

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

NEW VISION PROGRAM

**“RUSSIA, CHINA, AND THE UNITED STATES: FROM THE
GREAT GAME TO COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA?”**

SPEAKERS:

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THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

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DR. MARTHA BRILL OLCOTT: Okay, everybody, it's really a pleasure to welcome you here today. I'm Martha Brill Olcott, and I'm a Senior Associate here, at the Carnegie Endowment. It's a unique privilege to sit up here on this platform with so many dear friends and wonderful colleagues to talk about this rich and potentially controversial question of Russia, China, and the United States, moving from great game to cooperation in Central Asia.

I'm going to just briefly introduce the panelists now, altogether, and then they will speak in the order that I've introduced them. First, we will have Ambassador James Collins, who has just joined us, to our delight, here at Carnegie, as Director of the Russia-Eurasia Program.

Ambassador Collins has had a rich career serving as U.S. Ambassador to Moscow and having served as well as the ambassador who coordinated assistance with the CIS. I have had the privilege to know him most of my career.

Then we will have Dr. Sun Zhuangzhi, who is Director of the Central Asian Department of the Institute for East European, Russian, and Central Asian Studies, and Secretary General of the Center for Shanghai Cooperation Organization Studies of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. It's a privilege to have him here in Washington.

Then, Dr. Andrei Grozin, who I have the privilege of knowing from attending various meetings in Moscow, with us at the Carnegie Moscow Center. He's Head of the Department of Central Asia and Kazakhstan at the Institute for Diaspora and Integration, better known to many of us as the Institute for CIS Countries in Moscow, and he himself had a long career in Kazakhstan before he came to Moscow.

Then we will have Dr. Zhao Huasheng, from Fudan University in Shanghai, who also is a distinguished scholar in Shanghai, one of China's leading experts on Central Asia, and Director of the Center for Russian and Central Asian Studies at Fudan University.

And finally, our own Dmitri Trenin, Deputy Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, and here this year with us full-time, mostly, in Washington.

It's really a pleasure to welcome you all. We will be using both English and Russian. We have a wonderful translator, Yuri Somov, here, and so everybody will speak five to eight minutes first, and then we will have discussion. Thank you so much. Jim, the floor is yours.

JAMES F. COLLINS: Well, thank you, and let me add my greetings to everyone here. There are many, many faces in the audience with whom I've worked over the years, and in some cases, worked to, I think, our mutual benefit in Central Asia.

I wanted to begin the proceedings today by simply making one observation, and that is that the United States essentially is a newcomer to Central Asia. When I was in Moscow and the Soviet Union broke up, and we began to think about how we would address the emerging societies, new states in the Central Asian region, we quickly found out that we had no one who spoke any of the languages. We had no real experience, except some travel by a small core group of Foreign Service officers over the years, who had even been to these places, and so we were really beginning from ground zero. Our experience in Central Asia had been on the peripheries. We had, of course, had long experience in Iran, long experience in Afghanistan, long experience in the border areas of Central Asia, but never at the core, and so, from really the end of 1991 on, over the past 15+ years, the United States has had to define, almost from the beginning, both an approach to this region of the world, and how we would see our interests in this important part of the world, which has been so critical to the development of the history of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

I want to simply suggest that the United States has gone through three periods, basically, in trying to come up with an approach to the Central Asian region, and a strategy toward it, that will both reflect our interests and work effectively to build relationships with the countries and societies of that region, which increasingly play important roles in American regional, and in some cases, global interests.

The first period was the period for the United States when we became acquainted with Central Asia and its societies. Starting at the end of 1991 and through 1992, essentially I would call this the period of establishment of a relationship. The United States made certain strategic decisions at the end of 1991 regarding this region, and in some ways we were out front of most of the rest of the world. We announced, for one, that we would give diplomatic recognition to each of the states of the region. We established that relationship. We sent advanced teams to set up embassies in these states, and we began to articulate a certain set of principles that would guide us in the development of relations with these new societies. Our interests, we saw, I think, as, first of all, maintaining a degree of stability in this region.

We wanted to prevent the spread of, at that time, the rather critically dangerous Afghan conflicts. We were concerned not to see an expansion of militant Islam from Iran, taking advantage of a new situation in Central Asia, and we were interested to ensure that the future of these states would be secured as independent sovereign states in the international community. The strategy that we developed at that time was not all that complicated to understand. It was based on two or three basic premises. One was that we would accord diplomatic recognition, and urge and encourage the integration of these new states into the international community as full sovereign members of that community. The second was that we would open options, to the extent we could, for these states to establish relationships with the outside world, which had been closed to

them for the 100-plus years of their incorporation into the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

The second period I would suggest to you was, more or less, coincident with the beginning of the Clinton administration in 1993. At that time, I think, there was an effort to articulate not just these interests which I have suggested at the beginning, but also certain approaches to how the United States could conduct a policy in this region that would encourage both the objectives of the policy, and also further the development of each of these states in ways that, we felt, would lead to a longer-term stability and regional cooperation.

The basic policies from the outset of the Clinton administration, and it was at this point that I really made my first efforts personally to develop these policies, hinged on the idea that we would continue to support the territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty of each of these states. We would promote economic and political reform using the vehicles of American assistance, and encouraging, as well, assistance from our European allies to promote the idea of transition to a market economic system, and to a system of democratic institutions for governance of the new states.

We also, at this time, began to develop means of cooperation on the security side that led ultimately to the articulation of a new approach, which would welcome these states into the broader expanding orbit of the NATO alliance, in the form of the partnership for peace. This was an avenue and a vehicle by which the American and European defense establishments began to develop certain kinds of effective relations with the defense and security establishments of the new states. Finally, there was an effort to encourage and support the investment and development of economic relations between the United States and the Western European nations, and each of the states in this region. This, in particular, began to focus in the mid '90s, on the energy picture in the Caspian basin. It also was buttressed by the effort to promote or encourage the development of pipelines and access routes for the energy supplies that would give the countries involved, alternatives to just sole dependence on the Russian pipeline system.

Finally, I would say the third period is the post September 2001 period. Here, I think, our policy and our strategy has moved much more to see the Central Asian states as a critical part of America's strategic defense interests in South Asia and the Middle East, certainly no surprise that we took on the Afghan conflict. There were negotiations to establish at least a basis which would serve the support for the American military in Afghanistan, so long as that conflict is to last, and there was also a reorientation, even bureaucratically, in the American system that now puts Central Asia together, both in the defense establishment, and also in the foreign policy establishment, with the states of the Middle East and South Asia. In short, it seems to me that America began to look at this less as a part of the foreign Soviet space, and more as a part of the greater South Asia/Central Asia region, in which the Central Asian nations were going to play an increasingly important role in the protection and advancement of American interests.

