

Brzezinski plays Britain's 'Great Game' in Central Asia

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

War is raging in Russia.

Fools will protest that this is a gross overstatement and exaggeration. They will pathetically cling to their media-nurtured illusions, that the fighting which has gripped the autonomous republic of Dagestan since Aug. 7, is some local, internal affair, just one more instance of the chronic in-fighting and ethnic conflict which has characterized the Caucasus since time immemorial. This is no war, they will say, but merely an ethnic revolt, like so many others we have seen, and in the future will see.

With not-so-veiled glee at Russia's discomfort in this affair, some are saying that this is but one further step in the inevitable process of dissolution of the Russian Federation, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union but eight years ago. In the end, they say, the various autonomous republics will gain their independence, and Russia will break up into so many single entities, each ethnically, culturally, and linguistically defined (as indeed is only just and proper, they will add). What, they ask ingenuously, is all the fuss? Look at Kosovo, Kashmir, and East Timor: Is this not the wave of the future?

There is only one leading political figure outside Russia, who has had the knowledge and courage to rip through these lies and illusions, to state the painful truth of the matter. In an internationally distributed statement issued on Aug. 11, Lyndon LaRouche bluntly posed the question, "Is World War III Coming?" Asserting emphatically that he believed, that with his leadership, the otherwise inevitable process toward war could be reversed, LaRouche went through the steps of the process currently leading toward strategic confrontation and world war.

LaRouche wrote, "The drive toward a nuclear world war comes from the British monarchy, as the policies of the

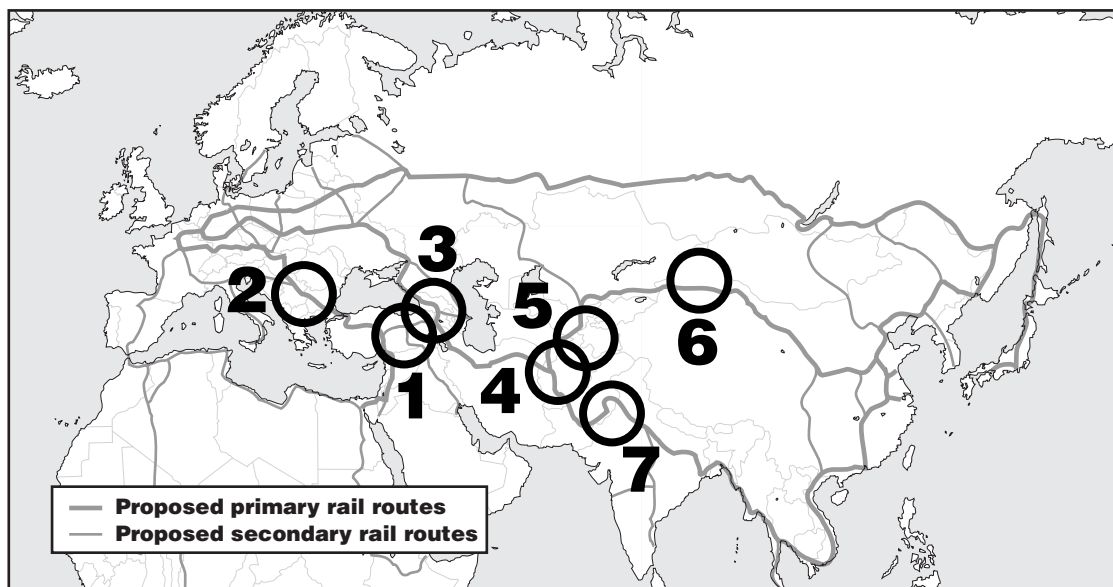
current Prime Minister and 1931 Ramsay MacDonald look-alike Tony Blair typify this impulse. However, although the British monarchy is by far the world's dominant financial power, and also the world's presently leading political power, the thrust for war depends upon that monarchy's ability to push the world's leading military power, the U.S.A., into adopting London's current geopolitical adventurism."

He continued: "It is from this standpoint, that we must understand the significance of madman Zbigniew Brzezinski's current policies, which are more or less identical to those of Brzezinski crony and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. For maniacs such as British Prime Minister Blair, Brzezinski, and Albright, the orchestration of the recent war against Yugoslavia was only the prelude to a nuclear confrontation with Russia, in Transcaucasia and Central Asia more widely. Blair, Brzezinski, Albright et al., are depending upon their belief that this drive toward a nuclear confrontation with Russia is a strategic bluff, to which they are confident that Russia will back down. London's attempt to orchestrate a nuclear attack on India, by London-controlled assets in the Pakistan military, is part of the same post-Balkan-War thrust. There, in brief, lies the risk of an actual nuclear World War III."

