Chapter Six

Relationship between Host and Kin States

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, by the year 2005, the government of Kazakhstan has successfully managed to create an authoritarian regime in which the forging of a cross-ethnic coalition through suppression and co-optation of the leaders of ethnic movements played a key role. This chapter provides a discussion of the international factors that lay behind minority elite support for the Nazarbaev regime. As noted earlier, for Brubaker the role of the ethnic homeland vis-à-vis its co-ethnics abroad is a vital element of the 'triadic nexus' and one which has the potential to lead to conflict. In the case of Kazakhstan, this chapter will argue that diaspora politics, in fact, served to depoliticise the issue of ethnicity within Kazakhstan, and thereby facilitated the stability of the ruling regime. Underpinning this development has been a common concern in the kin states of the four communities considered here not to play the diaspora card in their bilateral relations in order to maintain a range of shared interests, notably security and border concerns.

According to their respective processes of 'diasporisation,' the four communities addressed in this study can be divided into two groups. The Russians and Uzbeks were the communities who had been 'left behind' outside their homelands by the newly created borders following Soviet dissolution. They had little sense of being a minority within Kazakhstan when it was part of the USSR; the collapse of the single Soviet state suddenly forced them to accept an unfamiliar minority status. On the other hand, the Uighurs and Koreans had no national-administrative unit on the territory of the Soviet Union, and had been deprived of contacts with their co-ethnics for decades. The long-awaited reunion with co-ethnics abroad facilitated by the *perestroika* period inevitably stimulated

their ethnic movements. As a result, the Uighurs and Koreans were faced with the question of how to establish a relationship with a homeland that was either under Chinese control, as was the case with the Uighurs, or divided between North and South, as was the case with the Koreans.

Among the kin states of post-Soviet Kazakhstan's minorities (the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, North and South Korea), it was Russia where the issue of 'compatriots' has had the greatest importance for domestic as well as international politics. This was primarily due to the large number of ethnic Russians (estimated as 25 million) who lived outside the borders of Russia, and to the complex, almost post-colonial, relationship between Russia and the other former Soviet republics. In contrast, despite constituting the largest 'diaspora' in Central Asia, Uzbek communities abroad have practically never occupied a central place in Uzbekistan's internal political debates. Meanwhile, since the late 1980s, South and North Korea, both of which had little contact with their co-ethnics during most of the Soviet period, suddenly emerged as contenders for influence over the Korean diaspora in post-Soviet states. The challenges faced by 'stateless' Uighurs were the most serious; they were sandwiched between China, a state hostile to any kind of ethnic movement, and Kazakhstan, a host state that sought to maintain friendly relations with a neighbouring great power.

The sections below analyse the relationship between Kazakhstan and its minorities' kin states (or the state whose territory includes the minority's ethnic homeland) over the issue of co-ethnics. This chapter highlights the ways in which kin states treat their co-ethnics abroad and build bilateral relationships with Kazakhstan, and the ways in which these relationships have impacted the strategies available to minorities in the host state. It also reviews post-independence border delimitation between Kazakhstan and its adjacent states as well as border control of the states, and explores the ways in which territorial and security issues between host and kin states are related to ethnic communities residing on both sides of the border.

6.1 Russians: To Remain or 'Return'?

As Hilary Pilkington has rightly pointed out, Russia's policy toward its co-ethnics in the former Soviet republics is two-pronged: one is to aid the integration of compatriots into the newly independent states, another is to provide an opportunity for them to 'return' to their historic homeland (Pilkington 1998: 58). In the 1990s, with a great number of immigrants arriving from the other ex-Soviet states, Russia had to find ways to deal with this influx. It is against this backdrop that Russia under Yeltsin sought to achieve bilateral and multilateral agreements with the states of the near abroad over the issue of dual citizenship and guarantees of the rights of compatriots. Under President Putin's rule, Russia's compatriot policy has shifted towards 'repatriation' of co-ethnics; his administration has expressed its readiness to invite more compatriots from abroad in order to offset the serious decline in Russia's population. Russia's policy on compatriots in the near aboard also had a political dimension: prioritising bilateral relations over cross-border ethnic affinities for some states—especially those with which Russia shares key security and economic interests, and using the ethnic card as a bargaining tool for other states—as was the case with the Baltic states.

6.1.1 Developments in Russia's Compatriot Policy

Neil Melvin, one of the first authors to publish comprehensive work on ethnic Russians of the former USSR,[1] argues that the issue of the Russian 'diaspora' passed through three main stages in Russia's domestic politics in the first half of the 1990s: the defeat of the democratic vision of relations with co-ethnics; the consolidation of a centrist consensus; and the institutionalisation of 'diaspora' policy within Russia (Melvin 1995: 10-22). In the beginning of the first period (autumn 1991-autumn 1992), Russian diplomacy attached much greater importance to cooperation with the West than to relations with the former Soviet

[1] On Russia's policy towards ethnic Russians abroad, see also Kolstoe (1995: chapter 10) and Zevelev (2001: chapter 5).

states, which were viewed as having primary responsibility for the well-being of their respective Russian populations. At that time, the Russian government did not have a special interest in ethnic Russians abroad, who, it felt, should become citizens of their respective host states. This attitude of non-interference, however, came under concerted attack from a variety of forces in and outside of parliament, such as the communists, Russian patriotic forces and statists (*gosudarstvenniki*), who insisted that the Russian state and the Russian communities beyond its border were inexorably bound together.[2]

Melvin has argued that in the period from the winter 1992 to the fall 1993, the defence of the Russian communities became a basic tenet of Russia's external and domestic politics. The government accepted that the Russian populations abroad constituted an integral part of the Russian state and thus it had a basic responsibility to protect them. Radical Soviet revivalists and Russian patriotic forces advocated the unification of Russians within and outside Russia, concomitantly viewing the territory of their residence as the natural extension of the Russian state. Despite such demands, a general consensus was formed that economic and diplomatic pressure, not territorial annexation, were to be the means to influence governments of the near abroad in regard to the Russian minorities. The third period (winter 1993-winter 1994) saw important changes in the Russian 'diaspora' issue: a broad agreement among the Russian political elite about the significance of the diaspora question diminished divisiveness surrounding this issue in the Russian domestic debate, and a coherent policy towards co-ethnics abroad began to emerge. In addition to a Government Commission for the Affairs of Compatriots Abroad, a Committee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots was established in the State *Duma*, the lower chamber of the parliament. Furthermore, a Presidential Decree on 'The Basic

[2] As factors for changes in Russia's foreign policy, Melvin notes a series of events that escalated in 1992: fighting in Transdniestr in Moldova, conflict between Russia and Ukraine over the status of the Crimea, and citizenship issues in Estonia and Latvia. On this point, see also Kolstoe (1995: 280-287. This part is co-authored with Andrei Edemsky).

Directions of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in Relation to Compatriots Residing Abroad,' was issued in August 1994. It was in this period that Moscow sought to reach agreements on dual citizenship with the former Soviet states (see below).

The institutionalisation of compatriot policy identified above continued after 1995. Following the 'Programme of Measures to Support Compatriots Abroad,' adopted in May 1996, the 'Federative Law on the State Policy of the Russian Federation in Relation to Compatriots Abroad' (hereafter referred to as the Compatriot Law) was adopted in March 1999 (enforced in May 1999). Building on previous official documents concerning Russian communities, this law was the first to give legal definition to the term 'compatriot,' as an individual who should be protected by the Russian state. According to Article 1.2 of the law, compatriots are: citizens of the Russian Federation living outside of Russia; former Soviet citizens residing in ex-member states of the USSR who have obtained citizenship of these states or have become stateless persons; emigrants from the Russian Empire, USSR, or Russian Federation,[3] who had corresponding citizenship and became citizens of a foreign state or stateless persons; and direct lineal descendants of the abovementioned groups with the exception of descendants of 'persons of titular nations (*titul'nye natsii*) of foreign states'.[4] Table 6.1 categorises variants of citizenship and ethnicity of compatriots, excluding stateless persons and a few other cases such as the descendants of émigrés from the Russian Empire.

[3] The original text reads 'emigrants from the Russian state (*Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*), Russian Republic (*Rossiiskaia respublika*), RSFSR, USSR and Russian Federation.'
[4] Regarding the last category, there is no reference to the case when one's parents have different ethnic backgrounds.

Table 6.1. Compatriots, Russian Citizens, and Ethnic Russians

	Citizenship	Ethnicity	
Compatriots = Former USSR citizens and their descendants residing outside of Russia (except descendants of titular nations)*	Russia	Russian	
		Non-Russian	
	Others	Russian	
		Non-Russian	Titular
			Non-titular

Note: If we understand 'persons of titular nations of foreign states' as those who hold citizenship of 'one's own' republic (i.e. ethnic Uzbeks with Uzbekistani citizenship), not as all members of nationalities who had 'their own' republics within the USSR, children of ethnic Uzbeks in Kazakhstan, for example, are entitled to the status of a compatriot. Likewise, all descendants of Soviet citizens in the 'far abroad' are considered to be non-titulars, and thus compatriots.

According to this definition, all former Soviet citizens and a considerable number of their children are eligible to apply for the status of compatriot.[5] Why did the Russian lawmakers define a compatriot so broadly? This term, rather than the term 'Russian,' is used here not only due to the complicated character of Russian ethnicity, as discussed in Chapter Two. It also reflects a belief that the Russian state bears a moral responsibility to defend not only ethnic Russians, but all those who speak the Russian language and have accepted Russian culture. On the domestic front, the Russian Federation cannot identify itself as an ethnically pure Russian state, as its territory is home to a variety of communities who consider their settlements to be their ethnic homelands.

By adopting the Compatriot Law, Russia declared its determination to defend the rights of its co-ethnics abroad, and to build its foreign policy towards host states according to the ways in which they treat Russian compatriots. This attitude was most evident in Article 5 on principles and purposes of the compatriot policy; it indicates that state policy vis-à-vis compatriots abroad is 'a component of the domestic and international policy of the Russian Federation' (Article 5.1). While observing the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, Russia supported

[5] Naturally, not all of them identify themselves as Russian compatriots. Article 3 of the Compatriot Law stipulates that while Russian citizens (including dual-citizenship holders) are automatically considered compatriots, non-Russian citizens who are eligible for compatriot status have the choice about whether or not to claim it.

compatriots in securing their rights to retain and develop their language, tradition, customs, culture, and religion, to maintain ties with Russia, and 'to establish national-cultural autonomy (*natsional'no-kul'turnaia avtonomiia*), public associations, and mass media and to participate in their activities' (Article 5.2). Further, Article 14 stresses that the defence of the rights and freedoms of compatriots is an 'integral part of the foreign policy activities of the Russian Federation,' and if foreign states do not observe 'universally recognised principles and norms of international law in the sphere of basic rights and freedoms' in relation to compatriots, Russia is ready to take measures to protect compatriot interests. Thus, compatriots could count on Russia's support for their activities designed to counter ethnic or other discrimination (Article 15). The law also refers to Russia's support for compatriots in economic and social spheres (Article 16), as well as in the spheres of culture, language, education (Article 17),[6] and information (Article 18).