We have also, in this period, continued the policy of promoting the development of multiple routes out for the energy supplies of this region through the opening of the Baku Ceyhan pipeline, efforts to expand the pipeline between Kazakhstan and the Black Sea, and discussion of other avenues, and we have, I think, with pretty modest success tried to encourage investment and development of economic relations in other areas than the energy sector.

I would like simply to close by a couple of comments, which I think are challenges for American foreign policy; they remain challenges. Throughout my tenure, and I believe since I have left, one of the efforts that was singularly, I think, unsuccessful, was the effort either to develop in the American government a truly regional approach to Central Asia, or to encourage very effectively regional cooperation between and amongst the states of that region. We, I fear, had a policy of what I used to dub “terminal bilateralism,” which essentially meant, we spent a great deal of time in developing, I think, often quite creatively, a new relationship between the United States and each of the individual states, but we did much less well at building any kind of regional framework for a policy and for a strategy.

The second element, which I think was not effectively pursued, and it is, in part, tied to the first, was that we have yet, it seems to me, to develop the capacity to discuss this region, as we do many other regions of the world, not only with the people who are in the region, but also with its neighbors, with those who are going to have an impact on it, where our activities in this region are seen as affecting the interests of others, such as the Russian, Chinese, Iranian, and other powers who have a significant role and interest in this region historically that long predate the arrival of the Americans. I think it is going to be important in the future, and I would say, if we had two priorities, in my view, about what we should be thinking about, it is to develop something of an effective regional policy toward this area that will encourage better regional cooperation, and also cooperation between the regional states and their neighbors, and I think we need to open a significant and reasonable dialogue with the outside neighbors about our shared interest in the stability and development of this region as a constructive contributor to the global economy and the global security system. So, I will leave it at that.

Thank you.

DR. OLCOTT: Thank you. Thank you very much. We now turn to Dr. Sun to give us his view on these questions.

DR. SUN ZHUANGZHI: I want to speak in Russian, because I know English very little.

(All remarks through translator.) Once again, good afternoon. It does a great honor for me to be present at this very important presentation at the Carnegie Endowment. I would like to offer a brief overview of China’s interests in Central Asia. It’s very interesting subject. However, I would like to really find out for myself whether the overall interest that I am certainly aware of, and that I can feel in this audience, is

whether it's an interest in the greater powers of our neighbors of the Central Asian region, or in Central Asian nations themselves. I'm often asked why it is that Central Asia plays such an important role for China. My answer is usually that there is a very simple reason, one that is they are our immediate neighbors. Another reason for China to be so interested in the Central Asia is that just like China, the Central Asian countries are only halfway through their transitional period. They are emerging. Yet another reason is Central Asia is a focus of sorts where the interests of many major powers intersect. I would categorize the vast number of interests that China has with respect to Central Asia between two groups, as group A, or the more important interests, and group B, the less important interests.

Group A would consist of three interests, the first being for China to maintain a good neighborly relationship with the Central Asian countries. It is very important for China to have Central Asian nations as good neighbors if it is to see a stable and secure situation in its Western provinces, that border directly on Central Asia. Another interest, of course, is that of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia. It is public knowledge that China has a vast economic interest and an expanding economic presence in Central Asia. There's also the regional interest, which ranks as a very important interest for us. The regional interest implies that China and Central Asia have common enemies, we refer to them as three forces: terrorism, extremism, and separatism, which is why China and Central Asia are working to develop a multilateral cooperation mechanisms which operate in the framework of regional international organizations, with an emphasis on both security and political, humanitarian, and economic cooperation. There's a third highly important interest, the international interest. China and Central Asia share quite a few common challenges at the international arena, and they could use one another, and rely on one another, and try to face those challenges. They could also use one another's contribution to tackle those challenges.

I personally don't believe that China's interests in Central Asia run counter to those of the United States and/or Russia. My opinion is that these three countries: China, the U.S., and Russia, will in fact be able to find opportunities for working together and cooperation in the Central Asian region. Let me explain myself; the reason I think they will be able to cooperate is because China, Russia, and the U.S. are strategic partners. It is true, there may be a difference of interest between these three countries, China, Russia, and the U.S., and some of their specific interests will vary, and perhaps even be quite different from one another. However, their fundamental, long-term interests, as far as Central Asia, are identical. From the economic perspective, of course, the views of the three major powers vis-à-vis Central Asia, are different. So, there is room for competition here, and that competition, in fact, is already taking place in such sectors such as energy, transportation, and others. However, these I would refer to, as I said earlier, as specific interests, which may not vary between the three major powers.

However, their fundamental interests, those of having a friendly and neighborly, in the case of Russia and China, relationship with the Central Asian countries, are the same. These interests that China, Russia, and the U.S. share, as far as Central Asia, are not in anybody's way. They are not impeding any other country's interest with respect to

Central Asia. Therefore, my view is that China, Russia, and the United States should not, and probably will not, become opponents, or rivals, let alone enemies, in the Central Asian region. However, the reasoning for some kind of the multilateral, multifaceted mechanism for regional cooperation to be fostered through. I believe that the Shanghai cooperation organization just fits the bill, and it can just be the mechanism for such cooperation to be fostered through.

Spasibo.

DR. ANDREI GROZIN: (All remarks through translator.) Andrei Grozin, the CIS Institute in Moscow. We are a non-governmental organization and we can express our opinion without necessarily looking out for what the Russian government agencies have to say or think about the issues. Having heard the first two presenters, I would like to say that I largely subscribe to what the former U.S. Ambassador and our Chinese colleague have said on the subject. I would just like to make a few additions to what they said.

I believe that, despite certain inherent internal contradictions inside the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, this is not its main or largest problem. I believe that the problem has to do with the difference of approach to the formation and operation of intraregional locks, and that difference of approach manifests itself especially dramatically along the lines of the East-West confrontation, which once again is making itself felt, and hence the opposition to the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the difference of view, as far as what that organization does in the West, and in Russia. I believe the mere fact that quite a few people in both Europe and the United States see the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a threat constitute a very direct proof that there is no such thing as an inter-civilization dialogue in Central Asia taking place as we speak. Given the fact that Uzbekistan joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in '06 was seen by some in the West and in the East as a sign of forthcoming confrontation between that organization and the West in general.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has already proven its serious intentions by demonstrating that all the member countries have been making allocations to build a bureaucratic official arm of that organization, and a lot is happening along those lines. Agencies and bureaucratic entities of that organization are being put in place and are quite active. More evidence of the effectiveness of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is that one very important and quite difficult challenge has been tackled successfully within the organization, and that is that border tensions between several Central Asian Countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, on the one hand, and China being the other party, have been removed with minimal residual tensions left, and with a minimal amount of effort that anyone could have thought of.

