



Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests

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May 18, 2012

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

RL33458

CRS Report for Congress

Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE 18 MAY 2012		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2012 to 00-00-2012	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) The Library of Congress ,Congressional Research Service,101 Independence Ave, SE,Washington,DC,20540				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

Summary

U.S. policy toward the Central Asian states has aimed at facilitating their cooperation with U.S. and NATO stabilization efforts in Afghanistan and their efforts to combat terrorism, proliferation, and trafficking in arms, drugs, and persons. Other U.S. objectives have included promoting free markets, democratization, human rights, energy development, and the forging of East-West and Central Asia-South Asia trade links. Such policies aim to help the states become what various U.S. administrations have considered to be responsible members of the international community rather than to degenerate into xenophobic, extremist, and anti-Western regimes that contribute to wider regional conflict and instability.

Soon after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, all the Central Asian “front-line” states offered over-flight and other support for coalition anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan hosted coalition troops and provided access to airbases. In 2003, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan also endorsed coalition military action in Iraq. About two dozen Kazakhstani troops served in Iraq until late 2008. Uzbekistan rescinded U.S. basing rights in 2005 after the United States criticized the reported killing of civilians in the town of Andijon. In early 2009, Kyrgyzstan ordered a U.S. base in that country to close, allegedly because of Russian inducements and U.S. reluctance to meet Kyrgyz requests for greatly increased lease payments. An agreement on continued U.S. use of the Manas Transit Center was reached in June 2009. In recent years, most of the regional states also participate in the Northern Distribution Network for the transport of U.S. and NATO supplies into and out of Afghanistan.

Policymakers have tailored U.S. policy in Central Asia to the varying characteristics of these states. U.S. interests in Kazakhstan have included securing and eliminating Soviet-era nuclear and biological weapons materials and facilities. U.S. energy firms have invested in oil and natural gas development in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and successive administrations have backed diverse export routes to the West for these resources. U.S. policy toward Kyrgyzstan has long included support for its civil society. In Tajikistan, the United States focuses on developmental assistance to bolster the fragile economy and address high poverty rates. U.S. relations with Uzbekistan—the most populous state in the heart of the region—were cool after 2005, but recently have improved.

Congress has been at the forefront in advocating increased U.S. ties with Central Asia, and in providing backing for the region for the transit of equipment and supplies for U.S.-led stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. Congress has pursued these goals through hearings and legislation on humanitarian, economic, and democratization assistance, security issues, and human rights. During the 112th Congress, the Members may review assistance for bolstering regional border and customs controls and other safeguards to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), combating trafficking in persons and drugs, encouraging regional integration with South Asia and Europe, advancing energy security, and countering terrorism. Support for these goals also has been viewed as contributing to stabilization and reconstruction operations by the United States and NATO in Afghanistan. For several years, Congress has placed conditions on assistance to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan because of concerns about human rights abuses and lagging democratization. Congress will continue to consider how to balance these varied U.S. interests in the region.

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Most Recent Developments

Newly inaugurated Russian President Vladimir Putin accepted an invitation to pay his first foreign visit as head of state to Kazakhstan on May 25, 2012, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Russian-Kazakhstan Friendship and Cooperation Agreement. He earlier had declined to attend the G-8 (Group of Eight industrialized countries) summit in the United States on May 18-19, 2012, on the grounds that he was involved in forming his government.

Historical Background

Central Asia consists of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan; it borders Russia, China, the Middle East, and South Asia. The major peoples of all but Tajikistan speak Turkic languages (the Tajiks speak an Iranian language), and most are Sunni Muslims (some Tajiks are Shiia Muslims). Most are closely related historically and culturally. By the late 19th century, Russian tsars had conquered the last independent khanates and nomadic lands of Central Asia. By the early 1920s, Soviet power had been imposed; by 1936, five “Soviet Socialist Republics” had been created. Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, they gained independence.¹

Overview of U.S. Policy Concerns

After the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, then-President George H.W. Bush sent the “FREEDOM Support Act” (FSA) aid authorization to Congress, which was amended and signed into law in October 1992 (P.L. 102-511). In 1999, congressional concerns led to passage of the “Silk Road Strategy Act” (P.L. 106-113), which authorized enhanced policy and aid to support conflict amelioration, humanitarian needs, economic development, transport and communications, border controls, democracy, and the creation of civil societies in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

U.S. policymakers and others hold various views on the appropriate types and levels of U.S. involvement in the region. Some have argued that ties with “energy behemoth” Kazakhstan are crucial to U.S. interests.² Others have argued that Uzbekistan is the “linchpin” of the region (it is

¹ See CRS Report 97-1058, *Kazakhstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol; CRS Report 97-690, *Kyrgyzstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol; CRS Report 98-594, *Tajikistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol; CRS Report 97-1055, *Turkmenistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol, and CRS Report RS21238, *Uzbekistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol.

² U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, *Remarks: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice At Eurasian National University*, October 13, 2005. Perhaps indicative of the boosted emphasis on U.S. interests in Kazakhstan, former Secretary Rice argued that the country had the potential to be the “engine for growth” in Central Asia. More recently, Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake stated in November 2010 that “our relations with Kazakhstan are perhaps our deepest and broadest in Central Asia.” U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, Hearing on the Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership, *Testimony of Robert O. Blake, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*, November 17 2010.

the most populous regional state and is centrally located, shaping the range and scope of regional cooperation) and should receive the most U.S. attention.

In general, U.S. aid and investment have been viewed as strengthening the independence of the Central Asian states and forestalling Russian, Chinese, Iranian, or other efforts to subvert them.

Advocates of such ties have argued that political turmoil and the growth of terrorist enclaves in Central Asia could produce spillover effects both in nearby states, including U.S. allies and friends such as Turkey, and worldwide. They also have argued that the United States has a major interest in preventing terrorist regimes or groups from illicitly acquiring Soviet-era technology for making weapons of mass destruction (WMD). They have maintained that U.S. interests do not perfectly coincide with those of its allies and friends, that Turkey and other actors possess limited aid resources, and that the United States is in the strongest position as the sole superpower to influence democratization and respect for human rights. They have stressed that such U.S. influence will help alleviate social tensions exploited by Islamic extremist groups to gain adherents. They also have argued that for all these reasons, the United States should maintain military access to the region even when Afghanistan becomes more stable.³

Central Asia: Basic Facts

Total area: 1.6 million sq. mi., larger than India; Kazakhstan: 1.1 m. sq. mi.; Kyrgyzstan: 77,000 sq. mi.; Tajikistan: 55,800 sq. mi.; Turkmenistan: 190,000 sq. mi.; Uzbekistan: 174,500 sq. mi.

Total population: approximately 62 million, slightly less than France; Kazakhstan: 15.5 m.; Kyrgyzstan: 5.6 m.; Tajikistan: 7.6 m.; Turkmenistan: 5.0 m.; Uzbekistan: 28.1 m. (July 2011 est., *The World Factbook*.)

Total gross domestic product: approximately \$346 billion in 2010; per capita GDP is about \$5,600, but there are large income disparities and relatively large percentages of people in each country are in poverty. Kazakhstan: \$196.4 b.; Kyrgyzstan: \$12.0 b.; Tajikistan: \$14.7 b.; Turkmenistan: \$36.9 b.; Uzbekistan: \$85.9 b. (*The World Factbook*, purchasing power parity.)

Some views of policymakers and academics who previously objected to a more forward U.S. policy toward Central Asia appeared less salient after September 11, 2001—when the United States came to stress counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan—but aspects of these views could again come to the fore in debates over U.S. security policy in Afghanistan and Central Asia. These observers argued that the United States historically had few interests in Central Asia and that developments there remained largely marginal to U.S. interests. They discounted fears that anti-Western Islamic extremism would make enough headway to threaten secular regimes or otherwise harm U.S. interests in Central Asia. They also argued that the United States should not try to foster democratization among cultures they claimed are historically attuned to authoritarianism. Some observers rejected arguments that U.S. interests in anti-terrorism, non-proliferation, regional cooperation, and trade outweighed concerns over democratization and human rights, and urged reducing or cutting off most aid to repressive Central Asian states. A few observers pointed to instability in the region as a reason to eschew deeper U.S. involvement such as military access that could needlessly place more U.S. personnel and citizens in danger.

The Obama Administration has listed five objectives of what it terms an enhanced U.S. engagement policy in Central Asia:

³ At least some of these views seemed to be reflected in the former Bush Administration's 2006 National Security Strategy of the United States, which proclaimed that "Central Asia is an enduring priority for our foreign policy." The Obama Administration's May 2010 National Security Strategy does not specifically mention Central Asia or the Caspian region. The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, March 16, 2006, p. 40; *National Security Strategy*, May 2010.

1. to maximize the cooperation of the states of the region with coalition counter-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan (particularly cooperation on hosting U.S. and NATO airbases and on the transit of troops and supplies to Afghanistan along the “Northern Distribution Network”; see below);
2. to increase the development and diversification of the region’s energy resources and supply routes;
3. to promote the eventual emergence of good governance and respect for human rights;
4. to foster competitive market economies; and
5. to increase the capacity of the states to govern themselves, and in particular to prevent state failure in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, including by enhancing food security assistance.

Signs of this enhanced engagement include the establishment of high-level Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABCs) with each of the regional states on counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism, democratic reform, rule of law, human rights, trade, investment, health, and education. The first round of ABCs took place in late 2009-2010 in all the regional states except Kyrgyzstan (because of instability there).⁴

In February 2012, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testified that Central Asian states were unstable and increasingly vulnerable to violent extremism. He appeared to argue that most of the regional governments have reacted to “Arab Spring” developments by further constraining civil liberties and human rights. He warned that ethnic violence might recur in Kyrgyzstan’s southern regions.⁵

In July 2010, Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake refuted the arguments of critics “that this Administration is too focused on the security relationship with [Central Asian] countries and forgets about human rights.” He stated that human rights and civil society issues “will remain an essential part of our dialogue equal in importance to our discussion on security issues.” He also rejected criticism that the Administration “was too interested in maintaining the Transit Center at Manas International Airport in Kyrgyzstan and refused to criticize the Bakiyev regime on its human rights performance,” asserting that “we ... never spurned meeting with the then opposition in Bishkek or in Washington.”⁶

In September 2010, Assistant Secretary Blake argued that closer U.S.-Russia ties were facilitating U.S. engagement in Central Asia, and stated that “we want to not only build on that progress with

⁴ U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs, Hearing on Reevaluating U.S. Policy in Central Asia, *Testimony of George Krol, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of South And Central Asian Affairs*, December 15, 2009; U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, Hearing on the Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership, *Testimony of Robert O. Blake, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*, November 17 2010.

⁵ U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Hearing on Worldwide Security Threats, *Statement of James R. Clapper Director, National Intelligence Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, February 16, 2012.

⁶ U.S. Department of State, Robert O. Blake, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, *U.S. Policy Towards Central Asia*, Carnegie Endowment for Peace, July 30, 2010. See also U.S. Department of State, Robert O. Blake, Jr., *Remarks: U.S. Policy in Central Asia*, Forum of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, January 25, 2012.

respect to our relations in Kyrgyzstan, but also to look at other ways that the United States and Russia can cooperate in the region.”⁷ Other observers have disputed this characterization in regard to Kyrgyzstan, arguing that Russia and the United States disagreed about the significance of democratic elections there.⁸

In testimony in November 2010, Assistant Secretary Blake appeared to emphasize U.S. security interests when he stated that “Central Asia plays a vital role in our Afghanistan strategy.... A stable future for Afghanistan depends on the continued assistance of its Central Asian neighbors, just as a stable, prosperous future for the Central Asian states depends on bringing peace, stability and prosperity to Afghanistan.” He also discussed the other four U.S. goals of “increased U.S. engagement” in the region (see above). Appearing at the same hearing as Blake, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Robert Sedney stated that “from the Department of Defense perspective ... our focus is on the support for the effort in Afghanistan, but that is accompanied by the longer-term security assistance projects, including a variety of training efforts in areas from counterterrorism to counternarcotics that are building capabilities in those countries that are important for reasons well beyond Afghanistan.”⁹

Among recent contacts between President Obama and Central Asian leaders, the President met on April 11, 2010, with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC. A joint statement reported that they “pledged to intensify bilateral cooperation to promote nuclear safety and non-proliferation, regional stability in Central Asia, economic prosperity, and universal values.” President Obama encouraged Kazakhstan to fully implement its 2009-2012 National Human Rights Action Plan. President Nazarbayev agreed to facilitate U.S. military air flights along a new trans-polar route that transits Kazakhstan to Afghanistan, and President Obama praised Kazakh assistance to Afghanistan.¹⁰

On September 28, 2010, President Obama met with then-Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly’s opening autumn session. He praised her “courageous efforts to rebuild democratic institutions in Kyrgyzstan,” and thanked her for Kyrgyzstan’s support for Afghan stabilization.¹¹ Then-President Otunbayeva also met with President Obama during her March 2011 U.S. visit. Reportedly, President Obama informed her that the United States was improving the transparency of its financial arrangements regarding the Transit Center, and pledged that the Transit Center would work to maximize its benefits to the Kyrgyz people. He also praised Kyrgyzstan’s democratization efforts and reaffirmed U.S. support for those efforts.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, *On-the-Record Briefing: Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake on Developments in Central Asia*, September 22, 2010.

⁸ Joshua Kucera, “State Department Touts Russia Reset’s Positive Role in Central Asia,” *Eurasianet*, September 23, 2010.

⁹ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, Hearing on the Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership, *Testimony of Robert O. Blake, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*, and *Testimony of Robert Sedney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense*, November 17 2010.

¹⁰ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Joint Statement on the meeting between President Obama and Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev* April 11, 2010.

¹¹ U.S. Embassy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, *Read-out of President Obama’s Meeting with Kyrgyzstani President Roza Otunbayeva*, September 28, 2010.

Secretary Clinton visited Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in early December 2010. In Kazakhstan, she participated in the OSCE Summit (see below, “Kazakhstan and the Presidency of the OSCE”). She also met briefly with Tajik President Rahmon and Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on the sidelines of the Astana Summit. In Uzbekistan, she signed an accord on scientific cooperation as one means, she explained, to further U.S. engagement with the country. President Obama telephoned President Karimov on September 28, 2011, to thank him for Uzbekistan’s cooperation in stabilization efforts in Afghanistan, and reportedly to urge him to facilitate the transit of U.S. and NATO cargoes into and out of Afghanistan. During her October 22-23, 2011, visit to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Secretary Clinton discussed the U.S. “New Silk Road Vision” (see below, “Trade and Investment”) to turn Afghanistan into a regional transportation, trade, and energy hub linked to Central Asia. She also warned the presidents of both countries that restrictions on religious freedom could contribute to rising religious discontent.

President Obama met with President Nazarbayev at the nuclear security summit in Seoul, South Korea in March 2012, where President Obama hailed Kazakhstan’s efforts to secure nuclear materials inherited from the former Soviet Union.¹²

Post-September 11 and Afghanistan

After the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of State B. Lynn Pascoe testified that the former Bush Administration realized that “it was critical to the national interests of the United States that we greatly enhance our relations with the five Central Asian countries” to prevent them from becoming harbors for terrorism.¹³ All the Central Asian states soon offered overflight and other assistance to U.S.-led anti-terrorism coalition operations in Afghanistan. The states were predisposed to welcome such operations. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan had long supported the Afghan Northern Alliance’s combat against the Taliban, and all the Central Asian states feared Afghanistan as a base for terrorism, crime, and drug trafficking (even Turkmenistan, which had tried to reach some accommodation with the Taliban). In 2005, however, Uzbekistan rescinded its basing agreement with the United States. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have maintained their basing support for NATO peacekeeping operations, and Kyrgyzstan for U.S. and NATO operations, in Afghanistan. In 2009, most Central Asian states agreed to facilitate the air and land transport of U.S. and NATO non-lethal (and later of lethal) supplies to Afghanistan as an alternative to land transport via increasingly volatile Pakistan (see “Security and Arms Control” below). They also have provided aid and established increased trade and transport links with Afghanistan.

In October 2010, Kazakh President Nazarbayev announced that the country would send some officers to ISAF headquarters in Afghanistan. After the Kazakh Majlis (lower legislative chamber) approved sending military personnel to support ISAF on May 18, 2011, the Taliban reportedly issued a threat two days later to retaliate against Kazakhstan for supporting ISAF. After

¹² The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by President Obama and President Nursultan Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan Before Bilateral Meeting*, March 26, 2012; *Joint Statement of the Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America Regarding the Trilateral Cooperation at the Former Semipalatinsk Test Site*, March 26, 2012.

¹³ U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Central Asia and the South Caucasus, *The U.S. Role in Central Asia. Testimony of B. Lynn Pascoe, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs*, June 27, 2002.

bombings occurred at security offices on May 17 and 24, 2011 (see below, “The 2011 Attacks and Unrest in Kazakhstan”), the Kazakh Senate (upper legislative chamber) rejected the bill approved by the lower chamber. The Senate explained its action as a response to widespread public opposition to sending military personnel to Afghanistan.

Support for Operation Iraqi Freedom

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were the only Central Asian state that joined the “coalition of the willing” in 2003 that endorsed U.S.-led coalition military operations in Iraq. Uzbekistan subsequently decided not to send troops to Iraq. In August 2003, Kazakhstan deployed some two dozen troops to Iraq who served under Polish command and carried out water-purification, demining, and medical activities. They pulled out in late 2008.

Fostering Pro-Western Orientations

The United States has encouraged the Central Asian states to become responsible members of the international community, supporting integrative goals through bilateral aid and through coordination with other aid donors. The stated policy goal is to discourage radical anti-democratic regimes and terrorist groups from gaining influence. All the Central Asian leaders publicly embrace Islam but display hostility toward Islamic fundamentalism. At the same time, they have established some trade and aid ties with Iran. Some observers argue that, in the longer run, their foreign policies may not be anti-Western but may more closely reflect some concerns of other Islamic states. Some Western organizational ties with the region have suffered in recent years, in particular those of the OSCE, which has been criticized by some Central Asian governments for advocating democratization and respect for human rights.¹⁴ Despite this criticism, President Nazarbayev successfully pushed for Kazakhstan to hold the presidency of the OSCE in 2010 (see below).

The State Department in 2006 included Central Asia in a revamped Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. According to former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Steven Mann, “institutions such as NATO and the OSCE will continue to draw the nations of Central Asia closer to Europe and the United States,” but the United States also will encourage the states to develop “new ties and synergies with nations to the south,” such as Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.¹⁵ Other observers, however, criticized the move, arguing that it threatened to deemphasize efforts to integrate the region into European institutions and that ties with Central Asia would become an afterthought to ties with South Asia.¹⁶

The European Union (EU) has become more interested in Central Asia in recent years as the region has become more of a security threat as an originator and transit zone for drugs, weapons

¹⁴ See also CRS Report RL30294, *Central Asia’s Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol.

¹⁵ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, Assessing Energy and Security Issues in Central Asia, *Testimony of Steven Mann, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs*, July 25, 2006. The State Department appointed a Senior Advisor on Regional Integration in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Robert Deutsch, who focused on bolstering trade and transport ties between South and Central Asia.

¹⁶ Zeyno Baran, “Energy Supplies in Eurasia and Implications for U.S. Energy Security,” Nixon Center, September 27, 2005.

of mass destruction, refugees, and persons smuggled for prostitution or labor. Russia's cutoff of gas supplies in 2006 and 2009 to Ukraine—which hindered gas supplies transiting Ukraine to European customers—also bolstered EU interest in Central Asia as an alternative supplier of oil and gas. Such interests contributed to the launch of a Strategy Paper for assistance for 2002-2006 and a follow-on for 2007-2013 (see below), and the EU's appointment of a Special Representative to the region. The EU has implemented Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs, which set forth political, economic, and trade relations) with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. An existing Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe (INOGATE) program was supplemented in 2004 and 2006 by a Baku Energy Initiative and Astana Energy Ministerial Declaration to diversify energy supplies. One project involves the proposed Nabucco pipeline, which could transport Caspian region gas to Austria (see "Energy Resources," below).¹⁷

In June 2007, the EU approved a new "Central Asian strategy" for enhanced aid and relations for 2007-2013. It argues that the EU ties with the region need to be enhanced because EU enlargement and EU relations with the South Caucasus and Black Sea states bring it to Central Asia's borders. The strategy also stresses that "the dependency of the EU on external energy sources and the need for a diversified energy supply policy in order to increase energy security open further perspectives for cooperation between the EU and Central Asia," and that the "EU will conduct an enhanced regular energy dialogue" with the states. Under the strategy, the EU set up offices in each regional state and pledged regional assistance of \$1 billion. EU emissaries hold dozens of meetings and seminars each year with the Central Asian states on such issues as human rights, civil society development, foreign policy and assistance, trade and investment, environmental and energy cooperation, and other issues.¹⁸

Russia's Role

During most of the 1990s, successive U.S. administrations generally viewed a democratizing Russia as serving as a role model in Central Asia. Despite growing authoritarian tendencies in Russia during the presidencies of Vladimir Putin (2000-2008) and Dmitriy Medvedev (2008-2012), successive U.S. administrations have emphasized that Russia's counter-terrorism efforts in the region broadly support U.S. interests. At the same time, successive administrations have stressed to Russia that it should not seek to dominate the region or exclude Western and other involvement. Virtually all U.S. analysts agree that Russia's actions should be monitored to ensure that the independence of the Central Asian states is not vitiated.

