

SPECIAL REPORT

CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY CHALLENGES: 2012 AND BEYOND

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AFGHANISTAN

Overview:

Afghanistan plays a pivotal role in Central Asia's regional instability due to its weak central government, poor economy, and ethnically diverse population. Although Afghanistan contains important natural resources, the country still faces a number of problems, each of which has the potential to destroy the Afghan government after the pull-out of international military forces.¹ As a result of their nation's poor economy, many Afghan people have resorted to the production and distribution of illegal narcotics.² The revenue acquired from this illegal industry enables terrorist organizations to wage violent campaigns against the Afghan government.³

While many organizations have claimed responsibility for the plethora of violent attacks in recent years, the Taliban, Haqqani Network and Hezb-e-Islami have been the main perpetrators.⁴ In particular, the Taliban has used attacks as a means of regaining the power it lost following the invasion of Coalition forces in 2001. The tactics employed by the Taliban, like the other organizations, varies greatly and includes the use of suicide bombers and strategically placed explosives targeting mosques, security checkpoints and public gatherings.⁵

Violence and instability in Afghanistan are compounded by the largely ungoverned border it shares with Pakistan.⁶ Given its remote and rugged terrain, as well as a large population of extremist sympathizers, terrorist networks are able to use Pakistan as a place for planning and coordinating attacks in Afghanistan. This is especially true in the Federally Administered Tribal Regions (FATA), an area in northwest Pakistan that serves as a semi-autonomous collection of tribal groups that are largely exempt from policies enacted by the Pakistani government.⁷

In an attempt to combat the violence, Afghanistan has instituted a number of security measures, including new legislation, improved security tactics, and the implementation of pro-active approaches to thwarting recruitment into these organizations. Today, Afghanistan's newly enhanced security forces are comprised of a number of agencies and positions that include the National Directorate of Security, the National Army, and the National Police.⁸ The latter is divided between the Border Police, the Civil Order Police, and the Highway Police. These forces are trained and assisted by NATO and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). While the creation of these departments is a start, it is unclear whether Afghanistan can independently maintain its own security once coalition forces leave at the end of 2014.⁹ Due to Afghanistan's rich history of terrorism, extremism, and illegal arms and opium trade, the future security of this fragile state will have enormous implications for the rest of the region.

Security Issues:

Terrorism

Afghan Taliban: Comprised at first mostly of students who attended the madrassas in Pakistan, the Taliban was, at one time, the ruling party of Afghanistan.¹⁰ With the invasion of U.S. led

forces in October of 2001, the Taliban was uprooted and retreated into the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Due to the large and resilient support system it acquired during its rule from 1996-2001, the Taliban remains the largest threat to stability in Afghanistan.¹¹

Al-Qa'ida: While Afghanistan once provided a safe haven for al-Qa'ida, the collapse of the Taliban regime has resulted in an exodus of members into neighboring Pakistan. The invasion of a U.S.-led coalition has resulted in the apprehension and killing of many top al-Qa'ida leaders.¹² These include the May 2, 2011 raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan that resulted in the death of Usama bin Laden.¹³ While al-Qa'ida still poses a threat to Afghanistan, they arguably serve more as a spiritual guide for other groups rather than a tangible threat in the region. As of 2011, analysts estimate that only roughly 100 al-Qa'ida operatives reside in Afghanistan.¹⁴

Haqqani Network: Based in the borderlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Haqqani Network is responsible for some of the most violent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. Headed by Malawi Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin, the Haqqani Network is closely affiliated with al-Qa'ida and consists largely of Pashtun warlords.¹⁵ In recent months, they have been responsible for a number of attacks, including the 12-hour siege at the Lakeside Hotel in Kabul that killed 18 people and injured many more.¹⁶

Hezb-e Islami: Reportedly comprised of thousands of soldiers, this terrorist organization is headed by warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former Afghan prime minister and one time ally of the United States.¹⁷ In the past, Hezb-e Islami has had very strong relations with al-Qa'ida and is still considered to be closely linked with the Afghan Taliban. In 2002, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency launched an attempt to kill Hekmatyar in an effort to dissolve the terrorist organization. Currently, Hekmatyar and his followers are believed to be operating in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.¹⁸

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT): Meaning "Army of the Righteous," Lashkar-e-Tayyiba is an organization also based in Pakistan.¹⁹ One of their most notable attacks occurred in 2008 when members raided the city of Mumbai, India, killing 166 people.²⁰ Although this organization has dealt primarily with the violent tension between India and Pakistan and the dispute over the regions of Kashmir and Jammu, in recent years, LeT has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks in neighboring Afghanistan.²¹ LeT focuses its efforts on disrupting Afghan stability in an attempt to delegitimize the Afghan government and restore strict Sharia law. LeT has also formed a close alliance with al-Qa'ida, providing a safe haven for many of its members.²²

Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP): The Tehrik-e-Taliban was formed in 2007 when a number of small groups joined forces to repel Pakistani forces in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Regions (FATA).²³ In addition to the use of violence directed towards Pakistan, the TTP has directed its campaign towards the Coalition forces in Afghanistan with hopes of removing their presence. TTP also shares a very strong relationship with the al-Qa'ida leadership believed to be residing in tribal regions along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In retaliation for the death of Osama bin Laden, TTP vowed to attack western interests and is strongly believed to be the mastermind behind the failed 2010 Times Square bomb plot.²⁴

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU): Formed in 1998, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is a coalition of Islamic extremists dedicated to the overthrow of the Uzbek state and the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Central Asia. Based in Pakistan, the IMU is primarily active in eastern and northern Afghanistan.²⁵

Boundary Disputes

Afghanistan continues to disagree with Iran over the Helmand River tributary. The Iranian government has persistently claimed that the Afghan government dams this vital waterway (which runs through Afghanistan and empties into the Lake Hamun) during times of drought, resulting in a restriction of water flow vital to Afghan and Iranian agriculture.²⁶ While this issue continues to be a point of contention between the two nations, the removal of the Taliban in 2001 has helped to improve relations. Until 2001, the Iranian government supported the Northern Alliance, a group from the northern regions of Afghanistan that opposed Taliban rule.²⁷ Afghanistan's border with Pakistan is another disputed area. Although Pakistan and Afghanistan continue dialogue concerning security and trade issues along the border, recent meetings between heads of state, mediated by Turkish officials, have resulted in better relations between the two countries. The primary problem that plagues Afghanistan is the continuous use of Pakistan's mountainous tribal region as a safe haven for those who oppose the Afghan government.²⁸

In order to accommodate the large influx of U.S. military personnel and provisions immediately following the invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. military created the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) along the historic Silk Road.²⁹ This allowed Afghanistan to improve trade and deepen its relationships with Central Asia, the Caucasus, Russia, and China. The increase in regional influence has widened the possibility that Afghanistan can improve its economic and trade prospects which are largely natural resource-based.³⁰

Following the defeat of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan and bordering countries signed the 'Good Neighbor Declaration,' which promised to dutifully respect and acknowledge Afghanistan's 'territorial integrity.'³¹ Other regional players, including Russia, China, and Turkey, reaffirmed this declaration with the signing of the Istanbul Declaration in November 2011, further pledging their commitment to embrace the key tenets proposed in the Good Neighbor Declaration.³²

Other transnational issues include recent attempts by Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to supply northern Afghanistan with electricity.³³ Uzbekistan in particular has embraced Afghan industry since the fall of the Taliban. One hundred and twenty-two Afghan enterprises were registered in Uzbekistan, with 39 operating on 100% Afghan investment.³⁴ Turkmenistan has also improved relations with Afghanistan and continues to work closely with it on a broad cooperation package including the construction of the Trans-Afghan natural gas pipeline.³⁵ There is also scope for a project to distribute Turkmen electricity to Afghanistan and the region.³⁶ Additionally, there has been an increase in cooperation between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan against the threats emanating from terrorism and narcotics.

Trafficking

Afghanistan continues to serve as a major source, transit, and destination point for human trafficking. The industry is largely centered on the sale and distribution of women and children for sex and forced labor, though males also constitute a small percentage of the trade.³⁷ Women have been forced into the labor market in an attempt to capitalize on a very lucrative carpet-making industry. While the Afghan government has implemented legislation through the 2008 Human Trafficking Law, the enforcement of this law has been considered weak.³⁸

The agricultural economy of Afghanistan is heavily supported by the production of opiates – most notably opium poppies. Recent estimates indicate that drug sales are equivalent to 1/3 of Afghanistan's economic activity.³⁹ The Taliban reaps significant revenues from this illicit industry and uses these revenues to finance its terrorist activities. A recent report from the Center for American Progress indicates that “between 2005 and 2008 the Taliban accrued \$350-\$650 million from the trade” of opium.⁴⁰

In combination with the lucrative opium trade, buyers often exchange narcotics for weapons, which are then smuggled back into Afghanistan by insurgents and used against the government and coalition forces. These weapons range from basic small arms and improvised explosive devices to more sophisticated anti-aircraft and shoulder-fired launchers.⁴¹ Recently, concerns have been mounting regarding the distribution of weapons to Afghan security forces, who in turn exchange them with local warlords for narcotics or money. According to Amnesty International, the use of weapons in the black market trade seriously undermines any attempt at maintaining security and order in the country.⁴²

Additionally, corruption, security issues, and domestic instability have resulted in Afghanistan becoming the perennial leader in the opium trade. Current studies report that an estimated 93% of the opium trade originates in the southern provinces of Afghanistan.⁴³ In 2010 a serious agricultural blight destroyed many opium crops, resulting in an estimated 30% decrease in production. Such destruction aided in the continued efforts of eliminating opiate trading.⁴⁴ However, corruption and the narcotics industry still pose problems for the Afghan government. As recently as March 2012, U.S. forces opened an investigation into the illegal trafficking of both weapons and drugs by the Afghan Air Force.⁴⁵

Human Rights

While human rights conditions have certainly improved since the ousting of the Taliban regime, repeated claims of maltreatment and abuse remain prevalent. As recently as 2010, the U.S. State Department has raised concerns regarding a number of problems including corruption by local officials, maltreatment of women and children, torture and abuse, the violation of privacy rights and restrictions placed on freedom of movement, and censorship of the press.⁴⁶ The recent killings of women for petty crimes are a stark reminder of the improvements that must be made in the country.

Refugees

Since 2002, Afghanistan has experienced the largest repatriation in the world. Following the collapse of the Taliban regime, approximately 5 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan.⁴⁷ Of the 5 million, roughly 4.4 million have received financial assistance provided by the United Nations' Commissioner for Refugees, in addition to numerous other organizations including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Program (WFP), and other non-governmental organizations that have helped maintain stability in the country during the massive influx of former exiles.⁴⁸

According to the U.S. State Department's website, approximately 235,833 people are believed to be internally displaced in Afghanistan.⁴⁹ In a recent study, it was estimated that roughly 400 people are displaced every day, with roughly 35,000 civilians living in makeshift camps outside the nation's capital of Kabul.⁵⁰ In addition to the assistance provided to refugees returning to Afghanistan, numerous organizations, including the International Center for the Red Cross, WFP, and a number of NGOs, continue to provide financial assistance in order to ensure that the basic necessities, including food, shelter, water, and medicine are afforded to those displaced. Unfortunately, humanitarian organizations are prohibited from constructing wells or other permanent fixtures to ensure that adequate treatment is provided. This is due to the Afghan government's policy against creating camps that may turn into permanent dwellings for its residents.⁵¹

Domestic Counterterrorism and Security Steps:

In an attempt to track criminal activity, the Afghan government created the 'Afghan 1000' biometric ID program. By scanning fingerprints and the human iris, this program creates a database that attempts to track the movements and whereabouts of militants and extremists.⁵² This program was initiated as an attempt to prevent the infiltration of Taliban members into the Afghan Army and other vital security areas. In addition, this program will also help track the movements of militants across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in a further attempt to improve security.⁵³

In order to help combat terrorism in Afghanistan, the Afghan government created the Financial Investigative Unit. The primary responsibility of this unit is to track the financial transactions between suspected militants and their financial sponsors. Furthermore, the creation of a Financial Transaction and Reports Analysis Center in Afghanistan (FinTRACA) enables the government to record any suspicious bank transactions.⁵⁴ Since 2010, Afghanistan, as a member of the Egmont FIU, has had the ability to work with other intelligence agencies internationally to suspend and disrupt the financing of terrorism.⁵⁵ However, in spite of these efforts to eradicate illegal behavior through the implementation of these programs, the Afghan government and coalition forces still struggle to disrupt the funding provided by the black market (most notably the opium trade).

Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Identification (PISCES) provides a management program to further strengthen borders and the security of transnational travel. This program attempts to identify all of those departing from and arriving at Kabul International Airport as a preventative measure against terrorism.⁵⁶ The host nation is able to collect, analyze, and disseminate critical information to other countries in order to prevent the travel of suspicious individuals.⁵⁷ While this program is one way to help reduce the influx of militants, the primary problem still surrounds the mountainous and loosely guarded border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In partnership with the World Customs Organization and 60 other countries, Afghanistan joined 'Project Global Shield,'⁵⁸ which attempts to locate and track explosive and chemical compounds that could eventually fall in the hands of terrorist organizations. This project has been responsible for the seizure of large quantities of chemicals, most notably ammonium nitrate, a common ingredient found in many improvised explosive devices used in Afghanistan against Afghan and coalition forces.⁵⁹

In addition to the numerous safety measures implemented to thwart any suspected terrorists, the Afghan government has adopted a strong counter-radicalization program. This program attempts to dissuade would-be Muslim extremists by promoting a tolerant interpretation of the Koran. It focuses on places where people are susceptible to recruitment, particularly mosques, schools, and prisons.⁶⁰

International Cooperation:

In an attempt to improve security cooperation in Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) admitted Afghanistan as an observer state at the June 6, 2012 Summit in Beijing. Through the shared interests of promoting cultural, economic, and military cooperation, its inclusion into this organization will hopefully serve to reinforce Afghanistan's attempt to reduce terrorism and extremism in the region.⁶¹ In addition, members of the SCO have adopted the Regional Antiterrorism Structure (RATS) in order to battle the increased distribution of narcotics across state lines. These objectives were further reiterated when the SCO signed a treaty with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in order to further strengthen their stance against terrorism and drug trafficking.⁶²

Immediately following the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the United Nations provided assistance by establishing the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).⁶³ While the chief mission of the organization was to assist with establishing peace and security, UNAMA was also granted responsibility for organizing presidential elections in 2004 and National Assembly elections in 2005. Due to its effectiveness at promoting peace, security, governance, and regional cooperation since its inception, UNAMA has been asked to extend its presence in the country in order to provide a leading role on all civilian based positions that include rule of law, transitional justice, and anti-corruption.⁶⁴

Future Outlook:

With the anticipated withdrawal of NATO and other international forces in 2014, the future of Afghanistan remains very uncertain. Since its inception, the current Afghan government has relied heavily on NATO for security and stability. Many worry that the removal of NATO forces will result in a power vacuum due to the relatively weak central government and its inability to exercise authority.⁶⁵

In order to prevent such a scenario, the use of negotiations and dialogue will be paramount; primarily between the Taliban, Hezb-e Islami and the current Afghan government. In recent months the Afghan Taliban has at times expressed interest in denouncing the use of violence in return for representation in the central government. On June 30, 2012, representatives from the Taliban and the Afghan government met at a peace and reconciliation conference in Kyoto, Japan to discuss their respective grievances.⁶⁶ While this event provides a sense of optimism, little progress was made due to the Taliban's extreme interpretation of law and the polarized vision on how to govern Afghanistan. These obstacles will undoubtedly be the most critical to overcome if Afghanistan is to build a strong, coherent government that is representative of its numerous ethnic groups.

Other issues surrounding Afghanistan's future concerns include the need for regional and international cooperation. In particular, Pakistan must play a very important role in order to revitalize and maintain stability in the country. This includes cracking down on terrorist organizations that use Pakistan as a staging ground for violence in Afghanistan. It also means Pakistan must overcome the differences it currently shares with the U.S. over the unauthorized killing of Usama bin Laden and the accidental killing of 24 Pakistani soldiers by a U.S. predator drone and focus on the need to support the U.S. backed Afghan government.⁶⁷ But recent events concerning Afghan-Indian relations may result in difficulty trying to secure Pakistan's support for the current Afghan government. In October 2011, the Afghan government signed a strategic security agreement with India leaving many to speculate the willingness by Pakistan to continue to support the Karzai government, especially if Indian forces maintain a presence in Afghanistan.⁶⁸

Other countries in the region must also play an active role. This means abiding by the principles set forth by the 'Good Neighbor Declaration' and its emphasis on regional cooperation.⁶⁹ While it may be very enticing to exploit Afghanistan's resources, the need to respect the sovereignty of the new Afghan government and create a mutually beneficial relationship will be the deciding factor. It will be important to reiterate the commitment highlighted in the 2005 Regional Economic Cooperation Conference that pledged assistance and improved relations in central Asia.⁷⁰ This includes the need for increased trade, the disruption of the narcotics industry and active efforts to thwart the movement of anti-government insurgencies.

While security is the paramount concern in Afghanistan, revitalizing the Afghan economy is also important. This must be done by capitalizing on Afghanistan's natural resources, and utilizing the potential of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) in order to promote trade in the region. Recent developments have attempted to do so by appealing to the international community for assistance. On July 8, 2012, over 80 different countries and organizations pledged a combined total of \$16 billion over a four year period to improve infrastructure and jumpstart

businesses in the civilian sector.⁷¹ But a history of corruption and the financial mismanagement could seriously undermine this assistance, as it has done all too often in the past.

While many variables will influence the future of Afghanistan, the issues just mentioned will be crucial for determining Afghanistan's success. Through regional economic support, improved security, and the successful eradication of corruption, the future of Afghanistan has the potential to experience prosperity, but failure to do so will lead to yet another chapter in the Afghanistan's very tumultuous and unruly history.

Timeline:

February 8, 2007: A suicide bomber kills 23 at the Bagram Airfield. This event occurred in response to the visit of U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney.⁷²

July 19-August 30, 2007: Taliban forces kidnap 23 South Korean missionaries, later executing 2 males. The event leads to the withdrawal of South Korean forces in Afghanistan.⁷³

November 6, 2007: A bomb detonates at the Baghlan Sugar Factory killing 75, including several prominent lawmakers and dozens of children.⁷⁴

February 17, 2008: In Kandahar, a bomb explodes in a large crowd at a dog fighting competition. The explosion was directed at a local police chief who openly denounced the Taliban. 100 Afghan citizens are killed.⁷⁵

February 11, 2009: Taliban insurgents kill at least 19 and injure 50 in a raid in the capital city of Kabul.⁷⁶

August 25, 2009: In Kandahar province, a bomb detonates, killing an estimated 31 people and injuring an additional 46.⁷⁷

October 8, 2009: Taliban claims responsibility for a suicide car bombing of the Indian Embassy that killed 17.⁷⁸

October 28, 2009: The Taliban claims responsibility for an attack on a UNAMA guesthouse that killed eight U.S. soldiers.⁷⁹

December 30, 2009: At the Camp Chapman forward operating base, a Jordanian double agent sympathetic to al-Qa'ida detonates an explosive belt killing 7 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency operatives.⁸⁰

February 26, 2010: An attack on two Indian guesthouses leaves 16 people dead, including 9 Indian nationals.⁸¹

July 2, 2010: Four security personnel are killed when gunmen attacked the Kunduz office of Development Alternatives Incorporated.⁸²

August 2, 2010: Hezb-e-Islami in collaboration with the Taliban claimed responsibility for killing 10 members of a medical team in the province of Badakhshan province.⁸³

December 19, 2010: A suicide attack in Kabul leaves 5 Afghan National Army officers dead.⁸⁴

February 12, 2011: A coordinated attack consisting of a car bomb and small arms fire against Police Headquarters in Kandahar by members of the Taliban results in the death of 19 people and 49 wounded.⁸⁵

June 25, 2011: A suicide car bomb detonates in Azra district, killing at least 15 and as many as 35.⁸⁶

June 28, 2011: A group of gunmen and suicide bombers storm the Intercontinental Hotel, a luxury hotel in Kabul that is frequented by Westerners. The attack leaves dozens dead, including three of the six insurgents. The Taliban claimed responsibility for this highly coordinated attack.⁸⁷

August 14, 2011: A car bomb explodes outside of the gates of the governor's compound in Parwan province and is immediately followed by 5 suicide bombers. 19 people are killed.⁸⁸

September 20, 2011: A Taliban suicide bomber detonates explosives killing former Afghan President and leader of Jamiat-e Islami, Burhanuddin Rabbani. The attacks are in response to increased relations between Rabbani and Afghan security forces.⁸⁹

December 6, 2011: An attack on the Abu Fazl Mosque by members of the Taliban claims the lives of 50 worshippers.⁹⁰

December 25, 2011: A suicide bomber attacks a group of individuals attending a funeral in Taloqan killing at least 20 and wounding an additional 50 people. While no one claimed responsibility for the attack, it is widely believed that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is to blame.⁹¹

January 18, 2012: A motorcyclist carrying explosives targets an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) patrol in the Kajaki district of southern Helmand province. The explosion kills 13 people including two members of ISAF.⁹²

April 15, 2012: Suicide bombers coordinate an attack throughout Afghanistan. The attack and counter terrorism operations results in the death of 65 people, 36 of which were terrorists. These attacks are reported to be the start of "The Spring Offensive" carried out by members of the Taliban.⁹³

July 18, 2012: In Kabul, Taliban forces use a rocket propelled grenade and small arms fire to destroy 22 NATO vehicles. The trucks were a part of a convoy set to deliver fuel and provisions to U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan.⁹⁴

NB: These incidents are only a representative sample of many security incidents in Afghanistan during the period in question.

KAZAKHSTAN

Overview:

Kazakhstan is often recognized as one of the more stable, ethnically diverse countries in Central Asia, though it is not without its issues. While ostensibly recognized as a republic, the executive holds most of the power, giving President Nursultan Nazarbayev uncontested authority.⁹⁵ The President not only has control over regional and local governments, but also has great influence over the legislative and judicial branches.⁹⁶

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, clans have become increasingly involved in the political sphere. President Nazarbayev often favors his own clan, the “Great Horde,” by granting some of his sons-in-law political power.⁹⁷ Additionally, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) found that the 2007 elections for the lower house of Parliament, in which the pro-Nazarbayev Nur Otan party won every seat, fell short of international standards.⁹⁸ This came soon after constitutional changes eliminated any presidential term limits.⁹⁹

Kazakhstan also faces a number of transnational problems, including illicit drug flows, human trafficking, boundary disputes, and terrorism.¹⁰⁰ Kazakhstan’s topography and its extensive border with Russia, make the transportation of people and narcotics difficult to combat.¹⁰¹ Some of the profits made from the sale of illicit substances help fund global terrorism.¹⁰² The borders also serve as a problem in regards to Kazakhstan’s relations with its neighbors. The Caspian Sea and the flow of water through the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, which begins in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, are constant sources for tension.^{103 104}

Security Issues:

Terrorism

Islamic extremists are the primary source of terrorism-related issues in Kazakhstan. Due to Kazakhstan’s geography and terrain, militants from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan can easily enter the country. In southern Kazakhstan, there is some sympathy for Islamic extremism, and Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HT) is present in many parts of the country. There is also an Uighur diaspora in Kazakhstan, some of whom sympathize with separatist or extremist sentiments in northwestern China.¹⁰⁵

Before attacks in 2011 and 2012, the last recognized terrorist attack in Kazakhstan took place in 2000, when 2 police officers were shot and killed by alleged members of the Uighur Liberation Organization (now the East Turkestan Liberation Organization). However, after the government decided to send additional support to Afghanistan in May 2011, the Taliban threatened retribution.¹⁰⁶ Extremist violence spiked in 2011, when the Jund al-Khilafa, a new group possibly linked to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, claimed several acts of terrorism in Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁷

In 2012, the country experienced several incidents. In May 2012, 14 Kazakh border guards and a civilian were found dead on the Kazakhstan-China border.¹⁰⁸ President Nazarbayev declared it an act of terrorism, though it has not been confirmed and responsibility for the attack has not been assigned or claimed by a specific group.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, a missing fifteenth border guard was found with his commander's weapon and detained. This raises questions regarding the validity of the accusation that the deaths were the result of a terrorist attack.¹¹⁰

Narcotics

Besides terrorism, Kazakhstan constantly faces difficulties with the illicit drug trade. The Russia-Kazakhstan border, at over 7,000 kilometers long, is one of the longest continuous borders in the world.¹¹¹ The logistical difficulties of securing this border allow the volume of drugs crossing from Kazakhstan to Russia to be extremely high. Additionally, when opium travelling from Afghan to European markets cross from Central Asia into Russia, its value increases from \$10,000 to \$100,000 per kilogram.¹¹² With this steep price increase, many traffickers attempt to smuggle drugs across the border in order to reap the financial benefit. During a record drug bust in 2008, the Kazakh Customs Service seized 537 kilograms of heroin at the Russian-Kazakh border, thus, illustrating the sheer quantity of narcotics traveling across the boundary.¹¹³ While opiates and cannabis are transported through Central Asia to Europe, amphetamine-type stimulants are transported through an alternate route; from Europe to Central Asia.¹¹⁴ However, the trafficking of opiates from Afghanistan, through Central Asia, and into Europe, remains the largest narcotics issue for Kazakhstan.