The point which LaRouche has driven home, is that the flare-up of so-called ethnic conflict in the northern Caucasus republic of Dagestan, is but the most recent in a series of provocations mounted by the political forces of the British-American-Commonwealth (BAC) faction, who are committed to a strategic showdown with Russia. The aim of this faction, is to use such insurgencies to ignite a global confrontation which they, the BAC maniacs, foolishly believe they can win.

FIGURE 1

Caucasus, Central Asian conflict zones



Instigated conflicts, or potential conflicts, have succeeded in putting a “lock” on Central Asia’s development as the crossroads for Asia and Europe, as conceived in LaRouche’s concept for a new Silk Route. The 1991 war in Iraq and the Kurdish conflict (1) blocked one European route to the Mideast and Asia. The Balkans wars (2) disrupted river transport along the Danube, and prevented rail line development through southeastern Europe into Turkey and beyond. The conflicts in the Caucasian region (3) blocked the needed rail lines linking Europe and European Russia to the Mideast, and cut off the flow of oil from Baku through Russia westward. The continuing war in Afghanistan (4), the ongoing and threatened civil war in Tajikistan and conflicts elsewhere in Central Asia (5), and potential insurgency in Xinjiang Province, China (6), block the main required rail-development corridors linking China to the Mideast and Europe through Central Asia. The threatened India-Pakistan conflict (7) would impede the development of rail lines along the southern Silk Route.

The contours of the gameplan

The contours of their gameplan are by now obvious: Dagestani rebels—who are, in reality, British-backed Wahhabite insurgents moving from Chechen territory—are to challenge the central authority of Moscow, engaging the thousands of troops deployed by the Interior Ministry, in an impossible guerrilla warfare scenario. As the conflict inevitably drags on, the Russian military leadership will find itself confronted with the repetition of the tragedy of its unsuccessful war against the Chechen insurgency in 1994-96, and will face the option of escalating to tactical nuclear weapons, as its only recourse. Were the Russians to succeed in driving out Dagestani rebels from their positions, in the difficult mountainous terrain, said rebels could move into neighboring Azerbaijan or Georgia.

Their presence in either of the former Soviet republics, now internationally recognized as sovereign, independent nations, would provide the pretext for their Presidents, Heidar Aliyev of Azerbaijan or Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia, to launch an impassioned appeal to the “international community” to send in a “neutral” force of peacekeeping troops to guarantee their national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and

so forth. The peacekeeping force in question would be composed of NATO troops, but from the Turkish military, so as to cast it in a less Western garb, and present it under the more attractive dress of “our Turkic brothers” coming in defense of the Motherland.

In 1998, Aliyev, a career KGB operative who sold himself and his country to the Western oil interests after independence, publicly called for a NATO base to be built on the territory of Azerbaijan. On June 29, 1999, Murtuz Aleskerov, Azerbaijan’s Speaker of Parliament, stated, “Our country seeks to become a NATO member-state.”

On July 1, Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Giga Burduli announced that Georgia had requested “NATO membership.” Georgian President Shevardnadze, also a graduate of the KGB, discussed the perspective with visiting U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen, in late July. Georgia signed an agreement with the United States, on security cooperation and aid. On the issue of Russian bases in Georgia, the press reported that “if there is a prospect of them being replaced with American ones, [Cohen] said that it was up to the Georgian authorities to decide whether the independent state of Georgia should have foreign military

bases on its territory. It is also up to the Georgian authorities to decide if the current bases are to be replaced with American ones.”

Both Azerbaijan and Georgia have called for NATO troops to replace those of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in the Georgian republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and in and around the Armenian region of Karabakh.

There is no need to speculate on the Russian view of these developments. In July 1998, Russia responded to the idea, promoted by Turkey, of setting up “special peacekeeping forces” for the Caucasus region within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program. Foreign Ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin said that Turkey’s initiative implied an intention to expand the NATO sphere of activity to encompass the Caucasus, that is, beyond the boundaries of the North Atlantic treaty. “This has nothing in common with the task of stabilizing the situation in the region, nor with the specific needs for the settlement of the conflicts existing here,” Rakhmanin said.

Once such a “peacekeeping force,” no matter how small or symbolic, were to be deployed on Azeri or Georgian territory, the “red line” drawn by the Russian military establishment would have been crossed. At that point, whoever may be in charge in Moscow at the time—and this is a question which will be decided in the course of these events—may very well determine that there were no other recourse, than to escalate to the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons. Were Moscow to deploy these weapons in the Dagestan-Chechnya theatre, there is no doubt the next step would be global confrontation.

In short, World War III.

British geopolitical insanity

There is nothing coincidental about this, nothing “organic” or “sociological” in the process leading to catastrophe. In essence, this confrontation is the strategic goal which the forces of the BAC have been pursuing relentlessly since 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down.

