russian Far East, Siberia would gain a possibility to have such access only by acting in the direction of Middle Asian and Central East countries, organizing their industrialization and educational, scientific, and industrial development.

The types and rates of industrialization in different areas of the NSV will not be identical. In case of Russian Siberia, it would be third-level industrialization, based on a breakthrough into the seventh technological phase and the development of technologies for targeted improvement of the quality of life and for a knowledge-based society. For the southern areas, initial industrialization would be of primary significance. Common systems of transport-logistical management and guaranteed long-term employment, as well as electricity, irrigation and water supply infrastructure, will become the foundation of the common economic area.

The construction of a long-distance Siberia - Turkmenistan - Iran railway is of fundamental importance. It will come into being after 800 kilometers of railways are brought into operation on two routes: the first one between the Kazakh station Uzen and the Turk-
men stations Bereket, Etrek and Gurgen; and the second one is the Trans-Afghan railway from the Iranian city of Mashhad via Herat and Kandahar to the Pakistani city of Quetta.

Other transport projects, including water transportation projects essential for the industrialization of the region, are also very promising. One of the main conditions for economic development and peace in Afghanistan is the construction of a new irrigation system. Such a system, however, would increase several-fold the extraction of water from the Afghan part of the Amu Darya basin, which would exacerbate the situation with water supplies in the neighboring countries, especially in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, on the one hand, and in Pakistan, on the other. That is why it is high time to abandon the attitude of mockery toward the project of diverting around 5 percent of the water of Russia’s Ob River from Siberia to Middle Asia, and launch a serious discussion about it.

**A comprehensive Afghanistan development plan**

The establishment of a strong, united and independent state in Afghanistan is impossible without reconstruction of the basic conditions for its people's life and activities.

In a situation where real unemployment is close to 80 percent and more than a half of GDP is formed by cultivation, production and illegal trafficking of drugs, the main task for the Afghan government and the international community is to set up life-support infrastructure, able to provide no less than 1 kWh of electricity, one liter of drinking water and 10 liters of process water per day for each citizen of Afghanistan.

At present all the proposed so-called "development plans" for Afghanistan have at least one important defect: lack of a strategic horizon. These plans for the most part cover the issues of rendering foreign donor help to Afghanistan, ignoring the issues of promoting the country’s economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Afghanistan needs a Comprehensive Development Plan built on new principles and approaches.

The method of intense improvement and recovery of the basic conditions for life and human activity requires a combination of elements for accelerated industrialization - advanced development of the means of production and of the real economy, i.e., economic development planning centered on estimated minimum and additional consumption, as well as on practically oriented fundamental science.

A transition from the present state to the one required will be impossible without the creation of
strategic life-support infrastructure and full-scale productive forces. The latter should be based on practically oriented fundamental science, with the development of education and innovational advanced industry, which would be set up in Afghanistan through cooperation involving other countries.

Development of the energy sector, especially of the electric power industry, is a high priority for the economic development of Afghanistan. It can give an impetus to the development of the entire productive sector and dramatically raise the level and quality of life for the Afghan people. There is a great need for an Afghanistan State Electrification Plan, similar to the early 20th century GOELRO (State Plan for the Electrification of Russia), which provided the impulse for the Russian and Soviet industrialization. In particular, full cascades of power plants must be built on the rivers of Afghanistan, primarily on the Kunduz, Kokcha, Kabul, Helmand and Hari Rivers. Furthermore, it is necessary to build or modernize the electric power lines from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to Afghanistan to provide additional electricity for the country’s needs.

Efforts must also be focused on solving the problem of providing Afghanistan with adequate drinking and process water. This is a crucial factor in overcoming the imbalance between population growth and the reduction of overall land under cultivation and agricultural output.
One of the strategic objectives must be the construction of a railway line on the route Mashhad (Iran) - Herat - Kandahar - Quetta (Pakistan), which would integrate Afghanistan into the global railway network and goods circulation system. This line must become the backbone of the Afghan Development Corridor, which would be a place of concentrated implementation of development projects and would make Afghanistan a strong and economically self-sufficient state, able to take care of its further development and prosperity independently.

It would be appropriate to examine and approve the Comprehensive Afghanistan Development Plan at an International Conference on Peace and Prosperity for Afghanistan, to be held in Kabul.

