US POLICY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA SINCE THE COLLAPSE OF
THE SOVIET UNION: CHANGING OBJECTIVES, PRIORITIES, AND
MEANS

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University

October 2004
Dedicated to my wife, Shahla Arya, without whose encouragement and support this thesis might never have seen the light of day.
Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due acknowledgment is made in the text. I also certify that it does not contain work that has been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Enayatollah Yazdani

13 October 2004
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Abstract

This thesis examines US policy towards Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It seeks to demonstrate the changes in US priorities, objectives and means in its relations with the region. To this end, it first shows how the post-Soviet politico-economic challenges in the region influenced the outside world's attitude towards it. It shows that several major regional and global actors have displayed interest in becoming involved in the region's affairs. The thesis demonstrates that in this competition the United States has become a major player in the area.

US relations with Central Asia were established immediately after the demise of the Soviet Union. This thesis demonstrates that US policy towards the region has gone through three distinct phases since then. From the beginning until the mid-1990s, the region was not considered strategically vital to the United States and was treated as an accessory to Washington's interests in Moscow and, to some degree, the Middle East. From the mid-1990s until the events of 11 September 2001, a new pro-active policy emerged in the United States, focused on Caspian hydrocarbons resources and their routes of export to world markets. This was demonstrated by a remarkable rise in the importance given to the region by the Clinton administration. The geopolitical situation in the region has been strongly affected by the events of 11 September 2001. The terrorist attacks changed the international context, had a direct and profound impact on US foreign policy towards Central Asia, and also influenced the region's political dynamics. In this third stage the United States has re-evaluated its priorities in the area and increased the importance it attaches to the region as whole. As a result, the region's countries have to varying extents become US partners in the 'war on terror', and security has become US first priority in the area.

The thesis shows that US engagement with Central Asia during these three phases has in general been a preventive and geostrategic policy – to project US power into the Eurasian 'Heartland', increasing its influence on the borders of Russia, China and Iran in order to check them and to counter Islamic uprisings, thereby serving Washington's national and security interests. These concerns, essentially premised on calculations of Realpolitik, have become vital factors in US involvement in Central Asia.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AIOC</td>
<td>Azerbaijan International Operating Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTC</td>
<td>Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (pipeline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAAEF</td>
<td>Central Asian-American Enterprise Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CACO</td>
<td>Central Asian Cooperation Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>US Central Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CICA</td>
<td>Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Caspian Pipeline Consortium</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>Corruption Perceptions Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNPC</td>
<td>China National Petroleum Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>CST</td>
<td>Collective Security Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSTO</td>
<td>The CIS Collective Security Treaty Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTR</td>
<td>Cooperative Threat Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCS</td>
<td>Direct Commercial Sales</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defence</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECO</td>
<td>Economic Cooperation Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>Eurasian Economic Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation</td>
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<td>FLE</td>
<td>Future Leaders Exchange</td>
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<td>FMF</td>
<td>Foreign Military Financing</td>
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<td>FMS</td>
<td>Foreign Military Sales</td>
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<tr>
<td>FREEDOM</td>
<td>Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSA</td>
<td>FREEDOM Support Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUUAM</td>
<td>Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia, and Moldova</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ICG    International Crisis Group  
IEA    International Energy Agency  
ILSA   Iran-Libya Sanctions Act  
IMET   International Military Education Training  
IMF    International Monitory Fund  
IMU    Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan  
IOHR   Independent Organisation for Human Rights  
IREX   International Research and Exchanges Board  
IWPR   Institute for War and Peace Reporting  
KGB    State Security Committee (the former USSR)  
MESA   Middle East and South Asia  
NASA   National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organisation  
NEC    National Economic Council  
NIS    Newly Independent States  
NGO    Non-Governmental Organisation  
NPT    Non-Proliferation Treaty  
NSC    National Security Council  
OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
OIC    Organisation of Islamic Conference  
OPEC   Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries  
OPIC   Overseas Private Investment Corporation  
OPH    Operation Provide Hope  
OSCE   Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
OVL    ONGC Videsh Limited  
PCA    Partnership and Cooperation Agreement  
PDPA   People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan  
PfP    Partnership for Peace  
RDF    Rapid Deployment Force  
RFE/RL Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty  
SCCA   The South Caucasus and Central Asia  
SCD    Safe and Secure Dismantlement  
SCO    Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>SRSA</td>
<td>Silk Road Strategy Act</td>
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<td>SSD</td>
<td>Safe and Secure Dismantlement</td>
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<td>START</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDA</td>
<td>Trade and Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TI</td>
<td>Transparency International</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIKA</td>
<td>Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>US Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

The [Central Asian] region may be changing less than a cursory glance would suggest. Russia's influence in the region was waning steadily well before the September 11th attacks, while the influence of the United States in the region had been steadily on the rise. M.B. Olcott

The collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991 made salient the geopolitical, economic and cultural importance of the five former Soviet Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. As a result, Central Asia, a closed and hard-to-reach region of Eurasia, once again achieved a significant position on Eurasia's map, with increased geopolitical and strategic weight. As a region that in the Cold War era remained in the background of international politics Central Asia has attracted the attention of the global and regional powers. It started to gain prominence in the strategic objectives and politico-economic ambitions of the United States. Furthermore, its strategic location and enormous natural resources made it an area where some other states, such as the Russian Federation, China, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Israel, and the European Union (EU) also vie for influence.

Under communist rule, the region was a backyard of the Soviet Union, to which the United States had no access. The USSR's collapse provided the United States with an opportunity to influence the region and its political, economic, security and military affairs, as an integral part of US global strategy, and gradually turn it into a base from which to check Russia, China and Iran.

This thesis examines US foreign policy in post-Soviet Central Asia, focusing on two issues. One is the region's growing position in US foreign policy; the other is that the evolving US policy in Central Asia constitutes a good case study of its foreign policy generally, especially in the post-Cold War era.
Context of the study

Since 1991 US policy towards the Central Asian region has drawn the attention of many scholars. However, despite a multitude of studies produced in the past decade, there is no comprehensive work on this issue. The existing studies put emphasis on one of the following issues or combination of them in analysing American involvement in Central Asia:

- promotion of democratic and economic reforms;
- energy development; and
- security, particularly combating Islamic radicalism and terrorism.

Some literature has focused on the promotion of democratic and economic reform in Central Asia as a primary motivation in US policy in the region. For instance, G. Fuller has argued that the principal US objective in the area is to encourage increasing democratisation, human rights and a market economy, but he has not discussed the challenges the United States might face in this regard. Naturally, having been published in 1994, Fuller’s Chapter cannot deal with the many changes that later occurred in relations between the United States and the region.

Others have tried to analyse US policy in the region in the framework of Caspian energy and pipeline development. Rosemarie Forsythe, Stephen Blank, Bradford R. McGuinn and Mohiaddin Mesbahi, R. Hrair Dekmejian and Hovann Simonian, and Joe Barnes focused mainly on interest in Caspian energy resources to explain why the United States became interested in Central Asia. Forsythe has focused more on the economic aspect of Caspian oil and gas, while Dekmejian, Simonian and Blank have stressed the geopolitical aspect of the region’s hydrocarbon reserves and pipelines. These works provide excellent accounts of US energy policy in the region, but do not present a comprehensive evolution of Washington’s foreign policy there, because they give insufficient attention to other dimensions of US policy in Central Asia, in particular the geopolitical. A possible exception from this pattern is the study by McGuinn and Mesbahi, which provides an all-round account of the US energy policy in the region as of the late 1990s.

Some academics have focused on the significance of security agendas to US foreign policy in Central Asia. Elizabeth Wishnick, Thomas S. Szayna and Olga Oliker have stressed issues such as conflict, radical Islam, terrorist activity and drug trafficking, and their implications for US policy. In particular, the events of 11 September 2001 and the US-led campaign against terrorism have led some of them to
view relations between the United States and Central Asia primarily through the security lens. Although these studies have commented on a wide range of security aspects of American engagement with Central Asia, they have fallen short of an in-depth study of the issue. Most of them were undertaken before the events of 11 September 2001, a phenomenon that has greatly influenced US policy towards Central Asia. In addition, the role of Russia, China and Iran in shaping Washington’s foreign policy in the region has not been fully elucidated.

Still others have combined all three approaches to explain Washington’s movement towards the region. For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski (National Security Advisor to President Carter), Shireen T. Hunter, Sherman W. Garrett, Alexander Rahr, and Koiji Watanabe, Bulent Aras, Charles Fairbanks, S. Frederick Starr, C. Richard Nelson and Kenneth Weisbrode have emphasised all three areas of interest as forces leading the USA to increase its presence in Central Asia. These studies provide revealing accounts of US relations with Central Asia; but lack focused analysis of how the United States has charted its foreign policy course in relations with Central Asia, at both regional and global levels. Although these studies try to assess Central Asia’s strategic importance to the USA by analysing the key threats and challenges to its national interests, they do not discuss the broader aspect of Washington’s policy there, i.e. power politics and American hegemony. Similarly, there have been no critical studies of the discourse of national interests as applied to the Central Asian region. US foreign policy in Central Asia cannot be fully understood through only the concepts and analysis of the existing literature, none of which presents a comprehensive study of it. This thesis attempts to fill that gap in the literature. It treats US foreign policy as an evolving phenomenon proceeding through different stages, each of which exhibits unique dynamics. It is hoped that this method provides a better understanding of US foreign policy on the global scale, and that in this respect, the thesis is both timely and instructive.

This thesis discusses how and why the United States has engaged itself with the region by formulating and attempting to answer five main research questions: 1) How important is Central Asia to US global strategy? 2) What are the main driving forces for increased US involvement in the region? 3) What are the distinct phases of US foreign policy in Central Asia? 4) What are the mechanisms and means to strengthen US engagement in the region? And 5) What are the future prospects of US policy in Central Asia? The argument developed in this thesis is that, despite existing assessments that view US policy towards Central Asia in the framework of economic priority, especially
in the field of Caspian energy resources, Washington's foreign policy in the region has been motivated by its broader global strategy, geopolitical interests and power politics, i.e. projection of US power into the region, restriction of Russia's, China's and Iran's influence and of radical Islam, and, more importantly, expansion of American hegemony into the centre of Asia. The thesis also argues that economic considerations, and oil and gas in particular, have played an important, though secondary, role in US involvement in the area.

Scope of the study

This thesis focuses on examining US policy towards the Central Asian region in the post-Cold War era, covering the independent existence of the five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, from 1991 onward. In this connection, there are several scales of analysis to investigate the US involvement. One is the national scale – i.e. state level – of analysis, where each republic may be taken separately. Second, there is the regional scale of Central Asia itself, which takes the five countries together, and considers the interrelationship between their internal and external affairs. The third level of analysis includes Russia, China, South and Southwest Asia, from India and Pakistan through Iraq and Turkey, and Europe, which can be referred to simply as Eurasia. This thesis generally applies the second scale to examine US foreign policy, believing that all five republics have common economic, political, social and security agendas, and where necessary the third level of analysis is also used. However, since at times one republic gains more attention from Washington than the others, the study at times uses the first scale of analysis, placing particular emphasis on individual states, and explores US bilateral relations with them.

The thesis aims to present a comprehensive and dynamic analysis of US foreign policy, but not to offer a critique of that policy. It examines how the United States became involved in Central Asia after the Soviet Union's demise, then addresses three distinct phases in US policy toward the region, examining each phase and its impact on the affairs of the region and the interested external powers. Central Asia's internal economics and politics are considered only to the extent that they impact on US foreign policy. Furthermore, insofar as other interested powers' relations with Central Asia are important to the examination of US foreign policy there, the thesis provides an overview of those states' policies towards the area.
Source material

The thesis relies on various primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are policy papers, official documents, and interviews of some US officials and academics involved with the region, speeches, testimonies, interviews and comments of the US Congress, Presidents and key elements within the administration including the Secretaries of State and Defence, National Security Advisor, Secretary of the Treasury, Directors of the National Economic Council (NEC), and of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and ambassadors to the Central Asian countries. Furthermore, comments and statements from officials and experts I interviewed during three months of fieldwork (March-May 2003) in the United States, and primary sources such as official statements and policy papers from the Central Asian republics, Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey are also used.

The secondary sources include books, chapters, journals, papers, research and commentaries from various scholars, think-tanks and other institutions in the United States, the Central Asian countries, Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, Europe and elsewhere. In particular, the thesis relies on studies produced by certain important and demonstrably influential academic advisory bodies, such as the RAND Institute, the Commission on National Interests, the Atlantic Council of the United States, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

US relations with Central Asia: Towards a conceptual framework

US foreign policy generally (and, by inference, in Central Asia in particular) has been underpinned by realism and geopolitics. The ensuing discussion presents a general overview of the scholarly literature on realism, neorealism and geopolitics.

From Thucydides to Morgenthau (the ‘father’ of modern power politics theory), realists have stressed that states are led to formulate their foreign policies by material interests, the dominance of the strong over the weak, and an anarchic international relations environment. Morgenthau described realism as ‘theoretical concern with human nature as it actually is, and with the historic processes as they actually take place.’ Realism regards the international system as an anarchical environment, positing that the single most significant actor in international relations is the nation-state, and that all other units of analysis fall from or originate from there. The state is embodied in a number of anthropomorphic designations such as interests, needs and fears. In other words, as Viotti and Kauppi have argued, states are rational actors that seek to maximise
their own self-interests in their conduct of foreign policy. The realist approach focuses attention on the significance of power in relations between states.

Scholars have distinguished between two kinds of realism – aggressive and defensive. Both accept security as the strongest motivation of states in an anarchical system, but have opposite views about how to achieve it. Aggressive realism holds that security-seeking states are often compelled to adopt strategies of expansion and offensive warmaking in order to survive in the harsh environment of international anarchy. In other words, aggressive realism contends that the myths of empire are often true. In contrast, defensive realism holds that aggression that threatens other great powers diminishes a state’s security in a balance-of-power system.

Dispensing with classical realists’ emphasis on human nature, the neorealists tend to stress the impact of the structure of the international relations system on the behaviour of states. K. Waltz, a neorealist thinker, argued that humans are not driven to acquire power by some intrinsic property. Neorealists see power as a means to an end, that end being the survival of the state. Therefore, power plays an instrumental role in a state’s international relations. Furthermore, while classical realists advocate studying international and domestic politics as a whole, neorealists stress that a state’s behaviour in the international system is not substantially influenced by domestic imperatives. Waltz has pointed out that states, not individual statesmen, should be observed as the primary actors in international politics. Indeed, one can argue that neorealists, unlike classical realists, are not overly concerned with the internal characteristics of states. Yet, for Waltz, the international system consists of a number of great powers, each seeking to survive in an anarchic international order with no higher authority above the state to protect states from one another. In such circumstances, conflict and war are unavoidable. In anarchy, states seek security through self-help, by increasing their own military and economic capabilities, and/or through alliance with stronger powers. Thus, national security is the primary concern of states in their international relations, but only limited security can be achieved, because of the operation of the ‘security dilemma’, whereby any state’s attempts to improve its security by acquiring means of power provokes other states to follow suit, thereby rendering the initiating state as insecure as before.

Neorealists dismiss the role of international institutions in regulating states’ behaviour and promoting peace, on the grounds that they are creatures of self-interested great powers, and reflect, rather than shape, the prevailing distribution of power. In terms of international stability, institutions matter only at the margins. What really
matters is the balance of power. All self-help systems tend to be governed by a balance-of-power dynamic maintained by the great powers. States tend to balance their rivals domestically, by acquiring greater military and economic power, or by building alliances with stronger powers. Yet, neorealism is also sympathetic to the realist argument that in an anarchical situation 'states maintain an hierarchy of interest' in which national security is given supreme importance. Therefore, one can argue that both realism and neorealism look at states as rational actors, which seek to maximise their own self-interest through the conduct of foreign policy.

Following the Second World War (1939-1945), policy and academic circles in the United States were demonstrably receptive to major power themes. Influenced by the work of American realists such as George Kennan (as Head of State Department Policy Planning Staff), Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger (as National Security Adviser, then Secretary of State), Alexander Haig (Secretary of State 1981-1982), Brent Scowcroft (National Security Advisor), David Shambaugh (George Washington University) and Kenneth Lieberthal (University of Michigan), assessments of threats and opportunities affecting national interests were overwhelmingly concerned with controlling an incessant and anarchical struggle among self-interested states, through the maintenance of conventional military and nuclear superiority. This ran contrary to the traditional isolationist stance espoused by, for example, John Quincy Adams, US president during 1825-1829, who, as Secretary of State, said in 1821 that the United States 'has abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when the conflict has been for principles to which she clings...[It] goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. [It] is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. [It] is the champion and vindicator only of [its] own.'

Since the Second World War and especially after the Cold War, the United States has pursued an aggressive brand of realism in its foreign policy, defining interests in terms of power, as Morgenthau pointed out. Realism became an ideology of US international relations. In this connection, John C. Whitehead, former Deputy Secretary of State, in an address to the Hans Morgenthau Award Dinner of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy on 16 March 1988 affirmed that the United States 'has counselled realism as the foundation of foreign policy and prudence as the foremost political virtue.'

The realists have advocated that US foreign policy must be grounded only in national interests, not ideals or abstract principles, such as advancement of human rights and expansion of democracy across the globe. Based on realism's assumptions, the
United States must maximise its power if it is to protect and promote its national interests, as summed up in Morgenthau’s dictum that international politics is all about interests defined as power. Although, since the Carter administration (1977-1981), human rights and democratic reform have been rhetorically emphasised as US foreign policy priorities, the history of the US international relations indicates that they have taken at best second place to its national interests. In this connection, there are many examples. S. Crock has pointed out that President George Bush sent troops to Iraq in 1991 to protect oil, but not to oust an authoritarian regime, i.e. his motivation was strategic concerns, not democratic values. He has observed, as George W. Bush enlisted many of his father’s foreign policy advisers, including Richard (Dick) Cheney, Colin Powell, and Condoleezza Rice, that ‘it’s a good bet a Bush II Administration would take a similar pragmatic approach.’ In the words of National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, ‘the president of the United States was not elected to sign treaties that are not in American interests.’ Richard Haass, policy planning director in the State Department, has argued that ‘the principal aim of American foreign policy is to integrate other countries and organisations into arrangements that will sustain a world consistent with U.S. interests and values. And Robert Kagan, co-founder with William Kristol of the Project for the New American Century, has pointed out that the United States is ‘less inclined to act through international institutions such as the United Nations (UN), less inclined to work cooperatively with other nations to pursue common goals, more skeptical about international law, and more willing to operate outside its strictures when they deem it necessary, or even merely useful.’

Accordingly, one can argue that US foreign policy since the 1940s has been defined by realist principles, as summarised by Morgenthau. The first pillar is that political realism believes that ‘politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature.’ In other words, this principle ‘assumes global politics to be a contest for power among sovereign nation-states in an anarchic environment.’

The second principle is that ‘the main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interests defined in terms of power.’ This concept provides the link between reason trying to understand international politics and the facts that are to be understood. Indeed, power can be regarded as realism’s lifeblood. To realists, gaining and maintaining a ‘balance of power’ is the primary objective of actors in international relations. According to Morgenthau’s conception of balance of power, states will not allow adversaries (or even
allies) to secure more power than them. Power is an issue that, because of its often hidden and insidious nature, pervades all decisions in international politics. Indeed, in the realist view all states’ foreign policies are based on use of power in pursuit of interest, and the primary interest is usually power. Kissinger affirmed that the principles of the ‘balance of power’ and national self-interest still rule the contemporary world, and that the United States must act in conjunction with allies, alliances and coalitions.

The third pillar of realism is that it ‘assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all.’ Here one might say that national interests are the most significant feature of international politics, and play a key role in states’ foreign relations. Furthermore, Morgenthau offered ‘Four Fundamental Rules’ for US diplomacy:

- it must be divested of the crusading spirit;
- the objectives of foreign policy must be defined in terms of national interest and must be supported by adequate power;
- it must look at the political scene from the point of view of other nations; and
- nations must be willing to compromise on all issues that are not vital to them.

The realist grand strategy created a political rationale for establishing major security commitments around the world, organised in the framework of containment, nuclear deterrence, and maintenance of the global balance of power. After 1945 the United States tried to fill the vacuum left by the declining British Empire and a collapsing European in order to counter the Soviet Union. The touchstone of this policy was containment, seeking to deny the Soviet Union capability to expand its zone of influence. This notion was based on dividing the world into friends and enemies, and the USSR was painted as the principal US enemy. The division was expressed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in the mid-1950s as, ‘if you are not with us, you are against us.’ Fifty years later, following the events of 11 September 2001, George W. Bush repeated the formulation. In February-March 1946 there emerged a new political consensus in the United States, that the Soviet Union was not only an enemy, but set on communist world domination. Accordingly, the USSR was a threat and should be treated as such. Containment was based on two pillars. First, successive US administrations viewed the Soviet Union and communism as a major global threat, not only to US national security interests but also to those of other nations. Second, they claimed that the Soviet Union was an expansionist power, planning to develop its
political, economic and ideological presence globally. Global order was maintained through managing the balance between the two superpowers.

In the post-Cold War era the United States has continued to exercise power in the anarchic world where laws and rules are unreliable, and where true security and the defence and promotion of liberal order still depend on the control and use of military force. Despite expected changes in the militarisation of US foreign policy, even in 'the age of ending conflict between great powers' and 'Cold Peace', the US overseas military presence and activities have not ended. In a sense, realism would insist that politico-economic and military engagements are the most effective weapons that Washington can deploy in the struggle for prosperity and security. Thus, one can argue that the nature of post-Cold War US foreign policy has remained as during the Cold War; the character and scale of its power and influence have not changed, and US economic political and military institutions differ little from those of the Cold War era. Even after the collapse of its rival, the Soviet Union, the United States did not cut the Cold War force to the extent that was claimed. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) eastward expansion is a vivid example of US military enlargement. Washington spends over 3 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence, and, as Paul Kennedy has suggested, could maintain that level of defence spending and its world dominance far into the future.

That suggestion may reflect the thought that the United States always needs an 'enemy'. US military power, and especially its capability to project power globally, remains unprecedented, as does its deployment of a sizeable military arsenal around the world. This was described clearly in a paper provided by the White House, in February 1995: 'military force remains an indispensable element of our nation's power.' The paper emphasised that even with the Cold War over, 'our nation must maintain military forces sufficient to deter threats and, when necessary, to fight and win against our adversaries.' In fact, the lack of any formidable adversary has made the US administration keener to use force overseas. With the check of Soviet power removed, Washington has become free to intervene practically wherever and whenever it chooses — a fact reflected in the proliferation of overseas military interventions that began during the George Bush administration (1989-1993) with involvement in Somalia in 1992, continuing during the Clinton years (1993-2001) with interventions in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and under George W. Bush (2001-present) in Afghanistan and Iraq.
during the Cold War and not seriously reflected upon since then.\textsuperscript{50} While officials in Washington have spoken of pulling back from the world, the reality is that US interventions in foreign countries are more frequent than throughout most of the Cold War era.\textsuperscript{51}

The considerable continued military expenditure has been justified by labeling Russia and/or China as a new adversary to US national interests. Some US foreign policy specialists believe that Russia is still a great concern to US policy. A good example of such an assumption comes from American scholar from the Heritage Foundation in Washington, A. Cohen, who has argued that although containment is inappropriate in the post-Cold War era ‘it is not prudent to deny or forget a thousand years of Russia’s history – a history replete with wars of imperial aggrandizement...and absolutist, authoritarian, and totalitarian rule.’\textsuperscript{52} Cohen observed Russia as affecting ‘vital strategic and security interests of the United States’ because of its nuclear capability, geopolitical location, vast deposits of oil and gas and long border with China.\textsuperscript{53} Accordingly, Cohen advocated that ‘US policy toward Russia should be based on engaged realism, aimed at defending Western interests [especially those of the USA]’, and that ‘the West, and the United States in particular, must prevent Russia from becoming a renewed international threat.’\textsuperscript{54} He has pointed out that this should be a US priority.

Some American realists have also come to see China as a new competitor, which should be contained.\textsuperscript{55} Steve Forbes, a candidate for the US presidency in 1999, said, ‘strengthen our alliances with key countries in the region to counterbalance the Chinese threat’ to US policy.\textsuperscript{56} Others consider China’s rise to the status of a great economic and military power unstoppable, and argue that the USA must seek accommodation with it to keep the peace in Asia and beyond.\textsuperscript{57}

Furthermore, changes in international politics and the balance of power, resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union, have had a profound impact on US global politics.\textsuperscript{58} This event vastly increased US strength relative to the rest of the world, particularly the regions formerly constituting the USSR. Washington’s perceptions of its relationships with some regions has been shaped by a combination of realist assumptions influenced by the changing dynamics of the global and regional power structure. The elements of a realistic US foreign policy, as outlined by M.M. May in March 2000, were:

- NATO expansion, without any prior constraint on future expansion, and with explicit consideration of eventual inclusion of the Baltic States;
• an East Asia strategy that challenges Chinese power;
• enforcement of a ‘dual containment’ strategy in the Middle East which posits hostility toward Iran and Iraq while supporting a number of weak client states susceptible to revolutionary change;
• active competition with Russia in Central Asia and the Caucasus;
• promoting democracy and market liberalisation, particularly in the former Soviet Union, but also in Asia, Africa and Latin America;
• continued improvement in US military forces, with the highest priority given to offensive projection forces;
• a rhetorically militant yet factually ambivalent leadership of nuclear and related non-proliferation efforts;
• reliance on alliances and multilateral commitments; and
• waging war against sovereign states such as the Yugoslav Federation and Afghanistan, without an explicit mandate from the UN.59

The post-Cold War US policy in Central Asia reflects, to a great extent, the framework of realist theory. The United States has tried to influence the region in accordance with the concept of power politics to develop its national strategic interests and security in the area. However, Washington’s foreign policy in Central Asia, as in other former Soviet regions, e.g. the Caucasus, is still affected by its relations with Russia – the as yet rather weak successor to the USSR. In the words of former National Security Advisor Brzezinski:

For America, this new and perplexing geopolitical situation [posed] a crucial challenge. Understandably, the immediate task [had] to be to reduce the probability of political anarchy or reversion to a hostile dictatorship in a crumbling state [that possessed] a powerful nuclear arsenal. But the long-range task remains: how to encourage Russia’s democratic transformation and economic recovery while avoiding the reemergence of a Eurasian empire that could obstruct the American geostrategic goal of shaping a larger Euro-Atlantic system to which Russia can be then stably and safely related.60

Although at the present time realism in international relations is experiencing a renaissance, and some neorealists are sophisticated and well-geared enough to deal with the post-Cold War world, the US administration clings to a primitive variety of realism – namely, geopolitics, which is all about ‘balance of power’, imperialism, and containing competitors. Kissinger has argued that geopolitics meant recognition that nations possessed permanent national interests in a world ‘balance of power’.61 Conceptually, the term ‘Geopolitics’ originated in 1899 in the work of a Swedish
Political Scientist, Rudolf Kjellen and was later borrowed by Karl Haushofer, a German geographer. The term signified a general concern with geography and politics and the relations between them. It emphasises the important role of geography in influencing the foreign policy of a state, stressing the significance of locational factors in influencing relations among states, and of territory and territoriality as the core of the history of relations among nations. Most conflicts, treaties or strategies materialise in a territorial reality, while boundaries and the concept of sovereignty are the most obvious aspects of territoriality. Thus, geopolitics studies the relationship between territorial realities and political behaviour. Haushofer argued that the study of geopolitics demonstrates the ‘dependence of all political events on the enduring conditions of the physical environment.’ L. Carlson and A.K. Philbrick have argued that the concept of geopolitics encapsulates four fields: geography, history, political science and international relations. While scholars have considered geopolitics under different conceptual headings, they agree on its importance in the power struggle among international actors. The exact application of geopolitics varies from practitioner to practitioner, but as a discipline,

geopolitics studies the relation between physical space and international politics, develops models for the spatial division of the world into cooperating and competing parts for historical, economic and political reasons, and analyses how the participants interpret the political, economic and military consequences of this division...The geopolitics of a state or other territorially defined society means its pursuit of geographically dimensioned aims that are connected with its economic and political position, security and culture.

Geopolitics is a corollary of realist theory, which emphasises that the arena of international relations is a form of ‘power politics’. G. Tuathail and J. Agnew presented a radical picture of geopolitics, as ‘about actions taken against other powers, about invasions, battles and development of military forces.’ The term geopolitics has been frequently associated with imperialism. In particular, Nazi Germany exploited geopolitical ideas to justify its expansion in Europe as developing the living space (Lebensraum) of the German people. In general, the imperialist geopolitics of the first half of the twentieth century tended to stress the conditioning influence of physical geography on foreign policy.

In the early 1900s, one of the foremost geopoliticians of Britain, Sir Halford Mackinder (1861-1947), developed a coherent model of political geography. Mackinder viewed the north and central plains of Eurasia as the likely pivot of geopolitical power. Russia was the core country with five peripheral regions, Eurasia,
East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, forming a crescent of influence around its margin, and an outer crescent comprising America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Australia (see Map 1.1). Later Mackinder renamed the Russian core the ‘Heartland’, while the marginal crescent became the inner crescent, and an outer crescent was redefined to include Great Britain, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Japan (see Map 1.2). For Mackinder the ‘pivot area’ of world politics would become the vast plain that stretched from the borders of Eastern Europe across the steppes and forests of Siberia, and on to the East Coast of Asia. On the basis of this insight, Mackinder formulated his hypothesis, based on a shift of the balance of power from sea-based to land-based powers, in the following manner: 'Who rules East Europe commands the heartland; who rules the heartland commands the World Island; and who rules the World Island commands the world.' In 1942, Nicholas Spykman (1893-1943) proposed a geopolitical model contrary to Mackinder’s ‘Heartland’ theory. He argued that ‘Eurasia’s Rimland’, the coastal areas or buffer zone, not the ‘Heartland’, was the key to controlling the ‘World Island.’ Spykman, as a realist, viewed international politics as a struggle for power, in which Anglo-American national security necessitated control of the ‘Rimland’ as a means to block expansion of the ‘World Island.’

Map 1.1: Mackinder’s Original Model of the World

Source: F:\map makender.htm [accessed 12/07/2004].
The post-Second World War geopolitical outlook, however, indicated a changed approach by entwining geography closely with ideology from the very beginning of US-USSR rivalry in 1946. The Heartland-Rimland thesis became the conceptual basis for post-1946 US policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, with the United States seeking to establish hegemony over the ‘Rimland’. According to one historian of the Cold War, J.L. Gaddis, in the late 1940s ‘there developed a line of reasoning reminiscent of Sir Halford Mackinder’s geopolitics, with its assumption that none of the world’s ‘Rimlands’ could be secure if the Eurasian ‘Heartland’ was under the domination of a single hostile power.’ The basic premise of the US strategy of ‘Containment’ was aimed at excluding the Soviet Union from the ‘Rimland’ and containing it within the ‘Heartland’, but the Soviet Union countered by establishing its hegemony in Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Northern Asia, and part of Southwest Asia. Geopolitics as a grand strategy was one of the significant intellectual bases for the US containment policy.
'Containment' was in part based on Mackinder's vision, and of course, that of Kennan (the architect of the 'Containment' strategy detailed in his famous 'X' article in _Foreign Affairs_ in 1947). Tuathail and Agnew correctly argued that, to Kennan, 'Russia was never simply a territory but a constantly expanding threat.' In this connection, C. Gray said:

By far the most influential geopolitical concept for Anglo-American statecraft has been the idea of a Eurasian 'heartland', and then the complementary idea-as-policy of containing the heartland power of the day within, not to, Eurasia. From Harry S Truman to George Bush, the overarching vision of US national security was explicitly geopolitical and directly traceable to the heartland theory of Mackinder. Mackinder's relevance to the containment of a heartland-occupying Soviet Union in the cold war was so apparent as to approach the status of a cliché.

Gaddis explained how the policy of 'Containment' evolved from countering Soviet expansion at every point in the Rimlands to concentration of defence on a few key points, especially Western Europe and Japan. The geographical terminology used to describe the world map was also a description of ideological identity and difference. By proclaiming and implementing the Truman Doctrine (1947), the United States ensured that geopolitical confrontation between itself and the Soviet Union would be global. In fact, this doctrine presented an important break with traditional US foreign policy, and led it toward active military and economic combat against communists throughout the world.

From the 1950s to the 1970s the bipolar system protected both superpowers' hegemonic spheres of influence, while they sparred with one another on the edges. Indeed, the Cold War geopolitics that arose from US-Soviet rivalry consistently focused on spatial division of the world into capitalist, communist, and contested Third World of developing countries. Most US-USSR confrontations took place in the Third World, where each hegemonic power experienced both successes and failures.

Soviet control over the 'Heartland' continued until the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991. After this event the geopolitics of the 'Heartland' reemerged as a significant issue in the literature of international politics. In this connection D. Weiser has argued that 'in the former sphere of influence of the USSR...geopolitics has indeed become a key concept with respect to the redefinition of national interests.' Meanwhile hydrocarbon resources rose as a new factor in the politics of the 'Heartland'. As part of the 'Heartland', Central Asia's geopolitical setting and considerable energy resources have attracted the interest of major regional and international actors. As a result, the
geopolitical objectives of major powers have become inexorably linked to competition for significant geopolitical advantage and the resources of this region.

Washington continues to think of Central Asia in geopolitical terms. In this connection, Mackinder’s geopolitical theory is particularly relevant, because Central Asia constituted an integral part of his Eurasian ‘Heartland’. Here one might observe that the importance of geopolitics in the post-Soviet Central Asia milieu is evident by the praxis of the classic geopolitical hypothesis that every political interaction and relationship, every exercise of power and influence, every manifestation of political potential, derives from demands and responses projected from one point to another upon the earth’s surface. In fact, the competition between regional and external states in Central Asia constitutes an attempt to influence the ‘Heartland’, its energy resources and control of possible pipelines – a move that forms the signposts and stepping-stones of clashing hegemonic interests, in particular those of the United States, Russia and China. Thus, geopolitical factors and related security concerns have played, and continue to play, an important role in formulation of US policy towards Central Asia, recalling Mackinder’s insights.

Central Asia’s strategic significance to the United States has been highlighted most articulately by Brzezinski. He has presented ‘a post-modern version of the [Mackinder] geopolitical doctrine.’ Referring to Central Asia –‘the Eurasian Balkans’ – as ‘geopolitically significant’ for reasons of socio-political instability and potential power domination and energy, he has argued that ‘it follows that America’s primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to control this geopolitical space’ for ‘preponderance over the entire Eurasian continent serv[es] as the central basis for global primacy.’ Accordingly, Brzezinski has made Eurasia as a whole, and Central Asia in particular, the focus for American foreign policy in all of his writings, consistently warning of the dangerous advantages that the ‘Heartland’ power had over the West. Brzezinski has pointed out that US global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained.

In explaining the importance of Eurasia he has asserted:

A power that dominates Eurasia would control two of the world’s three most advanced and economically productive regions. A mere glance at the map also suggests that control over Eurasia would almost automatically entail Africa’s subordination, rendering the Western Hemisphere and Oceania geopolitically peripheral to the world’s central continent. About 75 per cent of the world’s people live in Eurasia, and most of the world’s physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil. Eurasia is also the location of most of the world’s politically assertive and dynamic states. After the United
States, the next six largest economies and the next six biggest spenders on military weaponry are located in Eurasia. All but one of the world’s overt nuclear powers and all but one of the covert ones are located in Eurasia. The world’s two most populous aspirants to regional hegemony and global influence are Eurasian. All of the potential political and/or economic challengers to American primacy are Eurasian.89

For the United States, according to Brzezinski, Eurasian geostrategy involves the purposeful management of geostrategically dynamic states. He has argued that the United States ‘is now Eurasia’s arbitrator, with no major Eurasian issue soluble without America’s participation or contrary to America’s interests.’90 Therefore, this is essential to sustain the unique position of the United States as the world’s sole superpower.91 Moreover, US involvement in this pivotal region enables Washington to integrate it into its global strategy, given careful handling of the geopolitically catalytic states, in keeping with the twin interests of the United States in short-term preservation of its unique global power and long-run transformation of it into increasingly institutionalised global cooperation. It can be argued that the World Island is still the central focus of US foreign policy, and that it is Central Asia’s proximity to Russia, China, Iran, and the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean that has made it increasingly of interest to the United States. It is believed that ‘this region should matter to the United States because it matters considerably to every other major Eurasian power whose global and regional interests affect US interests.’92

This trend gained further impetus after 11 September 2001. The geostrategic importance of Central Asia became evident as the Bush administration swiftly sought approval from the governments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for use of military bases when launching ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda terrorist networks in Afghanistan. In effect, Washington’s attempts to expand its influence into Central Asia, in particular the establishment of US military bases, have challenged both Russia and China, but especially the former, which considers the region its immediate ‘Near Abroad’.93 Paul Kennedy has observed that the US military deployment in the region ‘has rekindled interest in the [Mackinder’s geopolitical] hypothesis.’94 This geopolitical transformation taking place in Central Asia certainly has had sustained bearing on the competition for its energy deposits and particularly the routing of oil and gas pipelines. Thus, since Central Asia’s independence, Washington has tried to influence the internal evolution of the region’s republics and their external relations through increasing political, economic, cultural, security and military involvement.95
Geopolitics of Central Asia: Preliminary observations

Central Asia was part of the ‘Heartland’ and its pivotal geographical position allowed it to play a central role in relations among nations of Eurasia in the Middle Ages, as the bridge between China and Europe. In the modern world, its importance grew as the great powers of the time sought power and influence along its borders. The Bolshevik revolution and subsequent 70 years of Soviet rule closed the region to influences from the outside world, but with the Soviet Union’s demise it again rose to prominence in geopolitical and strategic calculations. Indeed, in the post-Cold War era Central Asia’s geostrategic importance and natural resource potential have made it a focus of attention in Eurasian geopolitics. Any consideration of its republics’ international politics has to be based on geopolitical, religious, economic, and regional realities.

In fact, the emergence of independent states in Central Asia has both literally and figuratively changed the map of Asia and affected the world, particularly the surrounding regions, notably the Middle East, South and West Asia. The region borders Russia in the north, Iran and Afghanistan in the south, China in the east and the Caspian Sea in the west (see Map 1.3). This geographical location has made it strategically important. Furthermore, it is located at the centre of Eurasia, connecting Eurasia not only from East to West, but also from South to North. More importantly, it is surrounded by four major world civilizations: Christian, Confucian, Islamic and Hindu, and Asian powers, Russia, China and India. In addition, the region lies at the strategic juncture between four nuclear powers, Russia, China, India and Pakistan. In the meantime, another aspect of the region’s geopolitical importance should not be overlooked i.e. the rise of political and commercial competition over the energy resources, namely oil and gas, and particularly the routes for export pipelines.

Such a geopolitical position, in fact, is a significant factor that has not only made the region attractive to the outside world but also placed it at global challenge, especially after the events of 11 September 2001. In particular, if the clash of civilizations foretold by S.P. Huntington materialises as the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world, the role this region could play is undeniable due to its special location.
Furthermore, the events of 11 September 2001, the subsequent anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan and US military deployment in Central Asia, have given a new strategic importance to the region. Although Washington was attempting to extend its military influence in the region long before 11 September, it became a strategic platform for the projection of US military power in ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ elevating its strategic significance in the new post-11 September security paradigm.

**Organisation of the thesis**

This thesis consists of seven chapters:

Following this introductory Chapter One, Chapter Two deals with the internal dynamics of Central Asia. It provides a brief background of Central Asia’s history, discusses the problems and challenges that faced the republics after the Soviet Union’s collapse, and investigates the way Central Asian internal affairs that impact on their external relations. It addresses the economic character of the region, political instability and its internal and external roots, and the role of Islam in the aftermath of communist rule. It argues that the legacy of Russian and Soviet rule was such as to impact on the
nature of the social, political and economic problems of the post-independent republics, and has contributed to their readiness to open their doors to the outside world.

Chapter Three examines the relations of selected foreign countries with Central Asia, and explores the republics' priorities in their relations with the outside world. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of significant state actors developing relations with the region, without which it would be difficult to fully appreciate the reasons for the US involvement in Central Asia. The chapter argues that the interest of other players affects US policy towards the region. Chapters Two and Three highlight the background and indigenous characteristics that have influenced US policy in Central Asia.

Chapter Four provides a timeline of US policy in Central Asia since 1991. It examines the first phase of US policy (1991-mid 1990s) towards the region, addressing US primary interests in the newly independent republics, and exploring the means and mechanisms used by the USA in pursuing its interests. The chapter argues that although, in the early years of engagement, Washington's policy towards the region was mainly primed by concern about Russia itself, it provided a base for the United States to increase its presence in the region during the next two stages.

Chapter Five examines the second phase of US policy in Central Asia (mid-1990s-September 2001). In particular it explores the importance of energy resources and oil and gas pipelines for US involvement in this area (and especially in the Caspian region). To analyse Washington's energy policy the chapter relies on two perspectives - those of 'Gamers' and 'Oilers'. Furthermore, it addresses some new dimensions in American policy particularly drug trafficking, terrorism and the shift away from Kazakstan to Uzbekistan as the region's primary US strategic ally. It argues that the geopolitical importance of energy reserves and pipelines were regarded as US 'vital interests' in Central Asia. Through energy policy the United States has attempted to contain the influence of other regional and international states, especially Iran, Russia and to some degree China, to expand its hegemony over the former Soviet sphere of influence.

Chapter Six examines the third phase of US policy since the events of 11 September 2001. It explores how these events have affected the US attitude towards Central Asia. The chapter demonstrates that the 11 September events launched a new stage in US engagement with the area. Since that time an essentially different geopolitical situation has developed in US relations with the region, which are now more focused on security. In this connection, the chapter discusses the security
importance of Central Asia for the United States and addresses its military presence as a new phenomenon in the republics' affairs. The Chapter argues that the terrorist attacks on the USA and consequently the so-called 'war on terror' have changed Washington's view of this region, elevating it to a central concern of US policy planners and resulting in the establishment of military bases in the 'heartland' of the world.

Finally, the conclusion summarises the thesis, elaborates on the findings, and discusses the prospect of future US policy towards Central Asia.
Notes

7 For a discussion of the responsibilities of these groups, and their importance in formulation of policy, see F. Carlucci, R. Hunter and Z. Khalilzad, Taking Charge: A Bipartisan Report to the President-Elect on Foreign Policy and National Security, Santa Monica: RAND, 2001, pp. 7-12.
9 P.R. Viotti and M.V. Kauppi, International Relations Theory, Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999, pp. 34-41.

12 Snyder, op. cit., pp. 121-132.


14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.


19 John Quincy Adams’ speech to House of Representatives, Washington, 4 July 1821.

20 Ibid.


26 Ibid.


30 Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 4-15.


32 Morgenthau, op. cit., pp. 4-15.

33 Ibid.

35 Morgenthau, op. cit., pp. 4-15.

36 Ibid.

37 Ikenberry, op. cit., pp. 43-60.


40 George W. Bush said in November 2001, ‘You’re either with us or against us in the fight against terror.’ ‘Bush says it is time for action’, CNN, 6 November 2001.


48 Ibid.


53 Ibid.


64 M. Bassin, 'Race contra space: The conflict between German Geopolitik and National Socialism', *Political Geography Quarterly*, No. 6, 1987, pp. 115-134.


In the 1940s, N.J. Spykman warned that US leaders should form a containment policy to prevent the 'rimland' from falling under Soviet control. In 1992, research by Nijman revealed that the 20 countries in which the USA and USSR had the most serious conflict largely formed a crescent around the Soviet borders, similar to Spykman's 'Rimland'. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, pp. 23-42, and Spykman, ed., *The Geography of Peace*, pp. 40-44.


The Truman Doctrine had significant impact on US foreign policy. When in February 1947 the British government informed Truman that it could no longer bear the burden of attempting to keep order in Greece, President Truman accepted responsibility for restoring order in Greece by supporting the pro-Western Greek government. In his address to Congress in March 1947, Truman claimed it was the duty of the United States to combat totalitarian regimes worldwide and stated: 'I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.' H.S. Truman, *Public Papers*, 1947, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963, pp. 178-180. Truman then requested Congressional approval for $300 million aid to Greece and $100 million to Turkey to help them meet the communist challenge. W.M. Bagby, *America's International Relations Since World War I*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, R.E. Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, and C. Lasch, 'The Cold War revisited and re-visioned', in Williams, Goldstein, Shafritz, op. cit., pp. 403-411.
American Primary and Its Geostrategical Imperatives, and Z. Brzezinski, 'A geostrategy for Eurasia', Foreign Affairs, Vol. 76, No. 5, September/October 1997, pp. 50-64
89 Ibid, p. 31.
90 Ibid, p. 194.
91 Ibid, p. 31.
95 See Hunter, op. cit., pp. 157-159.
Chapter Two

Central Asia: Brief history and domestic challenges

It is impossible to ignore the effects of 70 years of Soviet domination, but it is also naive to continue understanding the region by its past. When thinking of Central Asia, most people think of its history. Yet, Central Asia is living, producing and creating in the present.
L. Ahmady

Introduction

The primary objective of this chapter is to explore the Central Asian internal dynamics, which have a significant impact on its external relations. The chapter gives a background of the region’s history and discusses the problems and challenges that faced its republics after independence.

However, this chapter does not attempt to provide a complete view of the region’s long history and its post-independence internal changes and challenges. The chapter focuses briefly on the history of the region in the Russian colonial and Soviet era, and examines their legacy in the region. It also briefly studies the economy, politics and role of Islam in the republics in the post-Soviet period, and examines how these factors would affect their internal and external affairs. The chapter argues that the legacy of Russian and Soviet rule in Central Asia has influenced the nature of the social, political and economic problems of the post-independence republics, and has contributed to their readiness to open their doors to the outside world, to be discussed in following chapters.

Russian and Soviet rule in Central Asia

The Central Asian region has had a long history, whose legacy is still felt and continues to influence its politico-economic life and particularly its relations with the outside world. For more than three thousand years this region has been a crossroads for major ethnic migrations. Central Asia was predominantly peopled by nomadic and sedentary tribes, composed of a variety of ethnic groups. The Tajiks are closely related to the Persians, Kazaks are of Turkic-Mongol stock, also of Turkic stock are the
Uzbeks, who also spread across the then virtually nonexistent border into northern Afghanistan; the Turkmens and Kyrgyz were also Turkic, and all could reasonably be described as ‘backward’, especially technologically, compared to their Russian conquerors. In such circumstances it was not easy for them to develop a counterpart to European nationalism. The entire region was run as two governments, with roughly the present-day Kazakhstan being the ‘steppe’ governorate, and the rest – ‘Turkestan’ – under the influence of the main oasis states, namely Merv (Turkman), Khiva (mostly Turkmen and Uzbek), Bukhara (including Samarkand, a synthesis of Uzbeks and Tajiks), and Kokand (including Tashkent, mainly Uzbek). Among them, the Emirates of Bukhara and Khiva were the major political and cultural centres, both were established in the early sixteenth century. Turkestan society was feudal, overwhelmingly illiterate, and backward in its agricultural practices. Warfare between the nomadic tribes over grazing land, and between the nomads and the settled areas was endemic. Slavery was institutional, the Turkmens in particular made a living by robbing trading caravans and raiding adjacent areas, especially northern Iran, to abduct travelers and inhabitants and sell them in the slave markets of Bukhara and elsewhere. From the religious point of view, as discussed below, apart from the Pamiris, who were mostly Ismaili Shiite, the great majority of Central Asians were Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school of Islamic law (\textit{madhhab}), one of four such schools within Sunni Islam.

Furthermore, the region was a meeting place for the great civilizations of the ancient world and Middle Ages – Persian, Indian, Chinese, and Islamic. After the diffusion of civilization westward and eastward, the most convenient overland routes linking the Mediterranean world, India, Persia, and China led through Central Asia. As long as these routes remained the principal arteries of trade and communication among the four major centres of civilized life, Central Asia was assured a leading role in world history. The area has also long been an arena of great-power rivalry at various time involving the Persian, Arab, Mongol, Ottoman and Russian empires, and also China along its eastern margins. For more than one and half centuries it was predominantly under Russian and then the Soviet rule. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was the scene of an intense Anglo-Russian competition known as the ‘Great Game’. Thus, one may argue that for most of Central Asia’s history its politics have been shaped by external forces, particularly Russia, at least as much as by internal forces.

Russia has had a long history of contact with Central Asia and the cultural, social, economic and political characteristics of the region were greatly influenced by
the colonisation process, which went through several phases. In the first stage, Ivan IV’s capture of the Muslim Khanates of Kazan in 1552, and Astrakhan in 1556, brought the Muscovite state to the Caspian Sea and the banks of the Terek River in the Caucasus, and opened the gate of Asia to the Russians. The second phase, between 1580 and 1644, was the occupation of Siberia from the Urals to the Pacific. Through this stage a series of military bases was established at strategic points, and administrative units were established. This advance brought Russia to the Amu Darya River, and hence into direct confrontation with China. In the third stage, between 1680 and 1760, Russia projected its influence into the Caucasus and Kazak steppes. This advance provided a basis for future conquests, and marked the beginning of the end of the Kazak nomads’ role as a buffer between Russia, the Emirate of Samarkand and the Khanates of Khiva and Kokand. The next stage of Russia’s expansion was into the area between the Black and Caspian Seas during 1785-1830. The final phase (1860-1887) began with the settling of Kazakstan and the occupation of Transoxania and Transcaspia. This phase was prompted by defeat in the Crimean War (1853-1856), which for the time being thwarted any prospect of expansion into the Ottoman Empire’s European provinces, weakened Russia’s economy, and engendered an eastward shift in its foreign policy, towards Central and North-East Asia. As Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov (1798-1883), Alexander II’s foreign minister, put it, when he suggested Russian expansion into Central Asia ‘there was little Russia could gain in Europe and that its future must lie in Asia.’ The final phase comprised annexing Kokand, capturing Tashkent, Bukhara and Khiva and finally Turkmenistan.

Russian rule in Central Asia was based on specific strategic, economic, political, and cultural imperatives. Strategically, Central Asia became important during the nineteenth century. Indeed, in that period the conquest of the region took place in the context of wider international struggles. Occupation of Central Asia brought Russia closer to India, a British colony, a land of enormous economic potential, and a corridor towards the world market. This southward advance alarmed the British government, so some British politicians began to speak of a Russian threat to India, while Russia in turn characterised Britain as a real threat to its interests in the area. This situation led both powers toward conflict. In this connection, Central Asia played a strategic role for each to counter the other’s perceived threat by creating a form of strategic diversion associated with cross-border subversion; this became known as the ‘Great Game’, as mentioned earlier.
Politically, the Russians in most cases ruled the region indirectly through local emirs; they did not 'disturb the existing society; and where they did establish settlements, these usually took the form of new suburbs alongside the existing cities but separate from them.'\(^{15}\) This was because Tsarist regime's presence in the area was mainly motivated by economic and to some extent strategic considerations.

Economically, although Central Asia apparently offered little attraction for Russian colonisation, for much of it was arid, and there were relatively few oases and river valleys to offer a basis for settlement, the region had some compensating features. It was a good source of raw materials for Russian industry particularly cotton. Furthermore, it was crossed by trade routes connecting Russia, Iran, India and China, and even on its semiarid lands a pastoral economy was possible.\(^{16}\) The region's economic value was greatly enhanced by the Trans-Caspian Railway. Its construction began in 1880 at Krasnovodsk, on the Caspian Sea; and following the Persian and Afghan borders, it reached Merv in 1886, Samarkand in 1888, and Tashkent in 1905. Thus, one can argue that for Russia, set on a course of capitalist development, control of this region, with its unrivalled market and suspected rich raw materials, was in some respects important. Count N.P. Ignat'ev, a leading adviser to Tsar Alexander II, proclaimed in 1857:

Asia is the only area left to our trade and developing industry, which are too weak to compete successfully elsewhere with Britain, France, Belgium, America and other countries. The exploration of Central Asia, the strengthening of our relations with it and our influence there, and the weakening of British influence, correspond so closely with Russia's vital interests that it should not be difficult to meet the expense of an expedition. One can expect that many rich merchants and manufacturers will be ready to assist such an undertaking.\(^{17}\)

Besides, by the 1850s Russia's textile industry had developed to a point where it produced its own yarn, but depended on imports of raw cotton, mostly from the United States. When the American Civil War (1861-1865) interrupted the cotton supply, Central Asian cotton became very important for Russia's textile industry, and arguably the most important economic factor in Russia's economic linkage to the region.\(^{18}\) From 1860 to 1864 Russia's imports of Central Asian cotton increased over 2.5 times in volume, from 174,059 to 459,391 \textit{puds}, and over nine times in value, from 713,000 to 6,521,000 rubles.\(^{19}\) The region also grew as a market for Russian products, notably metal wares, tobacco, cotton fabrics, spirits, and sugar (see Table 2.1).\(^{20}\) Furthermore, the Russian leaders sought to generate more tax income to support their military and
bureaucracy in the area.

Table 2.1: Russia’s Trade with Central Asia, 1840-1867 (Rubles)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>From Central Asia to Russia</th>
<th>From Russia to Central Asia</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All trade</td>
<td>Trade in raw and processed cotton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>1,655,000</td>
<td>1,302,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>1,304,000</td>
<td>926,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1,263,000</td>
<td>1,025,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>1,885,000</td>
<td>1,184,000</td>
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<td>1860</td>
<td>2,324,000</td>
<td>1,349,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>7,699,000</td>
<td>6,931,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>4,704,000</td>
<td>3,897,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>8,504,000</td>
<td>6,030,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the cultural sphere, Russia’s influence during the Tsarist period was rather limited, and the region’s traditional social, cultural, and political fabric remained almost unchanged. The native population was to be exposed to Russian cultural and linguistic patterns, and such exposure through physical contact, and education in the native language, was believed sufficient to raise the inhabitants’ awareness of the superiority of Russian culture, and hence the desire for assimilation. During the 1890s and 1900s particularly under Prime Minister Peter Stolypin (1906-1911) many Russians migrated to Central Asia. But in fact Tsarist attempts to generate cultural changes in the region were minimal; very few Central Asians were educated, and illiteracy was still over 90 percent at the start of the Soviet period in 1917.

The Russian revolution of October 1917 occurred within an ideological framework that opened the way for new local elites and political bodies to emerge. The Central Asians had received the revolution with mixed sentiments. Nationalist Muslims tried to use this opportunity to gain independence, but moderate Muslim groups preferred to have the support of the new Soviet regime. To position the Muslims within the new alignment, the Bolshevik leadership sought to ‘pacify and to Sovietise Central Asia.’ One of the policies in this regard was to enforce immigration from other parts of the Soviet Union to the area. During the Stalin government many people were deported to the region: Kulaks (mainly Russians and Ukrainians, late 1920s-early 1930s), Koreans (1937-1938), Poles and Balts (1939-1941), Volga Germans (1941-1942), Chechens, Ingush and Crimean Tartars (1944). Furthermore, under Khrushchev’s ‘Virgin Lands’ campaign, which was planned to turn much of the north Kazakhstan
steppe into farmland in the mid-1950s, more people were sent to the region (see Figure 2.1). The Soviet government tried to Sovietise people in Central Asia and elsewhere in the Soviet Union to produce the ‘new Soviet man’ who, whatever his ethnicity, accepted and shared the values of the regime.

Figure 2.1: Increase in the Number of Russians in Central Asia, 1950-1970

![Graph showing increase in number of Russians in Central Asia](image)


Politically, in the 1920s, the Soviet leader, Josef Stalin (1929-1953), ordered the division of Central Asia into five republics. His ‘divide and rule’ dictatorship imposed borders through areas populated by people of the same ethnic group. For example both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan contain considerable numbers of people of the other’s titular ethnic group leading to intractable territorial disputes between the independent republics in the post-Soviet period. Development of their national identities began within those newly created territorial entities, although this process was limited by the Soviet ideological framework and Soviet political mythology. The Soviet borders were drawn to thwart any pan-Islamic or pan-Turkic movement for self-determination, and thus served Soviet strategic goals. Each republic’s communist party was part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the republics were controlled by political and financial power of the centre. Furthermore, there was a secret police, in its various incarnations as the CHEKA, GPU, OGPU, NKVD, MVD-MGB and finally KGB (State Security Committee), which was largely staffed by Russians.
The republics’ economic structure was determined by centralised Soviet planning. In fact, the region’s economy was tied to Moscow because the USSR was a single economic space, in which all Soviet republics were to a greater or lesser extent dependent on each other. Parts and raw materials for Central Asia’s industries were imported from elsewhere in the USSR. The Soviet era also brought forced collectivisation and migration that deeply changed Central Asian ways of life. Soviet resettlement programs and political expulsions brought large numbers of non-indigenes to the region, while collective farming and agricultural quotas initially came close to destroying the local economies and land. However, Soviet rule of Central Asia also brought some considerable progress, including the development of agriculture and to some degree industry, and significant achievements in culture, science, education, and public health, as discussed below (see for example Figure 2.2), and in addition, provided some access to wider markets for Central Asian products.

Askar Akayev, Kyrgyz president, has said in this respect: ‘Those citizens of the Central Asian countries who possess good common sense and are free from nationalistic prejudices are well aware of Russia’s positive role in developing the region. The Soviet epoch was really a sort of Renaissance for Central Asia in terms of public health services, culture, education and science.’

**Figure 2.2: Growth of Industrial Activity in the Central Asian Republics, 1960-1969 (1940=100)**

Apart from religious discrimination, discussed below, in fact, one can assume that the Soviet period led the Central Asian republics to massive modernisation efforts (industrialisation, mass education, large-scale public works, and mechanised agriculture) and to some extent the political development of the region.\textsuperscript{33} Compared to other former Soviet regions, this area remained less developed (see Table 2.2), but compared to its non-Soviet neighbours its progress was considerable.\textsuperscript{34}

In the late 1980s Mikhail Gorbachev started to promote decentralisation through \textit{glasnost} (openness) and \textit{perestroika} (reconstruction) as a way of reforming the Soviet system.\textsuperscript{35} This failed, and in December 1991 the presidents of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine unilaterally dissolved the Soviet Union, without consulting the Central Asian republics, which were thrust into an independence they had not sought.\textsuperscript{36} Before Gorbachev’s March 1991 referendum on the future of the Soviet Union, all Central Asian leaders had publicly advocated its continuance, and the voters had followed their leaders, with much higher turnouts and votes for continuance than in any other Soviet republics (93.7 percent of those voting in Uzbekistan, 94 percent in Kazakhstan, 94.5 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 96 percent in Tajikistan and 98 percent in Turkmenistan).\textsuperscript{37} The process of gaining independence occurred in three steps, first, proclamation in 1989 or 1990 by each republic’s legislature of its respective vernacular as the official language, alongside Russian, retained as an administrative language and lingua franca. The second stage, during 1991, was proclamation of sovereignty, a process begun by Russia in which the Central Asians were the last to follow suit.\textsuperscript{38} The final stage was formal declaration of independence, after dissolution of the Union in December 1991.

In short, Russian and Soviet rule in Central Asia widely affected the region’s culture, economics and politics, and created a relationship of strong dependency between the local nations and the Russian/Soviet state. The region’s politico-economic and social structure was shaped in a centrist manner that presented serious problems and challenges after independence, as discussed below. Thus Kazakhstan’s president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in an interview with \textit{The Washington Times} in December 1999, observed: ‘With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the severing of economic ties from the Soviet Union, we inherited an inefficient socialist economy.’\textsuperscript{39}
| Country | Kaza | Kyrg | Tajik | Turk | Uzbe | Arm | Azer | Geor | Bela | Mold | Russ | Ukra | Esto | Latv | Lith |
|---------|------|------|-------|------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Per cap US$, 1990 | 2600 | 1570 | 1130 | 1690 | 1340 | 2380 | 1640 | 2120 | 3110 | 2390 | 3430 | 2500 | 4170 | 3590 | 3110 |
| Poverty (% of pop) 1989 | 15.5 | 32.9 | 51.2 | 35.0 | 43.6 | 14.3 | 33.6 | 14.3 | 3.3 | 11.8 | 5.0 | 6.0 | 1.9 | 2.4 | 2.3 |

Independence: Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union’s collapse changed the geopolitics of Central Asia, placing it firmly in a new geopolitical and geoeconomic context. The republics became free to ‘pursue their own individual policy lines towards religion, politics, the economy and anything else for that matter.’\(^{40}\) Of course, they did not have complete liberty, because after more than a decade still it is hard to claim that they are not dependent on Russia, especially economically and militarily (for example, see Figure 3.2).\(^{41}\) Geopolitically, as noted in Chapter One, Central Asia is important due to its strategic position. Economically, some of the newly independent republics sit on vast natural resources, notably oil and gas, as well as gold and uranium are also present (for oil and gas reserves of the region see Table 5.1). These two important characteristics have impelled regional and international powers to seek roles in the newly independent republics, and exploit their economic and political problems to gain influence. Consequently, these republics have become new fields in post-Cold War international politics and economics.\(^{42}\)

Since 1991 the newly independent republics have been seeking to develop regional cooperation. Their leaders viewed creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on 21 December 1991 as a step toward cooperation.\(^{43}\) However, in practice the Central Asian republics have benefited little from CIS, and for them it has been ‘an empty shell.’\(^{44}\) Efforts for regional cooperation have not been limited to the creation of CIS; they have tried to coordinate economic activities so as to minimise inflation, curb the alarming fall in industrial production, and promote regional security. A. Koshanov and B. Khusainov have analysed the economic aspects of regional cooperation in Central Asia and the stumbling blocks on the road to regional integration. In their analysis they proceed from an assumption that a shared strategy of economic cooperation and closeness of economic models were two indispensable conditions of successful unification. Their conclusion is of strategic importance: deepening of integrative processes is an objective necessity.\(^{45}\)

Among the region’s leaders Nazarbayev has been one of the strongest advocates of regional cooperation.\(^{46}\) In January 1994 Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to establish an economic union, and Kyrgyzstan later joined it.\(^{47}\) In the twelve years since the breakup of the USSR, many organisations and communities to promote cooperation have been set up but it is hard to say whether they are really effective.\(^{48}\)
The creation of any regional organisation might serve the republics’ interests, but, as M.B. Olcott has noted, any notion that offers to bring these states together has to be balanced with some discussion of potential areas of conflict between them. Furthermore, some leaders have shown little interest in regional cooperation. Turkmenistan proclaimed a neutral policy, and has displayed no enthusiasm for regional collaboration.

Common historical and cultural experiences and economic logic and the Marxist-Leninist training of most regional economists all point to the advantages of regional cooperation. Yet, although Erlan Idrissov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakstan, believed that ‘high-level political will exists for integration’, the fact is that after more than 12 years of independence still there are no real alliances among the Central Asian states. Not one is really strongly allied with another, and, as Idrissov himself proclaimed, the pace of progress has been ‘slower than was hoped in 1992.’ Of course, in recent years under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), established in June 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, a fundamental step towards regional security collaboration has been taken.

This lack of a strong movement towards regional cooperation is also associated with the different nature of politics in each country. Kyrgyzstan, for example, has been characterised as a multi-party, liberal, free-market, open and democratic country, and is regarded as the most progressive of the republics in carrying out market reforms. President Akayev has tried to present his country to the West as an enlightened state that welcomes cooperation with foreign states. In contrast, the regime in Uzbekistan is the most aggressive toward religion, opposition groups and political parties in the region. And Turkmenistan’s president, who has taken the title of Turkmenbash (father of all Turkmen) in emulation of Kemal Ataturk (Turkey), is a dictator whose ‘corrupt, venal, and misguided policies are driving his country to isolation and international ridicule and its population to ruinous poverty.’

Thus, one can assume that one reason why the Central Asian countries have concentrated more on the outside world is lack of intra-regional integration. They have been in competition in gaining assistance from regional and international powers. In fact, political friction among them, and their preference for dealing with outsiders, perceived as more capable and less dangerous, are responsible for the failure to put rhetoric into practice.
1. The region's economy

The Central Asian economy had been shaped in the framework of the Soviet centralised economy. As a result, the newly independent countries faced challenges and problems.

a. Historical background

Theoretically, in all types of colonial relations, the needs and requirements of the colonial centres rather than those of the colonised periphery, determine the pattern of colonial economic development.\(^5\) The Soviet Union had many of the characteristics of colonial empires, notably the domination of centre over periphery, which in its case reached extremely high levels.\(^6\) Central Asia's economic system was formed by seven decades of centralised Soviet rule, was centrally planned and followed development strategies determined in Moscow, so that the republics were unable to pursue their own economic policies. In a speech in 1994, Nazarbayev said that 93 percent of Kazakstan's economy was managed by Soviet ministries in Moscow.\(^6\) Indeed, without heavy subsidisation from the central budget, ranging between 10 and 20 percent of GDP, these republics did not have viable economies capable of sustaining the standard of living to which people had become accustomed. The main peculiarity of such subsidisation was the extremely low level of prices on fuels and electricity. In the last Soviet years the domestic wholesale price for one ton of crude oil was just 26 rubles ($15.2) and for one thousand cubic metres of natural gas only 12.20 rubles ($7.1).\(^6\) Economic objectives were set by the central government of the Soviet Union. In effect, the economies of the Central Asian states were cut off from opportunities for independent development, dependent on the Soviet economy, and unable to engage in free trade with their neighbors or others beyond the Soviet borders. The pattern of economic development in the region was determined by the needs and requirements of the central government rather than those of the locals. The republics performed two essential functions for the central economy: 1) providing agricultural, particularly cotton, and other raw materials; and 2) providing markets for products from other parts of the Soviet Union.\(^6\) However, compared with Tsarist times, during the Soviet period the region's economy was far more diversified and advanced (Figure 2.3).
The main characteristics of this economy were as follows:

- a bureaucratic and over-centralised financial system;
- artificially and unreasonably high specialisation and concentration or monopoly of production;
- indirect inter-republican economic relations based on strong vertical ties to the centre, rather than horizontal ties among republics; and
- a distorted system of prices, taxes, subsidies, grants, and so forth. This system was used as an instrument of market formation by the central government through interference in trade, financial flow, income distribution and redistribution between the centre and republics, and among the latter.64

**b. Poverty and living standards**

The consequence of uneven economic development was that the Central Asian republics had the lowest standards of living of all Soviet republics except Moldova, and most of their populations were living below the poverty line (see Table 2.2). There has been a steady decline in per capita gross national product (GNP) of these republics since the early 1970s. In 1990, their GNP per capita was only 50 percent to 75 percent of the Soviet average. In 1988, the average per capita income of more than half of all Uzbeks and Tajiks was below the official Soviet subsistence level, estimated at 78 rubles per month, while in Russia only 6.3 percent of the population had an income below this
level. Per capita meat consumption in rural areas of Uzbekistan was 8 kilograms per year, while the official Soviet average was 62 kilograms.

