

Westminster IR Forum
Rentierism, Dependency and
Sovereignty in Central Asia
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3

- Central Asian republics either rentier or semi/quasi-rentier states
- Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan: 'classic' rentier states - oil and gas
- Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: semi-rentiers - indirect taxation of labour remittances, international aid, leasing access to territory, drug trade
- Uzbekistan: cotton, gold, gas, labour remittances, leasing access to territory
- The Middle Eastern-style 'division of labour'

4

- Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan: Russian controlled pipeline system has substantially narrowed their room for manoeuvre and allowed Russia to maintain the upper hand
- Uzbekistan: the most independent foreign policy in the region
- Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: largely subordinate their foreign policies to the politics of the regional or international powers on which its economic survival currently depends on

5

- **The rentier state**

The economy is dominated by rents rather than by productive enterprises like agriculture and manufacturing, and where the origin of the income is external. The rent is generated by small elite, the majority being only involved in the distribution or utilization of it, and the state being the principal recipient of these rents. A rentier state accordingly plays a central role in distributing this wealth to the population

- **Rentierism and Sovereignty**

The *oil-gas-rich rentier states* are often interlocked into long term economic and military relationships with outside powers. These relationships tend to endure – mainly due to physical nature of oil and gas - regardless of major political shifts at the regional or global level

The foreign policy of the *semi-rentier state* is more prone to change and also much more dynamic

6

Rentierism, Dependency and Central Asia

- The rentierism and economic dependency in post-Soviet Central Asia is a direct result of two legacies a) the Soviet Union and b) the neo-liberal project
- Central Asian republics in the Soviet Union: suppliers of cotton, oil, gas and minerals to existing manufacturing centres, located primarily in the Russian areas of the USSR
- The neo-liberal project: a) significantly aided the transformations of the Soviet Central Asian republics into rentier and semi-rentier economies and b) reinforced and deepened separation in the Central Asian economy which is today reflected in the regional “division of labour”

Uzbekistan



Area: 447,001 sq km (172,588 sq mi)

Population: 27,606,007

Capital: Tashkent 3,457,500 (metro. area)

President: Islam Abduganievich Karimov

Religion: Muslim 88% (mostly Sunnis), Eastern

Orthodox 9%, other 3%

Life Expectancy: 67.8 years

GDP per capita: \$1,023

Turkmenistan



- Area: 488,000 sq km (188,418 sq mi)
- Population: 4,888,887
- Capital: Ashgabat 727,700
- President: Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov
- Religion: Muslim 89%, Eastern Orthodox 9%, unknown 2%
- Life Expectancy: 64.8 years
- GDP per capita: \$3,039

Kazakhstan



- Area: 2,716,998 sq km (1,049,039 sq mi)
- Population: 15,399,437
- Capital: Astana 288,200
- President: Nursultan Äbishuly Nazarbayev
- Religion: Muslim 47%, Russian Orthodox 44%, Protestant 2%, other 7%
- Life Expectancy: 66.4 years
- GDP per capita: \$8,513

Kyrgyzstan



- Area: 198,999 sq km (76,834 sq mi)
- Population: 5,431,747
- Capital: Bishkek 824,900
- Provisional Leader: Roza Otunbayeva
- Religion: Muslim 75%, Russian Orthodox 20%, other 5%
- Life Expectancy: 67.4 years
- GDP per capita: \$958

Tajikistan



- Area: 143,001 sq km (55,213 sq mi)
- Population: 7,349,14
- Capital: Dushanbe 590,330
- President: Imomali Sharipovich Rakhmon
- Religion: Sunni Muslim 85%, Shi'a Muslim 5%, other 10%
- Life Expectancy: 66.5 years
- GDP per capita: \$991

The Foreign Policy of Central Asian (Reniter and Semi-Reniter) States

- Turkmenistan: Positive Neutrality
- Kazakhstan: Multi-vector
- Uzbekistan: Unique Case
- Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: Multi-vector?