Theoretically, this law could be used to justify Moscow's interference in the affairs of host states under the pretext of protecting its co-ethnics, but given high level opposition in the Yeltsin administration to this practice, it was unlikely that the law would be enforced to its full extent. The government, in particular the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed grave misgivings about the adoption of the law, and the president even vetoed the bill, a move that the upper house of the parliament subsequently overrode (Zevelev 2001: 147-148). Indeed, the Russian government faced a variety of obstacles to implementing this legislation. King and Melvin (1999: 116) have identified a number of specific constraints on Russia's ability to mobilise diaspora issues in the international arena: decreasing domestic utility of the diaspora question, competing foreign policy priorities, scarce economic resources available to Russia to reach out to the

[6] Interestingly, references to the language policy in the 1999 Compatriot Law indicate that Russia should assist compatriots so that they can use and preserve not only Russian but 'native languages of the nationalities' (*rodnye iazyki natsional'nostei*) of the Russian Federation (Article 17).

diaspora, and the weakness of ethnic identity and communal solidarity within the Russian community abroad. The difficulty of defining ethnic Russians is clearly reflected in the broad definition of the status of a compatriot in the law itself, which includes practically all former Soviet citizens. Similarly, Igor Zevelev suggests that the 'extreme weakness of state institutions, lack of financial resources, rampant corruption of the elite, and public apathy' (Zevelev 2001: 149) were the reasons for poor implementation of legislation and governmental programmes on compatriots.

As part of its policy towards compatriots, Russia has demanded that the former Soviet states give Russian the status of a second state language.[7] To date, however, Russia's demands have been mostly ignored in the near abroad with the sole exception of Belarus.[8]

It was expected that the inauguration of Vladimir Putin as the new president of Russia in May 2000 would lead to a more aggressive policy towards the 'Russian question.' Adopted in August 2001, the Concept of Support of Compatriots Abroad by the Russian Federation in the Contemporary Period indeed championed with greater force than ever before the notion that the Russian state should support the self-organisation of compatriots, to allow them to secure equal status with citizens of the titular nationality and adequate political representation. In the case of host states that discriminated against Russian compatriots, Russia was ready to 'restore justice.' Putin's attendance at the Congress of Compatriots (*Kongress sootechestvennikov*), which met in Moscow for the first time in October 2001, was also viewed as a demonstration of his determination to tackle this issue. At the congress, Putin stressed that it was the

[7] While the 1996 Programme on Measures to Support Compatriots Abroad sought to continue negotiations with ex-Soviet republics over the elevation of Russian to the status of a second state language, the 2001 Concept of Support of Compatriots Abroad (see below) downgraded this demand to the recognition of Russian as 'an official language and/or a language of interethnic communication.'

[8] Belarus made Russian a state language on a par with Belarussian by referendum in 1995. In Kyrgyzstan, Russian was given the status of an official language—not clearly defined but somewhat less prestigious than a state language—by a 2001 amendment to the constitution.

responsibility of the Russian state to defend and support compatriots, and deplored the fact that 'intolerably' little work had been done on this issue in the last ten years.[9] Despite all these statements and performances, however, the policy toward compatriots under the Putin administration has clearly shifted from facilitating their integration in ex-Soviet states to 'repatriation' (see below).

Kazakhstan has been one of the primary concerns of Russia's compatriot policy. At the time of Soviet break-up, the ethnic Russian population in Kazakhstan was second only to that of Ukraine, and as a percentage of the total population it was the highest among the former Soviet republics except Russia itself. With Kazakhstan, however, there existed no formal agreement that specifically addressed Russian compatriots in this republic. A Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, signed by Russia and Kazakhstan soon after the fall of the Soviet Union (in May 1992) included provisions related to the 'Russian question,' but there was no provision that directly addressed ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan.[10] In November 1996, the Russian leadership did propose a new, broader agreement on the status of ethnic Russians and the Russian language in Kazakhstan. However, the Kazakhstani side showed no inclination to negotiate such an agreement (Alexandrov 1999: 141).

This lack of bilateral agreement directly addressing the issue of ethnic Russians did not hinder Russia from playing the role of compatriots' guardian in Kazakhstan. In the mid-1990s, Russia provided political and diplomatic support to Russian community activists prosecuted by the Kazakhstani authorities, as noted in Chapter Four. Thereafter, however, it did not seek to meddle in the issues of

[9] Informatsionno-analiticheskii biulleten', Institut stran SNG, No. 38, 15 October 2001 [http://www.zatulin.ru/institute/sbornik/038/11.shtml].

[10] The most important in this area is Article 11, which stipulated that, first, the states guarantee equal rights and freedoms to their citizens and stateless persons irrespective of their ethnic and other differences; second, the parties guarantee citizens of the other country residing on its territory, civil, political, cultural, and other rights; finally, both sides provide their residents with the right to choose either Russian or Kazakhstani citizenship. In addition, some provisions refer to general principles regarding ethnic minorities, such as the development and protection of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious uniqueness (*samobytnst'*) of minorities (Article 14), and prevention of activities instigating violence based on ethnicity or other forms of intolerance (Article 15).

Russian ethnic movements. Instead, as argued in the previous chapter, the Putin administration has not only tolerated but even supported Nazarbaev's efforts to strengthen control over Russian organisations in Kazakhstan. In addition to the internally-driven changes in Russia's compatriot policy (diminishing domestic utility of the diaspora question and a policy shift to facilitating 'return' of co-ethnics), Russia actually had no need to play the ethnic card in order to exert pressure on Kazakhstan, with which it was already successfully cooperating in political, economic, and security spheres. The general weakening of the Russian movement by the Kazakhstani authorities since the mid-1990s also suited Russia's interests because it diminished the risk of Moscow being accused of not supporting the political struggles of its compatriots.

6.1.2 The Citizenship Law and the Dual Citizenship Issue

If the official documents on compatriots mentioned above aimed primarily to provide protection and support to those who had chosen to remain in host states, the citizenship law explicitly indicated which types of individuals the Russian state was ready to accept as its citizens. In the eyes of ethnic Russians, the law on citizenship served as an important criterion by which they judged whether or not the historic homeland welcomed their 'return.'

Most of the former Soviet states provided citizenship for permanent residents on their territory at the time when a law on citizenship was introduced.[11] Russia's Law on Citizenship (adopted in November 1991 and enforced in February 1992) also ruled that former Soviet citizens permanently residing in Russia were to be granted Russian citizenship, providing they did not reject it within a year of the enforcement of the law (Article 13.1). Furthermore, Russia, as the successor to the USSR, recognised citizenship rights for all citizens of the former Soviet Union irrespective of their ethnic background. If an applicant resided in an ex-Soviet

[11] Estonia and Latvia set rigorous proficiency requirements for the titular language and a certain length of residency for the acquisition of citizenship. On Estonian and Latvian citizenship policy, see, for example, Galbreath (2005).

republic and did not hold its passport, he or she could obtain Russian citizenship within three years of the adoption of the Law (until February 1995) by registration (Article 18).[12] An amendment of June 1993 stipulated that this article was also to be applied to those who had immigrated to Russia after February 1992. In February 1995, the deadline for the application for Russian citizenship by registration was extended to the end of 2000.

Another important aspect of Russia's citizenship policy was its attitude towards dual citizenship with the former Soviet states. As shown in Chapter Four, securing permission to hold Russia-Kazakhstan dual citizenship was one of the primary goals of the Russian movement in Kazakhstan. Russia's 1991 Citizenship Law permitted its citizens to hold the citizenship of another state with which Russia had concluded an appropriate treaty (Article 3.2). Otherwise, Russian citizenship would be granted on condition that an applicant relinquishes any other citizenship (Article 3.1 and 37.3). This obligation was dropped in 1993 amendments to the citizenship statue, as a relief measure for those who had already moved to Russia and often found it troublesome to prove that they had relinquished a previous passport. But it also showed Russia's willingness to unilaterally introduce dual citizenship by enabling individuals to keep a previous passport together with a newly obtained Russian one.[13] On a bilateral basis, however, Russia's call for dual citizenship elicited a positive reaction only from Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. (Turkmenistan would annul this agreement in April 2003).[14] For Kazakhstan, a state that hosts a significant number of ethnic

[12] Generally, former Soviet citizens who lived outside of the USSR were not entitled to registration. However, residency requirements on Russian territory (five years in total or three consecutive years) could be reduced or removed for former Soviet citizens (Article 19.2 and 19.3). Residency was considered uninterrupted if an applicant left Russia for study or medical treatment for no more than three months (Article 19.1).

[13] According to Ginsburgs (1998: 180), however, registration for Russian citizenship was conducted within the framework of the constraints imposed by the respective legislative and administrative canon of the state of residence of the applicants, which meant that the enrolment process depended on the extent to which each state tolerated the phenomenon of dual citizenship.

[14] The agreement on dual citizenship between Turkmenistan and Russia was annulled on 10 April 2003. Soon after that, Turkmenistan obliged dual citizenship holders to choose

Russians, dual citizenship with Russia was totally unacceptable.

One of the reasons of why Russia sought to introduce dual citizenship for ethnic Russians in the near abroad was to facilitate their adaptation to the host states with an aim to alleviate immigration pressures. For those who intended to, at least for the time being, remain in their country of residence, (and thus had obtained citizenship of that state), but felt uneasy about the future, Russian citizenship could serve as 'insurance' that would allow them to move to Russia if and when it became necessary. Thus, it was hoped that dual citizenship would alleviate the anxiety of ethnic Russians and as a result facilitate their integration into host states. From her interview with a chief analyst of Russia's Presidential Apparatus in 1995, Pilkington concluded that there was 'a growing recognition throughout the government that Russia's own best interest lay in their "compatriots" not becoming "repatriates."' (1998: 59). This judgement was, she pointed out, made on economic grounds (the high cost of mass resettlement) and social ones: 'there was a growing concern in government circles that the reception of refugees and forced migrants might provoke social tension in Russia itself as a result of increased competition for already scarce resources' (Pilkington 1998: 59).

However, in the face of protests from former Soviet republics with large Russian populations, Russia abandoned its dual citizenship strategy. Instead, it proposed simplifying the procedures for acquiring citizenship and providing mutually preferential treatment for the citizens of post-Soviet states (Iwashita 2000: 92-94). Kazakhstan was the first among the former Soviet republics to adopt this approach. In early 1995, Kazakhstan concluded an agreement with Russia on simplifying the acquisition of citizenship in cases where citizens of one country arrived in the other to take up permanent residence,[15] and a treaty on the

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only one of the two passports, within two months. Russia lodged a protest with Turkmenistan, arguing that those who had obtained dual citizenship before April 2003 should not be deprived of it. RFE/RL Central Asia Report, 1 May 2003 and 12 June 2003.