The Central Asian republics emerged from the Soviet Union with similar economic structures and problems, except for Kazakhstan, which was in a better position. As Table 2.2 above shows, per capita output in 1990 was estimated at between $1,130 and $1,690 for the four southern republics, versus $2,600 for Kazakhstan. Meanwhile, independence itself brought economic catastrophe. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, from 1990 to 1995, GDP fell by 47 percent; agricultural production fell by 35 percent; industrial output fell 61 percent by volume, and capital investment by 56 percent (see Table 2.3).
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<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>-11.0</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
<td>-9.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgystan</td>
<td>-7.9</td>
<td>-13.9</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>-19.8</td>
<td>-5.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>-28.9</td>
<td>-11.1</td>
<td>-21.4</td>
<td>-12.5</td>
<td>-4.4</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>-4.7</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-17.3</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
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<td>20.5</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-11.1</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The newly independent states not only suffered from poverty but also faced social crises caused by economic problems, such as the growing rate of unemployment (see Table 2.4) and public health problems. As a result they were forced to develop anti-crisis reforms. They also experienced very high inflation rates. In Kazakhstan, for instance, inflation was 1,176 percent in 1992, 1,662 percent in 1993, and 1826 percent in 1994, and 649, 530 and 720 percent respectively in Uzbekistan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>n.a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIS in 2002.
*It is believed that there are large numbers of unregistered unemployed, especially in rural areas.

c. Economic reform

After independence and the dissolution of the Soviet centralised and subsidised economic system, the key problem for the Central Asian nations was how to survive. In losing Moscow as the centre of gravity, they indeed 'lost crucial subsidies for budgets, enterprises and households, inputs for regional industries, markets for their products, transportation routes, and communications with the outside world – much of which was filtered through the Soviet capital.' According to the World Bank’s estimate, between 1990 and 1995 the region’s countries saw their economies decline by 20-60 percent of GDP. Since late 1991 they have pursued a variety of development strategies to reconstruct their economies. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan began reform early and relatively rapidly. Kyrgyzstan, for example, embraced advice from Western institutions to institute rapid change. Within limits, its president fostered the emergence of a liberal economic regime. This was strongly supported by international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and Kyrgyzstan became the first former Soviet republic to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in July 1998. Kazakhstan has also taken some significant steps toward economic reconstruction. Because of these, its greater resources base compared to other republics and some minor
political reforms, Almaty has been leading in terms of attracting foreign direct investment. Turkmenistan is the polar opposite; the process of reform has been very slow. The president has revived the personality cult and aims to limit economic changes. Uzbekistan’s movement toward restructuring its economy is in some respects considerable. In 1995, Karimov expressed willingness for economic reform based on reducing government support for state-owned industries and restricting the distributive role of the state. But whether Karimov’s regime, with its undemocratic characteristics, has done enough to transfer Uzbekistan’s economy to a market economy is questionable, and it seems that the country still has a long way to go. Tajikistan is categorised as the worst case in economic reform; civil war (1992-1997) and its aftermath have hindered efforts for reconstruction. In recent years however, Tajikistan has made significant efforts to rebuild its economy.

Economically, the region’s post-Soviet experience can be divided into two periods: a precipitous decline until the mid-1990s and modest recovery since 1995. During the first period the region’s countries experienced a wide economic decline during 1991-1995, as Table 2.3 shows, GDP fell by 58 percent in Tajikistan, 49 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 39 percent in Kazakstan and Turkmenistan and 19 percent in Uzbekistan. Such decline affected every aspect of their economic system. For example, agricultural production dropped 45 percent in Kazakstan, 40 percent in Tajikistan, 38 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 32 percent in Turkmenistan and 12 percent in Uzbekistan. The decline in industrial production was even more precipitous, by 68 percent in Kyrgyzstan, 57 percent in Tajikistan, 52 percent in Kazakstan, 38 percent in Turkmenistan, and about 7 percent in Uzbekistan in some years.

In the second phase (from 1996), the dynamics of the region’s economy took a turn for the better. As Table 2.3 shows, GDP has risen 15 to 30 percent above the level of 1995. However, one can assume that economic reform in Central Asia is still in its initial stage, and much remains to be done. The republics still have a long way to go to develop a non-state economy. According to Freedom House’s Economic Freedom assessment, for the period of 1998-2002, Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan are ranked as ‘mostly unfree’ and Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as ‘repressed’ (see Table 2.5). The republics need outside help, but the nature of the region’s societies and particularly their regimes themselves to some degree impede the reform process.
Table 2.5: The Central Asian Republics' Economic Freedom Score* and Rank (in the world), 1998-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakstan</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>104**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* 1-5, 1 most conducive to economic freedom and 5 least conducive.
** For 2003.

d. Economic challenges

Although the region is rich in natural resources, the republics have so far been unable to overcome their socio-economic backwardness and the problems they inherited from the centralised Soviet economic system. This system left Central Asia with primarily raw and agricultural material producing economies, with a monoculture of cotton, and mineral production; and maintained an orientation towards heavy industry, collective and state management in agriculture, expensive and wasteful irrigation, inefficient administration, and underdeveloped trade and services sectors.

Although Table 2.3 above shows positive rates of GDP growth, the countries still face some major economic challenges. After more than a decade of independence, there has not been any considerable economic development. For example, because the Central Asian countries were economically integrated into the Soviet Union and were part of common administrative region for planning purposes, investment in transport and communication infrastructure was insufficient to facilitate intra- or inter-republic integration and trade after independence. The location of railways and pipelines, in particular, was designed for taking raw materials to particular processing plants specified by Moscow’s planners, rather than to local plants. Although railway transportation in the republics was relatively well developed, road transportation was less advanced. Intra-urban public transport was extensive, but inter-city transport, especially by road, was not a high priority of Soviet planners. As a result, no highway crosses the entire east-west length of the Soviet Union, and hard-surfaced road networks in Central Asia were sparse. The adverse economic consequences from this distorted pattern of infrastructure have been strongly felt since independence, complicating the task of economic reinvigoration. Furthermore, the region’s republics were left short of legal and financial infrastructure compared to the non-communist world.
These republics also suffer from limited sources of water. This is a common problem, which could affect the region’s economy and even stability.\textsuperscript{91} Competition for water is increasing at an alarming rate, adding tension to an already uneasy region, since agriculture is the foundation of the Central Asian economy. Water use has increased rapidly since 1991 and is now at an unsustainable level, manifested by reduced flows in the Amu- and Syr-Darya Rivers and the shrinking of the Aral Sea.\textsuperscript{92} The problems of increasing demand and declining supply have been compounded by the failure of the region’s states to work together appropriately.\textsuperscript{93} Instead they have been trying to win more control over their resources and to use more water for electricity generation and farming. Water shortage has led the republics toward conflict, especially between Uzbekistan, which depends for irrigation on water from the Syr Darya and Amu Darya and its tributaries, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where these rivers rise.\textsuperscript{94}

All these economic obstacles have raised politico-social crises in the republics, and led each to place a high priority on resolving the economic problems. Furthermore, the economic situation in Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, is dependent on world prices for oil, gas and other raw materials, and, more significantly, the influx of foreign direct and indirect investment. Above all, the Central Asian states have an acute need to develop a new strategy of economic reform, and in that context have sought to expand relations with outside powers in order to receive financial support for development.

2. Central Asia’s political instability

The roots of instability in Central Asia can be considered from two points of view, one internal, and the other external. The main threat to regional stability has emerged from internal problems; however, the external factors should not be overlooked.\textsuperscript{95} Internally, perhaps one of the most significant factors contributing to instability is the very rapid and unexpected independence. Niyazov noted in late 1991: ‘Of late, the consciousness of the people has undergone dramatic change. Only yesterday most of the people could not even imagine living outside the empire, and today they cherish ‘independent Turkmenistan.”\textsuperscript{96} He then observed, ‘[h]owever the fears caused by the empire, the inferiority complex deeply rooted in the minds of the people, are still there.’\textsuperscript{97} Observers have argued that independence came far earlier than Central Asians could have expected, and probably faster than most would have wanted.\textsuperscript{98} This unforeseen independence, indeed, forced the republics – without political, economic or psychological preparation – to face a brand new world, and
confront a host of problems and challenges related to the process of nation-state building, the most immediate issue. The republics have attempted to reconstruct their nation-states; however, they have faced many politico-economic and religious challenges that have not allowed them yet to complete the process. Instead they have been led towards actual and potential insecurity and instability, for instance, in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, there are some disputes over their borders, such as between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and political and religious opposition groups are active, particularly underground in Uzbekistan.

In addition, the Central Asian republics lack democracy. All, except, to some degree, Kyrgyzstan, are categorised as authoritarian. In Uzbekistan, for instance, president Islam Karimov has admitted that he is authoritarian, declaring that 'strong executive power is necessary to prevent bloodshed and confrontation, and to preserve ethnic and civil concord, peace, and stability in our region...My opponents would see Karimov as a dictator. I admit that my activities are somewhat authoritarian. But I have acted in this manner for the sake of economic progress and prosperity of our people.' The ruling elites have blithely ignored the interests of the majority of people. Their hardship and suffering, associated with the absence of democratic redress, have brought about mounting discontent. Above all, the leaders, particularly in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, have used the dangers of drug trafficking, terrorism and especially political Islam to justify curtailment of basic liberties, and now openly reject democratic conceptions of political order. In particular there was a belief that because of ethnic tension and animosity between neighboring countries, the conflict in Tajikistan could spread. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were most likely to see outbreaks of violence, and many saw authoritarian government as the only way to prevent chaos. Karimov in 1992, for example, characterised the Tajik civil war as 'a time bomb', which could 'cause another conflict like Karabakh' in Central Asia, 'but a hundred times worse.' Indeed, as E. Allworth has pointed out, the practical men failed in many instances because they lost track of the people's ideals and just tried to keep power.

In fact, such brutal stances also have not given the region stability. Here one can assume that democratically-elected governments are more responsive to their electorates, and generally more stable than other forms of government. Lack of democracy, and aggression towards opposition groups have led these groups to fight the regimes, even if underground, causing security problems, such as the Tashkent bombing in February 1999. The regimes have increased pressure on opposition groups, which, in turn, have been tried to turn themselves from powerless and divided exiled political
groups into a united force. According to C. Cavanaugh, who tracks human rights conditions in Central Asia, the governmental crackdowns have become a greater threat to the stability and security of these countries. Under authoritarian governments, political opposition is still suppressed, independent parties are not allowed to act, and debate over the governments’ policies is forbidden or restricted. Surprisingly, as Tables 5.4 and 6.1 indicate, the Central Asian regimes have been steadily moving away from democratic reform since the early 1990s, i.e. throughout their existence; this is discussed more fully in Chapter Five. The events of 11 September 2001, and the so-called ‘war on terror’, have accelerated this trend by bringing the issue of security to the forefront, while democratic reforms and human rights have taken a back seat, as discussed in Chapter Six.

Some observers predicted that the dictatorial features of these republics would change. Fuller, for instance, believed soon after independence that Central Asian politics would be marked by increasing demands for popular participation, and by the opening of the political system to more nationalist and democratic parties. I. Torbakov has recently echoed this view, arguing that recent developments in Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan are examples of the type of regional conflict in which opposition movements can mount a serious challenge to authority. He has argued that since the local population is more or less receptive to liberal-democratic slogans, particularly in the Kyrgyz republic, vigorous opposition political activity that enjoys some popular backing may be able to force the governments to share power. Despite such observations, the existing situation in the region indicates that democratisation has a long way to go.

In addition to the lack of democratic institutions, corruption has become endemic in all aspects of life in Central Asia since independence. German-based Transparency International (TI), an international non-governmental organisation, has ranked Central Asian states as near the bottom of its annual corruption survey. In 2001 TI’s annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) report ranked Kazakstan and Uzbekistan joint 71st among 91 countries. In 2002, it ranked Kazakstan 88th and Uzbekistan 68th among 102 countries, and in 2003 ranked both equal 100th, Kyrgyzstan 118th and Tajikistan 124th among 133 countries (see also Table 2.6). Muhammad Nazarov, Turkmenistan’s former security chief, once described as the second-most powerful man in the country, for example, was charged in 2002, along with a former defence minister and 20 other security officials, with various crimes, including murder,
torture, drug smuggling, and large-scale corruption.\textsuperscript{14} Karimov has characterised corruption as having a negative impact of the transition period, stating:

Of course, it is possible to cite the universally accepted opinion that the complicated period of transition from totalitarianism to democracy and market economy implies in essence the break-up of fundamental political, economic and cultural structures which has a negative effect on moral and ethical norms and is inevitably accompanied by a growth in criminality and corruption.\textsuperscript{15}

Table 2.6: CPI score of Central Asian Corruption Compared with Highest CPI score (out of 10), Finland, during 2001-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>n.a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The economic difficulties and limitations, discussed earlier, have also shaken the stability of the republics. The lack of appropriate economic development and the economic downturn since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, particularly in the first years of independence have created unstable circumstances, which have affected the social and political situation in the region.\textsuperscript{16} And these circumstances have affected the region’s governments’ ability to stabilise their societies.

Ethnic conflict is another factor that has destabilised the region. In Karimov’s words, ‘the ethno-demographic situation in the region constitutes another threat. Changes in this situation have been constantly taking place in Central Asia. In different periods these changes were influenced by such factors as colonisation, the industrialisation of 1920s and 30s, the deportation and forced displacement of peoples, active urbanisation processes.\textsuperscript{17} The region has nine major ethnic groups of over a million, of which, as Table 2.7 shows, Uzbeks, Russians and Kazaks are the largest. This ethnic diversity has caused conflicts both within and between the states. For example, tensions between the governments of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1999 resulted from ethnic conflict.\textsuperscript{18} These conflicts stem largely from the changes wrought in the region by the Soviet Union and from the chaos that accompanied its dissolution.\textsuperscript{19} In this connection Karimov affirmed, ‘[these conflicts] result from the policy pursued by the Russian Empire which the Soviet power continued to pursue concerning the delimitation of the territorial and administrative boundaries of the republics in Central
Asia. Independence for the region’s states reopened a Pandora’s box of border disputes, as mentioned earlier. During the last 13 years they have been involved in high stakes negotiations to define their respective borders.

Furthermore, the politicisation of Islam has been viewed as a destabilising factor in the region. Both observers and leaders of the region have seen this and Islamic parties’ efforts to gain power as a threat. In a meeting in April 2000, in Tashkent the republics’ presidents described religious extremism as a threat to the region’s stability and security that had to be countered. In regard to the role of Islamic radicalism in the region in the late 1990s, M. Aydin argued: ‘...with Islamic extremism taking hold of neighbouring Afghanistan and movements like Wahabism – the Saudi Arabia-based strict sect of Islam – emerging both in Central Asia and in the North Caucasus, Islam might become an important source of tension throughout the region.’

Besides, some external factors have also affected the region’s stability. Perhaps first and foremost is Russia itself. Although it may have been reluctant to lose Central Asia, as discussed in Chapter Three, it was not prepared to stay in the region at all costs; however, since mid-to-late-1992 it has expected to retain its influence. Indeed, some Russian policymakers are said to harbour the ultimate objective of compelling the region’s reintegration with Russia on Moscow’s terms. Accordingly, Moscow has claimed this area as a part of Russia’s sphere of influence. This ambition has presented both security problems and opportunities for the regional states.

Some other countries besides Russia are viewed as sources of destabilisation. For example, instability in Central Asia was seen as an extension of the civil war in Afghanistan, especially after the Taliban came to power in 1996. Islamic radicalism, ethnic conflict, terrorist networks, and drugs from Afghanistan have been posing threats to the region at large – the possibility that the republics might crack at their ‘ethnic seams’, as was occurring in neighbouring Afghanistan. China has also been viewed as a source of instability. Unrest in its Xinjiang province and the uncontrolled movement of population from there to Central Asia have caused security problems. The major problem in this context is for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, who share common borders with China, and consequently face the possibility of Chinese intervention in the event of widespread unrest among China’s own large Uyghur, Kazak and Kyrgyz populations. More importantly, there are about 250,000 Uyghurs in Kazakhstan, including separatists who had fled from Xinjiang; however, Nazarbayev so far has kept them under control to China’s satisfaction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Kazak</th>
<th>Uzbek</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Tajik</th>
<th>Turkmen</th>
<th>Kyrgyz</th>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>Tatar</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>16,798,552</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>4,965,081</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>7,011,556</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>4,683,169</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>25,981,647</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Iran too is regarded, especially by western politicians and scholars, as another external agent of instability in the region, particularly in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan due to a common border with the former, and shared language and culture with the latter. There is a view that Tehran has been seeking to export its revolutionary Islam to Central Asia, discussed in next chapter. Meanwhile, the Chechnya crisis has had its own impact on the region. Saudi Arabia, which has far more acceptability and much more money than Iran with which to foster Wahhabism (a strict sect developed in Saudi Arabia) in Central Asia, as discussed in Chapter Three, is also viewed as an external source of instability.

Most importantly, Western, especially US, support for authoritarian regimes in Central Asia could help hasten the onset of this instability, as propping up repressive regimes could backfire into an explosion of public anger. By supporting the existing non-democratic governments, the West, particularly the United States, enhances the prospects of future clashes in the region. The current presence of US military equipment and troops and other anti-terrorism coalition forces in Uzbekistan (Khanabad) and Kyrgyzstan (Manas), has emboldened regional leaders, particularly Karimov and Akayev, to act forcefully to bolster their personal authority. This is discussed in Chapter Six.

Thus, one can argue that instability on the one hand affects the security of each republic and the whole region, and on the other hand slows the process of development. In addition, instability in any republic might affect other republics. For instance, Tajikistan’s prolonged civil war stimulated security concerns in the neighbouring countries, especially Uzbekistan. Conflict between the authorities and Islamist opposition groups in Uzbekistan could also spread to other republics. President Karimov has pointed out that ‘in its turn, the stability of Kazakstan is the stability of all remaining member countries [of the Central Asian Economic Community].’

3. Islam in Central Asia

To grasp Islam’s role in Central Asia, it is important to look briefly at its history. Between 632 and 870 AD Islam was transformed from mainly being the religion of the Arabs to the dominant faith of peoples stretching from the western Mediterranean into Central Asia. The early conversion to Islam of the Central Asian nations can be divided into two phases. The first began with the Arab invasion of the region under Omar – the second caliph after Prophet Mohammad – in 639 and ended in 715 after the death of Qutayba Ibn Muslim, who was in essence responsible for the successful establishment
of Arab rule in the area. The second phase, during which Islam was propagated by peaceful means, continued until the middle of the tenth century, when it finally became the dominant religion of the region, though conversion continued as late as the nineteenth century (see Table 2.8). Over the next several centuries, Bukhara, Khiva, and later Samarkand became centers of learning in the Islamic world. However, in the Kazak steppes for centuries, the widespread nomadic tribal lifestyle prevented not only Islam, but also other established religions, taking root.

Table 2.8: Religious Diversity in the Central Asian Republics (percent), 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Eastern Orthodox</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakstan</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


One of the key tenets of the Soviet system was that religion was incompatible with communism, and the communists methodically set about repressing all forms of religious expression. In Central Asia, as a part of the general aggressive Communist policy towards religion, and with the help of indigenous ‘modernising’ elements, who regarded Islam as an obstacle to development, Moscow embarked on a thoroughgoing attack on Islam. Of course, before the Bolsheviks, the Tsarist regime evidently had also the same view about the deadening influence of Islam as their Soviet successors. Both the Tsarist and Soviet regimes criticised Islam due to Muslims’ anti-colonial actions against Russian conquest, colonisation, economic exploitation, and political discrimination. M.I. Venyukov, geographer, statistician, ethnologist and publicist, (1832-1901), wrote that Russia ‘should provide Central Asian peoples access to industrial progress, proselytise ‘Christianity’, while replacing the elements of Mohammedan fanaticism by humanizing elements…and consequently freeing man from the narrow bondage of Islam.’ Compared with the Tsars, who did not destroy or desecrate Islamic institutions such as mosques, the Soviet anti-Islamic movement was much wider and deeper. However, the intensity of persecution varied over time. In the early years, 1917-1920, Moscow pursued official tolerance of Islam, but turned to repression in the period of industrialisation and collectivisation and became especially ferocious in the late 1920s and 1930s. During the Second World War, Stalin evoked
religion as a patriotic factor, and persecution stopped. It resumed for a while under Nikita
Khrushchev (1953-1964), but ceased under Leonid Brezhnev (1964-1982), though
advancement still depended on keeping religious affiliations private.146

Marxism and atheism were imposed as a new ideology on the people of Central
Asia through destroying Islamic social, cultural and educational systems. During the
1930s in particular, the Soviet government placed enormous difficulties in the way of
practicing Islam (as it did also in regard to Christianity) by closing or demolishing most
mosques and madrassas (religious schools), forbidding formal teaching of religion to
anyone under the age of 18, and making the practice of Islam a bar to advancement.147

Of about 25000-30,000 mosques in 1920, only about 1000 remained open in 1941.
Moreover, all 14,500 madrassas were forcibly shut down. Islamic leaders or Imams
were deported or imprisoned, and a number of Islamic traditions, such as Hajj
(pilgrimage to Mecca), marriage customs and Waqf, (donation for religious purposes),
were declared illegal. Fewer than 200 of the approximately 47,000 clerics survived.148

In 1930 all Waqf holdings were nationalised and in 1937 the Sharia court (Islamic
court) was declared invalid. In addition, the anti-religious ‘Union of the Godless’ was
established in 1938.149 In 1939 Cyrillic script was imposed in place of the pre­
revolutionary Arabic script and the latinised alphabets, which had replaced the Arabic
script in the late 1920s, thus making it more difficult for newly-literate Central Asians
to read publications in Arabic or Turkish.150

Although the Soviet regime regulated and sometimes persecuted formal religion,
communism was never able to destroy its unofficial and private practice. Personal
religion retained force, especially in rural areas where peasants did not expect
advancement, communist party structures were weak or non-existent, and traditions
remained strong. However, the attack on Islam did not arouse wide opposition in the
region, except from the Turkestan National Liberation Movement (Basmachi), 1916-
1930s, motivated at least in part by the anti-Islamic campaigns of the Soviet
government.151

Yet, Islam has played an important and all-encompassing role in Central Asia’s
history, culture, and society, bringing fundamental changes to all aspects of life, and
creating an Islamic civilization that gave the people of the region a new identity.152
However, some scholars have debated the extent of Islam’s impact on the region. A.
Ehteshami, for example, has argued that ‘historically, Islam has not played an identical
role in each of these societies.’153 Other analysts note that even the long periods of
Russian imperial rule and atheistic Soviet-era indoctrination failed to eliminate Islam’s
influence in Central Asia. A. Malashenko, head of Islamic Studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, for example, has pointed out that Islam has always been a main factor of the religious and cultural identity of Central Asia, even if this self-identification existed only unofficially under the Soviet government.\textsuperscript{155}

In the post-independence era, in general Islam re-emerged as a public faith, although, with different tendencies in each republic. As the Soviet empire fell apart, the people of Central Asia obtained an opportunity to reconnect spiritually and culturally with their Islamic past.\textsuperscript{156} In fact, Islam has gone from being a largely suppressed religion of the colonised to being the publicly-expressed majority faith of the peoples of the republics. This is most evident in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, where Islam has taken deepest root. However, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and to some extent Turkmenistan, due to their nomadic characteristics and Islam's much later arrival, have lacked equally strong attachment to Islam.\textsuperscript{157} The Kyrgyz republic, for example, is categorised as one of the more tolerant in its secularist development approach. President Akayev has stated that Kyrgyzstan is ‘against any kind of Islamic fundamentalism. It is a way to regress not progress.’\textsuperscript{158} In effect, different approaches toward Islam in the region are due to the ethnic orientation and structure of each state. Furthermore, the strength or weakness of the democratic forces, their capacity to institute an inclusive rather than exclusive method of governance, and the nature of the government of each country have had an effect on the approach.

As for Islam’s role in restructuring the region, its importance as a factor affecting nation-state building is still being fiercely debated. Some observers believe that Islam could play a role in rebuilding the nation and even the political system. S. Hunter, for instance, has argued: ‘Islam’s legacy thus has important implications for the current process of nation and institution-building and governance in this region.’\textsuperscript{159} G. Bondarevsky and P. Ferdinand have also pointed out that Islam undoubtedly now plays a visibly more important role in Central Asian politics and public life than before.\textsuperscript{160} Yet, existing conditions in the states indicate that Islam has had no room to play an effective role in their politics. The leaders’ intention has certainly not been to create Islamic theocracies.

The leaders, especially Karimov, have been attempting a dangerous balancing act, emphasising their personal commitment to Islam while suppressing and undermining any elements of ‘political Islam’ that might be outside their control.\textsuperscript{161} In fact, for these regimes Islam is neither a vision of the future nor a blueprint for action. The ruling elites made their careers in the Soviet Union, in which education was based
on atheism and opposition to religion. Consequently, it is obvious that they would not show enthusiasm for Islamic ideology, and have continued the Soviet policy of controlling Islam in their societies. Some of them consider Islam a threat. Uzbekistan's president Karimov, for example, views the Islamic religion as an 'ideological and political threat', promoting him to crackdown against unofficial, independent Islamic worship and impose state-sponsored official Islamic observance. Moreover, Uzbekistan's Oliy Majlis (Parliament) passed a law in May 1998, 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations', instituting stricter punishments for violating the rules for teaching religious subjects, and for preparing and disseminating materials containing ideas of religious extremism. The law required all mosques and religious groups with more than 100 members to register.

Although one can assume that the ruling elites have been greatly affected by the Soviet culture and associated themselves with its political culture, it is not the only factor in forming their attitudes to Islam. Separation of state and church is a principle observed in all Western democracies to a great or lesser extent. Marxism is itself a product of European thought. The creation of the Central Asian republics was based on the European concept of states based on a defined territory and single dominant ethnicity (at the time they were formed, Kazakhstan was an exception, because the high death rate of Kazaks during collectivisation meant they were outnumbered by Russians, but their high birthrate, the low Russian birthrate, especially in the last forty years, and the departure of Russians, mean that Kazaks now outnumber Russians in Kazakhstan). That the state should officially be secular is a principle not just of Communist but of modern democratic states. Therefore, in denying Islam a political role, the Central Asian leaders are not merely applying the old Soviet model, they are also applying one of the assumed criteria of a modern state, similar to Turkey, where Islamists may occasionally hold power but where the military sees itself as guardian of the secular tradition instituted by Ataturk, and deposes governments it sees as violating that tradition. All leaders have retained clauses in their constitutions that describe their states as secular, a claim also seen as part of being 'modern'. Of course, the separation of the political and religious spheres is the opposite of what Islamist parties such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) believe. Yet, almost all states' leaders, indeed, wish to keep the republics secular, and have avoided using some Islamic norms, such as Jihad, in describing their political or economic reforms. In response to a question on whether Uzbekistan corresponds to 'the standards of the Muslim world', Karimov said a categorical 'no': 'We are out of
keeping with the Muslim standards because we are a secular state. Turkmenistan’s president thought along the same lines: ‘We have firmly proclaimed the principle that Turkmenistan is a secular state. . .We have no grounds to think that someone intends to change this principle.’ President Nazarbayev also revealed his deep secular belief when he said:

Having been a Soviet people, we are atheists, but Kazaks’ background is Moslem. We do not allow religion to interfere with politics. And when working with Moslem states, we strictly define that there will be no religious interference in our country, and that goes even for literature, which is published in their countries.

The consequence is that, after more than a decade, Islam has had no effective impact on the republics’ political establishments. The leaders have been concerned about their own power and looking for investors rather than for Islam. Arguably, in such circumstances, ruling elites are particularly concerned to combat all potential threats. Karimov, as mentioned above, has characterised political Islam as a threat, and used this to deepen his suppression of any opposition to his autocratic regime. The region’s presidents not only wish to stay in power, but also worry that even signs of instability will scare off potential investors.

However, notwithstanding the pressure on Islamic movements in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, the rise of political Islam in recent years cannot be denied. The increase in Islamic movements has prompted the governments to pursue a series of policies directed against them. President Nazarbayev initiated the first of these in an attempt to reduce the spillover effect of perceived Islamic fundamentalist activities in neighbouring Uzbekistan. He severed the country’s religious ties with the Muslim Board of Central Asia and Kazakstan, and created a separate mufti (Spiritual Directorate for Muslims) for his country in 1990. The second policy has involved legislation and constitutional provisions designed to define the parameters of religious activities, violations of which would enable the governments to level criminal charges against individuals and organisations. Another policy to combat fundamentalism has taken the form of repression and crackdown on the religious opposition, systematically in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, but also in Turkmenistan and Kazakstan. President Karimov, for example, has spoken out harshly against Islamic extremists, stating that ‘such people must be shot in the forehead! If necessary, I’ll shoot them myself.’ In another statement in 1999 he declared: ‘I’m prepared to rip off the heads of 200 people, to sacrifice their lives, in order to save peace and calm in the republic. If my child chose such a path, I myself would rip off his head.’ Finally, the regimes have resorted to
assimilation of the Islamic forces and appeasement of the general public in an effort to stave off the perceived fundamentalist tendencies.179

Besides Islam’s role in internal affairs, its role in the region’s international relations is also a matter of debate. Initially the Islamic world hoped that Islam could play a significant role in its relationships with the newly independent republics, but more than a decade of relations has demonstrated that Central Asia’s historic ties have had no prominent impact on the republics’ policies toward Muslim countries. Partly, as J.O. Voll has also pointed out, this is because Muslim Central Asia had become a weak part of the Islamic world, so Islam could not be accounted the prevailing factor in determining the states’ international relations.180 Instead, economic relations and interdependence have bound republics more than the ideological/civilizational leverages dividing them. States consort with any civilization, however alien, as long as the price is right and goods are ready. As F. Ajami has argued, civilizations do not control states, instead states control civilizations.181 It seems that for the countries of Central Asia economic development has been more essential than ideological matters. During the last decade, the greatest challenge to the newborn republics has been how to rebuild their economies, and change all sectors of society. They, as mentioned earlier, have sought secular models, like that of Turkey, rather than an Islamic model.182

Nevertheless, some Islamic nations such as Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have viewed Islam as an important factor in their relations with the republics. And some observers believe that, after the inception of the glasnost policy in the late 1980s, official efforts to forge ties with countries of the Islamic world increased, as did the role of Islamic – oriented institutions in domestic politics.183 Others, however, argue that even the relations of some figures in Muslim countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan with Central Asia have had a negative effect on the region’s governments. S. Akbarzadeh, for instance, pointed out that, although Karimov initially spoke respectfully about the importance of Islam to the Uzbek way of life, increasing Saudi, Iranian and Pakistani investment in building new mosques and seminars in Uzbekistan, particularly in the first years of independence, he subsequently re-evaluated his approach, and has now become even more cautious in his support for the Islamic establishment.184 On the other hand, some have seen Islam, particularly political Islam, as a factor that has affected outsiders’ relations with these countries. According to J. Schoeberlein, Director of the Program on Central Asia and the Caucasus at Harvard University, ‘armed incursions into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan by radical Islamists whose declared aim is to establish a religious state in Central Asia have sent shock
waves through Central Asia, and have drawn as much international attention to the region as any issue since independence.\textsuperscript{185} Similarly, G. Fuller in 1994 argued that after the issue of nuclear weapons, no other problem in Central Asia rivets international attention as much as the potential spread of 'Islamic fundamentalism'.\textsuperscript{186}

Yet, it is not easy to view the Central Asian republics as part of the modern Islamic world. Islam has affected the society, but not influenced the politics. To one degree or another these countries remain concerned about preserving the secular governments and societies they inherited at independence, and resist attempts to be categorised as Islamic. This is partly because of the 'long isolation of Central Asia from the main centres and cultural processes of the Muslim world, and shortage of religious literature and restricted religious practice' and the decline of the level of religious education, the result of an anti-religious policy.\textsuperscript{187} The region's regimes have given only lip service to traditional Islam as a factor of social conservatism. They have tried to retain the Soviet-era system of control over the official clergy, which has power over the great mosques in the region.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that, after more than one and half centuries of Russian and Soviet dominance, the Central Asian republics have been heavily influenced by Russian and Soviet socio-economic systems. The republics had no history of modern statehood and little exposure to the outside world. Soviet control created considerable dependence on central government in Moscow, and there was no system of self-determination or intra-regional cooperation. As a result, after independence the five new nations faced serious political and economic problems. The dynamics of these challenges and new geopolitics of the region placed it in a new orbit completely different from the past.

In these new circumstances the republics faced the question of how to reconstruct their societies. The chapter has shown that developing the countries' economies, improving the people's quality of life and exploiting their resources have been major economic issues. Politically the immediate issues were building the nation-state and reducing the risk of instability and insecurity caused by problems inherited from the era of Russian and Soviet rule, and activity by external actors. From the cultural point of view, Islam's role has been a significant challenge. Despite expectations, Islam has not yet influenced the economics and politics of the region. The ruling elites have not allowed it to play a significant role in political life. And
insurgency of political Islam has been used by some leaders, particularly Karimov, as an excuse not to promote political reform.

Emergence of politico-economic and cultural dilemmas, particularly until the mid-1990s, and lack of actual capability to cope with these problems properly, has made the situation challengeable in Central Asia since independence. Although since that time the region’s economy has advanced, the republics still face daunting political, ethnic, economic, and environmental challenges to their stability and integrity. These factors have influenced the countries and threatened their security and stability.

Thus, the imprint of Russian colonialism, the politico-economic legacy of 70 years of Soviet rule, the republics’ lack of sustained experience with nationhood and statehood, and the region’s divers ethnic and cultural make-up have all contributed to the degraded political and economic condition within the Central Asian republics. It has been very difficult for any of them to meet such challenges without support from outside. As a result, the region’s states have attempted to establish a network of relations with the outside world in order to receive international political and economic support. At the same time regional and global powers have rushed to establish close ties with the republics and have been brought into competition over the region.
Notes

3 Jukes, op. cit., p. 35.
7 The term ‘Great Game’ was coined by an official in the nineteenth-century British Indian Empire, referring to the major regional powers’ competition to dominate Central Asia, where empires historically have rubbed together at the centre of Eurasia. It was a struggle for dominance over land and populations whose value lay in their location between the Russian and British Empires. For detailed discussion see P. Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*, New York: Kodansha International, 1994.
11 Approximately present-day Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan respectively The conquest began with the capture of Tashkent in 1865 and was completed with the capture of Merv, for this see S. Akiner, ‘Conceptual geographies of Central Asia’, in Akiner, Tideman and Hay, op. cit., pp.3-27, also for historical background of Russia in Central Asia see M. Rywkin, *Russia in Central Asia*, New York: Collier Books, 1963 and M. Saray, ‘Russo-Turkmen relations up to 1874’, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1984, pp. 15-48.

15 Jukes, op. cit., p. 35.


26 Khrushchev, being of a peasant background, attempted to remedy some of the shortcomings of Stalin’s collectivisation of agriculture. The Virgin Lands policy involved using previously unfarmed areas of land, particularly in Kazakhstan, for growing crops.


Of course, their economies improved compared to the Tsarist period. However, oil, gas and hydroelectric resources in Central Asia were less than those elsewhere in the USSR. The average standard of living in the region was lower than in Russia, but much higher than in neighbouring countries. See A. Sadri, 'Integration in Central Asia: From theory to policy', Central Asian Survey, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1997, pp. 573-586.


A. Akayev, 'Whither Central Asia', Russia in Global Affairs, No. 4, October/December 2003.


See D.L. Smith, Breaking Away From the Bear, Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 1998.


For more discussion on this issue see Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.


By signing the Minsk Agreement to create the CIS on 8 December 1991, the then Presidents of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Republic of Belarus, Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Shushkevich, proclaimed that 'the Soviet Union as a subject of international law and geographic and political reality ceased to exist.' The leaders of the other former Soviet republics except Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia accepted the creation of the CIS by signing the Almaty Agreement Protocol and the Almaty Declaration on 21 December 1991. At the dawn of the post-Soviet era, a union of the Newly Independent States of Central Asia at first appeared natural and realistic. Indeed, many regarded it as an important precondition for political stability and economic development in the region. By the end of the 1990s, however, hopes for any kind of unity had receded. As ethnic elites built their states and consolidated the authority of their leaders, each head of state began to play his own game and pursue his own interests. The post-Soviet era
has allowed differences between the individual Central Asian countries to become apparent. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan carried out a policy of reducing the state’s regulatory role in the economy, but Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan did not, and Tajikistan plunged into civil war. This institutional discordance can hardly contribute to drawing these five states closer together. In this sense, 1999 became a year of unprecedented economic confrontation among the states of Central Asia. Disputes erupted where their economic interests intersected: trade, energy, transportation, and water. B. Rumer, ‘Economic change and modernisation: Central Asia’, in ‘Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Reorientations, Internal Transitions, and Strategic Dynamics’, Conference Report, National Intelligence Council, Washington, April 2000, at C:\Program Files\Eudora\attach\10001.htm [accessed 6/1/2004] Also, for Karimov’s view on regional cooperation see, I. Karimov, Uzbekistan on the Threshold of Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998, pp. 67-72.


47 Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan took the first step in setting up a previously agreed Central Asian economic union on 1 February 1994 by removing customs duties at their common borders. See ‘First Steps of Central Asian Economic Union’, RFE/RL, No. 22, 2 February 1994, p. 5.


51 Eurasia Economic Summit 2000, ‘The Challenges of Inter-Regional Cooperation in Central Asia’, World Economic Forum, 28 April 2000, pp. 1-11. During the last decade some steps toward regional integration have been taken. For example, the Intergovernmental Council-Executive Committee, a small organ headquartered in Bishkek, coordinates their regular intergovernmental meetings and prepares materials for adoption by unanimous consent of the members. In the mid-1990s Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan
and Kyrgyzstan also created the Central Asian Bank for Cooperation and Development, with offices in Bishkek and Almaty. This small bank has financed some modest projects ($500,000 up to $5 million) in the three member states. B. Pannier, ‘Cited in Central Asia: Six month after – Security still top international issue’, RFE/RL, 12 March 2002 and Spechler, op. cit, pp. 1-11.

Eurasia Economic Summit 2000, op. cit, pp. 2-5.

The origin of the SCO was the Shanghai Five, established by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for confidence-building and disarmament in their border regions. In 1996 and 1997 their heads of state met in Shanghai and Moscow respectively and signed Treaties on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions and on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions. According to the declaration on the establishment of the SCO, 15 June 2001, the goals of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation are: to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good-neighbourliness between the members; to encourage effective cooperation between them in the political, trade and economic, scientific and technical, cultural, educational, energy, transport, environmental and other spheres; and to undertake joint efforts to maintain peace, security and stability in the region, and the building of a new, democratic, just and rational international political and economic order. For more information, see Declaration on the Creation of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Information Bulletin No. 1157, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 20 June 2001, Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, People’s Daily (online) at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/ [accessed 27/1/2004], Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, 14 June 2003, at http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/ShanghaiCO.html [accessed 13/9/2003], S. Shermatova, ‘Moscow steps up Central Asian interest’, IWPR (online), 21 June 2002, at http://iicas.org/english/enlibrary/lbr_26-06_02.htm [accessed 19/9/2003], G. Gleason, ‘Inter-state cooperation in Central Asia from the CIS to the Shanghai Forum’, Europe -Asia Studies, Vol. 53, No. 7, Abingdon, November 2001, p. 1077.


This sort of disintegration to some degree resulted from Soviet economic strategy and also the nature of the region’s market and products. What these republics produced was mostly sent to other Soviet
republics, not to each other. The cotton-producing countries, for example, were not markets for each other’s cotton. Kazakhstan’s oil, in its southwest, was exported crude to Russia; its refineries were in its north-east, working on crude oil imported from West Siberia. Tajikistan has an aluminum smelter, but it imported aluminum ore mostly from Siberia. The main market for Uzbekistan’s fruit and vegetables was Russia.

58 Spechler, op. cit, pp. 1-11.
59 Hunter, *Central Asia Since Independence*, p. 66.
60 Ibid, p. 67.
69 Kasenov, op. cit., pp. 28-53, from 1991 to 1998. The level of economic activity plunged by 39 percent in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, 45 percent in Turkmenistan, and 66 percent in Tajikistan. The exception to this pattern was Uzbekistan, where GDP decreased by less than 10 percent in this period. Although that country exhibited some signs of modest economic growth, according to official statistics, those gains are misleading: Uzbekistan has actually been rebuilding the Soviet economic model, a policy that will most likely lead only to stagnation and perhaps even a crash. Rumer, ed., *Central Asia and the New Global Economy*, pp. 78-82.


However, the table shows unemployment as higher than in Soviet times, when officially everybody was guaranteed some sort of job, but also low by western standards.


Hunter, Central Asia Since Independence, p. 81.


The war in Tajikistan killed about 40,000-60,000 people, created around 500,000 internal refugees, and consigned 60,000 others to like status in northern Afghanistan. R. Menon, 'In the shadow of the bear: Security in post-Soviet Central Asia', International Security, Vol. 20, No. 1, Summer 1995, pp. 149-181.


87 Akinger, *Central Asia: Conflict or Stability and Development*, pp. 120-135.


90 Hunter, *Central Asia Since Independence*, pp. 69-70.


94 Uzbekistan in particular depends on water from those two countries, with some 95 percent of its arable land requiring irrigation. ‘Uzbekistan: Human Development Report’, *UNDP*, 1999, p. 77.


96 Quoted in I. Bal, *Turkey’s Relations With the West and Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2000, p. 139.

97 Ibid.

98 Fuller, op. cit., pp. 19-43.


109 Fuller, op. cit., pp. 19-43.


111 Ibid.


Karimov, Uzbekistan on the Threshold of Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress, p. 45.


Karimov, Uzbekistan on the Threshold of Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress, p. 45.

For a comprehensive discussion on border disputes in Central Asia see ICG, ‘Central Asia: Border disputes and conflict potential’, pp. 7-22.


RFE/RL, 12 April 2000.


For more details see Chapter Four of this Thesis.


A. Rashid wrote in 1999 ‘With their porous borders, weak security apparatuses, and crisis-torn economies, the five former Soviet Central Asian republic have every reason to fear the turmoil emanating from Afghanistan. The threats include the flow of drugs and weapons and a possible flood of refugees if the Northern Alliance is defeated.’ A. Rashid, ‘The Taliban: Exporting Extremism’, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 78, No.6, November/December 1999, pp. 22-35. See also A. Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, and G. Gleason, ‘Counterinsurgency in Central Asia: Civil society is the first casualty’, Eurasia Insight, 24 June 2002.


For a comprehensive discussion on Xinjiang's role in Central Asia's stability see Khamraev, op. cit., pp. 65-73.


See Masanov, op. cit.

Torbakov, op. cit.


Jukes, op. cit., p. 47, Russian Orthodox Christianity was attacked as viciously as Islam.


144 Quoted in Hauner, op. cit., pp. 1-19.


147 See J. Voll, 'Central Asia as a part of the modern Islamic world', in Manz, op. cit., pp. 62-81.


149 Bondarevsky and Ferdinand, op. cit, pp. 36-54.


151 Jukes, op. cit., p. 47.


157 According to Bennigsen and Wheeler, this wide disparity is intimately related to the broad nature of Central Asian societies within which Islam gained popular acceptance. Islam first penetrated the sedentary regions of Central Asia where it succeeded in altering the structural makeup of the Uzbek and Tajik societies. In contrast, the Kazak, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen societies were nomadic. It was much harder to establish religion among nomads, building mosques, madrassas, and training Ishan, let alone imams, mullahs, qadis, and administering waqf, conducting sharia courts and so on, among people who were always on the move. Also, most of the work of converting the nomads was done not by Central Asian Ulama but by Tatars from Kazan in Russia, sent there by Catherine the Great, who believed the nomads were already Muslim and needed pastoral care. As a result, these countries have much fewer new religious schools, print fewer religious books, have fewer religious institutions, and much weaker pull to the holy places. For more information, see G. Wheeler, The Modern History of Central Asia, New York: Praeger, 1964, pp. 20-23. See also M. Haghayeghi, ‘Islam and democratic politics in Central Asia’, World Affairs, Vol. 156, No. 4, Washington, Spring 1994, pp. 186-199, M. Haghayeghi, ‘Islamic Revival in the Central Asian Republics’, Central Asian Survey, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1994, pp. 249-266, Kulchik, Fadin and Sergeev, op. cit., S. Akhmer, ‘Islam, the State and Ethnicity in Central Asia in Historical Perspective’, Religion, State and Society: the Keston Journal, Vol. 24, Nos. 2/3, June/September 1996, pp. 91-132, and R.H. Dekmejian and H.H. Simonian, Troubled Waters: The Geopolitics of the Caspian Region, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003, pp. 74-95.


159 Hunter, Central Asia Since Independence, p. 13.

160 Bondarevsky and Ferdinand, op. cit., pp. 36-54.

161 Abdullaev, op. cit., pp. 245-298, A. Appelbaum, ‘Migration experts ponder refugee management tactics in Central Asia’, Eurasian Insight, 27 September 2001 and Jonson and Esenov, eds., Political Islam and Conflicts in Russia and Central Asia. President Karimov has put repressions first against the Islamic organisations and the Muslim clergy, then common Muslims.

162 As noted before, on 1 May 1998 the Parliament of Uzbekistan passed a law imposing new restrictions on religious groups. It required all mosques and all religious groups with more than 100 members to register.


164 See Oly Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, at


168 Turkmenistan Constitution (1992) Article 1: Turkmenistan is a democratic secular state operating under the rule of law whose government takes the form of a presidential republic. Uzbekistan Constitution (1992), Article 12: No ideology shall be granted the status of state ideology. Kyrgyzstan Constitution (1993) Article 1.1: The Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) shall be a sovereign unitary democratic republic created on the basis of a legal secular state. Kazakhstan Article (1993) Article 1.1: The Republic of Kazakhstan establishes itself as a democratic, secular, social, rule of law state for which the highest value is the person and her or his life, rights, and freedoms. Tajikistan Constitution (1994), Article 1: The Republic of Tajikistan is a sovereign democratic, rule of law, secular, and united state.


170 Quoted from Narodnoye Slovo (Tashkent), 12 November 1997, by Malashenko, op. cit., pp. 9-18. Despite the secularist approach, political or radical Islam, as noted before, does not differentiate between government and Islam. Indeed, 'the distinction between religious and temporal is irrelevant to radical Islam.' Akbarzadeh, 'The political shape of Central Asia', pp. 517-542, The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, for example, has been seeking to topple Karimov's regime by guerrilla incursions. D.K. Roelofsma, 'Commentary: US, Islam and Central Asia', The Washington Times, 18 March 2002. This depiction of Islam was brought to the Islamic world after Iran's Islamic revolution of 1979. For an overview of the impact of Iran's Islamic Revolution on Central Asia, see H. Braker, 'The implication of Islamic question for Soviet domestic and foreign policy', Central Asian Survey, Vol. 2, No. 1, July 1983, pp. 111-128.


174 Roelofsma, op. cit., p.10.


Agence France-Presse (AFP), 2 April 1999.


Kulchik, Fadin and Sergeev, op. cit., p. 5.
Chapter Three

Engaging the newly independent Central Asian states: Regional and global actors

The territory of the formerly Soviet region of Central Asia lies at the heart of the Eurasian landmass, encompassing an area of some four million square kilometres. The region's strategic importance, together with its world-class reserves of minerals and hydrocarbons, makes it the focus of considerable international interest.

S. Akiner

Introduction

During the Soviet era, the Central Asian republics never gained the status of independent actors in international relations. Foreign relations were directed by the central government, and the central leadership determined foreign policy goals and priorities. After the collapse of the USSR, when these independent countries set out to outline a new framework of relationships with the outside world, this situation changed.

The independence of the republics and Russia's partial withdrawal from Central Asia changed the geopolitics of the region from a closed area to one opening up to other interested foreign actors. Under the new circumstances, the countries found themselves in the interest zone of many regional and global powers, attracting widespread attention because they have emerged at a point where the political, economic and security interests of various powers converge.

Independence brought the formal establishment of foreign embassies along with rapid development of communication between the republics and the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, Western Europe and the United States. Rivalry between various forces in the region added to friction and historical grievances within the CIS.

The Central Asian republics' orientation to the outside world would greatly affect the power and national security planning of neighbouring and other interested states, principally the United States, Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, India and Pakistan. How these actors have acted in Central Asia can influence geopolitical alignments in the region. It is also important to grasp how these states, and others whose interest is acute though less direct, (for example, the EU, Japan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia), position Central Asia into their strategic thinking. In fact, the initial power vacuum created by the collapse of the
Soviet Union has pulled regional states and some international actors into an intensive competition for power and influence in the area. Obviously, each has specific objectives and the competition has economic, political, ideological and religious dimensions.

This chapter examines the relations of selected countries, in the order of their importance, with Central Asia. It also explores the republics’ priorities in their relations with the outside countries. The central purpose is to provide a comprehensive overview of significant state actors developing relations with Central Asia, without which it would be difficult to fully appreciate the reasons for the US engagement with Central Asia, to be discussed later in detail. The chapter argues that with the opening up of Central Asia these interested actors have become engaged in the region for different combinations of geopolitical, economic, security, cultural and religious reasons.

Central Asia’s foreign policy priorities

For the post-Soviet Central Asian republics, one of the most important issues was to prioritise their foreign relations. Immediately after independence they were concerned to establish a positive image in the eyes of the global community, and to promote their self-identity in the international arena, attain membership of regional and international organisations, particularly the UN, establish relations with the outside world, and gain political and financial support to consolidate their independence and reconstruct their economies.

Presenting a positive image to the world was a complicated issue. All except Kazakhstan were near neighbours to an Islamic revolutionary government in Iran and an Islamic-oriented regime in Afghanistan. On the eve of independence and during its first few years, some experts, especially among Western academics, warned that these newly independent nations might come under the influence of Iran or other radical Islamic groups. On the other hand, the region’s states themselves faced political turmoil and other problems, such as economic collapse, and a radical opposition in which Islamist groups tried to play an important role, challenging the existing governments, particularly in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Accordingly, the governments attempted to block any Islamic influence, external or internal, from the state-building process. The leaders were oriented toward building secular states, as mentioned in Chapter Two, and presenting a non-religious picture of their republics to the international community.

As for self-identity, the problem was that throughout the Soviet era the leaders of the region were persistently taught that they belonged to a special world, part neither of the West nor of the Third World. These leaders had strongly believed that they were
part of a Eurasian superpower, geographically in Asia, but culturally, politically and economically part of Eastern Europe, and realised that they needed to redefine their identity when the USSR ceased to exist, in order to position themselves in the global community and develop their relations with it.6

To further these objectives they needed to strengthen their independence, maintain sovereignty, and give high priority to national consolidation and security.7 Accordingly, their priorities have appeared to be regime survival and economic restructuring, with foreign policy considerations relevant only if they support these objectives.8 Their poor economic performance, particularly in the early years of independence, progressively convinced them that they needed help wherever they could get it. Furthermore, securing foreign investment to develop their oil and gas industries was an important foreign policy issue, particularly for Kazakstan and Turkmenistan. In fact, to overcome their economic problems and reduce politico-economic and military dependence on Russia, they opened their doors to interested foreign states.9 In this connection, the Uzbek President Karimov stated: ‘Relying on their internal resources and possibilities, [the newly independent states] are searching for a solution to these problems with the support of interested parties in the world community.’10 At the same time, the region’s economic and market potential has attracted the outside world’s attention, especially the energy resources of the Caspian Sea, on which Kazakstan and Turkmenistan have coastlines. M.B. Olcott in the early 1990s pointed out:

Now the outside world could be let in, and each of the leaders saw the arrival of the international community as his salvation. Foreigners would help generate the capital that economic development required, through the purchase of energy and other valuable raw materials, through international funding (in part through joint ventures) Soviet-era plans for resource extraction as well as through the further expansion of these projects, and through the use of foreign aid, international credits, and joint ventures to reform agriculture and to modernise and expand the industrial base.11

Since 1991 the Central Asian states have established diplomatic relations with many countries. In 1992 they all joined the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), while Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan also joined the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), with Kazakstan and Uzbekistan following in 1995.12 In 1994 all joined the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP), as discussed below and in Chapter Four, (see also Table 3.1).13
### Table 3.1: Participation of Central Asian Countries in Organisations for Regional Cooperation, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>SCO</th>
<th>EEC</th>
<th>CSTO</th>
<th>CICA</th>
<th>ECO</th>
<th>CACO</th>
<th>PfP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (with Russia and China).
EEC: Eurasian Economic Community, ex Customs Union (with Russia and Belarus).
CICA: Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (with Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, India, Pakistan, Palestine National Administration, Russia, and Turkey).
CACO: Central Asian Cooperation Organisation, ex Central Asian Economic Community.
* Due to its policy of neutrality, Turkmenistan has participated in few regional organisations such as PfP Partnership for Peace (with NATO).

However, the close link between the individual states’ domestic policies and foreign relations has also led each down different paths in international relations. For example, Kazakhstan’s long border with Russia (6,846 km) and large Russian population, as Figures 2.1 and 3.1 show, and Tajikistan’s dependence on Russian military assistance during and after its civil war, have resulted in considerable interaction with Russia. Instead Uzbekistan has tried to distance itself from Russia, and Turkmenistan has pursued neutrality. Nevertheless, the republics have devoted, and continue to devote considerable effort to forming and implementing their foreign policies. And, for various reasons, Central Asia is also of increased importance to a considerable number of regional and extra-regional powers, as discussed below.

### Russia

Russia, for historical, strategic and politico-economic reasons, remains one of the most important players in Central Asia. Since the Soviet Union’s demise, Russian policy towards this region has moved through three distinct stages. The first, from 1991 to 1992, saw Moscow disengage from Central Asia as Russia grappled with domestic turmoil. From mid-to-late-1992 until 2000, Russia sought to restore its position in the region, but various instruments designed to promote reintegration, such as the Collective Security Treaty (CST), proved ineffective. Under Putin’s presidency, Moscow since 2000 has followed more economic avenues of influence than previously, but since the events of 11 September 2001 the Kremlin has also placed emphasis on security in its interaction with the region.
Russia’s foreign policy during the first years after the Soviet Union’s dissolution was markedly pro-West. Moscow hoped to become part of the Western world and undergo systemic change to a Western-type liberal democracy and a market economy. Russia’s high priority was to receive Western financial assistance to overcome its economic difficulties, its GDP having fallen by 40 to 50 percent in the first few years of economic reforms. Indeed, the predominant desire to speed up Moscow’s integration into the West caused ‘nearly complete neglect of Central Asia and the Caucasus’, or at least ‘Russia’s relations with the newly independent states of Central Asia were far from being the highest priority of the new Russian administration’ and ‘total immersion’ was ‘into relations with the West.’

The Guardian reported in 1993:

A 58-page document called The Conception of the Russian Federation’s Foreign Policy [was] circulated to parliament recently. Although it paid lip service to Russia’s need to ‘have its own face’, it said Russia’s priority was close relations with the developed West and a few newly industrialised countries in the Third World. Within this framework the document devoted several pages to its desired ‘partnership’ with the United States, much of it on traditional lines of nuclear arms control. Turning to the Pacific, it again highlighted the need for a ‘strategic partnership’ with the United States [against China and Japan] based on the two countries’ ‘adherence to common democratic values’.

President Yeltsin, out to transform Russia’s economy into a genuine market economy. He knew that he would need financial support from the West to cushion the Russians against what he hoped would be short-term hardships, and ‘was grateful for all the moral support, which leaders of Western countries had displayed for him.’

After an initial period of neglect, from mid-to-late 1992, Russian foreign policy began to change direction, as Moscow concluded that it had to re-establish its influence in the region, particularly for strategic purposes. The Kremlin thought that Russia’s security and that of the region to its south were interdependent. The permeable borders of the newly independent countries, and the waves of ethnic separatists, drug smugglers and criminals that poured into Russia from its southern rim all exposed Moscow’s need for security. NATO’s incipient eastward expansion was also a factor. Therefore, as A. Saikal has argued, Moscow ‘made a concerted effort to regain some of the lost ground’ in Central Asia. Meanwhile, Russia’s domestic political mood shifted. In this connection, Kortunov and Shumikhin have discussed:

The bitter internal political conflict in Russia in October 1993, and the ensuing move towards Presidential rule in the country ushered in a new stage in Russian foreign and Central Asian policies. It was evident that under the nationalists’ pressure, epitomised by the success of the Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovsky at the December 1993 elections, and failures in pro-Western policies, many key leaders of the
Yeltsin regime, including Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, began to change their rhetoric, if not perceptions and devotions.23

In fact, whatever the domestic pressures behind this reorientation, Yeltsin and Kozyrev had been compelled to shift from ‘Atlanticism’ to ‘Eurasianism’, realising that orientation of the republics’ foreign policy towards other powers, especially the United States, would considerably undermine Russia’s status in the south.24 Another cause for Moscow’s foreign policy shift was growing concern over the rights and security of the large ethnic Russian populations in Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan. However, as Figure 3.1 shows, the number and proportion of Russians in the republics has declined since 1989. This is partly because after independence some of them left Central Asia, and also due to the low Russian birthrate compared to Central Asians. Nevertheless, the number of Russians living in the republics is still considerable, and their fate has become one of Moscow’s priorities in its involvement with the region. In mid-1993 Kozyrev proposed a policy that stressed the particular relationships between Moscow and the other former Soviet republics, openly stating Russia’s claim of responsibility to protect Russians’ rights wherever they live.25 Moscow wanted a powerful influence in the area to protect Russians. Yeltsin and then Prime Minister Primakov repeatedly claimed Russia’s right to conduct ‘peacekeeping in the ‘Near Abroad’ to protect Russian-speakers.26 As a result, Russia made a U-turn towards the south, and formulated a consistent Central Asian policy, marked by the CST, mentioned earlier, which was aimed at ensuring military and political stability during the transition period. Initially Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan signed it, joined by Azerbaijan in September 1993, and Belarus and Georgia in December 1993.27

A significant move towards developing influence in Central Asia took place in 1995, when Yeltsin issued a decree entitled ‘Establishment of the Strategic Course of the Russian Federation with Member States of the CIS’.28 Effectively, this decree emphasised subordination of the region’s republics to Russian interests, including a guarantee of rights for Russian residents, economic cooperation and a defence union. In this connection, K. Mihalisko wrote: ‘Yeltsin’s decree not only acts on External Intelligence recommendation but goes much further by instructing executive organs to prosecute an all-inclusive subordination of policies throughout the Commonwealth to Moscow’s ‘vital interests’, in what amounts to a clarion call to restore Russian might in its traditional imperial context.29
Since that time Russia has been attempting to re-establish the economic, political and military control over Central Asia and the Transcaucuses, lost with the dissolution of the USSR. As mentioned earlier, for Moscow, Russia’s security, which could be threatened by development of political or religious conflict in the region, has been one of the great concerns in the CIS in general and Central Asia in particular. Andrei Kozyrev, then Russian Foreign Minister, stated in 1993: ‘Russia’s security zone extends as far as the borders of the former USSR.’ Sergei Karaganov, Chairman of Collegiums of the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy and a member of the Presidential Council, affirmed in early March 1996: ‘As far as rapprochement [in the CIS] is concerned, we must proceed cautiously when necessary and swiftly whenever we can. In particular, let us move as fast as we can where Belarus and Kazakhstan are concerned.’ Moscow considered Tajikistan’s civil war a direct threat to Russia’s national security, and intervened in it. To the press and public, Moscow’s officials spoke of fears that an opposition victory in Tajikistan would lead to the spread of instability all over Central Asia. Accordingly, in order to prevent the spread of civil war to the rest of the area, Russia became directly involved in the conflict, believing that if Russia were to ‘pull out from Tajikistan, a wave of destabilisation may sweep through the whole of Central Asia, which [was] the underbelly of Russia.’ Furthermore, the
Kremlin was worried about Tajikistan’s long border with Afghanistan (1,206 km), and accordingly signed an agreement with the Tajik government, by which Russia would provide border guard in Tajikistan. In 1993 President Yeltsin was quoted in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* as saying that the Tajik-Afghan border is ‘Russia’s border.’ However, border containment did not become a central issue for Russia until mid-July 1993, when a group of Tajik opposition fighters attacked a Russian border post and killed half of the troops stationed there. Therefore, one can argue that the Tajikistan civil war had serious implications for Russia, which had substantial forces stationed in the country and a significant stake in control over Tajikistan’s border with Afghanistan.

The security issue has remained an important dimension of Russian policy toward the CIS as a whole and Central Asia in particular. The official ‘Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation in 2000’ emphasised:

> A priority area in Russia’s foreign policy is ensuring conformity of multilateral and bilateral cooperation with the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to national security tasks of the country. Emphasis will be made on the development of good-neighborly relations and strategic partnerships with all CIS member states. Practical relations with each of them should be structured with due regard for reciprocal openness to cooperation and readiness to take into account in a due manner the interests of the Russian Federation, including in terms of guarantees of rights of Russian compatriots.

Moreover, the Kremlin was concerned about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, expansion of panturkism, and narcotics. Fear of Islamic extremism has led Moscow to keep an eye on the dynamics of events in Central Asia, out of concern not only about the regional instability radical Islamic movements might cause, but also about their potential influence on Muslim communities in Russia. Memories of Afghanistan, and the fact that about 10 percent of Russia’s population is Muslim, albeit highly secularised, made the threat of radical Islam one that Russian leaders remained mindful of. Consequently, maintaining a forward position in Central Asia, including on the Afghan-Tajik border, was seen as a way of helping prevent the spread of radical Islam into Russia proper.

The likelihood that Turkey would promote panturkism into the region has also been a great concern for the leaders in Moscow, as challenging Russian interests, ‘both in terms of serving to break up the CIS, and in creating the new ethnic bloc’. As discussed below, Turkey has displayed willingness to place the Turkic Central Asian republics in the Turkish orbit. Such a notion has made Moscow anxious. And it seems Russia has been happier with Iran’s efforts to develop its relations with the region, viewing Iran as a counterweight to excessive Turkish influence. However, in reality
Russian policy has been to prevent the influence of both countries spreading throughout the region. But if Russia were to feel uncomfortable with Turkish power immediately to its south, it might well look to strengthening the Persian belt at the expense of the Turkish.\(^4\) But in general Russia's interest is to prevent the influence of any outside power in the area that might threaten its interests.\(^4\)

Besides, the problem of increased drug trafficking from Central Asia into Russia has caused tension in relations. According to Russia's law enforcement agencies, in 2001, 17.1 percent of drugs entering that country came from Uzbekistan, 13.6 percent from Tajikistan, and 12.7 percent from Kazakhstan, and 80 percent of the heroin seized in Russia came from Central Asia.\(^4\) To minimise the social impact of drugs, Moscow has attempted not only to develop a more assertive stance towards all the successor states, but also to create some bilateral and multilateral agreements against drug trafficking through the region. For instance, on 26 September 2002 Rustam Nazarov, who heads the drug-control agency in Tajikistan, lauded the creation with the Russian Interior Ministry of a joint Committee for Combatting Drug Trafficking.\(^4\)

At the economic level, Russia wishes to control the pipelines and, as J. Anderson has argued, achieve a stake in the various deals for energy exploitation between Western companies and the regional states.\(^4\) Moscow has been also aggressively seeking to secure a dominant role in the development and export of Central Asian oil and gas resources, as discussed in Chapter Five. Russia has tried to identify itself as the best corridor for connecting Central Asia to Europe, and would certainly benefit from being a bridge between the region and Europe. Some analysts have pointed out that Russia remains the major economic partner for the Central Asian states.\(^4\) To expand its economic position in this region, policy planners in Moscow have been actively promoting the Eurasian Economic Community, as well as Russian participation in privatising strategic sectors of the regional economy, including hydroelectric power stations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.\(^4\)

From the Central Asian perspective, whether the republics should develop their relations with Russia is still under debate. Some observers argue that they are struggling to escape from Russia; others emphasise the necessity of maintaining close relations. In reality the region's leaders could hardly claim that they are no longer dependent on Russia. This is partly because their dependence on Russia took shape over more than one and half centuries. In this perspective, President Akayev believes the history of the region is the best advisor, and Central Asians must pay heed to its voice:
Possibly my perceptions of the prospects for relations between the Central Asian countries and Russia are too rosy? I am sure they are quite realistic. We cannot live only for the needs of today and tomorrow. Rulers come and go, as do political thrills, but these are only transient phenomena. What remain unchanged are the geopolitical factors and the peoples who keep age-old values and traditions going strong. It was not by chance that Russia came to Central Asia a long time ago. The road of their common historic development has not been trouble-free, but at this new turn Central Asia is sure to establish very special relations with Russia. The Central Asian countries simply will have no future if they do not cooperate closely with their old neighbor.47

To some extent, Akayev is correct, for example, in terms of transporting oil and gas these republics are still dependent on Russian routes. In this connection, one can assume that Moscow will remain one of the key players in Central Asia, though it may face challenges from the United States or China.48 However, the republics have attempted to find some alternatives that reduce their political, economic and military dependence on Moscow.49 In particular, from the security and stability standpoint, some observers believe that the region’s states, especially in the first years of independence, were unable to defend themselves without Russian support. Lounev and Shirokov, for instance, have argued that Russia is the guarantor of stable external borders of the CIS states, and the republics are dependent on Russia for military and defence purposes as well.50 Karimov in 1992 emphasised that he would ‘like to see the Russian Federation as a kind of ‘guarantor of stability’ in the region, or more simply put, as a guarantor of the survival of the administration that exists in Tashkent today.’51 And Yeltsin’s suggestion that Russia should have ‘special powers as guarantor of peace and stability’ in the ‘Near Abroad’ echoed this notion.52 However, Karimov’s regime is now broadly supported by the United States. The events of 11 September 2001 changed the situation and the region’s regimes could gain US guarantees for their security, but that does not mean they do not need Moscow’s help. US penetration of Central Asia, particularly its military presence in pursuit of the ‘war on terror’, to be discussed in Chapter Six, has led the Kremlin to undertake a serious drive to re-establish its influence in the region.53

Overall, since mid-to-late 1992 Russia has shown interest in expanding relationships with the republics of Central Asia. In the early years of independence, Central Asians were more reliant on Russia militarily and economically. Later it seems they tried to ‘distance themselves from Russia.’54 Yet, they are not fully independent from Russia, but Moscow is neither willing nor able to shoulder the burden of providing the huge amounts of capital the republics need.55 At the same time, Moscow’s presence in this region is not only for commercial, economic, strategic and security
considerations, but also for enhancement of Russia's international prestige and potential for partnership with the United States, other world leaders, and the UN. Thus, Russia's policy towards Central Asia is motivated by strategic, economic and security interests and it has accepted that it could not leave the region even if it wanted to.

The West

Since 1991 the West has recognised both geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in Central Asia. Its increased interest can principally be explained by the region's perceived strategic importance and natural resources. At the same time, many within Central Asia initially saw the wealthy states of the West as potential benefactors, as countries that had encouraged, however ambiguously, the break-up of the USSR, and that could provide the capital investment the region needed. The region's elites, to some extent, saw the West as a replacement for Russia, as a provider of financial support and security guarantees. While the regional countries consider economic development a priority in their foreign relations, the Western powers, as the group with most investment potential, would have the strongest position.