Soon after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, Russia acquiesced to increased U.S. and coalition presence in the region for operations against Al Qaeda and its supporters in Afghanistan. Besides Russia's own concerns about Islamic extremism in Afghanistan and Central Asia, it was interested in boosting its economic and other ties to the West and regaining some influence in Afghanistan. In the later part of the 2000s, however, Russia

¹⁷ For details, see CRS Report RL33636, *The European Union's Energy Security Challenges*, by Paul Belkin. See also European Union, "The EU and the Countries of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea Regions Agree on a Common Energy Strategy," *Press Release*, November 30, 2006, at <http://www.inogate.org>.

¹⁸ European Commission, *Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the Period 2007-2013*, June 2007; European Commission, External Relations Directorate, *Central Asia DCI Indicative Program 2011 – 2013*, September 2010; *Into Eurasia: Monitoring The EU's Central Asia Strategy*, Center For European Policy Studies, February, 2010. European External Action Service, Delegation of the EU to Kazakhstan, *Joint Press Release Following the EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting in Tashkent*, April 7, 2011.

appeared to step up efforts to counter U.S. influence in Central Asia by advocating that the states increase economic and strategic ties with Russia and limit such ties with the United States. This stance included efforts to persuade Kyrgyzstan to close its U.S. airbase. Such a stance appeared paradoxical to U.S. officials, since Russia (and China) benefitted from anti-terrorism operations carried out by U.S. (and NATO) forces in Afghanistan. Closer U.S.-Russia relations that developed since 2009 appear to have included some Russian cooperation with U.S. and NATO stabilization efforts in Afghanistan.

During the 1990s, Russia's economic decline and demands by Central Asia caused it to reduce its security presence, a trend that Vladimir Putin appeared determined to reverse during his first two terms as president (2000-2008). In 1999, Russian border guards were largely phased out in Kyrgyzstan, the last Russian military advisors left Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan withdrew from the Collective Security Treaty (CST; see below) of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in part because the treaty members failed to help Uzbekistan meet the growing Taliban threat in Afghanistan, according to Uzbek President Islam Karimov.

Despite these moves, Russia appeared determined to maintain a military presence in Tajikistan. It has retained from the Soviet period the 201st motorized infantry division of about 5,000 troops subordinate to Russia's Volga-Ural Military District. Some Russian officers reportedly help oversee these troops, many or most of whom are ethnic Tajik noncommissioned officers and soldiers. Thousands of Tajik Frontier Force border guards receive support as necessary from the 201st division.¹⁹ Russia's efforts to formalize a basing agreement with Tajikistan dragged on for years, as Tajikistan endeavored to charge rent and assert its sovereignty. In October 2004, a ten-year basing agreement was signed, formalizing Russia's largest military presence abroad, besides its Black Sea Fleet. At the same time, Tajikistan demanded full control over border policing. Russia announced in June 2005 that it had handed over the last guard-house along the Afghan-Tajik border to Tajik troops (some Russian border advisors remained). In October 2009, visiting President Rahmon reportedly urged then-President Medvedev to pay rent on Russia's base facilities in Tajikistan, but Moscow only agreed to consider the issue when the basing agreement came up for renewal. At a meeting in Dushanbe in September 2011, then-President Medvedev announced that he and Rahmon had made progress in reaching agreement on extending the basing agreement for another 49 years, and that an accord would be signed in early 2012. Some media reported that Tajikistan was calling for up to \$300 million in annual rent payments, while Russia continued to reject making any such payments. Also at the meeting, the two presidents agreed that the number of Russian border advisors reportedly would be reduced from 350 to 200, and would more closely cooperate with the Tajik border force. President Rahmon met with newly inaugurated President Putin in Moscow on the sidelines of a CIS summit in mid-May 2012, and the two leaders agreed to continue the apparently contentious discussions on extending the basing agreement.

In a seeming shift toward a more activist role in Central Asia, in April 2000, Russia called for the signatories of the CST to approve the creation of rapid reaction forces to combat terrorism and hinted that such forces might launch preemptive strikes on Afghan terrorist bases. These hints elicited U.S. calls for Russia to exercise restraint. Presidents Clinton and Putin agreed in 2000 to set up a working group to examine Afghan-related terrorism (this working group later broadened its discussions to other counter-terrorism cooperation; it has continued to meet under the Obama Administration). CST members agreed in 2001 to set up the Central Asian rapid reaction force

¹⁹ *The Military Balance*, London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, March 7, 2012.

headquartered in Kyrgyzstan, with Russia's troops in Tajikistan comprising most of the force (this small force of 3,000 to 5,000 troops has held exercises and supposedly is dedicated to border protection; in 2009 it was supplemented by a larger 20,000-troop rapid reaction force with a supposedly wider mission).²⁰ CIS members in 2001 also approved setting up an Anti-Terrorism Center (ATC) in Moscow, with a branch in Kyrgyzstan, giving Russia influence over regional intelligence gathering.

Perhaps as a result of the establishment of a U.S. airbase in Kyrgyzstan after the September 11, 2001, attacks (see "The Manas Airbase" below), Russia in September 2003 signed a 15-year military basing accord with Kyrgyzstan providing access to the Kant airfield, near Kyrgyzstan's capital of Bishkek. The base is a few miles from the U.S.-led coalition's airbase. Russia attempted to entice Kyrgyzstan in early 2009 to close the Manas airbase by offering the country hundreds of millions of dollars in grants and loans. However, after Kyrgyzstan agreed to continued U.S. use of the airbase in mid-2009 as a transit center, Russia reneged on some of this funding and requested that Kyrgyzstan grant Moscow rights to another airbase near Uzbekistan's border. Uzbekistan denounced this plan, and it appeared to be put on hold. With the U.S.-Russia "reset" of relations, Russia's opposition to the continued operation of the Manas Transit Center seemingly diminished, but in May 2012, the Russian Foreign Ministry hailed a statement by President Atambayev that he intended not to renew the lease on the U.S. Transit Center.

Besides Russia's military presence in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Russia's 2009 National Security Strategy called for the country to play a dominant role in Caspian basin security. Russia's Caspian Sea Flotilla has been bolstered by troops and equipment in recent years. A security cooperation agreement signed at a Caspian littoral state summit on November 18, 2010, states that Caspian basin security is the exclusive preserve of the littoral states. Some observers have viewed this agreement as reflecting Russia's objections to the U.S. Caspian Guard program and other maritime security initiatives (see below, "Security and Arms Control").²¹

Taking advantage of Uzbekistan's souring relations with many Western countries in 2005 (see below, "The 2005 Violence in Andijon, Uzbekistan"), Russia signed a Treaty on Allied Relations with Uzbekistan in November 2005 that calls for mutual defense consultations in the event of a threat to either party (similar to language in the CST). Uzbekistan rejoined the CST Organization (CSTO; see below) in June 2006 at a meeting where the member-states also agreed that basing agreements by any member with a third party had to be approved by all members, in effect providing supreme veto power to Russia over future basing arrangements. Despite rejoining the CSTO, Uzbekistan has appeared wary of Russian intentions in the organization, including by insisting that Tashkent will not participate in the CSTO rapid reaction force established in June 2009. In October 2011, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, acting as the head of the CSTO, reportedly called for a CSTO summit meeting scheduled in December in Moscow to consider whether Uzbekistan should remain a member. President Karimov attended this summit, as well as a CIS summit held the same day, and stressed that Uzbekistan's continued participation in these bodies depended on whether their actions accord with Uzbekistan's national interests.²²

²⁰ *CEDR*, February 25, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950282.

²¹ *CEDR*, November 19, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-4002.

²² *Interfax*, October 26, 2011; *CEDR*, November 25, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950093; December 9, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-964011; December 21, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950141.

Many observers suggest that the appreciative attitude of Central Asian states toward the United States in the early 2000s—for their added security accomplished through U.S.-led actions in Afghanistan—has declined over time. Reasons may include perceptions that the United States has not provided adequate security or economic assistance. Also, Russia and China are pledging security support to the states to get them to forget their pre-September 11, 2001, dissatisfaction with Russian and Chinese efforts. Russia also encourages the leaders to believe that the United States backs democratic “revolutions” to replace them. Lastly, Russia has claimed that it can ensure regional security after the planned drawdown of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

As Russia’s economy improved in the 2000s—as a result of increases in oil and gas prices—Russia reasserted its economic interests in Central Asia. Russia endeavored to counter Western business and gain substantial influence over energy resources through participation in joint ventures and by insisting that pipelines cross Russian territory. Although Russia experienced a decline in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009 and only modest growth in GDP in 2010-2011 as a result of shocks associated with the global economic downturn, it has appeared that Russia has tried to maintain economic leverage in the region, including by giving stabilization grants and loans to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In other areas, such as commodity trade, Russian economic influence has been reduced, although it is still significant. In 2009, the number of Central Asian migrant workers in Russia decreased, and the country imposed quotas on the number of migrant laborers. The numbers of migrant workers from Central Asia have increased since then, and worker remittances from Russia remain significant to the GDPs of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Russia’s efforts to maintain substantial economic interests in Central Asia face increasing challenges from China, which has substantially increased its aid and trade activities in the region. Perhaps to use institutional means to constrict growing Chinese economic influence, a Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan customs union began operating in mid-2011. Russian officials and state-owned media have called for the customs union to expand to include Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In an article in early October 2011, Prime Minister Putin called for boosting Russian influence over Soviet successor states through the creation of an economic, political, and military “Eurasian Union.”

Obstacles to Peace and Independence: Regional Tensions and Conflicts

The legacies of co-mingled ethnic groups, convoluted borders, and emerging national identities pose challenges to stability in all the Central Asian states. Emerging national identities accentuate clan, family, regional, and Islamic self-identifications. Central Asia’s convoluted borders fail to accurately reflect ethnic distributions and are hard to police, hence contributing to regional tensions. Ethnic Uzbeks make up sizeable minorities in the other Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. In Tajikistan, they make up almost one-quarter of the population and in Kyrgyzstan they make up over one-seventh. More ethnic Turkmen reside in Iran and Afghanistan—over 3 million—than in Turkmenistan. Sizeable numbers of ethnic Tajiks reside in Uzbekistan, and 7 million in Afghanistan. Many Kyrgyz and Tajiks live in China’s Xinjiang province. The fertile Fergana Valley is shared by Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The central governments have struggled to gain control over administrative subunits. Most observers agree that the term “Central Asia” currently denotes a geographic area more than a region of shared identities and

aspirations, although it is clear that the land-locked, poverty-stricken, and sparsely populated region will need more integration in order to develop.

Regional cooperation remains stymied by tensions among the states. Such tensions continue to exist despite the membership of the states in various cooperation groups such as the CST Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP). The CST was signed by Russia, Belarus, the South Caucasus countries, and the Central Asian states (except Turkmenistan) in May 1992 and called for military cooperation and joint consultations in the event of security threats to any member. At the time to renew the treaty in 1999, Uzbekistan, Georgia, and Azerbaijan formally withdrew. The remaining members formed the CSTO in late 2002, and a secretariat opened in Moscow at the beginning of 2004. Through the CSTO, Russia has attempted to involve the members in joint efforts to combat international terrorism and drug trafficking. Although the charter of the CSTO does not mention internal or external peacekeeping functions, other agreements have provided for such activities. Neither former Kyrgyz President Akayev nor former President Bakiyev apparently requested the aid of the CSTO during the coups that overthrew them (on the latter coup, see below, "Recent Developments in Kyrgyzstan"), and the CSTO has appeared inactive during other crises in the region. In September 2008, its members agreed to condemn Georgia's "aggression" against its breakaway South Ossetia region but refused a request by Russia to extend diplomatic recognition to South Ossetia and Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia. At a CSTO meeting in June 2010 to consider an urgent request by interim Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva for troops to assist in quelling ethnic violence, a consensus could not be reached and the members only agreed to provide equipment. At a CSTO summit in December 2011, all the members signed a pledge that no non-member military bases could be established on their territories unless all members agreed. They also reportedly agreed on detailed procedures for intervening in domestic "emergency" situations within a member state at the behest of the member.²³

In 1996, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed the "Shanghai treaty" with China pledging the sanctity and substantial demilitarization of mutual borders, and in 1997 they signed a follow-on treaty demilitarizing the 4,300-mile former Soviet-Chinese border. China has used the treaty to pressure the Central Asian states to deter their ethnic Uighur minorities from supporting separatism in China's Xinjiang province, and to get them to extradite Uighurs fleeing China. In 2001, Uzbekistan joined the group, renamed the SCO, and in 2003 the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) was set up there. Several military and security exercises have been held. According to some reports, in recent years Russia has discouraged the holding of major SCO military exercises as well as the strengthening of economic ties within the SCO, although Moscow has been amenable to cooperation within the SCO on regional oil and gas issues.²⁴ Perhaps marking new initiatives, an SCO summit will be held in Beijing and a "Peace Mission-2012" military exercise will take place in Tajikistan in June 2012.

In late 2007, the Central Asian states prevailed on the U.N. to set up a Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) to facilitate diplomatic and other cooperation to prevent internal and external threats to regional security. With its headquarters in Ashkhabad, the Center is headed by a special representative of the U.N. secretary-general. The Center was intended to take on some of the duties of the U.N. Tajikistan Office of Peace-Building, which had been established after the Tajik Civil War and was being closed. The Center's mandate includes

²³ *Interfax*, December 21, 2011.

²⁴ *CEDR*, November 8, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-6008.

monitoring regional threats and working together and with other regional organizations to facilitate peacemaking and conflict prevention. Priority concerns include cross-border terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking; regional water and energy management; environmental degradation; and stabilization in Afghanistan. The Center has held several regional conferences on such issues as Aral Sea desiccation, water-sharing, and Afghanistan. The Center's special representative visited Kyrgyzstan several times in the wake of the April 2010 coup to discuss U.N. aid to the interim government to ensure peace and stability.

In May 2009, the OSCE established a Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe to train officers from OSCE member and partner countries, including Afghanistan.

The 1992-1997 Civil War in Tajikistan

Tajikistan was among the Central Asian republics least prepared and inclined toward independence when the Soviet Union broke up. In September 1992, a loose coalition of nationalist, Islamic, and democratic parties and groups tried to take power. Kulyabi and Khojenti regional elites, assisted by Uzbekistan and Russia, launched a successful counteroffensive that by the end of 1992 had resulted in 20,000-40,000 casualties and up to 800,000 refugees or displaced persons, about 80,000 of whom fled to Afghanistan. After the two sides agreed to a cease-fire, the U.N. Security Council established a small U.N. Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) in December 1994. In June 1997, Tajik President Rahmon and the late rebel leader Seyed Abdullo Nuri signed a *comprehensive peace agreement*. Benchmarks of the peace process were largely met, and UNMOT pulled out in May 2000. To encourage the peace process, the United States initially pledged to help Tajikistan rebuild. Some observers point to events in the city of Andijon in Uzbekistan (see "The 2005 Violence in Andijon, Uzbekistan" below) as indicating that conflicts similar to the Tajik Civil War could engulf other regional states where large numbers of people are disenfranchised and poverty-stricken.

The 1999, 2000, and 2006 Incursions into Kyrgyzstan

Several hundred Islamic extremists and others harboring in Tajikistan and Afghanistan first invaded Kyrgyzstan in July-August 1999. Jama Namanganiy, the co-leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU; see below), headed the largest guerrilla group. They seized hostages and several villages, allegedly seeking to create an Islamic state in south Kyrgyzstan as a springboard for a jihad in Uzbekistan.²⁵ With Uzbek and Kazakh air and other support, Kyrgyz forces forced the guerrillas out in October 1999. Dozens of IMU and other insurgents again invaded Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in August 2000. Uzbekistan provided air and other support, but Kyrgyz forces were largely responsible for defeating the insurgents by late October 2000. The IMU did not invade the region in the summer before September 11, 2001, in part because Osama bin Laden had secured its aid for a Taliban offensive against the Afghan Northern Alliance.

About a dozen alleged IMU members invaded from Tajikistan in May 2006 but soon were defeated (some escaped). After this, the Kyrgyz defense minister claimed that the IMU, HT, and other such groups increasingly menaced national security.

²⁵ According to Zeyno Baran, S. Frederick Starr, and Svante Cornell, the incursions of the IMU into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1999 and 2000 were largely driven by efforts to secure drug trafficking routes. *Islamic Radicalism in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Implications for the EU*, Silk Road Paper, July 2006.

Attacks in Uzbekistan

A series of explosions in Tashkent in February 1999 were among early signs that the Uzbek government was vulnerable to terrorism. By various reports, the explosions killed 16 to 28 and wounded 100 to 351 people. The aftermath involved wide-scale arrests of political dissidents and others deemed by some observers as unlikely conspirators. Karimov in April 1999 accused Mohammad Solikh (former Uzbek presidential candidate and head of the banned Erk Party) of masterminding what he termed an assassination plot, along with Tohir Yuldashev (co-leader of the IMU) and the Taliban. The first trial of 22 suspects in June resulted in six receiving death sentences. The suspects said in court that they received terrorist training in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Russia and were led by Solikh, Yuldashev and Namanganiy. In 2000, Yuldashev and Namanganiy received death sentences in absentia, and Solikh received a 15.5 year prison sentence. Solikh denied membership in IMU, and he and Yuldashev denied involvement in the bombings.

On March 28 through April 1, 2004, a series of suicide bombings and other attacks were launched in Uzbekistan, reportedly killing 47. An obscure Islamic Jihad Group of Uzbekistan (IJG; Jama'at al-Jihad al-Islami, a breakaway part of the IMU) claimed responsibility.²⁶ In subsequent trials, the alleged attackers were accused of being members of IJG or of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT; an Islamic fundamentalist movement ostensibly pledged to peace but banned in Uzbekistan) and of attempting to overthrow the government. Some defendants testified that they were trained by Arabs and others at camps in Kazakhstan and Pakistan. They testified that Najmiddin Kamolitdinovich Jalolov (convicted in absentia in 2000) was the leader of IJG, and linked him to Taliban head Mohammad Omar, Uighur extremist Abu Mohammad, and Osama bin Laden. On July 30, 2004, explosions occurred at the U.S. and Israeli embassies and the Uzbek Prosecutor-General's Office in Tashkent. The IMU and IJG claimed responsibility and stated that the suicide bombings were aimed against Uzbek and other "apostate" governments.²⁷

The 2005 Violence in Andijon, Uzbekistan

Dozens or perhaps hundreds of civilians were killed or wounded on May 13, 2005, after Uzbek troops fired on demonstrators in the eastern town of Andijon. The protestors had gathered to demand the end of a trial of local businessmen charged with belonging to an Islamic terrorist group. The night before, a group stormed a prison where those on trial were held and released hundreds of inmates. Many freed inmates then joined others in storming government buildings.²⁸

²⁶ The IJG changed its name to the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) in 2005.

²⁷ See also CRS Report RS21818, *The 2004 Attacks in Uzbekistan: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol.

²⁸ There is a great deal of controversy about whether this group contained foreign-trained terrorists or was composed mainly of the friends and families of the accused and other disgruntled citizenry. See U.S. Congress. Commission on Security and Cooperation In Europe. Briefing: The Uzbekistan Crisis. *Testimony of Galima Bukharbayeva, Correspondent. Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, June 29, 2005. A declassified Defense Intelligence Agency memorandum prepared soon after the events stated that "no credible information indicates extremist groups participated in the attacks," but stressed that evidence was not definitive on this point. See *Uzbekistan: Review of Information on Unrest in Andijon, 12-13 May 2005*, Info Memo, 5-0549/DR, July 30, 2005 (the memo is part of the Rumsfeld Archive, see below). For alternative views on terrorist involvement and casualties, see Shirin Akiner, *Violence in Andijon, 13 May 2005: An Independent Assessment*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, July 2005; AbduMannob Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, Jamestown Foundation, June 2007; and Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown* (New York: Penguin Group Publishers, 2011). See also James Kirchick, "Did Donald Rumsfeld Whitewash Massacre In Uzbekistan?" *RFE/RL*, May 13, 2011

President Karimov flew to the city to direct operations, and reportedly had restored order by late on May 13.²⁹ On July 29, 439 people who had fled from Uzbekistan to Kyrgyzstan were airlifted to Romania for resettlement processing, after the United States and others raised concerns that they might be tortured if returned to Uzbekistan.³⁰

The United States and others in the international community repeatedly called for an international inquiry into events in Andijon, which the Uzbek government rejected as violating its sovereignty. In November 2005, the EU Council approved a visa ban on 12 Uzbek officials it stated were “directly responsible for the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force in Andijon and for the obstruction of an independent inquiry.” The Council also embargoed exports of “arms, military equipment, and other equipment that might be used for internal repression.”³¹ In October 2007 and April 2008, the EU Council suspended the visa ban for six months but left the arms embargo in place. In October 2008, the EU Council praised what it viewed as some positive trends in human rights in Uzbekistan and lifted the visa ban, although it left the arms embargo in place.³² In October 2009, it lifted the arms embargo.

At the first major trial of 15 alleged perpetrators of the Andijon unrest in late 2005, the accused all confessed and asked for death penalties. They testified that they were members of Akramiya, a branch of HT launched in 1994 by Akram Yuldashev that allegedly aimed to use force to create a caliphate in the area of the Fergana Valley located in Uzbekistan. Besides receiving assistance from HT, Akramiya was alleged to receive financial aid and arms training from the IMU. The defendants also claimed that the U.S. and Kyrgyz governments helped finance and support their effort to overthrow the government, and that international media colluded with local human rights groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in this effort. The U.S. and Kyrgyz governments denied involvement, and many observers criticized the trial as appearing stage-managed. Reportedly, 100 or more individuals were arrested and sentenced, including some Uzbek opposition party members and media and NGO representatives.³³ Partly in response, the U.S. Congress tightened conditions on aid to Uzbekistan.