[15] The Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan on Simplified Procedures for Acquiring Citizenship for Citizens of the Russian Federation,

legal status of citizens of one country permanently residing on the territory of the other.[16] The latter agreement secured the majority of citizens' rights for permanent residents who held the passport of the other state, thereby diminishing the losses that permanent residents might suffer if they were obliged to acquire a new citizenship and therefore become foreigners. Several CIS states followed suit.[17] The two states later concluded similar agreements on a multilateral basis with Belarus and Kyrgyzstan.[18] While these bilateral and multilateral agreements were intended not only for ethnic Russians, they focused first and foremost on ethnic Russians, who were the largest non-titular community in most of the ex-Soviet states. These efforts, however, have not resulted in a large increase in Russian passport holders in the near abroad.[19] Being denied dual citizenship, many of those who wished to remain in their host state remained its citizens.[20]

Under the Putin administration, the policy that prioritised the integration of compatriots into host states was transformed. With its population continuously declining,[21] Russia became interested in encouraging the 'return' of more compatriots. Even at the peak of the massive move from the 'near abroad' to

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Arriving for Permanent Residence in the Republic of Kazakhstan, and Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Arriving for Permanent Residence in the Russian Federation as of 20 January 1995.

[16] The Treaty on the Legal Status of Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Permanently Residing on the Territory of the Russian Federation, and Citizens of the Russian Federation, Permanently Residing on the Territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan as of 20 January 1995.

[17] Russia concluded an agreement on simplifying the acquisition of citizenship with Kyrgyzstan, and signed an agreement on mutual recognition of preferential status for citizens with Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Georgia, and Armenia. See Iwashita (2000: 93).

[18] Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan signed a treaty on the legal status of citizens of one country who permanently reside in the territory of the other country in April 1998, and an agreement on simplifying the acquisition of citizenship in February 1999.

[19] According to a figure provided by the State Statistics Committee of the Russian Federation, there were 900,000 Russian citizens residing in the near abroad in 1997. There is no information available as to how many of them had another citizenship in addition to the Russian one, in violation of the law of the state of residence (Zevelev 2001: 140-141).

[20] In March 2004, at the time of the Russian presidential election, over 30 thousand Russian citizens were registered with the Russian consulate. ITAR-TASS News Agency, 12 March 2004.

[21] See, for example, see Herd (2003).

Russia in the early- and mid-1990s, legal immigration failed to fully compensate for the natural decrease in the population; in 2001, newly arriving (legal) immigrants offset only 7.7 percent of the decrease (Teague 2005: 24). In the wake of this demographic change, President Putin has repeatedly spoken out about the need for Russia to attract more immigrants from the near abroad. In June 2006, he signed a decree that approved a State Programme on Support for Voluntary Migration by Compatriots Abroad into the Russian Federation. Seeking to 'unite the potential of compatriots abroad with the necessity for the development of Russian regions,' the programme clearly states that support for voluntary migration of compatriots into the Russian Federation is 'one of the ways to solve the demographic problem.' It also says that 'educated in the traditions of Russian culture, proficient in the Russian language and not wishing to lose the link with Russia, compatriots are the most capable of adapting' to the receiving society. Thus, participants in the programme are to enjoy preferential treatment in obtaining a residence permit and Russian citizenship. Within the framework of this programme the authorities planned to invite 300,000 individuals over a three years period.[22]

Yet citizenship policy in the Putin era fluctuated between inclusive and restrictive approaches in the face of two often competing goals: facilitating in-migration of specialists and skilled workers, and eliminating 'undesirable' immigrants. A Law on Citizenship enforced in July 2002 was a reflection of the growing concern about illegal immigrants from the South Caucasus, Tajikistan, China, and so forth.[23] The 2002 Law provided no preferential treatment for former Soviet citizens, and tightened requirements for those who wished to obtain

[22] 'Putin Seeks to Lure Ethnic Russians Home,' RFE/RL Newsline 19 (117), Part I, 27 June 2006; 'Ministry Plans to "Repatriate" 300,000 Russians,' RFE/RL Newsline 10 (133), Part I, 24 July 2006. It was reported that Kazakhstan Prime Minister Daniial Akhmetov criticised this plan, saying that it could lead to a significant loss of skilled workers from among Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians. See 'Kazakh Premier Criticizes Russian Repatriation Plan,' RFE/RL Newsline 10 (150), Part I, 16 August 2006.

[23] On the 2002 Law on immigration and concern voiced over illegal immigrants in Russia, see Teague (2005: 27-28).

citizenship: knowledge of the Russian language, a legal source of income, relinquishment of other passports, and a consecutive five-year history of residence (Article 13.1).[24] Only for some categories of ex-Soviet citizens (those who were born in the former RSFSR, stateless persons residing in the former Soviet republics, etc.) this residency requirement was relaxed (Article 13.2 and 14.1). The same treatment of co-ethnics as other foreign citizens invited criticism both within Russia and from compatriots abroad; critics said that this policy contradicted the welcoming messages sent to compatriots.[25] Indeed, it was quite difficult to legally distinguish 'desirable' (read Russian) immigrants from others. The provision on knowledge of the Russian language did not effectively serve this purpose because a great majority of non-Russian ex-Soviet citizens had at least a certain proficiency in the Russian language, and many of them did speak fluent Russian.[26]

Within a little over a year, however, the 2002 Law on Citizenship had to be revised to make it more inclusive. It became obvious that the conditions for the application for citizenship were too rigorous; the Russia Gazette (*Russiiskaia gazeta*) wrote that in the first half of the year 2003 only 213 persons received Russian citizenship, while the figure for the entire year of 2002 was 272 thousand.[27] In December 2003, requirements on Russian citizenship were relaxed for certain categories of citizens of the former Soviet states.[28] Further, the 2006

[24] Residency is considered uninterrupted if an applicant left Russia for no more than three months in one year.

[25] Interview with Vladimir Romanenko, First Deputy Director of the Institute of CIS states, 8 August 2002. In a similar vein, Boris Pastukhov, Chairman of the Committee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots of the parliament predicted that more amendments to the 2002 law were necessary to alleviate criticism from compatriots, although he understood that the law was necessary in order to take countermeasures against illegal immigrants (Interview, 8 August 2002.)

[26] Article 13.1 (d) stipulates that a procedure to determine the level of knowledge of the Russian language is to be established by a separate regulation on a procedure to examine citizenship questions.

[27] *Russiiskaia gazeta*, 14 November 2003.

[28] The newly added categories are: those who had completed three years' service under contract in Russia's armed services (Article 13.4); those who received higher or professional education in Russia after 1 July 2002 (Article 14.1 [v]); disabled persons registered in Russia as of 1 July 2002 (Article 14.3); and veterans of WWII residing on

amendments to Article 14.4 of the Law on Citizenship (enforced in January of that year) decreed that former Soviet citizens arriving from ex-Soviet states who legally resided on the territory of the Russian Federation as of July 2002 could apply for citizenship by a simplified procedure, if they did so before the 1st of January 2008.[29]

Reaction to Moscow's call for 'return' was not homogenous among the Russians in Kazakhstan. During his visit to Astana in October 2000, the first meeting ever of a Russian president with leaders of ethnic Russian organisations in the post-Soviet space took place.[30] President Putin reportedly announced that Russia would do its utmost to allow compatriots to return to their historic homeland.[31] To a question from *Lad* Chairman Viktor Mikhailov on the possible directions of Russia's compatriot policy, Putin answered: 'The best choice for Russia itself is compact immigration [into Russia].'[32] After the meeting, the Head of the Russian Community Yurii Bunakov and the soon-to-be founder of the Russian Party Gennadii Beliakov stressed that they had no intention to move to Russia.[33] Meanwhile, some *Lad* activists and the Council of Atamans of the Union of the Cossacks of the Steppe Region soon proposed an effort, 'The First Echelon', aimed at organising agricultural migration from Kazakhstan. They argued that now was the time for Russia to receive 'former *tselinnki*[34], their

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the territory of Russia (Article 14.5).

[29] In fact, there appear to be many cases in which bureaucracy does not allow applicants to obtain Russian citizenship as stipulated in the law. See *Russiiskaia gazeta*, 28 September 2007.

[30] Mikhailov complained that *Lad*, together with the Union of the Cossacks of the Steppe Region, was seeking since 1991 to hold a meeting with high ranking politicians in Russia, but none of them expressed any real interest before Putin. See *Lad*, No. 11, 2000.

[31] Kazakhstani media also quoted Putin as saying that Russia does not want to invite immigrants from all over the world, and that former Soviet citizens, including Kazakhs, are most welcomed. 'K vizitu Putina v Kazakhstan. Kommentarii Iuriia Bunakova,' *Internet-gazeta 'Navigator,'* 17 December 2000 [http://www.navigator.kz].

[32] *Lad*, No. 11, 2000.

[33] *Megapolis*, No. 4 (12), 31 January 2001; interview with Fedr Miroglov, 11 March 2001. At the time of the interview, Miroglov was in charge of public relations for the Russian Community.

[34] *Tselinniki* here means immigrant workers who were mobilised for the cultivation of 'virgin lands' in the north of Kazakhstan in the 1950s.

children and grandchildren' in order to develop the Russian non-Black Earth zone (Nechernozem'e) which had suffered chronic depopulation in recent decades.[35] Previously, Russian movement leaders had refrained from encouraging emigration to Russia. (Their organisations, in fact, were criticised for financially profiting from emigration through the imposition of fees for visa processing and other related intermediate services). But 'The First Echelon' showed that some Russian activists in Kazakhstan had come to openly advocate 'repatriation' in response to Russia's enthusiastic calls for the return of compatriots.[36]

6.1.3 Border Issues

With the demise of the USSR, Kazakhstan needed to delineate its borders with neighbouring states, all of which, except China, were former Soviet republics. Among them, the 7,500 kilometre-long border between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation is the second longest international border in the world.[37] Although issues over border delimitation and control were quite strained shortly before and after Soviet collapse, there have been no serious territorial disputes that could pose a threat to the relationship between the two states.

The original territorial form of present-day Kazakhstan is the Kirgiz[38] Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic founded in August 1920 within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Its boundary was largely based on the former Steppe Region of the Russian Empire. In 1925 the

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[35] See *Lad*, No. 12, 2000. In their statement the initiators of 'The First Echelon' also added that they did not call all compatriots to leave, and promised that they would continue to struggle for compatriot rights in Kazakhstan.

[36] The initiators of the 'The First Echelon' sent a letter to President Putin, but they received a negative response from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See *Lad*, No. 9, 2001.

[37] Available data on the length of the Kazakhstani-Russian border varies quite significantly, up to more than one thousand kilometres. It is the longest continuous border. In absolute terms, the US-Canadian border is the world's longest, but it is not contiguous because 28 percent of it is between Alaska and Canada. See Golunov (2005: 11, and note 1 on page 73).

[38] At that time, Kazakhs were wrongly called 'Kirgiz,' while Kyrgyz were called 'Kara-kirgiz' in Russian.

delimitation of a renamed Kazak Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic,[39] distinct from contiguous Russian territories was, for the most part, completed. In 1936, Kazakhstan was at last granted the status of a union republic, but rewriting of the Kazakhstani-Russian border at the local level continued up until the collapse of the Soviet Union. In addition to the repeated border changes, mutual land leases as well as changes in the courses of borderland rivers caused confusion over the border and would create difficulties for post-Soviet delimitation between Kazakhstan and Russia (Golunov 2005: 58-64).

