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Introduction to Comparative Politics

Topics to be covered in the Final Exam

- States
- Democracy – UK
- Democratic Institutions - USA
- AIDs – Germany
- Autocratic regimes - Russia
- Middle East
- Political Violence and Terrorism
- State Failure
- Protest and Revolution – Iran
- Modernization Theory – China
- Developmental State – Japan
- Former Soviet Union
- Central Asia
- Globalization

Kazakhstan at a Crossroads

- **Main idea:**
- **If Kazakhstan does not pursue a political liberalization agenda** (especially the dispersion of elite controls over the political system and the institutionalization of power), **then its modernization campaign will likely fall at.**
- **Russia and China** serve to support the existing authoritarian regimes.
- **The Western interests** in Central Asia tend to focus on national security concerns and commercial interests

Kazakhstan at a Crossroads

- **“Multivectorism”** - friendly foreign policy that seeks to maintain productive relations with all other states and strategically balance the competing interests of the great powers.
- Nazarbayev promises ordinary citizens stability and prosperity, but the economy has not recovered from 2014 devaluation + economic inequalities, YET there is domestic tranquility and not much public criticism
- By utilizing state resources to his own advantage, portraying himself as a political centrist, sparingly utilizing coercion, and setting the tone for all political discussions, Nazarbayev essentially rules as a **“soft authoritarian.”**

Kazakhstan at a Crossroads

- The word “**democracy**” does not appear within any of the one hundred steps, despite the fact that the h section calls for “establishing an accountable state.”
- The government needs to realize that to construct a diversified economy that is grounded in sound legal principles, guided by a competent and independent bureaucratic corps, and attractive to investors, it needs to disperse and institutionalize power.

Kazakhstan at a Crossroads

- **Political Liberalization Agenda (3 main issues):**
- 1. Russia and China must not perceive the dispersion and institutionalization of power in Kazakhstan as a major threat;
- 2. It is important in the leadership's view that political liberalization not spiral too far;
- 3. Kazakhstan must blaze its own trail.

Kazakhstan at a Crossroads

- Kazakhstan should also embrace certain aspects of the modernization model by introducing its citizens to *Western educational practices, experimenting with new technologies, and encouraging urban migration* around the country. In addition, to increase the chances of success for the modernization campaign, Nur Otan should advise the government to *relax media controls, solicit honest and constructive advice from local NGOs on proposed policies, and take a firm stance against corruption.*

TRANQUILITY OR TURBULENCE IN TASHKENT? UZBEKISTAN IN THE POST- KARIMOV ERA

- “Failed” and “collapsed” states are not the same. The key difference between them is that the former lack “effectiveness” and “legitimacy” (a seemingly quite common phenomenon across the developing world) while the latter constitute a “vacuum of authority” or “black hole” (a far worse condition bordering on anarchy).
- Uzbekistan’s elites have managed to preserve their ruling regime, thereby ensuring their hold on political power.

TRANQUILITY OR
TURBULENCE
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THE POST-
KARIMOV ERA

- Uzbekistan is **not in danger of falling victim to regime implosion and state collapse** any time soon on account of several geo-structural factors currently in place:
- 1. Contemporary history informs us that regime implosion and state collapse can occur following the onset of a **military intervention** by a foreign power.
- 2. Since Uzbekistan is predominantly comprised of Uzbeks who practice Sunni Islam, the country is not vulnerable to **ethno-sectarian divisions** like other fragile states.
- 3. If for some reason the planned transfer of authority goes awry, **Russia could still intervene** (politically and/or militarily) in the eleventh hour to save Uzbekistan from descending into chaos.

TRANQUILITY OR
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- Overall, the chances that meaningful change will take hold are very slim. That then leaves the West with essentially **two** options: continue with keeping Uzbekistan at a distance and prioritizing **regional security concerns**; or initiate a change in foreign policy and concentrate instead on promoting **economic and political reform**.
- As such, since the war in Afghanistan is virtually unwinnable, the West should focus instead on improving the governance standards of other bordering countries.

Radnitz's article

- Not revolution, not regime change – gov't change
- Differences from Georgia, Ukraine: not top-down, not urbanized, insignificant NGOs, almost no elite opposition (Only People's Development of Kyrgyzstan - NDK)
- Catalyst: exclusion of candidates for parliament from voting. Start – 3rd of March in Jalalabad, mostly family members, friends of candidates. In a week Osh also mobilized. After the Nauryz 10, 000 people reached Bishkek, and Akayev already flew away.

Radnitz's article

- Localism: compatriots (*zemlyaki*)
- NGOs: "rights defenders" (*pravozashitniki*) about 430 in Osh and Naryn – but, only in Bishkek
- NDK: information spread, transportation funds, telephones across regions – helped to overcome geographic fragmentation

Radnitz's article

- Hyper-democracy manipulated "people power" has insinuated itself into instability.
- Feliks Kulov (north) became PM, Bakiyev (south) – president.
- Corruption: unclear, Bakiyev himself became the most corrupt, also by appointing his family to posts. Case of Usenov.
- Reform of redistribution was too risky, and he banned for 1 year public demonstrations. But it is symptom, rather than poverty, an exaggerated and entrenched localism, and a weak central state.
- International debts.

Radnitz's article

- **Suggestions:**
- **Anti-corruption policy; transparency; increase salary of police.**

Sullivan's article

- **Why so smooth?**
- **Clan politics by Cathreen Collins (Niyazov became as mediator, but then failed to do so.)**
- **Cult – yes, Ruhnama, but no evidence.**
- **Elite loyalty – no.**
- **Turkmenbashi; Ruhnama; President-for-life;**

Sullivan's article

- Why so smooth change in authoritarian leadership?
- Coercion
- Regular purge of high-ranking officials
- Neutrality in global politics

Sullivan's article

- Only one party : Democratic Party of Turkmenistan; censorship; KNB
- “deck shuffling,” Niyazov 58 deputy prime ministers 1991-2005
- “positive neutrality” ; the government has permitted US transport aircraft carrying “non-lethal supplies” destined for Afghanistan to refuel at Ashgabat International Airport

Collin's article

- **Clan is an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin-based bonds. People cannot enter/ exit voluntarily. Clan is not clientelism, patronage, corruption, Mat, mafias, regions, ethnic groups, nations, or tribes.**

Collin's article

- Clans may persist under strong colonial states and gain power under weak and declining ones
- Clan pacts respond to the threat and foster regime durability: shared external threat; balance; broker.
- Elites, ideology, and formal institutions have only a short-term effect
- Under transitional uncertainty clan politics emerges, pervading formal regimes and weakening regime durability in the longer term