Exporting development

In the present circumstances in and around Afghanistan, Russia has a unique opportunity not only to develop a new policy on Afghanistan, but to take that as an opportunity to elaborate new principles for its entire foreign policy.

Russia cannot continue to its own existence as a world power (mirovaya derzhava) by further resigning itself to the isolationism and provincialism, imposed under the rossiysky nationalism of the last 20 years.

Russia has always existed and will exist with its full identity only as a world power (http://smd.kroupnov.ru), i.e. as a state entity which takes responsibility for formulating and working to solve world problems.

Implementation of the "mirovaya derzhava" doctrine requires countering the export of democracy, which currently dominates the world, with the export of development, i.e., the transfer of methods and technologies for the comprehensive development of countries, regions and spheres of activities. Only by exporting development to other countries will Russia be able to deal with civilizational, political and economic challenges, while simultaneously maintaining its own development.

The export of democracy has revealed not only its forcible and violent nature, but also a plain failure to be effective. Moreover, in practice it has turned out to mean the export of financial and economic crisis and military conflict, i.e., the guaranteed export of instability.

Russia has a unique opportunity to turn its traditional role of helping other countries to develop, into a major principle of its foreign policy. Unfortunately, indiscriminate criticism of the Soviet past and an imaginary intrinsic imperial character of Russia have disavowed and virtually wiped from public memory this central direction of Russian-
an international activity, historically: its fruitful and devoted efforts to train development elites for other countries, providing them with scientific, educational and industrial-technological support.

Today we must not only set the historical record straight, but also develop this hereditary feature of our nation into a principle of joint development, or co-development, which means the export of development as the targeted transfer of the full-set development capabilities to partner countries, enabling them to make qualitative breakthroughs.

The key idea of exporting development is to create full-fledged productive forces in the country under development, which would comprise three elements: developing education, fundamental practically oriented science, and innovational industry. In this sense the export of development may be counterposed to the export of democracy, which implies the imposition of alien state organizational and social standards on the country which is a recipient of "democracy." Russia's mission in Afghanistan is to create full-scale production forces, appropriate for the goals which are set.

The necessary preconditions exit for adopting such a doctrine at the government level. Inter alia it is significant that at the meeting of the Council of Heads of Governments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on October 30, 2008 in Astana, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin said that "values and models of development are becoming the subject of competition. We have to join our efforts to promptly complete the transformation of the global and regional security and development architecture by adjusting it to the new conditions of the 21st century, when stability and prosperity are becoming inseparable concepts."

Russia needs a strong, safe and friendly Afghanistan. Therefore, a Russian doctrine of exporting development can become the foundation for solving the current problems of this country. The export of development to Afghanistan would bring peace and prosperity to Central Asia, strengthen economic and political ties between the Middle Asian states and Russia and also would set an example to other great powers.

As a first step, the Russian Federation could propose to Afghanistan and other interested countries the elaboration of a Comprehensive Afghanistan Development Plan, and cover the initial expenses.

**Afghanistan development projects**

One of the main causes of the ongoing war in Afghanistan is that it lacks the economic conditions for its people to lead a decent and comfortable life. Many of those engaged in military actions do so
because, in the present socio-economic situation, they are unable to support their families by their own labor.

Therefore, in order to stop the war in Afghanistan and restore peace in the country, a solution to the economic and social problems of the country must be found above all. The recovery of Afghanistan's ruined economy requires the elaboration of comprehensive development plans and projects, along with a mobilization of the forces and joint labor of all Afghan citizens.

The rural way and pattern of life are traditional for the Afghan people, and the country's development system must preserve and rely on this unique asset. That is why progressive agriculture, organized in an exemplary way, should become the basis of Afghanistan's economy. A farmer confidently looking forward, providing for his family and leading a decent life based on his honest and highly skilled labor could become the symbol of Afghanistan as soon as 10 years from now.

On the whole, the development of agriculture must involve not only the cultivation of crops, but also the creation of a processing industry for the types of crops being grown.

The southern provinces of Afghanistan are famous for their fruit. Thus, cultivation and processing of fruit would be the most promising area of agriculture industry there.

