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For four years (2005-2009) he worked at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Dr. Rousseau has written over 750 books, book chapters, academic and scholarly articles and newspaper articles on various world politics topics.

Dr. Rousseau's interests over the years have included theories on origins of life, archeology, history, competitive tennis, hockey, baseball and playing music. As a teenager, he showed exceptional talent in hockey in the province of Quebec, Canada. On average, he scored 40 goals and 100 points in only 25 games per season between the ages of 12-17. In one game he scored 8 goals and got 4 assists, leading his team to the championship victory in a provincial tournament. In baseball, as a pitcher, he threw three no-hitters (perfect game) during one regular season. Dr. Rousseau has won many trophies and medals during his teenage years.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you agree with the view that India's interaction with Central Asia (CA) has a paradox. There is a long history of continuous flow of peoples and ideas between the two regions but today India is certainly not among the most important players there.

India is clearly not a major player in Central Asia, although it has the potential to evolve into a power comparable to China or even the United States. It has some "soft power" to capitalize on. Its political system is the most democratic in South Asia (although for the authoritarian leaders of Central Asia this is a feature that frightens much more than attracts them). Some Indian universities and technical institutes are quite competitive at the global level. In sum, intellectually and culturally, India has strong foundations to become a power to be reckoned with. However, India's "hard power" does not match that of China. On the brighter side, while India's ability, on paper at least, to influence Central Asians' hearts and minds is much more manifest than that of China, the latter is, on the contrary, a distrusted emerging power and its newly-gained allies, in Africa, South East Asia or Latin America, are still uneasy with China's style of diplomacy and economic relations. Except in Pakistan, suspicion towards India is almost non-existent across the world.

The Chinese leadership knows it well. Despite China's growing political and economic strength, the country suffers from a lack of the magnetic attraction. China is able to challenge the Americans economically, while the country is increasingly stronger militarily. But it is still extremely difficult for Beijing to make Chinese culture, polity and society more appealing to outsiders, a goal that is necessary if it wants to shape a friendly attitude towards China. This failure has a significant negative impact on China's drive towards superpower status and its rivalry with the U.S. This is a window of opportunity for India.

2. Do you believe India has to shed the current approach of understanding Central Asia steadfastly through a Western prism? The practice has obscured rather than clarified its interests, it is said.

First of all, generally speaking, India does not display great quality in its strategic and tactical thinking and analysis. In the 21st century, influence on, and cooperation with, other states are mostly achieved through commercial agreements and foreign investment. *Trade between China and the five* **FPRC Journal-10 India and Central Asia**

Central Asian countries totaled \$25.9 billion in 2009, up from \$527 million in 1992. India's trade with the same countries is ridiculously low at around \$450 in 2009. Globalization has reduced the importance of regional "civilizational" influence or the role of religions or philosophies as a means to expand a state's influence. All comes down to business practices and commercial opportunities. China is not trying to sell its "economic model" and its ancestral philosophies to the rest of the world. It strictly focuses on the economic realm. And its strategy has brought impressive success because it understands the world "through a Western prism," that is, the nation-state model organized by the rule of law. India should continue and enhance its "Extended Neighbourhood Policy" towards Central Asia, organize more state official visit to the region, put forward multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements in terms of development aid and technical support

India has to act very quickly, though; otherwise it will be definitely overtaken by the rapid changes in Central Asia. At the moment the U.S., Japan and Australia have governments which do not consider India as a serious emerging power. "Chindia" has been evacuated from talks at the higher levels. Trade and technological innovation matters more than "civilizational" influence.

3. Why the stability and security of CA is of prime importance for India, which it considers part of its extended neighbourhood?

For basically three reasons: drug trafficking, terrorism (Mumbai attack) and energy projects.

What happens in Central Asia matters to India for basically three reasons. First, Central Asia is part of a dangerous neighborhood, including Afghanistan. Second, the other great powers (Russia and the U.S.) have military bases in Central Asia which provide support and reinforcement to the Russian presence in the region and to U.S. actions in Afghanistan. Third, Central Asia is of interest, because of its proximity and history, to both Russia and China. If those two powers are interested in any Central Asian country, the U.S. has to be. The U.S. base at Manas, Kyrgyzstan is near the Chinese border. A power vacuum or significant disorder would be a threat to U.S. interests in Kyrgyzstan and the region.

