Kazakhstan Chaos: An Opportunity, But for Who?

Kazakhstan has suffered severe nationwide violence allegedly prompted by fuel price concerns. However, it quickly became clear that it was instead actually foreign-sponsored destabilization which was, at best, using legitimate public concerns as cover for attempted regime change.

A Russian-led deployment of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) forces has helped stabilize the Central Asia nation, giving the international community time to dissect the violence and follow both money and motives.

US Interest in “Overextending and Unbalancing” Russia in Central Asia

Kazakhstan occupies a very strategic location geographically - stretching nearly to Ukraine and Turkey to the west, sharing a very long border with southern Russia, and reaching the border with Xinjiang, China to the east. It is the perfect location for the US to “link” together its ongoing efforts to encircle and contain both Russia and China.

Kazakhstan is located in Central Asia, a region US policymakers have openly declared interest in attempting to “overextend and unbalance” Russia in.

A 2019 RAND Corporation paper titled, “Overextending and Unbalancing Russia: Assessing the Impact of Cost-Imposing Options,” would list several options ranging from attacking Russia’s energy exports by forcing Europe to
buy more expensive hydrocarbons from the US, poaching Russia’s skilled labor force, and arming Ukraine as well as
terrorists in Syria, to undermining neighboring Belarus and “reducing Russian influence in Central Asia.”

The report notes the difficulties of outcompeting the benefits both Russia and China offer Central Asian countries
including Kazakhstan. Opening transportation corridors as well as offering trade deals and technical assistance are
all areas Russia and China can easily outcompete the US in.

Thus, in order to “overextend and unbalance Russia” in Kazakhstan or any other Central Asian state, the only
remaining options include political subversion and terrorism. Just as the US has forced Russia’s military to invest
heavily in protecting Syria from armed militants sponsored by Washington and its allies in the Middle East, a similar
campaign of political subversion and armed violence across Central Asia has already prompted Russia and the rest of
CSTO to deploy troops to Kazakhstan.

The deployment is temporary, according to Russian officials, however this depends on whether or not the root of
unrest and violence is promptly dealt with - including and perhaps especially US-sponsored networks engaged in
political sedition.

US Interference in Kazakhstan

Evidence of US interference in Kazakhstan is as easy to find as visiting the US government’s National Endowment
for Democracy’s (NED) own official website and browsing its 2020 list of programs and organizations it funds in
Kazakhstan.

They include US-funded media outlets like “Vlast,” the “North Kazakhstan Legal Media Center,” “Uralskaya
Nedelya,” the “Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan,” and fronts posing as “rights” groups like Kazakhstan
International Bureau of Human Rights.

There are also US government-funded fronts which organize protests including Ar/Rukh/Khak and “Oyan Qazaqstan”
(or “wake up, Kazakhstan). The latter was in part led by Dimash Alzhanov who also founded the so-called “Legal
Policy Research Center” (LPRC) according to his biography on “Democracies and Parties.” The LPRC’s archived
website lists the US State Department, NED, the British government, Open Society and the European Union as
“partners.”

These organizations are depicted across the Western media as “independent” media, human rights organizations,
and activist groups when in reality they are all funded and directed by Washington DC. Their US government
funding has been deliberately and consistently omitted from media reports for years as their collective opposition
movement staged protests across Kazakhstan including the protests leading to this most recent episode of violence.

Their “demands” have consistently aligned with US foreign policy objectives. Human Rights Watch (HRW) in a 2019
article published on their website titled, “Mass Arrests Cast Doubt on Rights Reform in Kazakhstan,” would note the
anti-China nature of protests let by the outlawed Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan party. HRW would link to a
Eurasianet article titled, “Kazakhstan: Sinophobic sentiments trigger fresh rallies,” further explaining:

Footage of the rally in Zhanaozen filmed on September 2 showed demonstrators delivering fiery
speeches objecting to the potential construction of Chinese factories.

“We don’t want jobs. We don’t want factories. We just demand that you not let them in,” said one
protester, as seen in footage uploaded to the internet by an opposition movement.