Human Trafficking

Kazakhstan's borders also contribute to the country's problems with human trafficking. In 2006, The International Organization for Migration estimated that every year 5,000 women from Kazakhstan were the victims of human trafficking.¹¹⁵ Kazakhstan is also a destination for human trafficking, with women being transported there from Uzbekistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, and Ukraine.¹¹⁶ Women from rural Kazakhstan are also moved into Kazakh cities and sold as prostitutes.¹¹⁷ However, human trafficking is not limited to the sex industry alone. Men, women, and children are also at risk of being sold into forced labor.¹¹⁸

Organized and well-connected criminal groups conduct most of the trafficking. These crime syndicates have the resources to bribe officials and secure both fake passports and visas for the victims.¹¹⁹ What adds to the difficulty of recognizing illegal human trafficking is the fact that many victims initially volunteer, having been misled by the criminal groups. Once in another country, the victims may have their passports taken away, rendering them trapped.¹²⁰

Resource Security

Another problem facing the country is its natural resources. In 2009, Kazakhstan became the world's leading uranium producer.¹²¹ Given its history as a former Soviet satellite state, there is still a substantial amount of weapons-grade nuclear material in the country. Three metric tons of plutonium are located at a closed reactor in western Kazakhstan.¹²² In addition, small amounts of

highly enriched uranium (HEU) remain at two nuclear research institutes.¹²³ Such weapons-grade nuclear materials are dangerous, and allow for the possible use by terrorists to launch a radiological attack, or a “dirty bomb.”¹²⁴

One of the most serious points of conflict between Kazakhstan and its neighboring countries is its fresh water access. Southern Kazakhstan receives most of its water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers.¹²⁵ Neither river begins in Kazakhstan. The Amu Darya flows in from Tajikistan, and the Syr Darya from Kyrgyzstan.¹²⁶ Therefore, either Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan could cut off much of Kazakhstan’s water supply, creating an emergency situation for southern Kazakh farmers.¹²⁷ Additionally, Kazakhstan is not the only country that receives its water from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Tensions have arisen between the Kazakh and Uzbek governments due to allegations that Uzbekistan has siphoned off water traveling from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan.¹²⁸

With the large energy resources of the Caspian Sea, there is a potential for conflict among the governments of Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Azerbaijan.¹²⁹ Currently, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan have an agreement on the equidistant borders within the sea.¹³⁰ However, Iran maintains that it has rights to the sea; while Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are still discussing the creation of a seabed boundary.¹³¹

Domestic Counterterrorism and Security Steps:

Kazakhstan has formulated its own domestic policies to fight terrorism. The government is planning to construct a Material Protection, Control, and Accountability (MPC&A) training center, as well as a Center to Combat the Illegal Use of Nuclear Materials.¹³² In recent years, Kazakhstan has also prosecuted a number of suspected terrorists in court, and has made strides in combating money laundering and terrorism financing. In 2004, the state joined the Eurasian Group (EAG)--an organization designed to fight such crimes--and passed a law entitled “On Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism” in March 2010.¹³³

The government has also partnered with other states in the fight against terrorism. In 2010, Kazakhstan joined with other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in agreeing to create a cooperative, counterterrorism program for the term 2011 to 2013.¹³⁴ In June 2012, Kazakhstan participated in counterterrorism exercises with the other members of the SCO in the mountains of Tajikistan, calling the event “Peace Mission-2012.”¹³⁵ Additionally, Kazakhstan has undertaken a project, “Policing in multi-ethnic Kazakhstan,” to reduce human rights violations by government officials, and help create a more effective police force.¹³⁶ The Kazakh government also hopes that this program will strengthen relations between the many different ethnicities within Kazakhstan, thus providing the country with further stability.¹³⁷ To add to stability and cooperation, Russia and Kazakhstan began the Aldaspan joint military exercises in July 2012.¹³⁸

Kazakhstan has taken steps to fight against narco-trafficking, as seen by the implementation of a new policy that creates harsher penalties for drug-related crimes, and the success of which are demonstrated by arrests at the border. On June 26, 2008 a new law increased the maximum punishment for drug-related crimes to life imprisonment.¹³⁹ Also in 2008, Kazakhstan’s counter-

narcotic efforts were demonstrated by the two record drug seizures of 537 kilograms and 120 kilograms of heroin.¹⁴⁰ It also partnered with Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in “Operation Typhoon,” to eliminate one of the largest drug trafficking organizations in Central Asia.¹⁴¹ Over three years, the coalition arrested 42 members of the group, 14 of whom were Kazakh citizens, and seized 800 kilograms of heroin and 100 kilograms of opium.¹⁴² From 2009 to 2012 the number of registered drug users in Kazakhstan has decreased by 8.6 %.¹⁴³

The government also actively combats human trafficking. In 2010, Kazakhstan installed harsher penalties for those convicted of child sex trafficking.¹⁴⁴ During the same year, Kazakh police investigated 88 trafficking cases, compared to 49 cases in 2009.¹⁴⁵ In May 2012, the OSCE Centre in Astana began training government officials and non-governmental organizations to recognize victims of human trafficking.¹⁴⁶ Despite Kazakhstan’s efforts to combat human trafficking, in 2012, the U.S. State Department released a report stating that Kazakhstan failed “to fully meet the minimum standards” to prevent human trafficking.¹⁴⁷

International Cooperation:

Kazakhstan is a member of the United Nations (UN), the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and is a partner state in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), as well as a participant in NATO’s Partnership for Peace program.¹⁴⁸ Kazakhstan is also a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and held the position of chairman in 2010.¹⁴⁹ Relations are particularly strong with Germany. In June 2012, officials from Kazakhstan traveled to Hamburg, Germany for a meeting of the Kazakh-German Business Council for Strategic Cooperation.¹⁵⁰ Political and industry leaders from both countries met there to discuss their continued economic cooperation.¹⁵¹

Future Outlook:

The recent surge of suspected terrorist attacks might be an indicator that there is growing extremism in Central Asia, especially in the south. While Kazakhstan has celebrated its peaceful ethnic diversity and enjoyed a period of relative stability, it will have to carefully weigh its different options when it comes to its own security, and its commitments to other nations.¹⁵² Since Kazakhstan has provided assistance to Coalition forces in Operation Enduring Freedom, it may become a target for terrorist groups, especially as the United States pulls out of Afghanistan.¹⁵³ If terrorism were to become a larger concern in Kazakhstan, then the Kazakh government would also have to ensure that its large amounts of uranium do not fall into the hands of extremists.¹⁵⁴

Robert Blake, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, has stated that just because the United States is leaving Afghanistan, the U.S. will not, simultaneously, abandon Central Asia.¹⁵⁵ Still, many wonder what will happen with the inevitable void that will be created with the United States’ departure.¹⁵⁶ There is a possibility that China or Russia will attempt to step in economically—especially in Afghanistan—and take on a bigger role in the area.¹⁵⁷ Russia has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate by participating in

the “Aldaspan 2012” joint military exercises in Kazakhstan.¹⁵⁸ However, with China’s past refusals to help coalition forces in any military capacity, there is no certainty that it will provide adequate security for the region.¹⁵⁹

Timeline:

July 2006: Kazakhstan becomes an initial partner nation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.¹⁶⁰

April 2007: Kazakhstan’s first trial concerning the financing of terrorism begins.¹⁶¹

June 2007: Kazakhstan hosts over 50 partners for the third meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.¹⁶²

August 24, 2007: Five Hizb ut-Tahrir activists are arrested in Janaozen by Kazakh police.¹⁶³

January 27, 2008: A grenade explodes in school number 29 in Almaty. Two children are injured.¹⁶⁴

March 2008: The government approves a treaty with the Slovak Republic, aimed at cooperating in the fight against terrorism.¹⁶⁵

March 27, 2008: Customs Service seized 537 kilograms of heroin at the Karaik checkpoint on the border of Russia and Kazakhstan.¹⁶⁶

April 8-9, 2008: President Nursultan Nazarbayev signs two laws on counterterrorism activities, in relation to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.¹⁶⁷

June 2008: Twenty-one Hizb ut-Tahrir members are detained in Almaty in southern Kazakhstan.¹⁶⁸

June 6, 2008: Kazakhstan hosts the first Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism field exercise, entitled “Anti-Atom Terror.”¹⁶⁹

August 25, 2008: The government approves a treaty with the United Arab Emirates, aimed at cooperating in the fight against terrorism.¹⁷⁰

September 11-13, 2008: Kazakhstan hosts a “Design-Basis Threat” exercise that is attended by seven partner states of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.¹⁷¹

October 17, 2008: Kazakhstan hosts the Common World Forum, aimed at promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogues.¹⁷²

December 3, 2008: A gas cylinder explodes in a café in Almaty. One person is killed and more than ten are injured.¹⁷³

February 11 2009: The government ratifies the 2007 Shanghai Cooperation Organization agreement to actively advance cooperation in the fight against terrorism and extremism.¹⁷⁴

August 2009: The National Security Committee (KNB) and the Ministries of the Interior, Defense, and Emergency Situations hold counterterrorism exercises at the international trade port in Aktau.¹⁷⁵

August 2009: Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev signs two new laws aimed at countering terrorist funding and money laundering.¹⁷⁶

September – October 2009: Kazakhstan hosts Legislative Drafting Expert Workshop on Counterterrorism.¹⁷⁷

2010: Kazakhstan is Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE¹⁷⁸

April 2010: Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev signs the Shanghai Cooperation Organization agreement on joint counterterrorism exercises into law.¹⁷⁹

June 2010: Kazakhstan actively participates in the Collective Security Treaty Organization's joint counterterrorism exercise.¹⁸⁰

September 9-25, 2010: Kazakhstan hosts the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's September "Peace Mission 2010" counterterrorism military exercise.¹⁸¹

September 2010: Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism holds its Inaugural Implementation and Assessment Group Meeting and a Conference on Countering the Financing of Nuclear Terrorism in Kazakhstan.¹⁸²

October 2010: Kazakhstan hosts the international Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe Conference on Preventing Terrorism.¹⁸³

May 17, 2011: In Aktobe, suicide bomber kills himself in front of state security service offices.¹⁸⁴

May 24, 2011: A car bomb detonates at a security office in Astana.¹⁸⁵

July 8, 2011: Confrontation between security forces and suspected extremists results in 13 dead in western Kazakhstan.¹⁸⁶

October 13, 2011: Two explosions hit western energy nerve center of Atyrau.¹⁸⁷

October 31, 2011: Kazakhstan passes restrictive religion law to combat extremism.¹⁸⁸

November 12, 2011: A suicide bomber kills eight people in Taraz, using firearms and explosives.¹⁸⁹

December 3, 2011: Two Kazakh Special Forces officers and five Islamic militants are killed in gun battle near Almaty.¹⁹⁰

May 30, 2012: Fourteen Kazakh border guards and one civilian are found dead at the border of Kazakhstan and China.¹⁹¹

June 14, 2012: SCO members participate in counterterrorism exercises in the mountains of Tajikistan. The event is called "Peace Mission-2012."¹⁹²

KYRGYZSTAN

Overview:

Kyrgyzstan is a former Soviet satellite state in Central Asia that has experienced political upheaval and turmoil over the past several years. In 2005, President Askar Akayev was ousted due to nationwide demonstrations. Akayev's successor, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, resigned in 2010 after his attempt to gain more power through parliamentary manipulation, resulting in more nationwide protests. The current President, Almazbek Atambayev, was elected in December 2011, succeeding an interim government led by Roza Otunbayeva.¹⁹³

Geography has largely determined Kyrgyzstan's security threats and role in Central Asia. Russia continues to wield a significant influence in Kyrgyzstan. Also, Kyrgyzstan's proximity to Afghanistan heightens fears of terrorist activity and spillover effects of Islamic extremism.¹⁹⁴ Kyrgyzstan faces an underlying terrorism threat, as seen with various high-profile kidnappings and bombings. It is particularly at risk from transnational actors, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which operates in the country's southern border region.¹⁹⁵ In terms of landscape, its terrain is mountainous and difficult to patrol, leaving the country vulnerable to criminal goods trafficking, such as drugs and uranium. Combating this has proved to be a daunting security challenge for Kyrgyzstan and its Central Asian neighbors.