At that time, there were two radically opposed views in the West, as to what the post-communist world should look like. On the one hand, there were the voices of reason, those of Deutsche Bank chairman Alfred Herrhausen in Germany, and Lyndon LaRouche, who both urged the adoption of a development perspective for the East. Herrhausen had prepared a detailed plan for the extension of long-term, low-interest credits to the East, to generate massive technology transfer to Poland, for instance, and develop its economy along the lines that similar methods had generated the economic recovery and boom of post-World War II West Germany. Herrhausen was to deliver a speech on his project, in New York, on Dec. 4, 1989.

Instead, on Nov. 30 he was assassinated in an extraordinarily sophisticated terrorist attack, which was attributed to the Red Army Faction, a British front terrorist operation ac-

tive in the 1970s. The defunct terrorist capability had miraculously come alive, to intimidate anyone merely thinking along the lines of Herrhausen, in a post-communist Europe.

LaRouche was targetted as well. Earlier, on Oct. 12, 1988, LaRouche had delivered a speech in West Berlin, in which he forecast the fall of the Berlin Wall, and outlined his ideas for what a reunified Germany could accomplish, in developing the East. This later evolved into his “Productive Triangle” program and “Eurasian Land-Bridge” proposal. In a televised broadcast that same year, LaRouche identified the danger of war in Europe, specifically in Yugoslavia, were such a perspective for development not embraced.

The fact that LaRouche was campaigning for this approach, and was gaining support internationally, as well as among his Democratic Party base inside the United States, marked him as a target for political elimination, by the BAC. Thus, in 1988-89, President George Bush, in league with Henry Kissinger et al., launched a witch-hunt against LaRouche and his associates, to silence them as a political voice.

Once LaRouche was considered neutralized, through imprisonment, the BAC moved aggressively to utterly eliminate any potential for Germany to fulfill the mission which LaRouche and Herrhausen had identified, in extending economic progress to Eurasia. Instead of economic development, the nations of eastern Europe, and, after 1991-92, the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet republics, were forced to accept the economic recipes of the International Monetary Fund, which gutted their countries. At the same time, outright aggression was organized. As if working from a map of the continent, the British-based oligarchy proceeded systematically, to set fires leading to regional and international conflicts on the continent, many of which have continued to the present day.

A decade of wars

In 1990-91, the British orchestrated the precedent-setting war against Iraq, which diverted precious financial, economic, and political resources away from the historic task of Eurasian development, especially from Germany, which was the logistical launching pad for the “splendid little colonial war” of Margaret Thatcher and George Bush. No sooner had the aggression against Iraq ended, than the war in Yugoslavia broke out, laying waste to the region in southeastern Europe, which is the natural corridor along which infrastructure lines should extend into Turkey, the Persian Gulf, and beyond (see **Figure 1**).

The conflict in the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh through 1993, was fuelled from abroad, parallel to the Chechen insurgency, which generated civil war inside the autonomous republic of the Russian Federation, until 1996. Conflict in the northern Caucasus region ensured that pipeline transportation and other infrastructure routes would be blocked. The war in Afghanistan was escalated through the creation in 1994 of the Taliban, supported by British, Paki-

stani, and Saudi forces, and their drive for total military conquest, from 1996 into the present. The Afghan war has not only ravaged the country, but has effectively cut off access through it for the newly independent Central Asian Republics, to Iranian and Pakistani ports. The massive drug cultivation and trafficking which has fed the Taliban war effort, has radiated throughout the region, threatening the stability of all central Asia, and even China, through Xinjiang province. The so-called “Islamist” insurgencies, both from the northern Caucasus and Afghanistan, have generated continuing civil war inside Tajikistan, and are spilling over into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

The post-crash strategy

It was in autumn 1998, in the wake of the Russian default of Aug. 17, that the BAC refined its Eurasian strategy, to opt for a military solution. With the onset of the Russia crisis, the financial oligarchy had to acknowledge the imminent collapse of the entire monetary and financial system, on which its power had rested. In the post-crash strategy which the London-centered oligarchy designed, the primary focus was to target Russia and China directly, in the context of breaking up the “strategic triangle” of cooperation among China, Russia, and India—what LaRouche called the “Survivors’ Club”—which threatened BAC hegemony. At the same time, the BAC forces intended to seize control over all raw materials, minerals, energy resources and gold, worldwide, emphatically including the immense riches in the Caucasus, Caspian Sea, and Central Asian regions. In a world in which paper titles had become worthless, it would be those who held raw materials, who would prevail. Militarily, these goals were to be pursued through implementation of what was to become known as the “new NATO doctrine.”

