

**Security Sector Reform in Central Asia:  
Exploring Needs and Possibilities**

Merijn Hartog, editor

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Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Exploring Needs and Possibilities  
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The Centre for European Security Studies (CESS) is an independent institute for research, consultancy, education and training, based in the Netherlands. Its aim is to promote transparent, accountable and effective governance of the security sector, broadly defined. It seeks to advance democracy and the rule of law, help governments and civil society face their security challenges, and further the civilized and lawful resolution of conflict.

***The Man behind the Greenwood Papers***

*Resting his fists on the lectern, he would fix his audience with a glare and pronounce: "REVEAL, EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY." It was his golden rule of democratic governance. David Greenwood was born in England in 1937 and died in 2009 in Scotland. He first worked for the British Ministry of Defence, then went on to teach political economy at Aberdeen University, where he later became the director of the Centre for Defence Studies.*

*In 1997, David Greenwood joined the Centre for European Security Studies in the Netherlands as its Research Director. For 10 years, he was the principal researcher and teacher at CESS, and a friend and mentor to his colleagues. To borrow a phrase of his own, David Greenwood was a construction worker on the building site of democracy. This series of research reports, formerly called the Harmonie Papers, is affectionately dedicated to him.*

## Foreword

This is one of the first books on Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Central Asia.<sup>1</sup> It comprises papers presented at the first regional conference on the subject, organised in September 2009 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, by the Centre for European Security Studies in co-operation with several organisations from the region. This double first suggests that SSR is still an unfamiliar topic in Central Asia.

In Molière's play 'The Middle-Class Gentleman', Mr Jourdain discovers to his astonishment that he has been speaking prose for 40 years. Something similar that happened at our Almaty conference. A senior official working for the EU Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA) spontaneously admitted that he did not know the European Commission regarded BOMCA as an SSR project. He was practising SSR without being aware of the label and what it means.

If even a senior practitioner is unaware of the concept and policy of SSR, we can safely assume that other relevant parties in Central Asia are also unfamiliar with them. Elsewhere in this book, I suggest that the SSR approach can help to solve some of Central Asia's problems. This is why our Centre for European Security Studies ([www.cess.org](http://www.cess.org)) decided to introduce the SSR approach in the region. The professional training courses we held in Kazakhstan, the Almaty conference and this book are first steps towards that goal. CESS will continue its work in Central Asia with training courses in Kyrgyzstan and other countries of the region.

This publication is the first to be presented in our renamed book series. The old name of this series was 'Harmonie Papers'. The new one is inspired by David Greenwood, our colleague, friend and mentor who died in 2009.

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded the Starlink Kazakhstan programme which culminated in the Almaty conference and this book. Various experts from Central Asia and beyond contributed chapters to the book. Behind the scenes, our programme assistant Philippus Zandstra and our language editor Vivien Collingwood played essential roles in editing, while Joke Venema

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<sup>1</sup> Another is Eden Cole and Philipp Fluri, eds., *Defence and Security Sector Institution-Building in the Post-Soviet Central Asian States* (Geneva/Brussels, DCAF, 2007).

took charge of formatting, printing and distribution. Merijn Hartog pulled the whole volume together in the face of considerable difficulties. However, I am pleased to report that no blood was shed in the making of this book. Many thanks to all those who helped.

Sami Faltas  
Executive Director, Centre for European Security Studies

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## Introduction

*Merijn Hartog\**

The Central Asian region<sup>2</sup> faces a broad spectrum of security challenges. These range from religious terrorism, organised crime and simmering ethnic quarrels to endemic corruption, environmental decline and a disintegrating infrastructure. What is more, the danger of instability is heightened by unchecked authoritarianism in all five countries and a lurking receptiveness to religious extremism among returned migrants, mainly from Russia.<sup>3</sup> How to deal with such diverse challenges in an effective and comprehensive way should be a pressing concern, not only for the five countries of Central Asia, but also for the entire international community.