²⁹ Analyst Adeb Khalid draws a parallel between the Uzbek government’s actions at Andijon and at a large student demonstration in Tashkent in January 1992. In the latter case, Karimov allegedly ordered troops to fire on the marchers, resulting in up to six deaths and two dozen or more injuries. *Islam After Communism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), p. 155. See also *Reuters*, January 17, 1992.

³⁰ See also CRS Report RS22161, *Unrest in Andijon, Uzbekistan: Context and Implications*, by Jim Nichol.

³¹ Council of the European Union, *Uzbekistan: Council Adopts Restrictive Measures*, Press Release 14392/05, November 14, 2005. U.S. officials argued that the United States already had been limiting military assistance—at congressional request—because of human rights abuses.

³² Council of the European Union, 2824th General Affairs Council Meeting, *Press Release*, October 15-16, 2007; 2864th and 2865th General Affairs and External Relations Council Meetings, *Press Release*, April 29, 2008; 2897th General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, *Press Release*, October 13, 2008. Some international human rights groups protested against a visit by the head of the Uzbek state security service—who had been subject to the visa ban lifted by the Council—to Germany in late October 2008. He reportedly advised German officials on IJU activities in Central Asia.

³³ OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), *Report from the OSCE/ODIHR Trial Monitoring in Uzbekistan*, April 21, 2006; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Uzbekistan, *Comments on the Report Prepared by the OSCE ODIHR*, April 19, 2006.

The Summer 2009 Suicide Bombings and Attacks in Uzbekistan

On May 25-26, 2009, a police checkpoint was attacked on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, attacks took place in the border town of Khanabad, and four bombings occurred in Andijon in the commercial district, including at least one by suicide bombers. Several deaths and injuries were alleged, although reporting was suppressed. Uzbek officials blamed the IMU, although the IJU allegedly claimed responsibility. President Karimov flew to Andijon on May 31. In late August 2009, shooting took place in Tashkent that resulted in the deaths of three alleged IMU members and the apprehension of other group members. The Uzbek government alleged that the group had been involved in the 1999 explosions and in recent assassinations in Tashkent. In early December 2009, the Andijon regional court reportedly convicted 22 individuals on charges of involvement in the May 2009 events, and sentenced them to prison terms ranging from five to 18 years.

The 2010 Ethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan

Deep-seated tensions between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan erupted on June 10-11, 2010. Grievances included perceptions among some ethnic Kyrgyz in the south that ethnic Uzbeks controlled commerce, discontent among some ethnic Uzbeks that they were excluded from the political process, and views among many Bakiyev supporters in the south that ethnic Uzbeks were supporting their opponents. Allegedly, fighting began between rival ethnic-based gangs at a casino in the city of Osh and quickly escalated, fuelled by rumors of rapes and other atrocities committed by each side. The fighting over the next few days resulted in an official death toll of 426 (of which 276 were ethnic Uzbeks and 105 were ethnic Kyrgyz) and over 2,000 injuries. The violence also resulted in an initial wave of 400,000 refugees and IDPs and the destruction of thousands of homes and businesses in Osh and Jalal-abad. Otunbayeva appealed to Russia for troops to help end the fighting, but the CSTO, meeting in emergency session on June 14, 2010, agreed to only provide humanitarian assistance. The Kyrgyz interim government variously blamed Bakiyev's supporters, Uzbek secessionists, Islamic extremists, and drug traffickers for fuelling the violence.³⁴ There were some reports that elements of the police and armed forces in the south defied central authority and were involved in the violence and subsequent attacks on ethnic Uzbeks.

Although critical of the Kyrgyz government, Uzbekistan did not intervene militarily or permit its citizens to enter Kyrgyzstan to join in the June fighting. After some hesitation, the Uzbek government permitted 90,000 ethnic Uzbeks to settle in temporary camps in Uzbekistan. Virtually all had returned to Kyrgyzstan by the end of June.³⁵ According to Assistant Secretary of State Eric Schwartz, "the Government of Uzbekistan acted quickly and constructively in response to the humanitarian crisis, [and] cooperated closely with U.N. agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations. These efforts helped many people."³⁶ While also stating that "Uzbekistan ... behaved admirably" by hosting the refugees, Assistant Secretary Blake has testified that "although there were no reports of force to promote returns, reports of psychological pressure, monetary incentives, threats of loss of citizenship, coercion and/or encouragement to participate in the June 27 referendum and concerns about family members who

³⁴ Bruce Pannier, "Kyrgyzstan: Anatomy of a Conflict," *RFE/RL*, July 02, 2010.

³⁵ UNHCR, *Final Report on UNHCR Emergency Operations in the Republic of Uzbekistan*, July 23, 2010.

³⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Opening Statement of Assistant Secretary Schwartz*, June 29, 2010.

remained in Kyrgyzstan all may have factored into the rapid repatriation of those who were displaced.” Presumably, Kyrgyz officials were involved in these actions.³⁷

An OSCE informal foreign ministers’ meeting in July 2010 endorsed sending a 52-member police advisory group for an initial period of four months to help facilitate peace in southern Kyrgyzstan. It was proposed that the mission could later be extended and another 50 advisors deployed.³⁸ Concerns about the presence of the OSCE police advisory group from the Osh mayor and other Kyrgyz ultranationalists delayed its deployment. On November 18, 2010, the OSCE Permanent Council reached agreement with Kyrgyzstan on an alternative one-year police training program.

International donors meeting in Bishkek on July 27, 2010 pledged \$1.1 billion in grants and loans to help Kyrgyzstan recover from the June violence. The United States pledged \$48.6 million in addition to FY2010 and FY2011 planned aid. In addition, the United States provided \$4.1 million in humanitarian assistance to Kyrgyzstan immediately after the April and June events.³⁹ Analyst Martha Olcott has warned that the discrimination by ethnic Kyrgyz against ethnic Uzbeks has contributed in some cases to young ethnic Uzbeks being attracted to Islamic extremism.⁴⁰

On January 10, 2011, a Kyrgyz commission issued its findings on the causes of the June 2010 violence in southern Kyrgyzstan between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks. The report largely blamed ethnic Uzbek “extremists” and some supporters of former Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev for fomenting the violence. The report also blamed interim government officials of ineptness in dealing with the escalating ethnic tensions.

On May 2, 2011, an international commission formed under the leadership of Kimmo Kiljunen, the Special Representative for Central Asia of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, released its report of findings regarding the June 2010 violence. The commission concluded that the Kyrgyz provisional government failed to adequately provide security and leadership to stifle rising tensions and incidents in May or to minimize the effects of the June ethnic violence. The commission also raised concerns that security forces were directly or indirectly complicit in the violence (according to the commission, most police, military, and other security personnel are ethnic Kyrgyz). The commission called for the Kyrgyz government to condemn ultra-nationalism and proclaim that the state is multi-national, promote gender equality, provide special rights for Uzbek language use in the south, train security forces to uphold human rights and not subvert state interests through parochial loyalties, impartially investigate and prosecute those responsible for the violence, establish a truth and reconciliation commission, and provide reparations.⁴¹ The

³⁷ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Hearing on Instability in Kyrgyzstan: The International Response, *Testimony by Robert O. Blake, Assistant Secretary Of State For South And Central Asia*, July 27, 2010.

³⁸ OSCE, Press Release, *OSCE and Kyrgyzstan Agree on Principles for OSCE Police Advisory Group*, July 16, 2010; *OSCE Chairperson Says Presence of Police Advisory Group in Kyrgyzstan will Facilitate Strengthening Trust, Stability and Order in Country*, July 22, 2010.

³⁹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, *United States Announces Additional Support for Kyrgyz Republic*, July 27, 2010; U.S. Embassy, Bishkek, *Opening Statement by Daniel Rosenblum, Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia and Tatiana Gfoeller, U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic: High-Level Donors Meeting, “Emergency Response to the Kyrgyz Republic, Reconciliation and Recovery,”* July 27, 2010; Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Hearing on Instability in Kyrgyzstan: The International Response, *Testimony of Robert O. Blake*, July 27, 2010.

⁴⁰ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Hearing on Instability in Kyrgyzstan: The International Response, *Testimony of Martha Brill Olcott*, July 27, 2010.

⁴¹ OSCE, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in* (continued...)

Kyrgyz government has rejected the finding that security forces were complicit in the violence, continued to blame the former Bakiyev regime and Islamic extremists for fomenting the clashes, and stated that ethnic Uzbeks shared substantial blame for committing human rights abuses.

Some observers have raised concerns that what they view as inadequate efforts by the Kyrgyz government to foster ethnic reconciliation could result in new ethnic unrest. Among such concerns, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a terrorist group currently based in Afghanistan and Pakistan, reportedly has vowed actions against the Kyrgyz government for its alleged abuses against ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan. Former President Otunbayeva and other observers have warned that some ethnic Uzbek youth in the south are being recruited by the IMU.⁴²

Attacks by Jama'at Kyrgyzstan Jaish al-Mahdi in 2010-2011

According to Kyrgyz security authorities, Jamaat Kyrgyzstan Jaish al-Mahdi (Kyrgyz Army of the Righteous Ruler), an ethnic Kyrgyz terrorist group, bombed a synagogue and sports facility and attempted to bomb a police station in late 2010, and killed three policemen in early 2011. The group also allegedly planned to attack the U.S. embassy and U.S. military Manas "transit center." Kyrgyz security forces reportedly killed or apprehended a dozen or more members of the group, including its leader, in January 2011. Ten alleged members of the group were put on trial in May 2011. At least some group members allegedly had received training by the Caucasus Emirate terrorist group in Russia, but also in late 2010 the group reportedly pledged solidarity with the Taliban.

The 2010 Attacks in Tajikistan

In late August 2010, over two dozen individuals sentenced as terrorists escaped from prison in Dushanbe and launched attacks as they travelled to various regions of the country. Many of these individuals had been opposition fighters during the Tajik Civil War and had been arrested in eastern Tajikistan during government sweeps in 2009. In early September 2010, a suicide car bombing resulted in over two dozen deaths or injuries among police in the northern city of Khujand. An obscure terrorist group, Jamaat Ansarullah, supposedly related to the IMU, claimed responsibility. Some escapees and their allies, allegedly including IMU terrorists, attacked a military convoy in the Rasht Valley (formerly known as Karategin) east of Dushanbe on September 19, 2010, reportedly resulting in dozens of deaths and injuries to government forces. Heavy fighting in the Rasht Valley over the next month reportedly led to dozens of additional casualties among government forces. In early January 2011, the Tajik Interior (police) Ministry reported that its forces had killed former Tajik opposition fighter Alovuddin Davlatov, alias Ali Bedaki, the alleged leader of one major insurgent group involved in the ambush in the Rasht Valley. Another leader of the ambush, Abdullo Rakhimov, aka Mullo Abdullo—a former Tajik opposition paramilitary leader who spurned the peace settlement and travelled to Afghanistan and

(...continued)

June 2010, May 2, 2011.

⁴² Neil Melvin, *Promoting a Stable and Multiethnic Kyrgyzstan: Overcoming the Causes and Legacies of Violence*, Open Society Foundations, March 7, 2011; Bruce Pannier, "The Growing Threat of Militants in a Corner of Central Asia," *RFE/RL*, April 23, 2011; "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Says It Has New Leader and Can Attack Targets in Central Asia," *Report News: Central Asia*, Issue 631, Institute of War and Peace Reporting, October 13, 2010.

Pakistan, where he maintained links with al Qaeda and the Taliban, and who reentered Tajikistan in 2009—was reportedly killed by Tajik security forces on April 15, 2011.⁴³ In September 2011, Jamaat Ansarullah reportedly issued a directive to its followers in Tajikistan to kill pro-democracy advocates, who by its definition were “unbelievers” even if they were practicing Muslims. In December 2011, several of the alleged participants in the September 2010 attack in Khujand received life sentences.

The 2011 Attacks and Unrest in Kazakhstan

Several suicide bombings and other alleged terrorist attacks occurred in Kazakhstan in 2011, although the government appeared reluctant to release many details and trials of alleged terrorists were usually closed to outside observers. A suicide bombing took place in a security office on May 17, 2011, in the city of Aktoke and a car bombing took place at another security office on May 24 in Astana. On the night of June 30, alleged terrorists killed three police officers in the village of Shubarshi in Aktobe Region. Apparently shaken by these and other bombings and terrorist attacks, President Nazarbayev directed changes to the law on religion that were duly approved in late September. On October 31, two explosions occurred in the city of Atyrau, one at the regional administration building and the other a suicide bombing in a residential area. A week after these bombings, two police officers were killed in Almaty by alleged terrorists who had filmed their actions. On November 12, in the town of Taraz, one person killed several police and attacked a security office. The same day, an attempted explosion reportedly was foiled and an attack on a roadblock was carried out in Taraz, resulting in additional police deaths. The Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate) claimed responsibility for the bombings in Atyrau and may have been involved in other incidents. Kazakhstan’s Office of the Prosecutor-General claimed that Jund al-Khilafah was formed in mid-2011 by Kazakh citizens Renat Khabibuly, Orynbasarov Unasov, and Damir Nabiyeu, was allied with the Taliban, was headquartered in Pakistan’s tribal area, and was dedicated to “waging a jihad on the territory of Kazakhstan.” At the end of November 2011, Kazakhstan banned Jund al-Khilafah as a terrorist organization.⁴⁴ Jund al-Khilafah also has claimed responsibility for attacks on U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

On December 16, 2011, energy sector workers on strike since May 2011 and others reportedly extensively damaged and burned government and other buildings and clashed with police in the town of Zhanaozen, in the Mangistau Region of Kazakhstan, resulting in 16 deaths and dozens of injuries, the government reported. Some observers alleged that there were more casualties and that the riots were triggered or exacerbated by police firing on the demonstrators. Protests and violence also spread to other areas of the region. President Nursultan Nazarbayev declared a state of emergency and curfew in the town on December 17 and sent military and security forces to the region. He claimed that the violence was pre-planned and financed, perhaps from abroad, that the rioters had been given alcohol and money, and that police had shot into the crowds only in self-defense. At the same time, he charged that local officials had not heeded the grievances of the striking oil workers and had given him misinformation. In response, he fired the head of Kazmunaigaz, the state-owned energy firm, ousted his son-in-law as head of the national fund that owned Kazmunaigaz, replaced the governor of the region, and pledged new employment and

⁴³ Lola Olimova and Nargis Hamrabaeva, “Tajik Authorities Struggle to Quell Militants,” *Report News: Central Asia*, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, October 4, 2010; Tilav Rasulzoda and Parvina Khamidova, “New Militant Force in Tajikistan?” *Report News: Central Asia*, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, October 21, 2010; *CEDR*, January 12, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950136; Dilafruz Nabiyeu, “Mullo Abdullo Killed,” *Central Asia Online*, April 15, 2011.

⁴⁴ *CEDR*, November 9, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950038; *Interfax*, November 30, 2011.

retraining for oil workers who had been fired during their long strike. Critics charged that he took these moves to protect his popularity and that of the ruling political party during an electoral campaign (see below). The government reported that dozens of individuals have been detained so far in connection with the protests.

A trial against 37 individuals charged with crimes associated with the Zhanaozen riot opened in late March 2012. The bulk of the defendants are striking workers and youths, who are accused of initiating the violence, although five police officers are being tried for abuses in quelling the unrest. In late April 2012, the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch called for the trial to be suspended while an investigation of alleged torture and other abuses against those on trial is carried out.

U.S. Designation of the IMU and IJU as Terrorist Organizations

In September 2000, the State Department designated the IMU as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, stating that the IMU, aided by Afghanistan's Taliban and by Osama bin Laden, resorts to terrorism, actively threatens U.S. interests, and attacks American citizens. The "main goal of the IMU is to topple the current government in Uzbekistan," the State Department warned, and it linked the IMU to bombings and attacks on Uzbekistan in 1999-2000. IMU forces assisting the Taliban and Al Qaeda suffered major losses during coalition actions in Afghanistan, and IMU co-head Namangani was probably killed.⁴⁵

Former CIA Director Porter Goss testified in March 2005 that the IJG/IJU "has become a more virulent threat to U.S. interests and local governments."⁴⁶ In May 2005, the State Department designated the IJG/IJU as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist, and in June, the U.N. Security Council added the IJG/IJU to its terrorism list.⁴⁷ In June 2008, IJG head Jalolov and his associate Suhayl Fatilloevich Buranov were added to the U.N. 1267 Sanctions Committee's Consolidated List of individuals and entities associated with bin Laden, al Qaeda, and the Taliban. Also, the U.S. Treasury Department ordered that any of their assets under U.S. jurisdiction be frozen and prohibited U.S. citizens from financial dealings with the terrorists.⁴⁸ IMU head Yuldashev reportedly was killed in late August 2009 in Pakistan by a U.S. predator drone missile, and Jalalov allegedly similarly was killed in late September 2009.

In July 2011, an Uzbek citizen on an expired student visa was arrested on charges of being directed by IMU terrorists to assassinate President Obama. He confessed and was sentenced in 2012. Two other ethnic Uzbeks were arrested in the United States in early 2012 on charges of collaborating with the IJU. One of the Uzbeks had been granted refugee status after he fled the Uzbek government crackdown in Andijon in 2005. He was arrested at a U.S. airport while allegedly planning to join IJU terrorists abroad.

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*, April 2004.

⁴⁶ U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Testimony of the Director of Central Intelligence, The Honorable Porter J. Goss, March 17, 2005.

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, Press Statement: U.S. Department of State Designates the Islamic Jihad Group Under Executive Order 13224, May 26, 2005; U.N. Security Council, The Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee, Press Release: Security Council Committee Adds One Entity to Al-Qaida Section of Consolidated List, SC/8405, June 3, 2005.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release: Treasury Designates Leadership of the IJU Terrorist Group, June 18, 2008.

Democratization and Human Rights

A major goal of U.S. policy in Central Asia has been to foster the long-term development of democratic institutions and respect for human rights. Particularly since September 11, 2001, the United States has attempted to harmonize its concerns about democratization and human rights in the region with its interests in regional support for counter-terrorism. According to some allegations, the former Bush Administration may have sent suspected terrorists in its custody to Uzbekistan for questioning, a process termed “extraordinary rendition.”⁴⁹ Although not verifying such transfers specifically to Uzbekistan, the former Bush Administration stated that it received diplomatic assurances that transferees would not be tortured. Several citizens of Central Asian states who were held in U.S. custody at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base have been returned to their home countries.⁵⁰

All of the Central Asian leaders have declared that they are committed to democratization. During Nazarbayev’s 1994 U.S. visit, he and then-President Clinton signed a Charter on Democratic Partnership that recognized Kazakhstan’s commitments to the rule of law, respect for human rights, and economic reform. During his December 2001 and September 2006 visits, Nazarbayev repeated these pledges in joint statements with then-President Bush. In March 2002, a U.S.-Uzbek Strategic Partnership Declaration was signed pledging Uzbekistan to “intensify the democratic transformation” and improve freedom of the press. During his December 2002 U.S. visit, Tajikistan’s President Rahmon pledged to “expand fundamental freedoms and human rights.”

Despite such democratization pledges, the states have made little progress, according to the State Department. In testimony in May 2011, Assistant Secretary Blake stated that leaders in Central Asia “are suspicious of democratic reforms, and with some exceptions have maintained tight restrictions on political, social, religious, and economic life in their countries.... Kyrgyzstan has been the primary exception in Central Asia. The democratic gains recently made in Kyrgyzstan ... are cause for optimism.”⁵¹ The non-governmental organization Freedom House has rated all of Central Asia’s governments (except Kyrgyzstan’s) as among the most repressive in the world in terms of political rights and civil liberties, with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan being rated as similar to Burma and North Korea.⁵²

During the 1990s and early 2000s, almost all the leaders in Central Asia held onto power by orchestrating extensions of their terms, holding suspect elections, eliminating possible

⁴⁹ *The New Yorker*, February 14, 2005; *New York Times*, May 1, 2005; *New York Times*, December 31, 2005; Representative Edward Markey, *Congressional Record*, December 13, 2005, p. H11337; European Parliament. Temporary Committee on the Alleged Use of European Countries by the CIA for the Transport And Illegal Detention of Prisoners, *Draft Interim Report*, 2006/2027(INI), April 24, 2006; and *On the Testimony by Craig Murray, Former British Ambassador*, Working Document No. 5, June 1, 2006.

⁵⁰ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight, Hearing: City on the Hill or Prison on the Bay? The Mistakes of Guantanamo and the Decline of America’s Image, May 6, 2008; Hearing: Rendition and the Department of State, June 10, 2008. At least three Tajiks returned to Tajikistan from Guantanamo were then tried and imprisoned on charges of belonging to al Qaeda or the IMU.

⁵¹ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Hearing on Central Asia and the Arab Spring: Growing Pressure For Human Rights? *Testimony of Robert Blake, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs*, May 11, 2011.

⁵² “Combined Average Ratings: Independent Countries,” *Freedom in the World 2011*, Freedom House, at [http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw11/CombinedAverageRatings\(IndependentCountries\)FIW2011.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw11/CombinedAverageRatings(IndependentCountries)FIW2011.pdf).

contenders, and providing emoluments to supporters and relatives (the exception was the leader of Tajikistan, who had been ousted in the early 1990s during a civil war). After this long period of leadership stability, President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan was toppled in a coup in 2005, and President Niyazov of Turkmenistan died in late 2006, marking the passing of three out of five Soviet-era regional leaders from the scene. Soviet-era leaders Nazarbayev and Karimov remain in power, and Tajikistan has been headed since the civil war by Rahmon, the Soviet-era head of a state farm.