The European Union

Since the Maastricht Treaty, which came into force at the end of 1993, the EU has been moving toward developing a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In many respects, it has attempted to build common positions toward some regions such as Central Asia. Nevertheless, beyond general strategic concerns, such as energy, combating drug trafficking, and protecting the environment, it could be said that in the mid-1990s 'Central Asia has not been of high priority for the EU.' Indeed, even after the events of 11 September 2001, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, on 29 October 2001, claimed that the EU had neither the economic nor political will to become engaged in Central Asia because its 'main priority [was] the Balkans and how to bring them closer to the EU.' He called for reevaluation of EU policy towards the Central Asian countries, stressing: '...we have to start rethinking our policy towards the 'Stans'. This means cooperating with other international organisations to tackle the huge problems facing them.' However, compared to other powers, particularly the United States, the EU's trade relations with the region were already considerable by then (see Figure 3.2).
EU states realised that it would be in their own interests to assist the region’s countries economically and engage them in cooperation with EU institutions. From 1991 to 2001 the EU provided 944.4 million Euros in assistance to the republics (Table 3.2). In 1992 the European Community (EC) Council of Ministers adopted directives for negotiating Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and later also with Uzbekistan. Such PCAs formalise bilateral relations between the EU and individual partner countries, and provided the newly independent states with a common platform from which to address political, economic, and other considerations. The PCAs, which entered into force with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in 1999, specified their political, economic and trade relationships with the EU. The five Central Asian states joined the OSCE in 1992. In this context, the EU has paid particular attention to Uzbekistan; and that country would continue to figure high on the EU’s agenda, because of its resources and because it has the largest population in Central Asia. However, its poor human rights record might affect the EU.
Table 3.2: EU Assistance to the Central Asian Republics, 1991-2001 (million Euro)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kazakhstan</th>
<th>Kyrgyzstan</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
<th>Uzbekistan</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>159.5</td>
<td>109.5</td>
<td>328.2</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>176.9</td>
<td>944.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition, the EU has regarded the region as within its sphere of security interests, especially after the events of 11 September 2001 although it seemed initially that the EU did not want to become involved in the area.79 It is believed that the spread of Islamic radicalism, terrorism and conflict in this region affects not only European nations but also other powers that view Central Asia as part of their own security zones.80 Solana has argued that all countries in this region face the growth of Islamic extremism among their populations. This phenomenon can be controlled, but there is a danger of its spread due to the military operations in Afghanistan.81 In February 2000 the EU agreed on an Action Plan to combat drug trafficking from southwest Asia through Central Asia to the EU.82 The increase in terrorist activity across the newly independent countries has also drawn the EU's attention, as has the rise of political Islam. M. Laumulin has argued: 'For good reason, German analysts believe that strengthening the institutions of European security in the Caucasus and Central Asia can be a key step in enhancing the security of the EU.'83

In general the EU's strategy for Central Asia has pursued the following objectives:

- support the independence and territorial integrity of the states;
- consolidate democratic institutions and strengthen human rights;
- reduce the potential for conflict by undertaking political and economic reform and by using EU influence as an investor and commercial partner;
- support transformation of the economy, but emphasise environmental protection;
- cooperate actively in questions pertaining to investment in energy, mining, and pipeline construction; and
- enhance the EU presence by intensifying political dialogues.84

Besides the EU as a whole, individual members have also tried to expand their ties with the region, with Germany the most involved, in part because of the presence of large ethnic German minorities, particularly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, (Table 2.7).85 Germany seeks to 'provide economic incentives to persuade ethnic Germans to remain
in Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan.\textsuperscript{77} France has also paid special attention to Kazakstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and President Mitterrand’s official visit to Kazakstan in 1993 was the first to the region by a EU leader.\textsuperscript{78}

To sum up, the EU, particularly Germany and France, displayed political, economic and strategic interest in Central Asia, but the its role in politics and strategy is not comparable with some other actors, such as Russia or the United States.\textsuperscript{79}

**Asian Powers**

Some Asian powers have been seeking to expand their relations with Central Asia. China, India, Japan and Israel have the most potential for influence.

**a. China**

The broad ‘Silk Road’ trade network connected China with Central Asia since ancient times. After independence one of the most intriguing developments has been China’s renewed attention to the area. Four considerations provide the foundation for China’s policies towards the Central Asian republics in the post–Soviet era: 1) China’s desire to enhance the economic development of specific inland regions; 2) its growing energy needs; 3) its desire for stability on its frontier and in its border provinces; and 4) its concerns over its position in the post–Cold War strategic environment.\textsuperscript{80} Besides, for many decades China made territorial claims against areas of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and could, if it chose, more easily enforce its claims in present circumstances than during the Russian or Soviet eras.\textsuperscript{81} For the time being it can be said that the Chinese government has largely resolved all of its territorial disputes with its Central Asian neighbors. Kazakstan spent five years demarcating its border with China, and was the first to finish legal registration of it. Kyrgyzstan has begun demarcating its border with China, but Tajikistan has not yet entirely agreed its mutual frontier.\textsuperscript{82}

China is one of Central Asia’s largest trading partners since the early 1990s, particularly with Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan (see Table 3.3).\textsuperscript{83} As early as 1992 it accounted for 44 percent of Kazakstan’s imports and 16.3 percent of its exports.\textsuperscript{84} In recent years China’s total investment in the five countries has reached $500 million.\textsuperscript{85} Since the mid-1990s its trade with Kazakstan alone has exceeded Turkey’s trade with all five Central Asian republics.\textsuperscript{86} China is also interested in reopening the ‘Silk Road’, to function as a corridor between it and Europe. China’s Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation and the Yalian China Commercial and Trade Center have established commercial centres in some cities, such as Tashkent, aimed at increasing trade.\textsuperscript{87}
Table 3.3: Central Asian States’ Trade with China, 1992-1997 (US$ Million)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>363.2</td>
<td>434.74</td>
<td>335.65</td>
<td>390.99</td>
<td>466.44</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>2480.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>35.49</td>
<td>102.45</td>
<td>105.38</td>
<td>231.04</td>
<td>103.40</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>639.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>23.86</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>11.26</td>
<td>17.60</td>
<td>12.06</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>59.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>52.52</td>
<td>54.24</td>
<td>123.67</td>
<td>118.55</td>
<td>181.32</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>530.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>463.56</td>
<td>608.43</td>
<td>579.14</td>
<td>782.04</td>
<td>775.21</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>3778.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


China’s growing energy requirements give it a significant interest in getting access to the energy resources of Central Asia and the Caspian Basin. As Figure 5.1 shows, at present China is the world’s second largest consumer of energy. One analyst has suggested it will have to import one hundred million tons of crude a year by 2010. Its primary energy consumption now stands at a fifth of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) total (exceeded only by the United States), a tenth of the world total, and it accounts for more than a tenth of world carbon emissions. Given the scale of China’s demand, the solution to its oil supply problem could be found in Siberia an/or Central Asia. This has placed the region, as discussed in ChapterFive, at the centre of China’s attention, and encouraged it to establish closer ties. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) is one of the most important investors in the area. In Turkmenistan, for instance, China has sought to build a gas pipeline to Japan through China ($10 billion, for details see Table 5.3). In Kazakhstan, China has made a major investment, not only signalling but also implementing its intention to be and be seen as a major player in the region’s energy development and pipelines. It has signed a multi-billion dollar deal with Kazakhstan to build a 3000-kilometer long pipeline ($3-3.5 billion cost, for details see Table 5.2) over the next few years.

From the security standpoint, the Soviet Union’s dissolution improved China’s military position: as ‘the forward basing of the Soviet Army and border guard antagonistic to China’s interests have been replaced by weak Central Asian indigenous forces.’ Furthermore, China has been seeking to establish military contacts with the region’s states. Reports of growing military exchanges between China and the republics, and offers of military assistance by the former to the latter have also appeared of late.
On the other hand, post-Soviet events in Central Asia have influenced Xinjiang, a region in the west of China mostly populated by Muslims. Its location is important for defence of China’s national sovereignty. Xinjiang shares ethnic and cultural characteristics and borders with Central Asia, which China sees as a gateway to the West. As Xinjiang has been affected by the independence of the Central Asian countries, China has paid especial attention to the region, since instability there could challenge China’s security and jeopardise its access to Central Asia. Chinese authorities have been cautiously following the events in the region and have tried to ensure that the Central Asian regimes give neither support nor encouragement to the separatist movement in Xinjiang. Nevertheless, Beijing has not been completely able to prevent Central Asian events affecting Xinjiang. It should also be borne in mind that, in addition to Central Asian independence, the Mujaheddin's victory in Afghanistan in 1992, had also had an important impact on the rise of Islam in Xinjiang.

One of the most important achievements in Sino-Central Asian relations is the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2001. The organisation seems useful to all the parties involved, but for different reasons. China seeks assurance that Central Asia will not become a base for destabilising Xinjiang, access to Central Asia’s resources, and improved ties with Russia and the republics to promote regional stability and combat terrorism. In addition, China is concerned about the US expansionist policy, especially its military presence. Russia wants an economic commitment from China to balance the US influence in the region, and China also sees the organisation as a counterbalance to the US presence. And the region’s republics aspire to gain a higher degree of independence by playing off China and Russia against each other.

Central Asia’s ruling elites have attached great importance to developing relations with China. Kazak Prime Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev in 2001 described relations with China as a priority in Kazakstan’s foreign policy. In a meeting with his Chinese counterpart in 2003, Karimov expressed admiration for China’s development, claimed its relations with Central Asian had broad prospects, and said: ‘It is an important part of Uzbekistan's foreign policy to continuously strengthen cooperation with China. The two countries will score new achievements in cooperation in the fields of joint ventures and transportation.' At the same meeting Kyrgyz president Akayev said: ‘We treasure our friendship with the Chinese people and wish to strengthen the mutually beneficial cooperation with China in all aspects. Kyrgyzstan would work hard
to make its long border with China the bond of good-neighborly friendship and close cooperation and revitalise the ancient 'Silk Road'.

To conclude, Chinese influence, particularly on the region's economic growth, is increasing. This might reduce the republics' dependence on Russia over time, and enable them to play the 'China card' against Moscow. Although, one can argue that Chinese activities in Central Asia might undermine Russia's position, in practice it is hard to see China replacing Russia in the area at least for the next few decades.

b. India

The Soviet disintegration left India without a superpower patron, and to some degree, with compromised security. This forced New Delhi to construct policies to deal with the new political situation in Central Asia. However, India's favoured position there arose from its long historical connections with it, and the special relationships it enjoyed for decades with the Soviet Union. Early in 1992 India established diplomatic relations with the newly independent republics, opened substantial embassies in all except Tajikistan, and since then has worked to develop security, economic, and cultural cooperation. India has no boundary with any Central Asian state, but because of geographical proximity, historic cultural ties, and its interest in security and sources of energy, considers the region significant for its foreign policy.

Central Asia has occupied an important place in India's 'security calculus'. Undoubtedly, New Delhi's policies reflect changing perspectives in its long-standing rivalry with Pakistan, which, as part of its ongoing challenge to India in Kashmir and South Asia generally, has consistently tried to establish 'strategic depth' in Central Asia. India has sought good relations with Central Asia in order to prevent Pakistan from securing the region's support in the dispute over Kashmir. Therefore, one can argue that the relations of both India and Pakistan with Central Asia are part of their conflict with each other. India has not only attempted to develop its interaction with the region, but has also sought to limit Pakistan's influence there. Meanwhile, New Delhi has also been concerned about the possible effects on its security of the growing Islamist movement in Central Asia, and has supported the secular regimes there.

In addition, New Delhi has been worried that border and ethnic disputes, and civil discord in Central Asia, particularly in the early years of independence, could have domino effects on Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Kashmir. Phenomena such as illegal arms and drug trafficking and organised crime would endanger the security of the regional states and their neighbours, with inevitable consequences for India's national
security. Observers have argued correctly that the phenomena of opium cultivation, narcotics trafficking, as discussed in Chapter Five, and the related crimes and mafia politics pose a threat not only to the Central Asian states themselves, but also to other regional countries like India. To develop its security interest in Central Asia, India has undertaken for the first time to project its military presence there. Indian Defence Ministry Spokesman, Amitabh Chakraborty, emphasised on 13 November 2003 that 'our own security interests, our own energy interests have to be looked after by ourselves.' An agreement with Tajikistan provided for India to station troops and aircraft at Ayni, near Dushanbe. In addition, there is an agreement between two states for Tajik Army officers to be trained in Indian military establishments. Regional experts have viewed India's military presence in Central Asia as a new wrinkle in the geopolitical game being conducted in the region. There is an argument that Moscow wants India to become a player in Central Asia as a balancing factor on both the US and Chinese presence in the area. To this end, it is believed that India built defence ties with Tajikistan and has invited its military to undergo training in India with Russia's full support. However, Pakistan naturally suspects that the military cooperation between Dushanbe and New Delhi is part of an Indian plan of 'encirclement'.

India also seeks to play an important economic and commercial role in Central Asia, and reduce its dependence on Middle East oil by tapping into the energy reserves of the Caspian Basin. Besides, New Delhi has been attempting to ensure continued contact with long-standing commercial partners, and to provide opportunities for Indian businesses. Indian officials and entrepreneurs have explored the trade possibilities of the Central Asian republics, which are seen as a ripe potential market for Indian heavy machinery, pharmaceuticals and tea, and to possess mineral resources of great significance to Indian industry. India's economic relations focus mainly on Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, but it has not ignored the others. In 1992-1993, for example, it offered credits of $10 million to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and $5 million to Turkmenistan. In recent years India has considerably increased its economic agreements with the Central Asian countries, and shown much greater interest in the region's energy, notably in Kazakhstan. Its oil major, ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) has signed an agreement with Kazak government to explore two fields – Alibekmola and Kurmangazi. OVL currently has 15 percent stake in the former and 10 percent in the latter.

Though India has major strategic and economic interests in Central Asia, it seems that lack of overland routes between the two regions has hampered the development of relations. However, one can say that India's strategy towards Central
Asia reflects major trends in its foreign policy, themselves consequences of India's growing economic and military power and aspiration to become a major Asian player, not just the dominant power on the subcontinent. India's policies toward Central Asia therefore dispose of all the instruments of power: economic, diplomatic, and military. The military instrument is used directly by projection of power and by arms sales and security assistance to states like Tajikistan.

c. Japan

In July 1997 Prime Minister Hashimoto announced a new concept in Japan's policy towards the newly independent former Soviet republics, based on recognising a need to greatly expand Japan's foreign policy horizons by introducing 'Eurasian diplomacy from a Pacific perspective'. Since that time Tokyo has worked, particularly in the framework of officially-proclaimed 'Silk Road Diplomacy', to develop its relations with Central Asia and Transcaucasia. As Foreign Minister Komura said in 1999:

Diplomatic relations with the countries of the Central Asian and Caucasian region – the so-called Silk Road region – are an important dimension of our Eurasian diplomacy. What kind of relations Japan forms with former Soviet countries with which it previously had virtually no diplomatic ties will be a test of Japan's capacity as a global player to take a constructive part in the international community in a broader perspective embracing Eurasia as a whole.

According to former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Minoru Tamba, Japan's 'Silk Road Diplomacy' has three pillars: (a) dialogue aimed at enhancing mutual understanding; (b) economic cooperation aimed at fostering prosperity; and (c) cooperation to build peace.

Some observers characterise Japan's interest in Central Asia as not primarily commercial, but economic interests have actually ranked above political in Tokyo's relationships with the region. Michael Crosland, head of the Industrial Bank of Japan's advisory group, evaluated Central Asia in the early 1990s as a key trade area for Japan. Japan plans a major push in aid, trade, and investment with the five Central Asian states (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5). Racial similarity between Japanese and Central Asians is claimed to have had a positive impact on their relations. Hiroyuki Imahashi, Japanese consul in Uzbekistan, said: 'For Japan, this area has not...a strategic or security purpose, [but] more like a moral or spiritual ideal for Japanese people.' 'Buddhism in Japan and the traditional spiritual base for the Japanese' he claimed 'came from this area. And the name “Silk Road” still has a lot of meaning [for the] Japanese people.'
Nevertheless, Japan has not disregarded politics. In general, it is fair to say that Japan’s engagement has included both economic and political features. Japan has worked in many areas such as support for introduction of a market economy, political development, infrastructural development centred on transport and communication, oil and gas, and cooperation with social sectors, including medical care and education, and conservation of the environment.138

Table 3.4: Central Asian Republics’ Trade with Japan, 1998 (US$ thousand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Exports to Japan</th>
<th>Imports from Japan</th>
<th>Trade balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakstan</td>
<td>122,279</td>
<td>54,077</td>
<td>68,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>-554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5,397</td>
<td>-5,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8,005</td>
<td>-7,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>40,965</td>
<td>68,344</td>
<td>-27,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>163,880</strong></td>
<td><strong>136,931</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,949</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Support for introduction of the market economy has been Japan’s major objective in providing economic aid. It has taken the form of advice on macroeconomic and long-term development planning policy, master plans on topics such as promotion of small and medium enterprises, and intensive technical guidance.139 Since 1993 Japan has accepted 100 trainees a year from the Central Asian countries to be taught software provision, market reform and administration.140 Japan has also provided development loans, mainly for upgrading railways, roads, airports and communications. Grant assistance has mostly been directed to support of policies relating to the environment, health and medical care. In environment protection, Japanese organisations are conducting studies of environmental pollution in the Aral Sea.141 In public health, Japan has supported regional medical care in Semipalatinsk province in northeast Kazakstan.142 Other areas of cooperation include agriculture and mining. One favoured approach is to modernise the local cotton and silk weaving industry.143
<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>39.73</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>10.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.73</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>21.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oil and gas are two areas of interest for Japan, because it has no indigenous energy bases, is unsure about its oil and gas supplies, and interested in reducing its dependence on the Middle East. Indeed, as a major energy importer (see Figure 5.1), Japan has displayed keen interest in the Caspian’s energy resources. Hiroyuki Imahashi stated: ‘The Japanese government [has stressed the] importance of mutual dependence between the Silk Road region and the rest of the Asian region – and particularly in the energy field, because the world depends almost [entirely] on resources from the Middle East. And we think there is more possibility in Central Asia.’ In addition, as Toshihiro Oku, Executive Director of Daiwa’s energy and project group, has pointed out, Tokyo is interested in investing in the region’s oil industry because ‘these Central Asian countries offer a very big potential market for sales of infrastructure equipment, pipelines and refinery.’ In Kazakhstan, for instance, three Japanese companies are undertaking two geological surveys in inland areas. Mitsubishi is interested in a possible gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China and carrying out a feasibility study together with China’s CNPC and Exxon/Mobil. However, Japan cannot play a big role in this regard, partly because ‘Japanese companies are relatively inexperienced in exploiting oil and gas resources.’

In relation to Central Asia’s geopolitical importance, Japan’s main stated goal has been to help maintain independence and the peace of the region’s states. This is not only significant for international peace in general but can also be instrumental in shaping positive and constructive relations with Russia and China, Japan’s two important neighbours, as well as the Middle Eastern countries, notably Turkey and Iran.

To the Central Asian republics, relations with Japan are important. Given its position as a leading economy and large provider of aid (Table 3.5) and investment, during his 2002 visit to China Karimov noted that Japan should play a significant role in the international community and heighten its presence in the Central Asian region, and expressed a wish for Japan to cooperate with Uzbekistan to stabilise the balance of income and expenditure.

In sum, Japan’s engagement with Central Asia has been based on both economic and political considerations. The Japanese government has great interest in investing in this area. By expanding its economic and political influence in the region Tokyo hopes to reduce its dependence on Middle East oil and help stabilise Central Asia, which is important for stability in the Middle East. Simultaneously, the Central Asian states have
shown interest in closer ties with Japan, although the potential for their relations has not yet been fully realised.153

d. Israel

Despite its geographic remoteness from Central Asia, Israel was one of the quickest and most enthusiastic proponents of ties with the newly independent republics. This is because since 1948 Israel has sought to enhance its relations with the Islamic world, reduce the number of its enemies, and strengthen its regional and global position. To achieve this objective, it has pursued several strategies. In the 1950s, Israel developed the 'periphery strategy' of making common cause with Middle Eastern states beyond the ‘Arab fence’.154 Prime Minister Ben-Gurion sought to create a non-Arab Middle East alliance of Turkey, Ethiopia, Iran and Israel, but his strategy was undermined by the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978/1979.155 Then Israel struggled to divide the Arab world. A separate peace with Egypt was achieved in 1979, but had only limited effect due to the continued hostility of the rest of the Arab world, the coolness of the peace with Egypt, and the antipathy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.156

Failure of these approaches led Israel to seek to develop its relations with other Muslim countries.157 The emergence of the Central Asian republics provided Israel an opportunity, and it has established extensive relationships with them. Israel is playing an increasingly significant economic role in the region, and is a potential source of investment and technical assistance, especially in agriculture.158 In addition, Israel is keen to develop its influence in the area in order to divert the republics from prospective pro-Iranian policies and prove Israel’s bona fides in the Muslim world. Meanwhile, the Jewish minority populations of the region are another area of Israeli concern.159

At the economic level, each can benefit the other. Israelis have perceived Central Asia as an attractive investment opportunity, and have sought to forge links for long-term economic and political benefits.160 Central Asia’s most attractive sectors are its abundant natural resources, large pool of relatively cheap skilled labour, and potential as a market for specialised goods, such as machinery, chemicals and plastics.161 At the same time, Central Asia’s economic difficulties and needs, discussed in Chapter Two, have led its states to take account of Israel, especially in agricultural and technical matters, because of its possession of specialist technology and expertise, mainly in the water and agricultural sectors.162 For instance, Israel is involved in a $100 million irrigation project and a scheme to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Turkey.163
Furthermore, Israel’s geopolitical view of Central Asia is based on fear of growing Islamic fundamentalism in the region. Hence, Israel wishes the region’s republics to remain secular, and to avoid cultivating close relations with Iran. Iran’s broader relationship with Russia could also impact on Israel’s attitude toward Central Asia. Tehran has had good relations with Moscow, discussed below, although Russia’s continued assistance to Iran has to some degree strained Israel-Russia ties. However, while the growing hostility of some Islamic countries and the continuing Russian-Iranian alliance may dominate the headlines, Tel Aviv is quietly making friends in Central Asia through economic and agricultural policy. Israel has also capitalised on over ten years of active diplomatic relations to promote security ties with Central Asia. It is reported that, because of Central Asia’s proximity to Iran, Israel has located intelligence resources there, both human and electronic. During a visit to Kazakhstan in 2001 Avigdor Lieberman, Israel’s Minister of Infrastructure, suggested Israel and Kazakhstan exchange information to combat terrorism.

The Central Asian ruling elites see Israel as an important partner in developing their economies and ties with the West. Perhaps one major reason for their interest in close relations with Israel is that their foreign relations have not been influenced by Islam discussed in Chapter Two. They have pursued different policies from most Muslim states over the Arab-Israel conflict and Palestinian crisis, and have shown enthusiasm for Israeli support against Islamic extremism. In 2000 Kazakhstan sought Israel’s help against terrorism. Nazarbayev said: ‘Israel has important experience in the struggle against terrorism and this is very important for us.’ According to a report of September 2000, Uzbekistan also requested Israeli assistance to counter Islamist extremist terrorism.

Thus, Israel’s ties with the Central Asian republics appear designed to make more friends in the Islamic world. And from the outset Israel has had US support in its advances towards the region. In July 1992 State Department, in a joint statement on US-Israel Technical Assistance, urged Israel to take part in the Central Asian transition. Due to Central Asia’s geopolitical and geoeconomic importance, Israel will maintain its ties with the region, and the republics will also sustain relations with Israel, irrespective of the state of Palestinian-Israeli relations.

The Islamic world

When the Central Asian republics became independent, it was widely expected that their isolation from the Islamic world would end, and they would rapidly develop
relations. But it soon appeared that, although the region’s states have sought to expand relations with some Islamic countries, they have not tried to play the ‘Islam card’ in their foreign relations.

Some have argued that Central Asia’s leaders ignored the religious factor as an instrument for developing relations with the Muslim world. A. Hyman, for example, has pointed out that ‘none of them desired their shared Muslim religion to intrude as a factor in their relations with neighbours.’ Central Asian policy toward Palestine is a vivid example of playing down the religious element. As mentioned earlier, no state in the region has followed the ideological line of Iran or Saudi Arabia, on the Palestine issue, by restricting relations with Israel. B. Shaffer echoed this view, arguing that the foreign policy that emerged in the Central Asian republics ‘[did] not support the culturalist explanation of foreign policy.’ She added: ‘...culture seems to give us little explanation or predictive power in understanding the foreign policies of these states.’ Instead, the republics have striven to enhance their politico-economic ties with Israel.

The Muslim world’s interests in Central Asia can be divided into three categories: political, ideological and economic. The motivations of Muslim countries in exploring the potential for new relations with the Central Asian republics are mainly political, though Central Asia’s potential as a market and its resources of oil and gas have also played a part. Some Islamic states have attempted to deal with the region through their own ideological model; and there has been a kind of ideological competition between their political establishments, Turkey emphasising its secular model, Saudi Arabia supporting strict Wahhabism and Iran showing little interest in political Islam.

The leading Muslim countries vying to maximise their influence in the region are Iran and Turkey, and to a lesser extent, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

a. Iran

Iran has a long history of relations with, and cultural influence over, Central Asia, which was essentially part of the sphere of Iranian civilization in its various manifestations. Iran’s national and cultural renaissance after the Arab invasion occurred in Central Asia, especially in Samarkand, Bukhara and parts of present-day Afghanistan. The demise of the USSR and the emergence of independent states in the region once again have created opportunities and security threats for Iran. Tehran established official relations with the region’s states in November 1991. Given the importance of the region, senior Iranian figures, including Presidents Rafsanjani and
Khatami, visited the region. Iran, relying on its location as a bridge between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, has sought an important role in the region’s politics and economics. At the 11th International Seminar on Central Asia and the Caucasus on 8-9 December 2003, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi maintained that the new conditions following independence in 1991 created a good opportunity for pursuing Iran’s and the republics’ common interests. He said: ‘To stabilise this region we needed first to establish political relations with the countries of the region, second to develop economic cooperation...third to play an instrumental role in the region’s security, and finally, Iran wishes that foreign competition in the region be replaced by regional cooperation.'

Tehran has pursued two sets of policies, the first political and security, the second economic and cultural. At the political and security levels, conflict in Tajikistan and developing instability in the region became of great concern for Iran’s policymakers who, according to some analysts, feared it might invite foreign intervention and a new influx of refugees into Iran. In the cultural sphere, historical relations between Iran and Central Asia in linguistics, customs and religion could play a role. Iran has viewed the region as an opportunity to develop its economic ties, and some of these landlocked states see Iran as a natural link and gateway to the high seas.

In particular, Iran’s relations with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are based on mutual interests in the energy and transportation sectors. Iran could help these countries to develop their oil and gas industries and pipelines, as will be discussed in Chapter Five. In this connection, the Kazak President said, ‘...our investors who work on oil consider that the most beneficial route is through Iran to the Persian Gulf.’ According to an Interfax report of 9 March 2004, the contract for building a reservoir park in Turkmenistan, with a capacity of 3,000 tonnes, to be completed in August 2005, has gone to an Iranian company, Pars Energy. Iran’s relations with Turkmenistan have been the best of all with the post-Soviet republics (see Table 3.6). Niyazov and Khatami described Ashghabat-Tehran relations as a pattern for the rest of the region: ‘An example of fraternal good-neighborly relations.’ This is partly because of the absence of any major security problems, the political stability in Turkmenistan, and the possibility for developing economic ties. Completion of the 295 km Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan Railway has linked Turkmenistan’s railways to those of Iran, and given Iran an opportunity to use Turkmenistan’s rail networks to transport goods to other regional countries, particularly Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, obviously, some events have affected relations between these neighbours. In 2003 the Turkmen government
awarded a contract for rebuilding its refinery at Seyidi to the Israeli company Merhav, and on 8 September 2003 President Niyazov expressed the hope that Merhav would continue to participate in Turkmenistan’s economic development. The company is also developing software for a database that Turkmenistan intends to use for tracking the arrivals and departures of all foreign and Turkmen citizens.

Iran has a common culture and language with Tajikistan, and was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with it. It played a significant role in ending the Tajik civil war, beginning with a ceasefire agreement signed in Tehran in 1994. In August 1995, Iran hosted a peace summit attended by Tajik president Imomali Rahmanov and Abdollah Nouri, leader of Tajikistan’s Islamic Movement, at which both sides agreed to extend the ceasefire and form a joint deliberative council to narrow their differences. Tehran maintained amicable relations with both sides, and never supported the Tajik Islamists’ aim to create an Islamic government, even though Tajik opposition leaders were in Iran from 1993 to 1998. Coordinating policy with Moscow, in 1997 Tehran participated in preparing the General Agreement on Establishment of Peace and National Accord and Protocol on Mutual Understanding, signed by the Rahmanov and Nouri. Iran hosted the second, sixth and eighth rounds of peace negotiations, one consultative conference, and two meetings between the Tajik president and the opposition leader.

Iran’s relations with Uzbekistan, however, have been more difficult. Uzbekistan was the last Central Asian country in which Iran established an embassy. Comparatively, even though Uzbekistan has a pivotal position in the region, it ‘has not been as attractive to Iran as the other republics’, partly due to the Uzbek government’s suspicions of Iran’s intentions. For example, in October 1993 an Iranian presidential visit to Tashkent did not go very well, partly because Karimov refused to let an Iranian cultural centre open in Samarkand. Uzbekistan was also the only Central Asian republic to support the 1995 US-proposed trade embargo against Tehran, in part prompted by Iran’s purchase of Russian nuclear reactors.

In general, Iran’s leaders are convinced that economic presence is the key to increased influence in the region, and Iran has had good trade relations with it, particularly Turkmenistan (see Table 3.6), though its investments there are not comparable with Turkey’s, as discussed below. Iran also facilitated the Central Asian states’ admission to the ECO. On this, former Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati articulated: ‘The Islamic Republic of Iran is convinced that regional cooperation is the only guarantor of regional peace, security, and stability. It is in this light that bi- and
multilateral relations are being forged with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus.\textsuperscript{193} He also said: ‘The ECO pursues objectives like trade among member-states, and the encouragement of sustained development and active participation in international trade.’\textsuperscript{194}

While Iran’s role in economic and political developments should not be exaggerated, it is nevertheless fair to say that it has contributed to the economic development and political stability of the region, and is likely to continue to do so.\textsuperscript{205} One of the important dimensions of Tehran’s policy towards this area is security. Of course, this is not a new consideration for Iran, indeed, as Abbas Maleki, former Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, has written: ‘For the past two centuries, the greatest threat to Iran’s security and territorial integrity was posed by the Russian empire and its successor the Soviet Union.’\textsuperscript{206} For Iranian foreign and national security, maintenance of stability and peace in Central Asia has become a significant security objective since 1991. Velayati stated that ‘the Islamic Republic could not have remained passive in the face of the deteriorating security conditions on its northern border after the collapse of the Soviet System.’\textsuperscript{207} Therefore, one can argue that Tehran has given priority to maintaining stability in the region and securing its borders as much as possible. President Khatami said in Ashghhabat in 1998: ‘Stability here is our task – we should not create excuses for aliens to penetrate into our region.’\textsuperscript{208} During his visit to Bishkek on 5 September 2001, Foreign Minister Kharrazi affirmed that Iran’s relations with Central Asia were designed to overcome such threats to stability as drug trafficking, organised crime and the Afghan conflict.\textsuperscript{209} Iran played an effective role in conflict resolution in Tajikistan, as discussed in Chapter Four. Iran feels threatened by NATO’s eastward expansion, especially by the enthusiasm with which Central Asian leaders embraced PfP. During his visit to Moscow in March 2001, Khatami asserted that ‘any foreign presence in the Central Asian region can upset the balance of peace and stability there.’\textsuperscript{210} More importantly, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, a US military presence in the region poses a further potential threat.

Although Iran has sought to strengthen ties with Central Asia, it has been careful not to jeopardise its good relations with Moscow, which are important to its national and security interests.\textsuperscript{211} In 1996 Velayati claimed that Iranian-Russian relations were ‘at their highest level in contemporary history.’\textsuperscript{212} Thus one can argue that, for Tehran close multi-dimensional relations with Moscow are more important than ties with the region’s states.
### Table 3.6: Trade Relations between Iran and the Central Asian Republics during 1998-2000 (US$ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th></th>
<th>1999</th>
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<th>2000</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>-78.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>131.6</td>
<td>107.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>102.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>122.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>108.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, for Iran, relations with Russia as a strategic balancer, regionally and globally, as a source of trade and arms, and as a partner in political and economic regional patterns are significant. In this connection, Iran’s regional policy in regard to Tajikistan’s civil war (and the conflict in Chechnya) had become increasingly ‘Russiacentric’. Iran’s Defence Minister, Ali Shamkhani, has confirmed that closer defence relations between Teheran and Moscow are both necessary and inevitable, not least because both perceive a US-led NATO presence in Central Asia as a potential threat and feel that NATO’s eastward enlargement will escalate regional tensions and crises. The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 alarmed Iran to such extent that friendly relations with Moscow are now crucial for its national security.

In attempting to develop its influence in Central Asia, Iran has faced some political, economic and religious limitations and challenges. Economically, due to 8 years of war with Iraq (1980-1988), Iran has faced financial dilemmas, and has been unable to invest considerably in the region. Furthermore, Iran represents Shiite Islam, while about 85 percent of Central Asians are Sunni Muslims. Although Iran has not emphasised its Shiism in policy towards this area, its reputation as Shiite and as a would-be exporter of revolutionary Islam has caused the West and some of the region’s states to challenge its influence, whereas the opportunities for influence provided to other Muslim countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia by the majority Sunni population have gone largely unremarked. B. Rumer, for example, argued that ‘Tajikistan in particular has been a prime target of attempts [by Iran] to export the Islamic revolution.’ R. Burnashev, a Kazak scholar, has also claimed that one element of Iran’s regional policy has been ‘the attempt to strengthen the role of Islam in Central Asia.’

Islam as such has not in fact been a major dimension of Tehran’s policy towards this region; instead it has been motivated more by political, economic and strategic variables. Arguably, Iran has not attempted to disseminate political Islam in the region, nor to export its revolution there, but what some Central Asian states, particularly, Uzbekistan, view as an Islamic threat has engendered a very cautious attitude toward Tehran. Some of the region’s analysts, such as K. Syroezhkin, of the journal Kontinent in Almaty, have argued that the Iranian government ‘took a pragmatic position toward Central Asia. Aware that the rapid dissemination of Islamic idea in Central Asia was impossible, Iran concentrated on three tasks: economic cooperation, creation of joint transportation routes, and then resolution of issues involving the Caspian Sea.’
Externally, two issues have challenged Tehran's policy in Central Asia. First, the United States has been seeking to isolate Iran, as discussed in Chapter Four and Five, particularly in respect of energy resources and pipelines. Second, as mentioned earlier, some of the region's states, especially Uzbekistan, are reluctant to develop closer relations with Tehran. Many in and outside the region, particularly in the United States, feared that Iran would try to export its Islamic revolution to the newly independent states, and suspicion of Iran's intentions has limited its influence at the state level.

b. Turkey

The collapse of the USSR and the independence of the Central Asian countries were significant developments for the foreign policy of Turkey, which by early 1992 had opened embassies in all the Central Asian capitals. Over time Ankara's relations with them intensified, becoming more important to Ankara as the collapse of the USSR reduced Turkey's strategic importance to NATO, and its attempt to join the EU encountered setbacks. These circumstances drove Turkey to seek a more active role in Central Asia and Transcaucasus, to guard against possible isolation from Europe's emerging economic and political institutions, reassert its importance as a regional power, and find new sources of economic, cultural and political influence. As Z. Onis contended: 'The sense of isolation [was] crucial in understanding both the initial euphoria concerning the 'Turkic' republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as the subsequent development of close military and economic ties with Israel in the Middle Eastern context.' It seemed that strategic partnership with the region's states would be an important asset in relations between Ankara and Europe. In this connection, Turkey's Permanent Representative to the EU, Oguz Demiralp, asserted that Turkey 'has privileged links with Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. Therefore, not only with its first-hand insight on these regions but also with its common background with them, Turkey can positively contribute to the EU's foreign policy towards this extensive area.'

Economic, cultural and political interests motivate Turkey's ties with the region. Initially Ankara, was supported by some Western states, especially the United States, sought to convince Central Asian leaders that the Western-oriented, secularist 'Turkish model' was a roadmap for their transition, and despite its imperfection was preferable to the possible alternative of an Islamist-based Iranian model or simply a return to Russian domination. After meeting Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel in February 1992,
President George Bush described Turkey as ‘the model of a democratic, secular state which could be emulated by Central Asia.’231 Promotion of the Turkish model served two purposes, the first to negate Iranian or Russian influence, the second to create an environment favourable to Western, particularly US, national interests. Washington hoped that Turkey could create a bridge between Central Asia and the West.232 Later the Turkish model appeared to lose its earlier significance, when both Washington and Moscow realised that their initial fears of Iran’s influence had been exaggerated.233

Another factor in Turkey’s policy towards Central Asia was ‘Panturkism’.234 The underlying principle of this was the unity of all Turkic peoples, based on their common origins and linguistic affinities, and Ankara actively promoted it, seeing itself as leader and centre of the Turkic peoples.235 On the global level, Panturkism envisaged a unified federated or confederated state including Azerbaijan and all the Central Asian republics except Tajikistan. In January 1992 a *Turkish Times* article claimed: ‘Today there is an unprecedented effort underway to unite all the peoples of the region in a single federation of Turkistan, a land of the Turks. Such a federation could extend from Turkey to the Himalayas.’236 On 2 May 1992 Demirel, addressing a meeting in Ashgabat jointly with President Niyazov, told his select Turkmen audience: ‘You are part of the Turkic world, which stretches from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China. And this world is on the political stage today. The rest of the world is following behind.’237 The concept, however, failed to gain much following in the region.238

To coordinate assistance to the region’s republics, and promote cooperation with them, the Turkish Foreign Ministry formed the ‘Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency’ (TIKA) in January 1992 and also set up annual presidential ‘Turkic summits’.239 Turkey’s economic support for the states of the region has ranged from grants and loans to technical support and supplies, trade, transportation and communication projects. During the last decade, around 2,500 Turkish companies have been operating in a wide range of investment projects in Central Asia, their investment reaching $8.4 billion and involving $4 billion in construction services.240 Trade volume climbed from $145 million in 1992 to over $5.6 billion in 1999 (see also Table 3.7).241 Moreover, Turkey extended bank credits amounting to $1.5 billion, with official agencies such as the Turkish Eximbank playing an important role (see Table 3.8).242 In addition, some Turkish scholars believe that Ankara has attempted to help transformation of the region’s states from centrally controlled to market economies, though whether they have so transformed or whether Turkey could so assist them is debatable.243 Ankara has also attached special interest to the region’s energy deposits
and their transportation to world markets, working to ensure that oil from Kazakstan and gas from Turkmenistan are directed through Turkey. Lacking energy reserves, Turkey hopes to capitalise on energy imports from the region, reduce its dependence on the Middle East, and become a transit route to Western markets. In this context, it has supported the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project (discussed in Chapter Five) as an alternative to the export of Central Asian hydrocarbons via Russia or Iran.

Table 3.7: Trade between Turkey and the Central Asian Turkic Republics, 1992-1997
(US$ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakstan</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>131.7</td>
<td>150.8</td>
<td>164.0</td>
<td>210.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>165.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>117.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>111.8</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>213.5</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>138.6</td>
<td>229.9</td>
<td>210.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>94.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>372.2</td>
<td>117.6</td>
<td>383.9</td>
<td>541.6</td>
<td>588.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>48.20</td>
<td>156.00</td>
<td>180.80</td>
<td>265.40</td>
<td>220.90</td>
<td>341.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: I. Bal, *Turkey’s Relations With the West and Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2000, p.85.

Table 3.8: Credits Opened by Turk-Eximbank for Turkic Central Asian Republics, to April 1999 (US$ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Credit limit</th>
<th>Used for goods</th>
<th>Used for projects</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakstan</td>
<td>240.00</td>
<td>40.05</td>
<td>173.07</td>
<td>213.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>35.76</td>
<td>12.37</td>
<td>48.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>163.26</td>
<td>74.99</td>
<td>29.35</td>
<td>104.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>375.00</td>
<td>124.58</td>
<td>201.38</td>
<td>325.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>853.26</td>
<td>275.38</td>
<td>416.17</td>
<td>691.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: I. Bal, *Turkey’s Relations With the West and Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2000, p.83.

From a political perspective, Turkey could have an impact on reshaping the politics and government in the Central Asian countries, because it presents a secular model. Furthermore, some analysts have argued that Turkey has provided significant diplomatic support for the states of the region in their international relations and participation in regional and global organisations. Ankara saw itself as intermediary
between Central Asia and the West. According to *The New York Times* report, at a Washington conference on aid to the former Soviet Union in 1992, Turkey’s Foreign Minister, Gokberk Ergenekon, told US Secretary of State Baker that the Central Asian republics had asked Turkey to ask Washington to open diplomatic ties with them.247

Development of religious, cultural-historical and linguistic contacts with the culturally-related Central Asian nations have been a high priority in Turkey’s engagement with the region. Some analysts have evaluated these as successful. S. Sayari, for instance, argued that Turkey ‘has achieved greater success in implementing its educational and cultural programs in Central Asia [than its other policies].’248 Turkey’s cultural and educational programs include building schools, providing scholarships to Turkish universities, training for specialisations in a variety of governmental institutions such as central banking and foreign service, and promoting adoption of the Latin alphabet.249 According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, more than 10,000 students from these republics have received training since 1992; in 2000 approximately 7,000 were studying in Turkey.250 In the 1992-1997 period, $55 million was spent on these training programs.251 Important steps were also taken in broadcasting. Turkey’s radio and TV have been broadcasting over 400 hours of entertainment programs, news and films a week to Central Asia.252 In commenting on Turkish television broadcasts to the region, an Ostankino (Moscow) reporter said: ‘While Iran and the Arab countries are trying to consolidate their positions via the mosques, the Turks are unstinting when it comes to expanding their TV presence,’253 In fact, this has been a significant element in Turkey’s policy towards the republics of Central Asia.254 To compete with Tehran, Ankara has become active in the religious field, including building mosques, distributing the Koran, sending imams, and taking students to Turkey for religious education in madrassas.255

With such a wide range of interaction, the question is what has been the Central Asian states’ view of their relations with Turkey? After independence, the ‘Turkish model’ was seen at first as appropriate, largely because of its emphasis on establishing secular institutions in a predominantly Muslim society. The region’s leaders were quick to recognise its importance, and initially openly stated their support for it. President Karimov, for instance, said: ‘I announce to the whole world that my country will go forward by the Turkish route,’ and also maintained, while visiting Turkey in 1992, that ‘our example is Turkey, we will establish our state according to this example.’256 President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan also labelled Turkey the ‘Morning Star’ of Central
Asia, that ‘shows the true path to other Turks.’ In explaining these leaders’ interest in the ‘Turkish model’, I. Lipovsky argued:

What the leaders found appealing in the state model of Kemal Ataturk, the founding father of the Turkish republic, was its fundamental principles: nationalism, which was lacking in Marxism-Leninism; secularism, a sine qua non for the preservation of their own power; etatism, which included control of the economy; and republicanism, which ensured against a return to the absolute forms of rule practiced by the Central Asian khanates (rulers) of Bukhara, Kokand and Khiva.

Panturkism, on the other hand, has proved unwelcome. Niyazov and Karimov, for example, classified it as a potential obstacle to their nationalist rule. Karimov dismissed it briefly, as ‘Turkey wants us to become Turks but we are Uzbeks, not Turks.’

In fact, certain problems and limitations encountered by Turkey explain its failure to expand its influence substantially in Central Asia; its active foreign policy has not resulted in its attaining a leadership role in the former Soviet periphery. One major constraint is that its economic capability is insufficient to provide economic aid at the level desired by the region’s states. Onis noted that ‘economic difficulties such as high inflation, limited budgetary resources, and a costly war against Kurdish separatism, also cast doubt over the value of the Turkish connection.’ The region’s leaders soon realised that Turkey’s economic power was limited, and that it could not extend substantial assistance.

The next obstacle was that Central Asia’s links with other former Soviet republics were strong enough to make their replacement by linkages with Turkey harder than had been assumed. In particular, movement of the region’s oil and natural gas to global markets still mostly depends on Russian pipelines. Furthermore, Turkey’s experiments with democracy hold little appeal for the region’s authoritarian governments, and they hope to prevent the emergence of a new ‘big brother’, who could deprive them of the opportunities presented by other Muslim countries. Thus, Turkish influence in the area has significantly declined but cannot be altogether discounted.

c. Pakistan

Like Iran and Turkey, Pakistan has expressed considerable interest in Central Asia, which all factions in Pakistani politics agree presents important opportunities. Thus, since the demise of the USSR, Pakistan has actively presented itself to the region as a valuable partner, alternative model of development, and outlet to the outside world.
To these ends, official visits by leaders and their principal aides mushroomed from early 1992, so that by 2002 they numbered approximately 90-100.266

Islamabad’s policy towards the republics has been motivated by both economic and strategic objectives, with economic considerations dominant and the region viewed as a source of raw materials and a potential export market. Pakistan’s economic priorities have been: developing bilateral trade in raw materials and manufactured goods, opening up communications, and contracting for regular power supplies.267 Some estimates suggested the region had a potential market worth up to $80 billion per year and that even 5 percent of this would almost equal Pakistan’s current annual exports.268 There has also been talk of establishing a rail link between the region and Pakistan.269 In particular, Islamabad has shown interest in pipelines through Afghanistan to transport Central Asia’s oil and gas. In a meeting with Nazarbeyev and Niyazov in 2000, Pakistan’s Chief Executive, later President, Musharraf, urged them to consider the project, and his Foreign Minister Abdus Sattar admitted: ‘We would like to be part of the arrangements for gas from Turkmenistan and eventually oil from Kazakhstan.’270

Strategically, in the early 1990s Pakistan viewed linkages with the Central Asian republics as a chance to re-establish its relations with the United States, which after 1990 were subject to sanctions and later extended to a ban on all aid to Pakistan because of its nuclear weapons program.271 Moreover, Pakistan’s strategic significance was diminished by the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. To regain US attention, Pakistan presented itself as a moderate Islamic state seeking to prevent the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.272 However, Washington was focused on Turkey as a more fitting model for the Central Asian republics. Perhaps one reason is that Pakistan is more influenced than Turkey by Islamic groups such as Jamaat-i-Islami (the Islamic Society) that have been active in Central Asia. It is reported, for example, that ‘[Jamaat-i-Islami] supported Islamic fundamentalists fighting in Tajikistan in 1992 and 1993.’273 However, after the events of 11 September 2001 the United States also views Pakistan as a country that might play a significant role in Washington’s relations with Central Asia, potentially a major stabilising factor there, and have supported its regional role.

Meanwhile, Pakistan, feeling itself an isolated and vulnerable Muslim state bordering massive Hindu India, perceives the possibility of a new ‘Muslim strategic depth’ that Central Asia could confer.274 Indeed, at one level Pakistan’s interests in Central Asia can be viewed in the context of its long-term rivalry with India.275 This rivalry largely explains Islamabad’s eagerness to develop relations with the Central Asian republics. Additionally, Pakistan’s search for a quick end to the civil war in
Afghanistan led it to pay more attention to Central Asia. D. Smith has argued that Pakistan’s leaders saw the newborn republics as potential allies in its policy struggle over both Afghanistan and Kashmir. But given Islamabad’s fundamental role in establishing the Taliban, and regional leaders’ fear of politicised Islam, it is hard to see the Central Asian states as potential allies for Pakistan.

From the religious viewpoint, given Pakistan’s community of faith with the Central Asian nations, some observers initially expected that Islamabad would express Islamic sympathy in its relations with the region’s republics. Lieutenant-General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, Head of Pakistani Intelligence under President Zia ul-Haq, for example, stated that the Jihad against communism would not stop in Afghanistan, but would push on to Central Asia. But it was soon apparent that Islam would not be an important factor in relations with Central Asia, and Islamabad sought to avoid playing the ‘Islam Card’ in its ties with the region. For instance, the republics’ good relations with Israel have had no negative impact on Pakistan’s policy toward the region.

Pakistan’s relations with Central Asia have always been problematic; lack of direct access to the region and of historic ties with it have hindered Islamabad’s ambitions for close relations, and economic difficulties have prevented it playing an important role. T. Amin has argued that ‘the potential for Pakistan to get involved in the region is severely limited, not simply because of the Afghan conflict, but because of the general lack of financial resources available to Pakistan.’ Pakistan lacks resources for investment, and even the credits offered have been largely symbolic. Another phenomenon that affected Pakistan-Central Asian relations was Islamabad’s backing for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. At a meeting with Musharraf on 4 March 2000, then Turkmen Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov emphasised that the region’s countries were not happy with Pakistan’s support of the Taliban. More importantly, the Central Asian leaders have displayed little interest in developing relations with Pakistan. One of the main reasons for this is that they recognise the strong Islamic component in Pakistan’s geopolitical thinking and in the character of its government, even though Pakistan in recent years tried to change this perception by, for example, offering to help resolve the Tajik conflict, and cautioning the Taliban against involvement in Tajikistan. The ruling elites also fear that excessively close relations with Pakistan could harm their trade ties with India, which in their view has more to offer economically than has Pakistan.

In short, Pakistan has undeniable interests in enhancing its economic, cultural and political ties with Central Asia, but its hopes that the region would provide strategic
depth and become a collective security partner in its struggle with India have been dashed. The Central Asian regimes do not see Pakistan as a strategic partner.

d. Saudi Arabia

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and appearance of new independent Islamic nations immediately attracted Saudi attention to Central Asia, both to extend its influence and to reduce that of its rivals, Iran and Turkey, in the inter-Islamic political arena in this strategically important region. Accordingly, the Saudi regime established relations with the new republics. During his tour through the region in January 1992, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faysal Bin Abd Al Aziz Al Saud established embassies in each country, promised to provide economic and humanitarian aid. He declared that Saudi Arabia has focused its attention on cooperation with brothers in the Islamic world. We express to [the peoples of Central Asia] our desire and hope to cooperate with them and to establish ties of amity in order for the future of this region to be as prosperous as its past was.

Riyadh has sought to develop its influence through cultural, Islamic-oriented, trade, financial and banking policies. Central Asian independence provided Saudi Arabia with an opportunity to expand its special brand of Islam, Wahhabism, in the region through building or restoring mosques and madrassas, taking pilgrims to Mecca and Medina for the hajj, dispatching millions of copies of the Koran, organising Islamic studies centres and promulgating use of the Arabic language. In addition, Saudis have built dormitories for Muslim visitors in Samarkand, and an Islamic Studies centre in Tashkent.

In a sense, Saudi Arabia has continued its policy of filling the gaps left by years of Soviet domination and suppression of religious activities in the area. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Saudi cooperation with Central Asia would be difficult because its position on Islam differs radically from that of the United States. It is, however, likely that Washington would prefer to see the Saudi brand of Islam in the region rather than Iran’s political Islam.

From the political angle, the Saudi desire to enhance its presence in Central Asia seems based on preventing the spread of Iranian influence and revolutionary Islam, which it sees as a threat to its own security. However, in recent years Riyadh has shown less concern about the spread of Tehran’s influence, partly due to realisation that Iran policy towards the region has focused on economic and security interests, and
partly because since the mid-1990s there has been a growing rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran.297

The economic dimension is another field of Saudi activity in the area.298 An observer has commented thus on the mix of activities and motives in Saudi policies: 'Although most of the financial aid is for religious purposes there are economic benefits as well. For instance Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan welcome Saudi investments to develop these precious resources but for export away from the Russian market.'299 However, the emergence of the Caspian region as a new source of oil has caused serious concern to the Saudi government and its allies in the Persian Gulf. This is evident in the insistence of former Saudi Oil Minister Ahmad Zaki al-Yamani that the Persian Gulf Arab states should open their upstream sectors to foreign investors to resist future competition from the Caspian.300 In this connection, D. Ignatius wrote in The Washington Post in 1999 that the Saudis could hinder development of the Caspian oil industry by reducing oil prices, combined with reopening their hydrocarbon industry to large-scale Western investment, which could divert potential investors from the Caspian region.301

To the region's states, Saudi Arabia's financial resources have been its main attraction. Akayev, who visited Saudi Arabia in 1993, said '[he] would be happy to make the hajj for $100 million.'302 Yet Saudi support of the Taliban had a deleterious impact on the regional states' relations with Riyadh, and Saudi influence has also been limited by the religious repression practised by the region's states, particularly Uzbekistan.

e. Afghanistan

Afghanistan's relations with the Central Asian republics go back to the Soviet era. Gradually from 1978, and especially from 1980, after the Soviet military intervention, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government came to rely upon Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan as well as Russia for a range of goods. Political and economic links were rapidly expanded to bolster the Kabul regime, along with initiatives in higher education and culture.303 However, the PDPA's defeat, continued civil war, and the rise of the Taliban prevented the country expanding its relations with the ex-Soviet Central Asian states.304

Continued conflict and drug trafficking still impact negatively on the republics' attitudes toward Afghanistan (see Maps 3.1 and 5.2).305 Particularly since the establishment of the Taliban regime in 1996, Afghanistan came to be perceived as the prime security risk to Central Asia. However, Central Asian policymakers may see
Afghanistan’s instability and crisis as both threat and opportunity. Islam Karimov said: ‘For almost 20 years in Afghanistan, one of the immediate neighbours of Uzbekistan, the fratricidal war has been going on. This war [has] present[ed] a threat to peace and stability of the whole Central and South Asia’, and, ‘the regional conflicts in Afghanistan…posing real external threat to our national security, do not help to strengthen stability in Central Asia or globally.’ President Niyazov, by contrast, viewed the Taliban as an integrating and stabilising force able to overcome Afghanistan’s ethnic squabbling, and tried to expand bilateral relations with it. However, the states were worried about Afghan support for the civil war in Tajikistan, In particular, as Hyman noted, interaction between the two civil wars, with Tajik oppositionists receiving weapons from Afghanistan, training in camps on Afghan territory, and commanders of rival Afghan parties actively aiding Tajik opposition forces, albeit on a small scale. Karimov shifted from supporting Afghanistan’s (Uzbek) General Dostum to bombing Tajik refugee camps across the Afghan border. Moreover, drug traffic from Afghanistan, discussed in Chapter Five, has also jeopardised security and stability in the area.

The overthrow of the Taliban opened a new chapter in Afghanistan’s relations with Central Asia. Some experts and politicians, such as Niyazov, believe that it is time for pipeline projects, to transport the region’s oil and gas through Afghanistan to Pakistan and the Indian Ocean. However, it seems that until a completely stable government is established in Afghanistan the republics will show scant interest in relations with Kabul.
Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the Soviet Union's disintegration provided the Central Asian republics with opportunities to establish their own foreign relations. It argued that, due to the need for nation-state-building, international legitimacy, technical and economic assistance and security, the states have been attempting to join the international community through establishing relationships with a broad spectrum of countries and joining international and regional organisations.

In addition the growing international attention to the area shows that it has gained considerably in geostrategic importance following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This chapter also explored how the region's geopolitical importance, energy
resources, economic and political problems have caused the outside world to pay attention to it and rush to establish relations with the newly independent republics. As a result, Central Asia has become a field of geopolitical competition for regional and international powers. In this context, outside actors able to provide the republics with more political and financial support have been warmly welcomed.

The multi-state rivalry in Central Asia and growing influence of regional and global states – particularly Russia, China and Iran – have been major factors pushing the United States to become engaged in the region. The next chapter begins a discussion of the different phases of US foreign policy in Central Asia.
Notes


8 Amin, op. cit., pp. 216-231.


ECO is an inter-governmental regional organisation, which was established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for the purpose of sustainable socio-economic development of the Member States. For more information see [http://www.ecosecretariat.org/](http://www.ecosecretariat.org/) [accessed 13/7/2004], OIC was formed in 1969 after the burning of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, with the idea that Islamic governments should ‘consult together with a view to promoting close cooperation and mutual assistance in the economic, scientific, cultural and spiritual fields, inspired by teachings of Islam.’ First Islamic Summit Conference, Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Rabat, September 1969.


In the mid-1990s Uzbekistan was economically less dependent on Russia (in 1995, 40 percent of Uzbekistan’s imports came from Russia, versus 85 percent of Kazakhstan’s), Also the Kazak president is keener to promote regional cooperation than Niyazov. See, G. Bondarevsky and P. Ferdinand, ‘Russian foreign policy and Central Asia’, in P. Ferdinand, ed., *The New Central Asia and Its Neighbours*, London: Pinter for the RIIA, 1994, pp. 36-54.


20 Bondarevsky and Ferdinand, op. cit., pp. 36-54.
24 Atlanticists like Kozyrev and Yeltsin himself were emphasising the significance of ties with the West and particularly the United States. Instead, ‘Eurasianists’, such as Russian State Counsellor Sergei Stankevich, were opposing the idea of exclusive alliance with the West and criticising ‘Atlanticists’. Saikal, op. cit., pp. 142-157. See also M. Mesbahi, ‘Russia and the Geopolitics of the Muslim South’, in M. Mesbahi, ed., Central Asia and the Caucasus After the Soviet Union: Domestic and International Dynamics, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994, pp.268-319.
27 The CST became effective on 20 April 1994 for a period of five years with potential subsequent extensions. In 1999, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan pulled out of the treaty.
30 M. Aydin, New Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus Causes of Instability and Predicament, Ankara: Centre for Strategic Research, 2000, p. 10. In April 1992 Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev visited the region, by which time US Secretary of State Baker had already been there three times. More surprisingly, Russian embassies in the region were established only after those of Turkey, Iran, China and the United States. See Bondarevsky and Ferdinand, op. cit., pp. 36-54.
36 Official estimates of Russia's Muslim population range between 12-13 million. The main Muslim-majority areas are Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan. In October 1999 the Russian government demanded that Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait prevent extremist Islamic factions from intervening in Russia's internal affairs, including extending support to Muslim rebels in the North Caucasus and Muslim extremists elsewhere in Russia. The demands had little effect, and guidance centres for Islamic indoctrination continue to exist throughout Russia. At the beginning of 2002, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) announced that it had uncovered Muslim Brotherhood cells in 49 of Russia's 89 administrative regions, as well as in other FSU states. It stated that the leaders of the Russian Muslim Brotherhood coordinated their activities with Islamic terrorist organisations in the Middle East (al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, al-Jihad al-Islami), as well as with Osama bin Laden, and Islamist terror organisations in Bosnia (former Yugoslavia). The FSB report also noted that the heads of the Chechen rebels had told leaders of Palestinian terrorist organisations (Hamas and al-Jihad al-Islami) that they were prepared to send experienced fighters to help them. See D.L. Smith, 'Central Asia: A New Great Game?', Working Paper, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle, 17 June 1996, pp. 23-38, P. Goble, 'Russian Muslims and Muslim Russians', RFE/RL, Russian Federation Report, Vol. 3, No. 12, 4 April 2001, and R. Gainutdin, 'Muslims in Russia: Who are they?', Central Asia and the Caucasus, Vol. 18, No. 6, 2002, pp. 56-62.


46 On 10 October 2000, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan signed the treaty creating the Eurasian Economic Community. A primary objective was to develop a full-scale customs union and common economic space.


49 In the energy field, particularly pipelines, to be discussed in Chapter Five, there have been attempts to create alternatives to the Russian routes. The major supporter for such moves has been the United States, but Iran and China have also followed their own agendas.


For more discussion see S. Shermatova, 'Moscow steps up Central Asian interest', *RCA*, No. 125, Moscow, 17 June 2002, pp. 11-13, and Y. Vassilyev, 'The United States has come to Central Asia to stay', *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2002, pp. 10-16.


In addition to the elites, it seems some ordinary people also see the West as the best alternative to solve their problems. For example, a survey conducted in 1992 in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan showed that most respondents saw the West as a better option than Russia, China or the Muslim world. See N. Lubin, *Central Asians Take Stock: Reform, Corruption and Identity*, Washington: Institute of Peace, 1994, pp. 20-21. However, after US military deployment in the region in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001 in countries like Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the situation might have changed as some reports have noted. See for example, A. Cohen, 'Radical Islam and US Interests in Central Asia', Testimony before the Subcommittee on Middle East and Central Asia, Committee on International Relations, US House of Representatives, the Heritage Foundation, Washington, 29 October 2003.


Cited from Ulyanovsky, op. cit., p.1.


EU states are seeking to achieve their basic strategic goal of making the EU the world’s most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. See M. Laumulin, 'Central Asia and the European


66 Hunter, Central Asia Since Independence, p. 156.

67 Turkmenistan signed in May 1998, but the interim agreement is not yet in force. See Garnett, Rahr and Watanabe, op. cit., pp.45-53.

68 The OSCE Liaison Office in Central Asia, established in Tashkent in 1995, was to link the five Central Asian countries more closely to the OSCE. In 1998, the OSCE also established Centres in Almaty, Ashgabat and Bishkek. A Mission to Tajikistan was deployed in 1993.


72 Ulyanovsky, op. cit., p.1.


77 Anderson, op. cit., p. 192.


79 Ulyanovsky, op. cit., p.1.


See I. Komissina and A. Kurtov, ‘Russia-China-Central Asia: Striving for a new quality in international relations’, Central Asia and the Caucasus: Journal of Social and Political Studies, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2004, pp. 151-158. Kyrgyz President Akayev visited Beijing and met Chinese President Jiang Zemin. They signed eight bilateral agreements, including an Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation, and Good Neighbourliness that formally ended a border dispute between them. China and Tajikistan on 4 July 2000 agreed to speed up the search for early settlement of the border issue between them. And on 21 May 2002 Tajik President Imomali Rahmonov visited China. He agreed to return 3.5 percent of the disputed territory to China, thus ending the border dispute.


Swanstrom, op. cit., pp. 12-14


92 The region has been viewed as a new ‘Kuwait’ for China. But as will be discussed in Chapter Five, this is an exaggerated view see D.L. Smith, op. cit., pp. 1-59.


98 The Uighur majority of Xinjiang’s population are Muslims, and there are some Central Asian ethnic groups living in this area: Kazaks (1.1 million), Kyrgyz (140,000), Tajiks (33,500), Uzbeks (15,000) and Russians (8000). For more information see Govt. White Papers - china.org.cn [accessed 19/7/2004].


102 At a summit meeting on June 14, 2001, the leaders of China, Russia together with four Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, met to sign the Declaration on the Establishment of the SCO in Shanghai, China. The SCO has declared aims to ‘create a new international political and economic order featuring democracy, justness and rationality and facilitate cooperation in economy and trade, science and technology, culture, education, energy, transportation and environmental protection among the member states.’ The Organisation has also focused on security and terrorism issues. See http://www.geocities.com/aipsg/0601shanghai.html [accessed 23/8/2004].


105 *People’s Daily*, 9 September 2001, p. 3.

106 Chinese President Hu Jintao visited some Central Asian leaders in Moscow, 28/29 May 2003.

107 Ibid.

108 For example see D.L. Smith, op. cit., pp. 1-34, and Swanstrom, op. cit.

109 A. Hyman, ‘Central Asia’s relations with Afghanistan and South Asia’, in Ferdinand, op. cit., pp. 75-94, Large parts of Central Asia incorporated into the Russian Empire had previously close relations with India. During the post-1971 era of close Indian-Soviet relations, cultural exchanges flourished between India and the Central Asian republics.


The Muslim Population in India is between 120-150 million. With 500,000 mosques and hundreds of thousands of madrassas, India is the world’s most diverse Muslim country. Despite being a minority, Muslims dominate in many parts. See Komissina, 'India cooperation with the Central Asian countries in regional security', J.A. MacDonald, P. Rutland, and D.L. Smith, op. cit., pp. 23-32.


P. Stobdan, 'Central Asia: India’s strategic approach', Strategic Analysis, Vol. XVIII, No. 6, 1995, pp. 739-752, see also MacDonald, Rutland and Blank, op. cit., pp. 34-38.


S. Gupta, ‘Foothold in central Asia: India gets own military base’, The Indian Express, 12 November 2003, p. 4, and Baruah, op. cit.

With over 1 billion population and a booming economy, as Figure 5.1 shows India is the world’s eighth largest energy consumer. To keep its economy growing at an average annual 7-8 percent, as Indian Planning Commission Chairman K. C. Pant recently told the Indo-Asian News Service, India will need to increase its energy consumption by roughly 5 percent each year. R. Hrair Dekmejian and H. Simonian, Troubled Waters: The Geopolitics of the Caspian Region, London: I.B. Tauris, 2001, pp. 115-130, K.R.Jawahar 'India and Kazakstan: Significant Changes', Security and Political Risk Analysis (SAPRA) Foundation India, 24 February 2002, pp. 5-6, and I. Alibekov, 'India set to expand presence in Central Asia', EurasiaNet, 4 December 2003.


127 ‘Why India attaches importance to Central Asia’.

128 For more discussion see D.L. Smith, op. cit., pp. 1-33.


133 For example see Garnett, Rahr and Watanabe noted that Japan’s engagement with Central Asia is not motivated primarily by economic or commercial interests. Garnett, Rahr and Watanabe, op. cit., pp. 60-62.


136 Cited by A. Blua, ‘Central Asia: Japan Keen To Boost Regional Ties’, *RFE/RL*, 11 July 2002, p. 5. About 90 million Japanese consider themselves Buddhists. Buddhism spread from India along the Silk Road through Central Asia to China and Japan, but by the end of the first millennium, however, Islamic conquest and trade had all but eradicated Buddhism in Central Asia. See also ‘Japan diverts aid to Central Asia in bid for strategic edge’*, Christian Science Monitor*, Boston, 29 October 1992, p. 6.

137 Cited by A. Blua, ‘Central Asia: Japan Keen To Boost Regional Ties’, p. 5.
131


140 Garnett, Rahr and Watanabe, op. cit., p. 45.

141 Ibid, p. 44.


143 Rudnick, op. cit., p. 17.


146 Cited in Blua, ‘Central Asia: Japan Keen To Boost Regional Ties’, p. 5. See also K.E. Calder, ‘Japan's Energy Angst and the Caspian Great Game’, NBR Analysis, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 2001, pp. 4-9.

147 Quoted in Rudnick, op. cit. p. 17. See also Arunova and Kochevoi, op. cit., pp. 119-122 and Dekmejian and Simonian, op. cit., pp. 131-149.


149 Garnett, Rahr and Watanabe, op. cit., p. 45.


151 Garnett, Rahr and Watanabe, op. cit., p. 40.

152 Islam Karimov’s visit to Japan 28/31 July 2002, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.


Telhami, 'From Camp David to Wye: Changing Assumptions in Arab-Israeli Negotiations', The Middle

On Israel's strategies for foreign relations see P. Robins, 'The Middle East and Central Asia', in
Ferdinand, ed., op. cit., pp. 36-54.

C.R. Saivetz, 'Central Asia: Emerging relations with the Arab States and Israel', in H. Malik, op. cit.,
pp. 311-326, A. Blua, 'Israel emerges as a player in Central Asia', Eurasianet Business and Economics,
15/8/2001, J. Abadi, 'Israel’s quest for normalisation with Azerbaijan and the Muslim states of Central

Of course, the number of Jews in Central Asia has declined sharply since the collapse of the Soviet
Union. M.V. Shterenshish, 'Jews in Central Asia: The past for the present', Central Asia and the Caucasus
14/9/2002].

Robins, op. cit., pp. 36-54.

For details see Blua, 'Israel emerges as a player in Central Asia', and B. Aras, 'The Caspian region
cit., pp. 63-88.

Blua, 'Israel emerges as a player in Central Asia', and B. Aras, 'Post-Cold War Realities: Israel's

Dekmejian and Simonian, op. cit., pp. 115-130 and L. Bezanis, 'Niyazov in Egypt, Israel', OMRI
Daily Digest, 26 May 1995.

See B. Aras, 'Post-Cold War Realities: Israel's Strategy in Azerbaijan and Central Asia', pp. 68-82,
and Centre for Scientific Research and Strategic Studies of the Middle East, op. cit., pp. 123-134.

On relations between Moscow and Tehran, see S. Blank, 'Russia and Iran in a new Middle East',
relations in the 1990s', pp. 65-80.

'Israel supplies US with Central Asia Intelligence', The Jewish Institution for National Security
Affairs (JINSA) (online), at http://www.jinsa.org/articles/articles.html/function/view/categoryid [accessed
14/2/2004].