The ambiguity of the administrative border line between the republics had been never caused serious problems or resulted in calls to reconfigure the border under the Soviet regime. However, in the last years of the Soviet state, demands emerged to revise the existing border between Kazakhstan and Russia. Most of these were made by intellectuals and politicians in Russia—such as Nobel Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn—who argued that Kazakhstan's northern territory should be incorporated into Russia.[40] In the aftermath of the failed coup in the summer 1991, the territorial question became highly politicised. On the 26th of August, Russian President Boris Yeltsin issued a declaration stating that Russia reserved the right to raise the question of reviewing its borders with adjacent republics if union relations were broken off. Three days after the statement, Nazarbaev sent a telegram of strong protest to Yeltsin, criticising Russia for not repudiating territorial claims on Kazakhstan. On the same day, a Russian delegation headed by vice-president Aleksandr Rutskoi arrived in Almaty, and was met by angry activists of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk antinuclear movement who paraded with banners declaring 'Boris, you're wrong! Kazakh land is indivisible!' The situation was defused later that day when Rutskoi and Nazarbaev released a joint communiqué, in which both parties confirmed the territorial inviolability of

[39] In 1936, the name was changed to the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. The spelling 'Kazak' reflects the pronunciation of the original word in the Kazakh language (*Qazaq*) better than 'Kazakh.'

[40] For Kazakhstan's angry reactions to Solzhenitsyn's provocative writing and similar statements in Russia, see Alexandrov (1999: 28-30) and Uyama (1993: 123-124).

the two countries (Alexandrov 1999: 39-41, Uyama 1993: 124).

In May 1992, soon after Soviet collapse, Kazakhstan and Russia concluded a Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance in which they pledged to 'recognise and respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of existing borders' (Article 10). Further, the parties agreed to prohibit organisational as well as individual activities 'directed against independence, the territorial integrity of both states, or at exacerbating interethnic relations' on their territories (Article 10). This meant that Russia virtually conceded Kazakhstani authorities the right to suppress Russian separatist movements, and Russia committed itself to banning similar activities in its own territory (Alexandrov 1999: 89). Although irredentist claims did not cease to exist, such as those typified by the leader of Russia's Liberal-democratic party Vladimir Zhirinovskii, and there have been separatist activities in Kazakhstan,[41] these claims never enjoyed widespread support among local populations on either side of the border.

Delimitation of the border between the states began along the northern shore of the Caspian Sea, an area of crucial importance to the conflict over its huge deposits of oil and gas. Negotiations over the land border began in the fall of 1998. Both states took the Soviet inter-republican border as the basis for bilateral talks. There were, however, a number of problems caused by uncertainty surrounding the Soviet administrative border and complicated issues related to ownership of infrastructure. In some cases, a majority of the local population had citizenship of one country, while their settlement fell under the jurisdiction of the other. But the most contested issues were related to how to divide natural resources, railroads, dams, power plants and other facilities that were claimed by or belonged to both countries (Golunov 2005: 64-70). After long negotiations, a final agreement was reached on the 18th of January 2005, when Kazakhstan President Nursultan

[41] In November 1999, on a charge of separatist activities, Kazakhstani authorities arrested 22 individuals, of whom 11 were Russian citizens, ten were Kazakhstani citizens of Russian ethnicity, and one was a citizen of Moldova. The principal offender was a leader of an ultra-nationalist organisation in Russia. Some suspected that these arrests were stage-managed. For details, see Commercio (2004).

Nazarbaev and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a delimitation treaty in Moscow.[42]

By the early 1990s, Kazakhstan and Russia had introduced customs control and there was broad agreement that the two countries did not need a full-fledged system of border protection—which was also considered to be too expensive. Since the mid-1990s, however, border security has expanded (Golunov 2005: 274-275). In addition to increasing contraband and threats of 'extremists,' Golunov (2005: 295) argues that Russia was seeking to intercept an illegal flow of people and goods from or through Kazakhstan, while Kazakhstan was interested in strengthening its sovereignty. Perhaps the most controversial measure taken was Moscow's 'experiment' of deploying Cossack units along some sections of the border in 1996-1997, a move that provoked an angry reaction from Kazakhstan. For Kazakhs, Cossacks are a symbol of Russian colonialism and the most vocal flag-bearers of territorial revisionism.[43] Nevertheless, Kazakhstan and Russia have always been leaders in the quest to (re-)build a common economic space among the CIS states. Forming a Customs Union and then the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC),[44] both states basically agreed to guarantee the free exchange of goods and people on their territories.

6.2 Uzbeks: 'Ignored' by the Kin State?

Like Russia, Uzbekistan has a large number of co-ethnics in neighbouring states. After Soviet collapse, ethnic Uzbeks constituted the second largest ethnic group

[42] The parliament of Kazakhstan ratified the treaty on 2 December 2005.
[43] Alexandrov (1999: 141-143) points out that by deploying Cossack guards, the Yeltsin administration attempted to send 'a clear signal of dissatisfaction' with the status of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. Afterwards, Cossacks continued to be employed, but only as individuals by contract. For details, see Golunov (2005: 275-277).
[44] The EAEC was first formed as a Customs Union of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in January 1995. Kyrgyzstan joined in March 1996 and Tajikistan in February 1999. In October 2000, the organisation of the five states was renamed the EAEC.

after the titulars in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. While Kazakhstan's Uzbeks do not comprise a significant share of the total population, the Uzbek community has a strong presence in the southern regions adjacent to Uzbekistan. In contrast to Russia, however, the issue of ethnic kin abroad has almost never been seriously discussed in Uzbekistan. For the Karimov leadership, the highest priority has been state-building and security, not the interests of co-ethnics in neighbouring states.

6.2.1 The Absence of Compatriot Policy

The lack of an Uzbekistani policy toward co-ethnics is most evident in the total absence of programmes or legislation in Uzbekistan targeting co-ethnics. Uzbekistan's legislature does not provide any privileges for co-ethnics. The Citizenship Law (adopted and enforced in July 1992)[45] obliges an applicant to relinquish any foreign citizenship, to permanently reside in the Republic of Uzbekistan for more than ten years (or to have a parent or grand parent who was born in Uzbekistan), and to have a legal source of income (Article 17). The law also stipulates that in exceptional cases, compatriots,[46] i.e., foreign citizens who themselves, or whose parents or grandparents were 'once forced to leave [their] homeland due to the regime that existed at that time,' can obtain Uzbekistani citizenship in addition to their current citizenship (Article 10). Thus, Uzbekistan officially allows dual citizenship for those who have historic ties to the state. The overwhelming majority of Uzbek communities outside the present territory of Uzbekistan, however, are not descendants of refugees from Uzbekistan and thus are not eligible for this privilege. If anything, whether or not one is entitled to the compatriot status stipulated by the citizenship law does not seem to matter very much. 'Exceptional' recognition of dual citizenship is the only preferential treatment available to compatriots, and for the dual citizenship system to actually

[45] Uzbekistan provided citizenship for permanent residents at the time of its enforcement, irrespective of ethnicity or language skills (Article 4.1).
[46] '*Sootechestvenniki*' in the original text in Russian.

function, agreements with other states are required.

Matteo Fumagalli (2007b) is adamant that Uzbekistan has no diaspora policy whatsoever. He contends that ethnicity, or concern for co-ethnics living on the other side of the border, carries little explanatory power for Uzbekistan's foreign policy toward neighbouring countries with substantial Uzbek minorities—namely, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan was in fact directly involved in Tajikistani politics in the early 1990s and contributed to stopping the Civil War, but the presence of an Uzbek minority in Tajikistan is, Fumagalli argues, of little use for understanding these events. He attributes the marginalisation of Uzbeks abroad from political discourse to two policy priorities, namely, 'stability and security discourse, which differentiates sharply between internal stability and external disorder' and 'mutual tacit accords between Central Asian states not to meddle with each other's minorities' (Fumagalli 2007b: 115-116).

For the ruling elites in Tashkent, state-building and security assumed greater importance than establishing and/or developing links with Uzbeks abroad. The Karimov administration has often seen its co-ethnics living in foreign states as objects of control, not as people who need protection from Uzbekistan. Based on his long-term field research on the Uzbek minority in Kyrgyzstan, Nick Megoran also argues that it 'has been viewed with suspicion, and many Uzbeks feel alienated from and rejected by the Uzbekistani state' (Megoran 2002: 109). Uzbekistan has been troubled by repeated attacks by armed insurgents, among others the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), that aim to overthrow the Karimov regime.[47] The leadership appears to suspect Uzbek communities abroad of being collaborators or potential supporters of these insurgents who, the government believes, hide in neighbouring states. As Fumagalli suggests, '[t]he fact that Uzbeks, especially young males, are seen (rightly or wrongly) as the most likely recruits for underground movements such as Hizb-ut Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is a serious source of concern for Uzbekistani

[47] On the IMU, see, for example, International Crisis Group (2001).

authorities' (2007b: 115).

Southern Kazakhstan has reportedly seen a rise in activity among banned religious movements such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, a movement seeking to create an Islamic state by political means. International Crisis Group (2003: 18) attributes this activity primarily to the ethnic Uzbeks, both locals and those from Uzbekistan. Informants to this author also testified that there were indeed Uzbeks among the ranks of Hizb ut-Tahrir and that they were critical of the Karimov regime, but at the time of interview, they were not disproportionately represented.[48]

The government's intention to eliminate figures hostile to the state is obviously to blame for the long delays in the acquisition of Uzbekistani citizenship, but the unwelcoming attitude towards ethnic kin abroad can be also explained by another factor—demography.[49] Uzbekistan has the largest population of any Central Asian country, and that population is young and rapidly growing. The government faces economic difficulties and high unemployment, and cannot afford to accept new immigrants.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, despite their strong attachment to the territory of residence, in the first half of the 1990s, some of the Uzbeks in the south of Kazakhstan did move to Uzbekistan where living conditions were relatively more stable than in Kazakhstan's periphery at that time. This migration trend, however, did not continue and was soon reversed. This can be ascribed, first, to the lack of Uzbekistani policy aimed at the 'repatriation' of co-ethnics noted above, and second, to decreasing incentives to move to Uzbekistan for the Uzbeks in Kazakhstan. Their grievances over the issue of power-sharing and government language policy notwithstanding, the Uzbek minority increasingly benefited from

[48] Interview, March 2005. According to the interviewees, some members of Hizb ut-Tahrir were jailed for fabricated crimes such as possession of narcotics or arms. Also, there were cases when individuals with no connection with Hizb ut-Tahrir were arrested for allegedly participating in its activities.

[49] Interview with a professor in Tashkent, 13 September 2005. This informant also blamed complicated bureaucratic procedures for the delays. Another informant in Tashkent added that the lack of a compatriot policy was due to fears that neighbouring states might accuse Uzbekistan of expansionism (Interview, 10 September 2005).