Possible scenarios of political futures in Central Asia have ranged from continued rule in most of the states by elite groups that became ensconced during the Soviet era to violent transitions to Islamic fundamentalist rule. Peaceful transitions to more or less democratic political systems have not occurred and appear unlikely for some time to come (although the peaceful October 2011 Kyrgyz presidential election may offer some hope; see below). While some observers warn that Islamic extremism could increase dramatically in the region, others discount the risk that the existing secular governments soon will be overthrown by Islamic extremists.⁵³

In the case of the three succession transitions so far, Tajikistan's resulted in a shift in the Soviet-era regional/clan elite configuration and some limited inclusion of the Islamic Renaissance Party. Perhaps worrisome, Tajik President Rahmon has written a "spiritual guide" reminiscent of the one penned by Turkmenistan's late authoritarian president Niyazov, and has given orders on how citizens should live and dress. In Turkmenistan, it appears that Soviet-era elites have retained power following Niyazov's death and have eschewed meaningful democratization. Kyrgyzstan's transition after Akayev's 2005 ouster appeared to involve the gradual increase in influence of southern regional/clan ethnic Kyrgyz elites linked to Bakiyev until April 2010, when northern regional/clan ethnic Kyrgyz elites reasserted influence by ousting then-President Bakiyev. An interim president held office until an election was held on October 30, 2011, the first contested electoral transfer of power in Central Asia. This election was won by Almazbek Atambayev, who represents northern interests (see below).

Recent Developments in Kazakhshtan

A bill approved by the legislature in May 2010 proclaimed Nazarbayev the "Leader of the Nation" ("Yelbashi"), providing him with a political role if he retired from the presidency. The bill also provided the President and his family with lifetime immunity from prosecution. Nazarbayev refused to sign the bill into law, but did not veto it or return it to the legislature, so it went into effect without his signature. He claimed that he did not veto the bill because he was sure the legislature would over-ride his veto.

In late 2010, supporters of President Nazarbayev launched a petition drive to hold a referendum to approve extending his term in office until December 2020 (a similar referendum had been held in 1995 to extend his term to 1999). The United States and other countries and international organizations were critical of the proposed referendum. The Kazakh legislature quickly approved a bill to hold a referendum even before the petition drive was complete, but President Nazarbayev vetoed the legislation. The legislature overrode his veto (by this time, reportedly two-thirds of the

⁵³ Analyst Adeeb Khalid argues that the elites and populations of the regional states still hold many attitudes and follow many practices imposed during the Soviet period of rule. This "Sovietism" makes it difficult for either Islamic extremism or democratization to make headway, he suggests. Khalid, p. 193. For a perhaps more troubling view of the threat of Islamic extremism, see above, "Overview of U.S. Policy Concerns."

electorate had signed the petition), but the Constitutional Council ruled at the end of January 2011 against the legitimacy of proposed constitutional changes necessary to hold the referendum. President Nazarbayev claimed that to gratify the petition-signers who had endorsed his presidency and to uphold democracy, he would move up the date of the next scheduled presidential election from 2012 to April 3, 2011.

Many opposition politicians decried the holding of a sudden presidential election. They claimed that they would not be able to mount adequate campaigns in only a few weeks, while Nazarbayev's supporters had already mobilized to carry out the petition drive. During a three-week registration period, three candidates besides the president were able to satisfy the many requirements necessary to run (two of these also had run in the 2005 presidential election), while other more well-known opposition politicians refused to run, were unable to satisfy the various requirements, or were denied registration. All of the presidential candidates proclaimed that they wanted Nazarbayev to win, and one candidate announced on voting day that he had cast his ballot for the incumbent. The Kazakh Central Electoral Commission (CEC) reported that 89.99% of 9.3 million voters turned out and that Nazarbayev was reelected with 95.55% of the vote. According to OSCE monitors, "needed reforms for holding genuine democratic elections still have to materialize as this election revealed shortcomings similar to those" in previously monitored elections. The OSCE reported "serious irregularities" during voting, "including numerous instances of seemingly identical signatures on voter lists and cases of ballot box stuffing," and judged vote counting as even more problematic.⁵⁴ The U.S. Embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan, congratulated Nazarbayev on his reelection and "welcome[d] Kazakhstan's commitments to further liberalize the political environment and believe[d] that continued improvements in the electoral process are critical components."⁵⁵

For the third time during his period of rule, Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev issued a decree on November 16, 2011, dismissing the legislature and setting early elections for January 15, 2012. He invoked his constitutional power to dissolve the legislature in case of a "political crisis" between the legislature and the executive branch of government. He argued that the crisis was linked to the possibility of another global economic downturn. His presidential advisor added that other reasons included rising terrorism and increasing popular discontent that would make it more difficult for the ruling party to win if the election were held at the normal time in late 2012.⁵⁶

Of the 107 seats in the lower legislative chamber (the Majlis), 98 were to be allocated through party list voting, with the remaining 9 members selected by a presidential advisory body. Critics complained that the holding of an early election appeared aimed—as in the case of the early presidential election—to hinder the political opposition from preparing for the election. Critics also alleged that the government had prepared for an early election, including by suspending the activities of the opposition Communist Party in October 2011, on the grounds that the party was trying to form an illegal alliance with an unregistered party to participate in a future legislative election. Another possible preparatory move included the Ak Zhal Party's selection of Azat Peruashev as its head, who allegedly is a supporter of Nazarbayev. Under a law passed in 2009, more than one party must be represented in the legislature, so that even if only the ruling party

⁵⁴ OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *International Election Observation, Republic Of Kazakhstan, Early Presidential Election, 3 April 2011: Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, April 4, 2011.

⁵⁵ U.S. Embassy, Astana, Kazakhstan, *Press Release: U.S. Embassy Statement*, April 4, 2011.

⁵⁶ CEDR, December 19, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950019.

gained enough votes to win seats under normal rules, a runner-up party would be granted at least 2 seats.

Seven parties were registered to run in the January 15, 2012, election to the Majlis. One other party, Rukhaniyat, was de-registered two weeks before the election, a procedure the OSCE stated appeared selective. Days before the election, over two dozen candidates were removed from the party lists by the Central Electoral Commission because of alleged inaccuracies in their documentation, a procedure deemed problematic by the OSCE.

The official campaign season opened on December 16, 2011, the same day that a peaceful protest by striking energy workers in the northern Kazakh town of Zhanaozen turned violent, resulting in over a dozen deaths and dozens of injuries. Martial law was declared in the town and was extended to the end of January 2012, but voting on election day went ahead. Rukhaniyat claimed that it was blocked from participating in the election because of its criticism of the security crackdown in Zhanaozen. The riots contributed to more emphasis in the campaign to the need for boosting social programs. According to some reports, the government waited until after the election to launch arrests of many alleged protesters.

According to the final results issued by the CEC, the ruling Nur Otun Party received 80.99% of 7.02 million votes cast and won 83 seats, Ak Zhol received 7.47% of the vote and 8 seats, and Communist People's Party received 7.19% and 7 seats. The other four parties—the National Social Democratic Azat, Auyl, Patriots, and Adilet—failed to clear the 7% vote hurdle and won no seats. Critics charged that both of the minor parties that entered the Majlis were pro-Nazarbayev parties.

OSCE election monitors judged that the election did not meet fundamental principles of democratic elections. They reported that the legal framework for holding democratic elections was inadequate, only selected parties were permitted to run, voters had no assurance of which candidates on the winning lists might end up with seats, the open exchange of views during the campaign was restricted, and there were “significant irregularities” on voting day, including ballot box stuffing and “significant changes” by higher electoral bodies to vote totals reported at the precinct level. The OSCE monitors also raised concerns that the CEC had declared the winners before the appeal process period was over.⁵⁷ In early March 2012, President Nazarbayev criticized some unnamed countries in the OSCE for using election monitoring to “pressure” other OSCE members, and threatened that Kazakhstan and other CIS members might cease inviting the OSCE to monitor elections.

Even before the election was over, observers reported that government arrests and harassment of journalists and opposition party politicians were increasing. In late January 2012, one prominent opposition newspaper editor was arrested on charges that were two years old, and the head of the unregistered Alga Party was arrested on charges of inciting social disorder, ostensibly referring to the events in Zhanaozen. Several leading politicians of the National Social Democratic Party Azat and others have been arrested and fined following protests that have been held every month since late January 2012 against alleged electoral violations and the government crackdown in Zhanaozen. In mid-March 2012, the European Parliament approved a resolution that expressed indignation for the incarceration of opposition politicians and journalists since the election on

⁵⁷ OSCE, ODIHR, *Republic Of Kazakhstan, Early Parliamentary Elections, 15 January 2012: OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report*, April 3, 2012.

political grounds and called for their release. The resolution urged the Kazakh government to reverse the recent further deterioration of human rights by undertaking reforms to ensure future pluralistic elections, to safeguard a free press, and to permit NGOs to operate freely. The resolution also “strongly condemn[ed] the violent crackdown by the police against demonstrators in Zhanaozen,” and called for an independent and credible investigation of the incident.⁵⁸ On April 19, 2012, journalist Lukpan Akhmedyarov was attacked and wounded in western Kazakhstan. He has alleged that the attackers are linked to local officials.

Recent Developments in Kyrgyzstan

After two days of popular unrest in the capital of Bishkek and other cities that appeared to be linked to rising utility prices and government repression, opposition politicians ousted the Bakiyev administration on April 8, 2010, and declared an interim government. Roza Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister and ambassador to the United States, was declared the acting prime minister. The interim leadership formed a commission on May 4 to draft a new constitution to establish a system of governance with greater balance between the legislative and executive branches. Deep-seated tensions between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan erupted on June 10-11, 2010 (see above, “The 2010 Ethnic Clashes in Kyrgyzstan”).

Despite the violence, the interim government felt strongly that the country’s stability would be enhanced by going ahead with a June 27, 2010, referendum on the draft constitution. According to the government, the turnout was 72% and over 90% approved the draft constitution. A limited OSCE observer mission reported that vote-counting procedures seemed problematic in the polling stations visited.⁵⁹ Under the law implementing the new constitution, Otunbayeva was designated the president, although it also was stipulated that she could not run when presidential elections were held at the end of 2011.

A legislative election was held on October 10, 2010. Twenty-nine political parties participated for the 120 legislative seats. OSCE monitors reported that the election “constituted a further consolidation of the democratic process and brought the country closer to meeting its international commitments on democratic elections.” Morten Høglund, the head of the short-term OSCE observer mission, stated that “this election reflected the will of the people of the Kyrgyz Republic.” The mission’s preliminary report stated, however, that vote-counting was poorly organized and that tabulation procedures were not followed properly in half of the polling stations visited and in one-third of territorial electoral commissions.⁶⁰ Five parties were determined to have overcome a 5% vote hurdle to gain seats. The Ata Jurt Party, linked to former Bakiyev officials and to ultra-nationalists, received the largest percentage of 1.7 million votes, 8.7%, and 28 seats; the Social-Democratic Party (SDP; Otunbayeva’s party) won 7.8% of the vote and 26 seats; the opposition Ar Namys won 7.57% of the vote and 25 seats; the centrist opposition Respublika won 6.93% of the vote and 23 seats; and the pro-government Ata Mekan won 5.49% of the vote and 18 seats. About 35% of 1.7 million votes went to parties that did not pass the vote hurdle to gain seats. Since no one party obtained over one-half of the legislative seats, they

⁵⁸ European Parliament, *Resolution of 15 March 2012 on Kazakhstan*, 2012/2553(RSP), March 15, 2012.

⁵⁹ OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *The Kyrgyz Republic Constitutional Referendum, 27 June 2010: OSCE/ODIHR Limited Referendum Observation Mission Report*, June 27, 2010.

⁶⁰ OSCE, *Kyrgyz Republic: Parliamentary Elections, 10 October 2010, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, October 11, 2010.

negotiated on forming a ruling coalition. President Obama hailed the election as demonstrating “important and positive attributes of a genuine democracy.”⁶¹

After some time, Respublika in December 2010 succeeded in forming a coalition with the SDP and the Ata Jurt Party, controlling 77 seats out of 120. The coalition nominated SDP official Almazbek Atambayev as prime minister and he was approved by the legislature. In a speech to the legislators and other public comments, Atambayev pledged to solidify a “strategic partnership” with Russia, and to seek to join the Russia-Kazakh-Belarus customs union. He also called for close relations with the United States, and pledged not to challenge the U.S.-Kyrgyz accord on the airbase.

Kyrgyzstan’s presidential election was held on October 30, 2011, the first involving the peaceful contested transfer of presidential power in Central Asia. The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) approved 23 candidates (four after they won court cases). After being registered, however, several candidates withdrew from the race, leaving 16 on the ballot. Over one-half of these candidates ran as independents without a specific party endorsement. Prime Minister Atambayev temporarily stepped down so that he could run. Although a member of the coalition government, Ata Jurt fielded Kamchybek Tashiyev as its candidate. Atambayev was nominated by the party he heads, the Social Democratic Party, a member of the coalition. The third member of the coalition, the Republic Party, also backed Atambayev.

The day after the election, monitors from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and the European Parliament (EP) judged that the election had “shortcomings” that needed to be addressed “to consolidate democratic practice in line with international commitments.” They stated that although there was a wide choice of candidates and the electoral campaign “was open and respected fundamental freedoms,” there were “significant irregularities ... during the counting and [the] tabulation of votes.” including interference by outsiders in the vote count, pre-signed voting tallies, failure to post voting tallies, and alteration of completed tallies.

On November 12, 2011, the CEC announced final election results. It stated that Atambayev had won with 62.52% of 1.86 million votes cast, followed by the nationalist leader of the opposition party Butun Kyrgyzstan (One Kyrgyzstan), Adahan Madumarov, with 14.78% of the vote, and Tashiyev, with 14.32%.⁶² Atambayev was sworn in as president on December 1, 2011. The next day, the Social Democratic Party acted to form a new coalition, and on December 15, a coalition was formed comprising the Social Democratic Party, Respublika, Ata-Meken, and Ar-Namys. The coalition holds 92 seats, leaving the Ata-Jurt Party, with 28 seats, as the opposition in the legislature. On December 23, the legislature approved Respublika Party member Omurbek Babanov as the prime minister along with a slate of ministers. The distribution of power in the new government appears to revivify northern dominance over southern interests, intensifying regional tensions.

⁶¹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Statement by President Obama on the Parliamentary Elections in Kyrgyzstan*, October 11, 2010.

⁶² Central Commission for Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Resolution of the CEC*, November 12, 2011, at <http://www.shailoo.gov.kg>.

Recent Developments in Turkmenistan

A new presidential election law was adopted in May 2011 that was problematic in ensuring a free and fair election, according to the OSCE. Problems included hurdles to candidate registration, restrictions on freedom of expression that limited campaigning, and an inadequate process for complaints and appeals.⁶³ In October 2011, the Turkmen Central Electoral Commission (CEC) announced that a presidential election would be held on February 12, 2012. During the last two weeks of December 2011, initiative groups nominated candidates for president and gathered 10,000 signatures in a majority of the country's districts in order to gain registration of their candidates. The National Revival Movement, a civic association headed by the president, nominated President Berdimuhamedow as its candidate. In January 2012, the CEC registered eight candidates. All of Berdimuhamedow's challengers were ministerial officials or state plant managers. Based on an inadequate legal and political framework to ensure a pluralistic election, the OSCE decided not to formally monitor the election. The CEC announced that Berdimuhamedow won over 97% of the vote and that turnout was over 96%.

Recent Developments in Uzbekistan

In a speech in November 2010, President Karimov called for various constitutional changes which were approved by the legislature in March 2001 and signed into law by the president in April 2011. One of the changes provides for the political party that controls a majority of seats in the lower legislative chamber to have the right to nominate a candidate for prime minister (all existing political parties are pro-Karimov). Procedures also are outlined for the legislature to hold a vote of no confidence in the prime minister. The prime minister is given responsibility for appointing regional administrators, a power formerly lodged with the president. Another amendment specifies that in the event the president is incapacitated, the chairman of the Senate will serve as the interim head of state pending the holding of a presidential election within three months. Some skeptics have linked the constitutional changes to government concerns that civil discontent could become manifest as it did in several Middle Eastern countries in early 2011. Others suggest that since some of the ostensible reform efforts predate the "Arab Spring," they are linked to infighting within the elite. Perhaps supporting the latter view, in mid-July 2011 the legislature passed a joint resolution criticizing an economic report delivered by the prime minister.⁶⁴

Human Rights

According to the NGO Human Rights Watch, Central Asian governments in 2011 fell short in respect for human rights in many areas:

- Kazakhstan failed to carry out long-promised human rights reforms in the year following its OSCE chairmanship (see below). Instead, its rights record suffered further setbacks. Control over the prison system was transferred from the Justice Ministry back to the Interior Ministry, putting prisons back in police control, and a new restrictive religion law was adopted. Websites were blocked and legal

⁶³ OSCE, ODIHR, *Republic Of Turkmenistan Presidential Election, 12 February 2012: Needs Assessment Mission Report*, January 3, 2012.

⁶⁴ CEDR, July 22, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950121.

amendments limiting media freedoms remained. The government continued to restrict freedom of assembly and human rights activist Yevgeniy Zhovtis remained in prison.

- In Kyrgyzstan, torture and arbitrary detention in the aftermath of the June 2010 ethnic violence remained rampant and largely unpunished, with ethnic Uzbeks in the south being particularly vulnerable to police torture and other violations of the rule of law. Freedom of media generally improved in 2011, but authorities at times attempted to limit freedom of expression.
- The human rights situation in Tajikistan remained poor. The government persisted with enforcing a repressive law on religion and introduced new legislation further restricting religious expression. Authorities continued to restrict freedom of the media, including by harassing and arresting journalists. The judiciary remained neither independent nor effective.
- Turkmenistan remained one of the world's most repressive countries. Media and religious freedoms were subject to draconian restrictions, and human rights defenders faced constant threat of government reprisal. International observers expressed concern about allegations of widespread torture and ill-treatment, and of disappearances in custody.
- Uzbekistan's human rights record remained appalling. Security officers were responsible for the endemic torture of prisoners and detainees. Authorities continued to target civil society activists, opposition members, and journalists, and to persecute religious believers who worshiped outside state-approved channels. Freedom of expression was severely limited. The Uzbek government increased the presence of security forces across the country and widened its already-tight control over the internet.⁶⁵

In November 2006, the State Department designated Uzbekistan a “country of particular concern” (CPC) for severe religious and other human rights violations that could lead to U.S. sanctions. In its most recent report in October 2011, the State Department retained Uzbekistan's CPC designation. However, since 2009, the State Department has issued waivers for Uzbekistan, so that no U.S. sanctions are taken. In its most recent report in March 2012, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF; it provides recommendations to the State Department) reported that Uzbekistan had made scant efforts to address religious freedom abuses and should retain its CPC designation. Among other Central Asian states, the USCIRF recommended in its 2012 annual report—as it had since 2000—that Turkmenistan be designated a CPC, and recommended—for the first time because of the continuing deterioration of religious freedom—that Tajikistan be designated a CPC.⁶⁶

On human trafficking:

- The State Department did not evaluate Turkmenistan because of inadequate information until 2009, when it listed Turkmenistan on the “Tier 2 Watch List,”

⁶⁵ *World Report 2012*, Human Rights Watch, January 22, 2012.

⁶⁶ U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, *Annual Report*, March 2012. USCIRF first urged that Uzbekistan be designated a CPC in its 2005 *Annual Report*. For the most recent State Department CPC designations, see Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*, October 2011.

because it “does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.... [T]he government did not publicly acknowledge trafficking as a problem, undertake significant efforts to raise awareness, or assist victims.” In 2011, Turkmenistan was downgraded to “Tier 3” (designating a source country for human trafficking that did not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and was not making significant efforts to do so).

- Uzbekistan was downgraded in 2006 to “Tier 3.” No U.S. aid sanctions were reported as a direct result of the Tier 3 designation. In 2008, Uzbekistan was found to have made some modest progress in addressing human trafficking problems, and was upgraded to the “Tier 2 Watch List.” According to the State Department, Uzbekistan in 2008 adopted an anti-trafficking law and demonstrated modest improvement in its victim assistance and protection efforts. In 2011, the State Department reported that “the Uzbek government demonstrated negligible progress in ceasing forced labor, including forced child labor, in the annual cotton harvest and did not make efforts to investigate or prosecute government officials suspected to be complicit in forced labor,” so would remain on the “Tier 2 Watch List.”
- Tajikistan was downgraded from “Tier 2” to the “Tier 2 Watch List” in 2008 through 2010. In 2011, it was upgraded slightly to “Tier 2” because it is making significant efforts ... [to] comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.... The government made important progress over the past year in addressing the use of forced labor in the annual cotton harvest.”
- Kazakhstan was downgraded to the “Tier 2 Watch List” in 2010, even though it was making significant efforts to eliminate trafficking, because the government did not assist victims of forced labor and was complicit in the use of forced labor, including to pick cotton.⁶⁷ In 2011, it was upgraded to “Tier 2,” because it “significantly decreased the use of forced child labor in the cotton harvest, increased law enforcement efforts against human trafficking, passed a law strengthening penalties for convicted child sex trafficking offenders, and increased victim identification.”

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Labor listed all the Central Asian states as countries that use child labor to pick cotton. This list was meant to inform the choices made by the buying public. In addition, on July 20, 2010, cotton from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was added to a list that requires U.S. government contractors purchasing products to certify that they have made a good faith effort to determine whether forced or indentured child labor was used to produce the cotton.⁶⁸ The U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF) was permitted to monitor the Autumn 2011 cotton harvest, but Uzbekistan continues to bar monitors from the U.N.’s International Labor Organization.

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2006, June 2007, June 2008, June 2009, and June 2010. On Uzbekistan, see also *Invisible To The World? The Dynamics of Forced Child Labor in the Cotton Sector of Uzbekistan*, The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2009.