Quoted in A. Blua, 'Israel emerges as a player in Central Asia'.

B. Aras and H. Ahmadi, 'Strategy jadid Israel dar Ghafg haz va Asiae Markazi', Middle East Studies

2/4/2003].

‘Uzbekistan Seeks Israeli Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism’, Haaretz, ICT Articles, 3 September

A. Ehteshami, 'New frontiers: Iran, the GCC and the CCARs', in A. Ehteshami, ed., From the Gulf to

Abadi, op. cit., pp. 63-88, State Department Statement on ‘Joint U.S.-Israel Technical Assistance in


177 Ibid, also for more discussion see Hyman, op. cit., pp. 75-94.

178 For more information see Robins, op. cit., pp. 36-54.

179 Ibid.

180 Hunter, Central Asia Since Independence, p. 7. Khorasan is now a province in northeast Iran. Iran’s location, ethno-demographic situation and cultural and civilizational impact have at all times made it an integrating factor in the geopolitical expanse that includes Central Asia. Most countries or territories of the present-day region were in the past parts of Iran or tied to it with all sorts of bonds--some of them are even conquered parts of Iranian territory. All have been exposed to Iranian cultural influence, including the culture of economic development. Iran was mainly responsible for disseminating Islam as a unifying religious constant. However, the specificity of state formation in the 19th and 20th centuries, and inclusion of Central Asia and Caucasus in the Russian Empire, then the Soviet Union, decreased Iranian influence. H.A. Shirazi, Melliyathaye Asiaie Miane, Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1999, pp. 120-143, N. Mamedova, ‘Political and economic situation in Iran: Its impact on the relationships with Central Asia and the Caucasus’, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2003, pp. 98-114.


183 Iran’s Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi’s speech on the importance of Central Asia and the Caucasus in Iran’s foreign policy, ‘11th International Seminar on Central Asia and the Caucasus’, December 8-9 2003, Tehran, Iran, Iranian Students’ New Agency (ISNA), 9 December 2003.

184 Ibid.


186 Rumer, ed., Central Asia: A Gathering Storm, pp. 3-68.

187 Dekmejian and Simonian, op. cit., pp. 74-95, and B. Khajehpour-Khouei, ‘Survey of Iran’s economic interests in the Caspian, in H. Amirahmadi, ed., The Caspian Region at a Crossroad: Challenge of New


191 S.K. Sajjadpour, ‘Iran, the Caucasus and Central Asia’, p. 208. Iran is fourth among 63 trading partners of Turkmenistan, it has already contributed to dozens of large projects, and there are about 150 treaties and agreements between them. See Mesamed, op. cit.

192 The project was inaugurated in 13 May 1996 by Presidnet Rafsanjani of Iran in the presence of leaders and dignitaries of about 50 countries and International organisations. Ettelaat, Iran’s Daily Newspaper, 13 May 1996, p. 6. However, the opportunity is limited by difference in gauge; the Iranian gauge is 1435mm, the former Soviet system 1524 mm so goods have to be transshipped or wheelsets changed. This railway would connect all five Central Asian countries and Russia to the Iranian network and Persian Gulf, but the problem of gauge difference will remain. It is not, however, insuperable; similar gauge-changing facilities exist between standard-gauge (1435 mm) European systems and those of Spain and of the former USSR, and at standard-gauge China’s borders with Kazakhstan and Russia, and gauge-changing takes a matter of a few hours rather than days.


194 ‘Israeli company to rebuild Turkmen oil refinery’, p. 7.


It seems total investments barely reached $0.6 to 0.8 billion. In 1995/1996 the trade turnover with Central Asia and Transcaucasia (without Georgia) was $803.3m; in 1996/1997, $1,053.6m; in 1997/1998, $876.5m; in 1998/1999, $604.2m. For detailed information see ‘Foreign Trade’, *Salname-ye Amarie Keshwar* (Iran’s Annual National Statistics), Tehran/Iran, 2000/2001, and *Hambastegi*, Tehran, 14 March 2001, p. 13.

ECO was established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, to promote economic, technical and cultural cooperation among its members.


*Kabar* (News), Kyrgyzstan, 5 September 2001, p. 3.

Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Tehran/Iran, 16 March 2001.


IRNA, Teheran/Iran, 7 March 1996, p. 2.


However, some observers think the US invasion of Iraq will have some positive results for Iran, such as possible future Shiite ascendancy in Iraq. But, apart from the end of Saddam’s regime, Iranian officials...


217 M. Field, 'Tehran’s overtures to Central Asia fall on deaf ears', The Financial Times, 15 April 1992, p. 5, Mamedova, op. cit., and Maleki, 'Iran and Turan: Apropos of Iran’s relations with Central Asia and the Caucasian republics'. Several Iranian private-sector companies are involved in joint ventures in Central Asia, but the amounts invested are not significant. In addition, private companies and businessmen in Iran have had little experience of investing abroad. Interestingly, cultural and linguistic affinities have played only a minor role in determining the pattern of Iran’s economic relations, as illustrated by its low level of economic engagement in Tajikistan. According to Iran Radio, the Tajik President said in Parliament ‘Iranian-Tajik economic cooperation was at a very low level’, ‘Trade with Iran to improve after Tajik head’s speech in parliament’, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mashhad, 30 April 2000, at http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/tajikistan/hypermail/200005/0000.html [accessed 10/1/2004], and Tarock, op. cit., pp. 185-200.


220 Rumer, ed., Central Asia: A Gathering Storm, p. 36.


223 Turkmenistan is an exception; Turkmen-Iranian relations are developing well. See Hunter, ‘Iran’s pragmatic regional policy’, pp. 133-147, Rumer, ed., Central Asia: A Gathering Storm, pp. 3-68, Robins, op. cit., pp. 36-54 and D.L. Smith, op. cit., pp. 41-49.

224 All the Central Asian republics except Tajikistan speak a kind of Turkic languages.


226 S. Sayari, ‘Turkey, the Caucasus and Central Asia’, in Banuazizi and Weiner, op. cit., pp. 175-195. See also I. Torbakov, 'The Turkish Factor in the Geopolitics of the Post-Soviet Space', Working Paper, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, 10 January 2003, pp. 1-16. During the Cold War era of bipolarism and superpower rivalry, Turkey had a critical geostategic position in NATO, as a barrier against any Soviet southward expansionism. Following the USSR’s break-up, Turkey’s geostategic value to the West was no longer as clear-cut. Such circumstances led Turkey to extend its influence towards

227 Z. Onis, 'Turkey and post-soviet states: Potential and limits of regional power influence', pp. 66-74

228 By adopting a Central Asian policy Ankara would make Turkey a more attractive European, playing a bridging role. Burnashev, op. cit., pp. 114-165. Turkey, in a pivotal position at the heart of the Eurasian region and at the western pillar of the Greater Middle East, has privileged links with the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East. Therefore, Turkey can contribute positively to the EU’s foreign policy towards this extensive area.


Panturkism saw Turkey as predestined to be the integrating centre of the Turkic-speaking peoples and proclaimed the new era the ‘Turkish century’.


For more information on TIKA see http://www.tika.gov.tr [accessed 23/6/2003].


Robins, op cit., pp. 36-54.

For example see Sayari, op. cit., pp. 175-176. J. Anderson, has also discussed Turkey’s key role in gaining international recognition for the Central Asian republics and on occasion representing their interests abroad. Anderson, op. cit., p. 193.


Sayari, op. cit., p. 183.


251 See Chotoev, op. cit. In 1996 the Turkish Ministry of Education opened two schools in Kyrgyzstan, eight in Uzbekistan and three in Turkmenistan. Bal, *Turkey's Relations With the West and Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model*, p. 89.


253 Quoted in Saivetz, ‘Central Asia: Emerging relations with the Arab States and Israel’, p. 322.

254 Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model*, p. 91.


257 Cited from Newsweek, 3 February 1992, p. 23 in Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model*, p. 161. Although the leaders of the other Central Asian states also favoured the Turkish model, they were more cautious in their expressions of support. Niyazov, for example, feared a deterioration of relations with neighbouring Iran. Nazarbayev and Akayev had to take into account the high percentage of Russians in their population, who were suspicious of their state's rapprochement with Turkey. For this reason Nazarbayev chose to emphasise primarily the Turkish economic experience of stimulating local entrepreneurship and attracting foreign capital. To reassure the Russians, and understanding the implications of his republic’s geopolitical situation, Nazarbayev repeatedly declared that Turkey could not become Kazakhstan’s main foreign political partner. Lipovsky, op. cit., pp. 211-222.

258 Lipovsky, op. cit, pp. 211-222.

259 Quoted in Burnashev, op. cit., p. 132, see also Akbarzadeh, op. cit., pp. 517-542.


263 Rumer, ed., *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm*, p. 34.

264 See Bal, *Turkey’s Relations with the West and Turkic Republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model*, pp. 43-100, and Burnashev, op. cit., pp.114-165.


266 For more see Hyman, op. cit., pp. 75-94.

267 Ibid.

268 Yasmeen, op. cit., pp. 115-133.

269 However, there are many practical difficulties to be overcome. The first is terrain, and the second is gauge difference. If, for example, the line came through Iran, the terrain is easier than the alternatives through Afghanistan, but two changes of rail gauge, from Soviet (1524 mm) to Iranian (1435 mm) to
Subcontinent (1676 MM), would necessitate changing all wheelsets twice. Facilities for wheel changing are expensive to build, and their use time-consuming. If the line went through Afghanistan there would be only one change of gauge, but the terrain includes very high mountains (the Hindu Kush) and, of course, for a railway, as for the proposed pipelines, it is necessary for Afghanistan to be far more peaceful and orderly than it is currently, and for there to be more stability in Pakistani Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province than at present. Even if all those criteria are met, it is unlikely that such a line could attract enough traffic to be worth the very high cost of building and working it.


The Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994 emphasised: 'e) No assistance shall be furnished to Pakistan and no military equipment or technology shall be sold or transferred to Pakistan, pursuant to the authorities contained in this Act or any other Act, unless the President shall have certified in writing to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, during the fiscal year in which assistance is to be furnished or military equipment or technology is to be sold or transferred, that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device and that the proposed United States assistance program will reduce significantly the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device.' Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994. For details see A.A. Rizvi, 'The nuclear bomb and security of South Asia', *Asian Defence*, No. 108/94, 1995, pp. 25-27, and R.M. Hathaway, 'The US Congress and the South Asian Nuclear tests', *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2000. However, it should be mentioned that those restrictions were waived to a certain degree after the events of 11 September 2001 and subsequent 'war on terror'.

272 For details see Yasmeen, op. cit., pp. 115-133.

273 Ibid.


282 Amin, op. cit., pp. 60-65.


284 The US government also had an important impact on establishment of the Taliban regime. For extended discussion on how Pakistan and the USA supported the Taliban. See Y.B. Efrat, 'Afghanistan: How the US Put Taliban in power', *Green Left Weekly*, 21 November 2001, pp. 12-14.


287 Yasmeen, op. cit., pp. 115-133.


291 Quoted in Saitvetz, 'Central Asia: Emerging relations with the Arab States and Israel', p. 317.


300 'Yamani urges Gulf to open up oil sector', Middle East Economic Digest, 6 November 1998, p. 21.


303 Hyman, op. cit., pp. 75-94.

304 However, compared with countries such as India, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, Afghanistan is closer to Central Asia, in cultural, border and ethnic respects, and the peoples of northern Afghanistan are mostly of the same ethnic stock as the Central Asian republics, particularly Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Concentration in the late Soviet period on building roads, a railway, a river port and new bridges across the Amu Darya was part of an infrastructural network bringing northern Afghanistan closer to Central Asia. Hyman, op. cit., pp. 75-94.

306 Karimov, op. cit., pp. viii and 18.
Chapter Four

US engagement with Central Asia: The initial phase (1991–mid-1990s)

The fruits accruing from ending the Cold War are far from fully harvested. To ignore the Transcaucasus and Central Asia could mean that a large part of that harvest will never be gathered.

W.E. Odom

Introduction

The emergence of the independent Central Asian republics onto the international stage presented a new frontier for US policymakers. They have seen Central Asia as a gateway to three regions of great strategic importance to the United States: to the north lies Russia, to the south lie Iran, Afghanistan, and the Islamic world, to the east lie China and the rest of Asia. Moreover, Central Asia, in its own right, is a region of vast natural and human resources offering benefits for US entrepreneurs with the foresight to do business there. Clifford G. Bond, Acting Principal Deputy Special Advisor to the Secretary for the New Independent States (NIS), Department of State, in a hearing on the Middle East and South Asia of the House International Revaluations Committee on 6 June 2001, identified Central Asia as a ‘very important region for U.S. interest.’ US geopolitical, economic and security interests and ambitions in the region have led Washington to struggle for political influence, strategically important positions, economic dividends, and control over resources.

The primary US orientation toward the area had been based on what Washington viewed as a ‘power vacuum’, believing that the collapse of the USSR created a gigantic ‘black hole’ in Eurasia, and that major efforts should be made to prevent this vacuum being filled by any rival states, particularly Russia and Iran.

This chapter first provides a timeline for US engagement with Central Asia since 1991, then examines the first phase of its policy towards the region. It addresses America’s primary interests in the newborn independent states, and explores the mechanisms and means that Washington used to pursue its objectives. Here the main argument is that, although, in the primary years of engagement, US policy towards the former Soviet republics was mainly concerned with Russia itself, Washington did have other interests in the region. Several issues, such as the republics’ independence,
potential conflict, denuclearisation, politico-economic reforms, and concern with states like Iran captured US attention in its initial phase of dealing with the area. What this chapter shows is that this initial stage provided a basis for the USA to increase its regional influence during the next phases, although its policies for the region were initially ill-conceived.

US policy towards Central Asia after the Soviet demise: Early involvement

US involvement in Central Asia began with the collapse of the USSR. Washington initiated official relations with the region’s republics on 25 December 1991, when it accorded diplomatic recognition to Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan, followed on 19 February 1992 by its recognition of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and in that year US embassies opened up in most capitals of the region. Arguably, US policy towards the region has changed from time to time; in general it has gone through three distinct stages:

1. from 1991 until about the mid-1990s;
2. from the mid-1990s until September 2001; and
3. from 11 September 2001 until present.

In the early years of Central Asian independence the basic question for American policymakers was: ‘Does the region matter?’ Indeed, from 1991 until the mid-1990s, the region to some extent was of only marginal importance to the United States. This was reflected by some American diplomats’ statements: ‘We do not need to learn the local language of there because all the people we know in Central Asia speak Russian’ and that ‘we cannot put the flag of Turkmenistan up in the State Department lobby because it is too complicated.’ The region was viewed as less important, perhaps because the highest US priority at that time was Russia itself. Some American observers even argued that Russia might soon reabsorb Central Asia into a new empire, though others discounted the possibility. However, US policy also pursued other goals in Central Asia.

US interests in Central Asia in the first stage

Before America’s interests in the region can be placed in order of priority, they must first be defined. C. Fairbanks and his colleagues classify US national interests as vital, strategic and important. Vital interests are those that affect the national territory and basic welfare of the American people. These include, for example, peace and stability in Europe, Northeast Asia and the Middle East. Strategic interests involve areas of top priority for ensuring that vital interests are secured, such as relations with China.
and Russia. The third level of interests involves things that are desirable for the United States but do not directly affect its vital interests. These include economic and/or other ties with Latin America or South Asia, and humanitarian and related concerns in other parts of the world.

In a similar study, US national interests are categorised as vital, extremely important, important and less important or secondary. Vital interests are defined as those considered necessary for US survival, conceived in terms of its territorial integrity, governing institutions, and citizens' lives. Extremely important are conditions that, if compromised, would severely prejudice but not strictly imperil US ability to safeguard and enhance the well-being of Americans in a free and secure nation. These should be promoted, but threats to them warrant deployment of military force only with coalition of allies whose vital interests are threatened. Important national interests are those that, if compromised, would have major negative consequences for US ability to secure and develop the well-being of the US people. Secondary national interests are desirable, but have little direct impact on US capability to protect and improve the well-being of Americans in a free and secure nation. Secondary interests are based on balancing bilateral trade deficits, and enlarging democracy everywhere for its own sake.

To what extent were US interests affected by independence of the Central Asian republics during the initial phase? At that stage US officialdom did not recognise any vital interest in this region, and had no strategic vision for it, as some observers point out. In fact, the early US attitude towards the region placed it at the 'important' level of national interests, capable only of indirectly affecting US vital interests. For example, regional instability could impact indirectly on America's security by providing Russia with a pretext to intervene and re-integrate the republics with itself, or a resurgence of Islam could offer Iran an opportunity to expand its influence. An influential American scholar, S. Blank, warned US policymakers in 1995: 'While Central Asia itself may not be seen to be vital to the United States, the explosion that [would] ensue if we abandon the region to Moscow [would] spare nobody from its wrath.'

US officialdom thought the republics might be faced with one of three scenarios: preservation of the Communist-dominated status quo, evolution of pluralist democracy, or emergence of radicalised Islamic regimes, both anti-Communist and anti-Western. However, none of these scenarios eventuated. Indeed, in the early years of engagement, Washington was far from a realistic interpretation of the region. American officials were deeply idealistic and dependent on a flawed understanding of the nature of the
Central Asian societies and their leaders. The US government announced its objectives for the region as hoping to safeguard the republics’ independence, ensuring removal of all nuclear weapons from Kazakstan as soon as possible, maintaining stability, isolating Iran, preventing the appearance of fundamentalist regimes, and ensuring that the region’s newly independent states formulated their domestic policy in ways advantageous to the West and in keeping with the western democratic model. G. Fuller clarified US interests in the region on the following basis: 1) the presence of Soviet nuclear arms in Kazakstan; 2) the large hydrocarbon deposits in the Caspian Sea; 3) the region’s proximity to the Islamic world; 4) the indeterminate development of democracy; and 5) the Russian factor. Similarly, S.T. Hunter pointed to the following issues: 1) to resolve the issue of Kazakstan’s nuclear weapons and fend off the danger of proliferation by preventing the sale or other transfer of nuclear material or technology to other countries, especially Iran; 2) to prevent the spread of radical Islam, to contain Iran, and to promote Turkey’s role as the main regional player; 3) to develop an appropriate and important role for the United States in exploiting the region’s mineral resources, especially its oil and gas; 4) to anchor these countries within the western security and economic system; and 5) to promote democracy and human rights.

Although the United States had stated that it had interests in the area, its highest priority then was Russia. Overall, US interests in the region during its first period of engagement fall into three categories, geopolitical, security, and politico-economic.

1. Geopolitical interests

1.1-Russia first: Reform and liberalisation

US policy in Central Asia, was initially based on the ‘Russia first’ principle. There were at least two reasons for this focus; first, to dismantle the USSR completely, and second, to sponsor genuine independence in Central Asia (and the Caucasus). To these ends, US policymakers focused on Moscow’s relations with the southern republics, and found cause for concern in Russian policies toward its neighbours at least from late 1992, as discussed in Chapter Three. A number of Russians, including some in the leadership, still viewed Central Asia as a ‘former colony’, with Russia largely responsible for its current state of development. Some held the view that Moscow had a ‘priority right’ in the region, as Russia’s ‘Near Abroad’ and given that the region had benefited directly from Russian investment.
Russian officials and media variously emphasised strategic security, economic ties, and the fate of the Russian populations, particularly after proclamation of the ‘Near Abroad’ policy. Andranik Migranyan, former adviser to President Boris Yeltsin, asserted in 1994: ‘All the geopolitical space of the former USSR constitutes the sphere of vital interests of Russia’; and in 1995 Moscow began to talk about creating an economically and politically integrated association of states capable of claiming its proper place in the world community. Yeltsin had maintained: ‘The Central Asian countries have had enough of sovereignty and are looking for new forms of confederation with Russia, the only state capable of protecting them.’ However, due to Russia’s own domestic politico-economic problems and some other issues inside the republics, no such confederation was ever formed. Moreover, in his September 1995 decree ‘On Approval of the Strategic Policy of the Russian Federation Toward CIS Member States’, Yeltsin declared: ‘Our main vital interests in the spheres of economy, defence, security and protection of the rights of Russians are concentrated on the territory of the CIS, and safeguarding of those interests constitutes the basis of the country’s national security.’

These statements, and certain actions, such as Russia’s intervention in the Tajik civil war, persuaded US officials and experts that Moscow was attempting to reintegrate the south. In fact, some officials in Washington still viewed Russia with suspicion, as discussed in Chapter One. As J. Barnes argued, in international affairs old habits die hard, and Cold War habits, with their all-consuming emphasis on countering Moscow, had shaped the mind-set of generations of American policymakers. Sam Brownback, a member of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stated: ‘Present Russian actions and rhetoric indicate that the Russians do not really accept the notion of the independence and sovereignty of these [the Central Asian] countries.’ He maintained that Moscow was active in maintaining instability in the region in order to disrupt outside influences, and thus [was] impeding regional cooperation which the presidents of these countries [were] trying to achieve. In addition, a number of influential American scholars also focused on the possibility of restoring Russian power and its increased influence in the region. Dimitri Simes, founding President of the Nixon Centre, warned, immediately after the Soviet Union’s dissolution that ‘The collapse of the Communist establishment does not mean that the imperial, autocratic Russian tradition has come to an end. It only implies that, next time, it may have to reappear in a different form, with different slogans and different leaders.’ S. Blank also argued in 1995:
Russia does not hide its ultimate objective: to compel Central Asian reintegration on Moscow’s terms, mainly by using economic means. Though the Russian forces deployed in Tadzhikistan’s [sic] civil war give Moscow a military entree into the region, economic and political forces are Russia’s most effective policy tools. For Russian elites economic factors objectively impel reintegration of the CIS. President Yeltsin and Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin have reiterated that economic unity is a prelude to military and political reunion of the CIS. Although the specific forms of this reunion are to be decided, Russian leaders use economic factors at their disposal to shape their desired political ends.35

D.L. Smith also argued that Russia was seeking to protect and expand its economic position in Central Asia as part of a large effort to revive its regional economic (and hence political) influence.36 Accordingly, countering restoration of Russia’s power, and keeping it away from its former republics, became a high US priority in the region. Henry Kissinger publicised in 1992 that ‘the American political priority [was] to prevent the Russian empire from reforming.’37 As a result, Washington pursued a ‘Russia first’ policy, attempting to contain the expansion of Moscow influence into its southern neighbours, particularly through promoting reform in Russia. In a major policy address in March 1994, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said:

Bringing Russia into the family of peaceful nations will serve our highest security, economic, and moral interests. For America and the world, the stakes are just monumental. If we succeed, we [would] have established the foundation for our lasting security into the next century. But if Russia falls into anarchy or lurches back to despotism, the price that we pay could be frightening. Nothing less [is] involved than the possibility of renewed nuclear threat, higher defence budgets, spreading instability, the loss of new markets, and a devastating setback for the worldwide democratic movement.38

In relations with Central Asia, the Clinton administration in particular, viewed a democratised Russia as able to play a stabilising role in the area, though with increasing emphasis that Moscow should not seek to dominate it, or to exclude US and other involvement.39 In congressional testimony on 14 November 1995, Ambassador at Large to the NIS, James Collins, stressed that the United States had endeavoured to foster stability in the NIS by encouraging Russia to respect the sovereignty and independence of the other NIS.40 Thus, one can argue that US decision-makers needed, therefore, to monitor Russian policies in the former Soviet regions, in case Moscow might restore its lost power or create imbalances and raise the threat of conflict.41 Influential American regional expert M.B. Olcott believed that ‘for geopolitical’ reasons the United States must try to ensure that Russia behaves as a ‘good hegemon rather than as a bully’ toward the Central Asian republics.42 However,
supporting the republics, directly or indirectly, financially and politically, was viewed as crucial for constraining any return to an imperial Russian policy.

Besides, the United States was concerned by the considerable number of Russians living in Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan. This is because Washington thought that this issue might encourage Moscow to send military forces or re-impose some sort of imperial relationship upon the region, or at least insist on greater influence, in order to safeguard Russians in the republics, and therefore jeopardise the republics' independence. Statements by some Russian politicians alarmed the US government. Anatoli Sobchak, St. Petersburg's mayor, hinted at possible territorial claims on areas of Russian settlement in other republics. Ex-Vice Premier Aleksandr Shokhin stated in November 1993 that Russia would deploy every instrument of economic policy to advance the causes of reintegration and of the Russian diaspora, and that the issue of Russian-speakers abroad would figure in all economic negotiations with other CIS members, including in Central Asia. Consequently, some American scholars argued that Russia sought not only to preserve Central Asia's dependence, but also to codify a lasting privileged position for Russians there.

The 'Russia first' policy had been questioned by some US politicians and scholars as giving Russia a free hand in the region. Republican criticism of the Clinton administration's policy towards Russia had been on the rise for years, and would increase with disenchantment in the late 1990s at Russia's apparent failure in economic reforms, and its harsh policy towards the insurgency in Chechnya. F. Starr in 1997 described the 'Russia first' policy thus: 'The policies of a democratic Russia in the region are assumed to be benign, so the Clinton administration has given Moscow a free hand there.' Similarly, S. Blank argued that, since Russian policy in Central Asia tended towards neo-colonialism, any 'strategic alliance with Russian reform' would mean accepting Russia's neo-colonialism, which could neither sustain true market reforms nor promote democracy. He claimed that Washington's calls for democratisation, open doors for US investment, and support for Russia as a model and leader, involved contradictory logic, since support for Russia in fact, meant excluding foreign investment and hindering democracy, which could not thrive in Central Asia's neocolonial conditions, blasted ecologies and economies. However, one might argue that foreign investment was not excluded and the 'hindering' of democracy in the region resulted from the actions of indigenous leaders.

The extent to which Washington succeeded in isolating Moscow from its old sphere of influence is debatable. Due to the republics' historical dependency on the
central government, it was impossible, particularly in the first years of independence, to exclude Russia from their affairs. As Blank has argued, Russia would not simply let Washington take the lead in integrating into its sphere of influence an area Moscow viewed as part of its own sphere of influence because of geographical contiguity, centuries of domination, and large Russian populations.50

In the meantime, one might assume that Russia's own situation precluded any effective attempt to restore its empire at least for the first five years after independence, but in economic, military, political and even fiscal terms the newborn states were still dependent on Moscow.51 The rapidity with which the Central Asians acquired their unexpected and unsought independence, as discussed in Chapter Two, made continued dependence on Moscow inevitable for some years, however much the United States might wish to reduce it.52 US efforts to do so were also tempered by the perceived risk that undermined Russian influence might be replaced by the 'greater threat' of Islamic fundamentalism or Iranian religious-based influence.

To conclude, US policy towards Central Asia in the first stage depended, to a great extent, on the interplay cooperation and rivalry with Russia. In practice, the main US line, as explicated by Strobe Talbott, then Under-Secretary of State and US ambassador-at-large responsible for aid to the Former Soviet Union (FSU), was to focus on areas where success in one country or region would have an influence on surrounding areas.53 This meant that support for reform in the republics depended mainly on success of reform in Russia influencing reform in its neighbours. President Clinton made the same point in his 1994 national security statement.54 Thus, in the first years of the post-Soviet era, Central Asia remained of only marginal significance to US policymakers because Russia itself was their primary concern. However, one can say that, although policy initiatives in the region were all adjuncts to the 'Russia first' policy and to a strategic priority of confining the Soviet military machine within Russia, Washington's policy was also to support the republics' independence and sovereignty. Yet in mid-1994 the United States came to realise that it could not just aid Russia at the expense of other republics, and adopted a less complacent policy towards Moscow.55 It began moving toward increased support of the Central Asian states (Table 4.2 shows this increase in financial aid).
1.2-Helping Central Asians maintain their independence

Although Central Asia was initially marginal to Washington’s global concerns, the United States did not totally overlook it. Overemphasis on Russia was criticised by some US figures. For example, Ex-Secretary of State James Baker described the Clinton administration’s policy as too ‘Russocentric’, and advocated ‘support for reform in the newly independent states and support for the republics’ territorial integrity and independence.’56 On the other hand, the republics’ ability to remain fully independent and sovereign was important to US national interests. It was believed that they needed help to complete the transition from being dependent states under the USSR to being entirely independent from Moscow.57 Accordingly, Washington stressed that US and other Western aid and investment would strengthen the ‘Stans’ independence, and act as a counter and example to Moscow or any other powers, such as Iran.58 US ambassador Stephen Sestanovich described the overreaching goal of American policy in Central Asia as securing the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the region’s states.59

The issue became important when some observers speculated that Russia might soon reabsorb the Central Asian countries into a new empire. W.E. Odom argued: ‘If we want to see a democratic Russia, therefore, we have a strong strategic interest in maintaining the independence of all eight states [the Central Asian and the Caucasus] in this new strategic zone.’60 To this end, the Clinton administration tried to assist the republics to maintain their independence and thus counter Russia’s influence.61 Washington’s policy was to inject financial aid into the countries, as discussed below, in order to help them to overcome their economic obstacles and reduce dependence on Moscow. Meanwhile, US decision-makers were concerned at the possibility that instability in Central Asia would lead Russia to interfere in the region’s affairs. In this connection, security, including conflict resolution and denuclearisation, became a prime concern.

1.3-Isolating Iran

As discussed in Chapter Three, Iran has shown great interest in expanding relations with the Central Asian countries. In this context, the possible strengthening of Iran’s Islamic-based influence in the region made Washington nervous, because it had the potential to create a fundamentalist anti-Western/American bloc in the heart of Eurasia. As M.J. Malik noted: ‘Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fear of the ‘evil Empire’ has given way to the fear of the ‘Islamic
Empire’ stretching from North Africa in the West to Central Asia in the East. 

From the US viewpoint, Iran’s strategy was to export its revolutionary brand of Islam and exploit Central Asia’s potential as a market, so that the region would become a hotbed for political Islam. Furthermore, Washington saw Tehran projecting itself as a redeemer of Islamic values against all non-Shiite challengers, particularly Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and acting as a key player in the game of petrol politics, as discussed in Chapter Five. This was evident in the words of ex-Secretary of State Baker: ‘[The Iranians] are active in some of the former Central Asian republics. It’s one of the reasons we think it’s important that we ourselves, have contact and dialogue with these former republics.’ A. Cohen claimed that Tehran, with its militant Islamic Shiite ideology, had been contributing money to rebuilding mosques and religious schools neglected during the Soviet era.

Accordingly, from the beginning, Washington was anxious about Iran’s search for increased politico-economic and religious influence in the region, and used various policies to isolate Iran and prevent it from establishing any significant presence in the region. James Baker made this clear during a visit to Central Asia, when he said that the USA would move quickly to open embassies in the republics to counter expanding Iranian influence there. In February 1992 T. Friedman wrote in The New York Times that ‘[t]he Bush administration has already begun consulting with Turkey and Egypt on how they can all cooperate in order to help prevent Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kazakstan from falling under the political sway of Iran.’

Later in 1993 this became part of the Clinton administration’s broader strategy for containing Iran in the framework of ‘Dual Containment’. This policy was outlined by Clinton’s Advisor for Near East and South Asian Affairs, Martin Indyk, in June 1993. He emphasised the need for ‘dual containment’ of the regimes in power in Iran and Iraq until they modified their behaviour:

Dual containment derives from an assessment that the current Iraqi and Iranian regimes are both hostile to American interests in the region. Accordingly, we do not accept the argument that we should continue the old balance of power game...we reject it because we do not need it...the coalition that fought Saddam remains together. As long as we are able to maintain our military presence in the region; as long as we succeed in restricting the ambitions of both Iraq and Iran; and as long as we can rely on our regional allies – Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey – to preserve the balance of power in our favour in the wider Middle East region, we will have the means to counter the Iraqi and Iranian regimes.

The US decision-makers saw increased Iranian influence in the area as a threat to US national interests, and so tried to prevent Tehran from achieving its strategic
goals, while Iran attempted to expand ties and maximise the benefits from its relationships. R. Menon and H. Barkey described Iran’s diplomacy in, and radio broadcasts to, Central Asia as a threat to the West, particularly the United States. In the meantime, the Civil War in Tajikistan prompted concern that Iran could feed unrest. In addition, the US government saw Iran as wanting to use the region’s markets to reconstruct its own war-ravaged economy.

To counter Iranian influence in the region, Washington tried on the one hand to discourage the republics’ ties with Tehran, and on the other hand attempted, as discussed below, to increase Turkey’s influence, as an alternative to Iran.

To evaluate US policy towards the involvement of Iran in Central Asia, one could argue that initially American policymakers did not realise that Tehran was doing little to foster Islamic resurgence in the region, as discussed in Chapter Three. In contrast to Washington’s assumption, Iran was following politico-economic interests, not trying to export its revolutionary brand of religion. Former Deputy Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Maleki, made this clear: ‘Despite western accusation of Iran for exporting religious extremism to Central Asia and the Caucasus, Iran expanded economic and social relations with its neighbours’, and that ‘Iran’s position in the republics has been given a great boost by the fact that its policy is not based on ideology, but on trade and cultural links between it and the republics’. Moreover, Russia was, and still is, more important to Iran’s economy and particularly security than Central Asia, so its relations with Russia rank above those with the region’s states. In his visit to Uzbekistan in late 1991, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati reiterated the principle by which Tehran was to conduct its policy in the region: ‘Whilst respecting the aspirations of the Soviet republics for self-determinations, Iran’s relations with them would be formulated within the framework of [its] relations with Moscow.’ In fact, Tehran has seen Russia as the most important country in the region, and feels that it must have the best relations with it, believing that ‘Russia is a vast market for Iranian goods, on the one hand, and that Russia is a land of opportunities, on the other. These opportunities involve high-tech equipment, military industries, and nuclear technology and weapons, such as submarines.’ In relation to the Tajikistan conflict, first of all this problem resulted from local ethnic, regional, and inter-elite conflict, not from outside interference nor the influence of fundamentalist Islam. Second, Tehran played an important mediating role to end the conflict, as discussed in previous Chapter.

Therefore, one can argue that Washington’s primary understanding of Iran’s attitude towards the region was more myth than fact. Nevertheless, US policymakers did
come to realise that Iran’s limited resources and other problems deprived it of any capacity to monopolise Central Asia, and raised questions about the need to promote Turkey or any other country, such as Pakistan, as alternative models for the region.

Furthermore, compared to Iran, Saudi Arabia, a US ally, has been a much stronger backer of Islamic cultural and political renaissance, providing vast sums of money covertly to Islamic community leaders throughout the region. In this connection, M. Haghayeghi argued that, judged by the range and scope of Islam-based activities undertaken, Saudi Arabia seems ‘to have had a far more persuasive presence than Iran.’ Yet, the US administration encouraged the Saudis to expand their activities in the region.

2. Security objectives

2.1-Denuclearisation of Kazakhstan

In 1991, over 80 percent of Soviet nuclear weapons were deployed in Russia; the rest were located in the Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. They remained under control of Russia, as agreed successor to the Soviet Union’s nuclear power status, but the early focus of both the George Bush and Clinton administrations on establishment of a single nuclear successor to the Soviet Union brought Kazakhstan into sustained focus. According to The Guardian in 1993:

Washington [was] concerned about the distribution of nuclear materials in Central Asia and about a possible coalition of states, including Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Iran to produce nuclear weapons. There [was] talk of an ‘Islamic Bomb’ and of fundamentalism sweeping the former Soviet republics. This is why the Bush administration [was] encouraging Turkey to play a role and set itself as a model of a secular modernising Islamic state, in contrast to Iran.

In fact, Washington’s officials viewed the ex-Soviet nuclear weapons deployed outside Russia as potential threats to US national security, and sought to prevent the appearance of new nuclear states through inheritance of former Soviet nuclear weapons, or of proliferation by transfer to neighbouring states, in particular Iran. Of course, one can argue that the US fears were exaggerated if genuine, and propagandistic if not. There was never any likelihood that Russia would hand over any nuclear weapons to Belarus, Kazakhstan, or Ukraine, let alone Iran. The most the three could have done would have been to make it difficult or impossible for Moscow to use the weapons deployed on their territory. To avert these contingencies Senators Nunn and Lugar devised the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, which became law in 1991. It authorised expenditure of Department of Defence funds in the NIS for
non-proliferation and Safe and Secure Dismantlement (SSD) of nuclear weapons. SSD assistance facilitated the denuclearisation of Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine and the dismantling of nuclear weapons in Russia.\(^8\)

Indeed, the United States provided Kazakstan with support and constructive help in liquidating nuclear arsenals. The practicalities of cooperation in this field were discussed during several high-level meetings, particularly during the visit of Secretary of State Baker to Kazakstan in December 1991, and during the negotiations between Presidents George Bush and Nazarbayev in Washington in May 1992. Nazarbayev confirmed Kazakstan’s obligation to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and in a letter to Bush on 19 May 1992, he stressed: ‘Kazakstan guarantees the carrying out of the elimination of all kinds of nuclear weapons, including strategic offensive arms, located on its territory, over a period of seven years in accordance with the START [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty] Treaty.’\(^8\) In addition, at a news conference following his 17 September 1992 meeting with Baker, Nazarbayev declared that his country did not want to become a nuclear power.\(^8\) However, there was never any chance that Moscow would have given him the option.

Moreover, in December 1993, Vice-President Gore and Nazarbayev signed a US-Kazak umbrella agreement, committing $85 million in initial funds for ‘safe and secure’ dismantling of 104 SS-18 missiles, destruction of their silos, and related purposes.\(^8\) In 1994 the United States and Kazakstan signed a defence cooperation agreement, aimed at dialogue on training, and budgets.\(^8\) By April 1995 all the nuclear warheads had been removed to Russia (see Table 4.1).

### Table 4.1: Operational Strategic Nuclear Warheads and Operational Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicles in the Former Soviet Republics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Operational Strategic Nuclear Warheads</th>
<th>Operational Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>7,327</td>
<td>6,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakstan</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,280</td>
<td>6,848</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Therefore, elimination of the region’s nuclear weapons was described as a major US security interest.\(^8\) However, despite Washington’s fears, Kazakstan could not threaten the United States, as the nuclear weapons deployed on its territory remained fully under Russian control.\(^8\) On the whole, the US strategy of getting Kazakstan and
other post-Soviet nuclear republics to fulfil their obligations under START-1 as quickly as possible succeeded.89

2.2-Conflict resolution

The increased potential for conflict, civil war and instability across Central Asia became a US concern, due to the belief that they would allow Russian or other powers, such as Iran or China, to intervene in these newborn states, which lacked armed forces capable of countering conflict and keeping peace.90 Washington also believed that instability would create conditions in which Islamic movements would increase, and, more importantly, encourage countries like Iran to try to expand their influence in the area. Moreover, emergent nationalism in Central Asia was also seen as capable of impacting on neighbouring states with potentially grave international consequences, and it was also feared that the Afghan conflict could spread into the region.

In particular, the Tajikistan Civil War was a significant issue for Washington. This was partly because the Tajik government’s military weakness prompted it to request Russian military intervention, and partly out of concern at the conflict’s potential to expand into the neighbouring republics, thereby increasing Russian military influence over them.91 The Christian Science Monitor, in explaining why the United States should care about the Tajik civil war wrote:

Tajikistan, which borders Afghanistan and China, show[s] what [can] happen when a potent mix of political, ethnic, clan, and regional rivalries [is] added to a cultural and religious Islamic revival taking place in both a former Soviet republic and a neighboring country. What [makes] Tajikistan unique, apart from being the most violent Central Asian republic, [is] the role of Afghanistan and Islam. Unfortunately, the strife tearing Tajikistan apart could spread throughout the region.92

Therefore, the US administration tried to prevent the spread of conflict to other republics, which would provide Moscow more excuse to reenter the region, by seeking to end the civil war in Tajikistan.93

Washington’s primary goal was to prevent existing problems from escalating into crises that might engage Russia, China, Iran, or even India. The United States attempted to resolve, and where possible prevent, violent conflicts that would endanger regional stability.94 Moreover, promoting control over nationalist separatism and ethnic conflicts necessitated close and careful monitoring of regional issues, and ‘focus on the early identification of ethnic conflict, its potential dimensions, and possible methods of solution.’95 Consequently, conflict resolution became an important US foreign policy goal in this region, and as Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott put it, ‘job one’ to
promote all other desirable outcomes. In this connection, Washington believed that promoting democratic and economic reforms in the republics would help prevent conflict. Strobe Talbott articulated in 1997 that it was US policy to press for the creation of democratic, free market systems, promote conflict resolution, and seek the region’s integration into Euro-Atlantic economic, political and security frameworks. To this end the US Agency for International Development (USAID) tried to support development of civil society, promote employment and income growth, and help improve health, education and the environment. USAID allocations to the region grew from $77.5 million in FY 1993 to $199 million in FY 1995. However, this was only a small part of total US assistance funds to the NIS. Central Asia, with roughly 20 percent of the NIS’ total population, consistently received only 10-13 percent of USAID allocations to the NIS.

However, one should take into consideration that, except for the civil war in Tajikistan, there was actually no other major conflict in the region. Of course, there were some potential conflicts within and between republics, such as between Tajiks and Uzbeks in Uzbekistan or elsewhere, and border disputes, though none were as important as Washington claimed. As P. Croissant and B. Aras argued cogently, predictions at the time the Soviet Union collapsed, that its demise would spawn a series of bloody ethnic conflicts, had mostly not been borne out.

3- Político-economic reforms

The rhetoric of democracy and freedom is apparent in discourse on US national interests around the world. The belief seems to be that open and democratic societies serve as instruments for furtherance of US national interests. According to G.J. Ikenberry, democracy promotion is a strategy based on the view that the political character of other states has an enormous impact on US ability to ensure its security and economic interests. This conviction about the value of democracy has run through much US foreign policy thinking in the last decades. In 1995 Anthony Lake, then Director of the National Security Council, maintained:

We led the struggle for democracy because the larger the pool of democracies, the greater our own security and prosperity. Democracies, we know, are less likely to make war on us or on other nations. They tend not to abuse the rights of their people. They make for more reliable trading partners. And each new democracy is a potential ally in the struggle against the challenges of our time – containing ethnic and religious conflict; reducing the nuclear threat; combating terrorism and organized crime and overcoming environmental degradation.
In this context G.E. Fuller noted: 'Part of American interests in the rest of the world at large includes the assisting of democratic governments that respect human rights, allow open political dialogue, have free market economies, and exhibit concern for the global environment.' However, Washington has frequently supported and/or financed non-democratic states in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the Americas.

After the collapse of the USSR, President Clinton formulated a new policy, 'enlargement of free-market democracies', to replace containment of Soviet communism as the centrepiece of US foreign policy. Washington declared its objectives in the former Soviet republics to include promotion of human rights and democracy, fostering of which in the NIS was claimed by some to be a top priority of US foreign policy. This has enjoyed prominence in US Central Asian policy since 1991, when Secretary of State Baker, outlined his 'five principles' for peaceful and orderly dissolution of the Soviet Union: first, peaceful self-determination consistent with democratic values and principles; second, respect for existing borders, with any changes occurring peacefully and consensually; third, respect for democracy and rule of law, especially elections and referenda; fourth, human rights, particularly minority rights; and fifth, respect for international law and obligations. Rhetorically, Washington encouraged pluralism, freedom and democracy in strategically important states, as much as was feasible without destabilising the region. Baker said: 'We believe it is important that reform towards democracy and free markets take place and it is also important that the United States makes it clear that it supports the territorial integrity of these countries and the independence of these states.' Commitment to these principles was even a US condition for establishing embassies in the republics.

The United States continued to support democratisation in the former Soviet republics, Central Asians included, through various programs such as the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act (FSA), passed by Congress on 24 October 1992 (see Appendix A). With the passage of FSA the USA laid the foundation for multifaceted assistance to the Central Asian states, initially focusing on democratisation and promotion of free market economies, and funding many educational and social programs. In addition to FSA, the Central Asian-American Enterprise Fund (CAAEF or the Fund) was incorporated in August 1994. Its function was to provide budgets for policies and practices conducive to promoting development of the Central Asian private sector. Both organisations were directed by the State Department.
The question is whether US assistance was or was not restrictive? In other words, was progress in democratic reform really a US condition for providing the republics with aid? While visiting Central Asia in 1993, Talbott called on the states to improve their human rights performance and suggested that 'aid might be tied to their record in this area.' On 19 May 1993 Washington signed a bilateral agreement with Kyrgyzstan, pledging cooperation and assistance, ostensibly to signal US support for Kyrgyzstan, which seemed to score highly on ratings of liberalisation, as a model for the other Central Asian states, because of its bold pursuit of macroeconomic stabilisation and democratic reform, and because it had been praised as 'an island of democracy' in the region. By contrast, Washington shunned Niyazov of Turkmenistan (who, unlike his Kyrgyz counterpart, was not invited to meet President Clinton when he visited Washington in March 1993), on the grounds of disapproval of his human rights record. However, in practice the states’ poor record on human rights, particularly in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, did not stop the United States from aiding them in furtherance of its own interests.

Despite the stated US goal, the Central Asian countries are far from democracy (see Tables 5.4 and 6.1), as some politicians and scholars in the United States have acknowledged. In October 1996 Ambassador James Collins insisted that progress in democratisation in the region ‘has been much slower than we would have liked.’ J. Nichol further argued that ‘...the majority of Central Asian states appear more authoritarian than during the Gorbachev period, according to many observers, and commit many human rights abuses.’ The nature of leadership in most of the republics has placed maintenance of their own power ahead of democratic reform.

In market reform, Washington also made little headway. Because it was expected to generate political reform and preclude return to totalitarianism, US policymakers funded programs for economic reform and accelerated privatisation. Talbott argued that the US aim was ‘to help them towards democracy’, and noted: ‘Since 1992, the US has obligated more than 2.2 billion dollars in overall assistance to the eight states of the Caucasus and Central Asian region.’ Despite these injections of funds, neither democracy nor the market economy flourished in Central Asia, as some regional observers have noted. For example S. Duvanov, a Kazak journalist, wrote:

The Americans believed that market reforms in the national economy would trigger democratic reforms in political life. In fact, it turned out vice versa: concentration of power by the president has resulted not only in elimination of democratic institutions, but also in the restricted freedom of enterprise. Kazakhstan has become known as a highly unfavourable place for entrepreneurship. Doing business in Kazakhstan
got more and more dependent on those at the top. Strictly speaking, by 1998 authority had merged with business. Those at the top either owned or acquired the control over major profitable sectors and companies. In fact, all those people have divided the major bits of the national pie.\textsuperscript{117}

He noted that the United States had provided the Kazak government with funds to promote free enterprise and democracy, but the government envisaged something different, namely to gather personal wealth, consolidate more power, and neutralise opposition. In other words, the elite deftly co-opted US aid to its own advantage. Duvanov concluded: ‘All those years, the Clinton administration used democratic slogans to imitate aiding Kazak democracy, but in fact helping to curtail democratic processes in Kazakhstan.’\textsuperscript{118}

Washington’s policy toward Tashkent was another example of insufficient development in democracy. Uzbekistan has been far from a democratic ally; authority remaining centralised with President Karimov, and has been plagued with widespread governmental and societal corruption. Furthermore, political repression and disproportionate responses to threats associated with political Islam have encouraged rather than diminished the radicalisation of Islamist movements, and galvanised popular support behind them.\textsuperscript{119} Support for Uzbekistan contradicted the US commitment to principles of democracy and freedom. By playing the ‘our sonuvabitch’ game, Washington has implicitly encouraged undemocratic Uzbek policy, and flagrantly contradicted rhetorical claims that US contact influences states towards moderation.\textsuperscript{120}

One can certainly argue that ‘promotion of democracy’ in Central Asia has been a ‘failed policy’. Not only did US money and policies not improve the situation in the republics, in most cases, such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, they helped the leaders to establish monopoly on power. In fact, a family-state has replaced communist-state monopoly in these countries. Some in Washington have acknowledged this. In testimony to the House of Representatives in November 2000, Congressman Christopher H. Smith said: ‘It may sound bizarre, but it may not be out of the realm of possibility that some of these [Central Asian] leaders who already head what are, for all intents and purposes, royal families, are planning to establish what can only be described as family dynasties.’\textsuperscript{121}

Power never left the hands of the region’s old communist elite, and Washington’s double-standards toward such leaders never motivated them to change their behaviour.\textsuperscript{122} The United States has clearly lacked commitment to promotion of democracy and human rights in the region. According to Human Rights Watch reports, countries like Uzbekistan may have around four times as many political prisoners as the
whole of the former Soviet Union had in the early 1980s. According to an ‘International League for Human Rights’ report, in 2002 Uzbekistan had over 7,000 political prisoners – more than in all other post-Soviet states combined. This means that in some of these republics, the post-independence human rights situation is considerably worse than it was under late Soviet rule. Although in 1992 all the region’s leaders assured the USA that they would pursue democratisation, and pledged on joining the OSCE that they would abide by international human rights standards, democracy has not yet reached Central Asia. But the question arises: ‘why did the USA support leaders who showed no willingness to democratise?’ On this matter, S. Duvanov has pointed out:

The people, who have been trying to build an American-style democracy in their home countries, come to realise that Americans are just guarding their geopolitical or economic interests…There is a widespread opinion that America’s aid is sincere only when U.S. interests coincide with the interests of democracy (like it was in Yugoslavia). In all other cases this promotion of democracy is just a show up, a facade needed just to justify the U.S. presence. In practice, it is usually the America’s geopolitical, economic and other tasks that are being solved, and for this purpose the U.S. is ready to support any political regime. In fact, one can argue that Washington feared political Islam would be, in regard to its interests, a worse alternative to the existing regimes, so as long as these regimes served US interests, its policymakers were none too concerned about their flagrant abuses of democracy and human rights.

A contradiction emerged between the declared US policy of spreading democracy and the reality of the determination of the region’s leaders, particularly Karimov and Niyazov, to retain power. Nor, given Central Asian political nature and cultures, was fostering democracy there an easy task, as the various peoples lacked the cultural underpinnings necessary to support democratisation. The political culture of the region is very different from that of the West; in particular decisions on power and patronage are based more on personal and clan connections than on publicised abstract criteria.

Hence, it is obvious that, in its first stage of engagement with the region, despite its advocacy of democracy, the United States did not pressure the leaders to consider democratic standards. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher held that Washington’s policies are among the primary reasons why this large part of the world is falling into despair. He maintained that the Clinton administration lowered the priority of human rights as an international goal. Other analysts, such as B. Rumer, argued that Washington took no action against the region’s brutal leaders because it recognised that the alternative was
not democracy but either Islamic theocracy or chaos like that in the Balkans. Both may be possible, but, as discussed in Chapter Two, the likelihood of theocratic states emerging in Central Asia was very remote.

Therefore, promotion of democracy in Central Asia was in effect a lost cause, and the rulers’ poor record in human rights and high levels of repression presented no barrier to US establishment of military and politico-economic relations. It would appear that the policy of promoting democracy and human rights was of only tactical significance in Washington’s involvement with the region. In pursuit of its geopolitical interests, the United States, as discussed in Chapter Six, ignored the authoritarian characteristics of the Central Asian regimes. As N. Chomsky said in 1992:

Consider the President’s proud boast that *dictators and tyrants* know ‘that what we say goes.’ It is beyond dispute that the US has no problem with dictators and tyrants if they serve US interests, and will attack and destroy committed democrats if they depart from their service function. The correct reading of Bush’s words, then, is: ‘What we say goes’, whoever you may be.133

**US policy mechanisms and devices**

Important national interests cost nations some of their national treasure, in the form of funding to support engagement and development, and of military assets to defend those interests. Washington used different mechanisms and devices to develop its interests in the newly independent Central Asia, ranging from ‘soft power’ to military assistance and manipulation of allies.

1- Soft power

As Mackinder developed his formula of the ‘Heartland’, discussed in Chapter One, he advised strategists that maintaining balance in Central Asia would require a security coin where one side was ‘hard power’ such as military assistance, and the other ‘soft power’, namely diplomacy, financial aid, educational programs, culture, etc. An unstructured projection of influence is inherent in J.S. Nye’s conception of ‘soft power’.134 ‘Soft power’ has an ability to entice and attract, or to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences of others.135 It is ideational in form, and its characteristic is essentially influential. Nye argued that ‘soft power’ involves ‘getting others to want what you want...it co-opts people rather than coerces them.’136 Accordingly, Nye believed that

...we [Americans] must win friends through the use of our ‘soft power’ instead of relying solely on ‘hard power.’ If we can persuade others to want what we want, we save having to spend on expensive carrots and
sticks. Hard power works through coercion, using military sticks and economic carrots to get others to do our will. Soft power works through attraction. Our attractiveness rests on our culture, our political values and our policies by taking into account the interests of others. At a recent world gathering, Secretary of State Colin Powell correctly reminded Europeans that although we won World War II using hard power, we followed it with the Marshall Plan and support for democracy. And soft power was essential to our victory in the Cold War.

He argued there are times when hard power is essential, but that US success in the long term depends on balancing both soft and hard power.

To achieve their primary goals and interests in Central Asia, American policymakers mainly concentrated, at this stage, on ‘soft power’. In this connection, US assistance programs were the most important instrument for influencing the new republics including the Central Asians (see Table 4.2). FSA directed the US President to designate a coordinator within the State Department to oversee assistance to the states of the former Soviet Union, excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Fund was also used to direct financial support to Central Asia. In July 1994 it planned to send $150 million over five years to the republics. In addition to FSA and the Fund, some other US bodies provided the Central Asian republics with aid. In 1994 the Department of Agriculture gave $10 million to Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan received $500,000 in food and $5.5 million in medical assistance under Operation Provide Hope (OPH). Washington also provided Kazakhstan with $30 million in food aid. In Fiscal Year (FY) 1995 the US government set aside $23 million for privatisation, plus $10.5 million for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to engage in economic restructuring, and Tajikistan received $7.1 million in humanitarian aid. Through this kind of assistance the United States claimed to help the region’s countries to promote democratisation, privatisation and creation of free markets. However, it is doubtful that such goals could be gained by financial aid. In this connection, M.B. Olcott argued that money spent on developing civil society in the region is likely to have little impact. In practice, the financial support was aimed at reducing dependence on Russia and pulling the republics gradually away from it. Washington viewed its assistance to, and cooperative activities with, the NIS, Central Asia included, as a significant element in its engagement with the former Soviet republics. According to a US government annual report:

...the U.S. Government views its NIS assistance programs not only in developmental terms, but as an essential component in our overall relationship with these countries—these programs are not only promoting democratic and market reform, and helping prevent WMD proliferation and other threats to U.S. national security, but they are also
helping the U.S. to build constructive diplomatic, trade and people-to-
person relationships with the region.144

Table 4.2: USAID Assistance to the Central Asian Republics, 1992-1994, (US$ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Kazakhstan</th>
<th>Kyrgyzstan</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
<th>Uzbekistan</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>131.1</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>101.00</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>357.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


But where did the money go? Did Washington know where it went? It seems that despite stated US interest in democracy promotion and economic reform and undertakings to provide aid, the money has not been directed appropriately. Instead, the region's leaders have enriched themselves, their families and a favoured few, while the rest of the population struggles to eke out a miserable existence and drifts towards desperation.145

Moreover, the US government set up a variety of educational programs, such as student exchange and scholarships, in the Central Asian countries, involving the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), the premier US nonprofit organisation specialising in education (see Appendix B). IREX expanded academic exchanges, educational advising, alumni programming, independent media assistance and development, Internet training and access, professional training, non-governmental organisation (NGO) development, and partnership building.146 Elizabeth Jones described the programs as the 'most important tool' for US policy in Central Asia.147 Ambassador Sestanovich also acknowledged their importance for US objectives in the region:

We are providing the assistance necessary to help: exchanges that expose students, businessmen, farmers, government officials, and academics to the American way of life; judicial reform programs; advice on how to draft election laws in accord with international norms; training; observers for elections when they are held; and support for non-governmental organisations that will increasingly play a genuinely independent role in these countries' future.148

These various programs initiated in and after 1993 have provided opportunities for students and scholars from the region to spend from a few weeks to one or two years in the USA, with access to academic facilities, libraries, faculty, scholars, and the opportunity to attend some courses, seminars and so forth.149 As a result, Central Asians, particularly the youth, became familiar with American culture and values. Furthermore,
each year the US government sends many trainers, teachers, and scholars to the region, to run educational programs for young people.

2-US manipulation of Turkey

Two issues led Washington to manipulate Turkey in its policy towards Central Asia. First was a belief that ‘Central Asia being so remote and so alien to Americans, the US government [was] not likely to get directly involved in that region.’ Second, as noted earlier, US policymakers unrealistically feared that the vacuum left by the Soviet Union’s demise would lead to enhanced Iranian activity in the region and a consequent spread of political Islam into the newly independent states. Such an assumption and fear led the United States to promote Turkey’s role in Central Asia, encouraging ties to Ankara. Turkey, as a Western ally and secular state, was seen as a US bridge to the region and an alternative to Iran.

Because of its cultural and linguistic affinities with all the Central Asians except the Tajiks, Turkey was regarded by the West, especially the United States, as a gateway to Central Asia and Transcaucasia. Furthermore, the secular quality of Turkey’s official culture (discussed in Chapter Three) and, most significantly, its leaders’ thoroughly pro-Western orientation, induced Washington to support Ankara’s engagement with the newly independent republics. Accordingly, many in the West, particularly in the United States, began to discuss Turkey’s potential role in the post-Soviet era. The New York Times of 17 February 1992 observed that fear of fundamentalism spreading in Central Asia had, in turn, stimulated the USA to encourage Turkey in its approaches toward the region. In early 1992 Secretary of State Baker, while visiting several Central Asian capitals, recommended to the political leaders that they adopt the Turkish model for political and economic development, and European politicians and media followed suit. President George Bush took to calling Turkey a ‘model to others, especially those newly independent republics of Central Asia.’ Richard Burt, an official in the Reagan and Bush administrations, provided an emblematic view of Turkey as ‘the key ‘front line’ state in confronting the dominant post-Cold War dangers: state-sponsored terrorism, proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons, and spread of radical Islamic fundamentalism.

The United States therefore, favoured a greater role for Ankara as a counterweight to Iran, and, as R. Israeli pointed out, to bring ‘Central Asia closer to the West.’ On the eve of Prime Minister Demirel’s visit to the United States in February 1992, a State Department spokesman proclaimed: ‘We undoubtedly prefer for
Turkish influence to prevail over Iranian. This is in our interest.\textsuperscript{157} During a meeting with the region’s leaders, Mme Catherine Lalumiere, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, said Turkey provided a valid model of development for the independent Central Asian countries.\textsuperscript{158} Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter Three, Turkish politicians and scholars also envisaged a unique role for Turkey in Central Asia. M. Aydin, for example, argued that Ankara could, and should, play a dynamic role in connecting the newly independent Central Asian and Caucasian republics to the rest of the world, and help them in their ‘quest for an identity.’\textsuperscript{159}

Whether Turkey could play its proposed role, and Washington continued to support the Turkish model for Central Asia, remains undecided. Turkey, as discussed in Chapter Three, has had serious limitations on its ability to play an instrumental role in Central Asia. In the first flush of enthusiasm the region’s leaders called Istanbul ‘the Mecca of Turks’, but they did not maintain their initially positive view of the Turkish model.\textsuperscript{160}

In addition to Turkey, Washington has also encouraged Pakistani and Saudi Arabian influence in Central Asia to limit Iran’s presence. It acknowledged overlapping regional priorities with Pakistan, which it subsequently depicted as a ‘moderate’ Islamic state, and a model to be emulated. A draft defence planning document, leaked to \textit{The New York Times} early in 1992, underlined Pakistan’s strategic importance, asserting that ‘a constructive US-Pakistan relationship [would] be an important element in our strategy to promote stable security conditions in south-west and Central Asia.’\textsuperscript{161} In a meeting with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in April 1995, Clinton called Pakistan ‘a good partner’ that had ‘stood for democracy and opportunity and moderation.’\textsuperscript{162} Tomas Niles, the Assistant Secretary of State, clearly insisted that the United States has also encouraged Saudi Arabia and others to provide assistance to the newly independent states of Central Asia.\textsuperscript{163} He said that in Central Asia the Saudis feel a cultural, traditional link which they do not necessarily feel in Central and Eastern Europe, and that ‘we believe that the Saudis will be prepared, working with us, working with Turkey.’\textsuperscript{164} All three states, especially Turkey, have been active in Central Asia at US urging, in presenting alternative Islamic paradigms to counter Iran’s influence.

3-Hard Power: Expediting military assistance

The United States began military engagement with Central Asia soon after independence, aiming to support the region’s integration with Western political-military institutions, as well as to protect the new states’ sovereignty and independence.
Ambassador Sestanovich described US efforts as aimed at helping the region’s countries to create effective border controls, participate fully in bilateral and international arms control and non-proliferation programs, better control imports and exports, and develop modern military-civilian relationships. From the early days of the Clinton administration, the United States and its NATO partners envisaged a security strategy encompassing the CIS, to be conducted through multilateral bodies and mechanisms, such as the UN, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and bilateral links across the old Cold War divide. Such themes are particularly prominent in the work of some US scholars. Brzezinski, for example, outlined an ambitious strategy for NATO, under US leadership, to move closer to becoming an ‘international policeman’ in the Transcaspian region, and lending vigorous support to the Central Asian states, but the main preoccupation was with building a new security structure for Europe and providing a multilateral umbrella for peacekeeping operations. Within this broad framework, the Western powers’ mission has been seen as promotion of the norms and rules of international peacekeeping procedures and teaching the methods of democratic control of defence policy and armed forces. According to Talbott, expanding military-to-military cooperation during the Clinton administration would help reduce regional instability, promote mutual security, and seek to avoid any replay of the 19th Century ‘great game’ with its zero-sum competition for influence among great powers.

One aspect of US military assistance to the republics was training and exercises. In 1993 Central Asian officers began to receive training at the George C. Marshall Centre in Garmisch, Germany, under a German-American security initiative. In addition, the USA gave International Military Education Training (IMET) grants, and maintained other military contacts with all the countries except Tajikistan. During his visit to the United States in February 1994 Nazarbayev signed a memorandum on US-Kazak defence cooperation, including talks on defence, training, and budgets. In December 1995 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan formed a joint peacekeeping unit, with support from US Central Command (CENTCOM). This unit, the Central Asian Battalion (Centrazbat), was created to maintain stability in Central Asia and enable the three participants to share information in support of their bid to join UN peacekeeping missions. Centrazbat exercises have been held annually since 1997, with participation by forces from the USA, other NATO members and regional states.

From 1994 NATO forged stronger links with all the region’s republics through the Partnership for Peace. By mid-1994 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and
Uzbekistan had joined this program, and Tajikistan followed in 2001.¹⁷² Central Asia’s leaders reacted positively to NATO’s expansion. President Akayev claimed in 1997 that cooperation with NATO had helped Kyrgyzstan partially to resolve several urgent problems, including advanced training of military personnel, overcoming natural disasters, and providing expert aid to various ministries.¹⁷³ Niyazov thanked NATO for helping train Turkmen military personnel, and Karimov proclaimed that US advisors were helping form the Uzbek armed forces.¹⁷⁴ Karimov also claimed that NATO might become a stabilising force not only on the European continent, but also, by strengthening its political structure and ‘Partnership for Peace’, in the vast Eurasian region.¹⁷⁵ He maintained: ‘Our participation in the ‘Partnership for Peace’ program we regard as strengthening our independence and sovereignty, as connecting ourselves to modern military and technical achievements, and as expanding opportunities in our military experts’ training.’¹⁷⁶ Nazarbayev in 1999 praised NATO’s contribution to Kazakstan’s defence structure, and said ‘Kazakstan considers the participation in this program [PfP] and the whole cooperation with the Atlantic Block principally important.’¹⁷⁷ However, while Central Asian regimes expressed interest in expanding partnership with NATO, they denied that this would be to the detriment of their relations with Russia. Yet, and despite their positive reaction to NATO expansion, in discussions with NATO, the presidents of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan emphasised that they understood Moscow’s concern about NATO’s eastward expansion and its policy in the Balkans, and that Russia’s interests should be taken into consideration.¹⁷⁸ They also indicated that the republics were not planning, even in the far future, to seek membership of NATO. Karimov pointed out that Uzbekistan’s law on the fundamental principles of foreign policy bans participation in military or military-political blocs.¹⁷⁹

The PfP’s long-term strategic goals have been to involve the region in the security agenda, exchange information and expand military cooperation, plan for peacekeeping operations and finally strengthen stability in furtherance of US targets and interests. Moreover, inclusion of the countries in the PfP formalised their relations with NATO, and established a basis for combined action.¹⁸⁰ NATO’s key priorities in Central Asia have been to operate in harmony with the new world order, cooperate with other international organisations (UN, OSCE, and EU), strengthen security on the Eurasian continent, accentuate preventive diplomacy, and support introduction of integrated systems of military planning and standards.¹⁸¹ The PfP program hosted a series of exercises to provide training in peacekeeping and develop interoperability. Central
Asian troops have participated in PfP exercises since 1995. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan participated in operation NUGGET, exercises in peacekeeping tactics in August 1995 and in July 1997 at Fort Polk, Louisiana, where Kazakhstan also took part.182

Indeed, expanding military engagement with the republics was viewed as a significant mechanism to promote their integration into Western political-military institutions, encourage civilian control over militaries, institutionalise cooperative relations with NATO, especially the United States, and deter other regional powers, particularly Russia, China and Iran, from seeking to dominate the region. From the early 1990s Washington began laying the groundwork for future enhancement of military influence in the region. In this connection, R.G. Kaiser argued in The Washington Post:

During the 1990s the United States began to quietly build influence in the area. Washington established significant military-to-military relationships with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Soldiers from those countries have been trained by Americans...The militaries of all three have an ongoing relationship with the National Guard of a U.S. state – Kazakhstan with Arizona, Kyrgyzstan with Montana, Uzbekistan with Louisiana.183

Following the events of 11 September 2001, the existing military interaction facilitated Central Asian cooperation with the USA in the ‘war on terror’ (discussed in Chapter Six).

Conclusion

Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United States paid no attention to Central Asia. Considered a ‘backwater of the Soviet empire’, the region was primarily perceived as vast, remote and unfamiliar.184 The Soviet collapse offered Washington an opportunity to extend its influence into the region for the first time. However, US officials did not initially recognise any vital interests in Central Asia. This was acknowledged by some American scholars, who described the region’s relevance as something that people in the West are only ‘just beginning to understand’.185

Yet uncertain views about the region did not stop the USA from establishing relations with the newly independent republics soon after the demise of the USSR. Indeed, they had important geopolitical interests there. The United States, seeking to maximise and maintain its status as the only post-Cold War superpower, wanted to ensure that no single state, such as Russia, China or Iran, or group of states, such as the Islamic countries, could challenge its position in the area. Since Russia has been trying to reorganise its extensive military and politico-economic linkages with the republics
from mid-to-late 1992 onwards, it has occupied a major place in Washington’s policy in the region.