There's another important consideration as far as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and that is the mere presence in it of two major powers, two international power centers, China and Russia. The very fact that China is part of a supranational organization for the first time, actually, since the People's Republic of China came

around ever, that country is reconsidering and even adjusting its foreign policies on account of obligations that it has assumed within an international intra-government organization.

Another important characteristic, or at least something that is associated with the membership in the organization, is that virtually all member countries have in recent years, for several years in a row now, have been seen dramatic fast economic growth. There is no telling, of course, to what extent Tajikistan's, or Kazakhstan's, or Russia's, or China's, or Kyrgyzstan's membership in that organization has to do with their fast-growing economies; however, the fact is that while they are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, at the same time their economies have been growing at very fast rates.

Another characteristic of the organization that is still very appealing to both the current members and the succession countries is that all the decision making there is achieved by consensus, because there are both stronger nations among its members, such as China and Russia, and relatively weaker countries, such as Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and several others, yet all of them enjoy exactly the same voting powers and equal rights within the organization. The two outcomes are that, on the one hand, that does increase interest in that organization and potentially draws countries to that organization. However, in the longer term, it does lay the foundation for increased tension, because in the future, it may become increasingly difficult to operate that decision-making mechanism, because all countries indiscriminately have the same number of votes.

As far as immediate challenges, as far as the organization's development, I would refer to perceived difference of visions of what the organization should do in the future between the heavyweights in that organization. Russia most likely sees the future of this organization as a bastion of action against international terrorism, and something that can be used to mount greater and more resistance to international terrorism, while China may be leaning toward seeing and using that organization, to a greater extent, as a mechanism for economic cooperation between its member states. That difference of vision could present difficulties down the road.

The emphasis that China, within the PCR, within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization places on the establishment of free trade zones between the member countries has caused concern and questions in other member countries, such as Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. These three may be quite viable economically and may be successful, but they are not being as successful as China is. Moscow, Astana, and Tashkent have posed a number of questions as to whether or not free trade zones and economic cooperation if they established along the lines that the PRC suggests can, in effect, be fair and equitable between those countries. I believe that, in the foreseeable future this difference of approach and vision whether to use the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to boost the economies of the member states, or to see it as a security mechanism, something that strengthens protection against international terrorism. While there are legitimate differences, there is still a balance achieved within the organization between these two, and while it may later on become an issue, I believe that for the next

few years this balance will prevail, and there's not really a chasm inside the organization based on these two different visions.

DR. OLCOTT: We now turn to Dr. Zhao.

DR. ZHAO HUASHENG: Thank you very much. To be fair, though my English is not very good, but since it's in the United States, I try English. If I am difficult, I speak in Russian. If I still difficult, I will speak in Chinese. (Laughter.)

Now I'd like for several minutes to make several points on the talk of Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia. The first point is about the present state of relations between China and Russia and United States in Central Asia. In my opinion, I think the relations between China, Russia, and United States in Central Asia at present time is in a state of ambiguity, not work. It is ambiguous relations. Why? Because there no strategic understanding between them reached. I mean, if it takes triangular relations, not between China and Russia – bilateral relations. There is no cooperation mechanism worked out and no explicit, clear-cut policy of each power towards the other – towards us two powers work out, and there are some elements of cooperation, some elements of competition, but not very – no general clarification. So that is the first point.

The second point, I think the relations of the third-world powers in Central Asia now in a crossroads. Why? That's because I think now is – present time is a period for strategic calculations and judgment of each great powers for our powers, and that means that their choices for the triangular relations and there should be different scenarios, options. So, this is period of – (unintelligible). And maybe this period could last for some time to come, but I don't know how long it will last.

The third point is about the general tendency of relations between China, Russia and the United States in Central Asia. Maybe I am not right, I might be wrong, but according to my personal observation, I think the general tendency of the relations of the three great powers in recent years goes along negative directions. More and more doubts and distrust have been arising between them, especially since the – (unintelligible) – reason in July 2005, in which declare – or ask the United States to put a deadline of withdrawal they say from Central Asia, and accept Iran as a – (unintelligible) – state. Since then especially, doubts of the United States toward the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, towards Russia and China, I think increased, and maybe in next sometime there should be some measures in firm work of, for example, mutually exercise are scheduled in this year, and maybe there will be a dialogue between China and Russia and India, and all these measures I think may cause more doubt in United States.

So, the general tendency in recent years I think is negative. The reasons – I think there are many reasons. First, they have occupied – the powers occupy different geopolitical positions. Their geopolitical positions are different for these three great powers. So they have different interests, different concerns, and there is also an ideological difference, and different approaches to the original affairs. For example, China prefers the stability in Central Asia than the political or democratic reform of the

region, and China believes that the stability serves as a precondition for political reform, but maybe I am wrong. The United States prefers democratic political reform over the stability and believes that the political reform – (unintelligible) – is a real guarantee of stability. In other words, I think China and Russia are interested in maintaining the status quo in Central Asia, but the United States more interested in making changes.

There is another reason: the general relations between the great powers. For example, all we know that the Russian-American relations in recent years not getting increased, but instead of increasing is getting not worse but more and more in code, I think, and that condition, I think, is almost impossible to expect that their relations in Central Asia will be good. So, the general tendency is not promising. That is one point.

Next point is the trend of basic position towards the relations between the three powers, but I can't speak on behalf of the government; what I say is just my personal observation and opinion. I believe China doesn't like the – (unintelligible) – game repeat itself in Central Asia. This is one. And then, I think in China, interest in foreign conflict with other powers in that region. China has an interest, provisions and opinions about behavior of other great powers in Central Asia, but I think that China likes to make it serious prevalence; for example, make the difference between China and the United States a different problem between the relations of people – of China and the United States. That means China doesn't like to dramatize the difference.

Next, China is very careful in the triangular cooperation in Central Asia. I think no clear policy of China in this problem. So, China is very careful. It is understandable. Between the United States, I think China takes Russia as partner, but takes the United States as an enemy, not partner. In other words, China maybe – China think – if she takes the United States in Central Asia as a friend or competitor.