Kyrgyzstan's majority Muslim population is mostly moderate, and the separation of church and state ensures a check on the religion's influence in politics.¹⁹⁶ Instead, the main concern lies with disadvantaged and less educated populations that are more easily attracted to extremist groups as a means of changing their position in the status quo. While these Islamist extremists do not represent the general Islamic population in Kyrgyzstan, they are still a cause for concern.¹⁹⁷

Security Issues:

Terrorism

In 2011, there were no large-scale or interethnic clashes. Nonetheless, the US State Department Bureau of Diplomatic Security released a 2012 report stating that Kyrgyzstan remains vulnerable to becoming a safe haven for terrorist groups.¹⁹⁸ At the same time, Mariya Y. Omelicheva, Director of the European and Eurasian Studies Program at Kansas University, suggests that the terrorist threat is small, and that strict measures implemented by the government are more of a reaction to potential threats than a realistic response to the current situation.¹⁹⁹

The most active terrorist group in the region, with the exception of those operating primarily in Afghanistan, is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).²⁰⁰ Formed in 1998, the IMU is a coalition of Islamic extremists dedicated to the overthrow of the Uzbek state and the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in a newly formed Turkestan.²⁰¹ Although the group's several hundred members have recently concentrated their fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan alongside the Taliban, they also maintain a presence in Kyrgyzstan.²⁰² Armed members of the

IMU took hostages in 1999 and attempted to do so again in 2000. These incidents caused the Kyrgyz government to officially name terrorism as a threat to their national security.

Similarly, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), a splinter group of the IMU based in Pakistan, also poses a threat to Kyrgyz security.²⁰³ The IJU works closely with the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network, a terrorist organization that functions primarily in Afghanistan and Pakistan.²⁰⁴ Kyrgyz authorities killed two suspected members of the IJU and arrested another in January 2011, blaming the group for the November 2010 bombing of the National Sports Stadium in Bishkek.²⁰⁵

The toppling of the Taliban during Operation Enduring Freedom weakened other terrorist groups in Central Asia, allowing the Kyrgyzstan government to shift its focus to nonmilitant groups.²⁰⁶ In Kyrgyzstan, attention fell primarily on the group Hizb ut-Tahrir. Though not officially a terrorist group, Hizb ut-Tahrir has drawn much attention from the Kyrgyz authorities for its endorsement of radical Islam. Hizb ut-Tahrir seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate, but as an organization does not itself use violence to accomplish this goal. Instead it wishes other groups to take power on behalf of Hizb ut-Tahrir.²⁰⁷ The American Foreign Policy Council's *World Almanac of Islamism* asserts that the organization acts as a stepping stone for individuals who eventually plan to take up arms in the name of Islam.²⁰⁸ The group of nearly 5,000 has become a political opposition movement that styles itself as the alternative to the Kyrgyz government.²⁰⁹ It operates throughout Central Asia.²¹⁰ Between 2000 and 2001, the Kyrgyz government adopted stricter policies toward Hizb ut-Tahrir, eventually like almost all other Muslim countries outlawing the organization altogether. Since that time, members have been officially detained and arrested for distributing literature and tapes of extremist content.²¹¹

Finally, the East Turkestan Liberation Organization is one of several groups of Uighur separatists that hopes to create an independent state of Turkestan in the northwest region of China.²¹² Kyrgyz authorities suspect members of this group to be responsible for the murder of 21 passengers who were intercepted and taken in a bus bound from Bishkek to China in March 2003.²¹³

Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking continues to pose a significant societal problem in Kyrgyzstan. Heroin and other hard drugs simply pass through Kyrgyzstan's notoriously porous borders from production areas in Afghanistan, and continue to Europe or Asia for sale.²¹⁴ Recently, more drugs stay in Kyrgyzstan, causing state officials to remark upon the vast increase of drug usage among Kyrgyz citizens.²¹⁵ Drug trafficking threatens both the health of the 10,000 registered drug addicts in Kyrgyzstan, as well as the stability of their society.²¹⁶ The illegal trade nurtures transnational organized crime, terrorism, and, according to the Kyrgyz government, Islamic extremism.²¹⁷ For example, the IMU has contributed to the drug trade in Kyrgyzstan in order to fund their activities.²¹⁸ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime financially and administratively supports the Kyrgyz-run State Service on Drug Control, the leading agency tasked with dismantling the illegal drug trade flowing out of Afghanistan.²¹⁹ This organization recently opened a new office near the Tajikistan border in conjunction with US Central Command.²²⁰

Human Trafficking

In addition to drug trafficking, many Kyrgyz citizens fall prey to various human rights violations, such as human trafficking. The government has struggled to discourage this industry, which is driven by high youth unemployment, pervasive corruption, and poverty. According to the US State Department, 4,000 women are trafficked each year, approximately 10% of whom are under 18 years old.²²¹ The Kyrgyz State Committee for Migration and Employment created joint sponsored programs to battle trafficking, including labor migrant assistance centers in Russia, to help prevent the capture and sale of women after the end of the agricultural labor season when migrant workers return home.²²² In November 2011, the Kyrgyz President signed a law focusing on assistance for victims of these crimes.²²³ The government has also participated in trafficking awareness campaigns with assistance from about 36 domestic NGOs.²²⁴

Boundary Disputes

The Soviet division of Central Asia largely disregarded the ethnic divisions of the local people.²²⁵ Under Soviet rule, internal borders did not play a significant role between these nations. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, each nation attempted to establish independent divisions responsible for international borders that surrounded new, large ethnic minorities.²²⁶

As a result of these awkward geographical divisions and the unsure infancy of the post-Soviet states, several violent disputes erupted on Kyrgyzstan's borders, with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. More than 430 kilometers of disputed borders still run between Batken, in Kyrgyzstan, and the Tajik Province of Isfara, where most violence occurs.²²⁷ In May, 2012, the Kyrgyz and Tajik governments created a working group that agreed on a joint action plan for border cooperation.²²⁸ In addition to its problems with Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan must also ratify a 2001 boundary delimitation with Kazakhstan, and a delimitation of 130 kilometers of border with Uzbekistan.²²⁹

The densely populated Fergana Valley is the main area of conflict, due to its highly diverse ethnic groups (including many Uzbeks) and its notoriously poor economy. The international community sees this region as a considerable concern for the future of Central Asian security because this area fosters violent Islamism and the narcotics trade.²³⁰

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the European Commission provide Kyrgyzstan with funding and assistance dedicated to border management in the former Soviet Union.²³¹ The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Center in Bishkek also assists in developing long-term solutions to border management.

Ethnic Conflict

In June 2010, ethnic rivalries flared between the Uzbeks and the Kyrgyz living in the southern Kyrgyzstan city of Osh, leaving 470 people dead, many hundreds injured, and 2,000 to 3,000 homes destroyed.²³² The victims were disproportionately Uzbek, and as many as 111,000 Uzbeks fled across the border out of fear of more violence.²³³ The Kyrgyz government announced that an independent, international commission headed by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative for Central Asia and a national commission would explore the causes of the clash. The national commission concluded that the events had long been planned and were organized by the leader of the Uzbek diaspora, while Human Rights Watch released a report claiming that the government assisted in facilitating the attacks against the Uzbek people.²³⁴ Though uncertainty about the incident still exists, it is clear that the government must continue to work toward a greater degree of interethnic harmony.

Uranium

Kyrgyzstan does not have nuclear weapons, but it inherited large uranium mining and milling complexes after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Plants within Kyrgyzstan continue to ship low-enriched uranium (uranium with less than a 20% concentration of Uranium 235) to Kazakhstan and Russia.²³⁵

Kyrgyzstan still struggles in its battle against the illegal trafficking of these goods through its unsecured borders. To aid in this fight, the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy rebuilt part of Kyrgyzstan's border control system and the United States provided millions of dollars of equipment and training to improve border control systems.²³⁶

Kyrgyzstan has signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and an Additional Protocol agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. In addition, it signed the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone treaty in 2006.²³⁷

Resource Security

Kyrgyzstan's glaciers and rivers provide water resources for all countries in the region. Climate change threatens to deplete these resources. Experts say the number of glaciers will decrease to 142, compared with 8,200 in the middle of the last century, if the country's average climate becomes warmer.²³⁸ Kyrgyzstan's environmental health is also at risk. The majority of its 90 hazardous waste dumps do not meet international safety requirements.²³⁹

Domestic Counterterrorism and Security Steps:

In order to adequately respond to the threats emanating from the southern borders, with Afghanistan and Pakistan, Jakypbek Azizov, the head of the Public Security Administration of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Internal Affairs, stressed the deployment of internal security forces to the south.²⁴⁰

The Kyrgyz security establishment has always worked closely with its counterparts in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Russia. The government adopted many terms and practices from its

neighbors because it recognized its own limited ability to combat these transnational forces.²⁴¹ Kyrgyzstan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) counterterrorism conventions and the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism in 2001, eventually accepting many of these findings in domestic law. Lawmakers also increased penalties for terrorism related activities and passed the Law of Counteracting Terrorist Financing and Legalization of Proceeds from Crime in 2006, which established the Financial Intelligence Unit to analyze financial transactions and to search for suspicious transactions.²⁴² Bishkek is also the location of the headquarters for a CIS rapid-deployment force that unites troops from Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan.²⁴³

Overall, Kyrgyzstan is clearly influenced by other Central Asian states, Russia, and China. Following the example of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan has grown stricter against Islamic extremism in recent years (for example, the banning of Hizb ut-Tahrir).²⁴⁴ NATO, the OSCE, and the UN have also participated in assisting Kyrgyzstan financially and logistically with counterterrorism measures.

International Cooperation:

Kyrgyzstan hosts the NATO Transit Center at Manas near Bishkek, which is a vital component of the NATO coalition operation in Afghanistan. Acting as a transport hub for troops and supplies since 2001, the transit center (formerly an air base) was almost closed several times, only to be saved through negotiations. However, the president of Kyrgyzstan recently announced that the air base will close in 2014, leaving many to wonder about the future role of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia in the War on Terror. Kyrgyzstan is currently the only country to host both Russian and NATO military installations, and it is supposed that neither Russia nor China are overly pleased by the NATO presence in Kyrgyzstan.