⁶⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking, *The Department of Labor’s List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, September 3, 2009; Executive Order 13126, *Prohibition of Acquisition of Products Produced by Forced or Indentured Child Labor*, at <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/regs/eo13126/main.htm>.

Amnesty International was among NGOs that submitted petitions to the December 2008 session of the revamped U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) alleging ongoing Uzbek human rights abuses.⁶⁹ UNHRC also examined human rights in Turkmenistan at this session. On Uzbekistan, the UNHRC agreed to a report by its working group that called for the government to give accreditation to major international human rights organizations, adopt legislation to promote gender equality, modify the criminal code to establish a definition of torture, take measures to prevent torture, and eliminate forced child labor, among other recommendations. On Turkmenistan, the UNHRC agreed to a report by its working group that called for the government to eliminate the use of torture, protect the human rights of journalists and human rights defenders, ensure greater independence of the judiciary, and ensure that opposition parties are permitted to participate freely, among other recommendations.⁷⁰

Kazakhstan and the Presidency of the OSCE

The 15th Ministerial Meeting of the OSCE in Madrid in late November 2007 decided that Kazakhstan would hold the OSCE chairmanship in 2010, the first post-Soviet, Eurasian, Muslim-majority country to host an OSCE summit. Kazakhstan's then-Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin pledged at the Ministerial Meeting that Kazakhstan would enact human rights reforms prior to assuming the chairmanship and that during the chairmanship, Kazakhstan would ensure that NGOs are able to participate in OSCE events and that ODIHR's mandate is preserved.⁷¹ Addressing the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE in Astana in June 2008, President Nazarbayev stated that his country's preparations for holding the chairmanship included the elaboration of a blueprint he termed "the path to Europe," which envisaged Kazakhstan's integration into Europe in the areas of energy, transport, technology transfers, education, culture, and democratization.

Kazakhstan's progress in meeting these pledges was mixed at best, according to most observers. In early February 2009, President Nazarbayev approved changes to laws on the media, elections, and political parties. Political parties that did not gain at least 7% of votes cast in an Majlis election were accorded the right to participate in some legislative affairs; the number of signatures necessary for registering a party for a Majlis election was reduced from 50,000 to 40,000; and requirements for registering media were eased. Critics termed the changes minor.⁷² One positive sign was an action by the constitutional court in February 2009 to strike down a proposed law that would have tightened restrictions on religious freedom (however, the law later was tightened in 2011). In July 2009, changes to the media law were signed into law that restricted access to the Internet, barred foreign broadcasts from "complicat[ing] or support[ing] the nomination or election" of candidates or parties, and broadly banned media reporting that "interfere[s] with election campaigns," takes place during times when campaign news is not

⁶⁹ *Uzbekistan: Submission to the U.N. Universal Periodic Review Working Group*, Amnesty International, July 21, 2008.

⁷⁰ U.N. General Assembly, UNHRC, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Uzbekistan*, A/HRC/10/83, March 11, 2009; *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Turkmenistan*, A/HRC/10/79, January 6, 2009; *Draft Report of the Human Rights Council on its Tenth Session*, A/HRC/10/L.11, March 31, 2009.

⁷¹ OSCE, 15th Ministerial Council Meeting, *Address of Marat Tazhin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, November 29, 2007.

⁷² *An Atmosphere of Quiet Repression: Freedom of Religion, Assembly and Expression in Kazakhstan*, Human Rights Watch, December 2008.

allowed, tries to influence election results, or influences participation in strikes. ODIHR had urged the legislature not to enact the changes.⁷³

Kazakhstan assumed the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on January 1, 2010. It followed a varied agenda with emphasis on each of the military/security, democratic/human rights, and economic/environmental “dimensions” or “baskets” of activity of the OSCE. Kazakhstan stressed that it would emphasize several issues of concern to Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and Russia, among them: bolstering nuclear disarmament; continuing the “Corfu Process” dialogue on the future of European security (including discussion of Russia’s draft European Security Treaty); appointing a Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman to promote dialogue on protracted conflicts in the former Soviet Union; and supporting several initiatives regarding Afghanistan.

At an informal OSCE foreign ministerial meeting in Almaty (Kazakhstan’s largest city) in July 2010, an agreement was reached to hold an OSCE heads of state and government summit on December 1-2, 2010, in Astana (Kazakhstan’s capital), the first since the Istanbul summit in 1999. Kazakhstan had strongly urged holding this summit to “modernize” the activities of the OSCE. The United States earlier had raised concerns about the necessity of holding such a summit, but received assurances from Kazakhstan and others that a summit would address substantive issues of U.S. interest.⁷⁴ At a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council (the main decision-making body; it convenes weekly in Vienna) on November 15, 2010, Kazakh Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Kanat Saudabayev called for the upcoming summit agenda to include enhancing the OSCE’s efforts in Afghanistan; bolstering early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms; reaffirming the rule of law and the role of civil society; promoting cooperation among international security organizations; and formulating an action plan to update the 1999 Vienna Document (provisions for confidence and security-building, including the exchange and verification of information on armed forces, defense policies, and military activities).⁷⁵

During three Review Conference meetings to prepare the agenda for the summit, the United States stressed that in addition to the measures mentioned by Saudabayev, the agenda should include reestablishing an OSCE Mission in Georgia; empowering ODIHR to better monitor elections; and strengthening the powers of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, among other measures. At the same time, the United States reiterated that it did not see the need for new treaties or institutions to safeguard European Security as urged by Russia.⁷⁶ The United States also criticized Kazakhstan’s efforts to exclude some civil society representatives from the September 30-October 8, 2010, Review Conference held in Warsaw, Poland.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Human Rights in Kazakhstan: Seven Months before the OSCE Chairmanship*, Human Rights Watch Memorandum, Human Rights Watch, May 20, 2009.

⁷⁴ Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Articles, *OSCE 2010 Informal Ministerial: Kazakhstan Persistence Earns A Summit In Astana*, by Winsome Packer, November 1, 2010.

⁷⁵ OSCE Permanent Council, *Countdown to the OSCE Summit: Statement by Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs*, November 15, 2010.

⁷⁶ United States Mission to the OSCE, *Opening Plenary Session at the OSCE Review Conference, Vienna, Austria, As delivered by Dr. Michael Haltzel, U.S. Head of Delegation, OSCE Review Conference, October 18, 2010; Closing Plenary Session of OSCE Review Conference in Vienna, Austria, As delivered by Dr. Michael Haltzel, October 26, 2010.*

⁷⁷ United States Mission to the OSCE, OSCE Review Conference, Vienna, Austria, *As delivered by Julie Raschka, October 25, 2010; Catherine Fitzpatrick, “Turkmen Activists Denied Entry to OSCE Review Conference in Warsaw,” Eurasianet, October 4, 2010.*

According to many observers, the December 1-2, 2010, OSCE Summit accomplished a few of the goals set by Kazakhstan but fell short on most. Summit participants could not agree on an action plan, but issued the Astana Commemorative Declaration toward a Security Community. There appeared to be some progress in bolstering Afghanistan's security and development and in reaffirming the centrality of democracy and human rights as core principles. The United States and Russia clashed over the issue of Georgia's territorial integrity, including whether Russia had complied with ceasefire accords, and over Russia's failure to carry out its pledge to withdraw troops from Moldova. Lack of progress in resolving the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over the breakaway Nagorno Karabakh also was mentioned by the United States as a reason the summit could not agree on an action plan (however, a statement was issued calling for a settlement of the conflict). Although the summit declaration called for building on the so-called Corfu process to further European security cooperation, the United States and some other members of the OSCE had objected to Russia's call (supported by Kazakhstan) for a new European Security Treaty.

Security and Arms Control

The U.S.-led coalition's overthrow of the Taliban and routing of Al Qaeda and IMU terrorists in Afghanistan (termed Operation Enduring Freedom or OEF) increased the security of Central Asia. According to then-Assistant Secretary of Defense J. D. Crouch in testimony in June 2002, "our military relationships with each [Central Asian] nation have matured on a scale not imaginable prior to September 11th." Crouch averred that "for the foreseeable future, U.S. defense and security cooperation in Central Asia must continue to support actions to deter or defeat terrorist threats" and to build effective armed forces under civilian control.

According to Crouch

- Kyrgyzstan became a "critical regional partner" in OEF, providing basing for U.S. and coalition forces at Manas (in 2012, the U.S. Air Force reported that there were about 1,500 U.S. troops and U.S. contractors and about 700 Kyrgyz contractors at Manas).
- Uzbekistan provided a base for U.S. operations at Karshi-Khanabad (K2; just before the 2005 pullout, U.S. troops reportedly numbered less than 900), a base for German units at Termez (in 2012, *The Military Balance* reported that there were 163 German troops at Termez), and a land corridor to Afghanistan for humanitarian aid via the Friendship Bridge at Termez.
- Tajikistan permitted use of its international airport in Dushanbe for refueling ("gas-and-go") and hosted a French force (in 2012, media reported that there are 100 French troops based in Tajikistan).
- Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan provided overflight and other support.⁷⁸

To obtain Uzbekistan's approval for basing, the 2002 U.S.-Uzbek Strategic Partnership Declaration included a nonspecific security guarantee. The United States affirmed that "it would regard with grave concern any external threat" to Uzbekistan's security and would consult with Uzbekistan "on an urgent basis" regarding a response. The two states pledged to intensify military

⁷⁸ Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Central Asia and the South Caucasus, *Statement of J.D. Crouch II, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy*, June 27, 2002.

cooperation, including “reequipping the Armed Forces” of Uzbekistan, a pledge that appeared to be repudiated by Uzbekistan following events in Andijon.

Programs and Assistance

In November 2010, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense David Sedney testified that “the focus of the Department of Defense’s efforts in Central Asia today in the short term are the transport of goods and equipment and personnel through the ground and air lines of communication through Central Asia.... But beyond our focus on the immediate goals in Afghanistan, we also have long-term security assistance goals in Central Asia. Our security assistance focuses on the professionalization of the military, the border guards, counternarcotics forces and counterterrorism forces.”⁷⁹ Indicative of these goals, he mentioned that over 1,000 Central Asian security personnel had been trained at the U.S.-German Marshall Center and that the U.S. National Guard had provided training in civil-military relations (but not combat training) throughout Central Asia as part of the National Guard State Partnership Program, funded by Partnership for Peace and USCENTCOM (see below) appropriations. For example, the Arizona National Guard has provided training for Kazakh active and reserve forces, interagency partners, and international non-governmental organizations; the Louisiana National Guard for Uzbek participants; the Montana National Guard for Kyrgyz participants; the Virginia National Guard for Tajik participants; and the Nevada National Guard for Turkmen participants.⁸⁰

Although U.S. security assistance to the region was boosted in the aftermath of 9/11, such aid has lessened since then as a percentage of all such aid to Eurasia, particularly after aid to Uzbekistan was cut in FY2004 and subsequent years (see below). Security and law enforcement aid to Central Asia was 31% (\$188 million) of all such aid to Eurasia in FY2002, but had declined to 18% (\$247 million) in FY2010. Of all budgeted assistance to Central Asia over the period from FY1992-FY2010, security and law enforcement aid accounted for a little over one-fifth. Security and law enforcement programs include Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Excess Defense Articles (EDA), and border security aid to combat trafficking in drugs, humans, and WMD.

A Defense Department counter-terrorism train and equip program (created under Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2006; P.L. 109-163) provided \$20 million to Kazakhstan in FY2006, \$19.2 million in FY2007, and \$12.5 million in FY2008 (the latter to respond to threats in the North Caspian Sea). It also provided \$12 million to Kyrgyzstan in FY2008 and \$9.6 million in FY2009. Another Defense Department program for defense articles, services, training or other support for reconstruction, stabilization, and security activities (created under Section 1207 of P.L. 109-163; Sec. 1207 has expired and been replaced by a USAID Complex Crises Fund) provided \$9.9 million to Tajikistan in FY2008.⁸¹ In FY2010, the Defense

⁷⁹ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, Hearing on the Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership, Testimony of Robert Sedney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, November 17 2010.

⁸⁰ Lt. Col. Gail A. Ross, *The National Guard State Partnership Program*, USAWC Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, May 3, 2004; Maj. Colleen M. Kelly, *National Guard Bureau – State Partnership Program*, Air Command And Staff College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, April 2006.

⁸¹ For background, see CRS Report RS22855, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*, by Nina M. Serafino, and CRS Report RS22871, *Department of Defense “Section 1207” Security and Stabilization Assistance: Background and Congressional Concerns, FY2006-FY2010*, by Nina M. Serafino.

Department transferred \$15.8 million in Sec. 1207 funds to the State Department's Civilian Response Corps to assist in reconstruction in Kyrgyzstan following the April 2010 coup and the June 2010 ethnic violence.⁸²

In 2010, the Defense Department announced assistance to set up training facilities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The training center in southern Kyrgyzstan, planned to be built in the Batken region, was planned to cost \$5.5 million. The facility in Tajikistan, to be built near Dushanbe in 2011, was planned to cost \$10 million. It was stated that no U.S. troops would be stationed at the facilities, which were envisaged to bolster regional security by training military personnel to combat drug-trafficking and terrorism.⁸³ Construction of the Batken facility was reportedly postponed because of instability in Kyrgyzstan in 2010.

During his visits to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan in late June 2011, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) William Brownfield announced the launch of a new \$4.2 million Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative (CACI) to provide training and equipment to set up counternarcotics task forces in each of the Central Asian states. The initiative also aims to encourage regional cooperation by the task forces, including through the U.S. supported Central Asia Regional Information Coordination Center (CARICC), as well as broader cooperation with existing task forces in Afghanistan and Russia. Besides INL, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is involved in the initiative. A factsheet reports that the State Department will closely coordinate with the Defense Department, which has expended over \$100 million in counter-narcotics program in Central Asia.⁸⁴ Reportedly, Russia has objected to the implementation of CACI.⁸⁵

In addition to the aid reported by the Coordinator's Office, the Defense Department provides coalition support payments to Kyrgyzstan, including base lease payments and landing and overflight fees (see below).

U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) in 1999 became responsible for U.S. military engagement in Central Asia. It cooperates with the European Command (USEUCOM), on the Caspian Maritime Security Cooperation program (similar to the former Caspian [Sea] Guard program). Gen. Bantz Craddock, Commander of USEUCOM, testified in 2008 that the Caspian Maritime Security Cooperation program coordinates security assistance provided by U.S. agencies to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. He stated that U.S. Naval Forces Europe cooperates with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command "to promote maritime safety and security and maritime domain awareness in the Caspian Sea."⁸⁶ Russia objects to the involvement of non-littoral

⁸² U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Stabilization Capabilities: Lessons Learned From Kyrgyzstan*, Dipnote, October 04, 2010.

⁸³ Deirdre Tynan, "Kyrgyzstan: U.S. Intends to Construct Military Training Center in Batken," *Eurasianet*, March 3, 2010; *Stratfor*, June 25, 2010. The EU also has built or refurbished military training and border facilities in Central Asia, including in Kyrgyzstan. See *The EU's Border Management Program in Central Asia (BOMCA)*, at <http://bomca.eu-bomca.kg/en/about>.

⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *Fact Sheet: The Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative (CACI)*, February 21, 2012.

⁸⁵ Joshua Kucera, "Russia Thwarts U.S. Central Asian Counterdrug Program," *The Bug Pit, Eurasianet*, February 18, 2012.

⁸⁶ House of Representatives, Armed Services Committee, *Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, Commander, United States European Command*, March 13, 2008. Caspian Sea Maritime Proliferation Prevention aid to Kazakhstan was \$4 million in FY2005, \$5 million in FY2006, and \$7 million in FY2007, and \$8 million was requested for each of FY2008 and FY2009. U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, *FY2008-FY2009 Budget* (continued...)

countries in Caspian maritime security and has appeared to counter U.S. maritime security aid by boosting the capabilities of its Caspian Sea Flotilla and by urging the littoral states to coordinate their naval activities exclusively with Russia.

All the Central Asian states except Tajikistan joined NATO's PFP by mid-1994 (Tajikistan joined in 2002). Central Asian troops have participated in periodic PFP (or "PFP-style") exercises in the United States since 1995, and U.S. troops have participated in exercises in Central Asia since 1997. A June 2004 NATO summit communiqué pledged enhanced Alliance attention to the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and the NATO Secretary General appointed a Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia. Uzbekistan sharply reduced its participation in PFP after NATO raised concerns that Uzbek security forces had used excessive and disproportionate force in Andijon (however, it continued to permit Germany to use a base at Termez). Relations with NATO appeared to improve in 2008-2009 (see below).

Kazakhstan's progress in military reform enabled NATO in January 2006 to elevate it to participation in an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). Kazakhstan has stated that it does not plan to join NATO but wants to modernize its armed forces. According to analyst Roger McDermott, despite Kazakhstan's cooperation with NATO, "the defense relationship between Kazakhstan and Russia has, in fact, substantially deepened."⁸⁷ The Kazakh defense ministry has reported, for instance, that "1,259 Kazakh servicemen are now studying at Russian military educational establishments," constituting a substantial boost over previous years.⁸⁸

According to some reports, during the former Bush Administration the Defense Department was considering possibly setting up long-term military facilities in Central Asia termed Cooperative Security Locations (CSLs; they contain pre-positioned equipment and are managed by private contractors, and few if any U.S. military personnel are present). The Overseas Basing Commission in 2005 acknowledged that U.S. national security might be enhanced by future CSLs in Central Asia but urged Congress to seek inter-agency answers to "what constitutes vital U.S. interests in the area that would require long-term U.S. presence."⁸⁹ According to former USCENTCOM Commander Admiral William Fallon, the Bagram airbase in Afghanistan is the Forward Operating Site (basing intended for rotational use by operating forces with limited U.S. military support presence and possibly pre-positioned equipment) for access to and operations in Central Asia.⁹⁰

Closure of the Karshi-Khanabad Airbase

On July 5, 2005, the presidents of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed a declaration issued during a meeting of the SCO (see above, "Obstacles to Peace and Independence:

(...continued)

Estimates: Former Soviet Union Threat Reduction, February 2007.

⁸⁷ Roger McDermott, *Kazakhstan's Defense Policy: An Assessment Of The Trends*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2009.

⁸⁸ *CEDR*, April 14, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950316.

⁸⁹ Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States, *Interim Report*, May 9, 2005.

⁹⁰ House of Representatives. Appropriations Committee. Subcommittee on Military Construction. *Statement of Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander, U.S. Central Command, on Military Construction in U.S. Central Command*, April 17, 2007.

Regional Tensions and Conflicts”) that stated that “as large-scale military operations against terrorism have come to an end in Afghanistan, the SCO member states maintain that the relevant parties to the anti-terrorist coalition should set a deadline for the temporary use of ... infrastructure facilities of the SCO member states and for their military presence in these countries.”⁹¹ Despite this declaration, none of the Central Asian leaders immediately called for closing the coalition bases. However, after the United States and others interceded so that refugees who fled from Andijon to Kyrgyzstan could fly to Romania, Uzbekistan on July 29 demanded that the United States vacate K2 within six months. On November 21, 2005, the United States officially ceased operations to support Afghanistan at K2. Perhaps indicative of the reversal of U.S. military-to-military and other ties, former pro-U.S. defense minister Qodir Gulomov was convicted of treason and received seven years in prison, later suspended. Many K2 activities shifted to the Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan. Some observers viewed the closure of K2 and souring U.S.-Uzbek relations as setbacks to U.S. influence in the region and as gains for Russian and Chinese influence. Others suggested that U.S. ties with other regional states provided continuing influence and that U.S. criticism of human rights abuses might pay future dividends among regional populations.⁹²

Efforts to Improve Security Relations

Appearing to signal improving U.S.-Uzbek relations, in early 2008 Uzbekistan permitted U.S. military personnel under NATO command, on a case-by-case basis, to transit through an airbase near the town of Termez that it has permitted Germany to operate.⁹³ President Karimov attended the NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania, in early April 2008 and stated that Uzbekistan was ready to discuss the transit of non-lethal goods and equipment by NATO through Uzbekistan to Afghanistan. He announced in May 2009 that the United States and NATO had been permitted to use the Navoi airport (located between Samarkand and Bukhara in east-central Uzbekistan) for transporting non-lethal supplies to Afghanistan.

Representing the Obama Administration, Under Secretary of State William Burns visited Uzbekistan in early July 2009, and President Karimov assessed his talks with Burns as “positive.” In August 2009, General David Petraeus traveled to Uzbekistan and signed an accord on boosting military educational exchanges and training. Reportedly, these visits also resulted in permission by Uzbekistan for military air overflights of weapons to Afghanistan. Assistant Secretary Blake visited Uzbekistan in November 2009 and stated that his meetings there were “a reflection of the determination of President Obama and Secretary Clinton to strengthen ties between the United States and Uzbekistan.” He proposed that the two countries set up high-level annual consultations to “build our partnership across a wide range of areas. These include trade and development, border security, cooperation on narcotics, the development of civil society, and individual rights.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ CEDR, July 5, 2005, Doc. No. CPP-249.

⁹² On growing Chinese regional influence, see Michael Mihalka, “Counter-insurgency, Counter-terrorism, State-Building and Security Cooperation in Central Asia,” *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, May 2006.

⁹³ “U.S. Military Returns to Ex-Soviet Uzbekistan,” *Agence France Presse*, March 6, 2008; “Only Germany Can Use Uzbek Bases Now,” *United Press International*, December 13, 2005.

⁹⁴ U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, *Press Conference of Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake*, October 14, 2009.