Another speaker cited the ill-treatment of ethnic Kazakhs and Uyghurs in China’s Xinjiang region, where
hundreds of thousands of Muslims have been rounded up and forced to undergo ideological
reconditioning in reeducation camps.

Anxieties about China, which shares a 1,783-kilometers border with Kazakhstan, stems from a number
of sources, ranging from perceptions at Beijing’s overweening influence in the economy and the
country’s sheer population superiority. Horror stories emerging from Xinjiang have only compounded
such suspicions.

HRW and Eurasianet are describing (and attempting to defend) xenophobic mobs pushing irrational demands that in
no way benefit Kazakhstan and its people and solely serve Washington’s foreign policy objective of encircling,
isolating, and containing China.
It should be noted that Eurasianet is also funded by the US government through the NED as well as adjacent organizations like Open Society - illustrating just how deeply Washington directly controls global perceptions about events unfolding in Central Asia.

**Washington’s Client Regime of Choice**

As with all US-sponsored regime change activity, a client regime of choice is usually on stand-by, encouraging protesters, often from abroad, and waiting to place into power a figurehead favored by Washington, Wall Street, London, and Brussels.

In Kazakhstan’s case - the client regime of choice consists of the “Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan” party whose leader Mukhtar Ablyazov currently resides in exile in Paris, France.

AFP in its article, “Kazakhstan regime nearing end in ‘revolution’: dissident leader,” would claim:

> **The regime that has ruled Kazakhstan since the fall of the Soviet Union is nearing its end in a popular revolution where people have for the first time unified to express their anger, a France-based opposition leader said on Thursday.**

> **Mukhtar Ablyazov, a former energy minister and bank chairman wanted in his home country on a range of charges, in an interview with AFP also described a Russian-led military intervention as an “occupation” and urged Kazakhs to stand up to the foreign forces.**

AFP would also note:

> **Ablyazov, who also told AFP he wanted to meet with President Emmanuel Macron, is a hugely controversial figure whom Kazakhstan has tried and sentenced in absentia for murder and embezzlement.**

He is also wanted in Russia and spent time in French custody before France’s highest administrative authority in 2016 blocked his extradition to Russia ruling that the request was politically motivated. He now lives in Paris after winning refugee status in France.

Criminals and fugitives living in protected exile across the West are not uncommon choices for US-sponsored client regimes attempting to seize power in targeted nations around the globe. Their questionable legal status and deep dependence on Washington’s support ensure their obedience before and after they take power -if they take power.

Thailand’s Thaksin Shinawatra, Cambodia’s Khem Sokha and Sam Rainsy, as well as Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi have all faced criminal charges and convictions in their respective home countries and have at various points in time attempted to create governments in exile harbored by the United States and its European allies.

**A Window of Opportunity, But for Who?**

Washington’s condemnation of the CSTO’s deployment to Kazakhstan and the relatively prompt ending to violence that has spiraled out of control over months, sometimes years in other nations targeted by similar US-sponsored subversion may signify CSTO’s success in heading off an otherwise dangerous crisis.

The question remains - is this a long-term success for CSTO and Kazakhstan in particular? Or will the US light other fires forcing Russian forces and their allies to overstretch themselves across the region while continuing to destabilize Ukraine, Syria, and undermining Russia’s Chinese allies to the East?

If it is a success for CSTO, perhaps it stands as a precedent for other regions around the world to adopt a similar policy of solidarity against US-sponsored subversion. The US involvement through supposed “nongovernmental organizations” (NGOs) funded by the NED in Kazakhstan may also help raise global awareness regarding the threat these networks pose and the necessity to uproot them everywhere they are found.

Only time will be able to answer these questions and in the meantime the world must remain vigilant not only in regards to Kazakhstan itself, but other areas the US may seek to target next in a Central Asia version of its “Arab Spring” it organized in 2011 and more recently through ongoing conflict stemming from its “Milk Tea Alliance” beginning in 2019 and targeting Southeast Asia.
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