In 2001, NATO opened the Transit Center at Manas just outside of Bishkek, which serves as the main base for about 15,000 troops entering and leaving Afghanistan.²⁴⁵ Despite wishes for the US-led base to be closed by 2014, the Kyrgyz government continues to accept assistance from NATO for the renovation of border posts and arms depots.²⁴⁶ Still, Kyrgyzstan's cooperation has proved vital to NATO's efforts in Afghanistan. The government, along with the Uzbek and Kazakh governments, agreed to new transit routes that have allowed NATO to bypass Pakistan after it closed its supply lines and shipping routes.²⁴⁷ The transit of cargo agreements have shown Kyrgyzstan's key role in improving the situation in Afghanistan and the security of the Central Asian Region.

The OSCE Center in Bishkek was established in 1998 to encourage a closer relationship between Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE.²⁴⁸ The Center works with the Kyrgyz Republic in six areas: border security and management, rule of law, good governance, legislation, environmental protection, and regional cooperation.²⁴⁹

In the wake of Kyrgyzstan's ethnic violence in 2010, the struggling interim government asked OSCE to send in an international police force.²⁵⁰ The OSCE responded with a 52 member police force that represented member states. The police force also carried out training in Osh, and gave advice to members of the Kyrgyz security forces.²⁵¹

The OSCE also monitors Kyrgyzstan's elections. In 2010, it released a statement saying that the Kyrgyz election was set apart from other Central Asian elections due to the wide choice of candidates and vibrant campaign atmosphere.²⁵²

Although Kyrgyzstan's relationships with NATO and the OSCE indicate a strong inclination toward western cooperation, the United States and NATO fear the encroaching influence of Russia and China on Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian nations. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), led largely by Russia and China, acts as a counterweight to the United States in the region. The organization recently met in Shanghai to discuss securing a larger role for Central Asian countries in Afghanistan and for the SCO's future as the preeminent regional grouping.²⁵³ Together, these nations hope to assist each other with battling religious extremists and drug traffickers through regular meetings and joint military exercises.²⁵⁴ Since joining in 2007, Kyrgyzstan has participated in several counterterrorism exercises, including the Issyk-Kul Anti-Terror program in 2007.²⁵⁵

Future Outlook:

Kyrgyzstan remains a key element for NATO and US troops in Afghanistan. However, President Atambayev's decision to close the Manas military base in 2014 signals a changing role for Kyrgyzstan in the future. As the US plans to leave, Kyrgyzstan will lose \$60 million per year in rental payments and infrastructural support.²⁵⁶ Still, President Atambayev is seen to have kept his options open with the US, because of recent deals to allow NATO to transport goods through Central Asia.²⁵⁷

As NATO's influence diminishes, Russia may replace NATO and exert more power in Kyrgyzstan.²⁵⁸ Russia currently maintains an air base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan, and announced in May 2012 that it has no plans to shut down the base, despite a call by President Atambayev for this to occur.²⁵⁹ It also has a naval test center in Karakol, a military communications center in Kara-Balt, and a radio-seismic laboratory in Mayly-Suu.²⁶⁰ Russia has previously stated that it finds a U.S. and NATO military presence in Central Asia unacceptable.²⁶¹ Kyrgyzstan relies on Russia's fuel exports and has a large Russian minority, which both support Russia's influence reaching over the border with Kyrgyzstan.

Still, Russia and President Atambayev have expressed mutual disappointments. The President feels that Russia meddles too heavily in Kyrgyzstan's affairs, while Russia perceives him as unreliable and has refused to close Russia's facilities despite the President's wishes.²⁶² As a solution, Kyrgyzstan is looking toward other emerging partners such as Turkey.

Turkey was the first nation to recognize Kyrgyzstan's independence in 1991. Since then, the two nations have signed more than 100 agreements and cooperation protocols in areas such as education, culture, trade, economy, and the military.²⁶³ According to Asia Times, almost \$450 million of Turkish investment flows into Bishkek, and bilateral trade is predicted to reach \$1 billion by 2015.²⁶⁴

Timeline:

August 6, 1999: IMU militants cross into Kyrgyzstan and take 4 hostages.²⁶⁵

August 23, 1999: Some 100 militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan kidnap a group of Japanese geologists and Kyrgyz nationals.²⁶⁶

March 20, 2000: Police use excessive force to break up a peaceful demonstration against fraud in parliamentary elections. 100 demonstrators are arrested.²⁶⁷

August 14, 2000: IMU fighters cross into Kyrgyzstan from Tajikistan and engage security forces. The fighting ends in October, resulting in the death of more than 30 government troops and 120 IMU fighters.²⁶⁸

December 18, 2001: Americans arrive at Manas Transit Center to open the airfield for use in Operation Enduring Freedom²⁶⁹

December 27, 2002: IMU sets off a bomb in a Bishkek market, killing 6 and wounding 40.²⁷⁰

March 2003: The East Turkestan Liberation Organization captures Chinese and Kyrgyz hostages on a bus bound for China. All 21 passengers were killed.²⁷¹

May 8, 2003: IMU bombs currency exchange office in Osh. 1 person dies.²⁷²

October 23, 2003: Russian military base is established in Kant.²⁷³

March 19, 2005: Thousands of protestors burn down a police station, and storm government buildings in Jalal-Abad and Osh.²⁷⁴

August 6, 2006: Kyrgyz security forces, near the Uzbek border, kill a prominent imam, Mohammed Rafik Kamalov.²⁷⁵

August 16, 2006: Hizb ut-Tahrir members are caught distributing leaflets. 200 troops are mobilized to search for suspects.²⁷⁶

February 3, 2009 – June 22, 2009: Kyrgyz Parliament votes to close Manas Air Base. The U.S offers to triple the renting price and the base is kept open.²⁷⁷

June 23, 2009: GKNB conducts special operation against members of the IMU in Jalalabad. 5 terrorists were killed. Weapons, and instructions on how to make explosives, are found.²⁷⁸

March 11, 2010: Anti-Terrorist Training Center in Batken is announced to be built, with U.S. assistance.²⁷⁹

April 2, 2010: Three alleged members of Hizb ut-Tahrir detained in Jalal-Abad after extremist books, leaflets, and DVDs were found in their apartment.²⁸⁰

April 7, 2010: President Kurmanbek Bakiev is ousted in a people's revolution, amidst violence.²⁸¹

April 9, 2010: Gasoline bomb attack on Bishkek Synagogue.²⁸²

April 19, 2010: A group of ethnic Kyrgyz illegally seize land owned by minority Turks in a village near Bishkek. Looting and violence ensue, leaving 5 dead and 40 wounded.²⁸³

June 10, 2010: Violence erupts, largely, between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks; up to 400,000 are displaced.²⁸⁴

November 24, 2010: Two are arrested in Bishkek with improvised explosive devices in a car parked near the Central Mosque.²⁸⁵

November 30, 2010: A bomb explodes in Bishkek, outside of the Sports Palace, where the trial of former government officials was taking place. 6 are injured.²⁸⁶

January 18, 2011: Militants from a new group calling itself Jaish al-Mahdi plan to blow up the US embassy. 8 militants are arrested.²⁸⁷

February 7, 2011: 8 Hizb Ut-Tahrir suspects are arrested in Osh.²⁸⁸

October 11, 2011: 10 suspected members of Islamic Jihad Union are arrested for plotting terrorist attacks during the upcoming presidential elections.²⁸⁹

October 30, 2011: President Atambayev is elected.²⁹⁰

November 1, 2011: President Atambayev announces that he intends to close Manas Air Base.²⁹¹

December 7, 2011: 4 suspected Hizb ut-Tahrir suspects are arrested in Osh, after seizing audio-video materials, and leaflets, with religious and extremist content.²⁹²

March 20, 2012: 10 suspected Hizb ut-Tahrir members are arrested for having bombs and 420 items of banned religious literature in their homes.²⁹³

May 22, 2012: Arka Counter-Narcotics Center opens on the Tajikistan border.²⁹⁴

TAJIKISTAN

Overview:

The Republic of Tajikistan is a former Soviet republic that gained independence in 1991. President Emomali Rahmon has led the country since 1994. Currently, Tajikistan faces not only corruption within the legislative process, but also an array of security challenges, including the threat of terrorism, unsecured borders, cross border tensions over the development of hydropower, drug trafficking, and economic instability.²⁹⁵ The main terrorist organizations in Tajikistan have included the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), and during Tajikistan's Civil War (1992-1997), the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Despite the many challenges that Tajikistan faces, the country has the capabilities to overcome many of these challenges through the help of its Central Asian neighbors and other international actors.

Security Issues:

Terrorism

Tajikistan shares borders with Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, and Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan's mountainous landscape makes patrolling the country difficult and provides ample opportunities for narcotics, militants, and illegal migrants to pass freely through the country. For example, the Tajik-Afghan border is mostly defined by mountains that are poorly protected.²⁹⁶ The Vakhsh River that flows along the Tajik-Kyrgyz border provides an accessible passageway through the mountains of the Rasht Valley, which serves as a militant stronghold.

In the past, Tajikistan has faced threats from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Its close proximity to Uzbekistan allows IMU militants to cross the border, and operate out of bases in Tajikistan. Even though the group advocates an Islamic state in Uzbekistan, many Tajiks support the movement. The IMU has claimed responsibility for a variety of attacks in Tajikistan. Two attacks, in 2010, killed 25 people and injured more than 26.²⁹⁷

HT's objective is to unite all Muslim countries in order to create a worldwide caliphate. In contrast with the IMU, HT itself does not usually resort to violence. Nonetheless, it is a listed terrorist organization in Tajikistan, causing Tajik security forces to target HT members in an effort to limit their dissemination of extremist ideology.²⁹⁸ The UTO officially ceased to exist in 2003, but some former UTO militants unwilling to accept the peace agreement have been responsible for various attacks against the Tajik government. In response to a September 2010 attack that killed 23 soldiers, Tajik military and police forces launched a large-scale security operation targeting former UTO commanders based in the Rasht Valley.²⁹⁹

Narcotics

A major security issue for the Tajik-Afghan border is the movement of narcotics from Afghanistan, through Tajikistan, to eventually reach the market in Russia. According to Syed Shakeel Hussain, the head of Pakistan's Anti-Narcotics Force, along the Tajik border, in northeastern Afghanistan "the cultivation of opium has reportedly increased by 50% and the laboratories needed to process opium into heroin have also increased."³⁰⁰ Despite the rise in opium production in Afghanistan, the amount of heroin seized in Tajikistan decreased by 58% between 2005 and 2010.³⁰¹ The US State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) estimated that between 15% and 30% of heroin and opium from Afghanistan travels through Tajikistan to other markets.³⁰² Secure borders are one of the solutions to many of Central Asia's security problems, especially those concerning terrorism and narcotics.

Boundary Disputes

The border regions are also a source of tension between Tajikistan and its neighbor, Uzbekistan. In November 2011 an explosion severed a major railway that connected the two countries, and transported goods and fuel to Tajikistan. Tajikistan is extremely reliant on Uzbek fuel, and many of Tajikistan's imports and exports passed through the country. After the incident, Uzbek authorities reportedly began dismantling the railway instead of repairing it, which caused many to speculate over the circumstances surrounding the initial explosion. Then, on April 1, 2012 Uzbekistan cut its gas supply line to Tajikistan without notifying Tajik officials. Suhrob Majidov, an analyst at the Central Asia Caucus Institute, stated that the action affected the Tajik Aluminum Company (TALCO), a major cement supplier to hydropower construction sites. Since then, gas has been resupplied, but this incident has marked the continuous tensions between the two countries over the development of hydropower.³⁰³ According to the U.S. Department of State, Uzbekistan is concerned over the impact Tajikistan's hydropower development would have on downstream irrigation.³⁰⁴

Domestically, Tajikistan faces economic instability that threatens the country's security. Tajikistan's Civil War damaged its economic infrastructure, causing a severe decline in agricultural and industrial production. Since the 1990s, Tajikistan's economy has improved somewhat, but the country continues to have one of the lowest per capita GDPs among the former Soviet republics.³⁰⁵ Despite the efforts made by the government to improve the Tajik military, its weak economic system is unable to financially support the country's military and counterterrorism forces.³⁰⁶

Tajikistan is in a vulnerable economic situation because it relies on foreign cooperation for its import and export industries. According to the CIA, Tajikistan imports 60% of its food, which makes the government reliant on the trans-national railway system. As seen in the 2011 incident with Uzbekistan, the damaged railroad cost the country nearly \$3 million U.S. dollars.³⁰⁷ Thus, any foreign action that disrupts Tajikistan's transportation system can negatively impact its entire economy.