In the decade following the independence of the five Central Asian Republics, the region was largely ignored by the outside world. However, in the aftermath of the attacks in New York and Washington in 2001, Central Asia gained the western world's undivided attention. Subsequently, the potential utilisation of the region's vast energy resources sparked the interest of the energy-gobbling superpowers, China and Russia. The intense involvement and interest of the international community is reflected in the European Union's (EU's) 2007 Strategy for Central Asia, the participation of most Central Asian countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO's) Partnership for Peace (PfP) activities, the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2001 and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) in 2002 (both as counterweights to expanding western influence in Central Asia)<sup>4</sup> and, of course, Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010.

All of these international developments are promising, and indicate that Central Asia's isolationist phase is nearing an end. The international community should now acknowledge the daunting security challenges that seriously threaten Central Asia, identify how these could potentially spill-over and affect the wider region and beyond, and realise that the five republics cannot counter such threats individually. The various international organisations should thus

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<sup>2</sup> In this book, we regard Central Asia as consisting of the five former Republics of the Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

<sup>3</sup> International Crisis Group, "Central Asia: Migrants and the Economic Crisis," *Asia Report* 183 (January 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Neil J. Melvin, "Introduction," in Neil J. Melvin, ed., *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008), 1-8.

identify appropriate measures to counter threats; should aim not to antagonise each other and to work in an inclusive manner for the greater good; and finally, should actively encourage the five Central Asian states to work together and develop a regional, comprehensive security policy (which will be a challenge in itself).

The international community nowadays considers the concept of SSR to be an effective approach to building enduring stability, security and development. The aim of SSR is to provide the efficient delivery of security services to the population as a whole in a transparent and accountable manner, under the rule of law. Local ownership and sustainability are thus essential. SSR will not only improve the effectiveness of the security forces, but it will also make them more democratic, which will lead to increased trust in the security sector among the population. The concept of human security lies at the heart of SSR. This means that each individual child, woman and man not only *feels* safe, but also *is* safe.<sup>5</sup> And, although states and regimes are certainly worth protecting, they should be looked after in such a way that human security is enhanced. A vital requirement for SSR is that it cannot be pushed through without the full support of the governments concerned. Therefore SSR will only succeed if the leaders of Central Asian countries perceive it to be in their interests.

The objective of this book is to outline the design of the five Central Asian states' security structures, to explore the possibility of and need for SSR, and to examine cooperative regional security structures and the international community's involvement in the region. The papers contained in this book were written by leading experts on Central Asia and international security, both from the region itself and from abroad. Outlines of these papers were presented at a high-level conference on 'Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Identifying National Approaches, International Cooperation and Prospects for Cooperation', organised by CESS in Almaty in September 2009.

As concluded at the high-level conference and as this book will show, we have to be realistic about the prospects for genuine SSR in any of the five Central Asian countries at this stage. The chance of there being a conscientious programme of reform is unlikely at best. The fundamental issue at stake is what the regimes in Central Asia deem to be security challenges. In other words, what kind of security are we talking about: regime, national or human security? Today, national and especially regime security clearly take precedence over human security in most Central Asian countries. Indeed, human security hardly features on the policy agendas of the respective regimes. As long as this is the case, it will be difficult to imagine genuine SSR taking place.

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<sup>5</sup> OECD Development Assistance Committee, *Training Module on Security System Reform and Governance* (Paris: OECD, 2007), 17.

Nevertheless, as Sami Faltas points out in the first chapter of this book, SSR could help Central Asia to meet its main regional challenges. According to Faltas, these challenges consist of maintaining and improving the fragile stability, modernising economies, and pursuing sustainable development. SSR could be beneficial in all these areas. It would produce modern, professional and accountable military and police forces, which would increase effectiveness and enhance the population's confidence in the security sector. With regard to the economy and sustainable development, one should note that foreign investors are generally inclined to work in countries that have predictable investment and tax rules. One of the main objectives of SSR is the establishment of transparent and accountable governance, which promotes predictable regulations and attracts foreign investors.