Kazakhstan's rapid economic development and enjoyed a limited yet greater degree of political pluralism in Kazakhstan than in Uzbekistan. Understandably, Uzbekistan's political and economic environment became much less attractive to the Uzbeks in Kazakhstan.

A majority of the Kazakhstani Uzbeks were critical of the government policies of their kin state. Because many of them had relatives on the other side of the border, the Uzbeks in Kazakhstan inevitably compared their own lives to those of their co-ethnics in Uzbekistan. In the eyes of the Kazakhstani Uzbeks, the increasing gap in economic development between the two states was as clear as day. The extreme enthusiasm with which the Uzbekistan leadership prioritised security was also not popular. A common observation made by Uzbeks interviewed by the author was: 'There are more policemen than pedestrians in Tashkent.' An activist from the Uzbek Culture Centre compared the heads of the two states as follows: 'In Tashkent, I was caught in a trolley bus for twenty minutes while President Karimov went through. But President Nazarbaev danced with us during his visit to our *oblast*. We are fortunate with the president.'[50]

While not encouraging the migration of its co-ethnics from host states, Uzbekistan also seemed to be unwilling or unable to build close ties with them. According to Tursnai Ismailova, deputy chairperson of the Uzbek Cultural Centre of the South Kazakhstan *oblast*, her centre received no support from the kin state; the activities of the centre were funded by the local community and partly by the *oblast* administration.[51] The only assistance from the kin state for Uzbek communities abroad has been in the sphere of education in the native language. Until 1998, Uzbekistan provided textbooks for Uzbek-medium schools in neighbouring countries, offering pupils the standard educational programme of Uzbekistan.[52] Following the introduction of a Latin alphabet in Uzbekistan in

[50] Interview, 21 September 2005.
[51] Interview, 21 September 2005. The author asked Ismailova what kind of assistance, if any, she would wish to receive from Uzbekistan. Her answer was rather modest—costumes and instruments for folk music circles.
[52] In the 1990s, the Central Asian republics had an agreement to provide each other with

1993 (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001: 136),[53] Uzbek schools in Kazakhstan also used a Latin script from 1994 through 1997. At the end of the 1990s, however, these policies came to an end. Naturally, these changes in education policy led to serious confusion in teaching at Uzbek schools. Ismailova, who had worked as a leading specialist in charge of Uzbek schools in Kazakhstan, explained the abolition of the common educational programme from the perspective of both kin and host states. Several bomb blasts in Tashkent in February 1999 made national security a top priority for Uzbekistan, leaving other issues short-changed, while the Kazakhstani government increasingly wished to print its own textbooks for its citizens.[54]

6.2.2 Border Issues

For Kazakhstan, the conflict with Uzbekistan was perhaps the most heated of all Kazakhstan's border issues. While negotiations over delimitation were never easy, what irritated the Kazakhstani side most were shooting incidents caused by border guards from Uzbekistan, which resulted in dozens of casualties among the citizens of Kazakhstan. (To be fair, several Uzbekistani citizens also suffered in a similar way from Kazakhstani authorities). Yet these inter-state conflicts did not trigger serious inter-ethnic animosity in Kazakhstan. The governments of both sides never politicised the ethnic issue in the delimitation process, nor did they make territorial claims on the grounds of their respective co-ethnic settlements.

Historically, the southern regions of today's Kazakhstan have had closer ties with the present territories of other Central Asian republics than with the Kazakh steppe in the north. Under the rule of the Russian Empire, the territory of present-day Kazakhstan was divided into the Steppe General-Governorship and

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textbooks in their respective national languages. Interview with a former high-ranking official of Uzbekistan, 12 September 2005.

[53] Although Cyrillic is still widely used, school education has completely shifted to the Latin script.

[54] Interview with Tursnai Ismailova, 21 September 2005. She worked for the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan as a leading specialist in charge of Uzbek schools in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 1994-1998.

the Turkestan General-Governorship along a line stretching from Lake Balkhash to the Aral Sea, and then to the north-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea.[55] After the October Revolution in 1917, most of the land under the jurisdiction of the Turkestan General-Governorship was incorporated into the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic founded in 1918 (within the RSFSR). These regions became a part of Kazakhstan as a result of the national-territorial delimitation in Central Asia in 1924-1925.[56] As was the case with Russia, land swaps and mutual land leases with Uzbekistan under Soviet rule rendered the administrative border between the republics quite blurred.

After the fall of the USSR, delimitation did not start until serious problems arose in the borderland area. Timur Dadabaev (2004: 137-142) has pointed to three closely connected events that had a crucial impact on the reconfiguration of border policies among the Central Asian states: the Civil War in Tajikistan (1992-1997); bombings in Tashkent in February 1999 (allegedly engineered by the IMU); and IMU incursions into the territories of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 1999 -2000. The Karimov administration, the target of IMU activities, accused its counterpart in Tajikistan of harbouring insurgents and providing them with passage to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan from their bases in Afghanistan.[57] Mistrustful of its neighbouring states and questioning their ability to control the borders, Uzbekistan began laying minefields along its borders with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In 1999, it withdrew from the Agreement on Visa-Free Travel of CIS Citizens on the Territory of Its Members (Bishkek, October 1992).

With Kazakhstan, too, Uzbekistan increased border protection, although it did

[55] The Semirech'e province (*guberniia*) was put under the jurisdiction of the Steppe General-Governorship in 1882-1899.

[56] Karakaplakstan was first formed in 1925 as an autonomous *oblast* within the Kazakh ASSR. In 1930, it came under the direct jurisdiction of Russia, and two years later its status was upgraded to an autonomous republic. Since 1936, it has belonged to Uzbekistan. For a detailed account of the national-territorial delimitation in Central Asia, see Haugen (2003).

[57] Tashkent is particularly mistrustful of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan which had close ties with the IMU. The Islamic Renaissance Party formed the core of opposition forces in the civil war, and following a peace accord in 1997, its leaders joined the coalition government.

not use land mines for that purpose. (A visa-free exchange system exists between the states. See below.) In the spring of 1999, Uzbekistan's forces began installing border posts and watch towers in Tashkent *oblast*, which borders the South Kazakhstan *oblast*. This move was obviously intended to increase security after the terrorist acts in Tashkent, but also appeared to be an attempt to de facto establish Uzbekistan's rule over borderland districts where jurisdiction was blurred (Trofimov 2002: 54). In early 2000, Uzbekistan's border guards were found undertaking unilateral demarcation of the border with Kazakhstan, apparently deep inside Kazakhstan territory (International Crisis Group: 2002: 7-8). Moreover, the guards did not hesitate to open fire on local residents who, often not knowing where they were exactly located, crossed the border. (Such incidents continued even after delimitation was completed).[58] Naturally, the shooting of Kazakhstani citizens by foreign authorities aroused public sentiment in Kazakhstan. Antipathy for Uzbekistan and dissatisfaction with their own government were feelings Kazakh citizens frequently expressed in newspapers and on the Internet. These incidents did affect interethnic relations among people living in the borderland area: an Uzbek resident of a border village admitted that anti-Uzbek slogans, such as 'Uzbeks go home,' were voiced.[59] Nevertheless, the anti-Uzbek sentiment did not lead to serious inter-ethnic conflict in the local community.

At the end of 2001, an unusual incident occurred in the Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan borderland: ethnic Kazakh residents in this area declared 'independence.' Yet the aim of the participants in this movement was not separatism or irredentism based on ethnicity; their primary concerns were

[58] On 16 October 2003, the heads of the state border committees of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed a protocol in which the sides agreed not to use weapons against border violators unless the lives of border guards or other people were threatened (Dadabaev 2004: 159). According to the prosecutor's office in Shymkent, however, four people were shot dead by Uzbekistani border guards between mid-1999 and the end of June 2004. Olga Dosybieva, 'Uzbek Border Death,' IWPR's Reporting Central Asia 291, 8 June 2004.

[59] Interview with a resident, 17 March 2005.

mundane problems caused by the prolonged delay in border delimitation.[60] Until the end of the 1990s, the authorities in Uzbekistan appeared to be reluctant to negotiate border delimitation with their Kazakhstani counterparts despite the latter's frequent requests. This topic was officially raised for the first time in bilateral dialogue in October 1998 (Trofimov 2002: 53-54). Negotiations over delimitation began only in February 2000 (Golunov 2005: 150). A Treaty on the Kazakhstani-Uzbek State Border[61] signed on the 16th of November 2001 fixed ninety-six percent of the border. The remaining four percent, however, consisted of the most disputed plots. Some Kazakh inhabitants of the borderland, increasingly irritated by serious inconveniences caused by territorial confusion, resorted to extreme measures. In December 2001, villagers from Bagys and Turkestanets, not knowing in which country they lived, declared the establishment of the 'Bagys Kazakh Republic' in the hopes of attracting public attention to their plight. The majority of the residents of Bagys and Turkestanets were ethnic Kazakhs, and they wished their settlements to be included in Kazakhstan's territory. By the final delimitation, however, Bagys was incorporated into Kazakhstan, while Turkestanets passed into Uzbekistan's jurisdiction.[62]

Despite disputes and confrontations over border delimitation and control, the governments of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan did not make an issue of co-ethnics during negotiations. While in some cases the ethnicity of residents in a disputed area was taken into account, the two states made no claim to each other's territory on the grounds that it was settled by co-ethnics. After multiple and complex negotiations, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan finally signed a border delimitation

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[60] This 'independence' movement did assume an ethnic character due to the involvement of activists from *Azat*, a Kazakh nationalist organisation. But ethnicity did not play a central role in the incident.

[61] In Russian, the treaty is entitled 'Dogovor mezhdu Respublikoi Kazakhstan i Respublikoi Uzbekistan o kazakhstansko-uzbekskoi gosudarstvennoi granitse.' Interestingly, adjectives of different types ('Kazakhstani' and 'Uzbek,' not 'Uzbekistani') are used together here.

[62] Most residents of Turkestanets expressed a desire to move to the Kazakhstani territory. Daur Dosybiev, 'Uzbekistan: Ethnic Kazaks Set to Leave,' IWPR's Reporting Central Asia 157, 1 November 2002.

treaty on the 9th of September 2002.[63] As of July 2006, demarcation was still in progress.[64]

Given the importance the Uzbek authorities accorded to preventing incursions by 'enemies' from outside, it is perhaps not surprising that Tashkent has cast a suspicious eye on its co-ethnics abroad. Border closures, the introduction of tighter passport regimes, and more intrusive customs checks have aroused the antipathy of Uzbeks living in neighbouring countries, and led to their alienation from the kin state. Nick Megoran's in-depth interviews revealed a sense of exclusion among the Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan: 'The experience of being turned away, or treated with suspicion, or humiliated at the border by people of the same *millat* [nation] was generally traumatic for Uzbeks' (Megoran 2007: 271). Their inability to attend family ceremonies such as weddings or funerals organised on the other side of the border was particularly distressing. The Uzbeks in Kazakhstan were no exception.