In short, this chapter demonstrated that, in the first stage, the US engagement with Central Asia was a mix of misleading, misunderstood, and to some extent failed policies, rendering US policy toward the newborn republics far less effective than it might have been. In this connection, P.A. Goble, an expert on Central Asia and the Caucasus, wrote in 1994:

Unfortunately, even now, when the six Muslim states (Central Asian republics plus Azerbaijan) that have emerged from the wreckage of Soviet power call out to be taken seriously as countries, all too many in the West – and especially in the United States – remain trapped in the old paradigm for the region. As a result, we not only continue to misunderstand this region, but, equally seriously, we are failing to recognize its likely impact on the international scene, precisely the issue we claim to care about and the one with enormous consequences.186

Finally, during the early years there was no uniformity in US approach toward Central Asia. As regional expert A. Rashid has also argued, US policy was ‘stymied by the lack of a strategic framework – the United States dealt with issues as they came up, in a haphazard, piecemeal fashion, rather than applying a coherent, strategic vision to the region.’187 However, this initial phase provided a foundation for next stage, in which Washington pursued a clearer policy in the region, and focused particularly on energy resources.
Notes

3 C.G. Bond, Acting Principal Deputy, Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary for the New Independent States, Department of State, in a hearing on the Middle East and South Asia by the House International Revaluations Committee, 6 June 2001.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 D.L. Smith, for instance, argued: ‘America has no vital interests in Central Asia, nor will it assume responsibility for Central Asia’s security. We have little ‘leverage’ to directly influence events or push our foreign policy agenda on these sovereign states.’ D.L. Smith, ‘Central Asia: A New great game?’, Working Paper, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle, 17 June 1996, p. 24, Stephen Blank, of the Strategic Studies Institute US Army War College, pointed out that Central Asian trends did not directly affect vital US interests, although both the Bush senior and Clinton administrations

16 Even in October 1992, Sergei Karaganov, a member of the Russian Presidential Council, declared ‘Russia is compelled to play an active post-imperial role. Russia must return to its traditional role, bribe local princes, send troops to save someone, and so on. It is an ungrateful job, but it is our history and we partially ourselves led us to it.’ Cited by Y. Fedorov, ‘Russia’s Policies Toward Caspian Region Oil: Neo-Imperial or Pragmatic?’, Perspectives on Central Asia, Vol. 1, No. 6, September 1996, pp. 34-38.
20 Quoted in Smith, op. cit., p. 15.

28 Some issues have influenced the republics' relations with Russia. For example, Uzbekistan has been attempting to distance itself from Moscow, and some of the states have not accepted dual citizenship for Russians in their countries.


33 Ibid.


39 This was evident in Clinton’s words in April 1993: ‘The opportunity that lies before our nation today is to answer the courageous call of Russian reform – as an expression of our own values, as an investment in our own security and prosperity, [and] as a demonstration of our purpose in a new world.’ To this end, according to a Department of State report, of the $4.48 billion of US expenditures through FY 1994 to the NIS in the overall assistance program, Russia received $2.28 billion, or about one-half of the cumulative total. Clinton pointed out four major reasons why changes and reforms in Russia were important to the USA. The first was that reforms in Russia would offer America a historic opportunity to improve its own security. The second was that Russia’s reforms could present the United States with the chance to complete the movement from having an adversary in foreign policy to having a partner in global problem solving. The third was that Russia’s reforms would hold one of the keys to investing more in America’s future, because in the Soviet era, the USA spent trillions of dollars to prosecute the Cold
War. In the absence of the Soviet Union, the USA could reduce that pace of spending. The fourth reason
was that Russian reforms could provide a better opportunity for the US economy. W. Clinton, ‘A strategic
alliance with Russian reform’, address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Annapolis,
189-194.
40 Cited from Nichol, ‘Central Asia’s New States: Political Developments and Implications for US
Interests’, 1996, p. 3.
44-55.
42 M.B. Olcott, ‘Central Asia’s Catapult to Independence’, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 71, No. 3, Summer 1992,
pp. 123-126, M.B. Olcott, Central Asia’s New States: Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional
43 Cited in R. Menon and H.J. Barkey, ‘The transformation of Central Asia: implications for regional and
44 Quoted by F. Hill and P. Jewett, ‘Back in USSR’: Russia’s interventions in the international affairs of
the former Soviet republics and the implications for United States policy toward Russia’, John F.
Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University: Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project,
Cambridge, January 1994, p. 43.
45 For example see Blank, ‘Energy, economics and security in Central Asia Russia and its rivals’,
pp. 11-23, V. Tolz, ‘The burden of the imperial legacy’, RFE/RL Research Report, 14 May 1993,
48 For more details see Blank, ‘Energy, economics and security in Central Asia Russia and its rivals’,
pp.29-37.
49 Ibid. pp. 33-35.
51 For a comprehensive analysis of Russia’s inability to project power, see C. Foss, ‘Russia’s Forces Out
Menon, ‘Structural Constraints on Russian Diplomacy’, Orbis, Fall 2001, pp. 579-596.
52 I Karimov, Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century, New York: St. Martin’s Press,
the Australian National University, 2001, pp. 38-75, 117-175.
55 Hunter, op. cit., pp. 159-162.


60 Odom, op. cit., pp.1-8.

61 Olcott, 'Central Asia's Catapult to Independence', pp. 123-126.


65 A Cohen, 'US interests in Central Asia', Testimony before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific / House International Relations Committee - US House of Representatives, 17 March 1999. Forecasts of the early 1990s of possible dissemination of Iranian fundamentalism in Central Asia have proved wrong. The fundamentalist threat can be described as hypothetical rather than real. However, Turkey, Israel and the United States are still brandishing the forecasts.

66 Friedman, 'US to Counter Iran in Central Asia', p. A3.

67 Ibid.


75 BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Middle East, No. 1242, 29 November 1991, p. A5.

76 A. Maleki, ‘Iran and Turan: Apropos of Iran’s relations with Central Asia and the Caucasian republics’.

77 Pipes and Clawson, op. cit., pp. 124-142.


For more information see START I: Lisbon Protocol, signed by Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and USA Lisbon on 23 May 1992, at


E. Jones, ‘U.S. Engagement in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Staying Our Course Along the Silk Road’, Remarks at ‘Central Asia: Its Geopolitical Significance and Future Impact’ Conference Hosted by
the Title VI Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program Directors, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, 10 April 2003.

95 Fuller, 'Central Asia and American National Interests', pp. 129-142.


101 Croissant and Aras, op. cit., p. XV.


103 Quoted in ibid. In an Address on 3 May 1994. Talbott remarked: ‘Market democracy makes not only for prosperous citizens but for safe neighbors as well. History shows us that market democracies tend not to go to war with one another; they tend not to sponsor terrorist acts against each other; and they are more likely to be reliable trading partners, to protect the global environment, and to respect international law. In short, market democracies are the kind of friends and stable partners that the U.S. Government and U.S. businesses seek throughout the world.’ Talbott, 'Promoting democracy and prosperity in Central Asia', pp. 280-281.

104 Fuller, 'Central Asia and American National Interests', p. 139.


106 For details see Nichol, 'Central Asia’s New States: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests', 2001, pp. 4-16.

107 Baker, op. cit., p. 72.


111 'US, Kyrgyz sign bilateral Agreement on Assistance', and ‘Bentsen calls Kyrgyzstan a model for all CIS republics', USIS European Wireless File, No. 95/93, 21 May 1993, p.12. However, the Kyrgyz government has increasingly been criticised for an alleged rise in human rights abuses and restrictions on press freedom. See J. Anderson, Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia’s Island of Democracy, London: Harwood, 1999, G. Osorova, ‘Communists win election in Kyrgyzstan’s ‘Island of Democracy’, Central Asia-

112 Fuller, 'US presses Central Asians over aid and human rights', p. 4.


116 S. Talbott, 'Farewell to Flashman', op. cit.


118 Ibid.


120 A Lieven, 'The (Not So) Great Game', pp. 63-92, This policy is contrary to what Representative Dana Rohramacher said in July 2002: 'We need to let the people of the world know that the United States is not the friend of totalitarian regimes, of gangsters who beat people up and slaughter them and refuse to allow the people of their country to control their destiny through the ballot box.' Speech by Dana Rohramacher, 22 July 2002, Congressional Record, Vol. 148, No. 10026, July 2002, p. H5061.


125 Lieven, 'Western policy in Central Asia: Values or geopolitics?', pp. 18-20.


127 Duvanov, op. cit.

128 Hunter, op. cit., p. 162.


Ibid.


For more detail on IREX activities in Central Asia see http://www.irex.org/eurasia/ [accessed 26/11/2003].

A.E Jones, Testimony before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia House International Relations Committee, Washington, 29 October 2003.


During my fieldwork in the USA, March/May 2003, I met many of these student and scholars from the region at University of Indiana, University of Chicago and University of Washington.


163 T. Niles, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, Hearing of the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, 9 April 1992, see also Haghayeghi, op. cit., pp. 249-266.
164 Niles, op. cit.
165 ‘US policy toward the Caucasus and Central Asia’, Sestanovich’s Testimony.
171 PfP is the basis for practical security cooperation between NATO and individual Partner countries (19+1). Activities include defence planning and budgeting, military exercises and civil emergency operations. See R Groves, ‘PfP and the State Partnership Program; foresting engagement and progress’, Parameters, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, Spring 1999,pp. 43-53, R. Bhaty and R. Bronson, ‘NATO’s Mixed


\textsuperscript{173} Cited from \textit{Onyok}, Special Issue, Kyrgyzstan, June 1997, pp. 22-23.


\textsuperscript{175} Karimov, op. cit., p. 185.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{179} See A. Jekshenkov, 'The role of the West in the Central Asian region', \textit{Central Asia and the Caucasus} (online), No. 2, 2000, at \url{http://www.ca-c.org/online/2000/journal_eng/eng02_2000/03.dgek.shtml} [accessed 13/12/2001].

\textsuperscript{180} The general objectives of the PfP program have been identified as follows: to facilitate transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes; to ensure democratic control of defence forces; to maintain the capability and readiness to contribute to operations under the authority of the UN and/or the responsibility of the OSCE; to develop cooperative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training and exercises, in order to strengthen the ability of PfP participants to undertake missions in the field of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may subsequently be agreed; and to develop, over the longer term, forces that are better able to operate with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance. See \url{http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/index.htm} [accessed 2/7/2003].

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{182} Cooperative NUGGET is a military training exercise designed to foster interoperability between the participating forces.


\textsuperscript{184} See Fairbanks, Starr, Nelson and Weisbrode, op. cit., p. 94

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid. p.97

\textsuperscript{186} Goble, op. cit., p. 1.

\textsuperscript{187} Rumer, 'The Powers in Central Asia', pp. 57-68.
Chapter Five

US policy towards Central Asia in the second stage (mid-1990s–September 2001)

Those that control the oil routes out of Central Asia will impact all future direction and quantities of flow and the distribution of revenues from new production. J. Dorian

Introduction

The mid-1990s, and particularly the year 1997, was a turning point in US policy in Central Asia, evidenced by the rise in the importance given to the region by Washington. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the limited US interest in Central Asia during the early 1990s was expressed mostly through the policy of ‘Russia first’, support for maintaining the independence of the republics and encouraging so-called liberalisation. From the mid-1990s, however, several factors combined to alter this picture: the hydrocarbon resources of the Caspian Basin, in which two states – Kazakstan and Turkmenistan – have shares, the deterioration in US relations with Russia, the growing instability in neighbouring Afghanistan, especially after establishment of the Taliban regime, and the increase in drug trafficking through the region.

Among these factors the region’s energy resources (vastly exaggerated by the West) and particularly the issue of their transportation have had a significant impact on US policy. This was because one of the most prominent discursive nexuses of US geopolitical, security and economic interests was access to energy resources. George Kennan once suggested that the central goal of US foreign policy was to preserve America’s disproportionate consumption of world resources. In this sense, high-ranking officials in the Clinton administration recognised legitimate geopolitical and economic reasons for an aggressive US presence in the Caspian region, and began to take action at the beginning of 1995. Washington attempted to play a more active role in the pivotal region of Central Asia (and the Caucasus), and energy development and pipeline policy became a US priority, leading the administration towards greater engagement in both regions. Furthermore, certain influential US scholars such as Brzezinski and Starr called for a comprehensive policy toward Central Asia, acknowledging the region’s geostrategic
and economic importance to US interests. H. Clarke, former US Ambassador to Uzbekistan, argued that some Americans might think Central Asia too remote from the United States to be part of its basic challenge. ‘I would not’, said Clarke, ‘Central Asia is too large – its stability is too important to Russia and to any other countries. If we accept the challenge of contribution seriously to a peaceful transition to greater stability in the former Soviet Union as a whole, then we must engage also in Central Asia.’ In a publication produced jointly by the US Atlantic Council and the Central Asia – Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University in 2001, the authors argued that geographic distance should not lead American policymakers to ignore the region’s strategic importance. Accordingly, in this period, which lasted until September 2001, US officials talked about new and growing interests at stake in Central Asia, and for the first time evaluated US national interests in it as ‘vital’. This significant policy shift resulted in challenges to, and changes in, global and regional affairs. The emergence of serious competition between international players – states and oil companies – in the fields of oil, gas and pipelines, and America’s hope of expanding its hegemony in the region were seminal issues in the second period of US engagement with this area.

This chapter examines US policy towards Central Asia from the mid-1990s to September 2001. It explores the importance of energy resources and pipelines in Washington’s involvement in the region. In this connection, it examines the two schools of thought on the issue – ‘Gamers’ and ‘Oilers’. Furthermore, it explores other US national interests in the region, and focuses on some new areas in US policy in Central Asia, particularly drug trafficking, terrorism and the shift from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan as preferred strategic partner. The main argument is that the geopolitical importance of hydrocarbons and pipelines was defined as a ‘vital interest’ in US policy toward Central Asia, and that through this energy policy Washington attempted to expand its hegemony there, by preventing other regional and international states – especially Russia, Iran, and to some degree China – from gaining influence in the region.

**US involvement in and concern with Caspian energy**

The US policy of diversifying world sources of oil, not only for itself but also for other oil consumers, and reducing dependency on Middle East energy reserves, has led it since the mid-1990s to become more active in the Caspian Basin’s hydrocarbons field, and to further the interests of US oil producers in developing and exporting Caspian energy resources. More importantly, through control over those resources, particularly the pipelines, Washington has sought to contain Russia, Iran and to some extent China.
a. Diversifying supply: Can Caspian oil compete with the Persian Gulf?

The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that world oil demand will increase from about 70 million barrels per day in 1995 to between 92 and 97 million in 2010. The high demand for oil on the one hand, and increased oil prices on the other, have encouraged global oil consumers, including the United States, to invest great effort in finding new alternative sources of supply. Accordingly, from the mid-1990s the Caspian Basin’s energy potential began to attract renewed interest among regional and extra-regional countries, particularly the United States. A report from the Commission on America’s National Interests in July 2000 stressed that for the foreseeable future oil would remain an essential commodity, and insisted that greater attention must therefore be given to increasing energy supplies from regions other than the Persian Gulf. It stated that ‘the most promising new source of world supplies is the Caspian region which appears to contain the largest petroleum reserves discovered since the North Sea,’ and then suggested ‘[t]his geopolitical crossroad, which includes Iran, Russia, and a number of newly-independent states struggling with post-Soviet modernisation and dangers of Islamic extremism, demands more attention by American policymakers.’

American oil experts regarded the Caspian as ‘the area of greatest resource potential outside of the Middle East.’ The United States, the world largest oil consumer (as Figure 5.1 shows), recognised its interest in seeing Caspian petroleum enter the international market. In 1997 Sam Brownback, a member of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, identified the Caspian Basin as a new opportunity for Washington, stating that the United States had enormous stakes in the region and the countries surrounding it in Central Asia (and the South Caucasus) and that the region was of ‘vital’ political, economic and social importance to the United States. He also insisted: ‘Our window of opportunity to influence events there is very narrow. The US must assume a more consistent and proactive policy immediately; if we do not act soon, we may find that we are too late to take advantage of a unique opportunity.’ Accordingly, Washington declared the Caspian region a zone of US ‘vital interests’. Dick Cheney, later Vice-President, said of the Caspian Sea Basin in 1998, when he was in the oil industry, ‘I cannot think of a time when we have had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian.’ Ian Bremmer, President of the Eurasia Group and Director of Eurasia Studies at the World Policy Institute, maintained that ‘the Soviet Union has been eclipsed by the Caspian Basin as an American strategic priority.’ Thus,
although in its initial engagement with Central Asia the United States did not recognise any vital interest there, in its second term oil and gas appeared as its ‘vital interests’.

Figure 5.1: The World’s Top Oil Consumers, 2003

![Graph depicting the world's top oil consumers in 2003. The United States leads with the highest consumption, followed by China, Japan, Germany, Russia, India, South Korea, Canada, Brazil, and France.]


Washington’s immediate task was to ensure that no state, or combination of states, could gain the ability to expel the USA from the region, or even to diminish its decisive role in exploiting Caspian oil reserves. According to Richard Morningstar, Special Advisor to President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright for Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy in November 1998, Washington’s policy goals in the Central Asian and South Caucasian states included supporting their sovereignty and ties to the West, and expanding US private investment. He asserted that Washington’s policy was aimed at breaking Russia’s monopoly over oil and gas transport by encouraging construction of pipelines that bypass Russia, promoting Western energy security through diversified suppliers, assisting US ally Turkey, and opposing laying of pipelines that transit ‘energy competitor’ Iran or might otherwise give it undue influence in the region.18

To enhance Washington’s role in the energy area of the Caspian region, Congress introduced the ‘Silk Road Strategy Act’ (SRSA) in March 1999, mandating that US policy in Central Asia and South Caucasus should aim to:
promote and strengthen independence, sovereignty, democratic government, and respect for human rights;

promote tolerance, pluralism, and understanding and counter racism and anti-Semitism;

assist actively in resolution of regional conflicts and facilitate removal of impediments to cross-border commerce;

promote friendly relations and economic cooperation;

help promote market-oriented principles and practices;

assist in development of the infrastructure necessary for communications, transportation, education, health, energy and trade on an East-West axis in order to build strong international relations and commerce between those countries and the stable, democratic, and market-oriented countries of the Euro-Atlantic Community; and

support US business interests and investments in the region.19

The goal was to help the countries of both regions resist falling under the domination of other regional powers, including Russia and Iran, a notion important to US global hegemonic interests. In other words, Washington regarded Caspian oil and gas more as a geopolitical than as an economic objective. This was highlighted by the creation of the post of Caspian Energy Coordinator in 1998 within the State Department rather than the Commerce or Energy departments. Former Secretary of State James Baker stressed in 1995 that transportation of oil from the region was an issue of geopolitics, not necessarily of economics or engineering: ‘This oil is not going to get to market except through the crafting of a geopolitical solution that somehow satisfies most of the aims and goals of some of the countries in the region that are affected namely, Russia and Turkey, and particularly, some of the newly independent republics.’20 He added: ‘I think it is a case of understanding the geopolitical forces at play here and coming up with a creative solution that is reasonable and fair, and that will permit the oil to be marketed and the great economic potential to be realised.’21

Stephen Sestanovich similarly recognised that Washington’s energy policy in the Caspian region was more important to its strategic stance than to its economic interests.22 In this regard, projects like to Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline (see Table 5.3) have been described as uncommercial and the most political pipeline ever built.23 Bill Richardson, Clinton’s Energy Secretary, said ‘[this] is not just another oil
and gas deal, and this is not just another pipeline. It is a strategic framework that advances America's national security interests.24

Thus, one can argue that the main US interest in Caspian oil is geopolitical. From the economic aspect it is doubtful whether the region’s hydrocarbons are sufficient to be an alternative to the Persian Gulf, or whether the oil and gas could be routed economically to the US market.25 Washington has vastly exaggerated the region’s oil potential. Much of this exaggeration has derived from US Department of Energy estimates of the ultimately recoverable oil reserves in the region at around 200 billion barrels, a figure subsequently cited by top US officials, including Strobe Talbott.26 Some of the American press followed this line. D. Sneider, claimed in The Christian Science Monitor in 1995 that, with the oil and gas fields of Kazakstan and Turkmenistan, the Caspian was believed to hold reserves second only to the Persian Gulf.27 D. Yergin and T. Gustafson similarly reported in The New York Times in 1997: ‘The Caspian may hold oil and gas reserves second only to those of the Middle East.’28 And H. Pope wrote also in The Wall Street Journal: ‘The oil companies of the world are swarming into the Caucasus to drill for black gold in the Caspian Sea. The oil is here, plenty of it, with reserves bigger than America's and potentially as great as Kuwait's.’29

But as Table 5.1 shows, Caspian oil and gas reserves are much less than those of the Persian Gulf. Official US estimates that the Caspian holds 16 percent of world reserves are far too high; they are likely to be somewhere between 1.5 and 2 percent, compared to the Persian Gulf projection of between 30 and 50 percent.30

| Table 5.1: Oil and Gas Reserves in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Region, 2001 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Persian Gulf countries**     | **Oil reserves** | **Gas reserves** |
|                                | (billion barrels) | (trillion cubic feet) |
| Saudi Arabia                   | 259             | 213              |
| Iraq                           | 112.5           | 109.8            |
| United Arab Emirates           | 104             | 212.1            |
| Kuwait                         | 94              | 52.2             |
| Iran                           | 89.7            | 812.3            |
| Qatar                          | 13.1            | 394              |
| Bahrain                        | 0.148           | 3.8              |
| Total                          | 672.448         | 1797.1           |

| **Caspian region countries**   | **Oil reserves** | **Gas reserves** |
|                                | (billion barrels) | (trillion cubic feet) |
| Kazakhstan                     | 5.417            | 65                |
| Russia                         | 2.7              | n.a               |
| Azerbaijan                     | 1.178            | 4.4               |
| Turkmenistan                   | 0.546            | 101               |
| Iran                           | 0.1              | 0                 |
| Total                          | 9.941            | 169.5             |

US officials have now admitted not only that Caspian oil reserves fail to rival those of the Persian Gulf, but that production is not as easy in the Caspian Basin as in the Gulf, as discussed below. A consensus has emerged amongst US experts that the Persian Gulf will remain central to the economic and military life of the United States, and will remain by far the most important supplier of hydrocarbon fuels to global markets, without ever being rivalled by the Caspian. Research by the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy has emphasised: 'Oil production in Central Asia and the Caucasus will never match the Persian Gulf where there are five major oil powers and several smaller producers.' However, one can assume that Caspian oil and gas production can have important implications for world energy supplies at the margins. R. Cullen has written: 'according to the unpublished and presumably disinterested estimates of experts at the US Geological Survey, the proven and potential reserves in Central Asia suggest that it will become a significant petroleum source, in the order of Alaska's North Slope but hardly a new Kuwait.'

Thus, the notion that the region's oil and gas could be the panacea for long-run Western energy problems has been misguided. Furthermore, exporting oil and gas from the Caspian region is costly and risky. The region is landlocked and far from possible markets. Due to this distance, pipeline construction is expensive, and the passage of pipelines through other countries entails additional costs. Consequently, shipping oil from this region is much more expensive than from other areas. For example, transporting Persian Gulf oil to the end user costs $2-5 per ton, North Sea oil $10 per ton, Caspian oil $17 per ton. To bring this oil and gas to market, therefore, imposes a considerable financial burden.

Actual and potential regional conflicts should not be overlooked. They might have a negative impact on the development of energy in the region. Trans-shipment points have served as conflict zones and breeding grounds for arms and drug trafficking throughout the region. Such lucrative activities tend to reinforce local mafia structures and create powerful interest groups committed to maintaining the status quo. As a result, these smouldering conflicts stand in the way of foreign direct investment, including investment directed to the development of a broad-based transport corridor along pipeline routes. Various western routes under construction or negotiation could become targets should war be resumed in the region. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, between Azerbaijan and Armenia, presented the most serious threat to a western route. Although a route via Armenia is the shortest from Baku to Turkey, the conflict necessitates avoiding it, which entails extra distance and cost. There is also instability
within Georgia, arising from the Abkhazia conflict. More importantly, the pipeline route in Turkey goes through areas at risk from Kurdish guerilla activities and prone to earthquakes.

With such a range of problems, the question arises as to why the United States has shown such great interest in Caspian oil? It is very unlikely to transport Caspian Basin oil to the US market. S. Blank argued that such an outcome would undermine the whole thrust of US policy, which has been to minimise the need for the Persian Gulf oil and gas, and look elsewhere. However, as mentioned above, Caspian oil might help reduce dependence on Middle East energy deposits. International oil companies, most of which are US-owned, have many customers worldwide, and would not need to take Caspian oil or gas to the USA. Caspian hydrocarbons could, however, be shipped to consumers in Europe, such as Greece, Italy and Spain, reducing general world dependence on Middle East energy reserves. Yet the question of Washington’s desire to use these energy resources to project its hegemony over the eastern part of Eurasia still remains on the board. S. Ambrose and D. Brinkley have viewed this in the broader context of the national security strategy of engagement and enlargement, which identified international economic policy as central to global leverage. J. Israel has seen the course of US interest in Caspian energy reserves unfolding within the framework of geopolitics and security. In this connection, he has pointed to two major goals: first, to reduce the republics of the former USSR to US-controlled territories, helpless to prevent their treasures, whether oil, gold, natural gas, forests and land or people, from being plundered; second, to eliminate the potential threat that these newly independent states might cooperate to form a powerful political and military force with the potential to challenge US capabilities in the region and beyond.

In fact, Central Asia is a significant region not only because of its deposits of oil and gas but also due to its geostrategic position, as discussed in Chapter One. An influential US policy analyst, F. Starr, has argued against the idea that US policy in the region is being driven by oil, saying that is ‘fashionable nonsense, [as] there is too little oil for that purpose.’ Why then has Washington pursued the Caspian energy policy? Is the United States in the region for oil? Or is the US government interested in oil because of the region? What can be said is that Washington’s increasing engagement with the Caspian region has been fuelled by geopolitical and strategic reasoning.
b. Geopolitical containment of Russia, Iran (and China)

The major geopolitical explanation for US energy policy has been containment of Russian or Iranian influence in the region, or potential influence of any other nation. In this regard the US administration has used oil and gas pipelines as a political instrument to weaken its competitors’ influence. For the Clinton administration, the prime concern was that any pipeline should skirt Russia or Iran, denying them a chokehold over a new energy supply for the West. Washington has also attempted to use energy policy to bring the region’s republics into a Western bloc, and to project its power into the region. Bill Richardson in a *New York Times* interview, in November 1998, emphasised:

This is about America’s energy security, which depends on diversifying our sources of oil and gas worldwide. It’s also about preventing strategic inroads by those who don’t share our values. We’re trying to move these newly independent countries toward the West. We would like to see them reliant on Western commercial and political interests rather than going another way. We’ve made a substantial political investment in the Caspian, and it’s very important to us that both the pipeline map and the politics come out right.45

Therefore, one can assume that oil has been used as a means to develop US interests in the region particularly through pipeline negotiations. A State Department report in April 1997 stated: ‘The Caspian region could become the most important new player in world oil markets over the next decade. The US has critical foreign policy issues at stake – the increase and diversification of world energy supplies, the independence and sovereignty of the NIS and isolation of Iran.’46

Washington’s special focus on the geopolitics of the region’s energy, and its attempts to control the routes for oil exports, have led other interested states, such as Russia, China, Iran and Turkey to enter what can be termed the ‘oil’, ‘pipeline’, ‘geopolitical’, or ‘Caspian’ game, if not the ‘Great Game’.47 Of course, this game is more complicated than just a simple pipeline race. Rather, it is a struggle involving competing geopolitical interests, market forces, a rapidly deteriorating financial system, and covert operations of terrorism and sabotage.48 *The Economist* reported in 1997, ‘[the interested state-powers] and every shark east of Suez have realised that over the next decades, the greatest of games will be played around the Caspian.’49 The major players, as mentioned above, are the United States, Russia, China, and Iran, plus some oil companies. However, all nations in the surrounding area and many beyond have a stake in the ‘game’. Each player has tried to maximise its benefit from the region’s oil through various policies, as discussed below. To American officials, the ‘oil game’
plays a very significant role in the so-called 'grand chessboard' strategy, the aim of which is to increase US global hegemony through expansion of its politico-economic control, including in Central Asia, and prevention of competitor states – Russia, Iran and China – from controlling the region’s energy deposits. Brzezinski set the tone for this strategy by describing Russia and China as the two most important countries whose interests might threaten the US interests in Central Asia.50

To gain a major role in the game and develop its national interests, the US government has tried to expand relations with the republics, particularly Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. According to Stephen Sestanovich, ‘the transformation of U.S. relations with these countries is particularly striking. When we first opened embassies in Central Asia and the Caucasus, we envisioned small posts that would be able to get by with minimal resources. Our posts are now bursting at the seams. Many federal agencies want to establish a presence in these countries.’51 However, consistent with Washington’s overarching foreign policy, the USA has also seen its primary role as ensuring a normal business environment that emphasises commercial principles. At the same time, US officials believed that the difficult post-Soviet commercial environment would require intensified efforts to attain that end. In this connection, three principles underpinned US approaches to the Caspian region’s hydrocarbon reserves. First, that energy and pipeline projects should adhere to international commercial norms, consistent with standards typically required by international financial institutions; second, that they meet the test of commercial viability; and, third, that Caspian energy and pipeline deals be transparent.52 Washington has actively supported all steps that rapidly advanced its interests in respect to improving the region’s energy exploitation and the multiplicity of export routes. This has established a basis for US companies to rebuff proposals by regional actors seeking commercially unprofitable deals. However, some of the pipeline projects like BTC, as discussed above, have not been evaluated commercially.53

Thus, although realistically the focal aspect of US foreign policy in the Caspian Sea area has been strategic, Washington has not overlooked economic objectives. Securing access to the region’s hydrocarbon resources and pipeline investments for American companies, and thereby reducing dependence on Persian Gulf energy supplies, has also been important to US policymakers.54 By controlling production and transportation of Caspian energy resources, the US government would support companies, such as Chevron-Texaco, Exxon-Mobil and Unocal, in the oil production and export process.55 Washington has hoped that the involvement of these companies in
successful and lucrative oil deals would maximise economic benefits to the United States.

The US administration has sought active involvement in Caspian affairs. To this end, a new Caspian agency was established at the National Security Council (NSC) in 1997. The number of official visits increased dramatically, and the region’s capitals hosted many high-ranking diplomats from the United States. Cabinet secretaries and members of Congress made numerous visits; in Almaty, Tashkent and other regional capitals, expectations rose to the point of envisaging special relationships with America, comparable to those between the United States and oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia or Iran under the Shah.56 First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in November 1997, while at the same time US Energy Secretary Federico Pena was attending the inauguration ceremony of Azerbaijan’s first ‘early oil’ in Baku. Washington, for its part, extended welcomes to officials from both regions: Karimov visited the Washington in 1996, Nazarbayev and Aliyev, then President of Azerbaijan, in 1997, and Niyazov in 1998. Meanwhile, several institutes were established to research the energy resources of the Caspian region.57

At the geopolitical level, American analysts have argued that both Russia and Iran acted in concert in the Caspian region to prevent US control over or influence on energy development, suggesting that Washington has had to check both states’ influence in the region. A. Cohen argued in 1997 that US prevention of ‘the resurgence of aggressive Russian imperialism, especially in what used to be Russia’s backyard in the 19th and 20th centuries, is strategically important.’58 ‘Moscow, not Tbilisi or Baku,’ he said, ‘would gain from control of the area’s impressive energy resources.’59 Regarding Iran he claimed that ‘Tehran appears interested in turning Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and other countries in the region into a market for both its goods and its ideology,’ and he warned US policymakers that ‘Iranian domination would be likely to prevent the successful flow of oil to the West as well as the involvement of American companies in the economic development of the new Silk Road.’60 Some US officials presented a similar view. Sam Brownback argued in 1997 that even the region’s independence could well depend on successful construction of pipelines on an East-West axis avoiding both Russian and Iranian territory, and that these countries’ rhetoric regarding this issue showed clearly that they saw a connection between their control of pipelines and their level of domination over the region.61 He concluded: ‘It is no coincidence that we are seeing an intense rapprochement between these two countries.’62
The United States therefore, has sought to help the newly independent republics of the region develop their oil and natural gas industries. According to US official estimates, this would fit with Washington’s strategic goals, by bringing about economic growth and helping these countries to move away from the Russian sphere of influence and maintain their independence. From the economic standpoint, development of the oil industry in the countries of Central Asia and Transcaucasus would provide investment opportunities for Western construction and oil companies, and Washington has supported American private companies operating in the region.

Because of its problematic relations with Tehran, Washington’s energy policy in the Caspian region has followed a strongly anti-Iranian stance, although it has shown some degree of flexibility vis-à-vis Russia. For instance, under US pressure, Azerbaijan in 1994 barred Iran from participation in the ‘Contract of the Century’, but Washington accepted Russian participation in the consortium.63 The US government also supported the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), which planned to build a new pipeline from northwest Kazakhstan to the Russian port of Novorossiisk. In this connection, John S. Wolf, former Special Adviser to President Clinton and the Secretary of State for Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy and then Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation, claimed at a press conference in Istanbul on 28 February 2000 that the United States has ‘strongly supported the CPC pipeline and hope to see Russian oil flowing through BTC. Moreover, these projects are largely the initiative of the region’s governments, which view these pipelines as critical to securing their national interests.’64 President George W. Bush declared in early 2002 that the CPC project was advancing his administration’s national energy policy through the development a network of Caspian pipelines that ‘also includes the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Supsa, and Baku-Novorossiisk oil pipelines and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline.’65 Robert W. Gee said Washington has ‘also financed a major study to look at ways to export more volumes through the existing Russian pipeline system.’66 Another US official emphasised that the White House’s policy ‘has an anti-monopolistic nature, and not an anti-Russian one.’67 However, Washington was reluctant to support additional pipelines running north to Russia beyond the current pipeline from Baku to Novorossiisk, nor did it want the Baku-Novorossiisk route to serve as a model for a parallel main export pipeline.68 But US officials were talking harshly about Iran. At a US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce meeting on 7 March 2002, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage insisted that Iran should stop trying to pressure its Caspian neighbours to follow an agenda not supported by US political or commercial interests,
emphasising Americans ‘will not stand idly by and watch them pressure their neighbors.’ Therefore, as R.H. Dekmejian and H.H. Simonian have pointed out, a persistent feature of US energy policy toward the region has been the containment of Russia, Iran and to some extent China. This policy has led the region into competition between regional and extra-regional states.

Influential American newspapers such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal, together with other organs of the media, focused on the competition over pipeline plans. The New York Times, for example, reported in 1997: ‘The Caspian Derby is a feverish amalgam of competition, collaboration and political and economic wrangling.’ US officials had hoped to win over other powers so as to secure access to the region’s reserves. The ‘US National Security Strategy for a New Century’ of 1999 emphasised: ‘Conservation and energy research notwithstanding, the United States will continue to have a vital interest in ensuring access to foreign oil sources.’ Accordingly, the pipeline policy became an important element of US engagement with the region. The United States attempted to promote a network of multiple pipelines and an East-West rather than North-South energy transportation corridor. The Deputies Committee, consisting of high-level department and agency officials and chaired by then Deputy National Security Council (NSC) Advisor Sandy Berger, met during spring 1995, and issued policy guidance recognising the significance of the Caspian energy deposits and the need for greater US attention to the region and its export routes. The Committee agreed on the policy of ‘multiple pipelines’ and called for the convening of an interagency group, directed by Berger, to manage the implementation of policy on the Caspian region. As this interagency group surveyed the implications of the direction and placement of possible Caspian oil and gas pipelines, US national interests in the issue quickly emerged.

Developing oil and gas in the region and exporting them to global markets has been a formidable challenge since the late 1990s. However, during the past several years, the battle for dominance has come to focus on the question of where to build pipelines in order to move oil from the Caspian Basin to the world market. The need to construct these pipelines has encouraged countries within the region and outside to participate. The New York Times in October 1998 pointed to this competition:

The Caspian region has emerged as the world’s newest stage for big power politics. It not only offers oil companies the prospect of great wealth, but provides a stage for high-stakes competition among world powers...Much depends on the outcome, because these pipelines will not simply carry oil but will also define new corridors of trade and power.
The nation or alliance that controls pipeline routes could hold sway over the Caspian region for decades to come.76

A US analyst argued at the time: ‘Intense competition over the routing of the first generation of pipelines has emerged, in part, because all parties are aware that the sequencing of pipeline development will influence the political and economic orientation of the SCCA [the South Caucasus and Central Asia] region for the next decade.’77 From Washington’s perspective, getting Caspian oil and gas from the region into the global markets was a key geopolitical issue in its relations with the region and other actors in the area. One of the Clinton administration’s top foreign policy priorities during the second term was strong support for building pipelines to transport oil from the Caspian region to the global market, and the administration took a particular interest in pipeline policy in 1997.78 Washington tried to support a ‘corridor’ of prosperous, stable and secular states and, more importantly, states politically close to the United States. In this connection, the ‘Silk Road Strategy Act’, as discussed above, authorised support for the economic and political independence of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, to set up multiple pipelines to transfer the region’s oil and gas (see Map 5.1 and Tables 5.2 and 5.3).
Map 5.1: Oil and Gas Pipelines from the Caspian Region and Central Asia

### Table 5.2: Oil Export Routes and Options in the Caspian Sea Region 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Location</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Crude Capacity</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Estimated Cost/Investment</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atyrau-Samara Pipeline</td>
<td>Atyrau (Kazakhstan) to Samara (Russia), linking to Russian pipeline system</td>
<td>Recently increased to 310,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>432 miles</td>
<td>Increase in capacity cost approximately $37.5 million</td>
<td>Existing pipeline recently upgraded by adding pumping and heating stations to increase capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baku-Supsa Pipeline</td>
<td>Baku to Supsa (Georgia) Black Sea port</td>
<td>Recently upgraded from 115,000 to 145,000 bbl/d; proposed upgrades to between 300,000 bbl/d &amp; 600,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>515 miles</td>
<td>$600 million</td>
<td>Exports began in April 1999; approximately 115,000 bbl/d exported via this route in 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baku-Novorossiisk Pipeline (Northern Route)</td>
<td>Baku via Chechnya to Novorossiisk (Russia) Black Sea port</td>
<td>100,000 bbl/d capacity; possible upgrade to 300,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>868 miles; 90 miles are in Chechnya</td>
<td>$600 million to upgrade to 300,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>Exports began late 1997; in 2001 averaged 50,000 bbl/d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baku-Novorossiisk Pipeline (Chechnya bypass, link to Makhachkala)</td>
<td>Baku via Daghestan to Tikhoretsk (Russia) and Novorossiisk</td>
<td>Currently: 120,000 bbl/d (rail and pipeline: 160,000 bbl/d); Planned: 360,000 bbl/d (by 2005)</td>
<td>204 miles</td>
<td>$140 million</td>
<td>Completed April 2000. 11-mile spur connects with Russia's Caspian port of Makhachkala.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC Pipeline)</td>
<td>Tengiz oil field (Kazakhstan) to Novorossiisk</td>
<td>Currently: 565,000-bbl/d; Planned: 1.34-million bbl/d (by 2015)</td>
<td>990 miles</td>
<td>$2.5 billion for Phase 1 capacity; $4.2 billion total when completed</td>
<td>First tanker loaded in Novorossiisk (10/01); exports rising to 400,000 bbl/d by end-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia Oil Pipeline</td>
<td>Kazakhstan via Turkmenistan and Afghanistan to Gwadar (Pakistan)</td>
<td>Proposed 1 million bbl/d</td>
<td>1,040 miles</td>
<td>$2.5 billion</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding signed by the countries; project stalled by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipeline Type</td>
<td>Destination (Country)</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Proposed Costs (in millions)</td>
<td>Status/Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran-Azerbaijan Pipeline</td>
<td>Baku to Tabriz (Iran)</td>
<td>Proposed 200,000 to 400,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>$500 million</td>
<td>Proposed by TotalFinaElf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran Oil Swap Pipeline</td>
<td>Neka (Iran) to Tehran (Iran)</td>
<td>175,000 bbl/d, rising to 370,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>208 miles</td>
<td>$400 million to $500 million</td>
<td>Under construction; oil delivered to Neka will be swapped for an equivalent amount at the Iranian Gulf coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan-China Pipeline</td>
<td>Aktyubinsk (Kazakhstan) to Xinjiang (China)</td>
<td>Proposed 400,000 to 800,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>1,800 miles</td>
<td>$3 billion to $3.5 billion</td>
<td>Agreement 1997; feasibility study halted, September 1999, as Kazakhstan could not commit sufficient oil for the next 10 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran Pipeline</td>
<td>Kazakhstan via Turkmenistan to Kharg Island (Iran) on Persian Gulf</td>
<td>Proposed 1 million bbl/d</td>
<td>930 miles</td>
<td>$1.2 billion</td>
<td>Feasibility study by TotalFinaElf; proposed completion by 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khashuri-Batumi Pipeline</td>
<td>Dubendi (Azerbaijan) via Khashuri (Georgia) to Batumi</td>
<td>Initial 70,000 bbl/d, rising to 140,000-160,000 bbl/d</td>
<td>Rail from Dubendi to Khashuri, then 105-mile pipeline to Batumi</td>
<td>$70 million for pipeline renovation</td>
<td>ChevronTexaco has cancelled plans to rebuild and expand existing pipeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Caspian (Kazakhstan Twin Pipelines)</td>
<td>Aqtou (Kazakhstan coast) to Baku; could extend to Ceyhan</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>370 miles to Baku</td>
<td>$2 billion to $4 billion (if to Ceyhan)</td>
<td>Feasibility study agreement signed December 1998 by Shell, ChevronTexaco, ExxonMobil, and Kazakhstan; project stalled by lack of Caspian Sea legal agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.3: Natural Gas Export Routes and Options in the Caspian Sea Region, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Location</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Estimated Cost/Investment</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baku-Erzurum</td>
<td>Baku via Tbilisi to Erzurum, linking with Turkish natural gas pipeline system</td>
<td>Planned 254 bcf capacity</td>
<td>540 miles</td>
<td>$1 billion (includes up to $500 million to construct new Azeri section)</td>
<td>Finance being arranged, construction originally scheduled to start in summer 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Centgas’ (Central Asia Gas)</td>
<td>Daulatabad (Turkmenistan) via Herat (Afghanistan) to Multan (Pakistan). Could extend to India.</td>
<td>700 bcf/year</td>
<td>870 miles to Multan (additional 400 miles to India)</td>
<td>$2 billion to Pakistan (additional $500 million to India)</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding signed by Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan. Presidents of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan met in May 2002 to discuss reviving this pipeline idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia-Centre Pipeline</td>
<td>Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan via Kazakstan to Saratov (Russia), linking to Russian pipeline system</td>
<td>3.5 tcf/year</td>
<td>Existing route</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>Operational. Turkmenistan is using it to export a total of 8.83 tcf to Ukraine (via Russia) from 2002 to 2006, as well as smaller amounts to Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Gas Pipeline</td>
<td>Turkmenistan to Xinjiang (China). Could extend to Japan.</td>
<td>1 tcf/year</td>
<td>4,161 miles; more if to Japan</td>
<td>$10 billion to China; more if to Japan</td>
<td>Preliminary feasibility study done by ExxonMobil, Mitsubishi, and CNPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (TCGP)</td>
<td>Turkmenbashy (Turkmenistan) via Baku and Tbilisi to Erzurum, linking with Turkish pipeline system</td>
<td>565 bcf in first stage, eventually rising to 1.1 tcf/year</td>
<td>1,020 miles</td>
<td>$2 billion to $3 billion</td>
<td>Stalled; negotiations between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan over pipeline volumes restarted October 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korpeze-Kurt-Kui</td>
<td>Korpeze (Turkmenistan) to Kurt-Kui (Iran)</td>
<td>283-350 Bcf/year; expansion proposed to 459 bcf/year by 2005</td>
<td>124 miles</td>
<td>$190 million; 2005 expansion: $300 million to $400 million</td>
<td>Operational since December 1997.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Energy Information Administration (EIA) at [http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeg/cabs/caspgraph.htm](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeg/cabs/caspgraph.htm) [accessed 13/12/2003].
In particular, as discussed earlier, US officials have highlighted the importance to the United States of pursuing a multiple pipeline policy, so that Caspian producers have access to a variety of export options. The Clinton administration assumed that a broad network of multiple pipelines crossing the region would ensure security, both for the oil-producing republics themselves and consumer markets outside the region. For example, it was believed that multiple pipelines would ensure that Russia could not hold undue leverage over the Caspian by routing a solitary main route through its territory.79

In a testimony before the House Committee on International Relations on 12 February 1998, John J. Maresca, Vice-President for International Relations of Unocal Corporation, emphasised the need of Unocal and other oil concerns for multiple pipeline routes for Central Asian oil and gas.80 Robert W. Gee said in testimony in the same month that the US government had focused on promoting the development of multiple pipelines and diversified infrastructure networks to open the region's countries, and integrate them into the world market.81 Richard Kauzlarich, US Ambassador to Azerbaijan, also maintained:

Over a period of time, you'll need multiple pipelines. You won't be able to take all of that oil and run it through a single pipeline. Even if you had the flattest, safest, most direct route you wouldn't want to do that. You couldn't do that. So we would be pleased with a solution that would end up with multiple pipelines. Everybody will better off; we have to be sensitive to the broader implications.82

The US attitude created a field of competition among interested regional and international actors, and consequently made the entire region a forum for the 'oil game'. Some analysts have described this game as 'highly-fluid, fast-moving and unpredictable', and involving a big cast of players.83 K. Meyer and S. Brysac have summarised the game:

Six new republics, predominantly Islamic but vibrantly distinct, are grouped around the Caspian Sea, the current landlords of untapped oil and natural gas reserves that rival those in the Persian Gulf. Pipelines, tanker routes, petroleum consortiums, and contracts are the prizes of the New Great Game. India and China, each with exponentially growing energy needs, are vying for access, along with Russians, Europeans, and Americans. Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan have their own political, economic, and cultural interests in the former Soviet republics, where slumbering rivalries have abruptly awakened among Azeris, Armenians, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmens, and other long-subject peoples...it is a bloody muddle, made worse as before by outsiders.84

In this connection, it was believed that each state that control the oil routes out of the Caspian region would 'impact all future direction and quantities of flow and the distribution of revenues from new production.'85
American officials have attempted to work with the region’s governments to develop the pipeline projects. Sestanovich said in 1998: ‘We will continue working with the governments of the region – including Turkey, and with our colleagues in the Departments of Energy and Commerce – to bring about these pipelines because they make sense commercially, economically, and politically.’ He strongly contended that this would be ‘good for the region, good for global peace and stability, and good for U.S. interests.’ The US administration sought to finance some of the projects, such as BTC and the pipeline through Afghanistan, via US financial and investment agencies such as the Trade and Development Agency (TDA), the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), and the Eximbank.

Competition over the oil routes has become the central focus of most of the literature on Caspian energy politics since the mid-1990s. From the many approaches taken, two different schools of thought can be identified, whose adherents might be described respectively as ‘Gamers’ and ‘Oilers’. ‘Gamers’ focus on the states as players in the ‘oil game’ whereas ‘Oilers’ focus on the role of the non-governmental actors – the oil companies.

From the perspective of the ‘Gamers’ the competition boils down to the question of whether Russia can retain its old monopoly on the transport of hydrocarbons from the region. At independence in 1991, oil and gas either passed through Russia for export or were used by Russia to free up its own oil and gas for exports to the lucrative West European market. Since then, Moscow has been trying to ensure that pipelines continue to be routed through its territory. Existing lines have been repaired, upgraded and expanded. Russia, the old ‘big brother’ of the region, has tried to maintain its profound influence on the region’s energy routes, to retain its control over strategic resources and infrastructure networks, and deny other external powers control of the region. In this connection, Moscow’s opposition to the US multiple-pipeline strategy reflects its strong desire to retain control over energy resources and infrastructure. President Yeltsin in 1998 emphasised: ‘We cannot help seeing the uproar attired up some Western countries over the energy resources of the Caspian. Some seek to exclude Russia from the game and undermine its interests. The so-called pipeline war in the region is part of the game.’ Russia has put pressure on the Kazak government to choose an oil transit route through Russia rather than Turkey. Furthermore, Russia has an interest in controlling Caspian and Central Asian oil and gas exports to improve its own bargaining position with Western oil investors. Consequently, the Russian government has been concerned about the construction of new pipelines in other directions, and the potential for this to
undermine Moscow’s predominance in the region. It strongly expressed the hope that oil would be carried through an existing pipeline running from Baku, on Azerbaijan’s Caspian coast, to Novorossisk on the Black Sea.

Of course, although Moscow has wanted to keep Central Asia away from the United States due to problems discussed in Chapter Three, it could not achieve such a goal and Washington has remained a major competitor in the region. Yet, the United States also could not fully exclude Russia, due to its historical, economic and political ties with the region. Therefore, any regional or international actors in the Caspian have been warned that ‘Moscow [would] vigorously oppose all attempts to build up the political or military influence of third countries in the states adjoining Russia.’ In other words, Russian officials believe strongly that Transcaucasia, like the rest of the CIS, must remain Moscow’s sphere of influence, and that Russia should do more to resist Washington’s penetration. Boris Nemtsov, former Russian Deputy Prime Minister, in 1997 clearly asked Washington to remember that Moscow views the region as the United States view Latin America: a backyard where no strangers are allowed. President Putin put relations with the countries of the Caspian region at the very top of his foreign policy agenda. After assuming office, he moved quickly to name a special presidential representative for Caspian affairs, to commission a strategic study of Russian policy in the region, and to facilitate consortia of the major Russian energy companies, Lukoil, Gazprom, and Yukos, to develop Caspian resources.

These Russian efforts made Washington anxious. For instance, S.N. Heslin argued: ‘In the energy area, Russia has used its pipeline monopoly as a foreign policy tool to thwart Caspian energy development.’ Accordingly, US decision-makers were concerned at the prospect of new oil and gas pipelines flowing through Russia. Washington’s determination to prevent Moscow from retaining a sphere of influence in the Caspian region became public from the mid-1990s. In May 1997, Edward Shirley, a CIA analyst, insisted that the United States must ensure that the Central Asian republics and their oil and gas wealth stay free of Russian power. In April 2001 Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, stressed the need to ‘guard against dependence on Russia and also prevent dependence on Iran, which would have an interest in controlling Caspian oil because it is a competitor in the oil market. The United States supported a policy of multiple pipelines, aiming to deny and break Russia’s monopoly.

Washington’s attempt to diminish Russian influence has been part of a policy aimed at wrestling Central Asia and the Caucasus from its sphere of influence by any
means, including oil and gas pipeline construction, pressure by NATO allies, financial incentives for docile local leaders, and alignment of US media with others who oppose Russian alliances. At this point, as D. Blum has pointed out, it is hard to 'escape the conclusion that America's Caspian policy has been predicated on the illusion of a 'unipolar moment': 'The notion that Washington can orchestrate, and subsequently maintain a convivial alignment of international forces. The implication is that it is possible to fashion relations in the Caspian region so as to constrain Russian decision-making with little or no blowback from Moscow. According to the State Department sources, the new approach, coordinated by the National Security Council, was designed to break 'Russia's grip on Central Asian oil export. The objective [was] both to help ensure the survival of independence states in the region and to protect U.S. corporate interests. Thus, the 'Gamers' usually end up in the same place as the government, recommending US support for non-Russian oil routes, and specifically for the initiative which did in fact, become the centrepiece of Washington's policy toward Caspian energy in the second half of 1997: an 'East-West transportation corridor' consisting of a Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline and trans-Caspian oil and gas pipelines (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3).

Iran is another US concern in the Caspian region. It is the only Middle East oil exporter and member of the key Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that borders the Caspian and Central Asia. Tehran has declared that Iran is the logical route (one of the shortest), for transport of Caspian oil to world markets. This declaration is based on Iran’s possession of several well-equipped ports on the coast of the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman, and well-developed shipping terminals, a technically skilled workforce, and a widespread pipeline network that can be easily reached from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, or Kazakhstan.

More importantly, routes from Iran do not pass through areas where Russia could bring substantial political or military pressure to bear. Furthermore, there is no major internal conflict in Iran to endanger the pipelines’ security. Therefore, one can argue that, compared to areas like Armenia and Azerbaijan, Iran is much safer option for long-term export of the region's oil and gas. Besides, routing oil through Iran would be more viable economically. In fact, given its location, its highly-developed oil sector, and its existing network of pipelines, Iran could, as Iranian oil officials have stressed, offer a route for Central Asian oil that is 'the easiest, the safest, and the cheapest. Its cost, for us, would not be more than $300 million. You cannot compare that with the $4 billion for a pipeline going to Turkey.' At a forum in New York, in
September 2000, Iran’s Foreign Minster Kamal Kharrazi said: ‘We ought to choose the best route, free from any kind of political pressure and fanfare and non-economic parameters...The Iranian route is the shortest route for the transfer of energy resources.’

These advantages and assessments have led many observers to suggest that Iran, by simple geography, may be the best export route for Caspian oil. W. Kang and F. Freidum, for instance, have argued that to gain access to the Persian Gulf, and ultimately the Asia-Pacific, Central Asia must build its pipelines through Iran. B. Rumer has also noted ‘...one important economic factor that, objectively, makes relations with Tehran very important for the landlocked countries of the region: namely the territory of Iran not only presents the optimal route for linking this region with world markets, but is also the shortest route for other countries to reach Central Asia.’

As for the region, some countries have displayed interest in Iranian routes. Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, which each share a long border with Iran, have sought to include Iran in some of the key consortia, mentioned earlier, now being established, and that trend is expected to increase.

Although Iran, based on the advantages mentioned, has sought to play a role in determining the future of Central Asia, Washington has viewed the region as a hedge against it. In this connection, some of the ‘Gamers’ believe that Iran should be banned from accessing the political and economic influence in the Caspian region that an export pipeline would bring. US policy had been to oppose any pipelines through Iran. Jan H. Kalicki, former Counsellor to the US Department of Commerce and US Ombudsman for Energy and Commercial Cooperation stated in 1998:

[T]he US government steadfastly opposes the transit of Caspian oil and gas through Iran. We welcome signs of positive change in Iran, and we will seek to encourage future change. But when it comes to energy – a commodity on which our economies depend – we must look to our overriding security needs and remember that Iran is a competitor of the Caspian states, not a partner. On gas, for instance, Iran has set its sights on the growing markets of Turkey, Europe and Pakistan – the same markets sought by Turkmenistan. At the risk of stating the obvious, it does not strike me as a smart business decision to run pipelines through the territory of a major competitor.

Similarly, in Congressional testimony on 31 March 1998, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott warned that Washington would continue to caution nations throughout Central Asia and the Caucasus against developing close relations with Tehran. He said: ‘As a state-sponsor of terrorism and a nation bent on the development of weapons of mass destruction, Iran still poses a threat to all its
neighbors’ and that ‘we are against any state in the region being allowed to dominate the region, politically or economically.’

He then made it clear that the United States would continue to work with all the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus to thwart the growth of Iran’s influence. Such an idea was a reflection of Washington’s containment policy towards Tehran, as discussed in Chapter Four. Equally important, US economic sanctions against Iran, particularly the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) of August 1996, the imposition of penalties on major international investors (investing more than $20 million) in Iran’s oil and gas industry, which were prolonged again in August 2001, have directly affected the possibility of Caspian pipeline development through Iran. In practice, ILSA banned foreign investment in Iran’s energy sector. William Courtney, a senior Director for Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council, summarised ILSA’s attitude to the potential transport of Caspian oil through Iran:

[Washington] does not believe it is in the energy security interest of the United States, Russia, or other new independent states for Caspian oil to go through the Strait of Hormuz. Pipeline through Iran would give it dangerous leverage over the economies of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Until there is real evidence of changes in Iran’s policies, it would be reckless to give it a stranglehold over [Caspian] oil.

Initiatives such as ILSA gave US decision-makers additional powers to punish companies that trade with Iran. They claimed that Tehran had not renounced terrorism and was seeking WMD. Accordingly, some Western analysts called on Washington to overthrow the government of Iran. The last paragraph of US Senate Resolution 306, which was passed on 25 July 2002, stated: ‘In dealing with Iran we must focus all of our efforts on the people and their hopes of a free and democratic nation. The Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty must redouble their efforts to provide uncensored truth to the Iranian peoples.’ Although the resolution called for democracy and public freedom in Iran, indirectly it was against the existing Iranian regime of Iran. In contrast, some other American analysts suggested rapprochement with Tehran and an end to sanctions. Brzezinski for example, preferred a ‘position by the United States which does not exclude the pipeline through Iran.’ He thought such a pipeline would be implemented instantly in any case, and said ‘it is not wise for the United States to be opposing the possibility of international financing of a pipeline also through Iran.’ Similarly R. Sobhani insisted:

Ironically, that leaves an option involving Iran as the most feasible export route in the near term from both a business and political viewpoint. The President [Clinton] should exercise his Iran option by supporting American energy companies negotiating an ‘early oil’ swap
arrangement to export Azerbaijani and Kazakh oil from the Caspian Sea through Iran's existing pipeline infrastructure. This also buys time to decide which long-term pipeline route is the most feasible; through Russia to the Black Sea; through Turkey to the Mediterranean Sea; or through Iran to the Persian Gulf.\textsuperscript{127}

Sobhani even argued that "by encouraging Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to export their early crude oil production through Iran with the assistance of American oil companies working in the Caspian Sea, Washington could achieve a number of strategic and foreign policy objectives."\textsuperscript{128}

Despite such assessments, the US position on energy-related matters in Central Asia has been clear, discouraging construction of oil and gas pipelines through Iran, and working hard to promote westbound pipelines instead.\textsuperscript{129} In 1997, D.B. Ottaway and D. Morgan wrote in *The Washington Post* that the Clinton administration, facing erosion of its efforts to isolate Iran's regime economically, had begun aggressively pushing an initiative to convince the Caspian region's countries "to scrap plans for oil and gas pipelines through Iran in favour of a costlier 'Eurasian transportation corridor' to the West."\textsuperscript{130} They quoted J.H. Kalicki, who had said: "Iran is a competitor, not a partner for the Caspian states when it comes to oil and gas exports."\textsuperscript{131} Further he proclaimed: "We think the Caspian states will want to avoid an Iranian hand on the oil and gas spigot."\textsuperscript{132}

China is another external player whose position in Central Asia has attracted the "Gamers'" attention. China became a net oil importer in the 1990s, and its involvement in the Caspian region is a significant component of the 'oil game'.\textsuperscript{133} China, as Figure 5.1 shows, is the world's second largest energy consumer. Its oil imports have risen slowly over time, now averaging around 1.5-1.7 million barrels per day, and are expected to grow to between 2 and 4 million b/d in the 2010s.\textsuperscript{134} In the face of declining energy deposits, deteriorating production and increasing domestic consumption, Beijing has to find some alternative energy resources if it is to maintain the momentum of its economic development.\textsuperscript{135} Accordingly, China started to play a pro-Central Asian card because of its need for the region's oil. It has a strong interest in developing Caspian oil and gas fields, particularly of states that are located in its 'backyard', west of the province of Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{136}

China's rising energy needs are fuelling investment in Kazakhstan’s oil fields and pipeline projects.\textsuperscript{137} When in 1997 the CNPC won a privatisation tender enabling it to purchase a majority stake in one of Kazakhstan's oil-production subsidiaries, Beijing gained exclusive rights to develop another Kazakh oil field, and pledged to do a feasibility study for a new oil pipeline to be built from Kazakhstan's western oil fields to
the Chinese border, and presumably beyond. China reached a provisional agreement with Kazakstan in September 1997 that, if implemented, would involve construction of a 3,000 km pipeline (the longest pipeline in the region, see Table 5.2) linking energy fields in Kazakstan with Xinjiang. But the deal also had a political dimension. China desired closer relations with Kazakstan in order to increase its influence in Central Asia and to develop its energy security. Beijing has also planned to build a long-distance gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through China to Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Although US policy toward China has not reached the level of its opposition to Russian and particularly Iranian influence in the Caspian region, there has been no sign of intent to cooperate with Beijing. A. Cohen’s observation reflects US policy:

[The issue of access to the oil and natural gas of the Caspian Sea region is not an isolated one; it is linked to other important U.S. geostrategic interests in Eurasia. For example, U.S. policymakers are becoming increasingly concerned about the possible re-emergence of a new Russian empire, and they realise that ready access to the rich oil and gas resources of this region could fuel such an expansion. A new Russian empire conceivably might seek to gain exclusive control over the region’s pipelines and limit U.S. access. Furthermore, the radical Islamic regime in Iran could move to turn Central Asia into its strategic rear, viewing the Islamic states of Central Asia as a potential sphere of influence. Even China has the potential to become involved.]

From China’s perspective, the impact of a multiple pipeline strategy is indirect; anything exported westward is unavailable for export eastward.

To the extent that the United States has been seeking diversity of supply to global oil markets, it would plainly prefer that the Caspian region enjoy energy policies free from the influence and control of Russia, Iran and China. Influential American experts have viewed each of these countries as an actual or potential threat to US interests in the region and to some extent globally. Indeed, this policy was part of a grand strategy to help America develop hegemony over an important part of Eurasia, as strongly advocated by Brzezinski.

Contrasting with the ‘Gamers’ approach to the ‘pipeline game’ is a second perspective whose adherents might be termed ‘Oilers’. While the ‘Gamers’ emphasise states as actors in the game, the ‘Oilers’ place oil companies at the centre of their analysis, believing that the companies, rather than states are the major forces behind the exploitation of new pipelines from the Caspian region as they possess the necessary technology, capital and project-organising ability. American scholars such as Robert Ebel, John Roberts and Rosemarie Forsythe have best articulated this school of thought. The ‘Oilers’ suggest a commercial game, played by international and
regional oil companies, though they believe that states are certainly able to block or complicate pipeline projects. The oil companies have been competing fiercely to sign production-sharing agreements for the remaining Caspian oil fields, and to comply with tight deadlines for exploration and development. With the possible exception of the Chinese, Turkish and Russian alternatives, none of the proposed pipeline projects is likely to have states or state-owned companies leading financing and construction efforts. In effect, ‘Oilers’ emphasise the geoeconomic features of the oil routes, rather than geopolitical logic rooted in the balance of power and competition between states.

An approach that focuses on the decisive role played by oil companies in choosing pipeline routes has been strengthened by the fact that the Caspian countries themselves, contrary to conventional wisdom, have thus far been more observers than central actors in the pipeline derby. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have focused primarily on near-term efforts to get more of their current oil and gas production exported through Russia, using the existing Soviet-era infrastructure. A commentator in Almaty has argued that, for the region’s landlocked countries, Russia is the only functioning route for oil and gas exports to the world markets, so most Kazak oil and Turkmen gas reaches foreign consumers via Russian pipelines. Cooperation with Moscow could, therefore, provide better access to those markets and with it higher profits. The impetus for exploring various future oil routes, however, has come from external actors. The CPC project, planned to build a new pipeline from northwest Kazakhstan to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk (see Table 5.2) has been a public-private partnership, with private oil companies taking the lead and providing the finance. The same is true for the proposed oil and gas pipelines from Turkmenistan to Pakistan’s port of Gwadar via Afghanistan.

These two perspectives, and the two distinct logics that underlie them, must be combined in order to achieve a full understanding of the Caspian energy development and pipeline affairs. In other words, both states and companies have a role to play in the ‘oil game’. In the US case, the government and American oil companies were involved in the region’s oilfields to gain geopolitical and economic advantages. US multiple pipeline policy has aimed to exclude those viewed by Washington as ‘contenders for pipeline monopolisation’ of Caspian oil, namely Russia, Iran and to some degree China. In this context, a US policy analyst has argued that US ‘energy companies, for their part, favour multiple pipelines to ensure reliable market access and a predictable commercial regime so as to avoid being squeezed by excessive transit fees set by a
monopolistic pipeline operator. At the same time, US companies seek to develop their economic interests in the ‘game’.

**Other US objectives in the region**

Although energy resources and pipelines have been the highest US priorities since the mid-1990s, Washington’s engagement with Central Asia was based on a multi-purpose policy. Democratisation and economic reform, and the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, were cited as parts of US interest in the region. In principle, these goals clearly served as the rhetorical centrepiece of US policy. Richard L. Morningstar, maintained: ‘It is in the national interest of the United States to help these countries develop into independent and market-based democracies that form a zone of prosperity and stability rather than one of poverty and conflict.’ Furthermore, to promote a balance of power in the region, and to create a strong regional strategic partner, officials in Washington planned to work closely with Uzbekistan, to establish a hegemonic regional power.

**a. Promotion of democracy**

In the second period of US involvement in Central Asia, Washington considered promotion of democracy and market economic reforms to be significant. However, there has been almost no major action in this regard. In a speech at Stanford University in April 1996, Secretary of State Warren Christopher emphasised: ‘There can be no doubt that building stable market democracies in the former Soviet Union and Central Europe will reinforce our own security.’ In 1999, the US document ‘A National Security Strategy For a New Century’ described enhancement of the progress of democracy in the NIS (including Central Asia) as part of America’s ‘national interest.’ It emphasised further: ‘The independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and democratic and economic reform of the NIS are important to American interests,’ and proclaimed:

The United States works to strengthen democratic and free market institutions and norms in all countries, particularly those making the transition from closed to open societies. This commitment to see freedom and respect for human rights take hold is not only just, but pragmatic. Our security depends upon the protection and expansion of democracy worldwide, without which repression, corruption and instability could engulf a number of countries and threaten the stability of entire regions.

Yet, although Washington declared that it would continue ‘to assist in the area of building democracy’, and provided financial aid for the region’s countries, little was
achieved. While it was claimed that the administration had ‘serious reservations’ about calls to link US aid mainly to progress in democratisation in the region, there was no specific restriction on providing aid. As Tables 5.4 and 5.5 show, the region’s regimes did little or nothing to change their authoritarian behaviour, and in most cases conditions worsened. The US State Department’s *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1999* indicated that presidential power in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan overshadowed legislative and judicial power, and that Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan had lost ground in democratisation and respect for human rights. In Kazakhstan, where Washington was very hopeful for reform, Nazarbayev’s regime was known for brutalising its citizens. An opposition member of the Kazak parliament described the regime as a ‘super-presidential republic’, where ‘the president decides everything.’ The Kyrgyz president was admired by Westerners as a ‘man of democracy’; under his rule, however, political parties were banned, opposition leaders forced into exile, and media critical of his repressive rule shut down. Turkmenistan’s regime has been described as the most repressive and dictatorial in the region. A. Rashid has argued: ‘The indiscriminate use of the death penalty, the torture of prisoners in the overflowing prisons (which frequently erupt in riots) and the disappearance of dissenters without a trace all point to a regime that is paranoid about staying in power.’ Tajikistan’s regime under Rahmonov has a similar reputation. In Uzbekistan, though since 1997 Karimov has claimed that his regime has made ‘renovation and progress its strategic objective in order to enter the Twenty-First century as a modern democratic state’, it has arrested hundreds of ordinary Muslims for alleged links with Islamic fundamentalists, accused them of Wahhabism, closed mosques and madrassas, and forced clerics into jail or exile.

Table 5.4: Democratisation Scores (electoral process, political rights, civil liberties independent media and governance) in the Central Asian Republics, 1993-2003*

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<td>Turkmenistan</td>
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<td>Uzbekistan</td>
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* Ranking: Scale of 1-8, with 1 representing the highest and 8 the lowest degree of achievement and status: F (Free), PF (Partly Free) and NF (Not Free).
Table 5.5: Economic liberalisation, in the Central Asian Republics, 1997-2001*

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<td>Tajikistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
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<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
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*Ranking: Scale of 1-7, 1 representing the highest, 7 the lowest degree of achievement.