The last point, I think the relations between the three great powers in Central Asia have impact on the general structure of configuration of great powers, both on the regional and world level.

Thank you very much.

DR. OLCOTT: Thank you very much.

And now, Dima – Dmitri, it's yours to conclude. (Laughter.)

DR. DMITRI TRENIN: Martha gave me a very easy task. She actually provided us with questions at the outset, which I will try to address.

There are four points. The first point, with regard to the national interest and the strategies, I think that talking about Russia, Russia's position could be best described as being post-imperial, and I think it's an important distinction from being imperial, or neo-imperial. The focus is very much on Russia itself. The game of integration is over, and it is primarily about expansion. It is primarily about Russia projecting and protecting its

specific interests, whether they are economic, security, humanitarian, or political. In other words, Russia is acting far less like the Russia we've known it, and a bit more like some Western countries. This is my first point.

My second point would be with regard to the great game, and Martha's question was whether – has a new great game taken shape? My response to that question would be that there are outward similarities, but the chief difference – and I think I will stress this at the end as well – the chief difference between what's happening now and what happened in the 19th century, is that the countries in the region that are independent countries, and that they are the deciders in the final count, and I think that this factor will continue to play a role, and this role will continue to grow.

Of course, there is commercial competition, Caspian, oil and gas. There are strategic tensions, the SCO, the US bases, and yet, in my view, this is not enough for a full-blown rivalry. I am always struck when my colleagues back home get worked up over Western attitudes toward, say, the SCO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. I only see headlines about the SCO as being a NATO of the East in the Russian media. I do not see that in the West. It's very interesting. If people in the West were afraid of that, they would, I think, be putting that on the front page. Now, it gets to the front page, but that's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* in Moscow.

My third point would be that the question was, again, is there more competition or more cooperation to be expected? As far as competition is concerned, I think it's easy. There are important interests that do not match, and we talked about those things, and Jim talked about the pipelines, and Andrei talked about Russia as a power center and then many other things he said, and Huasheng talked about China seeing Russia as a partner, but not the United States, all these things that will be there, they will be there. That's kind of easy. The more interesting thing is cooperation, because we do have a number of interests that are common, and we agree about the first principles, but we have very different perceptions, and we have very different policies, and on such issues where we seem to have a lot of common ground in principle, as the drugs out of Afghanistan, or Afghanistan itself, or regional stability, or account of terrorism, we seem to have very different perceptions, in fact very different policies, and the lingering suspicions that exist have preempted the meeting of the minds. I would also strengthen what Andrei was talking about with regard to Russia-China; one should not take everything for granted.

The SCO faces an important hour of truth in the future. Otherwise it will be nice bureaucratic structures, with little else. People like bureaucratic structures; they're difficult to build down. They're easier to build up, difficult to build down. There are serious – well, not serious, but real differences in interest, which is normal between two big countries.

Let me highlight what Dr. Sun was saying. I think it's very important message that he was sending this afternoon. There is a case that can be built in favor of trilateral collaboration between the United States, Russia, and China, with regard to Central Asia. There are different ways of doing that – and let me, since it's fairly late, let me jokingly

propose to you a series of steps that could ameliorate the situation. Andrei talked about Russia and China being at loggerheads about what the SCO should be doing, right? So why don't China and Russia agree that Russia takes the lead in security matters and China takes the lead in economic matters, and forget that they collaborate in the SCO. Having done that, and having established that rapport, Russia would jointly with China open up to the United States and invite them to be an observer on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, so that it's not perceived as a threat, which it isn't, and the United States – Jim – and the United States uses its considerable influence with its NATO allies, and NATO establishes a relationship to be cherished Russian collective security treaty organization, which is about Russian security protection, or Russian security projection into Central Asia. Well, this is, of course, a joke, more or less. But I think the elements of this could be interesting. It's a way of balancing the various interests of three very important players.

But let me conclude on the note which I already have highlighted. Central Asia is primarily about the countries of the region. It's not about Russia or America or China. Eventually, Central Asia – this was actually Martha's last question, the political social dynamic within Central Asia.

DR. OLCOTT: (Cross talk.)

DR. TRENIN: Right. Now, those are extremely useful. The dynamic of Central Asia will depend on Central Asian countries and societies themselves. Which way Kazakhstan will go will depend on Kazakhstan. Same will be true of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. It's up to them, to their governments, to their elites, and finally, to their societies. It's up to them, and that's, I think, the guarantee that the great game will not happen.

DR. OLCOTT: Thank you. We're going to turn to the audience for questions, and, as we turn, I would like to give – we have guests from the other SCO countries here with us today, and can I just introduce you briefly? And any of you want to speak or ask questions first, just let me introduce the five of you who have come. (Chuckles.) We have Nikolay Kuzmin from Kazakhstan, who has joined us today. We have three delightful guests from Tajikistan. We have Suhrob Sharipov, Igor Sattarov, and Ravshan Umarova in the first row. And we have Shairbek Juraev, who has come from Kyrgyzstan, and we have Rafik Saifulin, who has come from Uzbekistan, and Arkady Dubnov and Alexey Malashenko, who have come from Moscow, just because they're here in the first two rows for – and any of you that want to start by asking questions – I think, Nikolay, did you have a question? And we have to wait for a microphone. If there is anybody who is sitting outside the room and has questions, please come into the room.

NIKOLAY KUZMIN: I would like to invite those who represent Central Asian states to meet together for a roundtable somewhere, I don't know, and to discuss the problem, their national interests of Central Asian countries in the United States. Are we competitors or partners? And then I would like to make a quick mark regarding Shanghai Cooperation Organization. What did you – (unintelligible) – and what is it now?

Let me compare this organization with another one, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Organization. China, Russia and United States all are members of this organization. So, the biggest achievement of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Organization are three big documents: first, so-called Bogor Goals. The goals are building free trade zone in this region, not yet achieved. The second document, so-called Pusan Roadmap to Bogor Goals, not yet achieved. And the latest one, Hanoi Action Plan for Pusan roadmap to Bogor Goals. I don't know the names of the documents signed in SCO. Their names are different, but the essence is the same, isn't it? Three documents – sounds different, but the content is the same.

DR. OLCOTT: Does anybody want to –

Q: Yeah, is true?

(Cross talk.)

DR. OLCOTT: I think we will go on to the next question. Shairbek?