In the early years following independence, crossing the border between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was quite easy, but since the end of the 1990s, border control has tightened.[65] Despite a visa-free movement regime between the states, a Kazakhstani citizen cannot cross the border (by land) with only a passport.[66] When the author visited Sarylgash district (*raion*) of the South Kazakhstan *oblast* in March 2005, a resident of a borderland village Zhibek Zholy recounted how she used to visit the Uzbekistani side of the border quite often, but now she does so only once a year. Every time she goes to a hospital (geographically closest to her

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[63] The parliament of Kazakhstan ratified the agreements of November 2001 and September 2002 on 2 July 2003.

[64] Information provided by Daur Dosybiev, independent journalist in Shymkent, 3 July 2006.

[65] This tightening of border control has to do not only with the security concerns discussed above. In 2002-2003, the government of Uzbekistan made several attempts to close the border in order to prevent its citizens from travelling to Kazakhstan for shopping and thus spending money there (Dadabaev 2004: 151-152).

[66] According to Ol'ga Dosybieva, a Shymkent-based journalist who actively covers border issues, until around 1998 it was enough to show an internal identity card (*udostoverenie*) to cross the border into Uzbekistan, but later it became necessary to carry a passport. Interview, 17 March 2005.

village) or visits her relatives in Uzbekistan, she needs to certify the reason for her visit and provide written documentation to prove it. The local Uzbek community in the south of Kazakhstan is of course not happy about inconveniences caused by intensified border control between the kin and host state. However, this has not led to demands to annex their settlements to the territory of Uzbekistan. Meanwhile, despite such increasingly strict border control measures, illegal border crossings are in fact rampant[67] and smuggling on the border is flourishing.[68]

6.3 Uighurs: Labelled as 'Terrorists'

Straddling the borderland between Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, the Uighurs have been buffeted by the winds of international power politics. In the past, the Soviet Union actively played the Uighur card against China, and this policy was coupled with generous protection for the linguistic and cultural needs of Soviet Uighurs. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the Uighurs in Kazakhstan have found themselves in a disadvantaged situation; their newly independent host state was increasingly willing to 'cooperate' with China over the issue of the Uighurs.

6.3.1 Post-Soviet Border Delimitation between Kazakhstan and China

China was the sole 'far abroad' state with which Kazakhstan needed to negotiate its border after independence. As will be discussed below, some observers in

[67] The author's observations revealed that dozens of people were offering 'services' for three hundred Kazakh *tenge* (approximately 2,3 US dollars) or 2,000 Uzbek *sum*s near the customs post at Zhibek Zholy. According to a local journalist, they were residents of the borderland area, and they allow clients to go through their yards and then pass them to counterparts in the Uzbekistani side. Further, several hundreds meters away from the post, there was an unpaved open road that crossed the border and along which people and cars could simply come and go. The abovementioned Zhibek Zholy resident told me that she makes it a rule to cross the border officially after she got arrested for an illegal crossing.

[68] For a detailed report on smuggling and involvement of border guards, see Daur Dosybiev, 'Smugglers' Paradise on Kazak-Uzbek Border, ' IWPR's Reporting Central Asia, No. 508, 10 September, 2007.

Kazakhstan complained that Astana's concessions to China were too generous. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan's agreement on border delimitation with China did not trigger popular protest as it did in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, where ratification of a border agreement with China resulted in a nationwide anti-government movement and subsequent resignation of the cabinet of ministers in May 2002.[69] On the issue of the transborder Uighur community, Kazakhstan and China found it in their mutual interest to cooperate in containing the Uighur independence movement on both sides of the border.

Historically, several nomadic khanates existed in the present territories of Kazakhstan and Chinese Xinjiang. In this region, the first state border was drawn by two colonial powers—the Russian Empire and the Qing Dynasty. Since the second half of the seventeenth century, a nomadic empire of Zhungars expanded its influence from a base in the northern part of Eastern Turkistan. Under the threat of attacks from Zhungars, some Kazakh rulers had, since the 1730s, rendered vassal homage to the Russian tsar to obtain protection. After the Zhungars were destroyed by the Qing Dynasty in 1755, Kazakhs also paid tribute to Beijing, but this dual homage was made for the sake of convenience and was largely symbolic. In the nineteenth century, Russia launched a full-fledged invasion of the Kazakh steppe, and by the mid-nineteenth century the territory of present-day Kazakhstan was fully annexed to Russia.

Of several treaties and protocols on the border concluded between Imperial Russia and the Qing, the most important ones—those that laid the foundation for today's Kazakhstani-Chinese border—were the Beijing Treaty (November 1860), the Chuguchak/Tarbagatai Protocol (September 1864) and the St. Petersburg Treaty[70] (February 1881) (Khafizova 2000: 77-78, Khliupin 1999: 29-33). After

[69] The protest was stimulated by shootings of unarmed protesters in Asky raion in the south of Kyrgyzstan in March 2002. They demanded the release of Azimbek Beknazarov, their member of parliament whom they believed had been arrested for his harsh criticism of president Akaev over the territorial issue with China. See Radnitz (2005) for an analysis of these bloody events and protest actions in Aksy.

[70] Taking advantage of Muslim uprisings in Xinjiang, Russia occupied the eastern part of the Ili Valley in 1871 in violation of previous agreements with China. In accordance with

both empires collapsed in revolution in the early twentieth century, the Kuomintang sought to recover 'lost territories,' insisting that the treaties with Russia had been concluded on unequal terms. Its rule, however, did not reach to the peripheries of the former Qing Dynasty; rather, Xinjiang was strongly influenced by the USSR in the 1930-40s. After the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, Moscow maintained friendly relations with Beijing, while retaining its influence in Xinjiang through economic and cultural assistance. With the beginning of the Sino-Soviet diplomatic split in the late 1950s, the relationship between the states deteriorated sharply, resulting in military conflicts on Damanskii Island in the Far East and near lake Zhalanashkol, Kazakhstan (in the south of the then Semipalatinsk, now East Kazakhstan, *oblast*) in 1969. The Soviet-Chinese border was closed until the 1980s when the relationship between Beijing and Moscow improved. In the late 1980s, both parties reached an agreement on delimiting most sections of the eastern border, although the western part remained unsolved.

After the Soviet break-up, nearly the entire Chinese-Soviet western border was transformed into the border between China and three newly independent republics of Central Asia. On the 26th of April 1994, Kazakhstan and China concluded an agreement on delimitation of most parts of the border. As to the remaining sections, the two parties concluded two supplementary agreements on the 24th of September 1997 and then on the 4th of July 1998. On the 23rd of November 1999 the presidents of Kazakhstan and China issued a joint communiqué, declaring that the border question between the two states had been 'completely settled.'[71] Information concerning the details of the negotiations, however, was strictly curtailed. Klara Khafizova, Kazakhstan's leading specialist

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the St. Petersburg Treaty, Russia returned to the Qing most of the territory it had occupied, while keeping a part within its territory. Approximately 43,000 Uighurs who wished to retain Russian citizenship moved from the territory which Russia returned to the Qing Empire to Semirech'e (Kamalov 2005: 149). See also Chapter Two.

[71] Khliupin (1999: 55-56), however, asserts that Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokaev has never given a definite answer to the question of whether the territorial question with China was completely solved by the 1998 agreement.

on China, writes disconcertedly: '[D]elimitation and demarcation were carried out in secret from the people, who found out about it all postfactum' (Khafizova 2000: 76).[72] Although critical comments on 'too generous' concessions to China did appear in the mass media,[73] information control by the government seems to have contributed to the successful ratification of these agreements by the parliament.[74] According to Golunov (2005: 149), demarcation of the borders was completed in October 2003.

6.3.2 Renewed Links between Xinjiang and Kazakhstani Uighurs: Transnational Movement for Independence?

Improvements in the Sino-Soviet relationship and the subsequent Soviet break-up have resulted in renewed links between Uighurs on opposite sides of the border, and this has had a significant economic, cultural, and political impact on Uighur communities in Kazakhstan and particularly in Xinjiang.[75] As Sean Roberts points out in his comprehensive study of the Uighur communities in the Ili Valley, the reopening of the border and these increased exchanges made Kazakhstan's (ex-)capital Almaty an important site for the transnational Uighur movement:

> In addition to the Uighurs who have long lived in Kazakhstan and those that came from China in the 1950s and 1960s, Almaty is now home to a growing number of Uighurs who have recently come to the city from China mostly to trade. For those Xinjiang Uighurs, Almaty is [a] *doorway* out of the turmoil in Xinjiang that opens up to the rest of the world. Furthermore, given this critical

[72] On the government's information control, see also Khliupin (1999: 46-49).
[73] See Khliupin (1999: 49-50, 56-57) and Khafizova (2000: 74, 76). According to Khliupin, some high-ranking officials informally expressed dissatisfaction with the delimitation agreement. Khliupin and Khafizova themselves were severe critics of Astana's policy towards the Kazakhstani-Chinese border in their writings.
[74] Both of the 1997 and 1998 agreements were ratified on 24 March 1999 in Kazakhstan. The agreement of 24 April 1994 was ratified by presidential decree as of 15 June 1995 at a time when the parliament was not operational. (It was dissolved in March 1995). The agreement came into force three months later, on 11 September 1995.
[75] For details, see Roberts (2004).

> mass of Uighurs in the city and the increased international access to Kazakhstan, Uighur exiles from elsewhere are in close contact with Almaty's Uighurs and often visit the city expressly to meet with them. For these exiles abroad, Almaty's proximity to Xinjiang and its many Uighur residents from Xinjiang make this city a *window* into the homeland from which they are exiled. As simultaneously a *window* into and *doorway* out of the Uighurs' homeland, Almaty has become one of the most important transnational sites for the negotiation of the Uighur stateless nation's ideology, culture, and political agenda (Roberts 2003: 280, emphasis in the original text).

Naturally, this situation was not welcomed by Chinese Communist Party officials, who grew anxious about Kazakhstan's potential to become a stronghold for a Xinjiang independence movement.

Kazakhstan's attitude towards the Uighurs has fluctuated since the fall of the USSR. As argued in Chapter Two, by demonstrating the superiority of Soviet nationalities policies over Chinese policies towards the Uighurs, Moscow stimulated the Uighurs' quest for national self-determination in Xinjiang. In the first years of independence, Kazakhstan played this traditional 'Uighur card'; the Kazakhstani government had de facto tolerated the activities of Uighur organisations on its territory, including those demanding the independence of Xinjiang (see Chapter Four). However, China's growing economic presence together with increasing threats from Islamic militants in Central Asia since the end of the 1990s led Astana to curry favour with Beijing by tightening control over Uighur movements in Kazakhstan (Roberts 2004: 232-234, Roberts 2003: 250-260). The leadership of Kazakhstan also began denying asylum to refugees from China; in February 1999 Kazakhstan deported three Uighurs back to China where they were subsequently executed. This step aroused international criticism (UNHCR Almaty, Kazakhstan: 6). Since then, no refugees have officially been deported back, but local NGO activists testify that Kazakhstani authorities have in

fact used unofficial channels to arrest some Uighurs and hand them over to China.