The new phase of BAC assault was inaugurated on the ground, in December 1998, when the British government of Blair, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, and Defense Secretary George Robertson arranged with members of the Principals Committee in the U.S. government—Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Defense Secretary Cohen, Vice President Al Gore, and others—to launch an undeclared war against Iraq. Using the phony report penned by UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) director and British intelligence agent Richard Butler, the cabal determined, in the absence of President Clinton, to “punish” Baghdad. What was significant about the military action, was that it established the precedent of U.K.-U.S. unilateral aggression, without the figleaf of the United Nations Security Council.

Later, at the Feb. 5-7, 1999 meeting of the Munich Conference on Security Policy, Cohen announced that the United States would feel free in the future to utilize whatever weapons it chose, to ward off the threat of biological, nuclear, or chemical weapons wielded by “rogue nations,” such as Iraq. When questioned as to the constraints on the United States in deciding such strikes, Cohen answered, that the December action against Iraq had proven, that the United States and

its “British friends” had the right to attack, even without an official UN Security Council mandate. He argued that the United States and Great Britain would not allow themselves to be handcuffed by dissenting opinions in the UN Security Council. The new NATO doctrine was formally under discussion at the NATO summit in Washington, in April, as three new members of NATO were welcomed, in the military alliance’s relentless expansion eastwards (see *EIR*, May 7, 1999, p. 64).

The March 1999 war in Yugoslavia was the next step in the BAC assault. As LaRouche laid out in a policy statement on Aug. 18 (see p. 34, this issue), the Balkans war was planned as a stepping-stone to confrontation with Russia and China. The manner in which the BAC ignored Russian considerations in the UN Security Council, and sabotaged diplomatic efforts undertaken by Yevgeni Primakov to prevent and, later, to end the war, sent a clear message to Moscow, that the real target of the Yugoslav air war, was not Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, but the Russian Federation. When, on May 7, the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was bombed, any lingering doubts in Beijing swiftly vanished, as to who the other main target of the war was. As Michael Liebig reported to a recent conference in India (see *EIR*, Sept. 3, 1999, p. 50), the air war against Serbia, conducted under the rubric of the new NATO doctrine, aimed to eliminate Russian influence in the region; exclude China as a partner in Security Council deliberations; batter a weakened Western Europe into submission; and, open up the route to the expansion of NATO into the Transcaucasus-Central Asian region.

Then came the “sudden” eruption of military activity in Dagestan, in early August, which brought the conflict onto the territory of the Russian Federation. British-backed Wahhabite rebels, operating from Chechen territory, crossed into Dagestan in the first week of August, and started their “rebellion.” An estimated force of 1,200 fighters, from Dagestan and Chechnya, and including Arab and Afghan elements, moved to occupy positions in the mountains. On Aug. 9, they issued a statement: “We, the Muslims of Dagestan, officially declare the restoration of independence to the Islamic State of Dagestan,” and appealed to Chechen terrorist Shamil Basayev to be their leader. They called on “all Muslims” to contribute to the battle for Dagestani liberation from Russian “occupation.”

The Dagestan rebellion, like the Chechen war of 1994-96, erupted in the strategically crucial region of the Russian Federation, bordering on Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Caspian Sea. Were the rebels to succeed in establishing “independence” in the Dagestan-Chechnya region, this would cut Russia’s access to the Caspian Sea raw materials down to a pittance. All pipelines running through the northern Caucasus region would be wrested from Russian control.

Just days later, Taliban-allied “Islamist” insurgents escalated activities in Tajikistan, and staged a kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan.

The stage was set.

War against Russia

On Aug. 17, the Russian Federation Acting Minister for Nationalities, Ramazan Abdulatipov, minced no words in characterizing what was happening. "A war against Russia is going on in Dagestan," he declared. He was echoed later by former Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, who said, "There is aggression directly against Russia. An attempt is being made to take away from Russia a vital part of it, which adjoins the Caspian Sea. If this were to happen, God forbid, it would entail great unpleasantness for the northern Caucasus as a whole."

Within days, the conflict had escalated, as Russian Interior Ministry troops faced the insurgents. Russian military leaders referenced the use of "special weapons" being deployed against the guerrillas.

More significantly, changes were being made in Russian military doctrine, apparently unnoticed, or cheerfully ignored, by those figures, like Brzezinski, Albright, and new NATO Secretary General George Robertson, who have promoted the policy leading to showdown.

Already following the December U.K.-U.S. war against Iraq, Russia and China had not only loudly protested, but had moved closer in military and strategic cooperation. Defense Minister Igor Sergeev had addressed a meeting of the CIS states in December, urging that, in light of the "unpredictable" nature of U.S. behavior, they reach "a common understanding of the military-political problems arising, and work out common views on prospects for developing military cooperation." It was in the wake of the Iraq war, in fact, that Primakov, then Prime Minister, had launched his idea of a "strategic triangle" with China and India.