During 30 years of the civil war, the culture of farming has been almost completely forgotten, such that today many people do not know how to till the soil and cultivate crops. The creation of a nationwide network of agricultural educational institutions, whose graduates will be able to organize highly efficient agriculture, must be one of the major projects. It will become prestigious to study at these universities and colleges, and their graduates will be respected in society as people working for the benefit of the entire Afghan population.

High-quality agricultural machinery is crucial for developing successful agriculture. Therefore, every international conference on Afghanistan's development should focus on issues of arranging deliveries of agricultural machinery to the country, providing maintenance service for the equipment, and sending specialists to the country to teach people how to use the machinery. The international community and donor countries should help, first and foremost, by providing special machinery, equipment and qualified specialists, as well as by providing a guaranteed market for Afghanistan's agricultural products. This is preferable to monetary grants, most of which does not enrich the Afghan people, but rather line the pockets of intermediary organizations.

It would be reasonable to begin pilot projects in one or two provinces, which would later become models for the organization of development in a specific area. Comprehensive development of these experimental provinces would include agricultural, industrial, infrastructure and energy
projects, as well as road construction, organization of water supplies, etc.

We would propose Nangarhar and Helmand as the model provinces. It would be appropriate to establish special administrative bodies responsible for the suggested projects.

**Nangarhar development projects:**
1. Reconstruction of the Jalalabad irrigation canal.
2. Reconstruction and construction of a complete cascade of power plants on the Kabul river (Naglu HPP, etc.) and construction of reservoirs along the river.
3. Establishment of sugar-cane plantations and construction of a sugar factory.
4. Revival of olive plantations and construction of an olive oil factory.
5. Setting up rose plantation and a rose essence and perfume production plant.
6. Reconstruction of the vegetable canning factory.
7. Revival of citrus farming for cultivation of lemons, oranges, tangerines and grapefruits.

**Helmand development projects:**
1. Setting up pomegranate farms and factories for producing pomegranate juice. Afghan pomegranates are of higher quality than the African ones, making this project very promising for the southern provinces.
2. Establishment of sunflower plantations and factories for producing sunflower oil (this project could also be implemented in Badakhshan).
3. Establishment of saffron plantations. A kilogram of saffron sells for around $2,500 on the world market. There is huge demand for it, making this a very profitable project.
4. Establishment of red pepper plantations.
5. Establishment of production and packaging of dried fruits.
6. Establishment of cotton plantations, as well as launching of clothing and textile production.
7. Establishment of vegetable storage facilities with refrigeration.

The Helmand development projects can also be implemented in other southern provinces, such as Oruzgan and Kandahar. In general, an individual list of development projects should be prepared for each province. The projects must be capable of palpably helping a province and creating jobs for its population. For instance, sugar beet plantations and sugar factories should be established in Baghlan: Afghanistan consumes around 800 thousand tons of sugar per year, so there is strong demand for this product.

Such projects would give an impetus to the economic development of the provinces and create jobs for thousands of people.

A national oil and gas company should be established to exploit the Afghan oil and gas fields and organize oil extraction in Lowgar and Paktika, as well as gas extraction in Sar-e Pol and other places. Afghanistan has enough gas for its own needs, but this gas needs to be extracted. Russia's Gazprom could become a partner
Gold mining at the four largest gold deposits of the country, which are now being plundered, should be placed under firm state control.

It is necessary to restore industry rapidly according to a special plan: build a cement plant, a clothing factory, and chemical fertilizer factories in Mazar-e Sharif and other provinces, reconstruct the Jangalak factory in Kabul, etc. This requires giving up the free-market model in favor of establishing and supporting a class of Afghan industrialists. It is also necessary to restore and organize development of Soviet-built facilities. Afghanistan's development projects must not be limited to economic ones. Socio-cultural projects are also of great importance.

For example, there is a need to solve the problem of providing higher education opportunities for graduates of Afghan schools. There are around 5 million pupils in Afghan schools now, meaning that 300,000-450,000 children graduate each year. At present, the universities can accept only around 15,000 entrants, so there is a great gap between the total number of secondary school graduates and how many are able to receive a higher education. The number of university entrants should be increased up 60,000 people per year in the next 10 years, while the overall number of university students should be increased from 45,000 to 250,000. This requires convening an international conference on the development of higher education in Afghanistan.