Domestic Counterterrorism and Security Steps:

In response to 9/11 and a 2001 domestic terrorist attack, Tajikistan increased its domestic counterterrorism, and cooperation, efforts within the international community to combat global terrorism. After 9/11, Tajikistan opened its airspace to be used for counterterrorist actions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). After former UTO militants assassinated an advisor to the President in 2001, Tajikistan became a member party to the 1979 International Convention against the Taking of Hostages and the 1997 Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings in 2002.³⁰⁸

In order to combat groups such as the IMU, the Tajik government has focused its efforts on controlling the influence of Islam in its society, and engaging in regional counterterrorism dialogues. Tajikistan has increased its military and police capabilities to curb the influence of the IMU and HT. In 2008, OSCE established the Tajikistan Counterterrorism and Police Unit. The program focuses on the development of police training, community policing tactics, and reforming the current police and military systems.³⁰⁹

In April, 2010 the government enforced the Criminal Procedure Code that was previously established in 2009. The new code granted courts the ability to issue arrest warrants, tap phones, freeze assets, confiscate property, and conduct other operations if the investigators could prove necessity. The code gives the government increased ability to combat terrorism and organized crime within Tajikistan.³¹⁰

Since 2010, the Tajikistan government has convicted, and in some instances killed, several key figures of various terrorist groups. On April 15, 2001 Tajik forces killed insurgent commander Mullo Abdullo and 10 of his followers.³¹¹ More recently, in May 2012 in Khujand, a court sentenced 17 men linked to the IMU for recruiting followers to the organization and attending training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan.³¹²

In addition to the legal proceedings regarding counterterrorism, the military and police forces regularly conduct training exercises; including one drill that took place in Fahrabad in May 2012. In May, the training exercises included a mock military response to an emergency situation.³¹³ According to the Tajik Ministry of the Interior, these events are conducted to improve the skills of Tajik forces. At this particular event, police officers from the Dushanbe police unit, the National Guard, Emergency and Civil Defense Committee, and the Tajik Security Committee all participated.³¹⁴

International Cooperation:

Tajikistan is a member of various regional, and international, organizations, including the SCO, the OSCE, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The Tajik government has participated in various regional events and mock counterterrorism exercises. Organizations such as the SCO and the CSTO hold regional exercises to improve coordination between participating countries in the event of a terrorist incident. In April, 2010, Tajikistan hosted the Rubezh counterterrorism exercises for countries who were members of the CSTO, where participating countries responded to a mock invasion of northern Tajikistan by a 120-member band of terrorists.³¹⁵

Participation in these international organizations has helped improve cooperation within the region, especially in regard to legal proceedings, such as extradition. On December 14, 2011, Tajikistan extradited two Kyrgyz suspects, allegedly involved in the 2009 killing of Medet Sayrkulov, the former chief of the Kyrgyz President Office.³¹⁶ Since militants often cross borders to escape prosecution, extradition is essential to maintain security.

Cooperation has also taken place at the bilateral and multilateral levels. In May 2011, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan participated in a joint counterterrorism exercise. The event, named Tianshan-II, took place in Kashgar, located in northwest China. Similar to other regional exercises, the training included “practice in decision-making, freeing abductees by force, and clean-up procedures.”³¹⁷ Further bi-lateral cooperation has taken place between Tajikistan and countries such as the US and Russia. The US government continues to grant Tajikistan aid for counterterrorism and counternarcotic efforts.³¹⁸

Future Outlook:

As the US withdraws from the region, more pressure will be put on Central Asian countries to combat terrorism and organized crime. Since Tajikistan shares a border with Afghanistan, the government must anticipate and prepare for a rise in Taliban militancy and power. As a land-locked country where mountains make up 93% of the landscape, border control should be a top priority. According to a 2011 Majority Staff Report to the Council on Foreign Relations, the mountains serve as “green zones” for militants and narcotics to flow easily across the country.³¹⁹ The narcotics trade not only helps fund organizations such as al-Qa’ida, but it also negatively affects the population due to drug addictions and increases in HIV/AIDS cases.³²⁰

Other contributing factors that may lead to an increase in terrorist activity within Tajikistan include the government’s relations with opposition groups. In the early 1990s, Tajikistan experienced a civil war that displaced more than 600,000 people. One key issue that led to the conflict was the disagreement over the influence Islam should have in society.³²¹ In 1997, the UN mediated a settlement between the Tajik government and the Islamic opposition group, the UTO. In the agreement, the UTO was offered limited representation in the government in exchange for an end to the violence.³²² Since 2008, the Tajik government has increasingly limited the representation of opposition groups within the government.

The growing youth population, political and religious disagreement, continued economic concerns, and the possibility of a rise in militancy in the region, all contribute to the reasons why Tajikistan must continue to collaborate with its neighbors in order to promote cooperation regarding security issues.

Timeline:

October 10, 1995: Tajik opposition gunmen from the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan cross Tajikistan's border and attack a truck carrying Russian soldiers. Six soldiers are killed and four are injured.³²³

June 2001: Low-level militants, associated with Tajikistan's civil war, kidnap 15 people, including a U.S. citizen, at a roadblock. Hostages are released with no further incident.³²⁴

July 17, 2001: Former United Tajik Opposition (UTO) militants assassinate Advisor to the President of Tajikistan, Karim Yuldashev.³²⁵

January 2005: A car bomb blows up near a government building in Dushanbe, killing one person. The same day, a fire breaks out at Security Ministry; the Tajikistan government blames Islamic militants.³²⁶

June 12, 2005: An explosion occurs outside the Ministry of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense, injuring 12 people working next door to the Ministry. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan claims responsibility for the attack, which was an attempt to destabilize the country.³²⁷

May 2006: The IMU attacks the border posts on the anniversary of the Andijan uprising in Uzbekistan in 2005, leaving several dead.³²⁸

June 16, 2007: A small bomb explodes outside the Supreme Court, leaving no one injured. No group claims responsibility.³²⁹

November 14, 2007: A bomb detonates at a conference hall in Dushanbe, killing one person.³³⁰

April 17, 2009: An officer is wounded when three assailants shoot him in Isfara, Sughd, Tajikistan.³³¹

July 9, 2009: Armed men attack a police checkpoint near Tavil-Dara, wounding several officers. Some link the assailants to either IMU or the former UTO.³³²

July 30, 2009: While the presidents of Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan hold security talks, a bomb blows up a police car in Dushanbe. The explosion wounds one officer.³³³

September 3, 2010: In Khujand, 2 officers are killed and 26 injured by a vehicle suicide bomber thought to be connected to the IMU. The explosion happens during morning formation at the Regional Department for Combatting Organized Crime.³³⁴

September 22, 2010: Militants in the Kamarob Valley kill 23 soldiers. Former UTO commanders Mullo Abdullo Rahimov and Ali Bedaki Davlatov lead the attack.³³⁵

December 26, 2011: A Tajik court convicts 53 people for a terror attack that killed two in September 2010.³³⁶

July 24, 2012: At least 12 Tajik troops and 30 rebel fighters are killed during a military operation in the eastern Gorno-Badakhshan region, near the Afghan border. The operation followed the killing of a top security agent, General Abdullo Nazarov by rebel forces. Authorities blame Tolib Ayombekov, a former rebel commander from the civil war, for General Nazarov's death.³³⁷

August 13, 2012: Following the deaths of 50 people in the Gorno-Badakhshan region, government forces captured Tolib Ayombekov, a wanted warlord from the 1997 civil war. Ayombekov turned himself in following a massive military offensive against him and his supporters.³³⁸

TURKMENISTAN

Overview:

Although a lack of verifiable information about security efforts makes it difficult to discern the exact level of danger that Turkmenistan faces from terrorist groups, it is clear that Turkmenistan confronts a legitimate threat from Central Asian militant groups such as the IMU, the IJU, and al-Qa'ida.³³⁹ One notable incident, in which two armed gunmen killed nine members of the Turkmen Special Forces, demonstrates the lethal potential of these groups.³⁴⁰ Despite these attacks, Turkmen counterterrorism forces are known for their stringent and thorough security standards.³⁴¹

Turkmenistan's expansive and permeable borders make border security an imperative for the Turkmen government.³⁴² Opium traffic from Afghanistan to Europe, by way of the Northern Route, increased 70% from 2003 to 2006.³⁴³ Terrorist organizations such as the IMU use drug profits to fund their general activities and acts of terrorism. However, Turkmenistan has taken strides to combat illegal cross border migration by introducing new technologies for border enforcement with US assistance.³⁴⁴ In 2010, Turkmenistan passed legislation to increase training for border guards, customs officers, and law enforcement while further securing checkpoints on the borders of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Additionally, the OSCE instructed students from the Police Academy of Turkmenistan in counterterrorism and human rights protection techniques.³⁴⁵

Turkmenistan's constitution established three branches of government, all controlled by the president in power. The past governments' mistakes, corruption, and suppression of opposition movements have caused low participation and little political competition.³⁴⁶ The government manipulated the educational system in order to accommodate political propaganda (i.e. requiring students to study the late President Saparmurat Niyazov's writings).³⁴⁷ Judicial review does not exist, and due process and legal rights are routinely ignored. The public service systems are not well maintained, and the healthcare system is considered a medical disaster. On February 18, 2010, President Berdymukhammedov announced that the government would try to develop a genuine democracy, including the development of an opposition political party.³⁴⁸

Turkmenistan's counterterrorism advancements result from new domestic tools along with increased regional and international cooperation. Turkmenistan participates in both the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Border Management Program in Central Asia (BOMCA). Turkmen officials have also participated in NATO advanced training in counterterrorism methods and strategies.³⁴⁹ New legislation revised terrorism related criminal punishments and also established the Financial Intelligence Unit under the Ministry of Finance.³⁵⁰ In 2010, the U.S. increased aid to Turkmenistan by almost \$8 million, helping the nation become the leader in counterterrorism efforts in Central Asia.³⁵¹

According to several observers, Turkmenistan can be described as a modern authoritarian state. The government passes laws that, in theory, should promote more political, cultural, and religious freedom; however, they rarely enforce the legislation. For example, the new National Assembly-approved constitution allowed for the creation of opposition parties. However, since its ratification in 2008, the ruling party in the Turkmen government has retained uncontested

authority in the country. Bribery is rampant, and freedom of the press is nonexistent in Turkmenistan. The government blocks all websites that are not approved by the state, including sites run by exiled citizens and extremists.³⁵² Family members of exiled extremists and journalists are often barred from leaving the country. Government officials at times threaten and harass independent foreign journalists. Turkmen culture is in a state of flux since artistic youth find themselves forced to migrate to Russia due to censorship and repression of the arts in Turkmenistan.³⁵³ The government restricts freedom of assembly and association, and involvement with unregistered religious groups results in fines or incarceration.³⁵⁴ Turkmenistan's promotion of the Turkmen national identity results in discrimination against minorities in the workplace and education system, even though more than 3 million ethnic Turkmen in fact live as minorities in Afghanistan and Iran.³⁵⁵

Security Issues:

Narcotics

Due to porous mountain borders, the amount of narcotics trafficked through Turkmenistan increased exponentially at the turn of the century.³⁵⁶ Former President Niyazov was accused by exiled Turkmen of aiding drug and weapons rings, which added to the ease of trafficking through Turkmenistan to Russia and Western Europe. Corrupt political and police officials supplemented trafficking through Turkmenistan to Russia and Western Europe. Turkmenistan is not known as a producer for precursor chemicals or narcotics, but it still remains one of the major routes to other drug markets because of its shared border with Afghanistan.³⁵⁷ Heroin and opium are the major trafficked drugs. However, Turkmenistan is a partner in the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP), which aims to create an effective international drug control system. CADAP cooperation includes study visits, in-country assessments, national and regional conferences, and training for leading Central Asian experts.³⁵⁸

Human Trafficking

Another concerning issue in Turkmenistan is the presence of human trafficking and forced labor. The U.S. notes Turkmenistan as a source for this type of illegal black market trade. Citizens from Turkmenistan are forced into prostitution and to work in sweatshops in, e.g., Turkey where they have no rights and where work conditions are terrible. Turkmenistan has failed to curb this issue or comply with the minimum standards for a reduction in trafficking.³⁵⁹ The government has made insufficient efforts to investigate or prosecute people involved in the trafficking process. Turkmenistan is involved in ongoing meetings with the International Organization on Migration to implement anti-trafficking measures, but has made little progress, apart from creating shelters for victims.³⁶⁰

Resources

Turkmenistan's location near the Caspian Sea forces Turkmenistan into a struggle to determine the territorial boundaries between Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Russia. Many believe the Caspian Sea possesses large energy reserves, and territorial disputes have caused sluggish Central Asian energy sector development compared to its potential gas and oil production

capabilities. Many leaders stress Turkmenistan's importance to Europe's future for energy resources by way of transnational pipelines like the Nabucco line and AGRI.³⁶¹ Estimated natural gas reserves in the Caspian region amount to 450 trillion cubic feet (tcf), as reported by British Petroleum.³⁶² It also ranks fourth in global natural gas reserves. The Caspian Sea region is home to one of the largest production areas for hydrocarbons and this has led to consistent talks with Turkmenistan about opening up a trans-Eurasian energy pipeline.³⁶³ Turkmenistan's economy relies on energy exports, resulting in many disagreements over gas prices with trade partners like China, Iran, and Russia.

