

The Concept of a "Greater Central Asia": Perspective of a Regional Approach

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After twenty years of independence, Central Asian republics continue to share a wide range of endogenous problems which seriously influence and hinder their economic and social development, an intra-regional cooperation and their full affirmation in the international geopolitical scenario: the slow implementation of economic, political and social reforms, poverty, the lack of regional cooperation in the economic and energy sector, the threats represented by the Islamic terrorism, the drug and weapons traffics, a strong marked presidential political model, the failure to solve endogenous problems - such as the shared borders and minorities rights - characterize the post soviet Central Asia allowing to identify itself as a region.

This concept of a "*Greater Central Asia*" reflects the will to promote a regional approach expressed by US and EU in order to help Central Asian republics to handle and to solve the common problems promoting regional stability and security in the area: this approach appears fully functional at the strategic goals achieved by the United States (and - in the lesser extent - by the EU) in the area, focusing on the strengthen of the security and the stability in the region by means of the military and economic cooperation of the Central Asian republics in the framework of the Northern Distribution Network.

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the impact of this regional approach in the evolution of post soviet Central Asia in the next years, starting from the analysis of the potential fields of positive application and the weaknesses points which could hinder its concrete implementation. However, the mistrust existing among the Central Asia political leaders, more interested in internal issues and to affirm themselves as regional leaders than to find common regional solutions, the lack of cooperation between "energy-rich" and "energy-poor" countries, the divergent geopolitical goals achieved by the two regional superpowers could represent serious threats to the coherent and successful setting up of a regional approach.