But more importantly, the region is inhabited mostly by Muslims. The escalation of the "Global War on Terrorism" (GWOT) – now renamed the "war against al-Qaeda" under the Obama administration – into "the long war," and its dangerous spillover effects, legitimize, at least in the eyes of Washington, the consolidation and open-ended duration of U.S. armed forces presence in Kyrgyzstan and more generally Central Asia.

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The infiltration of drugs and armed militants into Central Asia has transformed the region into a fertile ground of instability, a centre of transnational organized criminal activity. Moreover, Central Asia's physical centrality makes it vulnerable to spillover instability to India and Pakistan. It is now increasingly encapsulated by an intertwined web of terrorist networks: Russia's Chechens and Dagestani to the north, China's Uighurs to the east, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Al Qaeda, and various other terrorist groups to the south.

Southern Central Asia, in particular, with its close historical and trade links to Afghanistan, now serves as a vital conduit from Afghanistan and increasingly a focal point for the training and basing of militant terrorist groups. At the heart of Central Asia's security crisis is the Fergana Valley. Since the late 1990s this region has been fervently contested by Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and has endured continuous armed clashes, led by the IMU through raids and terrorist attacks, including car bombings, full-scale village assaults and the kidnapping of foreigners. Aiming to spearhead global jihadism, this militant group seeks to establish a transnational caliphate starting with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and ultimately expanding beyond the periphery of Central Asia's Muslim regions. India with its important Muslim population (the second most important after Indonesia) could become vulnerable to Islamic activism.

4 What are the Implications of the role of International actors in CA for India? Has India joined in the 'New Great Game' being played out in CA?

India is only starting to step up its involvement in Central Asia. It has not joined the new "Great game." While India considers itself as an equal to China with regards to power projection in Asia, China regards India as a regional Asian power and wants to limit its influence to its immediate neighborhood. The recent visit of President Obama to China has been perceived by many observers as confirmation of the idea that China and the Obama administration see a limited regional role for India. China's domination in Central Asia has been acknowledged by Washington; India cannot aspire, at least in the medium term, to have a status on par with China. On the other hand, because of its vast extension of its land borders, India is well positioned to impact on Central Asian states, and this is certainly taken into account in Washington, Moscow and Beijing. The Americans could take advantage of India's fast economic rise to achieve their objectives in Asia. **FPRC Journal-10 India and Central Asia**

5. The US urges India to expand its influence, saying India has the potential to positively shape the future of CA. How the US and India can co-operate for peace and security in CA?

Security in that part of the world is strongly linked with economic growth and social development. The "New Silk Road" is one project that has the potential to bring more economic activities in Central Asia. It aims at developing links, first, between Asian countries, then, with their neighbors, and finally with Western Europe. It emphasizes the construction of land transport linkages within Eurasia. At the end of the 1990s India's prime minister intensively promoted this idea and insisted that it held promising perspectives in terms of interregional economic development. India has a huge expertise in railway transportation, while Central Asian states have a lack of it. Since the U.S. backs this project and contributes to it financially and technically, India can only be interested in coordinating its efforts with those of the Americans as it is the best way to maintain peace and stability in Central Asia and to fight the three evils of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism.

The Americans are impressed by the high level of India's pluralism which has kept al Qaeda out of its Muslim community. They are equally amazed by the strength of India's democracy and stability. They want India to emerge as a pole of attraction for Central Asian states, partly to counter the growing influence of China.

6. Russia remains the critical balancer in the Central Asian competition, and significant advantages will accrue to India depending on its relationships with Russia. How far do you agree with this statement?

Even though India has had good relations with Russia over the last few decades, this will not be translated into significant benefits with regards to Central Asia. Russia wants to keep Central Asia for itself for different reasons. First, its cultural and linguistic influence in these ex-Soviet republics is still quite prominent and will remain so for many more years. Second, it badly needs to remain a transit country for the export of central Asian gas and oil. The revenues generated by this situation are crucial for Russia's internal development and its political and strategic influence in Central Asia. However, Russia's monopoly on the transport of hydrocarbons from Central Asia to external (European, Chinese, South Asian) markets has been destroyed by China and the EU. Almost all Central Asian states have expressed their willingness to escape from the Kremlin's domination in the **FPRC Journal-10 India and Central Asia**

energy sector, triggering some panic in Moscow and making the West and China – and India – optimistic about the odds of tapping into Central Asian energy resources. Where does the Russian advantage lie in this “Great Game” over gas and oil supplies? It lies in the fact that the Kremlin – as well as Beijing – does not embarrass itself with defending democratic or “civilizational” values in its foreign policy, and in its relations with foreign partners. As such, Russian foreign policy parameters are in line with most petro states in the world. It goes without saying that democracy and hydrocarbon wealth have a proven history of uneasy coexistence. Democracy does not marry well with oil and gas wealth. Russia can swiftly make oil and gas deals with a country like Kazakhstan because policymakers in both countries understand each other quite well. Russian political authorities will never make democracy or human rights respect an issue in their negotiation with Astana. India does not have this “privilege.” Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan know that their “black gold” and gas are most wanted by the West. However, the West has constantly to make it a point that there's large room for improvement in these countries' record on election transparency and the rule of law. Such demands outright annoy autocrats' regime.