SHAIRBEK JURAEV: Thank you. On the point Dr. Trenin made that indeed there are Central Asian states themselves, first of all, before we talk about Central Asian – interests in Central Asia of Russia, China, and U.S., but he said that the fact that there are Central Asian decision makers there is a guarantee that the new great game doesn't happen, but it seems that it is exactly the vice versa; the fact that there are decision-makers there is a guarantee that the great game or great game type process will continue. One thing that Central Asia has a feature is that it doesn't have a sort of identity today, and we know that there are no effective functioning political structures, political institutions there, and the domestic politics remain very unpredictable, which means while also culturally Central Asia remains kind of a heterogeneous region with Islamic, Russian, and of course liberal Western incorporated values all present, which means that for regional approach, it would be difficult.

And one question would be to Ambassador Collins: What does the regional approach mean for the United States? We saw the European Union's regional approach, which basically failed. Of course, that might be due to EU's lack of policy itself, but the difference between Central Asian countries, their politicians, personification of politics, and cultural differences, also play a great role. In that sense, I'm not sure what would be the regional approach of the United States within the bigger Central Asia, but still, that's a big question.

DR. TRENIN: I think what you have in mind is a not so great game. Now, that may happen. I didn't say it will not happen, but the great game, meaning the big ones fighting over the nations in the region, that is not going to happen.

MR. COLLINS: I think that I would approach it pretty much as sort of an American pragmatist. I've never had great faith in developing grand schemes and great

umbrellas. What I do think can be done, however, is to develop very practical solutions to real problems that exist among your countries: water sharing, transport, narcotics trafficking. These are real issues that affect the life of your citizens which none of your countries can solve alone, and it seems to me that we in the United States did mighty little to make much progress in encouraging any approaches to these issues. I think it's too bad, in many ways, that other than a few pipelines and so forth, we haven't done a good deal more to encourage regional solutions to very practical problems. Out of that, perhaps, you then get greater political cooperation, greater social cooperation, and so forth, but fundamentally, I would simply take the issue of water. I can think of no more critical issue to Central Asia than finding solutions to the issues of water use, and yet, so far as I am aware, there is mighty little being accomplished on this, and I think we could've played a role, and can play a role, in encouraging and addressing such issues.

Q: Thank You. Andrei Piontkovsky, Hudson Institute Visiting Fellow. I was struck that distinguished panelists during one hour discussion didn't mention once Afghanistan war, discussing security organization. It is the most hot security issue in this region. Only Dr. Sun implicitly addressed it – (unintelligible) – CCO demanding to withdraw of NATO bases from Central Asia, demanding the exact date of this withdrawal. My question, first of all to my Russian colleague, to Dr. Trenin and to Dr. Grozin, why are they seeking the liquidation of NATO bases, undermining evidently the NATO operation in Afghanistan? Are they interested in NATO defeat in Afghanistan? Are they taking it by Islamic radicals and expansion them in Central Asia? Does it correspond to Russian national and security issues?

DR. GROZIN: For the time being, yes, it is in sync with Russia's national interests. (Laughter.)

DR. TRENIN: Well, as Dr. Grozin said at the very beginning, his view does not necessarily correspond to the view of the Russian government – (laughter) – and I hope that's true.

Now, clearly, the one thing – and Andrei Piontkovsky is absolutely right when he says that basically Afghanistan is the big elephant in this room when we talk about security. It's becoming a more and more serious issue, Afghanistan, and if you look at the more global picture, if you add Iraq, if you add some other things and their repercussions, it's getting more and more serious. So I think that over time, the importance of what to do with or about Afghanistan will probably stimulate more collaboration than there has been so far between the countries involved, also between the United States and Russia. It's clearly not in the Russian interest that a radical regime takes over Afghanistan once again and the stability in Central Asia becomes threatened as a result. At least that's – I think that's the policy view that the Russian elite still holds – the Russian establishment still holds. It's one thing to tussle over bases in this or that country, but when push comes to shove, it's a different ball game.

So, I think that for the time being, Russia would be watching whatever is happening in Afghanistan, but clearly, if the situation is deteriorating, then you face a

choice. You either try to reach agreement with the Taliban, which is not unthinkable, or you turn to the United States and NATO countries, and other countries, and China, and discuss what you do about all that. So I think that's the frame very much for the future, for the foreseeable, maybe near future.

(Cross talk.)

DR. OLCOTT: Yeah, it's coming, it's coming – and then Rafik.

Q: Well, I think from my point of view there might be one other –

DR. OLCOTT: Please just say who you are so we know.

Q: Oh. I'm Wesley Irwin with the Executive Intelligence Review. From my point of view, there might be one other big elephant in the room, which is that in the last few days, the Chinese have blown up one of their own satellites. Back in 1983, President Ronald Reagan proposed what he called the Strategic Defense Initiative to the Soviet Union. It was rejected. The original idea was for the United States to work with the Soviet Union in discovering new scientific principles, which then could be used for mutual defense to get rid of the policy of mutual and assured destruction. Do the panelists think that the time has come to open up discussions for something like the Strategic Defense Initiative, with the discovery of new scientific principles to end the policy of mutually assured destruction?

DR. OLCOTT: Does anybody have anything they want to say? I think – (cross talk.). I know, I know, that's why. Does anyone have anything to add because this is really pretty far from where we are and I think we'll move on. This is a group essentially of Russian specialists.

Rafik. We need the mike. Rafik, Rafik, it's coming this way.

Q: My name is Rafik Saifulin. I am from Uzbekistan. Of course I have tomorrow any possibility to express some ideas.

DR. OLCOTT: Yeah, it's a different – (cross talk) – but you should say whatever you want to say. This is a big public meeting.

Q: Let me make only a few remarks and maybe some comments.

DR. OLCOTT: That's what we want, in fact.

Q: Yes. First of all, I would like to say that maybe I am wrong, but – I am from Uzbekistan. (Laughter.) Mr. Grozin, maybe – (unintelligible) – Uzbekistan joined to CRS last year, Shanghai Organization. Uzbekistan joined it some years before. But I think when we spoke too much about the role of Shanghai Organization, but the frame of this discussion is from great game to where? Or is the great game finished or no? My

personal point of view – (unintelligible) – isn't finished, of course, but there are new elements of this great game. And of course the role of Shanghai Organization is really important. In fact, it is true that we are paying a lot of attention for this organization, but I think that there are many, and other, really decisive factors which are making influence on situation in Central Asia.