The formation of a regional security alliance called the Shanghai Five and its reorganisation as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) highlights China's growing presence in Central Asia and its success in managing the Uighur question in cooperation with neighbouring states. Continued negotiations among China and the four neighbouring ex-Soviet states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) over border delimitation resulted in the Shanghai Agreement on confidence building measures in the borderland area in April 1994, after which this grouping came to be known as the Shanghai Five. Subsequently, the five states signed the Moscow Agreement on arms reduction in the borderland area, in April 1997. At the same time, China and the four CIS countries completed delimitation of their respective borders.[76] In June 2001, the Shanghai Five was enlarged with the official entry of Uzbekistan and renamed the SCO. Now the SCO's main agenda is officially the fight against the so-called 'three evils', namely separatism, extremism, and terrorism. Although each member state has different (but allegedly linked) targets such as Chechen insurgents and the IMU, many Uighur leaders whom the author interviewed believe that the real purpose of the SCO was to suppress international Uighur movements.[77] Ablet Kamalov, a Kazakhstani scholar of Uighur origin, writes: 'Every meeting of the Shanghai Five resulted in actions undertaken against Uighur organisations in Kazakhstan. … [D]iscussions of Uighur separatism became a permanent subject of the Shanghai Five meetings' (Kamalov 2005: 162).

It should be noted, however, that pressure from China alone does not explain why Astana cast its eye upon the Uighur movement. Although Uighur activists stress that their ethnic homeland is within the borders of today's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Province, Kazakhstan, like China, appears to be wary of potential

[76] On the negotiations over border delimitation between China on the one hand, and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the other, within the framework of Shanghai Five, see Iwashita (2002: 102-104).
[77] On this point, see also Khliupin (1999: 76).

Uighur demands for territorial autonomy within Kazakhstan or annexation of a part of the republic to a Uighur state, should such a state come into being. Konstantin Syroezhkin, a well-known Kazakhstani specialist on China and research fellow at the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan explicitly expresses this anxiety:

> The idea of establishing a Uighur autonomous region within Kazakhstan remains among Kazakhstani Uighurs even now, periodically reminding society and the authorities about its existence. Although from a practical standpoint it is highly doubtful that this idea can become a reality, such sentiment among the Uighurs indirectly harbours a threat to the national security of Kazakhstan, especially if we consider the current dominant global trend not to punish ethnic separatism (Syroezhkin 2003: 441).

Despite being absurd and written with unsophisticated language, a piece published in a nationalist newspaper *Kazakhskaia pravda* (which should not be confused with *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*) in early 2004 provides another example of Kazakhstan's concern for possible territorial demands on the part of the Uighurs. Entitled 'Kazakhs are Threatened with Latent Danger,' the article asserts that Uighur 'separatists' have been secretly making inroads into Kazakhstan and penetrating all manner of state structures. Their final target is, it argues, the establishment of a Uighur state on Kazakhstan's territory.[78]

Whether or not the SCO propaganda is to blame, prejudice against the Uighurs began to spread across Kazakhstan (and Central Asia as a whole), supported by notions that the Uighurs are 'terrorists' who are plotting armed struggles with an aim to build a Uighur state or an Islamic caliphate. An incident in September 2000 further intensified these attitudes: in the centre of Almaty, four men (various sources gave different information regarding the citizenship and

[78] Uighur leaders often suspect China's presence behind these kinds of anti-Uighur campaigns.

ethnicity of these individuals, but at least one of them was a Chinese citizen of Uighur ethnicity), who allegedly had killed two personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, were shot dead by Internal Ministry's forces.[79] After this, police searched houses in compact Uighur settlements, and took many Uighurs who had nothing to do with the incident to the police station for questioning.[80] The mass media sensationally reported the incident as 'Uighur extremism.' Dilbirim Samsakova, a Uighur activist in Almaty and head of the *Nazugum* Foundation, who volunteered to take care of two children of a deceased suspect, was found dead in early June 2001; the culprit is still at large. This incident had a significant impact on the entire Uighur community in Kazakhstan.[81] A Uighur non-partisan candidate for the 2003 Almaty city *maslikhat* elections testified that he was almost de-registered on a charge of 'calling for the overthrow of the government.' In fact, he only paid his respects to fellow Uighurs who were attending a cultural event.[82] The author's interviewees further complained that many Uighurs who had worked in the state sector lost their jobs after this incident.

In the face of this serious situation, the Uighur leaders did their best to secure a broad-based understanding that Uighurs were not 'terrorists.' The National Association of Uighurs (NAU) wrote letters to the president and the government, appealed to the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, and also organised meetings with journalists in an attempt to encourage a positive view of the Uighur

[79] A complete picture of the incident has not been forthcoming. According to some local Uighur observers, the suspects were engaged in smuggling and had disputes with the police over the amount of their bribe. Thus, they argue, the killing of the officers was not politically motivated. For details of the incident, see Bekturganova (2002: 3-6) and Syroezhkin (2003: 584, note 83).

[80] An informant testified that militia came to his house during a funeral repast; they suspected that the ceremony was held in memory of the Xinjiang Uighurs killed in the incident. Another interviewee told the author that militia searched houses and confiscated a Uighur newspaper printed in Xinjiang with Arabic script as an 'evidence' of participation in terrorist activities. Interview, 10 September 2003.

[81] Immediately after the September 2000 incident, the labelling of Uighurs as 'terrorists' was so widespread that even little Uighur children in nursery school were called 'terrorists' by other kids.

[82] Interview, 10 September 2003.

community and thwart growing prejudice.[83] The Chairman of the Culture Centre of Talgar *Raion*, in the outskirts of Almaty, demanded that the local administration employ Uighurs, criticising the dismissal of young Uighurs after the 2003 incident.[84]

These efforts by the Uighur leaders were strictly non-confrontational. The primary tactics were appeals and petitions. An overwhelming majority of Uighur leaders agreed that the highest priority was to avoid being regarded as disloyal to the regime or hostile to the host society. A Uighur activist stated: 'For us, the support for Nazarbaev is a kind of insurance that does not allow anybody to call us extremists. We should insure ourselves against being disturbed [by the authorities].'[85] This fear of being blamed for alleged participation in terrorist activities also explains the highly pragmatic attitude of the Uighur elites on the Xinjiang question. With a few exceptions of unregistered independence activists, Uighur leaders did not publicly demand Uighur independence because such demands could endanger both their own position and the position of the entire Uighur community in Kazakhstan.

6.4 Koreans: A Minority with Two Kin States

The case of the Koreans is unique because they have two kin states. Bringing their confrontation to the diaspora, North and South Korea competed with each other seeking the dominant position as kin state to the Soviet (and post-Soviet) Koreans. Most of the Kazakhstani Koreans had de facto 'chosen' South Korea as their kin state. This choice makes sense in view of the drastic changes in the international

[83] Interview with Khakimzhan Mametov, a member of the NAU, 24 September 2003 and 20 September 2004. The NAU was established in February 2002 and headed by professor Sharipzhan Nadirov. The NAU was primarily involved in defending Uighur rights, informational, and research activities.
[84] Interview with Rozakhun Dugashev, 16 September 2004.
[85] Interview, 29 September 2005.

environment since the end of Cold War.

6.4.1 South-North Rivalry over the Koreans in the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union had no diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea, and until the end of the 1980s, contacts with the communist People's Democratic Republic of Korea were very limited. As we have seen in Chapter Two, the only exception to this rule was the assignment of hundreds of Soviet Koreans to Pyongyang following the end of World War II. The isolation of Soviet Koreans from their co-ethnics in the historic homeland changed under Gorbachev's *perestroika*. North Korea successively organised performances by folk singers, dancers, and circus troupes, as well as exhibitions of books, photographs, and handcrafts, all of which were met with great interest by Soviet Koreans who previously had little opportunity to interact with the culture and art of their ancestral land. For its part, South Korea invited a delegation of some 140 Soviet Koreans to the World Korean Athletic Meet in September 1989. In this period, *Lenin Kichi* (later renamed as *Koryŏ Ilbo*),[86] a Korean newspaper based in Almaty, repeatedly published accounts by people who visited Seoul or Pyongyang and were moved by the warm reception from co-ethnics there.[87] The Koreans in the Soviet Union and on the Korean Peninsula showed great interest in one another, as they had had virtually no opportunity to interact prior to *perestroika*.

Beginning at the end of the 1980s, Korean organisations mushroomed, facilitating exchanges with co-ethnics, from both South and North Korea. However, a majority of these organisations increasingly focused on relations with the Republic of Korea, against the backdrop of rapid rapprochement between Seoul and Moscow. Active economic cooperation between the two states soon led to the establishment of diplomatic relations in September 1990. South Korea's

[86] Lenin Kichi and South Korea's Dong-a Ilbo signed a business cooperation agreement in October 1989.
[87] See Gendai gogaku juku 'Rēnin kichi' o yomukai (1991), a collection of articles of Lenin Kichi translated from Korean and Russian into Japanese.

success in the rivalry for greater influence over Soviet Koreans was due to the greater financial recourses allocated for compatriots and the more positive image projected by the South. Back in 1988, the Seoul Olympic Games had shown the Soviet Koreans the remarkable economic development of South Korea. In addition, the propagation of Christianity by enthusiastic Korean missionaries—from South Korea, the USA, and other parts of the world—attracted many Soviet Koreans who were seeking not only contact with co-ethnics, but were also suffering an identity crisis in a rapidly changing social environment. In contrast, Kim Il Song's idea of *Chuch'e*, or self-reliance, which Pyongyang tried to disseminate among Koreans abroad, held little appeal for Soviet Koreans who had begun to enjoy liberalisation under *perestroika*. In relation to the host state, too, Seoul appealed to Moscow as an economic partner.

Pyongyang did manage to find a group of supporters who organised the Association for Assistance in the Unification of Korea (AAUK, founded in November 1989). The relationship between the AAUK and the All-Union Association of Soviet Koreans (AASK, founded in May 1990), an umbrella organisation for most of the national-cultural centres across the Soviet Union, deteriorated; mutual criticism and confrontation reached into affiliated member groups at the republican and regional levels.[88] Efforts were made to unify the AASK and the AAUK, but the Soviet Union collapsed before an agreement could be reached.

Due to the dissolution of the USSR, the newborn Korean movement was divided among republics. In February 1992, the AASK was re-organised into the International Confederation of Korean Associations (ICKA), an organisation designed to maintain inter-republican connections among Korean organisations. The ICKA, however, has not been successful in achieving this goal. Inter-state

[88] It should be noted that the conflict between the AASK and the AAUK was only one of the intra-ethnic confrontations among Korean organisations. Kim and Khan have identified political, ethnic, economic, territorial, and 'stratificational' factors that caused fragmentation and lack of unity in the Korean movement. For details, see Kim and Khan (2001: 121-124).

cooperation has not been addressed and even within states—Uzbekistan and Russia, the two former Soviet Republics with the largest and second-largest populations respectively, for example—the Koreans have splintered into a number of rival groups.[89] Compared to their compatriots in the neighbouring post-Soviet states, the Kazakhstani Koreans are much better organised. The Republican Association of the Korean Cultural Centres of Kazakhstan (RAKCCK), and its successor the Association of Koreans of Kazakhstan (AKK), formed in October 1995, managed to unite almost all Kazakhstani Koreans and claimed to represent the Korean diaspora within and beyond the country.