Domestic Counterterrorism and Security Steps:

Access to the Caspian Sea and proximity to Europe and Russia makes Turkmenistan the ideal route for opium and heroin traffickers from Afghanistan. The UNODC has assisted Turkmenistan in two initiatives including the Caspian Sea Initiative Action Plan (CSI) and The Turkmen Border Initiative (TBI). The goals of the CSI are regional data collection and analysis, container control, intelligence sharing, and support for the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia.³⁶⁴ The TBI, and the Turkmenistan Drug Control Agency; which was modeled after those of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, are also a support effort. The TBI aims to strengthen drug and crime investigation abilities, increase the amount of mobile interdiction teams, and foster interagency and cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries.³⁶⁵

Turkmenistan has also united with BOMCA to increase interception capabilities and overall border strength.³⁶⁶ Currently, the State Border Service protects the border, the State Migration Service is in charge of migration control, and the newly established State Service on the Fight against Drugs gives the state a response mechanism against drug trafficking. The Anti-Money Laundering and Counterterrorism Financing Law, strives to curb money laundering from drug trafficking and other criminal activities. Turkmenistan revised the criminal code for terrorism and terrorist financing, raising the penalties for being convicted of related crimes.³⁶⁷ Punishment for terrorist activities ranges from 5 to 20 years and terrorist financing ranges from 4 to 15 years, in prison.

Turkmenistan has recently increased its naval prowess in an effort to maintain Caspian Sea security. This has proven a common trend for the countries that border the Caspian Sea: Turkmenistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Russia. These countries attribute their naval buildups to counterterrorism and counter-piracy policies. This situation has sparked an arms race between the Caspian Sea countries, leading Turkmenistan to build a naval base and naval academy. Turkmenistan has also attempted to expand its naval fleet by purchasing two Russian missile boats, with the intention of buying three more.³⁶⁸

International Cooperation:

Positive neutrality has limited cooperation between Turkmenistan and international actors.³⁶⁹ Positive neutrality entails maintaining good relations with all countries and staying away from alliances that cultivate cross-cutting obligations. However, Turkmenistan still cooperates with many international organizations and takes part in numerous regional integration efforts.

Turkmenistan is a member of the United Nations and the U.N. Global Counterterrorism Strategy in Central Asia, which increases regional integration.³⁷⁰

In October 2007, Turkmenistan hosted a training team from the NATO-Russia Council for Counternarcotic Training to work with Central Asian forces. The mission sought to increase the region's interception and policing capabilities.³⁷¹ Turkmenistan also hosted a civilian emergency seminar with NATO in Ashgabat in September of 2009.³⁷² In June 2010 the country became a full member of the Eurasian Group, which is part of FATF.³⁷³ Turkmenistan also played a supporting role for U.S. and NATO forces fighting in Afghanistan. As a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace Program, Turkmenistan is obligated to provide fuel and other duty free products to program members. Turkmenistan has also allowed the US to use the airspace and flight facilities of Turkmenistan since Operation Enduring Freedom began.³⁷⁴ Recently, Turkmenistan was elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in the United Nations to the Commission on Population and Development (2012-2015), the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (2012-2015), and the Executive Committee of the Program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Continuing Basis), while the European Union has plans for opening a delegation in Turkmenistan to increase Central Asian cooperation with security and economic development.^{375 376}

Future Outlook:

When examining the future outlook for Turkmenistan, repercussions of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan could create a regional power vacuum with aftershocks felt throughout Turkmenistan. The issues to focus on are the drug trade and Islamic extremism in Central Asia. Even though the U.S. vows to maintain a limited monitoring presence in the region, the prospect of having a restricted number of trained Afghani officials to control security within their nation's borders is alarming.

The U.S. prematurely pulled troops out of Afghanistan in the 1990s. That decision led to the resurgence of the Taliban's regime that fostered numerous terrorist activities and triggered an occupation with international security.³⁷⁷ Turkmenistan will be one of the countries directly impacted by the Afghanistan situation. The Turkmen government's internal problems and limited capacity for international cooperation could lead to a spillover of extremism from the borders of Afghanistan due to its weak border security. Additionally, Turkmenistan's lack of progress in human rights is of concern to the international community.

Timeline:

December 12, 1995: The UN recognizes Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality declaration³⁷⁸

September 21, 2001: President Saparamurad Niyazov gives consent for ground transport and overflights to provide humanitarian aid for the conflict in Afghanistan, declares "evil must be punished."³⁷⁹

November 25, 2002: President Niyazov is attacked with firearms on his motorcade. The government blames mercenaries sent by disgruntled exiles. However, they claim Niyazov used the attack as a pretext to crack down on security. Around 40 people are arrested and many other citizens forcibly disappear.³⁸⁰

September 1, 2003: Turkmenistan passed a law that outlines the legal structure and framework for the fight against terrorism nationally.³⁸¹

2005: Turkmenistan withdraws from Commonwealth of Independent States, however it remains an associate member.³⁸²

December 21, 2006: President Niyazov dies from heart failure.³⁸³

October 22-23, 2007: Turkmenistan hosts a training team from NATO-Russia Council for counter-narcotics training with Central Asian forces.³⁸⁴

September 2008: Revised constitution adopted that aimed to expand parliament in power and size, eradicated the People's Council, and threw out the agenda created by former President Niyazov.³⁸⁵

September 12-13, 2008: Two armed men set up in a drinking water plant in Khitrovka and 20 police were killed. At first they were suspected Islamic militants, but later reports say they were linked to the drug trade. Tanks and armored vehicles later opened fire on the drinking factory to neutralize the threat.³⁸⁶

March 2009: UNODC launched the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC). Turkmenistan is one of seven members.³⁸⁷

May 2009: Turkmenistan Government passed an Anti- Money Laundering and Counterterrorism Financing law.³⁸⁸

September 28-29, 2009: In Ashgabat, Turkmenistan hosts civilian emergency seminar with NATO.³⁸⁹

May 2010: Central Asian Drug Action Programme 5 (CADAP) is implemented by Turkmenistan.³⁹⁰

June 2010: Turkmenistan became a full member of the Eurasian group, which is part of the Financial Action Task Force.³⁹¹

July 1, 2010: Revised criminal code for terrorism and terrorist financing is instituted. Punishment for terrorism ranged from 5- 20 years depending on the crime and terrorist financing ranged 4-15 years depending on the crime.³⁹²

November 2010: Caspian Sea agreement that states a legal resolution is necessary to resolve the territorial dispute by Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan at the Baku Summit.³⁹³

April 2011: ECOSOC elects Turkmenistan to the Commission on Population and Development (2012-2015), Commission on Narcotic Drugs (2012-2015), and Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Continuing Basis).³⁹⁴

March 2012: The third of three follow up reports on the progress of Turkmenistan under the FATF is released.³⁹⁵

UZBEKISTAN

Overview:

The Republic of Uzbekistan is a landlocked country, sharing borders with Kazakhstan to the north, Turkmenistan to the west, Kyrgyzstan to the east, Tajikistan to the south east, and Afghanistan to the south. It is a former Soviet Republic (Uzbek SSR) and is led by President Islam Karimov. Tashkent is the capital and largest city of Uzbekistan, which is the most populous Central Asian country.

Although Uzbekistan is landlocked, the country is one of the world's biggest producers of the water-reliant crop, cotton, and is rich in natural resources, including oil, gas, and gold. After the fall of the Soviet Union, individual republics have tried to use the water that flows through its territory to their own advantage by building additional dams and canals. This redistribution of natural resources makes water-sharing an issue, and aggravates border disputes with Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. The delimitation with Kazakhstan is complete; however, due to the presence of Uzbek enclaves, the situation with Kyrgyzstan has become increasingly complicated. Additionally, Uzbekistan's border situation with Tajikistan is being discussed.³⁹⁶

Uzbekistan has the largest military in Central Asia. It is primarily used to secure the borders and combat terrorism. On February 16, 1999, six car bombs exploded in Tashkent, and simultaneously marked the "*arrival of terrorism to the region.*"³⁹⁷ IMU, a group that openly calls for the resignation of the Uzbek leadership in order to establish an Islamic government, was suspected of orchestrating the attacks.

Security Issues:

Terrorism

The first terrorist attack in Uzbekistan occurred on February 16, 1999 with the explosion of six cars in Tashkent. This event marked the emergence of a new terrorist organization in the country, the IMU. The IMU is a militant Islamist group that was formed in 1998 by the late Islamic ideologue, Tahir Yuldashev, and the late former Soviet paratrooper, Juma Namangani. The IMU aims to strip President Islam Karimov of his power and position in Uzbekistan and to create an Islamic state under Sharia law. It operates primarily in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and was responsible for bombings in Tashkent in 1999 and for attacks in Kyrgyzstan in 1999 and 2000.³⁹⁸

IJU is a splinter cell of the IMU, and was formed in 2002. The IJU claimed responsibility for the 2004 bombings against the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Tashkent and led two terrorist attacks on police stations in Andijan on May 26, 2005.³⁹⁹

In October 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom changed the security dynamics for Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and in particular, the status of the IMU, which shifted its operational focus to Afghanistan and Pakistan. While the IMU mainly operates in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, it has also carried out attacks in Afghanistan's northern regions near the Uzbek border.