In the next chapters of the book, the five Central Asian countries' approaches towards SSR are examined. As Sébastien Peyrouse points out, of all the Central Asian states, Kazakhstan is undoubtedly the most receptive to SSR. It is also the most open to international cooperation, and has considerable means to invest in it. However, introducing real reform in a particularly sensitive domain like security – one that is characterised by intertwined economic, political and strategic interests, a strong Soviet legacy, and an uncomfortable tendency to call the legitimacy of the regime into question – has proved to be very complex. Clearly, SSR is being limited as soon as it comes close to the heart of the system.

Erica Marat argues that the international community should promote SSR in Kyrgyzstan. The challenge is to explain to the regime that democratic control of the armed forces, as well as effective cooperation between the government, parliament and civil society in the formulation of a national security strategy, would bring about a policy that is able to respond to the existing problems of religious radicalism, drug trafficking, and organised crime.

According to Anna Matveeva, it is unlikely that Tajikistan's security sector will be reformed in the short term, because it would not be in the regime's interest to do so. A key question that has to be considered is how SSR can be pursued in a precarious environment in which basic security barely exists and cannot be taken for granted. In such circumstances, the concern of powerful elites that public oversight would undermine the effectiveness of the security sector has to be taken into account.

Michael Denison analyses Turkmenistan's security sector, and finds that SSR is beset by two problems that are related to the country's closed and opaque political culture. The first has to do with the lack of adequate information, which is both selective and secretive. The second relates to the structure of Turkmenistan's political society, with its absence of political opposition or an independent media and civil society. Although the country is slowly opening up and reforms have taken place since 2006, one needs to bear in mind that the SSR process remains embryonic and slow.

John Schoeberlein raises an important issue related to Uzbekistan's security sector. The complicated challenge for potential SSR support programmes in Uzbekistan is how to reconcile the different ways in which the Uzbeks and the West conceptualise security. Uzbekistan tends to define security in a much narrower sense than the West, in a way that could be described as 'regime security', as opposed to national, international or human security.

In the final chapters of the book, five experts consider the involvement of the main international organisations in Central Asia, and discuss the possibilities for regional cooperation. Martha Brill Olcott explores the role played by NATO and finds that the Alliance was relatively quick off the mark after independence, offering PfP membership to all of the Central Asian countries. Today, as the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorates, it has become difficult for NATO to achieve its twin goals in the region simultaneously: namely, getting Central Asian states to assist with stabilising Afghanistan, and promoting democratic reform in the region. NATO's priority in Central Asia has been enhancing the security of NATO member states, rather than enhancing the security of the Central Asian states and helping them adopt NATO values.

Alexander Nikitin offers insights into the role played by the CSTO in Central Asia. He emphasises the fact that the CSTO has been fine-tuned to counter conventional military threats and tackle new security threats. The CSTO is the only multilateral structure in the post-Soviet area that is capable of conducting military operations. In this capacity, it can be used independently or as a partner of EU, NATO or the OSCE. It may turn out to play a valuable role in attempts to stop drug trafficking from Afghanistan.

According to Jos Boonstra, the EU has an interest in security and stability in Central Asia because strategic, political and economic developments in the region can have a direct or indirect impact on EU interests. To counter national security threats in Central Asia, the EU could opt to support SSR projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and liaise closely with NATO and the OSCE on SSR in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The EU could also contribute to the fight against regional security threats such as religious radicalism, trafficking and regional tensions over water management. To do so, the EU could connect its BOMCA Programme to the European Police Mission (EUPOL) in Afghanistan, and extend BOMCA to other parts of the security sector.

Nargis Kassenova identifies three levels of constraint on the development of regional security cooperation in Central Asia: external, intra-regional and domestic. Russia's 'near abroad' policy and competition with China and the West for influence in the region dominates the external level. Intra-regionally, there are disputes over territory and resources, aggravated by the zero-sum approach adopted by Central Asian governments. Domestic constraints arise from the highly centralised and personalised character of

decision-making in the region. Sustainable solutions to the region's security problems will not be found in the absence of internal political reforms. The greatest security threats facing Central Asian states are those that are generated internally, and countering them will require better governance.