With such outcomes, one can claim that, although the United States was apparently determined to use promotion of democracy and particularly, its economic power, to integrate Central Asia and Transcaucasia into the Western orbit, it failed to promote political changes and economic reforms in the region. This was underlined by Congressman Christopher H. Smith: ‘[eight] years have passed since then [1992], but in much of Central Asia the commitments they promised to observe remain a dead letter. In fact, in some countries [like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan] the situation has deteriorated substantially.’ Thus, not only did the United States not achieve any improvement in democracy in the region, but it also, as Table 5.4 shows, stepped back from liberalisation and failed to convince the region’s leaders to pursue democratisation, respect pluralism of political opinions, and promote reform in their economies. In testimony before the Subcommittees on Operations and Human Rights (OHR) and on Middle East and South Asia (MESA) of the House International Relations Committee in July 2001, A. Cohen stated:

However, instead of following models of democracy and market reforms, all these leaders have either largely ignored the reform process, as is the case in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, or made some attempt to initiate economic reforms, but then backtracked and are now mired in unprecedented corruption, lack of transparency and criminality. It is little wonder these regimes are quickly running out of legitimacy and popular support, and have to revert to brazen manipulation of their political system, or outright authoritarian methods, to remain in power and fight off political challenges.

By 2000 the Central Asian situation had worsened enough for Congress to pass a resolution accusing the leaders of the five Central Asian states of committing serious violations of human rights and seeking to remain in power indefinitely. President Karimov of Uzbekistan attracted some US official criticism for violating human rights. For instance, on 20 August 1999, the State Department criticised a current trial as violating Uzbekistan’s commitments to uphold human rights and due process.
speech to an Uzbek audience on 7 February 2000, John Beyrle, then Deputy Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the NIS, warned that Uzbekistan’s religious freedom law was ‘one of the most restrictive...in the world.’ He argued that religious extremism should be combatted by ‘protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens.’ But, behind such criticism, as US scholar O. Wyatt has argued, it did not matter whether other nations had democratic or authoritarian systems. In terms of their relations with the US, democracies were not necessarily good and authoritarian governments were not necessarily evil. In Uzbekistan, for example, US decision-makers continued to support the Karimov regime politically and financially, even though some within the administration have questioned the policy and warned against support for such repressive governments. In hearings on military assistance and human rights in Central Asia by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on Central Asia and South Caucasus in June 2002, Senator Robert G. Torricelli stated: ‘As the United States witnessed in 1979 in Iran, and may soon see in some other nations, repressive regimes that do not have public support can quickly collapse,’ implying that US-supported brutal governments such as Uzbekistan’s are likely to be replaced by anti-American regimes. However, at least in the near future, it appears unlikely that an anti-US government would come to power in Central Asia, as discussed below.

b. Combatting terrorism and drug trafficking

As a consequence of US counter-measures against terrorist attacks, there were also signs of growing US interest in Central Asia from the late 1990s. In August 1998 US embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), were bombed, leaving 258 dead and more than 5,000 injured. The Clinton administration demonstrated an atypically aggressive response to the terrorist attacks, leading to reprisal attacks against suspected Al-Qaeda bases in Sudan and Afghanistan. But this did not dismantle the Al-Qaeda network, which continued to mount daring operations against the United States, especially the October 2000 suicide boat-bombing against the US **Cole** in Yemen. Consequently, ‘combatting terrorism’ became a part of US national security strategy. According to ‘A US National Security for a New Century’, Washington’s policy for countering international terrorists rested on the following principles in 1998: ‘1) make no concessions to terrorists; 2) bring all pressure to bear on all state sponsors of terrorism; 3) fully exploit all available legal mechanisms to punish international terrorists; and 4) help other governments improve their capabilities to combat terrorism.’
The increased activity of Islamist movements across Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, terrorist attacks in Tashkent (1999 and 2000), and the fear of a terrorist network expanding from Afghanistan to the region, led to emergence of a new factor in US policy toward this region – counterterrorism. After incidents such as terrorist bombings in Tashkent in February 1999 and armed incursions by the IMU into Kyrgyzstan in July-August 1999, on the one hand, and possible links between some of the region’s Islamist movements and the Taliban in Afghanistan on the other hand, counterterrorism became a more explicit component of US policy toward the region. These incidents drew special attention to the Islamic mobilisation in Central Asia, and causing the Clinton administration to adapt its policy. Ambassador Sestanovich asserted in March 1999 that the need to combat terrorism was a focal issue for US diplomacy in Central Asia, and urged the region’s governments to cooperate with Washington. In the late 1990s, partly due to increased repression by the Central Asian governments, the activities of Islamist groups flourished. In this connection, Talbott stated in July 1997 that US support for peace was aimed at preventing the region from becoming a hotbed of terrorism, religious and political extremism, and wider conflict. This became crucial when the leaders of some movements declared that their goal was to establish an Islamic state. In Uzbekistan, for instance, some Islamist leaders proclaimed that their aim was to overthrow the ‘communist government of Karimov’ and spearhead an Islamic revolution throughout Central Asia. Imam Abdul Ahmad stated: ‘First Ferghana, then Uzbekistan and then the whole of Central Asia will become an Islamic state.’

Thus, Washington became more suspicious of Islamic movements in the region and started to negotiate with the regimes on terrorist issues. Efforts against Islamic movements in Central Asia became prominent in the American press. J. Miller wrote in *The New York Times* in 2000: ‘The stated goal of the Islamic Movement, a coalition of several thousand from Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states, is to overthrow the secular government in Uzbekistan and establish a Taliban-style state there and in other former Soviet republics of Central Asia, which is about 85 percent Muslim.’ This report indicated that Osama Bin Laden had apparently been shifting focus from the Middle East and North Africa to Central Asia, and that a resurgence of militant Islam and a flourishing drug trade were destabilizing several former Soviet republics. In recognition of Uzbekistan’s geopolitical importance in the struggle to eliminate Bin Laden’s terrorist network, a US-Uzbekistan Joint Commission was formed in February 1998, to provide the two governments with a structure for maintaining regular high-level contacts.
After IMU offensives in Spring 2000, Washington confirmed that it was increasingly concerned about the activities of IMU and similar movements. The CIA, in fact, had delivered a chilling verdict on the IMU in February 2000. Several top US officials, including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, CIA director George Tenet, and former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director Louis Freeh visited Central Asia to discuss terrorist issues with the governments. In testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in February 2000, Tenet said:

[T]he IMU, [is] an extremist insurgent and terrorist group whose annual incursions into Uzbekistan have become bloodier and more significant every year. In Central Asia corruption, poverty and other social ills are providing fertile ground for Islamic extremists, terrorists, networking and drug and weapons trafficking that will have an impact in Russia, Europe and beyond.183

As a result, after further IMU attacks in Uzbekistan in August 2000, during which several Americans were held hostage, the State Department in September 2000 added the IMU to its list of foreign terrorist organisations, proclaiming the group had ties to Bin Laden’s terrorist network.184 This reflected the administration’s determination to isolate groups it believed were sponsoring or abetting international terrorism, especially those identified as part of a global network sponsored by Bin Laden. Sodiq Safaev, then Uzbek Ambassador to Washington, described the decision as ‘extremely positive...it shows that these are not freedom fighters, as they claim, but skillful, well-financed, well-trained and well-armed killers.’185 Uzbekistan is happy, he added, that America ‘now has a clear stand.’186 When General Franks, head of US Central Command (CENTCOM) visited Central Asia at the beginning of 2001, he reiterated the US view of the threat to the region posed by terrorism: ‘I believe it is possible for very small numbers of committed terrorists to bring great instability and a sense of insecurity to the people in the region. The states in Central Asia take this threat very seriously and have undertaken work over the past several years to put themselves in a position to be able to deal with the threat.’187

Moreover, due to increased narcotic cultivation in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, as Table 5.6 shows, and the crackdown by Pakistan and Iran on drug trafficking from Afghanistan, the flow of drugs moved north toward Central Asia.188 As a result, the region’s role in narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan steadily increased, and it has become an important route for trafficking drugs from Afghanistan to Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic states, the Caucasus countries, and on to Western Europe via Eastern Europe or Turkey (see Map 5.2).189 Corruption, poverty and other social ills have provided fertile ground for drug trading. This issue also became a serious concern for US policy

Internationally, our strategy recognises that the most effective counterdrug operations are mounted at the source where illegal drugs are grown and produced. We seek to stop drug trafficking by bolstering the capabilities of source nations to reduce cultivation through eradication and development of alternative crops, and attack production through destruction of laboratories and control of chemicals used to produce illegal drugs. In the transit zone between source regions and the U.S. border, we support interdiction programs to halt the shipment of illicit drugs. In concert with allies abroad, we pursue prosecution of major drug traffickers, destruction of drug trafficking organisations, prevention of money laundering, and elimination of criminal financial support.190

Table 5.6: Opium Production in Afghanistan in Metric Tons, 1990-2000

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<td></td>
<td>1.570</td>
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<td>3.416</td>
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<td>2.248</td>
<td>2.804</td>
<td>2.693</td>
<td>4.565</td>
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Map 5.2: Drug Trafficking from Afghanistan to Central Asia

Although some scholars did not acknowledge drug smuggling as an important US strategic concern, Washington took it seriously.191 The worldwide shift of heroin production from Burma and the Golden Triangle to Afghanistan from 1995 onwards had a significant impact on Central Asia.192 In October 2000, F. Starr told the US National Intelligence Council about ‘Narcotrafficking and rise of Independent Militias’: ‘Afghanistan and, increasingly, adjacent areas of Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Xinjiang produce and/or process 85 percent of heroin consumed in Europe and also meet
a rapidly growing percentage of Asian, mainly Chinese, demand. Ninety percent of the raw product derives from [Taliban-held areas of] Afghanistan.193

c. Uzbekistan partnership

Any contemporary survey of US foreign policy typically includes an assessment of the systemic and historical anomaly of ‘policy blowback’.194 Within the framework of blowback, foreign policy, based upon timely geopolitical exigencies, often assumes an epistemic role of generating complementary security threats.195 After the Second World War, the United States supported some brutal regimes around the world in order to defeat the communist threat, ignoring the poor human rights record and absence of democratic processes in these states, and supporting them as long as they maintained their anti-communist stance.196 Even under President Carter, a self-proclaimed champion of human rights, the United States backed the Shah of Iran, notorious for his human rights violations.197 Defeating communism was also one of the US motivations in supporting the dictator of Pakistan, General Zia ul-Haq, who in the late 1970s was nurturing what later became known as the Jihadi culture of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and was central to generating Islamic radicalism.198

In Central Asia, the United States has also been trying to create a regional hegemonic power that would serve its interests, particularly the containment of Iran and Russia. Initially Kazakstan achieved most US attention, but its prospects as a US surrogate were severely constrained by the presence of a large Russian population, the weakness of local institutions, lack of a scientific intelligentsia, and underdeveloped industry.199 Equally important politically was that the Kazak regime was more under Russian influence than any other of the republics. Oralbay Abdykarimov, Chairman of Kazakstan’s Senate, said at a January 2004 conference that ‘Kazakstan and Russia are strategic partners and reliable allies.’200 Nazarbayev is considered the most Russified of the region’s heads, and has traditionally had good relations with Russia.201

Such inconveniences led Washington to look to Uzbekistan as the only Central Asian republic with the potential to be regional gendarme and de facto US surrogate. In this connection, regional expert K. Alimov wrote in 1995: ‘A reasonable U.S. policy might be built upon three affirmations.’202 First, regional stability would be attained only when at least one anchor of stability existed in Central Asia, and was recognised as such by the major powers, particularly the United States. Second, Uzbekistan was the sole and best candidate for such role, and should be encouraged in this mission. Third, the stability and sovereignty of the region must be recognised as an important factor in Eurasian security as a whole, and a crucial element of the deeper structure underpinning the
security of Europe. Secretary of Defence William Perry visited Tashkent in March 1995, and praised Uzbekistan as ‘an island of stability’ in Central Asia. Washington closed its eyes to the authoritarian nature of the regime, assigned top priority to it from the mid-1990s, and relied on Tashkent to be its key strategic partner in Central Asia.

This was partly because Uzbekistan’s population is the largest in the region (Table 2.9) and its armed forces, second in size only to Kazakhstan’s (Table 5.7), are considered the most potent and capable in Central Asia. Furthermore, there are significant numbers of politically active Uzbeks in other republics, whereas the Russian population of Uzbekistan is small and declining (Table 2.4). In addition, Uzbekistan is located in the geographic hub of Central Asia (see Map 5.3). S.F. Starr wrote in 1996 about the necessity for a stronger gyroscopic centre in Central Asia that could fill a political vacuum and remove what has long been the main rationale for encroachments from abroad. He went on to introduce Uzbekistan as the sole candidate for leadership, arguing that its geographic position made it a potential ‘anchor state’ and ‘stabiliser’ in Central Asia. He pointed out that Uzbekistan would become the third leg of a tripod of power in the former USSR, along with Russia and Ukraine. Starr believed such a turn of events could then create the basis for the kind of healthy balance that could best serve the interests of regional security, and of the West, especially the United States. Former National Security Advisor Brzezinski also praised Uzbekistan as the prime candidate for regional leadership. He wrote: ‘although [Uzbekistan is] smaller in size and less endowed with natural resources, it has a larger population and much more important, a considerably more homogeneous population than Kazakhstan’s.’ He concluded that the key to controlling Eurasia was controlling the Central Asian republics, and the key to controlling them was Uzbekistan. The establishment of a strategic partnership between the United States and Uzbekistan became not only the proof of Brzezinski’s strategic vision of geopolitical pluralism in the heartland of Eurasia but also his and other scholars’ indication of post-Soviet Uzbekistan as a key country in the global US strategy:

Human rights are important as a long-term aspiration, as an objective, which has to be recognised and pursued. But that also implies recognition of the fact that pursuit does not mean instant attainment. We have to be conscious of the fact that these states have emerged from an essentially colonial relationship, which was not conducive to the creation of democratic political culture. To nurture a democratic political culture takes time, but it has to be something that is pursued deliberately. So, at this stage of our relations with these countries I would say preserving their independence has to take precedence over the immediate implementation of respect for human rights in their totality.
Table 5.7: Armed Forces Personnel, the Central Asian Republics, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>64,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>59,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Map 5.3: The position of Uzbekistan in Central Asia

Furthermore, P. Henze and E. Wimbusch looked at Uzbekistan from a cultural and religious respective, arguing that ‘Uzbekistan is the heart of Central Asia, the focal point of its long history, and its cultural and religious centre.’ Consequently, Uzbekistan was viewed as the geopolitical pivot of Central Asia. F. Hill wrote in May 2001 that the pivotal state for regional security in Central Asia is Uzbekistan, and recommended the US government strengthen its ties with Tashkent.

Above all, the Uzbek regime has tried to portray itself as a bulwark against Russian and Iranian expansion on the one hand, and Islamic extremism on the other
hand, presenting itself as the US ‘strategic partner’ in Central Asia, ‘in a role similar to Iran’s under Shah or Egypt’s today.”

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Uzbekistan was the only Central Asian republic to support Washington’s embargo against the sale of Russian nuclear reactors to Iran. Uzbekistan was also the only country in the region to back the imposition of economic sanctions on Iran under the American ILSA of 1996. The Russian press expressed the view that Uzbekistan’s main attraction for the United States has been its ‘prospects of counterbalancing Iran.’

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan’s government has developed close relations with Israel. Speaking on the occasion of President Karimov’s visit to Washington, special envoy Sadyq Safaev told *Insight* early in 2002 that his country stands with Israel as the only UN member to vote with the United States 100 percent of the time on controversial issues. Furthermore, Uzbek leaders have tended to distrust Moscow. Tashkent refused to allow dual citizenship for Russians living in Uzbekistan, and withdrew from the CIS Collective Security Treaty in February 1999. C. Fairbanks and his colleagues have argued that Uzbekistan is the only power in CIS other than Russia with a developed and specific sense of geopolitical destiny and the desire to become a serious regional power, and has therefore merited comparatively greater attention from US planners seeking to create a strategic partner in Central Asia in order to safeguard US interests there.

As for action against Islamic movements, Islam Karimov has described the militant fundamentalist threat the way he has perceived it. He has defined the aims of Islamic groups in terms of six objectives: 1) to endanger stability and discredit democracy, the secular state, and multinational and multiconfessional society; 2) to use populist slogans in order to brainwash the public and influence youth; 3) to create a split within society between those who pride themselves on professing ‘true Islam’ and those who are seen by fundamentalists as proponents of ‘false Islam’ (as is the case in Afghanistan and Algeria); 4) to use the proximity of civil war in Uzbekistan’s southern neighbours, which will produce a generation of terrorists and militants claiming to be ‘true Muslims’ ready to insinuate their ways into Uzbekistan; 5) to create artificial confrontations between Islamic and non-Islamic civilizations in order to endanger the process of global integration and maintain the backwardness of newly independent states; and 6) to misrepresent religion as a universal panacea for society’s problems.

In explaining why the United States is interested in pursuing active partnership with Uzbekistan, former US Ambassador to Uzbekistan Henry L. Clarke argued in 1999 that one of the strategic challenges facing the United States at the end of the 20th Century was to ensure that the collapse of the Soviet Union did not lead to dangerous
forms of instability in Eurasia that could threaten US interests or even the United States itself. In this connection, he mentioned the importance of stability in Central Asia for stability in Eurasia stating ‘Uzbekistan is centerpiece of the puzzle of Central Asian stability’, and that ‘Uzbekistan’s independence is a key element.’ Jeffrey Starr, former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence, also maintained that support of Uzbekistan and its military reforms was an important part of the US policy of promoting the sovereignty of post-Soviet states, stability, and keeping the region’s republics away from Russia. And John Beyrle, acting advisor to the Secretary of State, visiting Tashkent in April 2001, called Uzbekistan a reliable partner. Some observers have seen this as returning to a Cold War foreign policy that ‘willingly engage[d] unsavory regimes to advance [US] national security interests.’ The United States took steps to create influencing structure, by developing a large number of information-propaganda bodies, nongovernmental and private funds having broad connections with political parties, and public movements in Uzbekistan. Clinton’s Vice-President Gore once maintained: ‘USA attaches strategic importance to Uzbekistan, which occupies the central place in the region from the point view of our interests. Taking into account the proceedings in the Republic, the future of Central Asia, we connect our perspectives with and are intending to be supported by Uzbekistan in the first place.’

Thus, US politicians courted Karimov despite his repressive policies, even though Christopher H. Smith, Chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the House of Representatives’ Committee on International Relations, pointed out that ‘since mid-1992, Uzbekistan has been one of the most repressive New Independent States.’ In a 17-page memorandum released on 10 August 2001, Human Rights Watch documented Uzbekistan’s campaign against independent Muslims, which had involved the arrest, torture, and sentencing of thousands of pious Muslims who practice their faith outside state controls. Human Rights Watch therefore advised the US Commission on International Religious Freedom to recommend that Washington designate Uzbekistan as a ‘country of particular concern’ for religious freedom, as provided by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA):

We further urge the Bush administration to designate Uzbekistan as a country of particular concern. Under IRFA section 405, such a designation would require the Bush administration to take appropriate action with regard to Uzbekistan including, but not limited to, public condemnation in bilateral and multilateral fora, and the conditioning of state or other visits and of financial or security assistance on Uzbekistan’s progress toward ending abuses outlined in this memorandum.
Yet, analysts argued that the mutual interests of the United States and Uzbekistan had grown to such an extent that the authoritarian style of the regime was not a serious obstacle to strengthening bilateral relations. One Georgian analyst noted: ‘In the opinion of western analysts, Uzbekistan in Central Asia for present is the most attracting the West attention country [sic], as it more than the other states of the region shows the self-dependence and demonstrates the independence from Russia.’ He believed the Western analysts yielded to the opinion that ‘Uzbekistan has the most of the chances here to become powerful and authoritative state. In the West they count on Uzbekistan as a strategic ally, serious political and military support in realisation of Central Asian strategy, connected with the competition for resource redivision of the world.’ Karimov assigned high priority to joining Washington’s circle of client states. During his visit to the United States in June 1996 he said: ‘We especially hope for US support in strengthening of our independence, evolution process in the field of reforms, realisation of big projects’, and elsewhere insisted:

The development and deepening of multifaceted relations with the USA, the leading world power with its huge political, economic, military, technical and intellectual resources, is today of primary significance for us. The United States makes a substantial contribution to our processes of renovation, reform and democratisation in the strengthening of our independence and sovereignty.

Karimov’s efforts at rapprochement with the West were praised in the United States. Given its significance for US strategy in the region, Uzbekistan has received some political and military support from Washington. Between 1995 and 2001 it received $2.7 million in International Military Education and Training (IMET) and $7.65 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF). During those same years, Uzbekistan also received $442,316 in Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) licenses, in addition to $2.4 million in Foreign Military Sales (FMS) equipment (see also Figure 5.2). The GUAM Group (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova), which supported the United States in virtually all its actions, such as operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan in the late 1990s, expanded to include Uzbekistan (becoming GUUAM) during a meeting in Washington, held concurrently with NATO’s Fiftieth Anniversary Summit in April 1999 (see Map 5.4). In line with this turn away from Russia, Tashkent left the CIS Collective Security Treaty in May 1999. Yet, although the USA supported GUUAM as a potential partner to put a brake on Russian influence in the CIS, the organisation’s caps city to achieve this was undermined by the weakness of its members. Washington has pledged $46 million to support GUUAM projects in anti-terrorist training, information exchange and in establishing a GUUAM Parliamentary Assembly. Furthermore, in February 2000, the United States transferred sixteen
military transport vehicles to the Uzbek military to enhance interoperability with NATO forces, the first military equipment to be provided under the Foreign Military Financing program to Central Asia. As Washington’s major partner during 2000 and 2001 Uzbekistan received more military assistance than other states of the region.

Map 5.4: GUUAM


Washington’s policy of making Uzbekistan its strategic partner, and rewarding it as a policeman of the region, would have some impacts on both the country and the region. With respect to the country, observers predict a growth in anti-American sentiment similar to that seen in Iran during the seventies, which led to revolution in 1979 against the Shah. However, it should be noted that in this regard there is a fundamental difference between Iran and Uzbekistan. Iran had a strong religious leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who led an Islamic Revolution, while Uzbekistan lacks such a religious leader. Therefore, the establishment of any anti-American state in Central Asia in general and Uzbekistan in particular is very unlikely.
The strengthening of US ties with Uzbekistan has been a growing concern to other Central Asian states. There have been regional fears that the Uzbek regime will exploit US support to get its way regionally, especially over territorial disputes. Meanwhile, Washington's support for Uzbekistan might force Moscow to re-exert more direct control over the region.

Means and mechanisms of US foreign policy in Central Asia

US means did not change in the second stage of engagement with Central Asia, but as oil became the number one priority in the region, new mechanisms, such as the oil consortia, companies and technology were introduced. Yet, counterterrorism policy led to increased emphasis on provision of military aid and equipment to the region. Washington also continued to use its soft power to extend its influence in the area. Secretary of State Albright made it clear that 'assistance to the strategically-located and energy-rich democracies of Central Asia and the Caucasus is strongly in our national interest.' Accordingly, the United States continued to support the region's governments financially, in the name of promoting democracy, combating terrorism (and Islamist movements), and fighting drug trafficking (see Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10).

USAID developed a five-year (2000-2005) strategy for Central Asia to address these issues. In addition, government, and NGOs, sponsored social and educational programs were under way. Hundreds of youths from the region received opportunities to study or undertake research in the United States, and Central Asian academic institutions hosted many State Department-sponsored scholars from America. An official remarked:

We have funded a whole range of educational programs, such as the Fulbright and Hubert Humphrey academic exchanges. We helped found universities – for instance, the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek – and promoted institutional linkages with American universities. Our assistance also focuses on secondary education. The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program was established in 1992 for high school students from Eurasia to experience life in a democratic society. Since 1993, more than 11,000 students from 12 Eurasian countries, including all the Central Asian ones, have participated. Imagine how important this is for long-term change in Central Asia.
Table 5.8: Eurasia Foundation Grants to Central Asian Republics, 1997-1999 (US$ thousand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Economic reform</th>
<th>Governmental &amp; nonprofit reform</th>
<th>Media and communication</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>469,121</td>
<td>206,528</td>
<td>54,838</td>
<td>730,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>173,307</td>
<td>142,462</td>
<td>113,661</td>
<td>431,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>91,480</td>
<td>110,249</td>
<td>46,661</td>
<td>248,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>17,746</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64,060</td>
<td>81,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>520,750</td>
<td>307,122</td>
<td>336,650</td>
<td>1,164,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,274,404</td>
<td>780,091</td>
<td>615,820</td>
<td>2,656,635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Kazakhstan</th>
<th>Kyrgyzstan</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
<th>Uzbekistan</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democracy program</td>
<td>82.87</td>
<td>47.90</td>
<td>17.62</td>
<td>15.17</td>
<td>48.07</td>
<td>211.63</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market reform</td>
<td>212.49</td>
<td>129.57</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>25.26</td>
<td>64.05</td>
<td>440.05</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security program</td>
<td>258.30</td>
<td>14.90</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>26.94</td>
<td>306.10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
<td>69.02</td>
<td>268.21</td>
<td>251.67</td>
<td>108.60</td>
<td>41.64</td>
<td>739.13</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-sectoral/of</td>
<td>99.03</td>
<td>37.35</td>
<td>13.88</td>
<td>32.93</td>
<td>52.89</td>
<td>236.08</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>721.71</td>
<td>497.92</td>
<td>292.20</td>
<td>187.57</td>
<td>233.59</td>
<td>1932.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5.10: US economic aid to Central Asian Countries, 1999 (US$ thousand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Freedom Support Act</th>
<th>Peace Corps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>44,190</td>
<td>2,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>28,520</td>
<td>1,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>11,870</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>13,420</td>
<td>1,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>27,610</td>
<td>1,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125,610</td>
<td>6,612</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the military field, as discussed earlier, in the context of terrorism Washington began to be concerned about security in Central Asia. In 1997 General John Sheehan, then US Marine Corps Commander-in-Chief displayed US willingness to take part in regional peace support operations involving Central Asian forces under UN authorisation, further offering security cooperation to those republics. In 1997 the United States conducted a military operation – the deployment of 500 US parachute troops from the 82nd Airborne Division in North Carolina to the deserts of Kazakstan. This was the longest airborne operation in military history (7,700 miles), and part of a worldwide US strategy, in which connection General Sheehan claimed: ‘There is no nation on the face of the earth that we cannot get to.’ The ‘US National Security Strategy for New Century’ of 1998 clarified:

The U.S. military plays an essential role in building coalitions and shaping the international environment in ways that protect and promote U.S. interests. Through overseas presence and peacetime engagement activities such as defence cooperation, security assistance, and training and exercises with allies and friends, our armed forces help to deter aggression and coercion, promote regional stability, prevent and reduce conflicts and threats, and serve as role models for militaries in emerging democracies. These important efforts engage every component of the Total Force: Active, Reserve, National Guard and civilian.

Accordingly, Washington developed military ties and conducted military exercises with the states of Central Asia. On the one hand, these ties were considered a means for accessing Caspian energy resources and influence over the pipeline issues, and on the other they could pave the way for US access to bases in Central Asia. They led to direct support for and involvement in the ‘war on terrorism’ from some Central Asian militaries, as discussed in the next Chapter. In line with US military objectives in the region, J.D. Crouch II, Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Policy, maintained that, even before September 2001, military-to-military cooperation with Central Asia was aimed at:

- eliminating the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction;
- strengthening these states’ sovereignty and independence;
- supporting defence reform, namely, helping these states to reform their militaries to transition from the Soviet-era legacy of top-heavy, bloated militaries, to smaller, more professional forces capable of supporting legitimate defence needs;
- encouraging participation in NATO’s PfP program;
- promoting regional peacekeeping capabilities; and
• fostering greater regional cooperation

S.N. Heslin suggested that the USA should considerably expand its efforts, bilaterally and through multilateral institutions such as NATO’s PfP Program, to help all Central Asia’s states build up the capacity to protect critical infrastructure assets and control their own borders. She believed the United States had a direct interest in reducing the potential for arms proliferation through what could currently be described as a wide-open region bordering Iran. Beyond this, such capabilities would enhance the republics’ sovereignty, and reduce the temptation for outside powers to meddle, thereby enhancing regional stability. The US government has been providing modest military assistance to the region, as in the case of Uzbekistan mentioned earlier. Kyrgyzstan also received some $4-6 million US assistance in 2000, primarily non-lethal equipment such as radios and night-vision equipment.

Conclusion

This Chapter has examined US policy towards Central Asia in the second period, from the mid-1990s until 2001. During this period, oil and gas enhanced Central Asia’s strategic value to the United States. The major ambition of US foreign policy in the hydrocarbon field was geopolitical, i.e. to end Russia’s monopoly over the region’s energy and to minimise Iran’s influence by securing access to Caspian and Central Asian energy resources, and more significantly, controlling the routes for export of oil and gas. To this end the United States increased its financial support for the region’s states, developing close relations with them. However, declared US attitudes toward Russia were mixed, with some US decision-makers openly viewing Russia as a major competitor for Caspian resources and others denying that US Caspian policy was intended to bypass or thwart Russia. Accordingly, it may be argued that US policy was aimed in the short term at reducing Russia’s role in exploiting the region’s resources, but in the longer term at ending Russia’s regional hegemony. Washington’s policy toward Iran was much more obvious. It aimed to prevent Iran gaining any leverage over Caspian oil and gas, by insisting that any new pipelines must bypass Iranian territory. In other words, due to an increased interest in preserving the region as ‘a zone of free competition’ and in denying Moscow, Tehran, and to some extent Beijing, any lasting influence, the United States became de facto arbiter or leader on virtually every interstate and international issue in the region.

As for democracy, although US officials and experts classified it as a significant interest in Central Asia, no considerable move towards democratisation was made.
Indeed, successive US administrations did not make their support contingent on governments improving their dismal record in economic and political reform or human rights. Furthermore, the US government supported the Uzbek regime to become the regional hegemonic power. Although this might fit US aspirations for global hegemony, the choice is problematic. US support empowers Karimov’s regime, democracy and human rights are overlooked, and efforts by human rights organisations to promote democracy in Uzbekistan prove fruitless against the claims of counterterrorism and the fights against radical Islam and drug trafficking. Increased drug trafficking from the region and links between radical Islamic groups such as the IMU and terrorist networks in Afghanistan prompted the USA in the late 1990s to give increased attention to security in this region, but it became first priority only after the events of 11 September 2001, which opened a new chapter in US engagement with the region.
Notes


3. C.F. Jones, ‘The American Burden of Hegemony in the Middle East’, *American Diplomacy*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 2002, pp. 87-93. Since energy deposits are located in the Caspian Sea, and two Central Asian oil-rich republics, Kazakstan and Turkmениstan, have coastlines on the Caspian, US policy toward Central Asia was coupled with its Caspian policy. Moreover, as Azerbaijan also has Caspian coasts, US policy toward Central Asia has also been associated with its policy towards the Caucasus. In fact, all the former republics of Soviet Transcaucasia and Central Asia have been lumped together by the USA into a ‘super region’, a policy reinforced by region-wide projects, such as development of Caspian Basin natural resources, a new Silk Road and the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA). See M. Margelov, ‘Russia’s National Interests in the Caspian Region’, in Y. Kalyuzhnova, A. Myers Jaffe, D. Lynch and R.C. Sickles, *Energy in the Caspian Region*, London: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 195-211.


8. Ibid.


12. Quoted from the Washington-based American Petroleum Institute, voice of the major US oil companies by Cohn, ‘Cheney’s Black Gold: Oil Interests May Drive US Foreign Policy’, *Chicago Tribune*, 10

13 US oil consumption in 2003 was 19.9 million barrels a day, of which 11.2 million were imported.


15 Ibid.


21 Ibid.


25 ‘A US National Security Strategy for a New Century’ stressed: ‘The United States is undergoing a fundamental shift away from reliance on Middle East oil. The Caspian Basin, with potential oil reserves of 160 billion barrels, promises to play an increasingly important role in meeting rising world energy


29 H. Pope, 'Great Game II: Oil Companies Rush Into the Caucasus To Tap the Caspian- Two Pipeline Projects Vie To Export the Output; One Route Skirts Russia – Long-Sought Azeri Prize', The Wall Street Journal, 25 April 1997, p. A1. A number of analysts have echoed US government exaggerations about the amount of oil in the Caspian Basin, for example H. Pope, 'US Report says Caspian Sea oil deposits may be twice as large as expected', p. A10. Others question them, for example D. Hiro, 'Why is the US inflating Caspian oil reserves?', Middle East International, 12 September 1997, p.18. See also Department of State, Caspian Region Energy Development Report (As Required by HR 3610), undated report attached to letter from Barbara Larkin, Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs to Senator Robert Byrd, 15 April 1997, p. 3, and A. Cohen, 'US policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia: Building a new 'Silk Road' to Economic Prosperity', Heritage Foundation, 24 July 1997, pp. 1-10.


38 S.N. Heslin, 'Key Constraints to Caspian Pipeline Development: Status, Significance and Outlook; Chart: Political Constraints to Pipeline Development', Working Paper, James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, Houston, April 1998, pp. 12-16.


40 Ibid.


44 Author's interview with Frederick Starr via email, 29 December 2003.

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50 See Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primary and Its Geostratigical Imperatives*, pp. 50-61. Some US officials tried to avoid the term ‘game’. For example John S. Wolf, Special Adviser to President and Secretary of State for Caspian Basin Energy, said ‘This is not/not a replay of the old ‘great game’, and it’s not a James Bond movie either.’ US official’s statement in Istanbul on Caspian Basin energy, Istanbul, 28 February 2000.


52 Heslin, op. cit., pp. 12-16.

53 Ibid.


55 The major American companies involved with Caspian oil resources are Mobil, Chevron, Exxon, Pennzoil, Unocal and Amoco.

57 One such newborn institution is the Caspian Studies Program (CSP) founded in 1999 at Harvard University. It seeks to 'locate the Caspian region on the map of the US policymaking community as an area in which the United States has important national interest and where US policy can make major differences.' From a brochure published by CSP, October 2003. Several conferences are held each year in the United States, and attract increasing interest from academics and businessmen. In addition the American press produced a flurry of news reports and opinion pieces on the Caspian Basin, stressing the need for a more dynamic US policy towards the region. Barnes, op. cit., pp. 212-233.

58 Cohen, op. cit., p. 4.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid. p. 6.


62 Ibid.

63 The consortium that undertook this consisted of SOCAR (Azerbaijan) 20%, British Petroleum (UK) 17.127%, Amoco (USA) 17.01%, Lukoil (Russia) 10%, Pennzoil (USA) 9.82%, Unocal (USA) 9.52%, Statoil (Norway) 8.563%, McDermott International (USA) 2.45%, Ramco (Scotland) 2.08%, Turkish State Oil Company (Turkey) 1.75%, Delta-Nimr (Saudi Arabia) 1.68%. ‘The agreement [signed 20 September 1994] calls for a total $7.4 billion investment (at today's rates) over 30 years in three offshore oil fields. The fields include Guneshli (82 km offshore in section deeper than 200 meters), Chirag (94 km) and Azeri (113 km). The reserves are estimated at 4 billion barrels (511 million tons). The crude from these fields is considered among the lightest in the world. The lighter the oil, the less expensive to refine. Azeri crude weighs 36.7 degrees average API gravity, which is even lighter than Saudi Arabia’s, which weighs 34.’ N. Sagheb and M. Javadi, ‘Azerbaijan’s ‘Contract of the Century’ Finally Signed with Western Oil Consortium’, Azerbaijan International, Vol. 4, No. 2, Winter 1994, pp. 26-29.


68 Joseph, op. cit.


73 Joseph, op. cit.

74 Ibid.

77 Heslin, op. cit., pp. 12-16.
79 Joseph, op. cit.
80 Maresca, op. cit.
81 Gee, op. cit., pp. 23-25. As mentioned earlier, Ambassador Elizabeth Jones on 11 April 2001 also declared: 'To guard against dependence on Russia and also prevent dependence on Iran, which would have an interest in controlling Caspian oil because it is a competitor in the oil market, the U.S. supported a policy of multiple pipelines...' Elizabeth Jones, quoted from J. Israel, R. Rozoff and N. Varkevisser, 'Why Washington Wants Afghanistan?', at www.tenc.net [accessed 18/9/2003].
85 Dorian, op. cit., pp. 112-119.
87 Ibid.
89 Ruseckas, op. cit. pp. 41-86. Some scholars, such as E. G. Barry Grey, are regarded as 'Gamers'.
92 Cited by Firdous, op. cit., p. 172.
93 Noreng, op. cit.
94 Becker, op. cit., pp.91-132.
95 Forsythe, op. cit., p. 49.

Heslin, op. cit., pp. 12-16.


A. Maleki, ‘Iran and Turan: Apropos of Iran’s relations with Central Asia and the Caucasian republics’, Central Asia and the Caucasus (online), Vol. 11, No. 5, 2001 at http://www.ca-c.org/journal/eng-05-2001/11.malprimen.shtml [accessed 15/8/2003]. In addition, there are a number of refineries in northern Iran that are particularly suited to handle oil swaps with the Caspian states.


112 Wu and Fesharaki, op. cit., pp. 18-20, 22-23.


119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.


Ibid.

Wu and Fesharaki, op. cit., pp.18-20, 22-23. For a comprehensive description of the Baku-Ceyhan project see Karagiannis, op. cit., pp.151-162.


Ibid.

Ibid.


142 Cohen, op. cit., pp. 3-7.


145 Ebel, op. cit., and Forsythe, op. cit., pp.130-146.

146 Heslin, op. cit., pp. 12-16.


148 The 932-mile (1,500 km) pipeline from the Tengiz oilfield in Kazakstan is planned to terminate on the Russian Black Sea coast between Novorossiisk and Anapa; for more on this issue see 'The Pipe', SEU Times, the Socio-Ecological Union Newsletter, May/June 1999, pp. 23-28, 'Caspian pipeline consortium pushes into the Black Sea', Drillbits and Tailings, Vol. 4, No. 17, 23 October 1999, pp. 95-97, and C. van der Lecuw, Oil and Gas in the Caucasus and Caspian: A History, Richmond: Curzon, 2000, pp. 34-49.


150 Heslin, op. cit., pp. 12-16.


155 Ibid., pp. 34, 25.

156 'US policy toward the Central Asian States', Remarks by Ambassador James Collins at inauguration of the Central Asia Institute, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, 21 October 1996.


164 Testimony on ‘Silencing Central Asia: The Voice of the Dissidents’ before the Subcommittees on Operations and Human Rights (OHR) and on Middle East and South Asia (MESA), of the House International Relations Committee, by A. Cohen, of Shelby and Kathryn Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, 18 July 2001.


166 A secret trial in August 1999 of six suspects of the bombings (brothers of Mohammad Salikh – former Uzbek presidential candidate and head of the banned Erk Party – or Erk Party members) resulted in sentences ranging from 8 to 15 years, Nichol, op. cit., pp. 4-8.

167 Cited from Nichol, op. cit., p. 15.

168 Ibid.

169 O.S. Wyatt Jr. ‘Geopolitics of oil in the twenty first century’, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. 62, No. 7, New York, 15 January 1996, pp. 215-217. As mentioned earlier, several vivid examples of undemocratic regimes in the Middle East and elsewhere have been supported by the USA. In Saudi Arabia, for example, partnership with the United States for several decades has not brought about democratisation.


174 The explosions on 16 February 1999 in Tashkent are variously reported as killing 16-28 and wounding 100-351. See E. Wishnick, ‘Growing U.S. Security Interests in Central Asia’, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle, 2002, pp. 1-12, On the role of the Taliban in Central Asia see A. Rashid,
'The Taliban: Exporting extremism', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 6, New York, November/December 1999, pp. 22-35. President Karimov in April 1999 said that Mohammad Salikh had masterminded the plot, and had been supported by the Taliban and Uzbek Islamic extremist Tohir Yuldash. Nichol, op. cit., p. 13.


Nichol, op. cit., p. 15.


181 Ibid.


183 Senate, Testimony of CIA Director George Tenet to Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, 8 February 2000.


186 Ibid.

187 US State Department, 'Centcom Chief General Tommy Franks Round Table Press Briefing in Tashkent', Tashkent, 21 May 2001. CENTCOM did not seek new responsibilities, but the Department of Defence finally decided to make it responsible for the five Central Asian states in October 1998.

188 Even after the overthrow of the Taliban production and export of narcotics has continued. It should, however, be kept in mind that the USA has played a large part in the expansion of Afghanistan’s heroin industry. Throughout the 1980s, the Mujaheddin groups and their Pakistani handlers exploited the covert supply lines, set up with CIA assistance to get arms into Afghanistan, to smuggle out large quantities of opium. The CIA ignored the drug trade in the interests of prosecuting the war against the Soviet army. See P. Symonds, 'The Taliban, the US and the resources of Central Asia', *World Socialist Website*, 24 October 2001, at [http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/oct2001/tal1-o24.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/oct2001/tal1-o24.shtml) [accessed 12/10/2003].

189 Illicit drugs situation in the regions neighboring Afghanistan and the response of ODCCP, United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, October 2002. Four of the six main routes for shipment of drugs to Europe and the USA pass through Central Asia: 1) Kandahar-Herat-Turkmenistan-


194 According to Chalmers Johnson ‘The term ‘blowback’, which officials of the Central Intelligence Agency first invented for their own internal use, refers to the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people. See C. Johnson, Blowback: The Cost and Consequences of American Empire, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000.


196 For details see Chapter 1 of this Thesis.


200 Cited by I. Alibekov, ‘Kazakhstan tilts toward Russia’, Eurasia Insight, 18 February 2004, pp.12-16. Kazakhstan, perhaps more than any other former Soviet republic, depends upon continuance of Russia’s goodwill. In nearly three centuries of domination by Russia, its vast resource-rich and open spaces (2,724,900 sq. km) attracted successive waves of land-hungry Russian colonists. Moreover, Stalin consistently used Kazakhstan as a dumping ground for various undesirable ethnic groups, including Germans, Chechens, and several million Ukrainian peasants. As a result, Kazakhstan at independence was the only post-Soviet state where the titular nationality was less than half the population.

201 Russians are about a third of Kazakhstan’s population, and the majority in some provinces, so good relations with Russia are more of a priority for Kazakhstan than for other countries of the region. In May 1992 Kazakhstan signed a friendship treaty with Russia; in March 1996 it joined Russia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, in the ‘Agreement of Four’, forming an inner core of integration within the CIS. The agreement’s aims are to create a united economic area and customs union, harmonise legal systems, coordinate foreign policies, and provide mutual support in the fight against terrorism. See S. Akiner, ‘Emerging Political Order in the New Caspian States’, in G.K. Bertsch, C.B. Craft, S.A. Jones, and M. Beck, eds. Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia, New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 90-128.

203 Ibid.


208 Ibid.

209 Ibid.

210 Brzezinski, op. cit., p. 130.

211 Ibid. p. 132.


of all goods, technology or services from the USA to Iran, imports of goods or services of Iranian origin into the USA and transactions by affiliates of US enterprises. See Alimov, op. cit.


219 It should be borne in mind that, from 2003 Uzbekistan has also tried to build close relations with Russia see C. Carlson, ‘Uzbekistan: Karimov says improved relations with Russia not at expense of US ties’, EurasiaNet, 9 June 2003, pp. 9-13.


221 Karimov, op. cit., p. 38.

222 Clarke, op. cit., pp. 373-383.

223 Ibid.


229 ‘Memorandum to the US Government Regarding Religious Persecution in Uzbekistan’, 10 August 2001, at http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/uzbek-aug/recomm.htm [accessed 14/8/2004]. Under the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, countries whose governments engage in serious violations of religious freedom can be named countries of particular concern for religious freedom. The law offers the president a menu of options for dealing with such countries, ranging from limiting certain kinds of assistance to full sanctions. Section 402 mandates the executive to take certain actions against governments of countries of particular concern. These are enumerated in section 405 and may include: the withdrawal, limitation or suspension of development assistance in accordance with section 16 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; directing the Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or the Trade and Development Bank not to approve credits or other benefits; the withdrawal, limitation, or suspension of security assistance in accordance with section 502B with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; opposing loans by international financial institutions; denial or limiting of licenses for the export of certain goods; prohibiting any loan of more than $10,000,000; and prohibiting procurement of, or contracting for the procurement of goods.

229 Menteshashvili, op. cit., pp. 8-10.

231 Ibid.


Cutler, 'Central Asia and the West after September 11'.


Radyuhin, op. cit.

Nichol, op. cit., pp. 6-12.

For a useful account of US military assistance to Uzbekistan see Butler, op. cit., pp. 15-19.

For detailed discussion on US support for the Shah of Iran, see Saikal, op. cit., and for Uzbekistan see Alimov, op. cit., and J. Lobe, 'US allies with Uzbekistan at a cost to human rights', Asia Times, 5 October 2001.

However, anti-US sentiments in the very Islamised Ferghana Valley region, stirred up by underground religious organisations from within, will only intensify, as a result of changes in both Tashkent's foreign policy and the Uzbek government's repressive measures against dissidents, both of which continue to the present.


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Chapter Six

US Policy in Central Asia after 11 September 2001: The third stage

America will have a continuing interest and presence in Central Asia of a kind that we could not have dreamed of before.
C. Powell

Introduction

The events of 11 September 2001 in the United States ushered in an important reconfiguration of the entire international security and geopolitical environment. This new situation changed Washington’s foreign and security priorities and significantly shifted the focus of its foreign policy. Regions and nations that had been at the periphery or of modest US concern assumed a new importance as either suspected associates of terrorist networks and the states sponsoring them, or potential allies in Washington’s ‘war on terror’. William H. Courtney, former US Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Georgia, and former Senior Advisor to the National Security Council, stated: ‘In a world of global terrorism, drug trafficking, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, distant and remote places can be as strategic as neighboring and familiar ones.’

In particular these events made Afghanistan the epicentre of international shocks on a massive scale, and redefined the geopolitics of the regions surrounding it, especially Central Asia. This region was transformed from relative remoteness in US perception to great strategic importance. This was due partly to the region’s common borders with Afghanistan (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have borders with Afghanistan 1,206 km, 744 km, and 137 km long respectively) or closeness to Afghan territory (Kyrgyzstan), and partly to the support these states could offer for the US campaign against terrorism. Secretary of State Powell in April 2002 said: ‘We are also forming important new relations with our friends in Central Asia.’ The Guardian saw this as a ‘grandiose strategic seizure of power in Central Asia.’ Certainly, this reorientation has had an important impact on Washington’s relationships with the Central Asian republics. A report by The Economist proclaimed:

September 11 has re-established the precept that Central Asia is too important and too dangerous to be ignored. It is home to the world’s most alarming Islamic sects, it is the place where the West has historically
rubbed up against Russia and China, and it is both blessed with oil and cursed with [Pakistani] nuclear weapons. By bringing America back to the region in force, renewing the American alliance with Pakistan, conducting regime change in Afghanistan and, for the first time, securing American footholds in Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan [sic], last September's terrorist attacks may have the eventual effect of bringing stability to a highly volatile part of the world. That will only happen, though, if America’s interest in Central Asia does not dwindle again. But if America has, at long last, reversed its neglect of the region, it is also in danger of committing another old mistake – embracing too closely unsavoury types with a precarious grip on power.8

This change in focus strengthened US ties with states in the region. As Elizabeth Jones noted, American policy in the region must include a commitment to ‘deeper, more sustained, and better-coordinated engagement on the full range of issues upon which we agree and disagree’ – including security cooperation, energy and political and economic reform.9 In fact, officials in Washington came to believe that the deeper their presence, the more likely they were to achieve their objectives. After visiting Uzbekistan in January 2002, Congress majority leader Tom Daschle insisted: ‘We will increase our presence in this region in order to maintain US interests in Central Asia’, and ‘Hence, our presence in the region will be permanent; a required level of confidence with governments of Central Asian states exists here already.’10

Washington has shored up its relations with the countries of the region, and reinforced its foothold there. The republics have echoed the new US orientation, contributed to the ‘war on terror’ and become part of the new US strategy. This contribution has allowed Washington to establish military bases in the centre of the Eurasian ‘Heartland’.

This chapter examines post-9/11 trends in US policy toward Central Asia. It explores the changes in Washington’s engagement with this region, addresses how the region’s states have responded to the ‘war on terror’, explains the establishment of US military bases in the area, and explores US oil policy in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. The chapter also looks at the means of and mechanisms in US policy towards the region and addresses the challenges the United States has faced in this regard. It argues that the events of 11 September 2001, and subsequent ‘war on terror’, have led Washington towards greater involvement in Central Asia – a move that would enable it to develop its strategic interests in Eurasia. It also shows how increased US presence in Central Asia has raised Russian and Chinese concerns.
US policy towards Central Asia after 11 September 2001: Defining the priorities

Although the 11 September terrorist attacks confirmed the importance of some parts of the world, such as the Middle East, to US vital interests, they demonstrated that Central Asia would henceforth have a higher profile in US strategy. Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld said in January 2002:

...one of the really truly important things that struck me is if you go back to World War II, in the post-World War II period, how relationships shifted in the world dramatically and institutions changed in various ways. And I have said that I believe that will be the case as a result of this significant worldwide effort to deal with terrorism. If that's true, I think one can expect that there will be different relationships going forward, and I suspect that some of them will be in Central Asia.¹¹

On 7 January 2002, at Bagram air base, near Kabul, visiting Senator Joseph Lieberman confirmed the change: ‘We learned at a very high and painful price the cost of a lack of involvement in Central Asia on 11 September, and we’re not going to let it happen again.’¹² According to B. Lynn Pascoe, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, these events made it clear to the US government that its policy in Central Asia had not gone far enough. He stressed that it was critical to US national interests that Washington ‘greatly enhance’ its ‘relations with the five Central Asian countries, and help them find ways to take the political and economic reform measures necessary for long-term prosperity and stability.’¹³ As a result, the USA established relationships with the Central Asian states ‘of a kind that’ it ‘could not have dreamed before.’¹⁴ This new approach has necessitated new US steps in engagement, significantly reorienting its foreign policy, and attempting to enhance involvement with the region’s affairs.

Before the events of 11 September 2001, Central Asia was relatively marginal to US national security. Since that time it has assumed a new importance, as policymakers have used the lessons of ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ to refashion the US national security framework, and revised long-standing concepts of deterrence to address new threats from international terrorism.¹⁵ Possible links between some radical groups in Central Asia, such as the IMU, and the Al-Qaeda terrorist network in Afghanistan, made this area a US security priority, as President George W. Bush proclaimed in his address to Congress on 20 September 2001: ‘The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organisations known as Al-Qaeda. [This] group and its leader, a person named Osama bin Laden, are linked to many other organisations in different countries – including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.’¹⁶ Hence, security became the primary US interest in the region with a
view to preventing the ‘Afghanisation’ of Central Asia and emergence of more terrorist
groups with transnational reach that ‘might threaten the stability of all the interlocking
regions and strike the United States.’17 As a result, the region has become a centre of US
strategic interest, leading to the development of a US ‘vision’ for its future, articulated
by Elizabeth Jones in 2003:

We have a vision for this region – that it becomes stable, peaceful, and
prosperous. We have a vision that the individual countries will markedly
accelerate their economic reforms and democratic credentials, respect
human rights, and develop vibrant civil societies. We have a vision that
the countries of this region are increasingly integrated into the global
economy via an East-West corridor of cooperation stretching from China
and Afghanistan across the Caucasus to the Mediterranean. We share this
vision with the well-educated, ambitious, hard-working people of these
new countries. We are engaging —seriously and for the long term — with
Central Asia.18

Furthermore, the US Senate’s creation of a special subcommittee for Central
Asian affairs in late 2001 demonstrated the significance that the United States accords
to the ‘Heartland’ of Asia.19 According to J.D. Crouch II, Assistant Defence Secretary
for International Security Policy, the events of 11 September highlighted the reality that
the United States and Central Asian countries have major mutual security concerns —
such as Islamic radicalism and drug trafficking — and that the ‘continued stability and
security of this region will remain an important U.S. interest.’20 In explaining the US
role in the region, he argued that Washington should cooperate with the republics in
their efforts to secure their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, by
eliminating terrorism and the threat posed by the WMD, and by promoting stability and
democratic and human rights reforms.21 He maintained that the region’s governments
viewed the presence of US and coalition troops as enhancing their security, and that
‘[a]ll of the Central Asian countries have told us that [Operation Enduring Freedom]
directly addresses their security concerns.’22 Thus, in the third stage of US involvement
in Central Asia, security and counterterrorism have become a high priority, and it has
paid increased attention to these agendas. This emphasis on security is, according to US
officials, a lesson Washington has learnt from their experiences elsewhere:

Our disengagement from Afghanistan in the 1980s taught us a harsh
lesson, one that we do not want to repeat in other countries. We learned
that we must engage the region’s governments and people to promote
long-term stability and prevent a security vacuum that provides
opportunities for extremism and external intervention. This is
particularly true in Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan,
where terrorist groups have threatened our own national interests.23
However, one can argue that, unlike Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington engaged in Central Asia and the Caucasus well before the situation there developed into a crisis.\textsuperscript{4} The United States has a continuing interest in preventing trans-border movement of terrorist groups, weapons trafficking (including the WMD), drugs trafficking, and people-smuggling.\textsuperscript{5}

US policy-planners have suggested that long-term stability in Central Asia, however, requires progress in internal reform and energy development, as well as security promotion. They have argued that sustained democratic and market economic reforms are essential to achieving security leverages, while eliminating terrorist threats is crucial to advancing internal reforms. A National Security Council official mentioned that the Bush administration in late 2001 viewed the policy challenge in the region as a balancing act between internal reform, security and energy; he believed the focus on security was ‘overriding, but not exclusive’.\textsuperscript{26} Some other officials have said that in addition to wanting the republics to become stable and prosperous, the USA had three significant regional interests: ‘preventing the spread of terrorism, providing tools for political and economic reform and institution of the rule of law, and ensuring the security and transparent development of Caspian energy reserves’.\textsuperscript{27} Moreover, the United States has had interests in resolving and, where possible, preventing violent conflicts that threatened regional stability, and in ‘seeing all countries of the region become democratic, market-oriented states – the best long-term guarantee of regional stability and of positive, mutually beneficial relations’; however, the region’s countries are not committed to democratic reforms.\textsuperscript{28} All three areas of interests are interrelated, but the emergence of the US-led coalition against terrorism made security its number one priority in the region, with democratic reform secondary. Nevertheless, these officials have stopped short of mentioning broader US interests in the area, such as the desire to check other dominant powers, namely Russia and China, which might challenge US influence.

**The War on terrorism: Establishment of US military bases in Central Asia**

After the events of 11 September Washington urgently needed strategic assets such as military bases near Afghanistan for the declared ‘war on terror’. Central Asia’s proximity to Afghanistan was significant for operations against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda terrorist network. The region could also be used as a staging post for combating extremist networks based in South Asia, and was convenient as a place to organise intelligence operations against radical groups inside and outside the region.\textsuperscript{29}
These advantages bestowed new strategic importance upon the republics, with coalition forces setting up bases in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for the launch of ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ in Afghanistan in October 2001. Accordingly, in September 2001, the US government appealed to the region’s states to join the campaign against terrorism, and their leaders responded quickly and positively. So did Russia’s President Putin; on 24 September he appeared on national television to outline Russia’s position on fighting international terrorism, and confirmed that Russia and the Central Asian allies would allow the United States and its allies access to their air corridors and airfields for humanitarian, rescue and intelligence missions, though not military operations. Defence Minister Ivanov reaffirmed this, two days later. After his November 2002 meeting with Defence Secretary Rumsfeld, Putin again encouraged the Central Asian regimes to support the US campaign.

Moscow was hoping to join hands with Washington in crushing the Taliban regime, containing Islamic militants and terrorism, and fighting drug trafficking. However, it soon became evident that, due to strong domestic opposition to Russian participation in the ‘war on terror’ and to US military presence in the region, Moscow would not take part directly in military operations alongside US forces in Afghanistan.

In this context, two views were presented by Russians. On the one hand it was felt that Russia should cooperate with the United States in the campaign against terrorism. Those who supported this view believed that the Cold War was over, and that after 11 September 2001 both powers faced common threats – terrorism, Islamic radicalism, ethno-religious conflict and unstable states. Therefore, common geopolitical and security considerations necessitated establishing closer ties between the two states. President Putin was a major supporter of this view. In an interview on 19 September 2001 he said ‘We are ready to cooperate with the United States in the struggle against terrorism in the broadest terms.’ On the other hand, there were those who opposed cooperation with the United States in the ‘war on terror’ and involvement in Afghanistan. Some politicians, Duma members and high-ranking generals saw the increased US presence in the region as a potential threat and a geopolitical challenge to Russia. Dmitri Rogozin, Chairman of the Duma’s International Affairs Committee, opined that Russia, not being part of NATO, lacked guarantees for its security in case of attack, and that ‘massive armed action by the U.S. may lead to destabilisation all across Central Asia.’ Among the Russian military there was also strong opposition to Washington’s military presence in the area. Alexander Pikayev, an arms-control expert, pointed out: ‘Putin has been doing a lot of things for the U.S., but so far the benefits are
not clear. The more steps he takes without having something to show in exchange, the more criticism he will face among the ruling elite.40 In November 2001, the Russian newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reported ‘growing disagreement within the Defence Ministry with the way in which the Kremlin is structuring its participation in the anti-terrorist coalition.’41 An open letter from retired generals and admirals to the Russian President and his aides, published on 10 November 2001, strongly criticised Putin’s military policies.42 In a similar letter, published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* newspaper early in 2002, former Russian Defence Minister Igor Rodionov, together with some members of parliament and a group of retired admirals and generals, lambasted President Putin for betraying Russia’s interests by permitting American forces in Central Asia to fight the war on terrorism, and called for a referendum to reinstate socialism. The letter claimed that ‘these bases are not a strike against bin Laden, but in reality against Russia’s interests.’43 Speaking in Moscow in June 2003, General Anatoly Kvashnin, Chief of General Staff, criticised Moscow’s decision to let the United States and European powers use former Soviet bases in Central Asia following the 11 September attacks.44

The leaders of the republics not only declared solidarity with George W. Bush, and willingness to help the United States in the war in Afghanistan, but also competed to support the US-led war.45 On 16 September 2001, Uzbekistan’s Foreign Minister, Abdulaziz Kamilov, declared his country open to ‘any form of antiterrorist cooperation with the United States’, including possible use of Uzbek territory for strikes on terrorist camps in Afghanistan.46 At a meeting in Tashkent on 5 October 2001, two days before US missile strikes on Afghanistan began, Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld and President Karimov agreed to cooperate in three main areas. First, Uzbekistan opened its airspace to US military aircraft. Second, they agreed to exchange intelligence. Third, Uzbekistan agreed to provide an airfield for use by US cargo aircraft, helicopters and personnel involved in search and rescue and humanitarian operations.47 The airfield is at Karshi Khanabad –300 kilometers southwest of Tashkent and some 150 kilometers from Afghanistan (see Map 6.1).48 On 12 October 2001 Washington signed a landmark security agreement, under which it would provide military support for Uzbekistan against all internal and external threats. Following a visit to Uzbekistan in December 2001, Secretary of State Powell secured an agreement to reopen the ‘Friendship Bridge’ across the Amu-Darya River, to provide a key land route into northern Afghanistan for the first time since 1996, and facilitate supply and reinforcement of US ground forces in
Afghanistan. However, Karimov also sought US help to counter the IMU and other Islamic radical groups.

Immediately after the 11 September attacks, Tajikistan also expressed its willingness to join the campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan. On 21 September 2001 President Rahmonov, at the country’s Democratic Party Congress in Dushanbe, proclaimed: ‘Tajikistan is ready to cooperate with the international community, including the American government, in the struggle against terrorism and international extremism.’ On 8 October 2001, Dushanbe offered air corridors and, if necessary, airfields for counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan. When Rumsfeld visited Dushanbe in November 2001, the Tajik government offered use of three airfields – Khojand, Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube – and also assisted in transporting humanitarian aid to northern Afghanistan (see Map 6.1).

Bishkek feared that Kyrgyzstan could become a military theatre with unforeseen consequences, and ‘a main target for terrorists.’ Kabai Karabekov, Chairman of a Parliamentary Committee on Information policy in Kyrgyzstan, told RFE/RL:

The situation in Central Asia is changing and, should we fail to adapt to the new political environment, Kyrgyzstan would be in trouble. I think that the decision [to allow the construction of a US base in Kyrgyzstan] is purely political and that it is, first and foremost, aimed at securing the safety of our borders. That we have agreed to give this base to the Americans should not be seen only as a support offered to the United States. It also shows that the Americans are supporting Kyrgyzstan in its fight against terrorism.

Thus, the Kyrgyz government needed US support, and its decision to admit American troops and aircraft was provoked by long-term strategic considerations. It provided Washington with full basing rights, and in December 2001 the Kyrgyz parliament agreed to the establishment of a US military base at Manas International Airport, near Bishkek (see Map 6.1).

President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan stated on 24 September 2001: ‘Kazakhstan is ready to support an action against terrorism with all the means it has at its disposal.’ He explained his country’s position in a telephone conversation with President Bush on 26 September 2001. His Foreign Minister, Erlan Idrissov, at a meeting with Secretary of State Powell on 28 September 2001, expressed Kazakhstan’s readiness to support the anti-terrorist action in all possible ways.

The Central Asian states had five common reasons for responding to the US overtures. First, improvement of economic conditions: their leaders placed much hope on receiving more US aid to alleviate the economic problems, discussed in Chapter
Map 6.1: US Military Bases in Central Asia (and the Middle East)

Two, which posed socio-economic and security threats to their legitimacy.57 Second, reinforcement of national sovereignty: the regimes are non-democratic, and hence hoped that a US presence would help decrease international criticism of their poor human rights records. In October 2001 Ruslan Sharipov, of Uzbekistan’s Human Rights Society, voiced concern that ‘the US [would] take the pressure off Uzbekistan's human rights…and that things could get a lot worse.’58 Generally, as discussed below, deployment of US forces has weakened the process of civil and democratic reform, and facilitated suppression of the opposition and independent press.59 In this context, two days before Defence Secretary Rumsfeld visited Tashkent in December 2001, the Uzbek parliament changed the Constitution, extending Karimov’s presidential term from five to seven years.60 Third, the development of effective national armies: the region’s states needed and hoped for US military assistance to develop their military machines.

The fourth motivation was suppression of Islamist movements: the authoritarian leaders expected US military support for their fight against Islamist paramilitary forces, particularly in the Ferghana Valley, where they were reported to have links to the Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan, and seen by the regional governments as major threats to security and sovereignty.61 Given the lack of solid security and military structures, the regimes of the region could not counter such threats unaided, and existing security establishments such as the SCO and CSTO, mentioned below, could not provide much assistance.62 As Murat Laumalin, Deputy Director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, has noted ‘[t]en years of the Collective Security Treaty have demonstrated that it failed to resolve all problems and justify the hope of some of its members.’63 Nor have Russian military forces deployed in the region succeeded in suppressing Islamist activities.64 The fifth reason for their responding to the United States was the concern they shared with it about instability in Afghanistan, and use of its territory for training camps and staging grounds for militant and terrorist groups.65

Following their declarations of support in the ‘war on terror’, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan provided bases for American forces, while Kazakhstan and Tajikistan authorised US use of airfields, and Turkmenistan assisted in distributing humanitarian relief to Afghanistan. Not only did the Central Asian governments offer direct land and air access to northern Afghanistan, where Afghan opposition forces found most of their support during the years of Taliban rule, they also constituted a potential alternative to the US ally, Pakistan, which was beset by internal unrest and no longer ‘able to serve as a linchpin for our presence.’66 Hence, the region’s countries became indispensable partners in the antiterrorist – and anti-Taliban – campaign in Afghanistan.
The republics' involvement in the campaign against terrorism, and the establishment of a US military presence—the first such deployment on territory of the former Soviet Union—have had various impacts on the geopolitics and economics of the region. One obvious outcome was that these countries received considerably more aid than during the previous two phases of US policy. US aid to the five states more than doubled, and in 2002 amounted to more than $600 million (see Table 6.2). In addition, the war provided the regional governments opportunities to develop their armed forces with US assistance, thereby reducing their dependence on Russia. In this context Islam Karimov said:

The U.S. has done for Uzbekistan what its CIS partners were unable to do. For the past five years, Uzbekistan and its people have been living under the threat of an armed invasion by the Taliban, and a decisive role in removing the tension on Uzbekistan's southern borders has been played exclusively by the U.S., its determination, and its well-trained armed forces, and not by the participants in the CIS Collective Security Treaty.

In 2002, Uzbekistan began sending officers to the US National Defence and Air Force Academies. In 2003 Kazakhstan received another $3 million for military purposes.

However, some opposition groups across Central Asia started to criticise the region's governments for joining the US-led 'war on terror'. Tursunbai Bakir Uulu, a member of the Kyrgyz parliament and Leader of the Erk (Free Kyrgyzstan) Party, contended that the Kyrgyz government, ruling a Muslim country, had no right to allow military operations against other Muslim countries from its territory. He also questioned the financial benefits derived from the presence of US forces at Manas airfield: 'US representatives talk of multi-million dollar sums allegedly received by Kyrgyzstan as a result of their military presence. In reality, people know that these enormous resources end up in the pockets of those close to the country's top leaders: the two or three companies with permission to provide various services to the foreigners.'