But it was following the Balkans war, that news of a fundamental shift in Russian strategic posture was made public. Significantly, it was in the Beijing *People's Daily*, on Aug. 4, that the changes in Russian military policy were identified. "On March 12 NATO was expanded to include eastern European nations. . . . On March 24 NATO brazenly attacked Yugoslavia, ignoring Russia's strong opposition. . . . On April 24 the NATO heads met in Washington to establish a new strategy for the twenty-first century," which in essence provides for "armed intervention anywhere in the world, beyond the defensive territory of NATO itself." These events have provoked "extreme resentment and vigilance" in Russia, the paper wrote. It continued, that Russia would adopt new measures, to counter the NATO challenge, including a revision of military strategy, whereby NATO would be declared the "prime potential war enemy of Russia." In addition, military expenditures would be increased. The paper reported, "Russia plans to build 10,000 miniaturized and super-miniaturized nuclear warheads. . . . Using these types of 'miniaturized' and 'super-miniaturized' nuclear weapons, Russia could attack military targets at any point on the Earth in a 'precision attack' which would not trigger an all-out nuclear war."

And, following the outbreak of war in Dagestan, Russia

and China moved to consolidate cooperation, including military defense cooperation, with three Central Asian Republics—Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan—which are also targeted for destabilization. At a summit meeting in Bishkek on Aug. 24-26, they pledged to support the "diplomacy of the Silk Road Doctrine," to revive "international cooperation and economic development," and strengthen peace and stability in the region." Their resolution specifically stated their commitment to "fight international terrorism, illegal drug trade, arms trafficking, illegal migration, and other forms of trans-border crime, separatism, and religious extremism," i.e., in short, to fight against the Taliban and related "Islamist" insurgencies being centrally deployed against them all.

All these clear signals have been cheerfully ignored by the BAC crowd, which prefers to believe that "their man in Moscow," Yeltsin, and his coterie of compradors, has the situation completely under control. The recent money-laundering scandal, which has exposed the Yeltsin extended "family" and its partners in the West—headed up by George Bush and Al Gore—should be read as another clear signal, that "their man in Moscow" may not be there for long.

Instead, the momentum toward confrontation is being escalated.

The British 'Great Game'

When Russian Federation Minister Abdulatipov announced that there was a war against Russia unfolding in Dagestan, he spoke from an informed, historical perspective. Abdulatipov stressed that the insurgents were a group of criminals, organized and financed by powerful international forces, through "foundations in various countries, including Arab countries, including various sects." The guerrilla force shows "the presence of people from Pakistan and Afghanistan," he stressed. He pointed to their affiliation with the Wahhabite sect, but quickly differentiated between these insurgents and true believers in Islam. "I stress," he said, "that these people have nothing to do with either Islam or Allah. They call themselves the warriors of Allah, but in reality they have gone against the fundamental tents of the Holy Koran."

Furthermore, he explained how Wahhabism, as a sect based in Saudi Arabia, "appeared as a trend which was imposed, first of all, by British colonizers on Arab countries." At the dawn of the present century, he said, "94% of the world's Islamic, Muslim population lived in colonies. Any fight by Muslims against colonizers was automatically declared as Islamism or something like that." The central point is the following: "This is why this trend was created, in order to divide the Arab world. The Arab world, with the same language, the same culture and the same religion, consisted of more than 20 states." In another setting, he said, "Wahhabism was originally introduced to Arab lands by the British colonizers in order to divide the Arabs. And thus to rule them." This ideology, he said, "has been extended to the Caucasus. Why?

Because it is important to take over Russia from the point of view of Islamic fundamentalism as was attempted in the nineteenth century.”

The Minister of Nationalities hit the nail on the head. “You may remember,” he told the press, “al-Afghani who, supported financially from Britain and America, also launched this work.”

The reference is to Jamal ad-Deen Al-Afghani, who was a Persian, picked up in the later 1870s by the British, and deployed to organize “an Islamic revolutionary alliance with the British Empire.” The purpose of the operation, which was run by the notorious Arab Bureau of Wilfred Scawen Blunt, was to mobilize “Islamic” forces, to strike an alliance among Britain, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan, against Russia. Al-Afghani was one among legions of “native rebels” dancing to the tune of British imperial music.

At the time, the struggle of the British Empire to stop Russia’s influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus, was known as the “Great Game,” and it was waged through manipulation of ethnic and religious ideologies. The imperial method of ethnic-religious manipulation, championed by Lord Palmerston, was practiced by David Urquhart, alias “Daud Bey,” of British intelligence, and perfected later in the nineteenth century, by the Arab Bureau.