Of course, United States, Russia, China, big powers, and we are feeling the influence in our region, in Uzbekistan particularly, but I think there are some new players, and they are becoming much more active and active, and we have – for example, one example: Japanese contribution to, for example, Uzbek economy much more than – let my American friends excuse me – (laughter) – than the United States, for example. It's only one short example. Such kind of examples we can find in other spheres: in education, culture, ideological influence, et cetera.

One thing – I thought – you mentioned, Your Excellency, about the local problems in region: water, sharing – (unintelligible) – et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, and of course it's very important – (unintelligible) – to say it's Russia, the same China can do to improve the situation, but I'm not sure that under the umbrella of one of them – or all of them – all these problems can be resolved.

Let me take one, two minutes and remember an old Uzbek anecdote. (Chuckles) – anecdote. You know, Hoja Nasruddin. One day he worked together with his wife and saw two men who beat each other, and one of them said, Hoja, please tell – and explained the situation. He said, you are right. He ran, was really happy: Hoja Nasruddin recognized me like a winner. Second guy said, no, it was wrong. I am right. Hoja listened and he said, yes, you are right. Go. His wife listens, says, Hoja, are you crazy? You told both of them, said that you are right. He said, you are right also. (Laughter.) I am very afraid if such kind of place of big game, of second time or third time begin in our region, we will try to play the role of judge. I am not sure that any kind of nice positive result will be achieved very soon.

I am sorry I took your time, but tomorrow we can continue discussion on any of these. Thank you.

DR. OLCOTT: Wayne, and then Igor, and then Arkady.

Q: Thank you. Wayne Merry, American Foreign Policy Council. In his remarks, Ambassador Collins pointed the United States government, now, in both its defense and foreign affairs establishments, treats the countries of Central Asia, or what I might call central Central Asia, in conjunction with its southern neighbors, and yet all the discussion here today, and indeed, I think, all the discussion in Washington within my memory, is all about the relationship of those countries with their eastern and western neighbors, which is to say China and Russia. This either implies the United States government has made a major blunder in bureaucratic reorganization that does not reflect the probable future of this region, or the United States government is doing something fiendishly clever in order to rearrange the future of this region, or that the discussion is somehow

incomplete. And I put it to you that it's probably the third, that I've heard almost no discussion of India, Pakistan, Iran or Turkey in this discussion, and I put it to you that certainly, whether you're talking about ethnicity or history or culture or traditions or proximity to the world ocean economic future, that that is incomplete. To talk about these countries without a discussion of their southern perimeter is somehow incomplete. And I'm wondering if any of the panelists would like to address that southern dimension.

DR. OLCOTT: Actually, I'm going to address it since I've been quiet. And actually, our purpose really was not to assume that this was a complete picture of the global geopolitics of Central Asia. The goal, really, of the panel was to talk about, can potential tensions between U.S., Russia and China over Central Asia be easily managed? So, as Dima said – I mean, we're not excluding the Central Asians from the discussion. This isn't a discussion on whether these three countries will decide the fate of Central Asia; it's really a discussion, or at least the intent was a discussion on managing tensions between the U.S., China and Russia and not have Central Asia become a source of tensions between these countries, trying to move to an environment in which, as Dr. Sun said, we try to recognize what's common, but also at the same time realizing, as Andrei said, that there are some enormous differences of approach that are going to be in the area.

So it's not that the southern question isn't important. It's just like, the same thing with the Star Wars; it just wasn't part of what the purpose of the panel was. I mean, it's not to diminish the importance at all. And I'm going to go to Igor Zevelev's question.

Q: Thank you. I am Igor Zevelev, RIA Novosti Russian News and Information Agency. Do you see any fundamental differences between the U.S., Russian, and Chinese perceptions of the international terrorism, the strategies to combat it? And if yes, how do you think this may affect the three powers cooperation and competition in the region of Central Asia? Thank you.

DR. OLCOTT: Does anyone – (off mike) – take a stab.

DR. HUASHENG: One of the most difficult questions, or difficult problems, is definition of the term of "terrorism." There are a lot of terms or explanations about its answer. There's more than one hundred terms or explanations theoretically. But in practice, I think there's also some difference, and I think the difference is really very serious. Theoretically, where the terrorist is very clear for all of us, but in practice, every country, everybody takes that terrorist in a different way. So that's my principal opinion.

DR. OLCOTT: Does anybody else want to take it?

DR. TRENIN: Well, it's a highly interesting and highly important question, Igor, as we all know. I think that the answer to the question, if you look empirically, depends on who hits you. Second, who hits your allies? Who hits your interests? There's a descending order of priorities of dealing with various groups of people, and some people,

some groups classified as terrorists by one country will not necessarily be seen as a high priority in another country.

I think we have enough agreement among the three countries that al Qaeda is a big problem should it resurface in Afghanistan, that anyone tied to al Qaeda is a big problem, that the Taliban would be a big problem should it happen, and Pakistan was mentioned when Pakistan – God forbid if something starts to happen out there. That would be a huge, huge, huge thing, and we will all be talking about it. We're not talking about that at all, for very good reasons, maybe publicly, but that's a very important issue.

So if something happens down there, that will affect the situation in the region, and I would say the relations among the three powers very dramatically. But I would also add that, unfortunately, but unavoidably, terrorism has become a label that you stick on people who you perceive to be your opponents – or if not terrorists, then terrorists' helpers. And that complicates things enormously. If you have this extended concept of terrorism applied to essentially an internal political situation and then you use that concept in relations with some of your allies, some of the foreign countries, then the whole idea of standing up to terrorism becomes emasculated, actually perverted. And that is a huge obstacle to real collaboration against terrorism.

DR. GROZIN: (Through translator.) I think that the term and concept of terrorism, is as ideologically tainted as it can be. There isn't really much one can do to make it more ideological than it already has become. The point that I would like to make is that all of this just makes things a lot more difficult. The term and the methods employed by terrorism to perpetrate terrorism are seen so differently, and the difference can be so dramatic that literally the same phenomenon, the same occurrence can be viewed, depending on whose perspective is employed, as two completely different things.

I think a case in point to demonstrate this confusion is that for the last four or five years, the multiple military exercises that have been held under the auspices of NATO and the Shanghai Corporation Organization and others, where, of course, major military capabilities have been used and trained, such as large naval units, aviation and others – all of these war games have actually been conducted under the premise of combating terrorism. So what we have, in fact, is participants engaging in military exercises and effectively preparing for war to defend themselves, yet it is done under – well, the concept is employed of preparing to fight terrorism, and nothing could be more misleading.