Finally, Donald Bowser addresses the relationship between corruption and security in both Central Asia and Afghanistan, thereby concluding this volume on a positive note. Despite rising levels of corruption in the Afghan security sector and those of some Central Asian countries, we can finally see growing consensus and recognition among local policymakers that corruption within the military, border troops and police forces is a major destabilising factor. If the international community simultaneously keeps promoting the need for greater government accountability and the importance of tackling corruption, there are indeed reasonable grounds for optimism.



# 1. How Security Sector Reform Might Benefit Central Asia

*Sami Faltas\**

The purpose of the Almaty conference on SSR in Central Asia (September 2009) was to raise interest in the subject and the benefits it might bring to the region. By organising this meeting, CESS also wanted to encourage practitioners and experts from the region and beyond to learn from each other. Finally, we hoped that the meeting would create a network of people interested in SSR in Central Asia. The seminar was quite successful in achieving these goals, and this book will carry the process forward. In this essay, I will do three things:

- 1) Describe a successful case of SSR;
- 2) Explain what SSR usually means these days;
- 3) Explore its potential benefits for Central Asia;
- 4) Report some of the things we learned during SSR training programmes in former Soviet republics.

## 1. A Successful Example of SSR

There is nothing new about countries reforming their security forces or developing new ones. Let us consider the re-armament of Germany in the early 1950s and the integration of East Germany's armed forces into those of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1989. It is hard to imagine Germany without a government, a bureaucracy and an army, but in the early years after the Second World War, the country was governed by the occupying powers. Germany's pre-war state had ceased to exist. Not one, but two German states now emerged. In the Western sectors, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was established. The FRG would take time to develop into a mature and stable democracy, but essential conditions for this evolution were put in place at a very early stage. West Germany adopted one of the most modern and democratic constitutions in the world, and put an end to a long tradition of German militarism.

The Allies insisted on a tight integration of the FRG in the NATO and the European Community. The West Germans turned this obligation into an opportunity, adopting an outward-looking and European approach to economic

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\* Sami Faltas is Executive Director of the Centre for European Security Studies, the Netherlands. This essay is based on a speech given to the conference *Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Identifying National Approaches, International Involvement and Prospects for Cooperation* in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 24-25 September 2009.

development as well as defence. Along with the Benelux, France and Italy, West Germany became the heartland of the new Europe. With the help of the Marshall programme, the West German economy soon began growing at a rapid pace, and a new political system evolved that would prove sustainable and democratic.

It took West Germany several decades to fully overcome the political and psychological legacy of the Third Reich, but eventually, it dealt with the burdens and traumas of its past thoroughly and frankly.

In the FRG, the old Prussian idea that the army is the school of the nation was rejected. Instead, West Germany embraced the new concept of the soldier as a citizen in uniform. When it re-armed, its military forces were placed under powerful parliamentary control. There is hardly a parliament anywhere in the world that oversees the armed forces in such detail as the *Bundestag*. This has led some observers to describe the *Bundeswehr* as a parliamentary army.

At the head of the *Bundeswehr* is not a joint committee of military commanders, but an inspector-general accountable to the minister of defence. The FRG also established a centre, unique in the world, to foster democratic leadership in the military. The *Bundestag* appoints from among its members a special commissioner who serves as an ombudsman for Germany's soldiers. The military, police and other security forces of the FRG have all proved sustainable, effective and supportive of the rule of law. All in all, this is a case of successful and democratic security-sector development in a post-conflict country.

After the end of the Cold War, Germany was to face another huge wave of SSR. The East German state, called the German Democratic Republic, had collapsed. Once its people were able to speak and vote freely, they chose not to reform their state, but to liquidate it. They chose to merge their territory into the FRG. Now hundreds of thousands of East German soldiers, police officers and spies were demobilised, and many of them were inducted into the security forces of the FRG. This was costly and caused problems, but generally speaking, the restructuring was a success.

In the period of disarmament that followed the end of the Cold War, many military bases were closed. This left the FRG to deal with the challenge of tackling the pollution of these bases and finding new users. Huge amounts of weapons and explosives were taken out of service. Much of this surplus was destroyed, but some of it was exported.