7. Are India and China looking to redeploy their rivalry on the Central Asian and Afghan theaters on a geopolitical, but also political and economic level?

As long as India is almost totally absent in the ex-Soviet Central Asian states, the answer is no. As to Afghanistan, China and India are at the moment and will continue to be rivals over the routes the future pipelines will take.

In its approach to the Central Asia Beijing considers the potential reaction of other actors, including the U.S., EU, Japan, Turkey, India, Pakistan and Iran, whose interests are still paramount in the region, especially in terms of energy security. Nonetheless, China's interests are, on some issues, more numerous and specific than those of these other stakeholders. Thus, besides the obvious interest in having access to Caspian oil and Kazakh uranium, Central Asia is also critical to China's strategic interests, as the stability of this large region, especially its western border, is seen as a safeguard for China, which will prevent any hostile developments taking place in the region. There are perceived threats from the presence of other major

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powers, primarily the U.S., in the area and the actions of Uighur organizations, which have many cross-border linkages. In addition, China wants to promote and maintain economic synergies with neighboring countries, strengthening the role of Xinjiang as a regional pole in Eurasia and as a driver of economic development through, inter alia, strengthening its role as a center for logistics and energy redistribution, which may bring about the eventual establishment of a free trade area including much or all of Central Asia. The actions and interests of Beijing can be grouped into five dimensions: border, Uighur, commercial, energy and geopolitical issues.

8. Do you agree with the view that India's main regional interests in Central Asia are Pakistan and energy security?

To some extent, yes. Geopolitical and economic factors account for New Delhi's maintenance of good relations with Central Asian states. From a strategic standpoint, an Indo-Central Asian alliance could bring about the closing of ranks against Pakistan. Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, for instance, are potential enemies in the sense that the two Central Asian states fear a spread of Islamic fundamentalism originating from Pakistan. If Kabul further falls under the influence of Pakistan after the announced U.S. withdrawal in 2014, this danger will seriously increase. A rising Pakistan would be counterproductive to enhancing India's geostrategic interest in Central – and Southwest – Asia. Hence India must rapidly develop relations with the region, not only to satisfy its growing energy demand but also to prevent the ex-Soviet republics from forging stronger bonds with Pakistan on the basis of their shared Islamic heritage.

Despite the fact that Islamabad sees the recent trade and military agreement between India and Afghanistan as a manifestation of a policy of encirclement, in recent months there has been a tentative improvement in relations between the two neighbors. India intends to maintain its own policy towards Pakistan, independent of Washington, on the basis of its own vested interests. Islamabad has recently secured most-favored-nation status with India – an economic provision deriving from the rules of the World Trade Organization – although there are many internal pressures pulling it in the opposite direction. There are small signs of an improvement in their relations in general, but there are many problems as well, among which is Islamabad's failing to respond to Indian requests for it to carry out thorough investigation into the 2008 Mumbai attacks and to break Pakistan's links with the architect of the attacks, the Lashkar-e-Toiba.

9. How Central Asia looks at India? FPRC Journal-10 India and Central Asia

Many people in Central Asian states see India as a potential pawn in their negotiations (and games) with China, Russia and other major players in the region. India's emerging energy foreign policy is competing with China's. One can expect greater cooperation between New Delhi and Central Asia, especially in the military sector, in the form of joint counter-insurgency operations to protect the western border. Transfers of military equipment have been significantly on the rise in the last three years between India and Central Asia. India's stronger presence in the region is quite possible since the most regional states have made it a priority to diversify their foreign partners and expand their diplomatic activities. Concretely, it has allowed Central Asian region regimes to be courted by Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the EU and other important players in East and South East Asia, so as to lessen their reliance on China. India will undoubtedly continue to knock at Central Asia's door in the years to come with the hope of establishing a stronger presence in this resource-rich region.

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