The first Bilateral Consultation meeting took place in late December 2009 with a visit to the United States by an Uzbek delegation led by Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov. The two sides drew up a plan for cooperation for 2010. The two sides drew up a plan for cooperation for 2010 that involved an extensive range of diplomatic visits, increased military-to-military contacts, and investment and trade overtures, including the provision of Expanded IMET.⁹⁵ The second U.S.-Uzbek Bilateral Consultation meeting took place in February 2011 with a visit to Uzbekistan led by Assistant Secretary Blake. The talks reportedly included security cooperation, trade and development, science and technology, counter-narcotics, civil society development, and human rights. A U.S. business delegation discussed means to increase trade ties. Blake reported that the United States had purchased \$23 million in Uzbek goods for transit to Afghanistan in FY2010.

The Manas Airbase/Transit Center

The Manas airbase (since 2009 called the Manas Transit Center; see below) became operational in December 2001 and uses some facilities of the international airport near Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. According to a fact sheet prepared in early 2009 by the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing of the U.S. Air Force, the Manas airbase serves as the “premier air mobility hub” for operations in Afghanistan. Missions include support for personnel and cargo transiting in and out of the theater, aerial refueling, airlift and airdrop, and medical evacuation. Secretary Clinton was told during her December 2010 visit to the Manas Transit Center that up to 3,500 troops every day, over 13 million pounds of cargo each month, and 117 million gallons of fuel each year are handled by the airbase.

In early 2006, Kyrgyz President Bakiyev reportedly requested that lease payments for use of the Manas airbase be increased to more than \$200 million per year but at the same time reaffirmed Russia’s free use of its nearby base.⁹⁶ By mid-July 2006, however, the United States and Kyrgyzstan announced that they had reached a settlement for the continued U.S. use of the airbase. Although not specifically mentioning U.S. basing payments, it was announced that the United States would provide \$150 million in “total assistance and compensation over the next year,” subject to congressional approval.

In September 2007, a U.S. military officer stated that the Manas airbase was moving toward “a sustainment posture,” with the replacement of most tents and the building of aircraft maintenance, medical, and other facilities.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ CEDR, January 29, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-4019. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) defines Expanded IMET as a group of courses aimed at “educating U.S. friends and allies in the proper management of their defense resources, improving their systems of military justice ... and fostering a greater respect for, and understanding of, the principle of civilian control of the military. The program is based upon the premise that active promotion of democratic values is one of the most effective means available for achieving U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives.... For a country whose international military training program is very politically sensitive, the entire IMET program may consist of Expanded IMET training only.” See DSCA. *What is Expanded IMET?* At http://www.dsc.osd.mil/programs/eimet/eimet_default.htm.

⁹⁶ For background, see CRS Report RS22295, *Uzbekistan’s Closure of the Airbase at Karshi-Khanabad: Context and Implications*, by Jim Nichol. Perhaps indicating Kyrgyz pressure on Russia to compensate for use of the base, Russia in October 2006 pledged grant military assistance to Kyrgyzstan.

⁹⁷ Lt. Col. Michael Borgert, “Liberandos: Thank You for a Job Well Done,” 376th Expeditionary Services Squadron Public Affairs, September 9, 2007.

On February 3, 2009, then-President Bakiyev announced during a visit to Moscow that he intended to close the Manas airbase. Many observers speculated that the decision was spurred by Russia, which offered Bakiyev a \$300 million loan for economic development and a \$150 million grant for budget stabilization in the wake of the world economic downturn. Russia also stated that it would write off most of a \$180 million debt. The United States was notified on February 19, 2009, that under the terms of the status of forces agreement it had 180 days to vacate the airbase.

The Manas Transit Center Agreement

The Defense Department announced on June 24, 2009, that an agreement of “mutual benefit” had been concluded with the Kyrgyz government “to continu[e] to work, with them, to supply our troops in Afghanistan, so that we can help with the overall security situation in the region.”⁹⁸ The agreement was approved by the Kyrgyz legislature and signed into law by then-President Bakiyev, to take effect on July 14, 2009. According to the then-Kyrgyz Foreign Minister, the government decided to conclude the annually renewable “intergovernmental agreement with the United States on cooperation and the formation of a transit center at Manas airport,” because of growing alarm about “the worrying situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan.” The agreement is for five years and is renewed yearly, unless both parties agree to end it. A yearly rent payment for use of land and facilities at the Manas airport would be increased from \$17.4 million to \$60 million per year and the United States had pledged more than \$36 million for infrastructure improvements and \$30 million for air traffic control system upgrades for the airport. Sarbayev also stated that the United States had pledged \$20 million dollars for a U.S.-Kyrgyz Joint Development Fund for economic projects, \$21 million for counter-narcotics efforts, and \$10 million for counter-terrorism efforts.⁹⁹ All except the increased rent had already been appropriated or requested. The agreement also reportedly includes stricter host-country conditions on U.S. military personnel. One Kyrgyz legislator claimed that the agreement was not a *volte-face* for Kyrgyzstan because Russia and other Central Asian states had signed agreements with NATO to permit the transit of supplies to Afghanistan (see below).¹⁰⁰

Kyrgyzstan had also requested that French and Spanish troops who were deployed at Manas had to leave, and they had pulled out by October 2009. The French detachment (reportedly 35 troops and a tanker aircraft) moved temporarily to Dushanbe. The Spanish unit (reportedly 60 troops and two transport aircraft) moved temporarily to Herat, west Afghanistan, and Dushanbe was used temporarily as a stopover for troop relief flights. France and Spain have since reached accords with Kyrgyzstan and have returned to Manas.

The Status of the Manas Transit Center After the April 2010 Coup

Initially after the April 2010 ouster of then-President Bakiyev, some officials in the interim government stated or implied that the conditions of the lease would be examined. Then-acting Prime Minister Roza Otunbayeva warned on April 8 that questions of corruption involving commercial supplies for the Manas Transit Center would be one matter of investigation. On April

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, *DoD News Briefing*, June 24, 2009. See also U.S. Department of State, *Daily Press Briefing*, June 25, 2009.

⁹⁹ Tolkun Namatbayeva, “Kyrgyzstan Allows U.S. to Keep Using Base,” *Agence France Presse*, June 23, 2009.

¹⁰⁰ See also CRS Report R40564, *Kyrgyzstan and the Status of the U.S. Manas Airbase: Context and Implications*, by Jim Nichol.

12, she stated that she realized that 2010 was a seminal year for U.S. operations in Afghanistan and that President Obama planned on drawing down troops thereafter, and implied that ultimately she hoped there were no bases in the country.¹⁰¹ On April 13, Otunbayeva announced that the lease on the Manas Transit Center would be “automatically” renewed for one year. Meeting with Secretary Clinton on December 2, 2010, Otunbayeva stressed that the Manas Transit Center was a significant contributor to regional security and that Kyrgyzstan would support its operation at least through 2014 in line with U.S. Administration objectives for drawing down U.S. forces.¹⁰²

President Atambayev has called for the closure of the Manas Transit Center when the basing agreement comes up for renewal in 2014, to coincide with the drawdown of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek has reported that in FY2009, the United States provided \$108 million in direct, indirect, and charitable expenses in connection with the Manas Transit Center, \$131.5 million in FY2010, and \$150.6 million in FY2011.

Of this FY2011 amount:

- \$60 million was a lease payment
- \$27.4 million was landing and other fees and leases
- \$30 million was a contribution to Kyrgyz Aeronavigation
- \$30.9 million was for construction of buildings and road repairs, for furniture and other equipment, and for services
- \$824,000 was for “programmatically humanitarian assistance”
- \$1.4 million was for other local spending

The December 2010 Congressional Report on Fuel Contracts

In December 2010, the majority staff of the Subcommittee for National Security and Foreign Affairs of the House Oversight Committee released a report on contracts awarded by the Defense Department’s Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to the privately owned Red Star and its sister Mina firms for the supply of jet fuel for the Manas Transit Center.¹⁰³ The report stressed that many citizens of Kyrgyzstan, and even current Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva, supposed that former Kyrgyz Presidents Askar Akayev and Bakiyev and their families had benefitted from the contracts in a corrupt fashion. Perceptions of corruption regarding the fuel contracts, according to the report, were significant factors in the overthrow of the presidents and in growing tensions between the United States and Kyrgyzstan. The Subcommittee reported evidence from the FBI that the Akayev family was corruptly involved in fuel supplies to the Manas Transit Center, but the subcommittee found no direct evidence of illicit involvement by the Bakiyev family. President

¹⁰¹ CEDR, April 12, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-600.

¹⁰² U.S. Department of State, *Remarks With President Otunbayeva After Their Meeting, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State*, December 2, 2010.

¹⁰³ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, *Mystery at Manas: Strategic Blind Spots in the Department of Defense’s Fuel Contracts in Kyrgyzstan*, Report of the Majority Staff, December 2010.

Otunbayeva had called for transparency in the fuel contracts in a speech at the U.N. General Assembly in September 2010 and during an associated meeting with President Barack Obama.

According to the report's findings, DLA did not know who owned Red Star or Mina until late 2010, did not claim to care whether contract funds were being misappropriated by Akayev's family, did not know that Russia's state-owned Gazprom gas firm had an ownership interest in a subsidiary of the firms, and did not claim to know that the firms were using false certifications to obtain fuel from Russia. On the latter issue, Red Star and Mina had repeatedly informed DLA of the false certifications scheme, according to emails and other documents. In a 2006 Red Star proposal for a fuel contract, for instance, the firm spelled out that it was participating in a scheme to circumvent supposed Russian restrictions on fuel exports for military uses, and warned DLA that opening up the contracting process to other bidders might expose this scheme and lead to a fuel cut-off by Russia. The 2006 contract was subsequently awarded to Red Star without competition. A 2009 contract to Mina also was awarded without competition on "national security" grounds. The Subcommittee argued that the use of such a scheme to obtain fuel and DLA's apparent lack of reaction to the scheme opened the United States to excessive strategic vulnerability, since a sudden fuel cutoff by Russia could jeopardize U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

Red Star and Mina reported that the Russian government knew that Gazprom was the source of jet fuel for the Manas Transit Center. The firms claimed, however, that they still had to falsely certify that the aviation fuel was being used for civilian purposes so that Russian authorities could claim that their ban on aviation fuel exports for military uses was not being circumvented. After then-President Putin apparently decided in early 2009 that the U.S. airbase at Manas should be closed and offered assistance to Kyrgyzstan as a seeming *quid pro quo*, Gazprom initiated a slowdown in fuel shipments, according to the report. Although Kyrgyzstan's then-President Bakiyev had pledged to Putin that he would close the airbase, in mid-2009 Bakiyev instead redesignated it as the "Manas Transit Center" and permitted it to continue operations. Russia then "discovered" that Gazprom's fuel shipments were being used by the airbase, imposed a high export tariff on all fuel exports to Kyrgyzstan on April 1, 2010, and later cut off all fuel shipments to Kyrgyzstan through Mina and Red Star.

The report also criticized the State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek for ignoring the ramifications of the fuel contracts on U.S.-Kyrgyz relations. Even after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton became engaged with the issue during her December 2010 visit to Kyrgyzstan (see below), the embassy reportedly asserted that issues involving the fuel contract were beyond its concern, according to the report.

Among the recommendations on improving the transparency and due diligence of fuel contracts for the Manas Transit Center, the Subcommittee called for an interagency analysis of the U.S. military's "extraordinary reliance on Mina and Red Star for jet fuel" and on the risks associated with increased Russian influence over the fuel supply chain supporting U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The Subcommittee also stated that "ability to perform and financial viability are necessary but not sufficient objects of due diligence. Business history, litigation exposure, insurance posture, affiliated companies, and ownership are also important for U.S. contacting authorities to understand in order to make competent judgments about contractors." Knowledge of ownership, for instance, is needed to satisfy a Federal Acquisition Regulations requirement that principals be checked against sanctions lists, it stated.

In November 2010, DLA awarded Mina a \$315 million contract to continue supplying up to 120 million gallons of fuel to the Manas Transit Center for at least one more year. An amendment to the contract later highlighted by Secretary Clinton during her December 2010 visit to Kyrgyzstan provided for the possible addition of a second supplier for between 20 and 50% of the fuel.¹⁰⁴ The Kyrgyz government called for the Manas Refueling Complex—established in mid-2010 as a joint venture between the Kyrgyz government and Gazprom—to be named as the sole supplier and for Mina to be suspended from the contract. The report by the House Subcommittee raised concerns about more direct Russian involvement in fuel supplies, since the country has appeared to use its energy exports as a tool in foreign relations.¹⁰⁵

In early February 2011, a U.S.-Kyrgyz agreement on fuel supplies was signed. A few days later, the Manas Refueling Complex was reincorporated as the Gazpromneft-Aero-Kyrgyzstan joint venture, with Kyrgyzstan as the minority partner (with 49% of the shares). The US Defense Logistics Agency placed its first order for fuel with Gazpromneft-Aero-Kyrgyzstan on September 26, 2011, to initially supply 20% of the Transit Center's aviation fuel needs (estimated at up to 12 million gallons per month), potentially reaching 50% or more by the end of the year. According to one report, the fuel is directly supplied from Gazprom's oil refineries and transported by the Russian Transoil company to the transit center.¹⁰⁶

On October 26, 2011, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) announced that it had awarded a one-year contract for 2012 for the provision of fuel to the Manas Transit Center to World Fuel Services Europe (WFSE), a subsidiary of a U.S.-based firm. Under the contract, WFSE will cooperate with Gazpromneft-Aero Kyrgyzstan to fulfill the aviation fuel needs of the Transit Center. WFSE is to provide a minimum of 10% of the fuel requirements of the Transit Center and a maximum of 100%, but Gazpromneft-Aero Kyrgyzstan may eventually be called upon to provide up to 90% of the monthly aviation fuel supplies based on its capabilities and performance. The new contract does not mention any role for Mina Corporation in providing fuel. The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek stated that the new contract aimed “to ensure a stable, secure, and uninterrupted supply of fuel” to the Transit Center.¹⁰⁷

The Northern Distribution Network (NDN) to Afghanistan

Because supplies transiting Pakistan to Afghanistan frequently were subject to attacks, Gen. David Petraeus, the then-Commander of the U.S. Central Command, visited Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in late January 2009 to negotiate alternative air, rail, road, and water routes for the commercial shipping of supplies to support NATO and U.S. operations in Afghanistan (he also visited Kyrgyzstan to discuss airbase issues; see below). To encourage a positive response for this Northern Distribution Network, the U.S. embassies in the region announced that the United States

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, *Press Release*, November 4, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Deirdre Tynan, “Kyrgyzstan: Manas Fuel Supplier Doubles Down on Good News,” *Eurasianet*, November 4, 2010; Deirdre Tynan, “Kyrgyzstan: Is Manas Fuel Contract Award Only the Start, not End of Intrigue?” *Eurasianet*, November 5, 2010; Deirdre Tynan, “Kyrgyzstan: Manas Fuel Supply Contract to Be Re-Opened?” *Eurasianet*, December 22, 2010; Deirdre Tynan, “Kyrgyzstan: Manas Fuel Supplier Hitting Back at Bishkek,” *Eurasianet*, January 4, 2011.

¹⁰⁶ Deirdre Tynan, “Kyrgyzstan: Manas Fuel Contract Goes to Kyrgyz-Russian Venture,” *Eurasianet*, September 27, 2011; *CEDR*, September 28, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950073.

¹⁰⁷ U.S. Department of State, Embassy of the United States in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, *Manas Fuel Contract Award*, October 27, 2011; Deirdre Tynan, “Kyrgyzstan: The End of an Era at Manas Air Base,” *Eurasianet*, October 27, 2011.

hoped to purchase many non-military goods locally to transport to the troops in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan permitted such transit in February 2009, Uzbekistan permitted it in April 2009, and Kyrgyzstan permitted it in July 2009 (Georgia had given such permission in 2005, Russia in 2008, and Azerbaijan in March 2009).

There are broadly three land routes: one through the South Caucasus into Central Asia; one from Latvia through Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan; and one from Latvia through Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Although some small cargoes reportedly were sent along the route on an ad hoc basis in late 2008, a much-publicized rail shipment of non-lethal supplies entered Afghanistan in late March 2009 after transiting Latvia, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.¹⁰⁸ During his confirmation hearing in July 2011 as Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, Gen. William Fraser stated that the aim was to boost the percentage of surface transit through the NDN.¹⁰⁹ The Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported in late 2011 that almost three-fourths of the non-lethal surface shipments to Afghanistan are being transported via the NDN (this amount may well increase following Pakistan's halt to shipments in late November 2011).¹¹⁰ Non-lethal supplies reportedly being shipped to Afghanistan include cement, lumber, blast barriers, septic tanks, and matting. In addition, increasing volumes of jet fuel are being purchased in Azerbaijan and Central Asia and transported to Afghanistan. Supplementing land routes, Uzbekistan's Navoi airport reportedly is being used to transport supplies to Afghanistan. After aircraft land at Navoi, the supplies are sent by rail and truck to Afghanistan.¹¹¹ According to one report, U.S. Defense Department officials are concerned that Uzbek officials are delaying the transit of freight across the border into Afghanistan, including by delaying shipments until bribes are paid. In August 2011, shipments began along a 50-mile rail line from the town of Hairatan, on Afghanistan's border with Uzbekistan, to the city of Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan, which may ameliorate some of the delays.¹¹² Reportedly, the bulk of ISAF cargo containers shipped through the NDN eventually enter Afghanistan via this Uzbekistan-Afghanistan rail link.

Besides commercial shipping of non-lethal cargoes, most regional governments allegedly have quietly given U.S. and NATO military aircraft over-flight privileges for the transport of weapons and troops to Afghanistan. At the July 2009 U.S.-Russia summit, Russia openly announced that it was permitting such overflights. Some observers suggested that the announcement was linked to the assertion of some Russian officials that such transport could substitute for U.S. and NATO use of Manas and other Central Asian airbases. Presidents Obama and Nazarbayev reportedly agreed in principle to air flights of troops and unspecified equipment, including along a circum-polar

¹⁰⁸ "Northern Route Eases Supplies to U.S. forces in Afghanistan," International Institute of Strategic Studies, August 2010; Steve Geary, "Northern Distribution Network to Shore Up Afghan Supply Chain," *Defense Logistics*, June 28, 2010; "Supply Chain Council Recognizes Alternative Afghanistan Distribution Network," *Journal of Transportation*, May 8, 2010.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Confirmation Hearing for William M. Fraser to be Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, August 2, 2011. See also Subcommittee on Seapower, Hearing on the FY2012 Budget Request for Strategic Airlift Aircraft, July 13, 2011.

¹¹⁰ U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Central Asia And The Transition In Afghanistan: A Majority Staff Report*, December 19, 2011.

¹¹¹ A circum-polar air route from the United States transiting Russia and Central Asia to Afghanistan also has begun to be used. Marcus Weisgerber, "Afghanistan War Spurred Big Changes for Logistics Community," *Federal Times*, September 19, 2011.

¹¹² "Uzbek Corridor of Afghan Supply Plagued by 'Informal Payments,'" *The Times of Central Asia*, July 2, 2010; "Construction of Hairatan-Mazar-e-Sharif Railroad Completed" *Uzbekistan Daily*, November 16, 2010.

route transiting Kazakhstan, during their meeting in April 2010, and an air transit agreement was signed on November 12, 2010.

The United States and NATO are negotiating with Central Asian governments on permitting the egress of supplies and troops from Afghanistan in line with U.S. and NATO plans to draw down military operations in Afghanistan in 2014.

In March 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta visited Bishkek, reportedly to obtain reassurances about the Kyrgyz government's basing commitments. In early May 2012, however, President Atambayev reiterated that the basing accord would not be extended when it came up for renewal in 2014, an announcement that was hailed by the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Kazakhstan reportedly is advocating that the use of its Caspian sea port at Aktau be increased as a component of the NDN.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Major U.S. security interests have included elimination of nuclear weapons remaining in Kazakhstan after the breakup of the Soviet Union and other efforts to control nuclear proliferation in Central Asia. The United States has tendered aid aimed at bolstering their export and physical controls over nuclear technology and materials, in part because of concerns that Iran is targeting these countries.¹¹³

After the Soviet breakup, Kazakhstan was on paper a major nuclear weapons power (in reality Russia controlled these weapons). In December 1993, the United States and Kazakhstan signed a Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) umbrella agreement for the "safe and secure" dismantling of 104 SS-18s, the destruction of silos, and related purposes. All bombers and their air-launched cruise missiles were removed by late February 1994 (except seven bombers destroyed with U.S. aid in 1998). The SS-18s were eliminated by late 1994. On April 21, 1995, the last of about 1,040 nuclear warheads had been removed from SS-18 missiles and transferred to Russia, and Kazakhstan announced that it was nuclear weapons-free. The United States reported that 147 silos had been destroyed by September 1999. A U.S.-Kazakh Nuclear Risk Reduction Center in Almaty was set up to facilitate verification and compliance with arms control agreements to prevent the proliferation of WMD.

Besides the Kazakh nuclear weapons, there are active research reactors, uranium mines, milling facilities, and dozens of radioactive tailing and waste dumps in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Many of these reportedly remain inadequately protected against theft. Kazakhstan is reported to possess one-fourth of the world's uranium reserves, and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have been among the world's top producers of low-enriched uranium.