The above was written with the benefit of hindsight, and with an emphasis on the many things that went well. At the time, it was clear that the development of the FRG and its security forces was a difficult process that met stiff resistance from various quarters at home and abroad. It was also obvious that mistakes were being made. But today, few would dispute that the democratic development of the FRG and the evolution of its security sector have been a success story.

Today, Germany is widely acknowledged as a mature, stable and peaceful country, though sometimes criticised for its antimilitarism. Its armed force and police are praised for their professionalism and their human rights record. German mothers and fathers worry less than before, and less than parents in other countries, about what might happen to their sons in military service. The *Bundeswehr* has developed a new concept of soldiering, tough and competent, but democratic. Many young Germans called up for national service perform civilian tasks as conscientious objectors. But many others are proud to wear their country's military uniform.

## **2. What Does SSR Mean?**

What do we mean by security-sector reform today? What is new? SSR is a difficult concept, because it is not a single policy or policy domain. Rather, it is an effort that cuts across many policy areas. Its goal is to develop and reform the security system in such a way that it is both effective and accountable. Here the 'security system', a wide term that some prefer to 'security sector', means all organisations and people engaged in providing and overseeing security and justice services. It can be, and is, taken to mean everybody.<sup>6</sup>

Here are some of its basic ideas: First, comprehensive security. SSR assumes that security is indivisible. International, national and human security are all connected. They depend on each other. No one will deny this today. But it is not easy to translate comprehensive security into coherent policies and to carry out these policies. Besides, governments may claim to pursue human security, whereas in reality they are mostly concerned with the safety of their regime.

Second, SSR requires a wide coalition. All relevant government bodies and civil society must get involved and work together. This is obvious, but difficult. Bureaucratic organisations do not take naturally to pulling together. Besides, they do not understand non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and are uncomfortable with them. For its part civil society is not comfortable talking to the state. However, they need each other. Each can do important things that the other cannot.

Third, local ownership needs to be accomplished. It is impossible to reform another country's security sector. It would be arrogant and futile to try. Countries must develop a security community suited to their own needs. Of

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<sup>6</sup> The implication that security is everybody's business is appealing. But from an analytical point of view, bloated definitions are to be avoided. The wider a term is, the less precise it becomes. Besides, if we use such omnibus definitions for security, development and peace, and then claim that they are related by nature, then we fall into the trap of circularity. It is like saying that wives and husbands are related by marriage. OECD DAC, *Training Module on Security System Reform and Governance* (Paris: OECD, 2007), 7.

course, they can learn from each other and help each other. The OSCE in its SSR document of 2007 rightfully insists on national ownership.<sup>7</sup> But I do not think national ownership should mean government ownership. Civil society can be a mover and driver of SSR in its country.

Fourth, sustainability needs to be achieved. We learned this notion from the people working in development policy. It is given heavy emphasis in the OECD Handbook on SSR, and for good reason.<sup>8</sup> If SSR is not durable, the effort invested will be wasted, and the consequences may be dangerous. Fifth, effectiveness is one of the main objectives of SSR. If the State does not guarantee the safety of children, women and men, it is failing its oldest and most fundamental duty. This is not only the job of the security forces. It also involves the judiciary, elected bodies, civil society and the population as a whole.

Imagine a police officer investigating a murder. He or she will need information that only the population can provide. To do their job, the police cannot manage without the help of the people. But if people don't trust the police, they will not talk to them. Especially if they fear the police, they will remain silent. But if reforms make the police more honest, transparent and respectful of the rights of the population, public confidence in the police will go up. People will start co-operating with the police, and they will become more successful. An honest police is more effective than a dishonest police.