Q: Thank you. Let me ask my question in Russian.

(Through translator.) I will ask my question in Russian, with your permission. My colleague, Andrei Grozin, has mentioned that one of the appealing characteristics of the Shanghai Corporation Organization is that its decision making is strictly by consensus. I have personally worked at all of the SCO summits, starting in 1996. And unless I'm mistaken, over the last 10 or 11 years, there have only been two decisions made by the Shanghai Corporation Organization that were consensus-driven decisions

and that actually effectively changed the perception of the membership of the organization with respect to the outside players. One of them dealt with ensuring security, and the other one had to do with promoting economic cooperation.

The first one was made, if memory serves me right, a couple of years ago at the SCO summit in Astana, where the members – where the organization suggested that the United States, without saying as much but was very obvious from the suggestion it was targeted to make up its mind as far as the duration of its military presence and military bases operation in the Central Asian region.

And one thing that was caused by the repeal made by the summit, and I'm sure everybody remembers that, was that the U.S. withdrew its military base from Uzbekistan. And the other decision was, in fact, a suggestion by China that was supported by all the organization members to allocate just under a billion dollars, something to the tune of \$900 million, to foster economic corporation and trade in the region. This having been said, I have one comment and one question.

I have a comment for all the panelists and a question for our Chinese colleagues. The comment is that – the comment is that if the appeal that was issued two years ago at Astana to set a deadline for withdrawing foreign military bases from the territories – from the region is still relevant. That, in fact, could signify that there is a potential for cooperation in the security area in the region between the three major players involved because basically what it would say is that China and Russia, being the leaders of the Shanghai Corporation Organization community, insisting that there should be a deadline for withdrawing military bases, and if the U.S. was amenable to entertaining that concept, that in itself would signify that there is room for cooperation, for triangular cooperation in the security area in the region.

And my question for the Chinese panelists is this: I did mention the \$950 million worth of allocation proposed by China to foster economic cooperation and trade, and as of now in the Central Asian region, Tajikistan is pretty much the only recipient of those funds. Do our Chinese panelists think that, if all goes well, Tajikistan could actually become a poster country for economic cooperation in the region between the major outside players, because Russia, China and the U.S. are the three major outside players who are currently investing in Tajikistan, and as a matter of fact, Iran is also investing certain funds in Tajikistan. So the question is, this being the case, if it is a success story, could this be an example of economic cooperation in the region between major outside players?

DR. ZHUANGZHI: (Through translator.) I'd like to say that this is a very important – I'd like to say that the question is very important, yet I think it could be a little bit more accurate. Maybe it needs some rewording.

The CSO is a newcomer as an international organization, and by that token, I actually think it represents a new type of international organization. It's not your traditional, usual international organization where all the member countries either want

the organization to come out as a military alliance or as an economic entity. What the CSO member countries are trying to achieve – what the member countries of this organization want the organization to help them achieve is to tackle their domestic – their respective domestic issues and intraregional issues. And all the member countries in the CSO, including China, are thinking about the extent to which this organization may, in fact, contribute to its member countries' economic development. And by that token, it's not surprising, and my colleagues aptly mentioned it, that every member of that organization has its own vision and own concept of what the organization should be focusing on.

I believe that what's happening in the CSO is perfectly legitimate growing pains, if you will, kind of period, an early period in the life of this organization, and to answer the question that has to do with the presumed relevance of the call for foreign military bases to be withdrawn from the region, I think that the answer will largely depend on what the actual situation is going to be like in Afghanistan. And here is how we see the situation. China, Russia and the Central Asian countries would like to make a contribution to achieving and securing peace in Afghanistan. It is not that they are opposed to the United States as far as Afghanistan.

It is true that Tajikistan – I'm dealing now with the second comment – it's true that Tajikistan is the single-largest recipient of the funds; however, it is not the only partner. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are also on the receiving end of those funds. It all depends on – it varies by the specific project. And the reason why Tajikistan is actually the single-largest recipient of such funds is because projects that it has proposed has been worked through better than those suggested by other countries. China is committed to continuing this kind of cooperation within the SCO format, both in terms of providing lending and other formats of economic assistance.

DR. OLCOTT: Okay, this is what I'm going to do, because we're running out of time. I'm going to ask the three people who have questions – there's a question here, then there's Wayne and then there's Ambassador Morel – to speak all at the same time, one after another, and then I'm going to give each of the panelists a chance to respond to everything that has been said. So, start with you – you need a microphone – and to say who you are. Yeah, you need a microphone; it's coming. And then Wayne, and then Ambassador Morel has the last word from the audience, and then the five panelists get to respond.

Q: My name is Michelle. I'm with the LaRouche Political Action Committee. I can make my question really quick. First of all, the United States we're dealing with, today, being led by Bush and Cheney, is pursuing an aggressive war policy with Iran. It's been ongoing with Afghanistan, and this is being further accelerated by the fact that the U.S. economy is in a breakdown crisis. The dollar is on the verge of collapse. As long as that is the reality, is it really possible to have any fundamental change in really any region?

DR. OLCOTT: Thank you. Wayne?

Q: Yeah, thanks. Very quickly. Dmitri, picking up on your two excellent points, first we've got to look to the Central Asians as players in themselves, and leading to your conclusion, that that's why we won't have a great game, can't we have a pretty good game though? (Laughter.) And what I mean is that because of the Central Asians as players on their own, can't you make an argument that it's in their interests, at times, to encourage cooperation from the big three? Jim, I'm going back – you've had more experience than most in the room here with that game in the Middle East, horn of Africa, whatever – and that some of the most successful Central Asian leaders have recognized that and have played that game.

DR. OLCOTT: Ambassador Morel, the microphone is right behind you. Right there.

AMBASSADOR MOREL: I am the European Union Special Representative for Central Asia, in some way a foreigner in this triangle, but meeting friends again, especially Ambassador Collins after our Moscow years. It has been said that you had not been successful in Central Asia. Let me just say that that's not the end of the story, that precisely there is full perception of the misgivings and limitations, but the need for a new step. I will have opportunity to expand on that in the coming days. This is not the question for tonight.

