Central Asia's Hidden Offshore Ties: The Politics of Money-Laundering and Virtual State-Building

Tuesday, April 2, 9am-1pm
1501 International Affairs Building
Harriman Institute, Columbia University

For the first two decades of independence, most academics and policy analysts have viewed Central Asia as detached from the global economy and the diffusion of globalization trends. This is most evident in the US State Department’s recent vision of creating a "New Silk Route" that will increase trade and infrastructure linkages between Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. But this assumption about Central Asia’s economic isolation is highly selective analytically and empirically inaccurate. Re-orienting our focus away from formal trade flows to the more hidden offshore world and institutions of contemporary finance, we see, in fact, multiple areas that connect the Central Asian region to the global economy. Over the past two decades, many Central Asian elites have learned to strategically use global financial institutions and offshore vehicles to split the legal personality of nominally state-controlled assets, launder moneys, and structure side payments for their dealings with external actors such as foreign militaries, telecommunication companies and energy multinationals. For the most part, however, these complex webs of offshore entities have largely insulated closed regimes from sustained international scrutiny. This half-day conference brings together leading scholars, practitioners and advocates to analyze, for the first time, Central Asia’s hidden offshore connections.
9:00-9:20am  Introductory Remarks: Central Asia's Offshore World
  Alex Cooley, Barnard College, Columbia University

9:20-11:00am  Panel 1: Central Asia's Hidden Offshore Connections

  Chair: Alex Cooley, Barnard College, Columbia University

  John Heathershaw, University of Exeter
  Scott Horton, Columbia Law School
  Sarah Green, Senior Director, Enforcement Department, FINRA
  Steve LeVine, Correspondent, Quartz

11:00-11:15am  Coffee Break

11:15am-12:45pm  Panel 2: Kyrgyzstan's Offshore Practices

  Chair: John Heathershaw, University of Exeter

  Tom Mayne, Senior Campaigner, Global Witness
  Chorobek Imashov, Advisor to Executive Director of the World Bank
  Asel Doolotkeldieva, PhD student, University of Exeter
  Kemel Toktomushev, PhD student, University of Exeter

12:45pm  Concluding Remarks
  Alex Cooley, Barnard College, Columbia University

12:55pm  Adjourn
**Alexander Cooley** is Tow Professor for Distinguished Scholars and Practitioners and Chair of the Political Science Department at Barnard College, Columbia University. Professor Cooley's research examines how external actors have shaped the sovereignty and political development of the post-Communist states, with a focus on post-Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus. He is the author of dozens of articles and four academic books. The most recent, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (Oxford, 2012), examines US-Russia-China policies towards Central Asia from 2001-2010 as an example of the emerging politics of a multipolar world. In addition to his academic work, Professor Cooley serves on several international advisory boards, including that of the Central Eurasia Project, and has published political commentaries in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Foreign Affairs*. He is a frequent commentator on Central Asian issues for international media outlets, while his work has been supported by fellowships with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation and Open Society Foundations, among others.

**Asel Doolotkeldieva** is a final-year PhD candidate in the College of Social Sciences and International Studies. Asel’s research is focused on social protests in the post-rebellious Kyrgyzstan and their impact on politics. Her research is based on extensive fieldwork and combines various studies including the sociology of dissident groups, anthropology of the state and networks, system theories. Asel holds MPhil degree in International Relations and Russian Studies from Sciences Po Paris. She has professional experience in policy and research organisations in Kyrgyzstan including OSCE ODIHR, UNOHCHR, CARE, International Alert.

**Sarah D. Green** is a Senior Director in the Enforcement Division at FINRA, specializing in anti-money laundering (AML) and other Bank Secrecy Act issues. She has responsibility for consulting with both examination and enforcement staff on AML and other issues, as well as training staff organization-wide on the handling of suspicious activity reports (SARs). Ms. Green is also responsible for FINRA AML guidance and external training of financial industry professionals domestically and internationally. She has participated on subcommittees of the Bank Secrecy Act Advisory Group and FinCEN’s Data Management Council. She is a frequent speaker on AML, and has provided technical assistance for domestic and international audiences. Prior to joining the Commission, Sarah was an associate in the Corporate and Securities practice group at Gardner Carton & Douglas LLP. Sarah received her J.D. from the William and Mary School of Law and her B.A. from Hamilton College.

**John Heathershaw** is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Exeter and Principal Investigator of the UK Economic and Social Research Council project *Rising Powers and Conflict Management in Central Asia*. His research interests range across the politics of conflict, security, development and state formation in Central Asia. Heathershaw has published widely on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, including his 2009 book, *Post-Conflict Tajikistan: the politics of peacebuilding and the emergence of legitimate order*. He has spent several years working for governmental, international non-governmental and academic institutions in the region and was an instructor of the American University in Central Asia from 2001-2003.
Heathershaw is currently a member of the board of the Central Eurasian Studies Society and of the International Advisory Board of Central Asian Survey.

**Scott Horton** is a contributing editor at *Harper’s Magazine*, where he covers legal and national security issues. He is Adjunct Professor at Columbia Law School and counsel at the law firm of DLA Piper, where he is heavily involved in emerging markets. As a practicing attorney, Horton’s work has focused on investment in emerging markets in Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and West Africa. A life-long human rights advocate, Horton served as counsel to Andrei Sakharov and Elena Bonner and a number of other human rights and democracy advocates in the former Soviet Union. He is a director of the Moscow-based Andrei Sakharov Foundation. He has regularly appeared before Congress, most recently testifying before the House Judiciary, House Oversight and Senate Armed Services Committees on questions relating to the accountability of military contractors and the Justice Department’s uneven management of public integrity matters; he has also testified before the Council of Europe and the German Bundestag.

**Chorobek Imashov** is a former minister and deputy minister of finance of the Kyrgyz Republic. In the early 1990s he worked at the International Monetary Fund and has dedicated himself to international development projects for more than 10 years in different economic and financial areas.

**Tom Mayne** has worked for ten years for Global Witness, the London/DC-based NGO that investigates the links between natural resources, conflict and corruption. He has worked extensively on Central Asia, and has been involved in investigations concerning Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. He was one of the researchers involved in Global Witness' 2012 report 'Grave Secrecy' that detailed the scandal concerning AsiaUniversalBank, Kyrgyzstan's largest bank until the 2010 revolution.

**Kemel Toktomushev** is a PhD Candidate in Politics and International Relations at the University of Exeter. Kemel has received his Master of Science degree in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Prior to joining the University of Exeter, Kemel worked as the Director of Communications and Public Relations at the American University of Central Asia and has extensive experience in media relations and crisis communications. His primary research interests focus on regime security and foreign policy of Central Asia.