The sixth element of SSR is accountability. The power of the State to exercise force is supposed to protect us. But if this power is not held in check, the State will itself be a threat to our security. In a democracy, there is no public power without accountability. Everyone is equal before the law. Civil society and the press monitor the government's actions. And there are democratic institutions that hold the executive branch to account. In 2010 Kazakhstan will lead the OSCE. President Nazarbayev has said that one of the presidency's priorities will be the further development of democratic institutions. I think this is excellent. It is desirable for good governance in the OSCE countries and essential for security, and security sector reform. So this is SSR: a comprehensive approach to making the security sector more effective and more accountable. It must be driven by local actors and local needs. Only then will it produce durable results.

### **3. Benefits of SSR to Central Asia**

How might Central Asia benefit from SSR? The countries of this region are facing three big challenges. One, they need to maintain and improve the

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<sup>7</sup> *Chairman's Perception Paper on OSCE Basic Norms and Principles in the Field of Security Sector Governance/Reform. OSCE Ministerial Council, Madrid 2007, MC.GAL/9/07.*

<sup>8</sup> *OECD DAC. Handbook on Security-System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice. Paris, OECD, 2007*

stability they currently enjoy. Two, they want to modernize their economies and pursue durable development. Three, they desire democratic reform.

According to me SSR will help Central Asia achieve these three goals. With regard to the first challenge, stability, Central Asia needs modern and professional military and police forces that are up to their jobs. The countries are already working to develop them. However, at the same time they should work to make the military and the police more transparent, accountable and respectful of human rights. This will help make the soldiers and police officers more effective. As emphasized earlier, professionalism, integrity, accountability and effectiveness go hand in hand.

In the same spirit, I would recommend paying more attention to protecting the rights and freedoms of security sector personnel. Soldiers and police officers are human beings and citizens. They can be very vulnerable, especially in junior positions. So while we remind them of their duties, let us safeguard their rights. The better we protect their rights, the greater the chance that they will respect ours.

The second challenge for the Central Asian countries is development. The government of Kazakhstan wants to modernise the economy before it engages in ambitious political reform.<sup>9</sup> But why wait? Transparent and accountable governance is not only good for the security sector. It will also encourage domestic and foreign investment, broadening the base of the economy and spurring economic growth. Foreign investors like to know what the rules are, and how much tax they are going to pay. They like independent courts in which disputes can be settled. They like governments that keep their promises and provide security. If SSR leads to greater stability and security, that also will favour sustainable development.

The final challenge for Central Asia is democracy. When countries improve democratic governance in the security sector, this will have to be part of broader government reform. This is unavoidable, and we should regard it as a welcome opportunity.

#### **4. Experiences in SSR Training**

We believe it is good practice to teach in the country concerned, and in the local language, rather than inviting the trainees to the West and teaching in English. We always team up with local NGOs, which help us to adapt the programme to local needs. They recruit the trainees from various governmental and non-governmental organisations. Whenever we can, we put together mixed groups of trainees. The benefit is that they learn from each other and get to appreciate

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<sup>9</sup> President Nazarbayev sums up his priorities as follows: "The economy first, then politics." See for instance: <http://www.euronews.net/2010/01/15/nazarbayev-economy-first-then-politics/> accessed on 4 March 2010

each other. In Azerbaijan, someone told us that this was the first time that government and civil society had ever sat down together to discuss security policy.

We think training courses should be very different from university lectures. Our students do not learn only by listening. They also learn from each other, by discussing common issues, and by doing. In simulation exercises, they experience problems of the security sector in a very direct and personal fashion. In role-play, we make them speak their own language. Then they are most likely to behave like their domestic politicians. Of course, the game is always about a fictitious country, "somewhere south of Russia." At the end, when we ask them what the difference is between this fictitious country and their own, they laugh and say: "in my country, things are even worse." We believe this is an appropriate way to approach SSR training in the former Soviet Union and indeed everywhere else.