On this question of corporation and so on, I think that there is, and I would stress, an option for a better game to come back to the last observation, that is on the field of drugs. This has been mentioned several times, but I don't think it has been stressed enough as one of the gravest things in the region. The Chinese government likes to mention the three evils, which were recalled terrorism, extremism, and separatism. I would argue, and I would stress more and more, that there is a fourth evil, which is drugs – drugs and corruption and what comes with it. It is corrupting the whole area, corrupting Afghanistan, that is undoing what is tried by presence of forces and stabilization efforts, indeed – and it's easy to say that it's connected with these operations. I think it's completely wrong. If drug economy in Afghanistan is growing, it's connected with 25 years of war and poverty and confrontation and lack and disruption of normal social and economic activity – that's the basic reason – it will take a lot of time. It's corrupting Central Asia in a way which is drawing both through increase of trade, plus 60 percent on four-year to '06 compared to '05, but also with the population, because drug use is growing in Central Asian republics and they are calling for help, and that it's corrupting the end part of this process which is, of course, Russia and the rest of Europe.

So there is a feel for a cooperation, and I would argue that up to now, things have been done, but in a limited way. It's not adapted to the degree of the trade which is going on. We cannot speak any more about traffic. It's just trade connected with half of the economy of Afghanistan, and when you look at the fact that Afghanistan – not being a chemical country – is importing de facto 10,000 tons on a yearly basis to produce heroin

and becoming the world's center for heroin production, it means just well-organized trade in peril, and nobody really cares or deals with that unless with limited actions.

Dr. Sun spoke about the lack of mature organization – there is one, which is UNODC, working well – and all the three countries, three powers, are working with UNODC, but I think we have lots, and quite a change to come to in order to effectively, in the framework which has been stressed by UNODC, which is called Carric – C-A-R-R-I-C – that adds original framework for fighting drugs up to the level of the actual threat. If you look at all the tensions in the region, it's probably the most growing threats right now on a yearly base change. Thank you.

DR. OLCOTT: Does anybody have anything they want to add, on the panel? (Cross talk.) Yes, you do. We can start – you want to do it backwards?

DR. TRENIN: Well I would say the situation is getting more serious in terms of drugs, in terms of Afghanistan, writ large. What brings together the United States, China and Russia is more fundamental than the differences that exist among the three. So I would very much wish to strengthen that, and I think that we need to highlight, when we speak out, when we talk about these issues, the importance of getting some cooperation reenergized. Drugs is a perfect thing; it's not easy. This is clearly linked to lots of things in Afghanistan domestically, domestic stability in Afghanistan – it's lots and lots and lots of things – and also Central Asia and Russia are linked to that. But I think that we need to become more serious and try to get a few things done.

And to Wayne's observation, Wayne, I think that countries in the region would wish to have more competition between and among the Americans, the Chinese and the Russians, but I wonder whether they want more confrontation, and I think that's where the line is. They can thrive in competition, but they will not thrive in confrontation.

DR. HUASHENG: I think all I can say is that China, Russia, the United States and European Union and other great powers help cooperate. I think this is more proper region and more proper - easier. It's much easier today in Afghanistan than in Central Asia, and the statement or declarations made by – (unintelligible) – in July 2005 doesn't mean that this area interests in the fate of NATO or the United States in Afghanistan. I don't think so, and I think that the fear in our declaring was motivated by quite different reasons we didn't explain here. That's my opinion.

DR. GROZIN: (Through translator.) There is, of course, the old Russian saying that it's far better to be wealthy and healthy rather than sick and poor. And it would just be pretty much an ideal situation if the three major players, meaning Russia, China and the United States, could co-function and cooperate in the Central Asian region and just about everywhere else. However, I think that the experience of their relationship or lack thereof in this region actually paints an entirely different picture, and unfortunately, it is not what is happening there.

It is obvious that all the three players, as far as this region, are pursuing their narrowly understood and perceived national interests, which is not to say that the situation could not turn around – it could – but that would take a common enemy, an overarching common enemy, something like a second edition of al Qaeda or something like that, which, fortunately is not happening, and there is no sign of that.

Barring the emergence of such a powerful enemy that would bring the three players together, they will continue to drift farther and farther apart, which is what they have been doing, especially against the background of the competition for the control of the region's energy resources.

When Mr. Fox, who is in charge of the CIS with the Security Council – during his – (cross talk) – was visiting with us in Beijing, he asked me what China's interests in Central Asia were. And after a through discussion of our interests there – our potential interests there – we pretty much were unable to pinpoint any considerable differences, let alone contradictions, between China's interests vis-à-vis Central Asia and those of the United States.

As an expert on the CIS, I don't really think a dialogue like what we're discussing now between powers should necessarily be difficult, and why would it be difficult? After all, there has been a lot of that dialogue already happening at the expert level for quite some time, so all it would take is just to bring it from the level of expert discussions to those of politicians.

MR. COLLINS: I would like to start by suggesting that Ambassador Morel, really, I think in my view highlights both the dangers and the opportunities in this region, for all of the major outside players. Where we've come today is, in fact, to – I would say – in some sense have a great success for the early American hopes for this region. We have independent states; they are working as members of the international community; they have developed their own economies; and they are, indeed, more and more integrated into the global economic system and regional security system.

However, these are fragile states for the most part. The institutions are new. The societies are under great pressures. And what's the great challenge, as I see it, at this point for these nations and those who are interested in them is unfortunately coming from forces that are not really addressable by individual states or by anything but a reasonably accomplished coordinated effort by those states in turn. So whether it's drugs, the terrorist or fundamentalist Islamic militant threat, organized crime, et cetera, these are the dangers to these societies in many ways, and at the same time so far, it seems to me, whether it's Shanghai cooperation agreement or the European cooperation instruments, none of us have really found the way to bring the Central Asians together in an effective way to address them, and it seems to me that's the real challenge. That's the challenge in front of the three major players we have discussed today, but it's also the challenge in front of each and every one of those individual states in Central Asia. And so I would only hope that we will end up finding a way to discuss some of these very practical problems in a more constructive way than has been the case up to now.

DR. OLCOTT: I really want to thank everybody for coming today. Some of the people have traveled enormous distances to participate, and I think that – I just really thank you all for coming. I thank our translator for doing a difficult job, and I really hope that this is the beginning of a continued discussion of these problems, both on the grand scale and on the smaller scale, as Ambassador Morel pointed to us, that the question of drugs, I agree, is the most devastating, and the kind of scale of engagement has really still been largely lacking on that question, the kind of scale to speak to it. I began today by answering questions about the U.S. foreign aid budget for next year, and there's only a \$40 million increase in Afghan-related drug combating. In that kind of scale, we're going to have unfortunately lots to keep meeting about, and the people in the region will continue to pay a very high price, not the least of whom are the people of Afghanistan. Thank you all for coming today. We really appreciate it.

(Applause.)

(END)