In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, South Korea enjoyed an almost exclusive presence in the local Korean community. In addition to its diplomatic representative, Seoul opened the Almaty Centre for Education of the Republic of Korea,[90] which conducted cultural and educational activities, including instruction in the Korean language. The South Korean government provides various kinds of assistance to local Korean organisations and to mass media in the Korean language. South Korean business has also been actively making inroads into Kazakhstan's market. Kazakhstani Korean entrepreneurs made good use of 'ethnic bonds' with the kin state, while simultaneously contributing to the economy of the host state. The AKK maintained close relations with government officials and business people from South Korea. Conversely, *Kotongryon*, the only pro-North organisation to subscribe to the cause of the AAUK, de-facto ceased to exist.[91] The diaspora's strikingly different attitudes towards the two kin states were also related to pressure from Seoul not to pursue contacts with Pyongyang, if

[89] On Korean organisations in post-Soviet Russia, see Pak and Bugai (2004: 336-348).
[90] The Association of the Koreans of Kazakhstan used to rent the building of this centre before they constructed their own building—the Korean House. The Centre for Education of the Republic of Korea is located in Tashkent too.
[91] In early 1994, the discontinued Kazakhstan branch of the AAUK was reopened as the Kazakhstan Korean Association *Edinstvo*, which in December 1997 was renamed *Kotongryon*. Unlike the AKK, *Kotongryon* had no official branches in the regions, and its activities seem to have been supported by a handful of activists. In an interview with the author in 2003, Radmir Kan, the president of *Kotongryon*, admitted that it was not active any more. Interview with Radmir Kan, 29 August 2000 and 25 September 2003.

South Korean support was to be forthcoming. The 'Sunshine Policy' articulated by the Kim Dae Jung Administration in 1998 and the easing of tensions between North and South has somewhat diminished this pressure. At any rate, the presence of Pyongyang has become practically negligible.

6.4.2 South Korea: Adored Homeland?

So far, for the Koreans in Kazakhstan, the option to migrate to the homeland does not exist for all practical purposes. The Russian Far East is one possible 'return' destination; as shown in Chapter Two, there was a move among Korean leaders to 're-create' a Korean autonomous territory in the Maritime region (Primorskii *krai*) under *perestroika*. But a massive migration to that area from Kazakhstan has not been forthcoming as of yet.[92] Indeed, the vice-president of the Association of Koreans of Kazakhstan (AKK) Gurii Khan stated at the third session of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan in 1996 that the AKK 'does not support the idea of migration by Kazakhstani Koreans to the Russian Far East. For us Kazakhstan has become the Motherland.'[93] While few would wish or dare to move to North Korea, a totalitarian state in deep economic crisis, the government of South Korea does not encourage co-ethnics abroad to move for permanent residence.

Although quite active in seeking contact with Koreans in Kazakhstan and other parts of the former USSR, South Korea, unlike Germany, does not provide co-ethnics with citizenship and allowances for permanent settlement in the kin state.[94] Formerly a source country for immigrants, South Korea changed its migration policy and began to invite foreign workers in the 1990s. It was against this backdrop that the Law on Immigration and Legal Status of Compatriots

[92] For details, see Section Three of Chapter Three.
[93] See Tskhai et al. (2000: 136).
[94] According to Lee Tae-Woo, Consul of the Republic of Korea in Kazakhstan, there have been very few cases when ethnic Koreans applied for South Korean citizenship. He testified that since his arrival in 2002 he received only one application from an elderly individual over eighty years old. Interview, 17 September 2003.

Abroad was adopted in September 1999.[95] This law relaxed conditions for entry into and stay in the Republic of Korea, and guaranteed freedom to work and engage in other economic activities for South Korean passport holders and compatriot foreign citizens who permanently reside abroad. Former Soviet Koreans, however, were excluded from the category of compatriots abroad, which was defined as 'holders of the citizenship of the Republic of Korea or their lineal descendants.' Thus, the law does not apply to those who moved overseas before the establishment of the South Korean government (15 August 1948) and their descendants. A primary reason for the exclusion of pre-1948 immigrants is believed to be pressure from China which did not want its two million Koreans affected by the law.[96] Seoul did not wish to jeopardise its relationship with a strong neighbour for the sake of co-ethnics abroad. Meanwhile, the Law on Foundations for Compatriots Abroad (October 1997), another piece of legislation related to co-ethnics, defined 'compatriots' as persons of Korean ethnic origin irrespective of citizenship. Aiming to provide linguistic and cultural assistance to ethnic Koreans and support their integration into host states, this law did not refer to immigration to South Korea.

The Koreans in Kazakhstan and other former Soviet states have an ambivalent feeling toward the Republic of Korea. For them, South Korea is a historic homeland with which exchanges became at last possible after a long period of isolation. However, real contacts between co-ethnics have made both sides recognise the clear difference in culture, mindset, and mentality. South Koreans often do not hesitate to express their belief that all Koreans, no matter where they live, should speak the Korean language, if they claim to be Korean. Understandably, Russian-speaking Koreans find this attitude unpleasant and humiliating. After the initial euphoria of 'reunion' with co-ethnics, Kazakhstani

[95] This refers to the text translated into Japanese.

[96] Except those who hold a South Korean passport, most Japanese Koreans do not enjoy the privileges of compatriots either. The Korean community that benefited most from the law is that which lives in the United States, which consists primarily of recent immigrants.

Koreans have come to develop an identity, distinct from co-ethnics on the Korean Peninsula.

It is not easy to predict the reactions of Kazakhstani Koreans if South Korea were to adopt a 'repatriation' policy toward overseas Koreans (which is unlikely at present). Even if Seoul were to change its migration policy, it would be quite difficult for the 'Soviet' Koreans to integrate into South Korean society, as they had developed a distinct ethnic identity during the decades-long separation from their homeland. Despite possible difficulties they would face in seeking integration into the society of the kin state, some might take this risk in search of a better life, as the massive exodus of Germans from Kazakhstan suggests. Yet the relatively stable position of Koreans in Kazakhstan, coupled with Kazakhstan's remarkable economic development in recent years, would definitely serve to encourage them to remain in the host state.

6.5 Conclusion

The analysis on kin state policies toward co-ethnics above suggests that bilateral relations and internal conditions take priority over ethnic links. The triadic nexus relationship of host state, minority, and kin state does not necessarily lead to an escalation of ethnic antagonism; in fact, it can serve to constrain nationalist demands on the part of host and kin states.

Clear differences in compatriot policy between Russia and Uzbekistan aside, a key restraint here appears to be the interlocking nature of cross-border ethnic communities. A kin state's irredentist claims based on its co-ethnics abroad or attempts to promote their interests within a host state carry the inherent risk of inviting counter-claims. This is a dangerous scenario for practically all states in Eurasia that contain substantial numbers of co-ethnics from neighbouring states. As demonstrated in this chapter, Russia and Uzbekistan did not emphasise the

issue of co-ethnics during the delimitation process; neither did Kazakhstan make territorial demands on Russia, Uzbekistan, or China on the grounds that ethnic Kazakhs resided in these states. This is not to suggest that ethnicity has never been used as a diplomatic card. For example, Russia has actively used the Russian question in the Baltic states, linking it to the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enlargement and Russia-EU relations. This fact, however, does support the abovementioned pattern of prioritising bilateral relations over ethnicity. Russia is willing to politicise the diaspora issue when it aims to pressure states that are, conveniently for Moscow, home to ethnic Russians. In Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states, Russia chose not to use a diaspora card for the sake of its growing interest in natural resources in these states and their geopolitical importance in international security. Indeed, the broad commitment to cooperation across the region was clearly signalled by the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC); in both organisations, Russia and Kazakhstan played key roles as original member states.

From the point of view of managing ethnic divisions, over the period addressed in this study Russia's and Uzbekistan's policy toward co-ethnics has resulted in facilitating government control of their co-ethnics in Kazakhstan. Russia in principle accepted ex-Soviet citizens arriving from Kazakhstan and other republics, thereby offering an option of 'exit' for ethnic Russians. But Moscow's pressure on the government of Kazakhstan over the issue of compatriots—who had chosen to, or had no choice but to stay in Kazakhstan—was quite limited. With the Putin leadership, the Nazarbaev administration managed to elicit not only concession, but even support from Russia for putting the entire Russian movement in Kazakhstan under government control. In the case of the Uzbeks, Uzbekistan's suspicious view towards co-ethnics abroad as potential anti-Karimov militants, and its inability (or lack of willingness) to present itself as a welcoming and attractive homeland have served

to alienate Kazakhstani Uzbeks from Tashkent, a situation which has led the Uzbeks in Kazakhstan to recognise the relative superiority of the host state regime over that of the kin state. In both cases, ethnic grievances did not mutate into border disputes.

The stateless Uighurs and deported Koreans were controllable for different reasons. The Uighurs were caught between Kazakhstan and China, two states that view them as a potential threat to their security and are both willing to cooperate in their efforts to suppress Uighur independence movements. In a post-September 11th world in which the 'war against terror' is justified elsewhere, the Uighurs are an easy target for being labelled extremists seeking Xinjiang independence. This situation has left the Uighurs practically no other option but to profess loyalty to the regime of the host state. Finally, the Koreans are an 'ideal' diaspora who pose no threat to Kazakhstan's integrity and indeed play an active bridging role between their kin state and Kazakhstan. After all, if (although this is quite unlikely) the Koreans were to demand compensation for the deportation or bring up again the issue of territorial autonomy, it would not be Kazakhstan but the Russian Federation, the legal successor of the USSR who would be targeted.[97] Kazakhstani Korean business people have effectively used ethnic ties with South Korea in order to enrich themselves and enhance the influence of the Korean community as a whole in Kazakhstan through their economic contributions to the host state. And for their business ventures to succeed, the Korean elite need the recognition, if not the active support, of the state.

Thus, while the relationships between Kazakhstan and its minorities' homelands vary, Astana enjoys an external environment amenable to control over

[97] In April 1991, shortly before Soviet collapse, the Russian parliament independently adopted a Law on Rehabilitation of Oppressed Peoples, which promised compensation for those who were subjected to forced migration. The law also referred to rights to return to the area of previous residence and to re-establish the 'national-state formation' that had existed before deportation. Based on this law, the Supreme Soviet of Russia prepared a Decree (*Postanovlenie*) on Rehabilitation of the Russian Koreans, which came into force in April 1993. Implementation of social compensation depended on the budget of the local authorities who were to carry out such compensation. For details, see Pak and Bugai (2004: 332-336).

all four ethnic groups addressed in this study.