The stakes in the Great Game, were those most coveted by British geopolitics from the earliest phase of imperialism: Control over Eurasia, or what this century’s geopolitical thinkers called the “Eurasian heartland.”

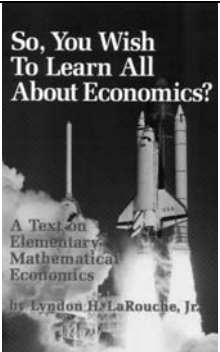
In an Aug. 14 interview with *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, Abdulatipov indicated his knowledge of the matter: Characterizing the war in Dagestan as a “large-scale operation coordinated and agreed at a relatively high international level,” he specified, “It is aimed primarily against Russia, at expelling it from the Caucasus. The choice of location was no accident. . . . Back in the eighteenth century, it was said that whoever controls Avaristan [where heaviest fighting is going on] controls Dagestan, and whoever controls Dagestan controls the Caucasus. Everything has been calculated to remove Russia from control of the resources of the Caspian Sea and of the Caspian Basin in general.”

“For centuries,” he went on, “Russia fought for control over the Caucasus. . . . Today there are forces which want to turn the clock back. To cut the Caucasus off from Russia. But we have grown up with Russia, and it is impossible to detach Dagestan from Russia.”

No difference, essentially, exists, between the aims and methods of the British during last century’s Great Game, and those of today’s. As the leading ideologues of geopolitics, like the psychologically disturbed Zbigniew Brzezinski or the megalomaniacal Samuel Huntington will readily admit, their “analyses” and “strategies” to use the “Islamic” card, in the “arc of crisis” or “zone of instability,” to re-draw the maps of the world, have been inspired by centuries of British machinations.

Now, as then, the name of the game is to manipulate ethnic and religious ideologies, to direct groups of insurgents against major powers, to destroy the nation-state. Now, as then, the primary target is Russia, then China, within the broader alliance of nations, including India, Iran, and the Central Asian Republics, which are collaborating in the construction of the new Silk Route across the continent. Now, as then, the vehicle selected to lead the infiltration into the Caucasus and Central Asia, is the pan-Turkic ideology, which today the “new NATO” would like to deploy into Turkic-speaking regions. Although the devastating earthquake which hit Turkey has forced certain rethinking of military considerations, nonetheless, the concept of pan-Turkism as an ideological tool, has been maintained from earlier centuries.

What is different now, is that the name of the game is known. Not only among Russian political figures, but also among the elite in China, India, Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and other targetted nations like Iran, there is a growing awareness of the strategic insanity currently gripping policy made in the name of “the West.” What is more, these same nations have been carefully weaving a fabric of cooperation for mutual economic development, as well as self-defense. Several of these nations are nuclear powers. Finally, the voice of sanity represented by LaRouche, is being heard, loud and clear in this area of the world.



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FIGURE 2

The Caucasus chessboard



Key to Figure 2

The Caucasus area under Soviet rule had been divided into several ethnically delineated autonomous republics and regions within the Russian Federation, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The borders of these autonomous republics and regions were often arbitrarily drawn.

Given the history of intense ethnic rivalry, and increasing poverty, it wasn't difficult to provoke wars.

Russia

Dagestan: 50,000 square kilometers; 1.8 million inhabitants. The republic is composed of a dozen tribes of Turkic and indigenous origin, with no one tribe predominating. The population is almost entirely organized into Sufi orders; clan structure remains especially strong. Dagestan is currently the main target of NATO-directed Islamic insurgents deployed out of Chechnya, and funded out of Saudi Arabia. Successful insurrection

in Dagestan would drive Russia out of most of what little remains of its old Soviet Caspian Sea coast.

Chechnya: The Chechen-Ingush republic was 19,000 square kilometers in 1989, before the republic split in 1991. The Chechens were deported to Central Asia by Stalin in 1943, for alleged collaboration with the German Army, and only returned in the 1950s. The republic's population as of 1989 was 1.25 million, of whom 735,000 were Chechens and 165,000 Ingush. Since the war, some 400,000 people have fled. The Chechens are dominated by Sufi orders, and entirely organized into clans.

Ingushetia: 2,000 square kilometers. There were 215,000 Ingush in the former Chechen-Ingush republic in 1989. The Ingush formed their own autonomous republic (within Russia) in 1991, after the Chechens declared independence. During World War II, the Ingush were deported to Central Asia, while the Ossetians, who were not, were given the Prigorodny district that had been Ingush land. Competition over this district, which has never been returned, led to an Ingush-Ossete war in October 1992, and the flight of the 30,000 Ingush living there.