Russia's direct participation in the development of Afghanistan, in the first stage, could include the implementation of humanitarian and socio-cultural development projects, specifically:
2. Construction of 5 mother and child centers in the same provinces, which would help mothers during pregnancy and after childbirth, with the included goal of reducing infant mortality.
3. Establishment of a Russia-Afghanistan scientific research center under the aegis of the Russian language department of Kabul University.
4. Reconstruction of the Kabul Polytechnical University.
5. Establishment of a Russian college in Jalalabad.

Cooperation with neighbors for development

A lasting peace in Afghanistan depends on two factors. First, it is unacceptable to regard Afghanistan as an area for testing geopolitical projects. Thus, a timetable for the withdrawal of fo-
reign military forces must be set, and any activity by a global or regional power in its own interests, at the expense of Afghanistan, must be prohibited.

Second, a gigantic resource for the stabilization and development of Afghanistan lies in the implementation by neighboring countries of a unified, coordinated Afghan development policy. Peace in Afghanistan can be achieved much sooner, if its neighbors combine their efforts to ensure security and stability in the country.

That is why Pakistan, Iran, Russia, China, India, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan must be broadly represented at the International Conference on Peace and Prosperity for Afghanistan, in Kabul, and participate in decision-making on securing peace in the country.

Cooperation with neighboring counties is also necessary for launching the development of Afghanistan. For example, construction of the Afghan Development Corridor Mashhad (Iran) - Herat - Kandahar - Quetta (Pakistan) will be impossible without the involvement of Iran and Pakistan, with the active participation of Russia as coordinator of the international efforts.

Afghanistan needs neighborly cooperation to rebuild itself as a united, sovereign and economically effective state, which would not only put an end to the export of instability, drugs and terrorism, but also serve as an example of accelerated industrialization and development.
Afghanistan's neighbors must help it achieve this goal in order to ensure firm cooperative security and stability. This would also help in forming a united, peaceful macro-region, the Novy Sredny Vostok (New Central East). Consequently, Afghanistan's neutral status needs to be guaranteed. This could become one of the key issues on the agenda of the International Conference on Peace and Prosperity for Afghanistan, where all countries of the Novy Sredny Vostok region should be represented.

The SCO factor

Deepening of strategic partnership between the neighboring countries, aimed at solution of the Afghanistan problem, would be most productive within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The leading role of this organization in defining and solving key problems of the Eurasian region is widely recognized at the present time. It is also very important that all of Afghanistan's neighbors are either members of the SCO or have observer status, which creates unique conditions for elaborating and mutually agreeing upon a new strategy and plans for supporting the establishment of a strong and independent Afghan state.

The SCO could act as a sponsor of the realization by the international community of long-term, capital-intensive development projects in economic, social and humanitarian spheres. For this purpose, it would be reasonable to create an SCO Afghan Fund, which would accumulate funds and other resources for implementation of the Comprehensive Afghanistan Development Plan.

The problem of Afghanistan should be seriously considered and raised by the SCO countries before the world community. The SCO Conference on Afghanistan, which is slated for the near future, according to the SCO Summit decision of August 29, 2008, must be used for this purpose to the full extent, while the next SCO Summit, in Summer 2009, should focus on the task of securing peace in Afghanistan and launching development of the country.

Russian-Pashtun dialogue

The passionate engagement (Passionarnost, a term introduced by the late Russian historian Lev Gumilyov to denote a special motive force which may develop in a society under certain conditions)
of the Pashtun people over the last 30 years have made this ethnic group into one with weight on the world scene, actively participating in international relations and affecting the outcome of problems which have worldwide significance. The Pashtuns are intensely organizing communication with other peoples around the world, and are interested in broadening this dialogue. The openness of the Pashtuns to communication with the world makes their future an issue of interest and significance for all other major peoples of the world.

Russia has an opportunity to enter into a direct dialogue with the Pashtuns, by using its unique civilizational experience of careful protection and co-existence with more than 150 ethnic groups, and thereby to contribute to solving the Afghan problem.

Russia needs to begin organizing this dialogue from scratch, employing active communication, exchange of parliamentary and other delegations, intense people-to-people diplomacy, sister city and sister province programs, Pashtun language studies, and publication in Russia of books in Pashto.

Unique opportunities are offered by the specific political-social and cultural-anthropological organization of the Pashtuns, which is based on deep respect for tradition, something which is still interpreted by many politicians and experts as being archaic and is automatically viewed as entailing backwardness and even an inability to develop.