Moreover, some observers have speculated that the United States has tried to use its military foothold in the area, and the 'war against terror', to exert political influence in the republics and to increase its access to the region's gas and oil reserves. M. Laumulin has argued that '[t]he American military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have become the linchpin of the unfolding American large-scale military and political presence in Central Asia.' Such geopolitical and economic considerations have encouraged Washington to plan for an extended stay in the region, if not forever, as some US officials have mentioned, just as it has in the Middle East. However, others
insist that the USA does not aim to stay in the region, and have avoided describing its military presence there as 'long-term', let alone 'permanent'. General Tommy Franks, Head of US Central Command, claimed during his visit to Bishkek in early 2002: 'We have no plans to build a permanent military base.'75 John O'Keefe, US Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, said in an interview on 26 June 2002 that the United States has 'no plans to establish a permanent base in the Kyrgyz Republic.'76 Congressman Jim McDermott also suggested that US military forces in Central Asia are not permanent, and that 'the official line in Washington has been that these forces will remain in the region until the job is complete. This means until Afghanistan is fully stabilised.'77 While visiting Uzbekistan on 26 February 2004 Defence Secretary Rumsfeld held: 'We have no plans to put permanent bases in this part of the world.'78

But other evidence and statements suggest the US long-term strategy is to remain in the region for long after the end of fighting in Afghanistan. Given the new tasks that the American military faces in a strategic environment focused on counter-terrorism, Central Asia is now a necessary element in any US global footprint. In this sense, Washington is in the steppes to stay.79 Its military leadership realised that US basing structures reflected Cold War planning, and should be adapted to new realities. The geographical focus of the US military presence is also changing. In fact, the global ‘war on terrorism’ dictates concentration on threats emanating from the wider zone of instability, stretching from the Balkans to Southeast Asia. The consequence has been gradual migration of Washington’s installations to the south and east of Asia. The United States is moving comparatively larger facilities to Central and Eastern Europe.80 Furthermore, it is establishing a patchwork of smaller base – so-called 'Lily Pads' – throughout the ‘arc of instability’ running along southern Eurasia. This is where Central Asia and the South Caucasus enter the picture, together with parts of Southeast and Southwest Asia, the Middle East and Africa.81 The US National Security Strategy document published in 2002 explains that the United States has to maintain a military presence overseas in order to contend with uncertainty, and to meet the many security challenges it might face.82 As a result, Washington will need bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe, the Middle East, Central, South and North-East Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for long-distance deployment of US forces: the United States should prepare for more such deployments by developing assets such as advanced remote sensing and long-range precision strike capabilities. According to President George W. Bush, ‘no nation can build a safer, better world alone.’83 The document also makes it clear that the United States has to lead the campaign to defeat
global terrorist networks, but needs support from its allies and friends.\textsuperscript{84} Wherever possible, Washington will rely on regional organisations and states to meet its obligations to fight terrorism; use all elements of national and international power; and preserve peace by building good relations among the great powers.\textsuperscript{85} These elements provide the proper context for situating the Central Asian states’ roles in US counterterrorism operations in Asia, especially in the region.\textsuperscript{86}

Indeed, Washington intends to increase both the extent and duration of its involvement in Central Asia. Secretary of State Powell made this clear when on 11 December 2001 he declared that American forces would maintain a presence after fighting ended.\textsuperscript{87} Senate majority leader Tom Daschle told Uzbek leaders in January 2002 that the US presence ‘is not simply in the immediate term.’\textsuperscript{88} Deputy Defence Secretary Wolfowitz said in January 2002 that building air bases and conducting joint training exercises with local troops would send a clear message to the Central Asian states, particularly Uzbekistan, that America would not forget about them and that it ‘will come back in whenever needed.’\textsuperscript{89} This sentiment was echoed once again by Powell, who told the House International Relations Committee in early February 2002 that ‘America will have a continuing interest and presence in Central Asia.’\textsuperscript{90} And Defence Secretary Rumsfeld addressing US troops in Kyrgyzstan in April 2002, said: ‘this task is one that is going to last for a while.’\textsuperscript{91}

Accordingly, as noted by Uzbek Foreign Minister, Abdulaziz Kamilov, the logic of the bases suggests that the USA has come to Central Asia with a serious purpose and for a long time.\textsuperscript{92} Influential US scholars C. Fairbanks and A. Bacevich have presented three reasons for a long-term stay in Central Asia: first, the nature and scope of international terrorism is broader than many appreciate. A critical part of the problem is that weak states abet, or cannot counter, terrorism, and Central Asia has several weak states. Second, the United States stands to benefit enormously in the long run from the increased stability and success of moderate Muslim societies and states. They have argued that Islam in Central Asia, for reasons of history and happenstance, is more moderate than in some other areas, and it is worth a US effort to sustain that moderation.\textsuperscript{93} Third, the USA needs to stay in the region in order to stabilise Afghanistan. Fairbanks and Bacevich insisted that it was wrong to believe that merely to smash the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and give humanitarian aid would render the country essentially harmless to US security.\textsuperscript{94} They believed that ‘It will be hard to stabilise that country, and it will not be accomplished anytime soon. Moreover, because of Afghanistan’s geopolitical situation – bordering Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan,
Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and China – it is a far more important country than even most American foreign policy experts tend to appreciate. In a 29 May 2003 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, US Undersecretary of Defence Douglas Feith affirmed that ‘everything is going to move everywhere...there is no place in the world where [US military presence] is going to be the same as it was.’ Later in June 2003 Deputy Secretary of Defence Wolfowitz further elaborated that significant attention now focuses on realigning the US global military footprint.

Furthermore, such military bases are part of Washington’s scenario to place the Central Asian republics within the Western political and economic system. Regional expert J.E. Duskin quoted one high-ranking US diplomat in the region as saying: ‘the USA now has an opportunity to move these countries away from Russia.’ In this context one analyst has argued: ‘Now, as the United States wages its war on terrorism in Afghanistan – and deploys troops for the first time in the energy-rich regions of Central Asia and the Caucasus – the borders of a new American empire appear to be forming.’ Another US commentator has argued that ‘[i]f the US is to stabilise the region, a security presence of some sort will have to exist.’ In this regard, the US justification for a long-term stay in the region is typical. B. Lynn Pascoe has said:

> Al-Qa’ida [sic] and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan have only been disrupted, not destroyed. And the radical Hezb ut-Tahrir is increasingly active in Central Asia; especially in the Ferghana Valley shared by Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Thus, not only do we believe it is strongly in our national interest to engage fully with these governments to urge the political and economic reforms that we judge are essential to alleviate the conditions that breed terrorism, but we also firmly believe it is in these countries’ own national interests.

Another motivation for US resolve to keep military bases in the area is its problematic relations with Iran. The US presence is related to the George W. Bush administration’s doctrine of ‘pre-emptive action’ (under which the USA could launch a preemptive attack against any country it believes to be developing WMD, or any country that may potentially attack America) against so-called ‘axis of evil’ states, of which Iran is one. Iran also has borders with Central Asia (with Turkmenistan and Afghanistan). If Washington’s policy of confrontation with Tehran enters an active phase sometime in the future, the region’s airfields and other military facilities may become vital factors in exerting pressure or conducting military operations against Iran. It is possible that some of regional states, such as Uzbekistan, would collaborate with the USA in a war against Iran. Therefore, with such evidence, statements and
reasons it is reasonable to assume that the United States will keep its military bases in Central Asia for a long time.

To sum up, the US-led anti-terrorism campaign since September 2001 has greatly affected Washington's ties with Central Asia. It has led the United States to establish a firm foothold south of Russia and west of China – the two rivals to US power in the region – and north of Iran – a country with which Washington has major differences in the Middle East. Furthermore, such presences enable the US government to increase its influence over the region's energy resources and pipelines.103

**US energy policy after September 11**

The Bush administration sees access to Caspian/Central Asian energy resources as 'the best opportunity for the US to reduce its dependence on Middle East oil.'104 However, it will not be easy to achieve this reduction, and US goals in the Caspian region have been more geopolitical than economic, as discussed in Chapter Five. Before the events of 11 September 2001 the *US Energy Advisory Board Website* outlined the broader picture of American thinking on Caspian oil:

Stated US policy goals regarding energy resources in this region include fostering the independence of the states and their ties to the West; breaking Russia's monopoly over oil and gas transport routes; promoting Western energy security through diversified suppliers; encouraging the construction of East-West pipelines that do not transit Iran; and denying Iran dangerous leverage over the Central Asian economies.105

On the day before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the *Oil and Gas Journal*, a US-based publication, reported that Central Asia represents one of the last frontiers for geological survey and analysis, 'offering opportunities for investment in discovery, production, transport and refining of enormous quantities of oil and gas resources.'106 Post-September-11 strategic considerations and concerns about the rise of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia have had serious implications for US thinking on the importance of the Caspian region's energy resources.107 In this connection, Elizabeth Jones made it clear that '[t]he terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan reinforces our view that underdevelopment and repressive, anti-democratic regimes provide certain conditions that terrorists and other extremists exploit.'108 She added: 'Development of the vast Caspian energy reserves and their reliable export to global markets will in large part determine the ability of Central Asia to achieve economic independence and improve the standard of living of its citizens', serving US national interests.109 Some analysts argue that the United States has used the 'war on terror' to cement its position in exploitation of Caspian energy resources.110 For
example, F. Viviano wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of 26 September 2001: ‘The hidden stakes in the war against terrorism can be summed up in a single word: oil.’ He described it ‘as a war on behalf of America’s Chevron, and Exxon; France’s TotalFinaElf; British Petroleum; Royal Dutch Shell and other multinational giants’, which have hundreds of billions of dollars of investment in the area. Abdul Salaam Zaeef, former Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan, also argued that the US campaign in Afghanistan was ‘waged not because of Osama, but oil and gas fields in the region’. Najibullah Lafraie, Afghanistan’s pre-Taliban Foreign Minister, similarly described the US response to the 11 September attacks as a veiled grab for oil: ‘the Bush Administration seized the opportunity to place the US Rapid Deployment Forces close to the Caspian and Central Asian oil and gas fields in the same way George Bush seized the opportunity provided by Saddam Hussein’s attack on Kuwait to place those forces close to the oil reserves of the Persian Gulf.’ Russian scholars such as B. Volkhonsky, have also expressed this view, claiming that the main goal of US military operations in Afghanistan was apparently linked to the oil and gas deposits in the region, and to support for the economic interests of US corporations. In fact, these analysts have evaluated US military presence in the area and the ‘war on terror’ as an additional attempt to access the energy resources.

Despite such views, however, energy resources cannot be seen as the sole motivation behind the US-led ‘war on terrorism’ and the military presence in the region, military strategic and security objectives are more significant. Nikolai Zlobin, Director of Russian and Asian Programs at the Centre for Defence Information in Washington, has argued that US policy in this region is geared towards enhancing the area’s security. Nevertheless, one can reasonably assume that one of US secondary goals in Afghanistan could be development of energy exploitation, particularly construction of pipelines, to serve the interests of US companies. Development of Caspian energy reserves and their reliable export to global markets will in large part determine Central Asia’s ability to achieve economic independence and improve its citizens’ standard of living. Less than a week after starting its operation in Afghanistan (7 October 2001), Washington discussed the shape of a post-Afghan government to deal with oil and gas pipelines. *The New York Times* reported on 15 December 2001 that ‘State Department is exploring the potential for post-Taliban energy projects in the region.’

Washington has continued its multiple pipeline policy, aimed at expanding control over the energy routes. J. Dorian wrote: ‘Those who control the oil routes out of Central Asia will impact all future direction and quantities of flow and the distribution
of revenues from new production."121 The United States wants to gain such control to forestall Russian and Iranian control. In accordance with this policy, in Washington on 21 December 2001, Secretary of State Powell and the Kazak Foreign Minister signed an 'Energy Partnership Declaration', that called on the United States and Kazakstan to cooperate in developing Kazakstan's energy sector, and reaffirmed 'US support for multiple export routes of oil, particularly along the proposed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline linking Kazakstan's oil fields to the world markets via Turkey.'122 In a message to the international energy conference, 'Caspian Oil, Gas, Oil Refining, and Petrochemistry-2002', George W. Bush supported the project:

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project will make an essential contribution to better integrating Azerbaijan, Georgia and other countries in the region into the global economy, and will also help the West reduce its dependence on Gulf exporters. Construction of the pipeline, expected to carry 1 million barrels of oil a day, would also mean that the Caspian producers –Azerbaijan, Kazakstan, and Turkmenistan – would not depend on Russian pipelines for shipping their oil.123

In fact, the US occupation of Afghanistan presented an opportunity for Washington to pursue one of its old plans for a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to the Indian Ocean through Afghanistan.124 Eighteen months before the 11 September attacks, Zalmay Khalilzad, then an advisor to the Bush administration and US Ambassador to Afghanistan, maintained: 'Afghanistan was and is a possible corridor for the export of oil and gas from the Central Asian states down to Pakistan and to the world.'125 This issue has attracted the attention of Western experts. Richard Butler, a former Australian diplomat, then in residence at the Council on Foreign Relations, has argued: 'Now the prize is oil – getting it and transporting it – and Afghanistan is again contested territory. The difference is that this time around, it is the United States that will be playing the game of Russia.'126 He added: 'the war in Afghanistan...has made the construction of a pipeline across Afghanistan and Pakistan politically possible for the first time since Unocal and the Argentinean Company Bridas competed for the Afghan rights in the mid-1990s.'127 US administration officials are enthusiastic about a pipeline via Afghanistan to Pakistan and India, citing the huge potential energy market in South Asia. However, many remain sceptical about the viability of such a route, citing numerous geopolitical obstacles. 'All that is needed is to get rid of the remnants of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, a more democratic regime in Ashgabat, and peace between India and Pakistan', said one former oil executive with extensive experience in Central Asia.128 Yet these will not be achieved easily.
As discussed in Chapter Five, US energy policy in the region took shape within a framework of monopolisation of oil and gas deposits and pipeline routes, while attempting to eliminate Russian and Iranian – and to some extent Chinese – influence. Citing Newsweek magazine, the Azeri Russian-language newspaper Zerkalo wrote:

The United States can celebrate a strategic victory: it is now close to reaching its goal of putting an end to Russia’s long monopoly on the oil pipelines exporting Caspian oil. Washington began striving for at least one oil pipeline to run from the Caspian Basin via Turkey without passing through Russia. This route would not only help the Caspian republics to obtain genuine oil and economic independence from Russia, it would also bypass Iran and reduce the significance of this American adversary as a player in the region...129

As for Iran, Washington continues adamantly to block any route through Iran, despite the obvious commercial advantages (discussed in Chapter Five), because of concerns about Tehran’s foreign policy. In justifying the US opposition to Iranian routes, Steven Mann, Senior Advisor, Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy, said: “The US has been very clear about what our immediate concerns with Iran are. Support for terrorism, pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and its negative influence on the Middle East peace process.”130

The US desire to tap the region’s energy resources has accelerated Moscow’s efforts to establish a Central Asian energy alliance as a counterweight. President Putin used an informal CIS summit on 1 March 2002 to propose a Central Asian oil and gas producers’ export association, and appealed to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to join it.131 Following the meeting, Putin stressed that it was important for Russia and the Central Asian countries to unite to protect their respective stakes in the world energy market. He reiterated Moscow’s hopes that its energy alliance might appeal to Central Asian republics, which currently have to compete with Russia for Western customers.132

In short, one of the US goals in expanding its military buildup in Central Asia was to improve its prospects of controlling its energy reserves and export routes to world markets. A presence in the heart of the region would enable the United States to develop its own energy interests, and monitor the moves of other powers.

Challenges to US policy in Central Asia

The events following 11 September and the extra US attention to Central Asia have engendered a range of challenges and reactions to US policies. In general three fundamental challenges confront any model of US involvement in Central Asia; the political characteristic of the region’s states, regional powers’ interest and US support of
Uzbekistan. First, without exception, all Central Asian governments have justified concentrating power in the executive’s hands, avoiding elections, retarding development of participatory government, and curtailing civil liberties, in terms of national security. The authoritarian governments of the region hope that US patronage will deflect international criticism of their human rights records and failure to democratise.

Second, two major regional players, Russia and China, are pursuing their own geopolitical and economic agendas. Particularly, in the aftermath of US military establishment in the area, both powers have been trying to expand a multidimensional presence in there. This would challenge US presence in the region in the long-term.\textsuperscript{133}

The third, issue is Uzbekistan, which aspires to be the region’s strategic pivot, while each state has its own agenda. Kazakhstan’s long border with Russia, and substantial ethnic Russian population, ensure that it cannot break with Russia. However, the struggle for regional supremacy dictates that Nazarbayev cannot be indifferent to Karimov’s development of a close strategic partnership with the USA. Nazarbayev’s trump card in diversifying his security options is the considerable Western and Chinese investment in Kazakhstan’s oil industry.\textsuperscript{134} Turkmenistan has close relations with Iran, and Tajikistan still has Russian forces on its territory. Kyrgyzstan has a border with China, and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan face Islamic insurgency in the Ferghana Valley (see Map 6.2). Therefore, one can argue that what is taking place in Central Asia is a challenge to the influx of US influence in the region.

Map 6.2: Political Map of the Ferghana Valley

a. Supporting authoritarian regimes

One major issue is that US aid, under the name of the ‘war on terror’, has supported the Central Asian regimes in their undemocratic practices. The US need for bases has necessitated turning a relatively blind eye towards these regimes’ dismal records in human rights and democratisation.133 US officials have claimed to be working to reinforce democracy in Central Asia, and some have spoken out against human rights violations and perversions of the democratic process. Elizabeth Jones said that the numerous US initiatives to promote democracy, human rights, and economic reform are ‘as important as the assistance we render in ensuring security and combating the real reasons behind terrorism.’136 However, in January 2002 State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, confirmed that Uzbekistan could expect a threefold increase in foreign aid for the coming year, and its aid request was not tied to any improvement in its human rights record.

In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, evidence has accumulated that the region’s leaders exploited the threat from Islamic extremism and Washington’s need for support in the war on terrorism to suppress opposition and strengthen their grip on power. Regional analysts have argued that Karimov has vowed to continue his campaign against the Islamic organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir until it has been entirely wiped out.137 Currently, some 4,000 alleged members of this group are believed to be in prison.138 During a visit by Iranian President Mohammed Khatami in early 2002, Karimov signalled at a press conference in Tashkent that there would be no let-up in the drive against religious militants. Describing the wave of arrests and court cases as a struggle against radical extremists, he denied that they had any legal right to continue their activities.139 He added: ‘In accordance with the law, we will pursue that organisation and will not allow it to appear on Uzbekistan’s territory’, and claimed that his stance had the backing of Moscow and Washington.140 In late June 2004 the Kyrgyz National Security Service (successor to the Kyrgyzstan’s KGB) arrested ten officials of the governmental apparatus and foreign, internal and justice ministries, on charges of espionage and cooperation with international terrorist networks.141

Democratic reforms and human rights, once described by Washington as its priority in Central Asia, have been overlooked.142 However, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, Lorne W. Craner, has claimed that these issues have now come to the fore:

Because of September 11 our focus on democracy and human rights in Central Asia is much more intense...Central Asia was put to the centre of
our thinking; certainly in the security [and strategic] sense, but also because we are not a country which is concerned only with leaders...It has put the issues of democracy and human rights at the centre of our thinking.143

Dismissing criticism that the United States had aligned itself too closely with authoritarian governments, President George W. Bush also said: 'The more people...work with the US, the more likely it is that they will work to improve the human condition', and Craner called the 'war on terror' a 'fight for democracy', a definition that can hardly be accepted.144 This argument is derived from Bush's repeated claim that the terrorists attacked the United States on 11 September 2001 because of their hatred for its democracy, freedom and way of life. As George W. Bush insisted, the attacks were made because '[t]hey hate our freedoms', not because of US support for corrupt dictatorships in the Arab world and elsewhere. In other words, they hate the USA for what it is, not what it does. In fact, the US administration avoided any discussion that delved into the impact of US Middle East policy on Arab and Muslim attitudes towards America. In this connection London-based Canadian scholar Gwynne Dyer has argued that the 11 September attacks were not aimed at US values, which are of no interest to the Islamists one way or another, but that 'they had the further quite specific goal of luring the United States into invading Muslim countries.'145

In practice, as A. Rashid has also argued, the approach has been one-dimensional, trying simply to engage the regional states in the 'war on terror' without pushing for democratic reform.146 In fact, US aid has increasingly served the interests of governments and not the people. The regimes continue to suppress their people and deny basic rights.147 In Kazakhstan in 2002, parliament passed legislation raising the number of signatures required for an organisation to be recognised as a political party from 3,000 to 50,000, thereby threatening small parties, and the courts sentenced a key opposition leader, Mukhtar Abyazov, to six years in jail, claiming he had abused his power and conducted 'illegal entrepreneurial activity'.148 In Kyrgyzstan President Akayev is rapidly altering the political landscape. In May 2002, some high-ranking Kyrgyz officials resigned over criticism for mishandling a March 2002 demonstration in which five people were killed. A series of protests followed, including a June 2002 rally that called for Akayev's resignation.149 Furthermore, mass arrests of high-ranking officials and opposition figures are taking place. One regional expert has written: 'Charges pressed against the arrestees remind observers of Josef Stalin's era – espionage for foreign countries.'150 Kyrgyz opposition leader, Azimbek Beknazarov was jailed in 2001 for asking why President
Akayev had ceded territory to China. The cabinet later resigned as a result of the deaths, but Beknazarov remained in prison and Akayev remained firmly entrenched.

As Table 6.1 shows, there have been no positive democratic changes in the Central Asian states since the ‘war on terror’, and in countries like Kyrgyzstan conditions have become worse than before. This reflects poorly on US regional policy. Some officials in Washington have observed this, and commented on the weak human rights records of the region’s leaders. They believe that for some leaders, especially Karimov, the ‘war on terror’ has constituted an opportunity to gain new importance in US foreign policy, and avoid accountability for their governments’ conduct in domestic affairs. Lorne W. Craner rated the human rights records for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as ‘poor’, Uzbekistan as ‘very poor’ and Turkmenistan ‘extremely poor’. The State Department released a report on 25 February 2004 that described the Central Asian states, particularly Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as ‘authoritarian states’ with limited civil rights, and described as ‘poor’ the human rights records of all the region’s governments. Furthermore, human rights advocates around the world have cautioned the US government against double standards when it comes to combating terrorism:

One of the things that we have been constant and very watchful and mindful of since September 11 is this kind of double standards policy in relation to human rights. Whereas the Afghanistan regime was held accountable for absolutely everything that it had failed to do to uphold human rights, all of a sudden, in military strategic interests, governments like the governments of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and so on suddenly became acceptable allies. These organisations have suggested that US support has bolstered autocrats, such as Islam Karimov, enabling them to crack down more harshly than in the past on dissidents in the name of America’s ‘war on terror’. In addition, some opposition groups in the region suspect that the regimes have played along with US strategic goals to solve their own internal political problems. Nurbolat Masanov, a prominent Kazakh opposition activist, for instance, has stated that authoritarians expected that their support for the USA would prompt Washington to turn a blind eye to their oppressive actions. Meirjan Mashan, Director of the Strategy Centre of Analysis in Kazakhstan, has also said: ‘Kazakhstan has taken this step under pressure from the USA, hoping that in return Americans will be less critical about the political situation in Kazakhstan.'
Table 6.1: Democratisation Scores* in the Central Asian Republics, 1993** and 2001-2003

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<th>Country</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>5.5 NF</td>
<td>6.5 NF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>4.2 PF</td>
<td>6.5 NF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>6.6 NF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
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<td>Uzbekistan</td>
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* Ranking: Scale of 1-8, with 1 representing the highest and 8 the lowest degree of achievement and status: F (Free), PF (Partly Free) and NF (Not Free).

**This year has been selected for comparison.

This disappointing situation contradicts the Bush administration’s claim that its support for these states is aimed at encouraging democracy and human rights, and that working together with them allows Americans to raise more issues, linked to democracy, more frequently and with greater chances of success. They point to incremental victories; for example, Uzbekistan eventually registered an independent human rights organisation in 2002. But this was little more than a symbolic gesture, made on the eve of Karimov’s visit to the United States in March 2002.161

Systematic violation of human rights is a serious challenge to the USA in its relations with the Central Asian governments. Some officials in Washington believe that the challenge facing the United States centres on how to engage with these regimes to move them in the ‘right direction’, towards greater personal freedom, rule of law, and economic openness. Other observers believe there is little the United States can do to move Central Asia’s regimes towards democracy. Helping the states increase their own security contradicts Washington’s proclaimed policy of promoting democracy. One US government source has pointed out that US attacks on Afghanistan could give Central Asian leaders a ‘green light to quash civil liberties’, while some others, together with State Department, deny that the US human rights agenda has been put on the back burner, behind military and anti-terrorism cooperation, concluding that through the provision of stability a long-term US presence in the region will improve prospects for political and economic reforms. However, such hope is far from realization because of the nature of the governments in the region. In this regard, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, a former Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, has argued:

In spite of its strength, the U.S. needs allies in its fight. Central Asian governments have pledged their support. But can you rely on allies who
do not share your fundamental values like freedom, equality, and justice? Saddam Hussein could be one of the counter-terrorism coalition foes. Does he radically differ from Turkmenbashi or Nazarbayev? Here we see the same authoritarian rule, the desire to remain in power indefinitely, family control of the economy, and control of the press.166

b. Challenge from Russia and China

The US military-based presence itself could undermine stability in Central Asia, because it would conflict with that of other powers, for example, Russia and China. It is conceivable that a new bout of great power rivalry could destabilise the region.167 Even President Karimov has expressed fear for Central Asia’s stability as Washington and Moscow compete for a toehold in the region. In particular he has expressed his worries about a new Russian air base in Kyrgyzstan, believing it will spark a military contest between great powers, and ultimately threaten security in the region. In this connection, Karimov told a press conference on 12 December 2002 that the establishment of the Russian base, coming hot on the heels of establishment of airbases for US-led forces in his own country and Kyrgyzstan, could prove ‘counterproductive to this overheated region.’168

In fact, by maintaining a military presence in Central Asia, the United States would try to lure the region’s countries away from Russia and China. This has been evident in statements by some US officials. Colin Powell stated that US interests in Central Asia far exceed the conflict in Afghanistan.169 This statement alarmed Moscow and Beijing, which hoped the United States, would withdraw its forces and facilities after the Afghan operation ended.170 J.C. Peuch wrote that this policy ‘is likely to prompt much gnashing of teeth in Russia and China, as the two nations traditionally regard Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan as their backyard.’171

As for Russia, after the events of September 2001, when it supported the United States in the fight against international terrorism, Washington changed its approach toward Moscow, and initiated closer relations. As a result, the Russian factor in the region and its ‘weight’ in US foreign policy planning grew significantly. While visiting Moscow in October 2001, US Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans said: ‘This is a very important time in the development of the relationship between the United States and Russia.’172

The two powers found a common language at the peak of the war on terrorism, since this was in keeping with their mutual interests.173 In January 2002 a US delegation including Assistant Secretary of State Wolf visited Moscow, and maintained that 11
September engendered fundamental changes in relations, with a major convergence of interests between Russia and the United States. They have had one common goal in the region, preventing the spread of political Islam. Both have concluded that the problem of fundamentalist Islam in Central Asia would present a paradoxical situation. They have seen Islamic insurgency oppose their interests in this region and around the world, though for different reasons. However each, guided by its own reasons and interests, came to oppose it: Moscow because of the quagmire in Afghanistan, where ‘final’ battles were still being fought between the Taliban and the former Mujaheddin. The situation in Afghanistan increased the danger of militant fundamentalist contamination in Central Asia, which in turn would feed the fundamentalist trends in the north Caucasus and undermines the stability of the southern tier of the former USSR.

The United States, for its part, has been increasingly concerned that Islamist movements against the existing regimes in Central Asia and elsewhere in the Islamic world – North Africa, the Middle East – as well, might become an integral part of the militant Islamic hostility toward the West in general and the United States in particular. In this regard, the view of a Russian political scientist, Andrei Piontkovsky, is typical. He has argued that the main question is ‘not how long the Americans are staying, but for what purpose they are staying. If to oppose Islamic extremism, then good. If to secure purely US economic interests, then not good.' Perhaps to this end, when he telephoned President George W. Bush immediately after the 11 September attacks, President Putin expressed solidarity and supported Bush’s right to strike in self-defence at terrorists and those supporting them, Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. On 13 September 2001, Russia and NATO issued a joint statement condemning the terrorist attacks. Russia had great expectations of closer cooperation with America. Therefore, one can argue that the temporary high level of cooperation between them was largely determined by the war in Afghanistan, where both had parallel interests in suppressing Islamic militants and fighting terrorism, and Russia assumed a pivotal role.

Another reason why Washington could not bypass Moscow was the formation of an essentially new collective security system in the region, in which Russia and China played significant roles. Had the United States entered Central Asia and established military bases there without the Kremlin’s approval, an extremely tense situation would have arisen, since the Collective Security Treaty among several CIS republics was still in effect. Speaking on January 2002 in Kazakhstan the speaker of Russia’s State Duma, Gennady Seleznev, warned the region’s states that any decision to allow foreign troops on their territory should not be made without Moscow’s consent:
I think that presidents, governments, and parliament members will very carefully analyse what the status of the [foreign] army units expected to be deployed in Kyrgyzstan or in Uzbekistan will be, how they will behave in Tajikistan, on which legal grounds, for which period of time, et cetera. These, of course, are all issues to which we cannot remain indifferent. CIS countries that are members of the Collective Security Treaty, including those I just mentioned, cannot take a single decision without consulting each other. We do not wish to see permanent U.S. bases appear here in the Central Asian region.180

Once the active phase of operations in Afghanistan ended, it became clear by mid-2002 that Russian-American relations were returning to their former state. Moscow’s negative response to the US war on Iraq in early 2003 was a clear sign of a cooling relationship. Completion of the main stage in operations against the Taliban reduced Russia’s role in US foreign policy, and made it ‘difficult to resolve the remaining contradictions in bilateral relations.’181 Before travelling to Uzbekistan in December 2001, Secretary of State Powell told journalists that the United States could have better relationships with the region’s countries without causing the Russians concern, but Moscow was not convinced, seeing the US deployment in Central Asia as an attempt to undercut its influence there.182

Accordingly, after supporting the US war in Afghanistan and consenting to the entry of Western military contingents into the Central Asian and Caucasian countries, Russia tried to enhance its influence in the region, and this began to assume the status of a long-term strategy. Sergei Kazyonnov, an expert with the independent Institute of National Security Research in Moscow, noted: ‘There is a growing feeling here that the US is using the tragedy of 11 September not only to punish the terrorists, but also to extend its own influence.’183 This stance has also been motivated by perception among some of the regional political elites that Central Asia has been rapidly turning away from Moscow. Adakham Madumarov, a Kyrgyz opposition leader and Member of Parliament, said the United States wanted to pull Central Asia away from Moscow.184 Indeed, the rise of US influence in Central Asia, along with the establishment of its military presence, has raised Russian concerns considerably. Some Russian experts, such as Kazyonnov, Maria Podkopayeva, Vyacheslav Belokrinitsky and Vitaly Ponomaryov, have cited these concerns, as well as fears that Washington is manoeuvering to cut Moscow out of the region’s oil and gas reserves and pipelines.185 Belokrinitsky observed that ‘many people in Moscow are hoping the US will have the wisdom to radically scale down or remove its military from Central Asia once it has achieved its present goals in Afghanistan. Otherwise, it will be a continual stumbling block for our relations.’186 In this connection, President Putin reportedly told President
Bush that Moscow would not object to a US presence in the region ‘as long as it has the
object of fighting the war on terror and is temporary, not permanent.’

Moscow’s indirect and rather sluggish policy during the 1990s in the Central
Asian republics had essentially led President Putin to reformulate Russia’s interests in
the region and in so doing build a new system of relations not only with the regional
countries, but also with states beyond the region, such as Iran, India and China. With
regard to the region’s states, Moscow has tried to play more proactive role to counter
US encroachment into its own ‘backyard’, developing its influence in the areas of
politics, energy and security.

During 2002 and 2003 several developments demonstrated that Russia was
stepping up its presence in Central Asia. It dispatched representatives to the Central
Asian countries in early 2002 to discuss particularly the US military situation in the
region. In early January 2002, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visited Ashgabat and
Tashkent, Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov visited Bishkek and Astana,
while the Director of the Russian Federal Border Service, Colonel-General Konstantin
Totsky, and the Speaker of the Duma, Gennady Seleznyov, visited Dushanbe at the head
of a parliamentary delegation. While these representatives usually only repeated that
they expected the US military presence to be temporary, Seleznyov was more
outspoken, stating that he believed an increase in the Russian military presence in
Tajikistan was necessary, and ‘we wouldn’t want various American and NATO bases to
appear in Central Asia for the long-term.’ His statements were more a reflection of the
mood among the Russian political elite than of any actual plans, since the Duma has no
real influence over foreign policy-making. In an interview with the magazine
Kommersant-Vlast on 11 June 2002, Defence Minister Ivanov made an unprecedented
demand for the US to withdraw militarily within a set period, announcing that the
Kremlin was ‘not indifferent’ to the US military presence in Central Asia, and asserting
that Russia would ‘strive for maximum transparency of [US] military activity in the
region and time limits on their military presence.’

The US bases in Central Asia have placed its forces on Russia’s southern border
for the first time. In response to such deployment many Russians believe they have to
do everything possible to keep the region as a zone of interest of Russia, not the United
States. Seleznyov maintained: ‘Geopolitically, Russia’s presence in Central Asia is
important, and now we have to do everything to make it more considerable and, most
importantly, effective.’ Accordingly, Moscow has pursued numerous new initiatives
in the security field:
• initiating a new CSTO Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), and establishing a RDF staff permanently stationed in Kyrgyzstan;

• reinforcing Russian forces guarding Tajikistan’s external borders, and attempting, by negotiating a long-term agreement, to convert the status of its troops in Tajikistan into an official Russian military base;

• increasing military exchange of information;

• proposing closer cooperation between Russia and the Kazakstan border authorities in defending Kazakstan’s external borders and jointly guarding the Kazakstan – Russia border; and more importantly

• establishing its own military base in Kyrgyzstan, in the small town of Kant, about 20 kilometres from Bishkek.\(^{194}\)

The agreement on the Kant base was signed on 22 September 2003.\(^{195}\) At the opening of the base, on 23 October 2003, President Putin evaluated its importance for Russia, Kyrgyzstan and other CIS members, and said: ‘By creating an air shield here in Kyrgyzstan, we intend to strengthen security in the region, whose stability has became a tangible factor affecting the development of the international situation.’\(^{196}\) Although Putin insisted that the Russian base was meant as a complement, not a competitor, to the US one, both Western and regional experts regard Moscow’s move as clearly intended to counterbalance US forces stationed in Central Asia.\(^{197}\) Moscow has also sought to strengthen the CST with its Central Asian members, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, by forming the Collective RDF, joint military exercises, and strengthening its military capabilities by opening the Kant airbase.\(^{198}\) At the Moscow CST summit in mid-May 2002, Russia attempted to develop the treaty into a military-political alliance. Putin proposed that the CST be transformed into an international organisation that is a military-political bloc, becoming CSTO.\(^{199}\) CSTO was established on the basis of the CST of May 1992, discussed in Chapter Three, and has proclaimed that its aims are the strengthening of peace, international and regional security and stability and the defense on a collective basis of the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of member states, priority in the achievement of which is to be given to political means.\(^{200}\) However, it has no effective role in the region’s affairs.\(^{201}\)

In addition, Moscow has tried to revitalise the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) and the SCO, which brings together Russia and all the Central Asian republics except Turkmenistan, as its geopolitical instruments.\(^{202}\) Washington’s military influence in the area might weaken the existing security arrangements. US presence violates the 1992 Tashkent Agreement on Collective Security between Russia, Kazakstan,
Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and is also incompatible with the provisions of the SCO.203 Russian ambassador-at-large Vadim Lukov urged the West to regard the SCO as a partner in Central Asia:

The course of the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan has supplied the West with a reason to have another look at the regional security structures to be successfully employed in the antiterrorist struggle and the efforts to stabilise the situation in Central Asia and the adjacent regions. Here I have in mind the Collective Security Treaty and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation...the current antiterrorist operation has testified that it is not in the interests of the West to continue ignoring the security structures set up in the former Soviet Union. They should be treated seriously and with due attention as potentially useful collective partners.204

Putin’s talks with Turkmen President Niyazov in early April 2003 focused also on joint energy projects and the roles Russian companies could play in developing and exporting Turkmen oil and natural gas. A 25-year contract, between Turkmenistan and Russia’s natural gas giant Gazprom, gave Turkmenistan much more money than had previously been offered.205 Part of the talks between Putin and Nazarbayev in Omsk, on 15 April 2003, concerned cooperation in the energy field, particularly in the Caspian Sea.206

As for the region’s powers, Kremlin policy has been to work closely with them. Moscow has moved toward a closer relationship with Beijing to counter allegedly hegemonistic US plans.207 Both states are upgrading their strategic-military and defence technology cooperation.208 According to Russia’s Chief of General Staff, General Kvashnin, at a meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Fu Quanyou, on 21 October 2001, ‘development of friendly relations between Russia and China, and their armed forces, corresponds to the crucial interests of the peoples of the two countries.’209 Furthermore, Russia, China and India have emphasised the need to establish a multi-polar world order instead of a unipolar one. In this context, Dmitrii Trenin, Deputy Director of the Carnegie Centre in Moscow, noted that the purpose of such ‘geopolitical coalitions’ was to wage ‘a political struggle against American hegemony.’210 Moscow is trying to set up close ties with China. Gennady Chufrin, a Deputy Director of the Institute for World Economy and International Relations, said that ‘relations with China constitute the most important factor in Russian foreign policy strategy today.’211 He evaluated these relations as more important, in some ways, than those with the USA.212 Boris Titov, Vice-President of the Russian Union of Manufacturers and Entrepreneurs, believed ‘Russia and China supplement each other.’213 He argued that it is no secret that, despite all the US investment in China, Washington wants to hold China back, and henceforth
'Russia’s decision to work with China has a strategic character.' In addition to China, Russia has also attempted to strengthen ties with regional countries like Iran and India. For example, in May 2002 the leaders of the corresponding ministries of Russia, Iran, and India signed a statement on the official opening of the North-South international transportation corridor.

Such attempts to strengthen intra-regional relationships are a clear reaction to the US presence in Central Asia. Its bases in the region have placed the USA in the ‘strategic rear’ of the Asian powers, Russia, China and India. This constitutes a kind of encirclement, especially of Russia and China. The presence of US and other NATO forces in Afghanistan puts the US-led alliance system close to China’s ethnic hot spot, Xinjiang, and India’s ethnic hot spot, Kashmir. For the present the common interest of SCO and NATO in combating Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and drug trafficking overrides their rivalry, but for the longer term Russia is cultivating India as well as China. Both India and China are buying large quantities of Russian-made weapons, and all three powers make periodic statements favouring multipolarity, e.g., in the joint Russian Federation-People’s Republic of China declaration of 17 May 2003.

Given China’s problems with the Uighurs in Xinjiang, and the possible Muslim support they receive from Central Asia, it supported the US ‘war on terrorism’ in Afghanistan. However, Beijing has viewed the prospect of permanent US military bases with alarm. It has seen the US military deployments in the area as presaging a potentially permanent threat to China’s national interest and security, and more importantly believes Washington is ‘encircling’ China to prevent its emergence as a strong nation. The new bases place US forces near China’s western frontier (Manas is only 200 miles from it) and, in combination with its bases to China’s east and south, enable the US military to surround it. In the words of Chu Shulong, an expert on Sino-US relations at Beijing’s Qinghua University, ‘China’s government is growing very worried’ about the US military presence on its borders. Clearly referring to Central Asia, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan told a regional gathering in Beijing in early January 2002: ‘One should not endlessly expand the aims of the anti-terrorist operation, which should be conducted under UN aegis.’ China’s increased troop deployments in Xinjiang are mostly intended to deter Uighur separatism, but can also be seen as a response to the introduction of US military influence into adjacent Central Asia. During his visit to Tehran on April 2002, the then Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, said ‘Beijing’s policy is against strategies of force and the US military presence in Central
Asia and the Middle East region.\textsuperscript{221} He affirmed that ‘one of the primary issues for China is to protect developing countries from the pretensions of the United States.’\textsuperscript{222}

China has reacted by sending delegations to the Central Asian states, and convening a meeting of the SCO to discuss US activities in the area. General Fu Quanyo, Chief of General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army, said that reports of imminent US deployment in Kazakhstan posed ‘a direct threat to China’s security.’\textsuperscript{223} While China does not plan a military presence outside its borders, it is likely to play a significant role through the SCO, which has emerged as a political forum against Washington’s assertive stance in the region.\textsuperscript{224} Both Russia and China envisage SCO as an instrument to counter foreign encroachment into their geopolitical and strategic backyard.

More importantly China has shown interest in establishing close ties with Russia. Vice-President Hu Jintao told Russia’s independent Interfax News Agency in June 2003: ‘China is ready to intensify its relations with Russia in order to accelerate the formation of a multipolar world order’, not dominated by ‘a single superpower.’\textsuperscript{225}

c. The Uzbekistan factor

Another major issue for US policy in the region is the continued support of Uzbekistan’s regime. As discussed in Chapter Five, in the second phase the United States placed Uzbekistan within its zone of strategic interests, seeing it as a potential, or even ‘only possible’, anchor for US influence in this region, and Tashkent became Washington’s main strategic partner in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{226} After 11 September, the USA reaffirmed its interest in continuing its preferential policy, and the relationship was deepened further by the conflict in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{227} In a joint statement of 13 October 2001 the two states ‘decided to forge a new bond based on their long-term commitment to enhancing security and stability in the region.’\textsuperscript{228} With the joint ‘Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation’, signed in March 2002, Washington assumed a list of obligations to Tashkent, including financial and military assistance.\textsuperscript{229} Since the declaration and subsequent summit between Presidents Bush and Karimov on 13 March 2002, Uzbekistan’s conversion into a strategic partner of the USA has continued. The United States has stated it would regard with grave concern any external threat to Uzbekistan’s security and territorial integrity.\textsuperscript{230}

Washington’s redefinition of security interests and its military-based presence in the region provided the Uzbek regime with a great opportunity to strengthen its ties with the United States and hence its position in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{231} When Secretary of State
Powell visited Tashkent in early December 2001, he brought a letter from George W. Bush to Karimov, in which Bush pledged to adhere to 'developing a long-term partnership with Uzbekistan.' US assistance would increase; the administration 'was planning to triple the amount of support to political and economic reforms in Uzbekistan this year.' Furthermore, Washington pledged 'all-round support to Uzbekistan's' efforts to develop a program of economic reforms, which would help Uzbekistan build a reliable economic foundation and open the way for considerable support on the part of international financial institutions.

State Department data (Table 6.2) indicate that US aid to Uzbekistan increased to 297.84 million dollars in 2002, almost half the total granted to it over the previous decade. Washington justified this as necessary to shore up security in Central Asia under a bilateral treaty, signed on 7 October 2001 that defined the extent of US-Uzbek collaboration in the US-led anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the joint statement of 13 October 2001, mentioned earlier, declared that strengthening of military cooperation would be marked by bilateral consultations aimed at working out joint measures to deal with any threat to security. Uzbekistan's armed forces were being re-equipped to NATO standards. More significantly, in a rare display of the special character of the bilateral relations, Washington even agreed to set up facilities on Uzbek soil to manufacture certain types of US weaponry. In this connection T. Karaev, an independent journalist in Uzbekistan, has argued that Karimov has promised to build up a professional army, but this clearly would not be easy, therefore 'Tashkent may have to rely on the protection of affluent, powerful nations like America simply because its own armed forces can no longer guarantee the country's defence.

The enhancement of US ties with Uzbekistan has aroused the ire of Uzbekistan's opposition and also other countries in the region. In fact, Uzbekistan has certainly manipulated US support, and taken Washington's cooperation with the region as giving it legitimacy. According to an expert on Uzbekistan, who preferred not to be named, 'Karimov behaved like a true Oriental politician, when he supported America without hesitation. He knows that from now on nobody in the West will have anything to do with Uzbek political prisoners, freedom of speech and human rights in Uzbekistan.' Certainly, key groups in opposition to the Uzbek regime feel that the US has been complicit in giving Karimov a free hand in dealing with the opposition. Despite hopes expressed by some observers, that US support for the Uzbek government would promote democratic processes in Uzbekistan and develop its economic prospects, Mohammad Salikh, leader of the Uzbek opposition movement in exile, argued that US
cooperation would just prolong the existence of Karimov’s leadership. He said: ‘look at Saudi Arabia, which is a long-term American ally. Has it become more democratic?’ Comparing Washington’s support for the Uzbek president to its support for the Shah of Iran, the chief Imam of Tashkent cautioned: ‘Our government wants to use America’s anti-Taliban campaign in its own interest.’ He suggested that the regime in Tashkent derived three major benefits from collaboration with US troops against Afghanistan: ‘...the major interest of Uzbekistan is to destroy the IMU. The second benefit is that Uzbekistan’s participation in military operations [would] soften America’s stand toward violation of human rights in our country. The third important factor is the economic benefits that Uzbekistan [would] expect from the United States for supporting American troops.’ More significantly, there have been regional fears that Tashkent would exploit US support to get its way regionally, especially over territorial disputes. Some neighbouring nations, like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, have feared that the Uzbek regime would even resort to force. Seidakhmet Kuttykadam, leader of the Kyrgyz opposition movement Orleu, made a typical statement: ‘Tashkent may attempt to manipulate US power to hammer its neighbours, especially Kyrgyzstan, into obedience. In this case, we will have to seek protection from someone else, like Russia. Russia and China will not tolerate the presence of their strategic rival next to them.’ He added: ‘As if it was not enough that Central Asia is squeezed between China, Russia and the Muslim world, now we have also an American eagle flying over it.’

In addition, the rapidly developing friendship between Washington and Tashkent has been of growing concern to some human rights bodies. For instance, Amnesty International released a report on Central Asia on 11 October 2001, which concluded that Uzbek leaders might use the campaign against terrorism as a pretext for imposing more restrictions on rights and liberties. According to the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), a non-government organisation generously funded by State Department to train local journalists, Washington’s message about promoting democracy and human rights has been drowned out by its generous praise (and finance) for military cooperation with the Central Asian states. The IWPR noted: ‘Authoritarian leaders, especially in Uzbekistan, the main player, continue to ignore pleas for change in their human rights practices’, and ‘as valued partners [the region’s regimes, especially Uzbekistan’s] can do pretty much as they like.’ More importantly, observers have argued that US over-support for Uzbekistan undermines the stability and security of the region in the long term because Washington places too little emphasis on human rights
in that country. Lawrence Uzzell, Director of the Oxford-based Keston Institute, has viewed this as 'a national security danger as well as a human rights danger.'

Of course, as mentioned earlier, Uzbekistan’s government has shown some signs of changing its domestic policies under pressure from international organisations and the USA. One sign of this, mentioned earlier, was the sudden decision to allow the campaign group ‘Independent Organisation for Human Rights in Uzbekistan’ (IOHRU) to register with the authorities in early 2002. Although IOHRU was set up on 2 August 1997, the Uzbek authorities previously used various pretexts to deny it recognition.

After gaining international notoriety for suppressing human rights and denying basic freedoms, Uzbekistan signaled a change of direction. According to Kamiljon Ashurov, of the Samarkand office of IOHRU: ‘None of this would have been possible before September 11.’ He noted: ‘We had been under constant pressure until last autumn. I was under surveillance. Maybe I still am, but it isn’t as obvious anymore. There are no more threats and we feel safer.’ Furthermore, in some regions, persons unjustly imprisoned for their religious beliefs have been reprieved. Yet, viewed in a broader perspective, these appear token steps, aimed at pleasing the country’s Western allies and dulling criticism.

However, the State Department on 13 July 2004 refused to certify Uzbekistan for military and economic aid of up to $18 million, because of ‘lack of progress on democratic reform and restrictions put on U.S. assistance partners on the ground.’ Although some analysts such as A. Taksanov (Uzbek political analyst) and A. Dubnov, (a regional expert and columnist at the Moscow-based newspaper Vremya Novostei) have predicted that this policy would push Uzbekistan further toward Russia and China it is unlikely that the suspension will affect the US-Uzbek strategic relationship. For the United States, as discussed in Chapter Five, it is not important whether or not Uzbekistan is democratic; what is significant is that, as Central Asia is strategically important for the United States, Uzbekistan inevitably plays ‘a key role in our policy toward the region. It occupies a core position in Central Asia: it is the only country that borders all Central Asian countries as well as Afghanistan…and it boasts the largest and most effective military among the five countries.’ And that the United States has found in Islam Karimov a ‘good friend’, like the Shah of Iran, also well known as a dictator but supported by Washington. A US senator aptly summed this up: ‘Uzbekistan provided assistance to us in the anti-terrorist coalition and proved to us that it is our good friend. If our good friend is not ideal, that doesn’t mean that he can’t still be our
friend. In regard to the recent decision in a press release, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher emphasized that:

Uzbekistan is an important partner of the United States in the war on terror and we have many shared strategic goals. This decision does not mean that either our interests in the region or our desire for continued cooperation with Uzbekistan has changed. We want to continue to work with Uzbekistan to pursue our common goals and to implement the standards and ideals in the Strategic Partnership Framework.

In Tashkent, on 14 July 2004, Uzbek Foreign Ministry spokesman Ilkhom Zakirov claimed that the decision would not seriously affect bilateral relations, because the United States and Uzbekistan remain strategic partners in the ‘war on terror’. He maintained that Foreign Minister, Sadyk Safayev, and US Assistant Secretary of State, Elizabeth Jones, had agreed that, despite the State Department decision, the two countries saw no obstacles to continuing and developing cooperation in various fields.

Mechanisms and instruments of US policy in Central Asia

The United States has continued using soft and hard power to develop its national interests in Central Asia in the post-9/11 era. In soft power, it has increased its effort in several key areas, such as improvement in local infrastructure and social services, job creation through provision of micro-credits and small business training, support for accession to WTO and promotion of trade, investment, and economic development through fiscal and accounting reform. It has also expanded exchange programs to show Central Asians, particularly young ones, how US society has promoted religious and ethnic tolerance, education reform, and strengthening of NGOs, independent media and human rights monitors to urge greater government transparency. Washington claims to support independent media, and to be helping improve primary health care, with particular focus on fighting tuberculosis. However, in none of these areas has there been any significant achievement. According to USAID’s Eurasia office, the United States has set four primary objectives for each country. These are:

- facilitating small-scale enterprise and trade through support for activities in finance;
- promoting a more open, democratic culture, through strengthening non-governmental organisations, electronic media and parliamentarians;
- encouraging better management of environmental resources, through support for regional water management and energy regulation and efficiency; and
promoting improved primary health care by encouraging community and family practices, including fighting infectious diseases and promoting social marketing.\textsuperscript{264}

To what extent these objectives have been met is debatable. These are region-wide objectives tailored in different ways to the unique situation in each of the five countries. Richard Gold, Deputy Director of USAID’s Eurasia office has noted:

Following September 11, we recognised the need to reemphasise the elements of the CAR [Central Asian Republics] strategy focusing on conflict prevention and mitigation. The objective of USAID’s conflict strategy is to avert crises through addressing the root causes of conflict – poor economic opportunities, high unemployment, inadequate social services, conflicting claims on uses of natural resources, authoritarianism, inadequate opportunities for public debate, lack of conflict mitigation skills, and limited religious freedom.\textsuperscript{265}

US government aid to Central Asia, as Table 6.2 shows, has increased substantially, from $324.5 million in fiscal year 2001 to $692.3 million in 2002. However, US support of the states has declined since 2003. This has raised questions about whether it is through preoccupation with the war in Iraq, or because the campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan is nearly over, or is a response to negative political developments in the republics. Only the last would be a response to lack of reforms.

| Table 6.2: US Assistance to the Central Asian States, FY 2001-2004, (US$ million) |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Kazakhstan        | 94.15  | 95.93  | 92.00  | 74.20  |
| Kyrgyzstan       | 50.85  | 114.98 | 56.6   | 50.80  |
| Tajikistan        | 78.39  | 162.55 | 49.00  | 50.70  |
| Turkmenistan      | 16.44  | 21.03  | 11.10  | 10.40  |
| Uzbekistan        | 84.66  | 297.84 | 86.10  | 50.60  |
| Total             | 324.49 | 692.33 | 294.80 | 236.70 |


In the educational field, the number of academic programs for the region, as discussed in Chapter Four, mushroomed after the September 11 events. Many universities in the USA initiated programs, courses and language training related to Central Asia. The government has provided many fellowships and scholarships for students from the region.\textsuperscript{266}
Conclusion

The events of 11 September 2001 and subsequent war in Afghanistan brought the world's attention to Central Asia. These events had a significant effect on the political landscape of the Central Asian states, which to varying degrees became Washington's allies against Taliban rule in Afghanistan and the Al-Qaeda terrorist network. The US military presence in the 'heart of Asia' has renewed interest in its geostrategic importance. Accordingly, despite two previous phases, particularly the first stage, where Central Asia was deemed to involve no vital US interest, Washington has now identified vital national security and economic interests in the region. Meanwhile, the region's geopolitics are further complicated by stationing of US military near the borders of China, Russia and Iran.

In its post-September 11 relationships with Central Asia, Washington has been concerned with security and counterterrorism as foreign policy priorities. However, it has continued to develop other interests, such as gaining control over Caspian energy resources and promoting internal economic and political reform in the republics. In fact, the United States has tried to use the foothold gained in the area for the 'war against terror', to exert political influence and acquire control over the pipeline network from the region. To achieve these goals since 11 September Washington has moved towards 'enhanced engagement' with Central Asia, trying to increase financial and military assistance to the republics.267

The increase in US assistance to the region's states, particularly Uzbekistan, shows that Washington is striving to secure its presence in Central Asia by diplomatic, military, economic, and political means. At this stage, with security interests in the forefront, Washington has sought to improve the mobility of the region's armed forces and provide communications infrastructure, primarily by supplying helicopters and strengthening borders, with a view to inhibiting trafficking of drugs and weapons, including WMD.268 Such aid programs tend to benefit the rulers and have only a marginal effect in areas such as reducing poverty, stopping corruption, tackling unemployment and easing repression.269 Moreover, the regimes' support for the 'war on terrorism' has led Washington to turn a blind eye to their poor human rights record, believing that their espousal of anti-terrorism will blunt the rising international criticism of their record on economic reform and human rights. In fact, US policy vis-à-vis the region's states has done little to discourage repression, and has failed to link continued aid to politico-economic reforms.270 As a result, the US military build-up has
emboldened the non-democratic leaders to avoid democratic reforms. Thus, one can say that the events of 11 September 2001, brought the issue of security to the forefront, but democratisation, human rights and economic reform took a back seat.

Geopolitically, the US military move into Central Asia is an attempt to prevent the emergence of a force capable of checking US hegemony, namely Russia and China. The current US administration sees its military might as a trump card to be employed to prevail over its rivals in the struggle for political hegemony and resources. Thus, it can be argued that the immediate goal of ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ was to counter terrorism, but the long-run purpose was to consolidate US power in Central Asia, contain Russian and Chinese influence there, and gain more control over the transportation routes used for exporting energy resources from the Caspian region. In particular, Washington would be able to check Russian expansion in Asia and China’s westward extension. Such attempts have led the two powers to redouble their efforts to strengthen their relationships with the region’s states and with each other, and to work more closely together through regional organisations such as the SCO, to counter US influence. For Russia itself, the post-11 September situation brought new demands. If in the future it is to play a larger role in Central Asian security, it has to prove itself more useful than other foreign actors to the Central Asian states.

Finally, it seems fair to argue that the US military presence in Central Asia is a means of promoting its long-term political, security and economic objectives. The United States has gained a foothold in these lands lying between Europe to the west, Russia to the north, China to the east, and India to the south, and to turn this strategic region increasingly into a US sphere of influence. William Wallace has rightly summed up this US stance as resting upon a range of resources, of hard military power, economic weight, financial commitments, and the soft currency of hegemonic values, cultural influence and prestige.
Notes

1 Colin L. Powell, Address to House International Relations Committee, Washington, 6 February 2002.
5 Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were called the ‘front-line’ countries. All three have ethnic ties to northern Afghanistan; Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are generally believed to have supported the various groups that resisted the Taliban regime.
10 Volkonsky, op cit, p.11.


17 F. Hill, 'The United States and Russia in Central Asia: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran', The Aspen Institute Congressional Program, 15 August 2002.


19 E. Jones, ‘US Engagement in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Staying Our Course Along the Silk Road’.


21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 E. Jones, ‘US Engagement in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Staying Our Course Along the Silk Road’.


27 E. Jones’s Testimony at the new Senate Subcommittee on Central Asia and the Caucasus. She also mentioned, in testimony before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia House International Relations Committee, Washington, 29 October 2003, that the United States has three sets of strategic interests in Central Asia: Security, including fights against terrorism, proliferation, and narcotics trafficking; Energy, involving reliable and economically sound transit of Caspian oil and gas to global markets, and the use of energy revenues to foster sustained and balanced economic growth; and Internal reform, encompassing democratic and market economic transformations in these countries that can support human rights, and expand freedom, tolerance, and prosperity. T.W. Simons, former US Ambassador in Pakistan, Poland and some other former Soviet bloc countries, made the same three points as Jones in an interview, but added that he believed pursuing these three goals would be difficult. He
continued that US aid to the region has been conditional on reform, and claimed that the 9/11 events have
developed these three objectives. Author’s interview with T.W. Simons, Harvard University, Cambridge,
9 October 2003.

28 E. Jones ‘US Engagement in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Staying Our Course Along the Silk Road’.
29 For instance S. Mukhametrakhimova, IWPR’s Central Asia Project Manager in London, ‘NATO Looks
to Central Asia’, Reporting Central Asia (RCA), No. 164, 26 November 2002, pp. 21-23.
30 R. Giragosian ‘The US military engagement in Central Asia and Southern Caucasus: An overview’,
31 A. Aslam, ‘Central Asia: On the periphery of New Global War’, Foreign Policy in Focus, 24
33 L. Jonson, ‘Russia and Central Asia: Post-11 September, 2001’, Central Asia and the Caucasus
12/6/2004].
Analysis (SAPRA) Foundation India, 26 November 2001, at
http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/research/centralasia/articles/ca_article_20011126a.html.html,
[accessed 24/6/2003].
35 A survey in late 2001 showed only 39.8 percent of Russians polled favoured US access to air bases in
Central Asia, with 63.5 percent opposed. 88.8 percent opposed Russian military involvement in
February 2002, at
36 S. McHenry, ‘Why should Russia and the US build strategic alliance’, Moscow News (in English), No.
4, 30 January/5 February 2002, p.2, R. Dongfeng, ‘The Central Asia policies of China, Russia and the
USA, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization process: a view from China’, Working Paper,
37 German ARD Television, interview with President Vladimir Putin, Germany, 19 September 2001.
‘Russia limits support for US action’, The Russia Journal, 21/27 September 2001, p.8, M.A.R. Vahidi,
‘The American military presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Russia’s response’, Amu Darya: the
Iranian Journal of Central Asian Studies, Vol. 6, No. 12, Tehran, Summer 2002, pp. 278-294, and
Dongfeng, op. cit., pp. 9-11.
40 Eberhart, op. cit. See also V. Socor, ‘Russia’s Murky Affair With Terrorism’, The Wall Street Journal
Europe, 21 September 2001, p. 4.
41 Eberhart, op. cit.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.


Jonson, op. cit.


However, Tajikistan was subsequently pressured by Russia to tone down its logistical support. Russia has still roughly 7,000 troops in Tajikistan. Giragosian, op. cit., pp. 43-77.


Cited by Jawahar, op. cit.

Giragosian, op. cit., pp. 43-77.


Peuch, op. cit., p. 6.


Ibid.

Ibid.


69 Ibid.


71 Ibid.


73 Laumulin, op. cit., pp. 27-35.

74 ‘The United States has come to Central Asia to stay’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2002, pp. 10-16.


76 Cited from *Argumenty i Fakty Kyrgyzstan*, Bishkek, 26 June 2002 by *Kyrgyzstan Daily Digest*, 1 July 2002.


Ibid., pp. 5-6.
81 Ibid., p.7.
90 C. Powell, Address to House International Relations Committee, Washington, 6 February 2002.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
98 Duskin, op. cit.
101 Peuch, op. cit., p.6


Ibid.


San Francisco Chronicle, 26 September 2001, p.6, also G. Parthasarathy, 'War against terror: Oil and gas factor', *The Pioneer*, New Delhi, 20 June 2002, pp. 15-17. He believes the map of terrorist sanctuaries and targets in the Middle East and Central Asia is also, to an extraordinary degree, a map of the world's principal energy sources in the 21st century.


Volkhonsky, op. cit.


Volkhonsky, op. cit.

Helmore, op. cit., p.9


Dorian, op. cit., pp. 20-32.


Zonn and Zhiltsov, op. cit.

agreement with Afghan leader Hamid Karzai and Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf to construct a 
pipeline to carry an estimated 15 billion cubic metres a year of gas from Turkmenistan’s Dauletabad field 
to Kandahar in Afghanistan and on to the Pakistani port of Gwadar on the southern shore of the Arabian 
Sea.

125 Z. Khalilzad, Address to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on 9 March 2000, at 
Khalilzad as his special envoy to Afghanistan. Khalilzad was Unocal’s chief consultant on the Afghan 
pipeline project in the 1990s). A. Rashid commented: ‘The Clinton administration was clearly 
sympathetic to the Taliban, as they were in line with Washington’s anti-Iran policy and were important 
for the success of any southern pipeline from Central Asia that would avoid Iran. The US Congress had 
authorised a covert $20 million budget for the CIA to destabilise Iran, and Tehran had accused 
Washington of funneling some of these funds to the Taliban – a charge that was always denied by 


127 Ibid.

128 Cohen, op. cit., p. 2.

129 Zonn and Zhiltsov, op. cit.

29/8/2004].

131 D. Satpaev, ‘Russia Pushes for Central Asian OPEC’, RCA, No. 108, 15 March 2002, pp. 14-17, 35-
46.

132 Ibid.

(PINR), 18 September 2003 at 


135 For more discussion see Rumer, op. cit., pp. 57-68.


137 G. Bukharbaeva, and A. Samari, ‘Uzbekistan: Karimov Steps up War on Islamists’, RCA, No. 118, 2 
May 2002.


139 Bukharbaeva, and Samari, op. cit.

140 Ibid.


142 See Chapter Three of this thesis.


144 Cited by Mukhametrahkimova, op. cit., pp. 21-23 and L. Craner, Testimony at Senate Foreign 
Relations Subcommittee on Central Asia and the South Caucasus, Washington, 27 June 2002.


150 Panfilova, op. cit., pp. 1, 5.


154 Craner, op. cit.


157 Donovan, op. cit., p.3.


162 Pascoe, ‘The US role in Central Asia’.

163 See, for example, NATO is an inter-governmental organisation. It does not have the apparatus to influence these countries as the individual alliance members can. Mukhametrakhimova, op. cit. pp. 21-23.


Starr, op. cit.

Helmore, op. cit., p. 9.


Zonn and Zhiltsov, op. cit.


Lapidus, op. cit., pp. 1-7. Russia started providing Humanitarian Aid (HA) to Afghanistan in October 2001. It has supported humanitarian operations by transporting more than 420,296 tons of food, 2,198 tons of medicines, 15,282 beds, 1,200 heaters, 13 mini electric power stations, 780 tents, 11,000 blankets, 49,674 bedding kits, 11,000 kitchen utensils, and nine tons of detergents. In December 2001, Russian personnel started reconstructing the Salang road tunnel connecting the northern and southern provinces of Afghanistan. In January 2002 it was officially reopened. In January 2002, as a joint Russian-German project, a pontoon bridge across the Panj River was opened. Together with the Salang tunnel it provided a continuous delivery route from Tajikistan to central Afghanistan for international humanitarian assistance. Russia provided the first coalition hospital in Kabul on 29 November 2001. It treated more than 6,000 patients before handing over to local control on 25 January 2002. On 29 March 2002, EMERCOM, Russia’s emergency response organisation, deployed a mobile hospital to Nakhrehn and began medical assistance to victims of an earthquake. Thus far, EMERCOM has delivered over 100 tons of HA supplies to the Nakhrehn area. Additionally, Russian teams have conducted search and rescue operations throughout the area. On 24 April 2002, Russia presented 43 special vehicles to the Afghan government. http://nato.usmission.gov / Contributions / Russia.htm [accessed 16/1/2004].
179 Zonn and Zhiltsov, op. cit.
180 Kaushik, op. cit., pp. 10-17.
185 S. Kazyonnov is at the independent Institute of National Security Research in Moscow, M Podkopeyeva at the Experimental Creative Center, a Moscow foreign policy think tank, V. Belokrinitsky at the official Institute of International Relations in Moscow, and V. Ponomaryov at Panorama, an independent think tank.
186 Quoted from V. Belokrinitsky by Weir, op. cit., p. 6.
188 Zonn and Zhiltsov, op. cit.
189 A survey by the Komkon-2 Eurasia agency published on 1 April 2003, showed 84 percent of respondents in Kazakstan believed it should cooperate first and foremost with Russia, versus only 3.6 percent who championed links with the United States, and 2 percent links with China. Few Kazak intellectuals seem surprised by the expressions of renewed warmth with Russia and correspondingly cooler feelings towards neighbors in Central Asia. Political scientist Auezkhan Kodar said relations with Moscow were always more solid than ties to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan or Turkmenistan. 'It is the same today. Integration with Russia is a priority for Kazakstan and this is our chosen path', he said. 'The survey shows most Kazakstan citizens are making the right choice.' Quoted by E. Jumagulov, an independent journalist in Almaty, 'Kazakstan Turns Its Back on Central Asia', RCA, No. 200, Almaty 28 April 2003, pp. 23-25. An analyst from the region says Russia still controls efficient financial and economic levers in Central Asia. So far the local economies are still dependent on it. There is a new and important factor: the sentiments of the local people and, more importantly, youth. According to sociological polls among regional youth, 76.5 percent of respondents in Tajikistan, 67.2 percent in Kyrgyzzstan, 52.4 percent in Kazakstan, and 42.5 percent in Uzbekistan believe Russia ‘might help to the greatest degree solve the problems of their countries’, while 88.1 percent in Tajikistan, 71.5 percent in Kyrgyzzstan, 60.6 percent in Kazakstan, and 54.9 percent in Uzbekistan said Russia could make the weightiest contribution to regional stability and security. Russia left the United States a very poor second. Only 15 percent of those polled in Tajikistan, 15.5 percent in Kyrgyzzstan, 30.9 percent in Kazakstan and 36.2 percent in Uzbekistan expected effective help from the United States, while 7.6 percent in Tajikistan, 18.2 percent in Kyrgyzzstan, 25.5 percent in Kazakstan, and 33.2 percent in Uzbekistan their nations could rely on a US contribution to regional stability and security. S. Sharapova, 'The US-Western Europe-Russia triangle and Central Asia', Central Asia and the Caucasus (online), Vol. 1, No. 19, 2003, at http://www.ca-c.org/online/2003/journal_eng/cac-01/08.shaeng.shtml [accessed 13/2/2004], and Jumagulov, op. cit., pp. 23-25.
190 Jonson, op cit, and Davlatov, op. cit., pp. 34-41.

Ibid.

Jonson, op cit.


Kyrgyz Defence Minister, Esen Topoev, said the Russian military presence in Kyrgyzstan is aimed at fostering peace and stability in the region, which he says is faced with the threat of Islamic extremism. ‘There is a need [for a permanent Russian military base], dictated by those threats and challenges to the Central Asian region. And it is a component of building up a collective rapid-reaction force. It will conduct two tasks: One is purely on the united air-defense system, which [includes] SU-27 [aircraft], and the other is on securing land forces. These are army aviation, or attack planes, as we call them, which are SU-25s, and they will be deployed here starting next year.’ Z. Eshanova, ‘Central Asia: Diplomatic Visits Highlight US, Russian Competition’, *RFE/RL*, 4 December 2002, p.5. In contrast, A. Malashenko, a professor at the Moscow Institute for International Relations, said the Russian military presence in Kyrgyzstan will serve first and foremost to maintain the rule of President Akayev, who is considered pro-Moscow. ‘The kinds of developments that have taken place in Kyrgyzstan in October and November, in my point of view, exactly point out that the current Kyrgyz political elite is very much interested in cooperation with Moscow. At least cooperation with Moscow, including military cooperation, gives some confidence [to Akayev’s regime], while the American military presence, in my opinion, in no way influences its stability or its future.’ Eshanova, op. cit. p.5. Some of the jets stationed there will be SU-25 ground-attack aircraft that could be used against possible ‘Islamist’ insurgencies. At the same time, the Russians are training Kyrgyz frontier troops. S. Jumagulov, ‘Superpowers Compete in Kyrgyzstan’, *RCA*, No. 200, Bishkek, 28 April 2003, pp. 7-9.


The Collective Rapid Deployment Forces being formed under the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

Laumulin, op. cit, pp. 27-35. The charter of the CSTO and its legal status were approved on 7 October 2002.

At the moment CSTO’s members are Russia, Belarus, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia.


Nourzhanov, op cit, p.7.

V. Lukov, ‘Russia’s Indispensable Role in the Fight Against Terrorism’, International Affairs, Vol.48, No.1, Moscow, 2002, pp. 59-69. Thus, one can say Russia and China have begun working together to oppose US military influence in Central Asia, a possible major move in strengthening their relations.


Kazakhstan Daily Digest, 16 April 2003, p.2.


Rumer, op cit, pp. 57-68. The best example of close relations between Russia and China is their active role in the SCO.

Cited in Weir, op. cit., p. 6.

Ibid.

Ibid

Ibid.