North Ossetia: 8,000 square kilometers; 630,000 inhabitants, of whom 60% were Ossetes, 30% Russians, and 10% Ingush, as of 1989. The Ossetes are the most russified population in the region, and are Orthodox Christians. Since the Georgian invasion of South Ossetia, virtually the entire Ossetian population of Georgia, approximately 100,000, fled to North Ossetia. South Ossetians are demanding reunification with North Ossetia.

Kabardo-Balkar: 12,500 square kilometers; 750,000 inhabitants, of whom 49% are Kabard, 32% Russian, and 11% Balkar, as of the 1989 census. The Kabards are an eastern branch of the Circassians, which includes the Adigai and Cherkess, and are cousins of the Abkhazians. The Balkars are a Turkic people, closely related to the Karachai. The Balkars were deported to Central Asia during World War II, while the Kabards were not. The Balkars have begun demanding the restoration of pre-deportation territorial districts that had been given to the Kabards. Foreign-based Circassian organizations are active among the Kabards.

Karachai-Cherkess: 14,000 square kilometers; 415,000 inhabitants, of whom 42% are Russian (mostly Cossacks), 32% Karachai, and 9% Cherkess, as of 1989. The Karachai are Turkic cousins of the neighboring Balkars; the Cherkess are Circassian cousins of the neighboring Kabards. The Karachai were deported to Central Asia in World War II and now claim full rehabilitation, including territory now held by the Cossacks. Some Karachai movements insist on a separate republic. The Cossacks, on the other hand, have reportedly advocated secession from the republic, to join the Kuban Cossacks of the neighboring Krasnodar district.

Adigai: 7,600 square kilometers; 430,000 inhabitants, of whom 68% are Russia and 22% Adigai. The Adigai are Circassian. The republic is an enclave with the Krasnodar Krai. De-

spite their tiny population within the republic, the Adigai are calling for self-determination.

Georgia

Georgia is 70,000 square kilometers in extent, and as of 1989, its population was 5.45 million. Georgians accounted for 70% of the total population. It had three autonomous areas: South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Adjara. The Georgians and Abkhazians are indigenous peoples. The Ossetians are Iranian. Virtually all of these populations are Christian.

South Ossetia: 3,900 square kilometers. In 1989, its population was 99,000 inhabitants, of whom 66% were Ossetians and 29% Georgians. Today, almost the entire Ossetian population has fled to North Ossetia, Russia. In 1989, the South Ossetian Popular Front called for reunification with North Ossetia, triggering martial law and the 1991-92 Georgian-Ossetian war.

Abkhazia: 8,600 square kilometers. In 1989, its population was 540,000, of whom 44% were Georgian, 16% Russian, and 17% Abkhazians. Since the Georgian-Abkhazian war, the Georgian population has fled. The Abkhazians are part of the Circassian group also including the Adigai, Cherkess, and Kabardians.

Adjara: 1,100 square kilometers; 140,000 population: 80% Georgian, 10% Russian, and 5% Armenia.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is 87,000 square kilometers in extent. As of 1989, it had a population of 7 million, of whom 78% were Azeri, 8% Russian, and 8% Armenian (including the Armenian enclave of Karabakh). The Azeris are a Turkic Muslim population. Azerbaijan has huge petroleum deposits, especially in the Caspian Sea.

The British have skillfully used the various proposed, conflicting pipelines to transport this oil, as an added factor in provoking wars in the region. The entire region is desperately impoverished, and industry has collapsed. Oil extraction, transport, and refining are commonly considered to be the only means of short-term economic improvement.

Nagorno-Karabakh: 4,400 square kilometers. As of 1989, its population was 190,000, of whom 80% were Armenian and the rest Azeri. Since that time, the Azeri population has fled. Armenian agitation for the inclusion of Karabakh into Armenia in 1988 triggered ongoing Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict, resulting in each minority fleeing the other's state (with the exception of Karabakh). Armenian forces now occupy one-sixth of Azeri territory, including virtually all of Karabakh.

Armenia

Armenia is 30,000 square kilometers, with a population in 1989 of 3.3 million, of whom 90% were Armenian and 5% Azeri. The Armenians are Christian, mostly Armenian Orthodox, and indigenous to the region.

FIGURE 3

The Central Asian cauldron



Key to Figure 3

Kazakstan: 2,720,000 square kilometers; 16.5 million population as of 1989, of whom 40% were Kazaks and 38% Russians, along with 950,000 Germans and 900,000 Ukrainians. The Russian population, which until recently was the largest ethnic group, primarily resides in the north, bordering Russia. An ethnic-based formal division of the country remains a possibility.

The Kazaks were nomadic until the Soviet sedentization programs in the 1930s, and remain predominantly rural. The population is divided into three rival hordes, which further subdivided into tribes and clans. The population only became Islamic in the eighteenth century; Sufi orders predominate.