This region is a significant narcotics trafficking route, which adds an additional factor to the potential for violence.⁴⁰⁰

Trafficking

Human trafficking in Uzbekistan is an internationally recognized problem. According to the CIA World Factbook: Uzbek: “Uzbekistan is a source country for women and girls trafficked to Kazakhstan, Russia, the Middle East and Asia for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation; Men are trafficked to Kazakhstan and Russia for the purposes of forced labor in the construction, cotton, and tobacco industries; men and women are also trafficked internally for the purposes of domestic servitude, labor in the agricultural and construction industries, and for commercial sexual exploitation.”⁴⁰¹

Refugees

There were 39,202 refugees from Tajikistan and 1,060 from Afghanistan in 2007. The same year, the government transferred 3,400 people from their villages to the Tajikistan border.⁴⁰²

Ethnic conflicts

Central Asia’s international borders were not structured based on strict ethnic or linguistic boundaries. Instead, the geographical borders cross cut ethnic groups, creating cleavages in society (for example, Uzbekistan’s population was also composed of 5.5% of Russians, 5% of Tajiks and 3% of Kazakhs⁴⁰³). Ethnic Tajiks and ethnic Uzbeks often acknowledge different versions of history, and, while ethnic Tajiks claim the Samanid empire legacy, the Uzbeks claim the legacy of the Timurid Empire (the current territory of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and parts of Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan).⁴⁰⁴

Uzbekistan also has ethnic tension with Kyrgyzstan. In June 2010, the Uzbek community was attacked by Kyrgyz in Osh, near the Uzbek border. At least 1,100 people were wounded and over 100 were killed in what was considered the country’s worst ethnic clash in 20 years. Thousands of terrified ethnic Uzbeks flooded to the nearby border of Uzbekistan after their homes were destroyed.⁴⁰⁵

Resources

Access to water remains one of the biggest causes of tension between the countries in Central Asia, especially for Uzbekistan, which needs water to irrigate its agricultural industries. Water is not well distributed between the countries of Central Asia, and since the fall of the Soviet Union, irrigation facilities have led to tensions over distribution. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan both say that the water is at their disposal. The Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers first cross Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, on their way toward the Aral Sea. These countries are therefore considered upstream countries. The rivers, then, enter Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, which are considered downstream countries. Despite the abundance of water resources, the upstream countries are poor in terms of oil and gas reserves. To make up for their shortages, and to supply their energy needs, they continue construction on hydro-electric projects, some of which began

in the Soviet period. Uzbekistan is strongly opposed to Tajikistan's plans to dam the Vakhsh River, one of the major tributaries of the Amu Darya, which would make Uzbekistan dependent on the Tajik government for its water supply. Since Uzbekistan is a major producer of cotton, this dependency would have the ability to cripple the Uzbek export economy.⁴⁰⁶

In 2000, Uzbekistan cut gas exports to Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan reacted by draining a great amount of water behind the Toktogul Dam. As a result, Uzbekistan established a military garrison on its border with Kyrgyzstan and deployed tanks, armored vehicles, and helicopters, in order to recover the dam. In response, Kyrgyzstan threatened to blow up the dam, which would have led to the destruction of farmlands in Uzbekistan in the Fergana and Zarafshan valleys. Although the crisis ebbed some time later, it was an exemplary instance of the high potential that a water crisis in this region has for rapidly evolving into a political and military confrontation.⁴⁰⁷ In 2012, Tajik diplomats accused Uzbek officials of imposing an "economic blockade," after Uzbekistan's state-owned gas company, Uztransgaz, halted exports to Tajikistan on April 1st.⁴⁰⁸

Uzbekistan is still a major source of gas for its neighbors—the majority of which goes to Russia—where it is sold to Europe. Now, Uzbekistan expects its neighbors to pay for their gas at the same price as Russia. However, as of now, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have refused to do so.⁴⁰⁹

Domestic Counterterrorism and Security Steps:

Uzbekistan is a unitary state under a presidential system of government, led by the President who holds the majority of power. Ostensibly classified as a republic, Uzbekistan allows competing political parties to enter the parliament, but all of them are pro-presidential. This gives the appearance that opponents exist during the presidential elections, without it actually being the case. Power is indeed centralized, and the territory is monitored by governors (called akims), who are appointed by the President, thus ensuring that those who are loyal to the President retain power, and keep control of the different areas. Therefore, Uzbekistan can be considered an authoritarian country that possesses all the power needed to repress terrorism.⁴¹⁰

Matthew Stein, an analyst at the Central Asia Foreign Military Studies Office, says that "Uzbekistan sees itself as the bulwark against terrorism and extremism among other Central Asian states."⁴¹¹ It has been the birthplace of regional extremist groups, most notably the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and has demonstrated in the past that it will take any necessary action to protect its interests against such groups.⁴¹² Since the 2004 attacks in Tashkent, Uzbekistan has only suffered two terrorist attacks, both of which occurred in 2009. Since these attacks, the government raised military appropriations from 2% to 3.5% of the GDP and started a large terrorist eradication program.⁴¹³

The government represses those suspected of Islamic extremism and restricts unregistered religious instructors. Since its independence from the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan has limited the formation of independent institutions and suppressed all forms of dissent. After the 1999 bombings in Tashkent, the government intensified restrictions on independent political and religious organizations. The Karimov government arrested and jailed numerous individuals, on suspicion of involvement in extremism, terrorism, and other egregious crimes.⁴¹⁴

In May 2005, dozens or perhaps hundreds of civilians were killed or wounded after Uzbek troops fired on demonstrators in the eastern town of Andijon. The protestors had gathered to demand the end of a trial of 23 prominent local businessmen charged with belonging to an Islamic extremist group. The night before, a group had stormed a prison where those on trial were held and released hundreds of inmates. Many freed inmates then joined others in attacking government buildings. The tragic events were followed by condemnations from Western countries.⁴¹⁵

According to the US State Department's human rights report of Uzbekistan, the government allows torture, in order to collect information on terrorist groups. This report, released in 2005 says that "the law prohibits such practices; however, police and the NSS routinely tortured, beat, and otherwise mistreated detainees to obtain confessions or incriminating information. Police, prison officials, and the NSS allegedly used suffocation, electric shock, rape, and other sexual abuse; however, beating was the most commonly reported method of torture. Torture was common in prisons, pretrial facilities, and local police and security service precincts. Defendants in trials often claimed that their confessions, on which the prosecution based its cases, were extracted by torture."⁴¹⁶

In 2001, the Uzbek government allowed US troops and planes to use Uzbekistan's airspace and air bases, and implement a bilateral security plan against the Taliban in order to eliminate international terrorism. In exchange, Uzbekistan received \$300 million in aid from the US.⁴¹⁷ Additionally, Uzbekistan received an extra \$25 million in foreign military financing (FMF), \$18 million in nonproliferation, anti-terrorism, demining, and related programs (NADR), and \$40.5 million in Freedom Support Act (FSA) funds.⁴¹⁸ However, after the US condemnation of the Andijan tragedy, Uzbekistan announced it would end its cooperation with the US on counterterrorism in Central Asia.⁴¹⁹

International Cooperation:

Uzbekistan is part of many international organizations including the UN, IMF, the World Bank, CSTO, OSCE and SCO.⁴²⁰ As a former Soviet Republic, Uzbekistan remains close to Russia but has recently improved ties to the U.S.

In 1999, Uzbekistan did not sign the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty, when it was to be renewed, as Uzbekistan did not accept the military presence of Russian troops at its borders, and joined Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova in the GUUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, a pro-occidental organization which gathered the states offended by Russia and tries to limit its influence in the area. In the meantime, Uzbekistan began to align itself more closely with the U.S. and other NATO countries. For instance, Uzbekistan was the first Central Asian state to offer basing rights to the U.S. after 9/11.⁴²¹ Donald Rumsfeld visited Tashkent, on October 5, 2001, after Uzbekistan signed an agreement with U.S. officials allowing the use of Uzbekistan's airspace and limited number of U.S. military personnel (not more than 1,500 troops) to operate out of the Khanabad airbase in exchange for security guarantees.⁴²² However, after the Andijon tragedy in 2005 and the condemnation of repression by major western countries including the United States, the US-Uzbek agreement was abrogated and the authorization for U.S. aircraft to overfly Uzbekistani territory ended in January 2006.⁴²³

Afterwards, Uzbekistan did not support the formation or use of the CSTO's Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF) and refused to send troops to collective exercises, or make them available for the CORF.⁴²⁴

Cooperation and communication between the United States and Uzbekistan restarted in 2009 with President Karimov's agreement to join the Northern Distribution Network, which aims to open Navoi's airport, in order to provide supplies to Afghanistan without going through Pakistan. Since the relations between the United States and Uzbekistan were still uncertain, American forces were not involved. Instead, South Korea's commercial airline Korean Air officially took the place of the United States.⁴²⁵

In 2001, Uzbekistan joined China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which initially aimed to enhance relations between its members, solve borders issues, and improve economic cooperation. Now, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization aspires to increased economic integration and interaction, and could develop into a new geopolitical force in the international community.⁴²⁶

Future Outlook:

According to Martha Brill Olcott from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, one of the greatest risks Uzbekistan faces is not an armed Islamic opposition, "because the government has prove[n that] it can deal with that kind of threats." Under Karimov's presidency, Uzbekistan's security is unlikely to deteriorate. It has been rebuilding links with the U.S. (Northern Distribution Network officials visited Uzbekistan in 2011), and it is still improving economic cooperation with Russia and China thanks to the SCO. The great security challenge of Uzbekistan rests on the physical wellbeing of its leader.⁴²⁷ Any indication of weakness or instability could cause mass unrest from political minorities.

The looming withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in 2014 is likely to leave Uzbekistan facing a critical risk for its border security. After being forced from Uzbekistan, the IMU found refuge in Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to Matthew Stein of the Military Review, the IMU could strike Uzbekistan because of fundamentalist beliefs or criminal activities related to drug trafficking. If this happened, the government would have to close or restrict movement across the border or be forced to conduct a cross-border strike into Afghanistan against the IMU. In that case, Uzbekistan would have to forge tight links with the Afghan government, in order to prevent a future spillover of IMU influence.⁴²⁸

Water also remains a key factor for the future of Uzbekistan. By 2050, the water demand is expected to double. However, without any access to the sea, Uzbekistan is dependent on its neighbors for its water supplies. The Uzbek economy relies mainly on the production of cotton; a crop that relies on large amounts of water, a shortage could have dire economic consequences which would likely lead to major tension between Uzbekistan and its neighbors.⁴²⁹

Timeline:

February 16, 1999: 16 are killed in Tashkent bombings, which attempted to assassinate President Islam Karimov.⁴³⁰

June 15, 2001: Uzbekistan joins the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.⁴³¹

October 7, 2001: Uzbekistan allows U.S. troops and planes to use Uzbek airspace and air bases, and implement a bilateral security plan against the Taliban.^{432 433}

March 30, 2004: Suicide bombing and gun battles leave 23 dead in the Uzbek capital.⁴³⁴

July 30, 2004: Suicide attacks outside of U.S. and Israeli embassies in Tashkent kill two security guards; coinciding with the opening of legal proceedings against 15 people accused of terror attacks the previous year.⁴³⁵

May 13, 2005: In response to an attempted jailbreak of accused extremists in Andijon, security forces open fire on a crowd of protestors, killing dozens or hundreds and provoking international condemnation.⁴³⁶

September 30, 2005: After cutting off U.S. access to a key military base, Uzbekistan also quietly terminated cooperation with Washington on counterterrorism, a move that could affect both countries' ability to deal with al Qaeda, and its allies in Central Asia, and neighboring Afghanistan, U.S. officials said.⁴³⁷

March 5, 2008: Uzbekistan allows US limited use of its southern Termez air base for operations in Afghanistan, partially reversing its decision to expel US forces from the Khanabad base in 2005.⁴³⁸

October 13, 2008: EU further eases sanctions imposed on Uzbekistan in response to the 2005 Andijan violence.^{439 440}

October 27, 2009: The EU lifts the arms embargo that it imposed in 2005 after the Andijan violence.^{441 442}

May 26, 2009: Assailants fire rocket-propelled grenades and small arms at a police station, killing one police officer, wounding three others, and causing minor damage to the police station. Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) claimed responsibility for the attack.⁴⁴³

February 18, 2010: Three men are convicted of murdering Uzbekistan's most prominent theatre director, Mark Weil, in 2007. The murder was in response to his portrayal of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad in a play, *Imitating the Koran*.^{444 445}

June 13, 2010: Mobs of Kyrgyz men rampage through southern Kyrgyzstan, slaughtering ethnic Uzbeks and burning down houses in a third day of ethnic bloodshed.⁴⁴⁶

December 21, 2011: Train route from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan opens, which assists in transporting supplies for NATO troops.⁴⁴⁷

February 10, 2012: Native Uzbek man pleads guilty to plotting an assassination attempt on President Obama in the United States.⁴⁴⁸

April 13, 2012: Tajik diplomats accuse Uzbek officials of imposing an “economic blockade” after Uzbekistan’s state-owned gas company, Uztransgaz, halted exports to Tajikistan on April 1, 2012.⁴⁴⁹

June 4, 2012: NATO concludes agreements with Central Asian nations, including Uzbekistan, to open up supply route to Afghanistan for vehicles and other military equipment.⁴⁵⁰

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