This point of view is profoundly mistaken.

Traditionalism does not merely mean the absence of modernity in a society. It also represents a unique resource for development.

For instance, the "Pashtunwali" code of conduct is unquestionably of fundamental importance for the Pashtuns. It represents a priceless treasure trove of guiding principles for life, which are archaic from the standpoint of the antiquity of the code, but are, therefore, all the more important, and their significance for Afghan society will only increase with time.

The persistence of archaic traditions is habitually viewed in a negative light, as the absence of modern values. This point of view, however, is rather artificial. It was created within a number of anthropological schools in the early 20th century, and is outdated.

Traditionalism is not an obstacle, but rather a starting point for designing and creating a country's own forms of statehood.

The situation is similar to problems in the development of Russia's own statehood, since Russia is also confronted with demands posed from the perspective of a "modern" state.

The modernist approach, which resists the establishment of strong statehood in Afghanistan or Russia, is most vividly presented in works of Anglo-Saxon geopoliticians, among them the book by former British Deputy Secretary for Defense and Overseas Affairs Robert Cooper The Postmodern State and the World Order. (London, 1996: Demos, The Foreign Policy Centre).

Cooper argues that we live in an epoch in which pre-modern,
modern and postmodern countries exist simultaneously, shaping three corresponding "worlds."

The first world - the "pre-modern" one - is inhabited by those who still have not learned, or have already forgotten, how to organize the form of nation-state best known during the last 300 years, which Cooper calls "contemporary" or "modern."

According to Cooper, the "post-contemporary" or "postmodern" world is characterized by "the breaking down of the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs," "mutual interference in (traditional) domestic affairs and mutual surveillance," "the rejection of force for resolving disputes," etc.

Cooper argues that, since the postmodern states (in fact, the G7 countries) are surrounded by pre-modern ones, it is crucial to impose hegemony in order to achieve a more reliable and perfect world order - "a hegemony as a new kind of imperialism, one compatible with human rights and cosmopolitan values: an imperialism which aims to bring order and organization but which rests today on the voluntary principle."

Undoubtedly, the desire of certain countries to establish their own hegemony and the "new voluntary imperialism" is what motivates setting modernity as the standard and the sole acceptable model. Afghanistan and Russia, however, have every opportunity to stay out of this proposed neo-imperialism, and rather to build a unique model of development, based on their centuries-old traditions and experience.

Adoption of a neo-traditionalist approach could play a significant role in this respect.

The concept of neo-traditionalism, proposed by Russian anthropologist Aleksandr Pika, looks at opportunities for full-scale development based on combining a carefully preserved base of cultural and historical tradition with the simultaneous introduction of new technologies, up to and including the transition to a new technological phase.

Pashtun neo-traditionalism is perfectly capable of becoming the locomotive for creation of the new Afghan statehood on a non-modernist basis.

An agenda for the top-level cooperation between Russia and Afghanistan

The visit of the President of the Russian Federation to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which was agreed upon by the leaders of the two countries on August 29, 2008 in Dushanbe, could be of truly
historic significance for the peaceful resolution of the Afghan problem.

The doctrine of exporting development as a creative alternative to the doctrine of exporting democracy could be articulated during the visit of the Russian President to Afghanistan. The Russian Federation could also introduce an initiative to draft the Comprehensive Afghanistan Development Plan, and declare its readiness to cover related expenses.

The President could call upon all sides in the civil war to reach an understanding. Also, he could officially propose to hold an International Conference on Peace and Prosperity for Afghanistan, in Kabul, to discuss measures for securing peace and concord in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Presentation of this analytical and programmatic report "The Path to Peace and Concord in Afghanistan Will Be Determined by the Position Russia Takes" is a first public step toward developing new ideas for Russian-Afghan cooperation. These efforts should result in the proposal of a new Afghan policy by the expert community.

As the next step, we propose to hold a project conference in Moscow on Afghanistan development problems, at which politicians, public figures, developers and experts could draft the concept of a Comprehensive Afghanistan Development Plan.

The Institute for Demography, Migration and Regional Development welcomes cooperation from all interested parties and organizations.
THE PATH TO PEACE AND CONCORD IN AFGHANISTAN

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