Kazakhstan had a fast breeder reactor at Aktau that was the world's only nuclear desalinization facility. In 1997 and 1999, U.S.-Kazakh accords were signed on decommissioning the Aktau reactor. Shut down in 1999, it had nearly 300 metric tons of uranium (some highly enriched) and

¹¹³ A Treaty on the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone entered into force in January 2009. All five Central Asian states are signatories. The Treaty prohibits the development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, or possession of nuclear explosive devices within the zone. See CRS Report RL31559, *Proliferation Control Regimes: Background and Status*, coordinated by Mary Beth Nikitin.

plutonium (some weapons-grade) spent fuel in storage pools. CTR aid was used to facilitate transporting 600 kg of highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Kazakhstan to the United States in 1994, 2,900 kg of up to 26% enriched nuclear fuel from Aktau to Kazakhstan's Ulba facility in 2001 (which Ulba converted into less-enriched fuel), and 162.5 lb. of HEU spent fuel from Aktau to Russia in May 2009. In the latter instance, the material originally had been provided by Russia to Kazakhstan, and was returned to Russia by rail for storage in a series of four shipments between December 2008 and May 2009. In November 2010, CTR aid was used to facilitate the shipment of the last of more than 10 metric tons of highly enriched uranium and three metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium from Aktau to a newly constructed storage site 1,800 miles away at the former Semipalatinsk Test Site in East Kazakhstan Region.¹¹⁴

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan hosted major chemical and biological warfare (CBW) facilities during the Soviet era. CTR and Energy Department (DOE) funds have been used in Kazakhstan to dismantle a former anthrax production facility in Stepnogorsk, to remove some strains to the United States, to secure two other BW sites, and to retrain scientists. CTR funding was used to dismantle Uzbekistan's Nukus chemical weapons research facility. CTR aid also was used to eliminate active anthrax spores at a former CBW test site on an island in the Aral Sea. These latter two projects were completed in 2002. Other CTR aid helps keep former Uzbek CBW scientists employed in peaceful research. Uzbekistan has continued to cooperate with DOD and DOE—even after it restricted other ties with the United States in 2005—to receive radiation monitoring equipment and training.

Trade and Investment

Successive U.S. administrations have endorsed free market reforms in Central Asia, since these directly serve U.S. national interests by opening new markets for U.S. goods and services and sources of energy and minerals. U.S. private investment committed to Central Asia has greatly exceeded that provided to Russia or most other Eurasian states except Azerbaijan. U.S. trade agreements have been signed and entered into force with all the Central Asian states, but bilateral investment treaties are in force only with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In line with Kyrgyzstan's accession to the World Trade Organization, the United States established permanent normal trade relations with Kyrgyzstan by law in June 2000, so that "Jackson-Vanik" trade provisions no longer apply that call for presidential reports and waivers concerning freedom of emigration.

In June 2004, The U.S. Trade Representative signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with ambassadors of the regional states to establish a U.S.-Central Asia Council on Trade and Investment. The Council has met yearly to address intellectual property, labor, environmental protection, and other issues that impede trade and private investment flows between the United States and Central Asia. The United States also has called for greater intra-regional cooperation on trade and encouraged the development of regional trade and transport ties with Afghanistan and South Asia. The reorganization of the State Department in 2006 to create the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs facilitated this emphasis.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration, *Press Release: Joint Statement By Co-Chairs of the U.S.-Kazakhstan Energy Partnership On Successful Completion of the U.S.-Kazakhstan BN-350 Spent Fuel Program*, November 17, 2010; *Press Release: NNSA Secures 775 Nuclear Weapons Worth of Weapons-Grade Nuclear Material from BN-350 Fast Reactor in Kazakhstan*, November 18, 2010.

¹¹⁵ *Remarks at Eurasian National University*, October 13, 2005; and U.S. Congress, House International Relations (continued...)

A working group meeting of the U.S.-Central Asia TIFA was held in May 2010 in Tashkent. U.S. delegation head Madelyn Spirnak, the Senior Advisor for Biotechnology in the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, hailed the session as advancing the U.S.-Central Asian business and government partnership. A major U.S. emphasis was on educating regional businesses on opportunities to sell supplies that could be transported via the Northern Distribution Network to support U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The U.S. delegation and emissaries from Afghanistan, which is an observer to the U.S.-Central Asian TIFA, also urged the expansion of regional trade with Afghanistan.¹¹⁶

The sixth meeting of the U.S.-Central Asia TIFA was held on September 14-15, 2011, in Washington, D.C., and included emissaries from Afghanistan participating as observers. Bilateral sessions and meetings with private industry took place. Kazakhstan provided an overview of the newly formed Kazakhstan-Belarus-Russia Customs Union, and other attendees provided updates on efforts to accede to the WTO. The United States stressed adherence to intellectual property protections and discussed its "new silk road vision" (see below) with the emissaries.¹¹⁷

Building on U.S. government efforts since the mid-2000s to encourage energy and other trade linkages between Central and South Asia, in July 2011 Secretary Clinton announced that U.S. policy toward Afghanistan in coming years would focus on encouraging "stronger economic ties through South and Central Asia so that goods, capital, and people can flow more easily across borders."¹¹⁸ She further explained this "new Silk Road vision" at a meeting of regional ministers and others in September 2011, stating that "as we look to the future of this region, let us take this precedent [of a past Silk Road] as inspiration for a long-term vision for Afghanistan and its neighbors. Let us set our sights on a new Silk Road—a web of economic and transit connections that will bind together a region too long torn apart by conflict and division.... Turkmen gas fields could help meet both Pakistan's and India's growing energy needs and provide significant transit revenues for both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tajik cotton could be turned into Indian linens. Furniture and fruit from Afghanistan could find its way to the markets of Astana or Mumbai and beyond."¹¹⁹ The Silk Road Vision further was adumbrated during meetings in Turkey and Germany in late 2011. The Istanbul Conference Communique called for connecting Afghanistan to Central Asian and Iranian railways and for bolstering regional energy linkages.¹²⁰

(...continued)

Committee, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, *Testimony by Steven R. Mann, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary*, July 25, 2006. See also U.S. Embassy, Astana, Kazakhstan, *Kazakhstan and the United States in a Changed World*, August 23, 2006.

¹¹⁶ U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, *U.S.-Central Asia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Partners Meet in Tashkent*, May 5, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Office the U.S. Trade Representative, *United States and Central Asian Countries Evaluate Progress on Trade and Investment Relationship*, Press Release, September 2011.

¹¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Travel Diary: "India and the United States—A Vision for the 21st Century,"* DipNote, July 20, 2011.

¹¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Secretary Clinton Co-Chairs the New Silk Road Ministerial Meeting*, DipNote, September 23, 2011; *Fact Sheet on New Silk Road Ministerial*, September 22, 2011. See also U.S. Department of State, *Remarks, Robert D. Hormats, Under Secretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs, Address to the SAIS Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and CSIS Forum*, September 29, 2011.

¹²⁰ Andrew Kuchins, "Laying the Groundwork for Afghanistan's New Silk Road: How Washington and Kabul Can Turn a Vision Into a Plan," *Foreign Affairs*, December 5, 2011.

This “new Silk Road vision” seems congruent with suggestions made by a bipartisan group of analysts and former U.S. officials who have called for enhanced U.S. economic assistance to Central Asia to bolster the TIFA by focusing on highway and other projects. The group also has proposed moving beyond TIFA through involvement of foreign and economic ministers in discussions about regional economic and security cooperation, akin to those undertaken by the CSTO and the SCO.¹²¹

All the states of the region possess large-scale resources that could contribute to the region becoming a “new silk road” of trade and commerce. The Kazakh and Turkmen economies are mostly geared to energy exports but need added foreign investment for production and transport. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are major cotton producers, a legacy of central economic planning during the Soviet period. Uzbekistan’s cotton and gold production rank among the highest in the world and much is exported. It has moderate gas reserves but needs investment to upgrade infrastructure. Kyrgyzstan has major gold mines and strategic mineral reserves, is a major wool producer, and could benefit from tourism. Tajikistan has one of the world’s largest aluminum processing plants. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan possess the bulk of the region’s water resources, but in recent years both countries have suffered from droughts.

Despite the region’s development potential, the challenges of corruption, inadequate transport infrastructure, punitive tariffs, border tensions, and uncertain respect for contracts discourage major foreign investment (except for some investment in the energy sector). Cotton-growing has contributed to environmental pollution and water shortages, leading some observers to argue that cotton-growing is not suited to the largely arid region.

Uzbekistan began to restrict railway and road transport to and from Tajikistan in February 2010, reportedly to pressure Tajikistan not to build the Roghun dam on the Vakhsh River that might limit water flows to Uzbekistan. Reportedly, thousands of railcars and trucks faced delays, including those carrying construction materials bound for Afghanistan to support ISAF, materials for building the Roghun dam, materials from Iran for completing the Sangtuda-2 hydro-electric power plant on the Vakhsh River (the plant became operational in September 2011), fuel and seeds for Tajik farmers, flour, and materials for road construction in Tajikistan. Uzbekistan also boosted tariffs on railcars and trucks crossing into Tajikistan, restricted gas supplies to Tajikistan, and restricted Turkmen electricity supplies to Tajikistan, perhaps as part of efforts to pressure Tajikistan not to build the Roghun dam. In May 2011, media reported that Iran had shipped equipment through China and Afghanistan for Sangtuda-2 to get around transit delays imposed by Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan rejected Tajik assertions that shipping delays were political and claimed that they were caused by increased ISAF rail traffic to Afghanistan, a backup of railcars headed to Turkmenistan, and track repairs. Tajikistan has repeatedly appealed to the OSCE, the U.N. Secretary-General, USCENCOM, and others that Uzbekistan continues to delay rail transit to and from Tajikistan.¹²² Most recently, a bridge support on a railway spur from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan was damaged by a bomb or by natural means in November 2011, backing up food and

¹²¹ *Strengthening Fragile Partnerships: An Agenda for the Future of U.S.-Central Asia Relations*, The Project 2049 Institute, February, 2011.

¹²² Konstantin Parshin, “Tajikistan: Repercussions of Tajik-Uzbek Feud May Be Felt All the Way to Afghanistan,” *Eurasianet*, April 1, 2010; Konrad Mathesius, “Boxcar Diplomacy Puts Tajik Businesses at Tashkent’s Mercy,” *Eurasianet*, August 6, 2010; *CEDR*, November 18, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950138; November 19, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950234 and Doc. No. CEP950214; December 30, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950116; March 30, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-950190; May 10, 2011, Doc. No. CEP-964198.

fuel shipments and creating a humanitarian crisis in Tajikistan, according to the U.N. World Food Program.

According to some reports, Uzbek officials have stepped-up arrests, fines, and other actions against international business interests in recent months, perhaps due in part to elite infighting and growing corruption.¹²³ Other international businesses continue to carry out operations.

Energy Resources

U.S. policy goals regarding energy resources in the Central Asian and South Caucasian states have included supporting their sovereignty and ties to the West, supporting U.S. private investment, promoting Western energy security through diversified suppliers, assisting ally Turkey, and opposing the building of pipelines that transit “energy competitor” Iran or otherwise give it undue influence over the region. The encouragement of regional electricity, oil, and gas exports to South Asia and security for Caspian region pipelines and energy resources also have been recent interests.

Until 2004, the Bush Administration retained a Clinton-era position, Special Advisor on Caspian Energy Diplomacy, to help further U.S. policy and counter the efforts of Russia’s Viktor Kaluzhny, the then-deputy foreign minister and Special Presidential Representative for Energy Matters in the Caspian. After the Administration abolished this post as no longer necessary, its responsibilities were shifted at least in part to a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (responsibilities of a former Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh and Eurasian Conflicts also were shifted to the Deputy Assistant Secretary). Some critics juxtaposed Russia’s close interest in securing Caspian energy resources to what they termed halting U.S. efforts.¹²⁴ A post of Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy issues was (re-)created in March 2008, with the former Bush Administration stating that there were “new opportunities” for the export of Caspian oil and gas. In April 2009, Secretary of State Clinton appointed Richard Morningstar as Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy.

The Caspian region is emerging as a notable source of oil and gas for world markets. The U.S. Energy Information Administration has estimated that gas exports from the region could account for 11% of global gas export sales by 2035, belying arguments by some observers that the region would be a marginal contributor to world energy supplies. According to British Petroleum (BP), the proven natural gas reserves of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are estimated at over 450 trillion cubic feet (tcf), among the largest in the world.¹²⁵ The region’s proven oil reserves are estimated to be 48 billion barrels, comparable to Libya. Kazakhstan possesses the region’s largest proven oil reserves at about 40 billion barrels, and also possesses 64tcf of natural gas. Kazakhstan is increasingly producing more gas than it consumes, but since it re-injects some of its gas into the fields, it still must import a small amount of gas. Kazakhstan’s oil exports are about 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd). Turkmenistan possesses about 286tcf and Uzbekistan about 59tcf of proven gas reserves, and both possess less than 1 billion barrels of oil reserves.

¹²³ Catherine Fitzpatrick, “Uzbekistan: Foreign Investors Suffering amid Tashkent’s “Bizarre” Business Behavior,” *Eurasianet*, August 16, 2011.

¹²⁴ *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 31, 2007.

¹²⁵ *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2010.

Russia's temporary cutoffs of gas to Ukraine in January 2006 and January 2009 and a brief slowdown of oil shipments to Belarus in January 2010 (Belarus and Ukraine are transit states for oil and gas pipelines to other European states) have highlighted Europe's energy insecurity. The United States has supported EU efforts to reduce its overall reliance on Russian oil and gas by increasing the number of possible alternative suppliers. Part of this policy has involved encouraging Central Asian countries to transport their energy exports to Europe through pipelines that cross the Caspian Sea, thereby bypassing Russian (and Iranian) territory, although these amounts are expected at most to satisfy only a small fraction of EU needs.¹²⁶

The Central Asian states long were pressured by Russia to yield large portions of their energy wealth to Russia, in part because Russia controlled most existing export pipelines.¹²⁷ Russia attempted to strengthen this control over export routes for Central Asian energy in May 2007 when visiting former President Putin reached agreement in Kazakhstan on supplying more Kazakh oil to Russia. Putin also reached agreement with the presidents of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan on the construction of a new pipeline to transport Turkmen and Kazakh gas to Russia. The first agreement appeared to compete with U.S. and Turkish efforts to foster more oil exports through the BTC. The latter agreement appeared to compete with U.S. and EU efforts to foster building a trans-Caspian gas pipeline to link to the SCP to Turkey. The latter also appeared to compete with U.S. and EU efforts to foster building a pipeline from Turkey through Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary to Austria (the so-called Nabucco pipeline).

Seeming to indicate a direct challenge to these plans by Russia and the West, China signed an agreement in August 2007 with Kazakhstan on completing the last section of an oil pipeline from the Caspian seacoast to China, and signed an agreement with Turkmenistan on building a gas pipeline to China (see also below).¹²⁸ In March 2008, the heads of the national gas companies of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan announced that their countries would raise the gas export price to the European level in future years. They signed a memorandum of understanding on the price with Russia's Gazprom state-controlled gas firm, which controls most export pipelines. According to analyst Martha Olcott, "the increased bargaining power of the Central Asian states owes more to the entry of China into the market than to the opening of [the BTC pipeline and the SCP]. Russia's offer to pay higher purchase prices for Central Asian gas in 2008 and 2009 came only after China signed a long-term purchase agreement for Turkmen gas at a base price that was higher than what Moscow was offering."¹²⁹

In testimony in June 2011, Morningstar stated that U.S. policy encourages the development of new Eurasian oil and gas resources to increase the diversity of world energy supplies. In the case of oil, increased supplies may directly benefit the United States, he stated. A second U.S. goal is to increase European energy security, so that some countries in Europe that largely rely on a single supplier (presumably Russia) may in the future have diverse suppliers. A third goal is assisting Caspian regional states to develop new routes to market, so that they can obtain more

¹²⁶ For details, see CRS Report RL33636, *The European Union's Energy Security Challenges*, by Paul Belkin. See also International Crisis Group, *Central Asia's Energy Risks*, May 24, 2007.

¹²⁷ According to a plan published by Russia's Institute of Energy Strategy covering the period 2007-2030, "Russian control over a large share of Central Asian gas needs to be maintained." See Minpromenergo (Ministry of Industry and Energy), Institut energeticheskoi strategii, *Kontseptsiya energeticheskoi strategii Rossii na period do 2030g.*, 2007. As reported by Philip Hanson, "How Sustainable Is Russia's Energy Power?" *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 38 (2008).

¹²⁸ An oil and gas conference involving Kazakh, Chinese, and Russian energy ministries and firms has met annually since 2004 to "exchange views" on possible regional cooperation. *ITAR-TASS*, December 5, 2007.

¹²⁹ Martha Olcott, "A New Direction for U.S. Policy in the Caspian Region."

competitive prices and become more prosperous. In order to achieve these goals, the Administration supports the development of the Southern Corridor of Caspian (and perhaps Iraq) gas export routes transiting Turkey to Europe. Of the three vying pipeline consortia—the Nabucco, the Interconnector-Turkey-Greece-Italy, and the Trans-Adriatic pipeline groups—the Administration will support the project “that brings the most gas, soonest and most reliably, to those parts of Europe that need it most.” The Administration also supports the diversification of Kazakhstan’s export routes and the boosting of oil production as a significant addition to world oil supplies. At the same time, Morningstar rejected views that Russia and the United States are competing for influence over Caspian energy supplies, stating that the Administration has formed a Working Group on Energy under the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission.¹³⁰

Kazakhstan’s Oil and Gas

Until recently U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) played a dominant role in the development of Kazakhstani oil and gas resources, amounting to about \$29 billion in Kazakhstan (over one-third of all FDI in the country) from 1993-2009.¹³¹ According to some reports, China provided about \$13 billion in investments and loans to Kazakhstan’s energy sector in 2009, eclipsing U.S. FDI. Some U.S. energy firms and other private foreign investors have become discouraged in recent years by harsher Kazakh government terms, taxes, and fines that some allege reflect corruption within the ruling elite. In 2009, the Karachaganak Petroleum Operating (KPO) consortium (the main shareholder is British Gas, and U.S. Chevron is among other shareholders), which extracts oil and gas from the Karachaganak fields in northwest Kazakhstan, was faced with an effort by the Kazakh government to obtain 10% of the shares of the consortium. Facing resistance, the government imposed hundreds of millions of dollars in tax, environmental, and labor fines and oil export duties against KPO. Both the government and KPO appealed to international arbitration. In December 2011, KPO agreed to transfer 10% of its shares to the Kazakh government, basically gratis, and in exchange the government mostly lifted the fines and duties.¹³²

Kazakhstan’s main oil export route has been a 930-mile pipeline completed in 2001—owned by the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), in which Russian shareholders have a controlling interest—that carried 693,000 bpd of oil in 2009 from Kazakhstan to Russia’s Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. Kazakhstan’s other major oil export pipeline, from Atyrau to Samara, Russia, has a capacity of approximately 730,000 bpd. Lengthy Russian resistance to increasing the pumping capacity of the CPC pipeline and demands for higher transit and other fees, along with the necessity of offloading the oil into tankers at Novorossiysk to transit the clogged Turkish Straits, spurred Kazakh President Nazarbayev to sign a treaty with visiting Azerbaijani President Aliyev in June 2006 to barge Kazakh oil across the Caspian Sea to Baku to the BTC pipeline. Kazakhstan began shipping about 70,000 bpd of oil through the BTC pipeline at the end of October 2008. Another accord resulted from a visit by President Nazarbayev to Azerbaijan in September 2009 that provides that up to 500,000 bpd of oil will be barged across the Caspian to

¹³⁰ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, Hearing on European and Eurasian Energy: Developing Capabilities for Security and Prosperity, *Testimony of Ambassador Richard L. Morningstar, Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy*, June 2, 2011.

¹³¹ U.S. Department of State. *Robert O. Blake, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs: Remarks Before the Washington International Business Council*, February 24, 2010.

¹³² *Press Release: Agreement Reached with Republic of Kazakhstan on Karachaganak*, BG Group, December 14, 2011, at <http://www.bg-group.com/MEDIACENTRE/PRESS/Pages/14Dec2010.aspx>.

enter the BTC or the Baku-Supsa pipeline. When the volumes exceed 500,000 bpd, a trans-Caspian pipeline may be built.

Apparently to counter Kazakh's export plans via Azerbaijan, then-President Putin's May 2007 agreement with Nazarbayev (see above) envisaged boosting the capacity of the CPC pipeline. However, this project did not materialize in the timely fashion, so Kazakhstan proceeded to upgrade its Caspian Sea port facilities. Kazakhstan also barges some oil to Baku to ship by rail to Georgia's Black Sea oil terminal at Batumi, of which Kazakhstan became the sole owner in early 2008. Kazakhstan began barging oil from Batumi to the Romanian port of Constantza in late 2008 for processing at two refineries it purchased. Some Kazakh oil arriving in Baku also could be transported through small pipelines to Georgia's Black Sea port of Supsa or to Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiisk, although in the latter case Kazakhstan might be faced with high transit charges by Russia.¹³³

In December 2010, the CPC approved a plan to upgrade the pumping capacity of the oil pipeline to 1.4 million bpd, with several phases of construction through 2015. As of the end of 2011, construction reportedly has faced delays.

In addition to these oil export routes to Europe not controlled by Russia, in 2009 Kazakhstan and China completed an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan's port city of Atyrau to the Xinjiang region of China that initially carries 200,000 bpd to China. Some Russian oil has been transported to China through this pipeline, the first Russian oil to be transported by pipeline to China.

Russia is the major purchaser of Kazakh gas through the Central Asia-Center gas pipeline network. According to British Petroleum (BP) data, Kazakhstan exported 422 bcf of gas to Russia in 2010.¹³⁴ Kazakhstan completed its sections of the Central Asia-China gas pipeline in 2009-2010. At the end of October 2008, China and Kazakhstan signed a framework agreement on constructing a gas pipeline from Beyneu, north of the Aral Sea, eastward to Shymkent, where it will connect with the Central Asia-China gas pipeline. The pipeline is planned initially to supply 176.6 bcf to southern Kazakhstan and 176.6 bcf to China. Pipeline construction began in September 2011 and to be completed by 2015.