Ibid.

A. Klimenko ‘Evolution of the military factor and its influence on the international-political relations system in East Asia’, Voyennaya Myst; (Military Thought), April 2004, pp. 56-68.


Nemets and Torda, op. cit.

222 Ibid.


225 Ibid.

226 Ibid. See also Vassilyev, op. cit., pp. 10-16.


233 Ibid.

234 Ibid.

235 Ibid.

236 Karaev, op. cit., pp. 9-11.


238 Karaev, op. cit., pp. 9-11.


243 Ibid.

245 Rumer, op cit, pp. 57-68.
246 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
252 Ibid.
257 Bukharbaeva, ‘Slow progress in Uzbekistan’.
258 Boucher, op. cit.
260 Ibid.
261 Pascoe, ‘The US role in Central Asia’.
262 Ibid.
263 Ibid.
264 Ibid.
265 Ibid.
266 As noted in Chapters Three and Four, this is one of the US instruments in Central Asia. According to E. Jones’s report the United States has admitted over 13,000 citizens from the five Central Asian states for professional or academic training since 1993. See Jones’s Testimony at the new Senate Subcommittee on Central Asia and the Caucasus. She also mentioned, in testimony before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia House International Relations Committee, 2003. According to R. Hoagland, US Ambassador to Tajikistan, over 30,000 students and young professionals from Central Asia and the Caucasus have participated in US exchange programs. R. Hoagland, ‘Dushanbe’, 25 November 2003, at http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7436-7.cfm [accessed 27/2/2004] also http://www.irex.org/eurasia/ [accessed 27/2/2004].
A commentator said these five republics 'are not in transition to democracy, but are heading down a political and economic trajectory that can only be called sharply negative.' Kaiser, op. cit., p. A01 This view has been echoed by some within Central Asia. Murat Auezov, former Kazak ambassador to China, recalled: 'We have a process of de-civilizing going on.' Kaiser, 'US plants footprint in shaky Central Asia', p. A01.


For details on US policy toward Caspian Sea energy resources and pipelines see Chapter Four of this thesis, and Weir, op. cit., p. 6.


Conclusion and Prospects for the future

We want to stand by the Central Asian countries in their struggle to reform their societies in the same way they have stood by us in the war on terrorism. This is not only a new relationship, but a long-term relationship.
A.E. Jones

a. Conclusion

This thesis has examined US policy in Central Asia in the post-Cold War era. It has demonstrated that the independence of Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union facilitated the emergence of new geopolitical alignments in Asia. The region’s geostrategic location and proximity to Russia and China attracted US policymakers’ attention to this region and resulted in US penetration into a vast region, where it was not able to exert its influence during the Soviet rule. Central Asia is predominantly Muslim in character; the United States has attempted to gain a foothold there to enhance its influence in ‘Islamic’ South-West Asia and to counter ‘enemies’ such as Iran. Accordingly, since 1991, the United States has shown growing interest in this region and has continued to boost its political, military, security and economic cooperation there.

This thesis has shown that US foreign policy in Central Asia has evolved through three distinct phases. In the primary years of independence, the region was not considered strategically vital to the United States. It was believed that America was too far from the area to be able to dominate this part of the Eurasian landmass, and it was treated as an accessory to its interests in Russia and, to some degree, the Middle East. Therefore, the United States abstained from taking important steps that might have been perceived as threatening to Russia. In the first term of the Clinton administration, Russia was placed at the centre of US policy in the NIS, and officials in Washington were sceptical of the importance of other former Soviet republics, the Central Asian ones included. This was because of the importance of Russia in US foreign policy and lack of sufficient information about the region. US national and security objectives aimed to bring Russia into an alliance with the United States. Therefore, policy initiatives in Central Asia were all adjuncts to the ‘Russia first policy’. Thus, the first stage of US policy in Central Asia could be characterised as an introductory stage in which the policymakers tried to explore the region. Yet, for Washington, a major objective was to support the newly independent republics’ bid to curtail ties with the Russian Federation.
In general during this stage the United States stressed the following objectives:

- strengthen the independence and sovereignty of the region’s republics, and by doing so tilt them towards the West;
- consolidate Central Asian stability and conflict resolution;
- denuclearise Kazakstan;
- promote ‘democracy’ and a market economy; and
- contain Iranian influence and prevent the spread of political Islam.3

Given the somewhat limited initial influence in Central Asia, Washington relied on regional allies, particularly Turkey, and to some extent, Pakistan and even Israel to counter Iran’s expansion into the region. The US government expected the newly independent republics to imitate the ‘secular’ Turkish model, and Turkey was regarded as a potential regional leader. However, Washington soon realised that Turkey did not have the capability to play such a role. At this stage US policy also tended to differ from republic to republic. At the beginning special attention was given to Kazakstan because it was one of the former Soviet republics in which nuclear weapons had been stationed. The semblance of human rights standards in Kyrgyzstan led Washington to regard it as an ‘island of democracy’, and thus deserving of more assistance. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan’s low record in human rights, to some degree, contributed to Washington’s cool relationships with them. However, from the mid-1990s Uzbekistan received more attention as a US strategic partner in the region, ignoring Karimov’s repressive politics.

By the mid-1990s, due to the presence of the Caspian hydrocarbon resources adjacent to Central Asia, a new pro-active policy emerged in the United States. Washington started to gain a better understanding of the larger dynamics and geopolitical importance of the area and US decision-makers recognised important and growing interests in this ‘reborn’ region.4 They came to realise Central Asia’s centrality in Asia and its strategic importance. This was a turning point in US approach to both sides of the Caspian – Central Asia and the Caucasus – signified by the remarkable rise in the importance the Clinton administration attached to it. Washington’s policy in the Caspian region became increasingly assertive and recognised a ‘vital interest’ in the area. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott described Central Asia in 1997 as a ‘strategically vital region’ and part of the ‘Euro-Atlantic community’ that America could not overlook.5 The United States attached great importance to the geopolitics of oil and gas and pipelines, increasing Central Asia’s standing in its foreign policy, which affecting US policy toward Russia and other regional actors.
In particular, support for multiple pipelines, especially routes bypassing Russia and Iran, became firmly embedded in Washington’s wider Eurasian and Middle Eastern strategic priorities. Through this multiple pipeline strategy, the USA tried to end Russia’s monopoly, and prevent Iranian influence in the region’s energy resources. Washington attempted to create a ‘zone of influence’ for itself and Western oil companies. In fact, US policymakers’ repeated insistence on the advantages of a multiple pipelines strategy represented mere rhetoric, behind which was determination to exclude passage through Russia or Iran. Even more importantly, for the United States, control of the region’s energy resources and of their transportation to world markets meant leverage and control over the region’s countries. This new stage of US policy, which lasted until 2001, witnessed an increase in US aid to the region’s republics. After initially favouring Kazakstan, in this phase Washington switched to Uzbekistan as its preferred strategic partner. Indeed, US interest in Kazakstan waned after the removal of nuclear weapons from Kazak territory and US policymakers realised that Kazakstan could not afford to dissociate itself from Russia. The emergence of Uzbekistan as the favoured US partner was due not only to the country’s geopolitical importance, but also to its anti-Russian/Iranian tendencies. In fact, the United States sought to support Uzbekistan to assume the role of regional power, and as a rampart against perceived Russian hegemony, Islamic extremism and Iranian influence. Uzbekistan’s violations of human rights were expediently downplayed in State Department reports, strategic interests outweighing humanitarian concerns.

In the second phase, despite Washington’s affirmation that politics in the region should not become a replay of the old ‘Great Game’, the pipeline game became an undeniable factor in the region’s international politics. In this connection, although the Clinton administration claimed that its policy was ‘all players winners’, there was doubt that the US joined the ‘pipelines game’ without modifying its policy. This was confirmed by a senior US official, S. Heslin, who affirmed that Washington’s goal was to ‘promote the independence of these oil-rich republics, to in essence break Russia’s monopoly control over the transportation of oil from that region.’

During the second phase, the Clinton administration worked to:

- continue support for the region’s independence, sovereignty and prosperity;
- counter Russian and Iranian control of the region’s energy and pipelines;
- develop the energy security of the USA and its allies, and reduce reliance on Middle East oil;
- enhance commercial opportunities for US companies;
• counter terrorism and drug trafficking; and, most importantly
• project US power and hegemony into the region.9

The geopolitics of Central Asia were strongly affected by the events of 11 September 2001, which changed the international context, with a direct and profound impact on US foreign policy in the region, and also influenced its political dynamics. The United States re-assessed its priorities and increased the importance of the region as a whole. In this new phase, because of Central Asia’s geographic contiguity to the Al-Qaeda terrorist network in Afghanistan, its predominantly Muslim populations, and its utility as a base area for the campaigns against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, it received much more attention. And, despite the regimes’ human rights abuses and authoritarian character, they became new partners for the United States. Washington’s support has resulted in strengthening of their despotic nature, enabling them to crack down more harshly than in the past on dissidents in the name of the US ‘war on terror’, and hence avoid making democratic reforms.10

The Central Asian regimes eagerly signed security agreements with the United States. These agreements have admitted US military forces to the region, resulting, for the first time, in a US presence in an area formerly part of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union.11 However, as this thesis has shown, during the 1990s the United States initiated military engagement with Central Asia to support its integration with Western political-military institutions, as well as to deny it to a possible resurgent Russia. This thesis has demonstrated that US policies and actions undertaken after the events of 11 September 2001 have had an enduring impact on the internal and external politics of the region and its geopolitical setting. In this stage Washington’s objectives were to:

• establish military bases in Central Asia;
• develop close relations with the countries neighbouring Afghanistan;
• sever the ties between the Al-Qaeda terrorist network, the Taliban, and Islamic movements in Central Asia such as the IMU;
• empower the region’s existing regimes against political Islam; and
• strengthen US influence over the region’s energy resources and pipelines.12

The relocation of Central Asia from the periphery to the centre of US strategic interests has fundamentally changed the balance of the main players in the area. The thesis indicated that this is not just the result of rivalry between the United States and Russia, but also the consequence of the competitive interests of other powers and the Central Asian republics as well. Nevertheless, the 11 September attacks and subsequent
anti-terrorist campaign provided Washington with an opportunity to take the initiative against rival powers in the region, namely Russia, China and Iran.

The increased US presence in the region has had geopolitical repercussions, and has influenced the regional policy of these powers. Russia, as the regional dominant power, was expected to face the greatest loss of influence. This encouraged Moscow to react immediately to join the US-led coalition against terrorism, but the Russian government also expressed its concern about a long-term US military presence in the region and tried to restore military ties with the republics. Russia’s 2003 agreement with Kyrgyzstan was a vivid example of a Russian attempt to retain a strategic military outpost in the area.

Beijing also perceived the unexpected projection of US military influence into neighbouring Central Asia with great concern. It has supported the USA in its ‘war on terror’, but in the long-run considers the US deployment as a challenge to its regional security. It perceives expansion of US influence in the region as leading to proportional reduction of China’s weight and influence.

Iran’s geopolitical horizon was further affected by Washington’s moves in Central Asia. Tehran was deeply concerned at the proximity of US power additional to that already deployed in the Persian Gulf, and has regarded it as a threat to its national security.

To sum up, in general, US engagement with Central Asia has geostrategic goals – to project its power into the Eurasian ‘heartland’ and thereby increase its influence on the borders of Russia, China and Iran, enhancing US ability to check them and at the same time counter Islamic radicalism. To these ends the United States has made comprehensive partnership plans with the region through increased financial and military support. US involvement in the region has also improved its access to the energy deposits of the region and facilitated US influence over its oil and gas export routes. Washington’s multiple engagement is part of a broader US global strategy, which seeks to restrain potential adversaries and strengthen US power throughout the world. Therefore, one can assume that from the Realpolitik point of view US foreign policy in Central Asia has been geared to develop hegemonic influence rather than to promote idealistic values such as democracy. US policy has been impaling itself upon a contradictory logic in Central Asia. Washington has repeatedly claimed that its objective is to promote democracy in the republics, but has never taken any specific steps against the authoritarian regimes or talked about ‘regime change’, as it did in Iraq. It has persistently tried to preserve the status quo and stability in the region,
apparently seeing the only alternative as Islamist theocracy or something similar. The thesis showed that US pursuit of its geopolitical interests has clashed with its proclaimed policy of reinforcing democracy and human rights in the region.

b. Prospects for future US policy in Central Asia

The United States will seek stronger influence in the future development and political makeup of Central Asia. Several specific circumstances motivate it to remain engaged with the region. First, Central Asia combines an important geopolitical location with valuable energy resources, giving rise to the particular issue of exporting oil and gas from the area. Second, it is characterised by weak states, radical Islamist movements and proximity to Afghanistan. Third, other powers aspire to develop their own influence in the region. These factors will ensure the continued significance of Central Asia to US policymakers. In a sense, as US military engagement in Central Asia becomes more permanent, it will increasingly become a factor both in broader regional politics and the internal politics of the individual republics. Some commentators believe that the US bases at Khanabad (Uzbekistan) and Manas (Kyrgyzstan) may serve as textbook examples for a future patchwork of ‘Lily Pads’ throughout Central Asia. That role raises a host of questions. Chief among them is how regional powers, namely Russia and China, will react to the US presence. A second question concerns the implications of an American presence for both the political development of the region’s countries, and the future of radical Islam.

Certainly, geopolitical interests will remain major drivers in US foreign policy in this area, even though it gives special priority to campaigns against Islamic radicalism, drug trafficking and, especially, terrorism. Accordingly, one can argue that, as the military campaign in Afghanistan decreases in intensity, Washington’s military and security relations with the region are likely to shift from tactical to strategic. It seems that for the years to come the United States will continue to challenge the growing influence of Russia and China in Central Asia, at the same time working to prevent the spread of Islamic radicalism. Yet, two other issues, namely the US uneasy relationship with Iran, and uncertainty in Afghanistan, would also encourage Washington to keep its forces in Central Asia. In addition to US long-term interests in the region, several internal and external issues have to be considered. These include politico-economic reforms, Washington-Tehran relations, the Russian and Chinese positions in the region, and the US occupation of Iraq.
One of the major challenges to US policy will be tackling the authoritarian regimes of Central Asia. Until now, two issues have contributed to lack of democratic reforms in Central Asia: one is that the region’s leaders have been reluctant to pursue such reforms and the second is that, despite the proclaimed policy of promoting democracy, the United States has supported the existing regimes in order to counter the establishment of any anti-American governments in this area. The governments of the region claim that they furnish stability in this area, and to the extent that they do, they serve one of the primary US objectives. This has led Washington to avoid replacing these non-democratic regimes. Instead, during the latest period of its engagement with the region’s states, and particularly since 11 September the United States has supported them. American expert S. Blank has recently argued that in Central Asia the transplantation of US influence has paradoxically strengthened autocratic rule, not democracy and liberalism. Oil company agreements, top-level US government contacts with the region’s states, and US financial aid have entrenched the region’s leaders and helped transform governments into corrupt oligarchies that have enriched themselves while suppressing opposition. These moves not only stifled democratic reforms, but also strengthened these regimes, especially in Uzbekistan. Elizabeth Jones rightly argued that ‘tightening up on law enforcement and maintaining human rights standards, must remain an integral part of our assistance.’ Without continued US pressure for democratisation, Central Asian ruling elites will simply use fear of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism as an excuse to strengthen their grip on power.

Officials in Washington still have much to learn about the region and its politics. If they really want to promote democratic reforms, they have to gain a deeper understanding of political, economic, and cultural characteristics of the region’s states and societies. With the existing ruling elites, political and economic reforms are unlikely to eventuate. Therefore ‘regime change’ seems the only way to bring them about, though not in the way the United States has acted in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, in doing so, Washington’s policymakers will face a growing dilemma. If they support democracy and human rights, they risk undermining apparently pro-US regimes, but if they continue to support these authoritarian regimes they risk in the long run the same problems that in the past have beset US policies elsewhere, in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

The future state of US-Iranian relations is among the most important issues, and also has a strategic impact on US policy in Central Asia. Were normalisation of Washington-Tehran relations to take place, the regional picture would change
significantly by altering the strategic calculations of the United States. In such circumstances, Iran would no longer be seen as Washington’s antagonist in Central Asia, and the hostile US policy towards pipelines through Iran would be revised.

But if Tehran-Washington relations remain cool, the United States then has more interest in increasing its influence in Central Asia. This is also in accordance with President George W. Bush’s signal to the international community that Washington reserves the right to extend the ‘war on terrorism’ to other countries. Iran, Iraq and North Korea were the three states named by Bush in his State of the Union address in January 2002 as future potential targets in the campaign against terrorism. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, if the United States, with or without UN approval, should decide to attack Iran, then its bases in Central Asia will play a role in its military operations.

The development of US engagement with Central Asia will also depend on the republics’ relations with Russia. Moscow possesses more leverage than other actors in Central Asia, and might move aggressively to foil any attempt to replace its primacy. However, one can assume that Russia’s interaction with the region depends on the political and economic situation in that country. If Russia’s economy remains weak, it would be hard to visualise any strong reemergence of its influence in the region. Currently Russia’s economy is growing at over seven percent per annum; if that rate is sustained, President Putin’s undertaking to double the size of the economy by 2012 will easily be fulfilled.

China will also continue to be actively involved in the region and this too will challenge US regional policy. A struggle for influence in the region might lead to one of the following scenarios: continued balance of interests and the status quo, or confrontation and clashes of powers. However, because of Russia’s and China’s limitations and US reluctance to contemplate costly conflicts with powerful opponents, major confrontation is unlikely.

Since occupying Iraq in March 2003, the United States has decreased its financial assistance to the Central Asian states (see Table 6.2). This has chilled regional leaders’ hopes. The US involvement in Iraq has also reduced Afghanistan to a secondary priority, and it is likely that the Taliban and its followers will increase their activities in the region as a result. These strategic changes have also made the region’s republics, especially Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, worry about the spread of conflict into the area or influx of refugees from Afghanistan. Moreover, if Washington remains bogged down for long in an Iraqi quagmire, the Central Asian leaders may see no alternative to seeking closer relations with Russia and/or China. Therefore, the way in
which the United States resolves the Iraqi problem is important to the future of Central Asia.

To conclude, US policy toward Central Asia should be genuinely reoriented to encourage a democratic transition. Washington must practically emphasise the implementation of politico-economic reforms in the region that allow the people to participate in their countries' political processes.
Notes


2 Central Asia was regarded as a part of the Middle East or a new Middle East. For comprehensive discussion of this issue see David Menashri, ed., Central Asia Meets the Middle East, London: Frank CASS, 1998.


4 See J. Collins 'US policy toward the Central Asian States', Remarks at the inauguration of the Central Asia Institute, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, 21 October 1996.


10 For more discussion see J. Donovan, 'Central Asia: Verdict Still out on U.S. Engagement Policy', Eurasia Insight, 24 November 2002.


15 L. Lifan and D. Shiwu, 'Geopolitical interests of Russia, the US and China in Central Asia', Central Asia and the Caucasus, Vol. 27, No. 3, 2004, pp. 139-145.


18 Cornell, op. cit., pp. 239-254.

19 Ibid.


See George W. Bush’s State of the Union Address, the White House, Washington, 29 January 2002.


Lifan and Shiwu, op. cit., pp. 139-145.

Appendix A

Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act (FSA), 24 October 1992

Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 or FREEDOM Support Act - Title I: General Provisions - Directs the President to designate a coordinator within the Department of State to be responsible for coordinating assistance to the independent states of the former Soviet Union (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). Requires the coordinator to report to the Congress on the overall assistance and economic cooperation strategy for the independent states.

Title II: Bilateral Economic Assistance Activities - Amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to authorize the President to provide assistance to the independent states for the following activities: (1) meeting urgent humanitarian needs; (2) establishing a democratic and free society; (3) creating private enterprise and free market systems based on the principle of private ownership of property; (4) promoting trade and investment; (5) promoting market-based mechanisms for food distribution and encouraging policies that provide support for the agricultural sector; (6) promoting programs to strengthen quality health care and voluntary family planning, housing, and other components of a social safety net; (7) promoting educational reform; (8) promoting energy efficiency and production; (9) implementing civilian nuclear reactor safety programs; (10) enhancing the human and natural environment and conserving environmental resources; (11) improving transportation and telecommunications infrastructure and management; (12) promoting drug education, interdiction, and eradication programs; and (13) protecting and caring for refugees, displaced persons, and migrants.

Requires the President, in providing such assistance, to take into account the extent to which the state is: (1) making progress toward, and is committed to, the implementation of a democratic system and economic reform based on market principles; (2) respecting human rights; (3) respecting international law and obligations and adhering to the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Charter of Paris; (4) cooperating in seeking peaceful resolution of ethnic and regional conflicts; (5) implementing responsible security policies; (6) taking actions to protect the international environment; (7) denying support for terrorism; (8) accepting responsibility for paying a
portion of debt to US firms incurred by the former Soviet Union; (9) cooperating in uncovering evidence regarding American prisoners of war or missing in action who were detained in the former Soviet Union during the Cold War; and (10) terminating support for Cuba.

Prohibits assistance to the government of any state which: (1) engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations; (2) has failed to facilitate the implementation of arms control obligations derived from agreements signed by the former Soviet Union; (3) has knowingly transferred to another country missiles or missile technology inconsistent with the Missile Technology Control Regime or materials, equipment, or technology that would contribute to such country's ability to manufacture weapons of mass destruction; or (4) is prohibited from receiving assistance under specified provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. Bars assistance to Russia if it has failed to make progress on the removal of troops from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania or has failed to undertake good faith efforts to end other military practices that violate the sovereignty of the Baltic States.

Waives such prohibitions, other than the prohibition on assistance to states barred from receiving assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991, if such assistance: (1) is in the national interest; (2) will foster respect for human rights and democracy; or (3) is furnished for the alleviation of suffering.

Authorizes the use of economic support fund assistance and the use of funds and authorities under the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 for assistance under this title.

Permits funds under this title to be used for procurement in the United States, the independent states, or a developing country or in any other country, subject to conditions of availability, emergency, or the promotion of efficiency in the use of such assistance.

Authorizes appropriations.

Prohibits any governmental entity of an independent state from being eligible to receive assistance (except for humanitarian assistance) under this title if: (1) there is outstanding a final judgment by a court of competent jurisdiction within the state that such entity is withholding books or other documents of religious or historical significance that are the property of US persons; and (2) the Secretary of State determines that execution of
the court's judgment is blocked as the result of extra judicial causes. Waives such prohibition of the court's judgment has been executed or it is important to national interests.

Title III: Business and Commercial Development - Encourages the President to establish American Business Centers in the independent states where the President determines that such Centers can be cost-effective in promoting the objectives of title II and US economic interests and in establishing commercial partnerships between the United States and the independent states.

Requires the Agency for International Development (AID) to conclude a reimbursement agreement with the Secretary of Commerce for the Department of Commerce's services in operating the Centers.

Earmarks an amount from funding made available under title II for the Centers.

Authorizes the President to establish the Independent States Business and Agriculture Advisory Council to: (1) advise the President regarding assistance programs for the independent states; and (2) evaluate the adequacy of bilateral and multilateral assistance programs that would facilitate exports and investments by US companies in the independent states.

Encourages the President to use a portion of funds made available under title II to fund export promotion and related activities and capital projects.

Declares that the Secretary of Commerce should implement programs to provide commercial and technical assistance to US businesses seeking markets in the independent states.

States that the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee should utilize its interagency working group on energy to assist US energy sector companies to develop a long-term strategy for penetrating the energy market in the independent states.

Requires the Secretary of the Commerce to report annually to the Congress on: (1) implementation of this title; (2) programs of other industrialized nations to assist their companies with efforts to transact business in the independent states; and (3) trading practices of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development nations and pricing practices of the independent states that may be disadvantageous to US companies.

Declares that the President should give priority attention to combatting tied aid practices if the Secretary of the Treasury determines that foreign countries are engaged in such practices with respect to any of the independent states.
Authorizes the President to provide technical assistance, through an American university in a region which received nonstop air service to and from the Russian Far East as of July 1, 1992, to facilitate the development of US business opportunities, free markets, and democratic institutions in the Russian Far East. Authorizes appropriations.

Makes funds under title II available for Overseas Private Investment Corporation programs in the independent states.

Title IV: The Democracy Corps - Authorizes the President to provide for the establishment of a Democracy Corps, a private, nonprofit corporation, to maintain a presence in the independent states. Authorizes the AID Administrator to make an annual grant to the Democracy Corps. Requires the grant to enable the Corps to assist at the local level in the development of: (1) institutions of democratic governance; and (2) nongovernmental organizations of a civil society. Directs the Corps to carry out its activities through the placement of teams of US citizens with appropriate expertise in the independent states to: (1) provide advice and technical assistance; (2) make small grants to assist in the development of such institutions and organizations; (3) identify other sources of assistance; and (4) operate local centers to serve as information and educational centers and to encourage those involved in the development of democratic institutions, market-oriented economies, and civil societies.

Prohibits the use of funds for the Corps or any grant from the Corps to finance the campaigns of candidates for public office.

Earmarks an amount from funding made available under title II for the Corps.

Title V: Nonproliferation and Disarmament Programs and Activities - Permits nonproliferation assistance to be obligated for an independent state only if the President has certified to the Congress that such independent state is committed to: (1) making a substantial investment of its resources for dismantling or destroying weapons of mass destruction if obligated to do so under an agreement; (2) forgoing any military modernization program that exceeds legitimate defense requirements and forgoing the replacement of destroyed weapons of mass destruction; (3) forgoing any use in new nuclear weapons of components of destroyed nuclear weapons; and (4) facilitating US verification of weapons destruction carried out under this Act or the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991.

Authorizes the President to promote nonproliferation and disarmament activities by: (1) supporting the dismantlement and destruction of nuclear, biological, and chemical
weapons, their delivery systems, and conventional weapons of the independent states; (2) supporting efforts to halt the proliferation of such weapons, systems, and related technologies; (3) establishing programs for safeguarding against the proliferation of such weapons; (4) establishing programs for preventing diversion of weapons-related scientific and technical expertise of the independent states to terrorist groups or third countries; (5) establishing science and technology centers in the independent states for purposes of engaging weapons scientists and engineers in productive, nonmilitary undertakings; and (6) establishing programs for facilitating the conversion of military technologies and capabilities and defense industries of the former Soviet Union into civilian activities.

Makes funds available for such activities. Bars the obligation of such funds unless FY 1993 expenditures are counted against the defense category of the discretionary spending limits for purposes of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Authorizes the use of security assistance funds for such activities.

Prohibits the obligation of funds for the conversion of military technologies and capabilities and defense industries of the former Soviet Union unless the President has previously obligated an amount equal to such sums in the same fiscal year for defense conversion and transition activities in the United States.

Amends the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991 to increase the amount of funds that may be transferred from Department of Defense accounts for use in reducing the Soviet military threat. Makes such amendment inapplicable if the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 enacts a similar amendment.

Authorizes the Secretary of Defense to provide assistance to support international nonproliferation activities. Bars the obligation of such funds unless the expenditures will be counted against the defense category of discretionary spending limits for FY 1993 pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Prohibits the furnishing of assistance unless the Secretary certifies to the Congress that the assistance: (1) is in the national security interest; and (2) will not adversely affect the military preparedness of the United States.

Limits the amount of such assistance and the amount to be provided for the On-Site Inspection Agency in support of the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq. Makes international nonproliferation authorities of this Act inapplicable if the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 enacts the same authorities.
Directs the Secretary of State to report to the Congress on possible alternatives for
the ultimate disposition of special nuclear materials of the former Soviet Union.

Authorizes the Director of the National Science Foundation to establish an
endowed, nongovernmental, nonprofit foundation to: (1) promote and support joint research
and development projects for peaceful purposes between scientists and engineers in the
United States and the independent states on subjects of mutual interest; and (2) seek to
establish joint nondefense industrial research, development, and demonstration activities
through private sector linkages which may involve participation by scientists and engineers
in the university or academic sectors.

Makes funds appropriated under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal
Year 1993 (to the extent available) available for the establishment of the endowment.

Requires an independent state, as a condition of participation in the foundation, to
make a minimum contribution to the endowment which shall reflect its ability to make a
financial contribution and its expected level of participation in the foundation's programs.
Authorizes local currencies generated by US assistance programs to be made available to
the foundation.

Title VI: Space Trade and Cooperation - Requires any request for a license or other
approval described under this title that is submitted to a US Government agency by the
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), its contractors, or any other
person to be considered on an expedited basis by that agency. Provides for notification of
designated congressional committees if an agency denies a request. Applies this title to
requests for licenses or approval necessary to conduct discussions with an independent state
with respect to the possible acquisition of space hardware, space technology, or space
service for integration into US space projects that have been approved by the Congress or
commercial space ventures.

Encourages the Office of Space Commerce of the Department of Commerce to
conduct trade missions to appropriate independent states to familiarize US aerospace
industry representatives with space hardware, technologies, and services that may be
available from the independent states and with the business practices and business climate
of such states.

Directs the Office of Space Commerce to: (1) monitor the progress of discussions
being carried out with the independent states for the acquisition of space hardware,
technology, or service for integration into US space projects; and (2) advise the NASA
Administrator of the impact on US industry of each potential acquisition of such hardware, technology, or services from the independent states, including any anticompetitive issues the Office may observe.

Title VII: Agricultural Trade - Amends the Food Security Act of 1985 to waive the annual tonnage limitation with respect to commodities furnished from stocks of the Commodity Credit Corporation (Corporation) during FY 1993 to the independent states. Permits the Corporation to make commodities available on grant or credit terms to such states.

Encourages the President to make funds available to assist private voluntary organizations and cooperatives in carrying out food assistance programs for the independent states.

Expresses the sense of the Congress that the President should encourage the involvement of multinational organizations to monitor the transport and distribution of food aid within the independent states.

Amends the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to make the independent states eligible for an agricultural fellowship program. Authorizes fellowships to private agricultural producers under such program.

Amends the Agricultural Development and Trade Act of 1990 to authorize direct credits with respect to the promotion of agricultural exports to emerging democracies. Permits export credit guarantees under such Act to be available for the establishment or improvement of facilities or the provision of services or US goods in emerging democracies by US persons if such guarantees will promote the export of US agricultural commodities.

Amends the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 to exempt the independent states from conditions on export financing of, and export credit guarantees with respect to, agricultural commodities by the Corporation that require the development of the importing country as a foreign market on a long-term basis or the improvement of the capability of the country to use such commodities on a long-term basis.

Authorizes the Corporation to use such financing and guarantees to assist emerging democracies that have committed to carry out policies that promote economic freedom, private domestic production of food commodities for domestic consumption, and the expansion of domestic markets for the purchase and sale of such commodities.
Prohibits the Corporation from making export sales financing available in connection with sales of an agricultural commodity to any country that cannot adequately service the debt associated with the sale.

Directs the Corporation to ensure that at least 35 per cent of the total amount of credit guarantees issued in connection with sales to the independent states under the export credit guarantee program (and 25 per cent of the funds expended under the export enhancement program) in a fiscal year are issued (or expended) to promote the export of processed and high-value agricultural products, with the balance issued (or expended) to promote the export of bulk or raw agricultural commodities.

Makes such percentage requirements inapplicable only if the percentage of the total amount of: (1) credit guarantees issued in a fiscal year to promote the export of such products to all countries is less than 25 per cent; and (2) funds expended and the value of commodities made available in a fiscal year to promote such exports to all countries is less than 15 per cent.

Title VIII: United States Information Agency, Department of State, and Related Agencies and Activities - Amends the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 to designate a specified law and business training program for students from the independent states and the Baltic States as the Edmund S. Muskie Fellowship Program.

Repeals provisions of such Act relating to the Soviet embassy in Washington, D.C.

Amends the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Anti-Terrorism Act of 1986 to require at least 15 Fascell fellowships (for temporary service at US missions abroad) to be provided during FY 1993.

Considers the International Development Law Institute to be a public international organization for purposes of the International Organizations Immunities Act.

Authorizes appropriations for FY 1993 for exchanges with the independent states. Permits the Director of the US Information Agency (USIA) to use funds to provide technical assistance in local and regional self-government to the independent states.

Authorizes appropriations for FY 1993 for the Fulbright Academic Exchange Programs and other programs administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Authorizes the President to establish regional agribusiness offices at State universities and land grant colleges for purposes of expanding exchanges between agribusiness practitioners in the United States and the independent states. Bars the use of funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act for such program.

Title IX: Other Provisions - Amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to remove Czechoslovakia, Estonia, East Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, and the Soviet Union from the list of Communist countries to which assistance is prohibited.

Makes a provision of the Federal criminal code that prescribes penalties for financial transactions with foreign governments in default on obligations to the United States inapplicable with respect to obligations of the former Soviet Union.

Amends the SEED Act of 1989 to authorize the President to conduct SEED activities in any East European country similar to those being conducted in Hungary and Poland (with specified exceptions).

Authorizes the President to furnish administration of justice assistance to East European countries under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Includes Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and states that were once part of Yugoslavia in the definition of “East European countries” for purposes of the SEED Act.

Amends the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1990 to extend certain provisions granting refugee status or permanent residence to nationals of the independent states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Prohibits US assistance under this Act (other than title V) or any other Act to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President reports to the Congress that such government is taking steps to cease all blockades and uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Title X: International Financial Institutions - Amends the Bretton Woods Agreements Act to authorize: (1) the US Governor of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to consent to an increase in the US quota of the IMF and to the amendments to the Articles of Agreement of the IMF approved in resolution 45-3 of the Board of Governors; and (2) the US Executive Director of the IMF to approve a pledge to sell gold to restore the resources of the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility Trust.
Directs the Secretary of the Treasury to instruct the US Executive Director of the IMF to promote the following proposals: (1) considerations of poverty alleviation and reduction of barriers to economic and social progress in all IMF programs; (2) audits to review policy prescriptions in the areas of poverty and the environment; (3) economic reform programs that increase the productive participation of the poor in the economy; and (4) public access to information.

Requires the Secretary to instruct the US Executive Director of the IMF to urge the IMF to explore ways to increase the participation of representatives from the loan-recipient country in the development of IMF programs.

Directs the US Executive Director of the IMF to urge the IMF to: (1) develop an economic methodology to measure the level of military spending by each developing country; (2) provide the Executive Board of the IMF with annual reports estimating the level of such spending by such countries; and (3) include an analysis of the level of such spending in every Article IV consultation with a developing country.

Supports US participation in a currency stabilization fund for the independent states.

Requires the Secretary to instruct the US Executive Director of the IMF to urge the IMF to study the need for, and feasibility of, a currency stabilization fund for Ukraine and make recommendations with respect to the economic and policy conditions required for the success of such a fund.

Amends the International Finance Corporation Act to authorize the US Governor of the Corporation to: (1) vote for any increase in capital stock needed to accommodate the requirements of the independent states; and (2) agree to amendments to the Corporation's Articles of Agreement to increase the votes by which the capital stock may be increased and by which the Articles of Agreement may be amended.

Requires the Secretary to report to the Congress on the debt incurred by the former Soviet Union held by commercial financial institutions outside the independent states that are obligated on such debt.

Amends the International Financial Institutions Act to add the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the IMF to the list of institutions through which the United States shall advance human rights.

Directs the Secretary to instruct the US Executive Directors of international financial institutions, in assessing human rights, to consider, in relation to assistance to
Russia and the other independent states, the responsiveness of such governments to providing a substantial accounting of Americans missing in action.

Requires the US Director of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency to report to the Congress on: (1) the investments in the independent states of the former Soviet Union guaranteed by the Agency; and (2) the demand for investment guarantees of the type provided by the Agency for investments in the independent states.
Appendix B

Major US Educational Programs in Central Asia since 1993

a. Public Affairs section of the US Embassy administers the following US Government programs:

Fulbright Program - Two-way exchange program for senior scholars, researchers and professors from countries worldwide who have doctoral degrees.

English Teaching Fellow Program – Exchange program for English teachers.


International Visitor Program – Exchange program for high professionals in different fields. The International Visitor Program brings participants to the United States from all over the world each year to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to experience the U.S. firsthand.

Speakers/Specialists – Exchange program for high professionals in different fields.

Aid-to-Artisan’s Craft Organization Program (ATA COLE).

Humphrey program – for mid level professionals.

b. American Councils for International Education (ACTR/ACCELS)

FSA/FLEX - Freedom Support Act Future Leaders Exchange Program provides scholarships to more than 1,200 secondary students from Eurasia each year for an academic year of study at an American high school. The program was initiated by the Senator Bill Bradley and was launched in 1993 (this year all the FSA FLEX Alumni Hubs of NIS are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the FLEX program).

Ugrad – Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program provided fellowships to undergraduates from Eastern Europe and Eurasia for one academic year of study in the United States.

Edmund Muskie/Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Program awards fellowships for graduate study in the United States to citizens of Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

US – Eurasia Awards for Excellence in Teaching Program identifies and rewards outstanding teachers from throughout Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

Partners in Education is a six-week community-based training and internship program in civics education for secondary school teachers from Eastern Europe and Eurasia.
Regional Scholar Exchange Program provided scholars in the humanities and social sciences with individual, non-degree research opportunities at universities and institutes in the United States.

Junior Faculty Development Program is an eleven-month faculty development program for university professors from Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

c. Soros Foundation

Undergraduate Students Exchange Program provided fellowships to undergraduates for one academic year of study in the United States.

Edmund Muskie/Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Program awards fellowships for graduate study in the United States to citizens of Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

Faculty Development Program goal was to create conditions for establishment and development of professionals' contacts between faculty in the USA and Kyrgyzstan.

Social Workers Program provides fellowship for graduate students study in USA's universities two academic years.

English Language Program provided regional methodological seminars for English language secondary school teachers.

Regional Secondary School Scholarship Program provides scholarships for school students, study in schools in the USA from 5 weeks - up to 1 year.

d. International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) Programs, which are administered by IREX, are supported by the US Government. They are:

Curriculum Development Exchange Program provided graduate level exchange and training fellowships for educators or advanced graduate students from NIS. Participants spent four months at US universities.

Regional Scholar Exchange Program provided scholars in the humanities and social sciences with individual, non-degree research opportunities at universities and institutes in the United States.

Freedom Support Act Undergraduate Program provided fellowships to undergraduates from Eastern Europe and Eurasia for one academic year of study in the United States.

FSA Contemporary Issues Fellowship Program awards fellowships to government officials, NGO leaders, and other professionals from Eurasia engaged in the political, economic, social, and educational transformation of their countries.

Edmund Muskie and Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Programs awards fellowships for graduate study in the United States to citizens of Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

e. Civic Education Project
Local Faculty Fellowship Program, is for those who, after studying abroad, return to university positions in their home countries. CEP offers these scholars financial, institutional and professional development support for at least one academic year.

Visiting Faculty Fellowship Program brings scholars from around the world to teach for at least one academic year at universities in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. These fellows receive a basic package of support, including allowances for teaching materials.

SCOUT (Support for Community Outreach and University Teaching) program is for Edmund Muskie FSA graduates program alumni only. They can apply for part-time, full-time or special project grants. SCOUT grantees can be renewed, if they successfully complete the first grant period.

Central Asian Scholarly Support Association program (CASSA), which supports local professors in developing new courses at their universities.

Central Asia Student Emergency) fund (CASE) – small scale emergency financial assistance to student for such items as medicine, eye glasses, entrance fees for graduate schools etc.¹

¹Personal communications with Anara Jamasheva, Senior Educational Adviser, IREX, Bishkek, April/June 2003.
Appendix C

US Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999

To amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to target assistance to support the economic and political independence of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Section 1: Short Title

This Act may be cited as the “Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999”.

Section 2: Findings

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The ancient Silk Road, once the economic lifeline of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, traversed much of the territory now within the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

(2) Economic interdependence spurred mutual cooperation among the peoples along the Silk Road and restoration of the historic relationships and economic ties between those peoples is an important element of ensuring their sovereignty as well as the success of democratic and market reforms.

(3) The development of strong political, economic, and security ties among countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia and the West will foster stability in this region, which is vulnerable to political and economic pressures from the south, north, and east.

(4) The development of open market economies and open democratic systems in the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia will provide positive incentives for
international private investment, increased trade, and other forms of commercial interactions with the rest of the world.

(5) Many of the countries of the South Caucasus have secular Muslim governments that are seeking closer alliance with the United States and that have diplomatic and commercial relations with Israel.

(6) The region of the South Caucasus and Central Asia could produce oil and gas in sufficient quantities to reduce the dependence of the United States on energy from the volatile Persian Gulf region.

(7) United States foreign policy and international assistance should be narrowly targeted to support the economic and political independence as well as democracy building, free market policies, human rights, and regional economic integration of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Section 3: Policy of the United States

It shall be the policy of the United States in the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia—

(1) to promote and strengthen independence, sovereignty, democratic government, and respect for human rights;

(2) to promote tolerance, pluralism, and understanding and counter racism and anti-Semitism;

(3) to assist actively in the resolution of regional conflicts and to facilitate the removal of impediments to cross-border commerce;

(4) to promote friendly relations and economic cooperation;

(5) to help promote market-oriented principles and practices;

(6) to assist in the development of the infrastructure necessary for communications, transportation, education, health, and energy and trade on an East-West axis in order to build strong international relations and commerce between those countries and the stable, democratic, and market-oriented countries of the Euro-Atlantic Community; and
(7) to support United States business interests and investments in the region.

Section 4: United States Efforts to Resolve Conflicts in the South Caucasus and Central Asia

It is the sense of Congress that the President should use all diplomatic means practicable, including the engagement of senior United States Government officials, to press for an equitable, fair, and permanent resolution to the conflicts in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Section 5: Amendment of the Foreign Assistance ACT of 1961

Part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

Chapter 12—Support for the Economic and Political Independence of the Countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia

Section 499: United States Assistance to Promote Reconciliation and Recovery from Regional Conflicts

(a) Purpose of Assistance- The purposes of assistance under this section include:

(1) the creation of the basis for reconciliation between belligerents;

(2) the promotion of economic development in areas of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia impacted by civil conflict and war; and

(3) the encouragement of broad regional cooperation among countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia that have been destabilized by internal conflicts.

(b) Authorization for Assistance:

'(1) In General- To carry out the purposes of subsection (a), the President is authorized to provide humanitarian assistance and economic reconstruction assistance for the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia to support the activities described in subsection (c).
(2) Definition of Humanitarian Assistance- In this subsection, the term “humanitarian assistance” means assistance to meet humanitarian needs, including needs for food, medicine, medical supplies and equipment, education, and clothing.

(c) Activities Supported- Activities that may be supported by assistance under subsection (b) include:

(1) providing for the humanitarian needs of victims of the conflicts;

(2) facilitating the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes; and

(3) assisting in the reconstruction of residential and economic infrastructure destroyed by war.

(d) Policy- It is the sense of Congress that the United States should, where appropriate, support the establishment of neutral, multinational peacekeeping forces to implement peace agreements reached between belligerents in the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Section 499A: Economic Assistance

(a) Purpose of Assistance- The purpose of assistance under this section is to foster economic growth and development, including the conditions necessary for regional economic cooperation, in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

(b) Authorization for Assistance- To carry out the purpose of subsection (a), the President is authorized to provide assistance for the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia to support the activities described in subsection (c).

(c) Activities Supported- In addition to the activities described in section 498, activities supported by assistance under subsection (b) should support the development of the structures and means necessary for the growth of private sector economies based upon market principles.

(d) Policy- It is the sense of Congress that the United States should--

(1) assist the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia to develop policies, laws, and regulations that would facilitate the ability of those countries to develop free
market economies and to join the World Trade Organization to enjoy all the benefits of membership; and

(2) consider the establishment of zero-to-zero tariffs between the United States and the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Section 499B: Development of Infrastructure

(a) Purpose of Programs- The purposes of programs under this section include—

(1) to develop the physical infrastructure necessary for regional cooperation among the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia; and

(2) to encourage closer economic relations and to facilitate the removal of impediments to cross-border commerce among those countries and the United States and other developed nations.

(b) Authorization for Programs- To carry out the purposes of subsection (a), the following types of programs for the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia may be used to support the activities described in subsection (c):

(1) Activities by the Export-Import Bank to complete the review process for eligibility for financing under the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945.

(2) The provision of insurance, reinsurance, financing, or other assistance by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

(3) Assistance under section 661 of this Act (relating to the Trade and Development Agency).

(c) Activities Supported- Activities that may be supported by programs under subsection (b) include promoting actively the participation of United States companies and investors in the planning, financing, and construction of infrastructure for communications, transportation, including air transportation, and energy and trade including highways, railroads, port facilities, shipping, banking, insurance, telecommunications networks, and gas and oil pipelines.

(d) Policy- It is the sense of Congress that the United States representatives at the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance
Corporation, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development should encourage lending to the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia to assist the development of the physical infrastructure necessary for regional economic cooperation.

**Section 499C: Border Control Assistance**

(a) Purpose of Assistance- The purpose of assistance under this section includes the assistance of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia to secure their borders and implement effective controls necessary to prevent the trafficking of illegal narcotics and the proliferation of technology and materials related to weapons of mass destruction (as defined in section 2332a(c)(2) of title 18, United States Code), and to contain and inhibit transnational organized criminal activities.

(b) Authorization for Assistance- To carry out the purpose of subsection (a), the President is authorized to provide assistance to the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia to support the activities described in subsection (c).

(c) Activities Supported- Activities that may be supported by assistance under subsection (b) include assisting those countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia in developing capabilities to maintain national border guards, coast guard, and customs controls.

(d) Policy- it is the sense of Congress that the United States should encourage and assist the development of regional military cooperation among the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia through programs such as the Central Asian Battalion and the Partnership for Peace of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

**Section 499D: Strengthening Democracy, Tolerance, and the Development of Civil Society**

(a) Purpose of Assistance- The purpose of assistance under this section is to promote institutions of democratic government and to create the conditions for the growth of pluralistic societies, including religious tolerance and respect for internationally recognized human rights.
(b) Authorization for Assistance- To carry out the purpose of subsection (a), the President is authorized to provide the following types of assistance to the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia:

(1) Assistance for democracy building, including programs to strengthen parliamentary institutions and practices.

(2) Assistance for the development of nongovernmental organizations.

(3) Assistance for development of independent media.

(4) Assistance for the development of the rule of law, a strong independent judiciary, and transparency in political practice and commercial transactions.

(5) International exchanges and advanced professional training programs in skill areas central to the development of civil society.

(6) Assistance to promote increased adherence to civil and political rights under section 116(e) of this Act.

(c) Activities Supported- Activities that may be supported by assistance under subsection (b) include activities that are designed to advance progress toward the development of democracy.

(d) Policy- it is the sense of Congress that the Voice of America and RFE/RL, Incorporated, should maintain high quality broadcasting for the maximum duration possible in the native languages of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Section 499E: Ineligibility for Assistance

(a) In General- Except as provided in subsection (b), assistance may not be provided under this chapter for the government of a country of the South Caucasus or Central Asia if the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the government of such country:

(1) is engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights;
(2) has, on or after the date of enactment of this chapter, knowingly transferred to another country--

(A) missiles or missile technology inconsistent with the guidelines and parameters of the Missile Technology Control Regime (as defined in section 11B(c) of the Export Administration Act of 1979 950 U.S.C. App. 2410b(c); or

(B) any material, equipment, or technology that would contribute significantly to the ability of such country to manufacture any weapon of mass destruction (including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons) if the President determines that the material, equipment, or technology was to be used by such country in the manufacture of such weapons;

(3) has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism; or

(4) is prohibited from receiving such assistance by chapter 10 of the Arms Export Control Act or section 306(a)(1) and 307 of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991 (22 U.S.C. 5604(a)(1), 5605).

(b) Exceptions to Ineligibility

(1) Exceptions- Assistance prohibited by subsection (a) or any similar provision of law, other than assistance prohibited by the provisions referred to in paragraphs (2) and (4) of subsection (a), may be furnished under any of the following circumstances:

(A) The President determines that furnishing such assistance is important to the national interest of the United States.

(B) The President determines that furnishing such assistance will foster respect for internationally recognized human rights and the rule of law or the development of institutions of democratic governance.

(C) The assistance is furnished for the alleviation of suffering resulting from a natural or man-made disaster.

(D) The assistance is provided under the secondary school exchange program administered by the United States Information Agency.
(2) Report to Congress- The President shall immediately report to Congress any
determination under paragraph (1) (A) or (B) or any decision to provide assistance
under paragraph (1)(C).

Section 499F: Administrative Authorities

(a) Assistance Through Governments and Nongovernmental Organizations-
Assistance under this chapter may be provided to governments or through
nongovernmental organizations.

(b) Use of Economic Support Funds- Except as otherwise provided, any funds that
have been allocated under chapter 4 of part II for assistance for the independent states
of the former Soviet Union may be used in accordance with the provisions of this
chapter.

(c) Terms and Conditions- Assistance under this chapter shall be provided on such
terms and conditions as the President may determine.

(d) Available Authorities- The authority in this chapter to provide assistance for the
countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia is in addition to the authority to
provide such assistance under the FREEDOM Support Act (22 U.S.C. 5801 et seq.) or
any other Act, and the authorities applicable to the provision of assistance under
chapter 11 may be used to provide assistance under this chapter.

Section 499G: Definitions

In this chapter:

(1) Appropriate Congressional Committees- The term appropriate congressional
committees' means the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the
Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives.

(2) Countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia- The term countries of the
South Caucasus and Central Asia means Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakstan,
Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Section 6: Restriction on Assistance for Government of Azerbaijan

Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act (22 U.S.C. 5812 note) is amended--
(1) by inserting (a) Restriction- and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

(b) Waiver- The restriction on assistance in subsection (a) shall not apply if the President determines, and so certifies to Congress, that the application of the restriction would not be in the national interests of the United States.

Section 7: Annual Report

Section 104 of the FREEDOM Support Act (22 U.S.C. 5814) is amended--

(1) by striking and at the end of paragraph (3);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (4) and inserting ;

(3) by adding the following new paragraph; and

(5) with respect to the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia--

(A) identifying the progress of United States foreign policy to accomplish the policy identified in section 3 of the Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999;

(B) evaluating the degree to which the assistance authorized by chapter 12 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 has been able to accomplish the purposes identified in those sections; and

(C) recommending any additional initiatives that should be undertaken by the United States to implement the policy and purposes contained in the Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999.

Section 8: Conforming Amendments

Section 102(a) of the FREEDOM Support Act (Public Law 102-511) is amended in paragraphs (2) and (4) by striking each place it appears “this Act”) and inserting this Act and the Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999).

Section 9: Definitions

In this Act:
(1) Appropriate Congressional Committees- The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives.

(2) Countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia- The term “countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia” means Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.¹

Notes

Appendix D

Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework
Between the United States of America and the Republic of Uzbekistan,
March 2002

The United States of America and the Republic of Uzbekistan, hereinafter referred to as the Sides,
Seeking to establish qualitatively new and mutually beneficial relations in the political, economic, military, military-technical, humanitarian and other areas;
Recognizing the importance of consistent implementation of democratic and market reforms in Uzbekistan as a necessary condition for ensuring political, social, and economic stability, sustainable development, prosperity, and national security;
Recognizing the fundamental principles of the indivisibility of global and regional security;
Convinced that the independence, territorial integrity and sustainable development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the inviolability of its borders, is one of the key factors in maintaining stability and security in Central Asia;
With deep appreciation for the relations that have been established between the two countries and that are based on common goals, including combating international terrorism and eradicating economic and financial sources of support for extremism and terrorism; and
Reaffirming their commitment to the legal objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter and the political objectives and principles of the Helsinki Final Act of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, as well as the principles of international law and human rights set forth in both UN and OSCE documents;
Have reached mutual understandings on the following:

I. Cooperation in the Political Field
Article 1.1 Principles of Cooperation

The Sides should implement bilateral cooperation and develop a strategic partnership based on the universally recognized principles and norms of international law; respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of both states; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; commitment to democratic values and human rights and freedoms; and conscientious fulfillment of their international obligations.

Article 1.2: Cooperation in the Area of Democratization

The Uzbek side reaffirms its commitment and intention to further intensify the democratic transformation of society in the political, economic and spiritual areas, taking into account the obligations deriving from international treaties and the requirements of national legislation.

The United States side will endeavor to provide appropriate advice, aid, and assistance, consistent with U.S. law, to the Uzbek side and Uzbek society to implement democratic reforms in the following priority areas, where both Sides expect concrete progress:

-- strengthening the foundation for a secular state based on the rule of law, a market-based economy and an effective social safety net, and building a strong and open civil society;

-- further strengthening and developing democratic values in the society, ensuring respect for human rights and freedoms based on the universally recognized principles and norms of international law;

-- enhancing the role of democratic and political institutions in the life of society; establishing a genuine multi-party system; developing political culture and activism among citizens; ensuring free and fair elections, political pluralism, diversity of opinions, and the freedom to express them; and ensuring the independence of the media;

-- further strengthening and developing non-governmental structures, including non-governmental and public organizations, including independent media, as well as organs of self-government, and simplifying the procedure for registering them;

-- ensuring implementation of the constitutional principle of separation of powers, improving the lawmaking process, and increasing the oversight functions of the legislature, including through the establishment of a freely elected and multi-party bicameral legislature;
-- further improving the judicial and legal system and adopting additional measures to ensure the independence of the courts as a fully empowered, independent branch of government; and
-- further improving the activities of executive and administrative agencies and increasing public oversight of their activities.
The forms of cooperation in this area should be determined within the framework of individual programs and agreements.

II. Security Cooperation in the Military and Military-Technical Field

Article 2.1: Security Issues

Recognizing that the security of states in the region is key to the development, prosperity, and stability of Central Asia, and developing a qualitatively new, long-term relationship, the United States affirms that it would regard with grave concern any external threat to the security and territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Were this to occur, the United States will consult with the Republic of Uzbekistan on an urgent basis to develop and implement an appropriate response in accordance with U.S. Constitutional procedures. For its part, the Republic of Uzbekistan recognizes the critical importance of developing close, cooperative ties with its neighbors and promoting efforts at regional cooperation.

Article 2.2: Combating Transnational Threats to Security

The Sides expect to develop cooperation in combating international terrorism, trafficking in persons, narcotics trafficking, organized crime, money laundering, illegal trafficking in weapons, munitions and explosives, and other transnational threats to security while respecting internationally recognized human rights and the rule of law. Cooperation in this field may include:
-- holding regular consultations on problems of ensuring security and stability in Central Asia, including political, military, economic, environmental, and other aspects;
-- establishing cooperation, on a permanent basis, between the law enforcement agencies and military services and agencies of the Sides, consistent with the national laws of the Sides;
— training special units of the Republic of Uzbekistan in combating terrorism, illegal narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and other transnational threats, and providing them with training assistance and equipment, and developing the necessary methodological and logistical basis for training special units;
— supporting the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear, bacteriological, biological, and chemical weapons and means of their delivery, as well as dual-purpose technologies;
— intensifying the export-control cooperative relationship to create an effective export-control system in the Republic of Uzbekistan;
— further strengthening and building up the infrastructure of the state border of the Republic of Uzbekistan and ensuring greater effectiveness in guarding and protecting the border; and
— other forms of cooperation as the Sides see fit.

Article 2.3: Bilateral Military and Military-Technical Cooperation

The Sides take note of the dynamic development of military and military-technical cooperation between the two countries and intend to intensify relations in this area in the future.

The Sides may cooperate in the following areas:
— modernizing and reforming the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including training in civil-military relations and its obligations for conduct under international conventions, increasing their combat readiness, and providing training and advanced training of specialists, officers and command staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
— using up-to-date information and computer technologies in training military personnel, and establishing and developing distance learning, and modeling and simulation systems in the Republic of Uzbekistan;
— re-equipping the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan with weapons and military hardware, providing assistance in modernizing and restoring the weapons and military hardware of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
— actively utilizing the entire complex of existing international mechanisms and instruments in providing military-technical assistance to the Republic of Uzbekistan, developing its military infrastructure, and strengthening the logistical and training/methodological foundation of military educational institutions and training centers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan; and
Article 2.4: Cooperation under the Partnership for Peace Program

In accordance with the requirements of their national legislation and their international obligations, and within the framework of the Republic of Uzbekistan’s participation in NATO’s Planning and Review Process (PARP) program and in the Partnership for Peace program, the Sides expect to develop cooperation on both a bilateral and multilateral basis for the purpose of:

-- training of peacekeeping units of the Republic of Uzbekistan, conducting bilateral and multilateral exercises within the framework of NATO Partnership for Peace and plans for bilateral contacts;

-- establishment of a NATO Partnership for Peace Training Center in the Republic of Uzbekistan, and organization of its activities; assistance by the U.S. side in strengthening the center's methodological and logistical base and in providing appropriate assistance for its activities;

-- assistance in the study and phased introduction of NATO standards in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to include equipping them with appropriate types of weapons and military hardware, as well as training military personnel within the NATO Partnership for Peace framework;

-- implementation of other measures as the Sides see fit.

Article 2.5: Disaster and Emergency Prevention and Response

The Sides reaffirm that sustainable development of the Central Asian region would benefit if cooperation in preventing and responding to natural disasters and natural, technogenic, and environmental emergencies is developed to the maximum extent possible.

The cooperation between the Sides in this field may include:

-- developing the capabilities of the countries of the region to predict and prevent emergencies;

-- increasing the preparedness of the population and the effectiveness of the emergency services of the Republic of Uzbekistan in preventing and responding to emergencies, as well as averting the consequences of natural, technogenic, and environmental disasters;
promoting cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations of the Sides to promote the prevention of natural, technogenic and environmental emergencies and disasters and mitigating the consequences of such situations; planning, developing and implementing joint measures to increase the capacities of emergency services to act in disaster response; and other forms of cooperation as the Sides see fit.

III. Cooperation in the Economic Field

Article 3.1: Development of Economic Cooperation

In support of Uzbekistan's transition to a market-based economy and its integration in the world economic system, the Sides plan to give priority to the economic aspect of bilateral cooperation. This relationship should focus on Uzbekistan's commitment to implement macroeconomic, financial, and structural reforms, including efforts to improve the economic prospects of the most vulnerable segments of the population. Economic reforms should be aimed at liberalizing the economy, achieving currency convertibility, increasing competitiveness, and developing the private sector.

Article 3.2: Implementation of Market Reforms

The Uzbek side reaffirms its commitment to implementing large-scale market reforms and intends to take steps aimed at: liberalizing all spheres and sectors of the economy, and expanding the freedom and economic independence of business entities; deepening structural reforms aimed at sustainable economic development, including in the areas of banking and finance; privatization; agriculture, including the procurement system; capital markets; and private-sector development; creating a legal and regulatory environment conducive to the development of an efficient market-based economy; and creating an attractive investment climate to attract foreign capital, by creating clear and transparent legal conditions that bar corruption, encourage good business and corporate governance, and respect contractual agreements. The Uzbek side also reaffirms its full cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions in order to:
-- achieve unification and convertibility of the national currency, and to fully implement the obligations under Article VIII of the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund;
-- increase the effectiveness of foreign economic relations, develop and strengthen Uzbekistan's export capacities, and update procedures and mechanisms in the field of customs rate regulations; and
-- provide accurate data to the international financial institutions, and adopt internationally acceptable accounting standards.

Article 3.3: Provision of Priority and Long-term Assistance in Implementing Economic Reforms

In support of Uzbekistan's implementation of economic reforms to achieve sustainable growth, the U.S. side reaffirms its willingness to:
-- promote bilateral programs of technical assistance that are consistent with Uzbekistan's long-term interests; and
-- support the Republic of Uzbekistan's dialogue with international financial institutions as the Republic of Uzbekistan demonstrates adherence to their mutually agreed conditionalities and programs.

Article 3.4: Development of Trade and Investment Cooperation

The Sides should also seek to develop and expand WTO-consistent trade and investment cooperation by:
a) expanding the scope of technical assistance provided to the Republic of Uzbekistan within the framework of appropriate United States government and other international programs aimed at:
-- development of technical and economic justifications for attracting to Uzbekistan U.S. companies and banks participating in investment projects, including in the field of small and medium-sized business;
-- introduction of international standards of quality and certification of export products, and the use of up-to-date marketing technologies to promote Uzbek products on the world market; and
-- development of energy-saving and information technologies.
b) encouraging private-sector development activities, including through support for the development of small and medium-sized business, and other areas of mutual interest.

c) establishing in Uzbekistan the conditions essential to attract foreign investment, facilitating the use of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) programs for investment projects, privatization of large government-owned enterprises, development of small and medium-sized private business and the infrastructure of international tourism, as well as in other spheres of the nation's economy; and

d) expanding reciprocal access to markets of goods, labor and services, including working toward terminating the application of Jackson-Vanik Amendment provisions and toward Permanent Normal Trade Relations status for the Republic of Uzbekistan, and assistance from appropriate United States government entities in the process of the Republic of Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO.

Article 3.5: Expansion of Regional Cooperation in Central Asia

The Sides reaffirm their goal of expanding and intensifying regional cooperation in Central Asia, and the desirability of providing assistance in strengthening friendly and neighborly relations among the countries of the region in matters relating to:

-- comprehensive development of economic relations among the nations of the Central Asian region;

-- formulation of effective forms and mechanisms for implementing agreements aimed at expanding reciprocal trade and investment among the nations of the region and beyond, including the development of common customs and tariff regimes consistent with WTO rules;

-- efficient and mutually beneficial use of water-management facilities, hydroelectric power resources, and other water-related infrastructures in Central Asia on the basis of the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and improvement of the mechanism of interstate use of transnational water resources;

-- establishing an interlinked regional and inter-regional transport, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure, including a system of international vehicular and railway transportation within the framework of the proposed "Europe-Caucasus-Asia" transportation and communications corridor; and

-- combating regional and transnational crime, especially narcotics trafficking, organized crime, human trafficking, and terrorism, through law enforcement cooperation among nations of the region and beyond.
IV. Cooperation in the Humanitarian Field and in Development of Human Resources

Article 4.1: Cooperation in Specialized Training, Education, Public Health, and Environmental Protection

The Sides intend to cooperate actively in the humanitarian field, particularly in the area of specialized training, education, public health, and environmental protection. Cooperation in this field may include:

-- providing humanitarian aid, including medicines, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and supplies, food aid, clothing and other humanitarian commodities to the populace of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including in zones of environmental distress;
-- development of human resources, including by providing professional and academic exchanges and training and Internet access, and by considering appropriate assistance to the Republic of Uzbekistan's new vocational colleges and academic high schools;
-- assistance for socially oriented projects to be implemented in Uzbekistan in the area of improving the primary health care system, including the establishment of a network of regional emergency medical training centers, technical assistance to rural clinics, improvement of the system for preventing infectious diseases and vaccinating the populace, specialized training and other projects in the context of implementing the Republic of Uzbekistan's National Program for improving the public health system;
-- encouraging international exchanges and initiatives of non-governmental organizations; and
-- such other forms of cooperation as the Sides see fit.

Article 4.2: Cooperation in the Field of Science and Technology

The Sides expect to cooperate actively in the area of basic sciences and the humanities, and also in high-technology areas. The Sides agree to discuss the possibility of entering into a Science and Technology Agreement between their governments that could provide significant mutual benefits. Cooperation in this field may include:

-- scientific exchange, contacts, and interaction of Sides' scientific associations, institutions, scholars, and specialists;
-- establishment of joint scientific associations;
-- the organization and carrying out of joint scientific investigations, including in high-technology areas;
-- the implementation of promising projects, including ones that serve the interests of ensuring security and stability in the Central Asian region;
-- specialized training in branches of science and technology that have priority for the Republic of Uzbekistan, including in high-technology areas;
-- provision by the U.S. side of technical and financial assistance in strengthening and developing the Republic of Uzbekistan’s system of scientific institutions through exchanges and grant programs consistent with U.S. law; and
-- such other forms of cooperation as the Sides see fit.

Article 4.3: Cooperation in the Area of the Human Dimension

The Sides expect to cooperate actively in matters of the human dimension, and express their resolve to ensure the effective exercise and protection of human rights and basic human freedoms, and the strengthening of democracy’s accomplishments in light of the requirements of international law and national legislation.

Article 4.4: Cooperation in the Field of Information

The Sides wish to encourage a broad and free exchange of information among the mass media, including non-governmental media, and each wishes to encourage the dissemination in the territory of its country of print, audio, and video products and other informational materials of the other country, in accordance with the existing national laws of each Side.

The Sides should seek to promote intensified cooperation by the professional associations of journalists and independent journalists of the two countries; the organization of exchanges of information and journalists; the holding of meetings, seminars, and conferences involving specialists on the mass media; and the implementation of joint projects in the area of journalist training.

The forms of cooperation and the conditions for exchanges may be developed through agreements between the relevant organizations of the two countries.

The Sides, through the relevant government agencies, should cooperate and exchange experience in the fields of democratization of the mass media.
V. Cooperation in the Legal Field

Article 5.1: Avenues of Cooperation in the Legal Field

Recognizing the shared view of the need to build in Uzbekistan a rule-of-law state and democratic society in accordance with international norms, the Sides will endeavor to develop cooperation in improving the legislative process, the law-based government system, and the judicial system, and enhancing the citizens’ legal culture and knowledge of law and the training of legal specialists.

Article 5.2: Improvement of Legislation

The Sides plan to cooperate in improving the Republic of Uzbekistan’s legislation in the light of generally recognized principles and standards of international law.

The cooperation may take place in the following areas:

-- supporting the primacy of law; protecting the rights and interests of the individual, the family, society, and the state; and strengthening and improving the legal defense of the rights and interests of citizens and legal entities;

-- establishing the legislative foundations for further democratization and liberalization, improving the activity of courts, and ensuring the independence of judges;

-- working to ensure that penal institutions meet international standards;

-- organizing seminars, training courses, and conferences, and exchanging visits by specialists and experts on current issues relating to contemporary law and law-making;

-- training and retraining personnel who take part in drafting and applying legislative and regulatory enactments;

-- exchanging information on legislation and the practice of its application; providing assistance in the translation of legislative and regulatory enactments; and

-- such other forms of cooperation as the Sides see fit.

The Sides intend also to endeavor to intensify their inter-parliamentary relations, and to promote improvement of the activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan’s Supreme Legislative Body.
Article 5.3: Cooperation of Law-Enforcement Agencies

The Sides intend to promote intensified cooperation and enhanced effectiveness of interaction on the part of the Sides' law enforcement agencies in conformity with existing agreements.

Cooperation in this field should be focused on:

-- specialized training and enhancement of skills of employees of the Republic of Uzbekistan's law enforcement agencies with respect for internationally recognized human rights and rule of law, including organizing internships and conducting relevant seminars and training courses;

-- exchange of work experience by law enforcement agencies, particularly in combating terrorism, narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, money laundering, and organized crime, as well as other particularly dangerous crimes;

-- strengthening the material and technical base of the Republic of Uzbekistan's law enforcement agencies; and

-- exchanging information on the operation of the penitentiary systems, in the context of a program for humanizing the penitentiary system, particularly in matters relating to retraining convicts for life in society after their release from their places of imprisonment.

VI. General

The Sides should endeavor to find new fields of joint activity, and to expand and intensify their relations. They may wish to conclude other bilateral intergovernmental and interagency understandings in order to implement the specific provisions and intentions of this Declaration. Nothing in this Declaration is intended to effect an obligation of funds by either Side nor to prejudice the rights and obligations of the Sides under existing agreements, and everything provided should be subject to the laws and regulations of both countries.

Signed at Washington, in duplicate, on March 12, 2002, in the English and Uzbek languages.¹

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