The country shares a long border with Xinjiang province, China, the home of some 8 million Uighur Turks. The province had been almost entirely Turkic until the 1949 Maoist revolution; subsequent Han colonization has made the Uighurs a minority. Over a half-million Uighurs now live in exile in Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Kazakstan has huge, untapped, oil and natural gas deposits, notably the Tengiz field near the Caspian Sea. Conflict over the exploitation of these deposits, and over alternative pipeline routes, is one of the primary means through which British interests are fueling war in the region. As of 1990, it had 90% of the Soviet Union's proven reserves of chrome, and 50% of its lead, tungsten, copper, and zinc. It produced 80% of the Soviet Union's phosphate, and 15% of its gold.

Kyrgyzstan: 200,000 square kilometers; 4.26 million population, of which 52% are Kyrgyz and 22% Russian, and there are 550,000 Uzbeks.

Only 7% of Kyrgyzstan is arable. Its population, until Soviet sedentization programs in the 1930s, was nomadic. The Kyrgyz remain rural; its cities are dominated by Russians and Uzbeks. The population is divided into two great tribal federations. The population only became Islamic in the eighteenth century, and is religiously dominated by the Sufi orders.

Kyrgyzstan is the primary base of efforts to raise revolt in neighboring Xinjiang, China. However, the greatest threat to the State, appears to be the opium and heroin trade, largely grown and processed in Afghanistan, but increasingly grown and processed in Kyrgyzstan. The Osh region bordering Uzbekistan is the center of the trade.

Kyrgyzstan's economy is primarily agricultural. It also has significant uranium deposits.

Tajikistan: 140,000 square kilometers; 5.1 million population as of 1989 census, of whom 62% were Tajiks and 24% Uzbeks, and there were 388,000 Russians.

The Tajiks are ethnically Iranian, and speak Farsi, the language of Iran. They are the only non-Turkic population in the region. But, like the Turkic population of the region, and unlike the Iranians, they are Sunni rather than Shiite. Unlike their nomadic neighbors, the Tajiks and Uzbeks have been rela-

tively highly urbanized. Historically, they were the merchants and other urban dwellers who ran the various oases on the Silk Route to China.

Nonetheless, Tajikistan was the poorest republic in the former Soviet Union, with an economy based on cotton production. Since independence, it has plunged into a clan-based civil war. Competition over drug trade routes from neighboring Afghanistan, and competition over massively increasing opium cultivation in Tajikistan itself, have fueled the civil war.

Tajikistan has been much affected by the arbitrary way it has been ethnically divided. The 1884 Anglo-Russian treaty, placed a large number of Tajiks in neighboring northern Afghanistan, which remains ethnically Tajik.

During the 1920s, the Soviets arbitrarily divided up the Central Asian region into five republics, creating new problems. The region had been administered as one entity under the czars. One major effect of the division was to pit Tajiks and Uzbeks against each other. Under the new division, only 65% of all Tajiks were included within Tajikistan. The Tajiks' main urban centers, and the center of their culture, Samarkand and Bukhara, were lost to Uzbekistan, as were the remaining 35% of the Tajik people. Bukhara is also the headquarters of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, which plays a dominant role in the Caucasus today.

Turkmenistan: 490,000 square kilometers; 3.525 million population, of which 72% are Turkmens and 9% Russian, and there are 320,000 Uzbeks. The Turkmen population is the most undeveloped of all the former Soviet Central Asian republics, and was, until Soviet sedentization programs, entirely nomadic. The Turkmen population is divided into 31 tribes.

The country is the site of huge untapped natural gas deposits now targeted for exploitation by competing foreign interests.

Uzbekistan: 450,000 square kilometers; 20 million population as of 1989, of which 71% are Uzbeks, 8% Russian, and 5% Tajik, and there are 800,000 Kazaks.

The arbitrary Soviet border division of the region in the 1920s left many Uzbeks outside its borders, and over a quarter of the Tajik population within its borders. There are some 1.25 million Uzbeks in Tajikistan today, constituting 25% of Tajikistan's population. There are also over 300,000 Uzbeks in Turkmenistan, (9% of the population), and a half-million Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, (13% of the population). Moreover, there are at least 2 million Uzbeks in neighboring Afghanistan, who are under the effective rule of the ethnic Uzbek-Afghan warlord Gen. Rashid Dostum. Uzbekistan is the militarily strongest State in the region. It has also played a major role in the Tajik civil war, and has allowed Tajik rebel leaders to reside there.

A Greater Uzbek movement has surfaced in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, an ethnic Uzbek city on the border with Uzbekistan, that is a regional center of the opium trade.

Uzbekistan's economy has been dependent on cotton production, which has comprised 40% of its total agricultural production. It has large reserves of petroleum and natural gas.