Kazakh officials have appeared to make contradictory statements about providing gas for the prospective Nabucco pipeline. Kazakhstan's Deputy Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Aset Magaulov stated at a Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Security Forum in June 2009 that Kazakhstan would not have a surplus of gas that it could send through the Nabucco pipeline.¹³⁵ President Nazarbayev appeared to support the possible transit of Kazakh gas through Turkey when he stated on October 22, 2009, during a visit to Turkey, that "Turkey ... will become a transit country. And if Kazakhstan's oil and gas are transported via this corridor then this will be advantageous to both Turkey and Kazakhstan."¹³⁶ In late October 2009, however, the Kazakh Ministry of Energy reiterated that "the main problem for our country [regarding the supply of natural gas to Nabucco] is the limited availability of gas" because of existing contracts for projected gas production. It suggested that Kazakhstan might be a potential supplier for Nabucco

¹³³ *ITAR-TASS*, May 29, 2008; *CEDR*, December 11, 2007, Doc. No. CEP-950096; April 26, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950045.

¹³⁴ "Natural Gas: Trade Movements 2010," *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2011, p. 29.

¹³⁵ *ITAR-TASS*, June 25, 2009.

¹³⁶ *CEDR*, October 22, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950337.

if gas production exceeds expectations, but that Kazakhstan could not transport any gas via Nabucco until the legal status of the Caspian Sea was resolved, which would permit building a connection to Nabucco.¹³⁷ Reacting to the decision of the European Commission to facilitate talks on building a trans-Caspian gas pipeline (see below), Minister of Oil and Gas Sauat Mynabyev stated in early October 2011 that “we do not have available resources for the gas pipeline yet.”¹³⁸

Turkmenistan’s Gas

The late President Niyazov signed a 25-year accord with then-President Putin in 2003 on supplying Russia up to 211.9 billion cubic feet (bcf) of gas in 2004 (about 12% of production), rising up to 2.83 trillion cubic feet (tcf) in 2009-2028 (perhaps then constituting an even larger percentage of production). Turkmenistan halted gas shipments to Russia at the end of 2004 in an attempt to get a higher gas price but settled for all-cash rather than partial barter payments. Turkmenistan and Russia continued to clash in subsequent years over gas prices and finally agreed in late 2007 that gas prices based on “market principles” would be established in 2009. Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia signed accords in May and December 2007 on building a new gas pipeline that was planned to carry 353 bcf of Turkmen and 353 bcf of Kazakh gas to Russia. However, the Turkmen government appeared to have reservations about building another pipeline to Russia.

Seeking alternatives to pipeline routes through Russia, in December 1997 Turkmenistan opened the first pipeline from Central Asia to the outside world beyond Russia, a 125-mile gas pipeline linkage to Iran. Turkmenistan provided 282.5 bcf of gas to Iran in 2006 and reportedly a larger amount in 2007. At the end of 2007, however, Turkmenistan suddenly suspended gas shipments, causing hardship in northern Iran. Turkmen demands for higher payments were the main reason for the cut-off. Gas shipments resumed in late April 2008 after Iran agreed to a price boost. In mid-2009, Turkmenistan reportedly agreed to increase gas supplies to up to 706 bcf per year.¹³⁹ At the end of 2009, a second gas pipeline to Iran was completed—from a field that until April 2009 had supplied gas to Russia (see below)—to more than double Turkmenistan’s export capacity to Iran. BP reports that Turkmenistan supplied 229.5 bcf of gas to Iran in 2010.

As another alternative to pipelines through Russia, in April 2006, Turkmenistan and China signed a framework agreement calling for Chinese investment in developing gas fields in Turkmenistan and in building the Central Asia-China gas pipeline with a capacity of about 1.0 tcf per year through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to China. Construction of the pipeline began in August 2007 and gas began to be delivered through the pipeline to Xinjiang and beyond in December 2009. A second parallel line was completed in 2010. BP reports that Turkmenistan supplied 125.3 bcf of gas to China in 2010.

Perhaps an additional attempt to diversify gas export routes, Berdimuhammedow first signaled in 2007 that Turkmenistan was interested in building a trans-Caspian gas pipeline. Turkmenistan signed a memorandum of understanding in April 2008 with the EU to supply 353.1 bcf of gas per year starting in 2009, presumably through a trans-Caspian pipeline that might at first link to the

¹³⁷ *ITAR-TASS*, October 31, 2009.

¹³⁸ *Interfax*, October 6, 2011.

¹³⁹ *Iran: Daily Report*, January 21, 2008, Doc. No. IAP-11017; January 24, 2008, Doc. No. IAP-950014; April 26, 2008, Doc. No. IAP-950049; and May 6, 2008, Doc. No. IAP-950052.; *CEDR*, July 12, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950097.

SCP and later to the proposed Nabucco pipeline (see below). Berdimuhammedow also has revived Niyazov's proposal to build a gas pipeline through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India.

On the night of April 8-9, 2009, a section of a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Russia exploded, halting Turkmen gas shipments. Russia claimed that it had notified Turkmenistan that it was reducing its gas imports because European demand for gas had declined, but Turkmenistan denied that it had been properly informed.¹⁴⁰ After extended talks, then-President Medvedev visited Turkmenistan in December 2009 and he and President Berdimuhammedow agreed that Turkmen gas exports to Russia would be resumed, and that the existing supply contract would be altered to reduce Turkmen gas exports and to increase the price paid for the gas. Turkmenistan announced on January 9, 2010, that its gas exports to Russia had resumed. The incident appeared to further validate Turkmenistan's policy of diversifying its gas export routes. BP reports that Turkmenistan supplied 341.8 bcf of gas to Russia in 2010.

Seeming to indicate interest in a trans-Caspian pipeline, Berdimuhammedow asserted on July 10, 2009, that there are "immense volumes of natural gas in Turkmenistan [that] make it possible for us to carry out certain work related to the implementation of various [gas export] projects, including the Nabucco project."¹⁴¹ At an international oil and gas conference held in November 2010 in Ashkhabad, Turkmen Deputy Prime Minister Baimurad Khodzhamukhamedov stated that the country would have an excess of 1.4 tcf of gas, more than enough to fill the proposed Nabucco pipeline, and that "the construction of the trans-Caspian gas pipeline will be coordinated in compliance with all environmental standards and after expert examinations, which meets the policy of diversification of natural gas sales pursued by Turkmenistan."¹⁴² At a summit meeting of heads of state of the Caspian Sea littoral states also held in November 2010, President Berdimuhammedow reportedly asserted that a sub-set of littoral states could agree on a sub-sea pipeline. However, Turkmenistan's claims against Azerbaijan regarding some offshore oil and gas fields have stymied a formal agreement on a trans-Caspian pipeline between the two countries.

In September 2011, the Council of the European Union approved opening talks with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan to facilitate an accord on building a trans-Caspian gas pipeline. Such a link would provide added gas to ensure adequate supplies for the planned Nabucco pipeline. Hailing the decision, EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger stated that "Europe is now speaking with one voice. The trans-Caspian pipeline is a major project in the Southern Corridor to bring new sources of gas to Europe. We have the intention of achieving this as soon as possible."¹⁴³ The Russian Foreign Ministry denounced the plans for the talks, and claimed that the Caspian Sea littoral states had agreed in a declaration issued in October 2007 that decisions regarding the Sea would be adopted by consensus among all the littoral states (Russia itself has violated this provision by agreeing with Kazakhstan and with Azerbaijan on oil and gas field development). It also claimed that the proposed pipeline was different from existing sub-sea pipelines in posing an environmental threat.

¹⁴⁰ *OSC Feature*, Open Source Center, April 14, 2009, Doc. No. FEA-844966; *CEDR*, April 14, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950339; *ITAR-TASS*, April 3, 2009; Sergey Blagov, "Turkmenistan: Ashgabat Wonders Whether Russia Still Has Deep Pockets," *Eurasia Insight*, March 26, 2009.

¹⁴¹ *CEDR*, July 11, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950124.

¹⁴² *ITAR-TASS*, November 19, 2010.

¹⁴³ European Commission, *Press release: EU Starts Negotiations on Caspian Pipeline to Bring Gas to Europe*, September 12, 2011.

In December 2010, the presidents of Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and the prime minister of India signed an agreement on constructing the Turkmenistan- Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline. Turkmenistan long has called for building this pipeline to diversify its export options, but financing for the project remains problematic because of ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. Support for TAPI is part of the Administration's "new Silk Road vision" (see above).

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is a net importer of oil. The country consumes the bulk of its gas production domestically, but has used its network of Soviet-era gas pipelines to export some gas to Russia and to other Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan). Gas exports to the latter two states have been substantially reduced in recent years because of payment arrears. According to BP, Uzbekistan exported 364 bcf of gas to Russia, 102 bcf to Kazakhstan, about 7 bcf to Kyrgyzstan, and about 6 bcf to Tajikistan in 2010. Gas is provided to Russia and Kazakhstan through the Russian-owned Central Asia-Center Pipeline system. Reportedly, Uzbekistan was an unreliable gas exporter during the winter of 2010-2011, restricting supplies to Russia and Kazakhstan to divert them to cold-weather domestic use. Gazprom complained in November 2011 that Uzbekistan was again reducing its gas exports due to cold weather. Kazakhstan faced similar reductions, including in its major city of Almaty, leading it to urgently conclude an agreement with the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) to obtain gas from the Central Asia-China Pipeline.¹⁴⁴

Uzbekistan largely has been closed to Western energy investment, although efforts to attract international energy firms appeared to increase in 2010-2011. Russian firms Gazprom and Lukoil are the largest investors in Uzbek gas development and production. Reportedly, Gazprom pays European-pegged gas prices for only a fraction of imports from Uzbekistan. In 2005, CNPC and Uzbekistan's state-owned Uzbekneftegaz firm announced that they would form a joint venture to develop oil and gas resources. In 2007, Uzbekistan and China signed an agreement on building a 326-mile section of the Central Asia-China Pipeline, and a construction and operation joint venture between Uzbekneftegaz and CNPC, Asia Trans Gas, began construction in 2008. Uzbekistan also has signed a framework agreement to eventually supply 353 bcf of gas per year through the pipeline. A production sharing consortium composed of Uzbekneftegaz, Lukoil, the Korea National Oil Corporation, and CNPC is exploring for gas in the Aral Sea region.

U.S. Aid Overview

For much of the 1990s and until September 11, 2001, the United States provided much more aid each year to Russia and Ukraine than to any Central Asian state (most such aid was funded from the FSA account in Foreign Operations Appropriations, but some derived from other program and agency budgets). Cumulative foreign aid budgeted to Central Asia for FY1992 through FY2010 amounted to \$5.7 billion, about 14% of the amount budgeted to all the Eurasian states, reflecting the lesser priority given to these states prior to September 11.

¹⁴⁴ *Interfax*, November 14, 2011.

Budgeted spending for FY2002 for Central Asia, during OEF, was greatly boosted in absolute amounts (\$584 million) and as a share of total aid to Eurasia (about one-quarter of such aid). The former Bush Administration since then requested smaller amounts of aid, although the Administration continued to stress that there were important U.S. interests in the region. The former Bush Administration highlighted the phase-out of economic aid to Kazakhstan and the Congressionally imposed restrictions on aid to Uzbekistan (see below) as among the reasons for declining aid requests. In April 2008, then-Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher stated that another reason for declining U.S. aid to the region was a more constrained U.S. budgetary situation. Aid to Central Asia in recent years has been about the same or less in absolute and percentage terms than that provided to the South Caucasian region.

The Obama Administration boosted aid to Central Asia in FY2009 to about \$494.5 million (all agencies and programs), but aid declined to \$436.3 million in FY2010, despite a boost in assistance to Kyrgyzstan (see below). Budgeted “function 150” foreign assistance to Central Asia was \$125.8 in FY2011 and an estimated \$133.7 million in FY2012, and the Administration has requested \$118.4 million in “function 150” aid for Central Asia for FY2013 (see **Table 1**, **Table 2** and **Table 3**).¹⁴⁵ The Administration stated in FY2010 and FY2011 that it was prioritizing foreign assistance to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In Tajikistan, the Administration stated that aid would help increase the stability of a country “situated on the frontline of our ongoing military stabilization efforts in Afghanistan.” In Kyrgyzstan, the Administration stated that aid would improve security, combat drug-trafficking, reform the economy, and address food insecurity.¹⁴⁶ Following the April and June 2010 instability in Kyrgyzstan, the Administration provided \$77.6 million in addition to regular appropriated aid for stabilizing the economy, holding elections, and training police as well as urgent food and shelter aid.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), created in 2004 to provide U.S. aid to countries with promising development records, announced in late 2005 that Kyrgyzstan was eligible to apply for assistance as a country on the “threshold” of meeting the criteria for full-scale development aid. In March 2008, the MCC signed an agreement with Kyrgyzstan to provide \$16 million over the next two years to help the country combat corruption and bolster the rule of law. This threshold program was completed in June 2010, and Kyrgyzstan has requested another threshold grant.

Congressional Conditions on Kazakh and Uzbek Aid

In Congress, Omnibus Appropriations for FY2003 (P.L. 108-7) forbade FREEDOM Support Act (FSA) assistance to the government of Uzbekistan unless the Secretary of State determined and reported that it was making substantial progress in meeting commitments under the Strategic Partnership Declaration to democratize and respect human rights. The conference report (H.Rept. 108-10) also introduced language that forbade assistance to the Kazakh government unless the Secretary of State determined and reported that it significantly had improved its human rights

¹⁴⁵ The “function 150” aid numbers include funds from the Aid for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA) account, Global Health and Child Survival (GHCS), Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Food for Peace. The totals do not include Defense or Energy Department funds, funding for exchanges, the value of privately-donated cargoes, or Millennium Challenge Corporation aid to Kyrgyzstan.

¹⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations for FY2010*, May 2009, p. 44; *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations for FY2011*, Volume II, March 2010, p. 85.

record during the preceding six months. However, the legislation permitted the Secretary to waive the requirement on national security grounds.¹⁴⁷ The Secretary reported in mid-2003 that Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were making such progress. Some in Congress were critical of these findings. By late 2003, the former Bush Administration had decided that progress was inadequate in Uzbekistan. Since FY2005, the Secretary of State annually has reported that Kazakhstan has failed to significantly improve its human rights record, but aid restrictions have been waived on national security grounds.

Consolidated Appropriations for FY2004, including foreign operations (P.L. 108-199) and for FY2005 (P.L. 108-447), and Foreign Operations Appropriations for FY2006 (P.L. 109-102) retained these conditions, while clarifying that the prohibition on aid to Uzbekistan pertained to the *central* government and that conditions included respecting human rights, establishing a “genuine” multi-party system, and ensuring free and fair elections and freedom of expression and media. These conditions remained in place under the continuing resolution for FY2007 (P.L. 109-289, as amended). In appropriations for FY2008 (Consolidated Appropriations; P.L. 110-161), another condition was added blocking the admission of Uzbek officials to the United States if the Secretary of State determines that they were involved in abuses in Andijon. Omnibus Appropriations for FY2009 (P.L. 111-8, Secs. 7075 [Kazakhstan] and 7076 [Uzbekistan]) reiterated these conditions on assistance to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Consolidated Appropriations for FY2010 (P.L. 111-117) referenced Secs. 7075 and 7076, but added that Uzbekistan would be eligible for expanded IMET. The Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, FY2011 (P.L. 112-10), directed that assistance would be provided under the authorities and conditions of FY2010 foreign operations appropriations.

In late 2009, Congress permitted (P.L. 111-84, Sec. 801)—for the first time since restrictions on aid to Uzbekistan were put in place—the provision of some assistance on national security grounds to facilitate the acquisition of supplies for U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan from countries along the Northern Distribution Network. In 2012, \$100,000 is requested under the Foreign Military Financing program to provide non-lethal equipment to facilitate Uzbekistan’s protection of the Northern Distribution Network.

On September 22, 2011, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a foreign operations appropriations bill, S. 1601 (Leahy), that provides for a waiver for assistance to Uzbekistan on national security grounds and to facilitate U.S. access to and from Afghanistan. According to one media account, the Administration had called for such a waiver in order to facilitate security assistance, including FMF, for Uzbekistan.¹⁴⁸ Some human rights groups have protested against the possible bolstering of U.S. security assistance to Uzbekistan.¹⁴⁹ Consolidated Appropriations

¹⁴⁷ The language calling for “substantial progress” in respecting human rights differs from the grounds of ineligibility for assistance under Section 498(b) of Part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-195), which includes as grounds a presidential determination that a Soviet successor state has “engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.” The Administration has stated annually that the president has not determined that Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have engaged in “gross violations” of human rights.

¹⁴⁸ Joshua Kucera, “Uzbekistan: Military Aid to Tashkent Would Help Protect NDN - State Department,” *Eurasianet*, September 28, 2011.

¹⁴⁹ International Crisis Group (ICG), “Joint Letter to Secretary Clinton Regarding Uzbekistan,” *States News Service*, September 27, 2011; Human Rights Watch, “Don’t Lift Restrictions Linked to Human Rights until Tashkent Shows Improvement,” *States News Service*, September 7, 2011. The joint letter by ICG and other human rights groups called on Secretary Clinton to affirm that “U.S. policies towards the Uzbek government will not fundamentally change absent meaningful human rights improvements, including the release of imprisoned pro-democracy activists, an end to harassment of civil society groups, effective steps to end torture, and the elimination of forced child labor in the cotton (continued...)”

for FY2012 (P.L. 112-74; signed into law on December 23, 2011) provides for the Secretary of State to waive conditions on assistance to Uzbekistan for a period of not more than 6 months and every 6 months thereafter until September 30, 2013, on national security grounds and as necessary to facilitate U.S. access to and from Afghanistan. The law requires that the waiver include an assessment of democratization progress, and calls for a report on aid provided to Uzbekistan, including expenditures made in support of the NDN in Uzbekistan and any credible information that such assistance or expenditures are being diverted for corrupt purposes. The law also extends a provision permitting expanded IMET assistance for Uzbekistan.

In January 2012, the State Department issued the waiver for assistance to Uzbekistan, assessing human rights conditions as of “serious concern.”

Besides bilateral and regional aid, the United States contributes to international financial institutions that aid Central Asia. Recurrent policy issues regarding U.S. aid include what it should be used for, who should receive it, and whether it is effective.

Table I. U.S. Foreign Assistance to Central Asia, FY1992 to FY2011, and the FY2012 Request
(millions of current dollars)

Central Asian Country	FY1992 thru FY2010 Budgeted ^a	FY2011 Actual ^b	FY2012 Estimate ^b	FY2013 Request ^b
Kazakhstan	2,050.4	17.57	18.79	14.9
Kyrgyzstan	1,221.71	41.36	47.05	46.73
Tajikistan	988.57	44.48	45.02	37.41
Turkmenistan	351.55	11.01	9.89	6.73
Uzbekistan	971.36	11.34	12.94	12.6
Regional	130.44	--	--	--
Total	5,714.03	125.76	133.69	118.37
As a Percentage of aid to Eurasia	14%	23%	25%	26%

Sources: State Department, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, FY2013, Annex: Regional Programs*, March 2012.

- a. Includes funds from the Aid for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA) account and Agency budgets. Excludes some classified coalition support funding.
- b. Includes funds from the Aid for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia account (AEECA; now these funds are part of Economic Support Funds) and other “Function 150” programs. Does not include Defense or Energy Department funds or funding for exchanges.

(...continued)
sector.”

Table 2. U.S. Assistance to Central Asia, FY1992-FY2001

(millions of current dollars)

Country	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Kazakhstan	20.33	51.47	202.75	138.85	79.32	53.52	75.85	72.60	77.95	80.01
Kyrgyzstan	13.03	108.22	90.36	44.43	63.63	23.85	50.29	61.12	49.73	43.07
Tajikistan	11.61	33.72	45.26	33.71	45.36	14.75	36.57	38.16	38.69	76.48
Turkmenistan	14.71	57.28	22.38	21.82	25.33	6.25	8.94	15.94	10.91	12.57
Uzbekistan	5.62	15.00	34.07	14.44	23.34	30.88	26.84	46.88	39.06	48.33
Regional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	0.60	7.87	0.00	4.50	7.57
Total	65.3	265.69	394.82	253.25	256.98	129.85	206.36	234.7	220.84	268.03

Source: Derived from U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Europe and Eurasia.

Notes: Includes all agencies and accounts.

Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Central Asia, FY2002-FY2010 (and Totals, FY1992-FY2010)

(millions of current dollars)

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total (FY1992- FY2010)
Kazakhstan	97.4	97.88	111.00	84.91	81.31	167.55	179.52	220.28	157.90	1197.75
Kyrgyzstan	94.47	53.85	55.25	55.23	43.44	71.25	71.23	111.74	117.52	673.98
Tajikistan	136.34	48.71	53.01	65.69	42.81	49.94	67.33	67.44	82.99	614.26
Turkmenistan	18.93	10.98	10.42	18.94	10.44	19.84	16.83	20.78	28.26	155.42
Uzbekistan	224.14	90.77	84.25	78.28	49.30	35.90	38.33	48.55	37.38	686.9
Regional	13.88	9.99	3.41	5.02	5.43	7.59	6.66	25.71	12.21	89.9
Total	585.16	312.18	317.34	308.07	232.73	352.07	379.9	494.5	436.26	3418.21

Source: Derived from U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Europe and Eurasia.

Notes: Includes all agencies and accounts.

Figure 1. Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan



Source: CRS (September 2010).

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