## 2. Security Sector Reform in Kazakhstan

*Sébastien Peyrouse\**

### **Introduction**

Of all the states in Central Asia, Kazakhstan is probably the most receptive to the question of SSR, and the most open to international cooperation. Compared to its neighbours in the region, Kazakhstan has considerable means to invest in these goals.<sup>10</sup> Some years ago, the Kazakh authorities became aware of the fact that the issues that threatened the security of the country and its population were, above all, non-conventional: drug trafficking, clandestine Islamist networks, the possible destabilisation of Kazakhstan's southern Uzbek and Kyrgyz neighbours, migration flows, and food security. However, a reading of Kazakh legislation and security strategies, and an analysis of the country's army and security services, reveal that a comprehensive formulation of SSR as a driving force for public action has so far failed to emerge. Kazakhstan has sought to impress the West by creating a peacekeeping brigade, appointing a civilian to head the Ministry of Defence, and pursuing a reformist approach to its presidency of the OSCE in 2010. However, one should not be misled. Introducing real reform in a particularly sensitive domain – one that is characterised by intertwined economic, political and strategic interests, a strong Soviet legacy, and an uncomfortable tendency to call the legitimacy of the regime into question – has proved to be very complex. Numerous challenges and obstacles remain, but the possibilities for change are real.

### **1. Kazakh Military Policy: Achievements and Failures, Aspirations and Realities**

Like its post-Soviet neighbours, Kazakhstan continues to be heavily influenced by its Soviet heritage. Threats are largely interpreted in military terms. Even in the conventional domain, it has proved difficult to make reforms. Despite a great increase in the Kazakh military budget in 2007, the authorities have had trouble identifying potential enemies, adjusting their defence strategies, and envisaging different types of conflict (such as foreign invasions, civil wars, and localised

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<sup>10</sup> On SSR in the Central Asian region, see Jos Boonstra, "The EU Strategy for Central Asia says 'Security', Does this Include Security Sector Reform?" *EUCAM Policy Brief* 10 (November 2009).

operations against Islamists). Moreover, Kazakhstan has inherited the Soviet tradition of maintaining a massive army, including a large number of high-ranking officers, and this is impeding attempts to bring in cutting-edge technology, and create a professional army. The army reform decree of 2003 failed in many areas, especially in that of professionalization. The lack of quality educational institutions, not to mention numerous social problems (the poor quality of military life, corruption, violence against conscripts, and regional tensions), are potentially undermining the ability of the Kazakh armed forces to respond to conflict.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as in Russia, the high level of corruption has had a very negative effect on efforts to reform the army.<sup>12</sup> Numerous incompetence scandals have rocked the Defence Ministry, leading to the dismissal of Minister Danial Akhmetov, the first civilian to hold the post, in June 2009.

The Kazakh authorities are keen to cultivate international partnerships and reassert the country's 'multi-vector' foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> Strategically, however, Russia clearly remains Astana's primary military ally, and the 2008 bilateral exercises that were held near Cheliabinsk were the largest that had occurred since the fall of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, Astana wants to demonstrate goodwill towards western multilateral institutions and achieve interoperability with NATO.<sup>14</sup> Kazakhstan's partnership with NATO is grounded in the country's Individual Partnership Programme (IPP), the Planning and Review Process (PARP), and the Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC). Astana also undertook peacekeeping activities. The Kazbrig Peacekeeping Brigade participated on a mission in Iraq within the Coalition Stabilisation Force, between August 2003 and October 2008. However, the technical and logistical capabilities of Kazakhstan in this area remain very modest, and have been largely overstated.<sup>15</sup>

Kazakhstan supports the use of confidence-building measures, rejects the use of force to resolve inter-state conflicts, and promotes the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The authorities are proud of their commitment to disarmament. On becoming independent, Kazakhstan quickly signed the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

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<sup>11</sup> McDermott, *Kazakhstan's Defense Policy: An Assessment of the Trends*.

<sup>12</sup> See Erica Marat, *The Military and the State in Central Asia: From Red Army to Independence* (London: Routledge, 2009), Chapter 3.

<sup>13</sup> Marat, *The Military and the State in Central Asia*, Chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> Roger McDermott, "Kazakhstan's Partnership with NATO: Strengths, Limits and Prognosis," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2007); Roger McDermott, "United States and NATO Military Cooperation with Kazakhstan: The Need for a New Approach," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 21, no.4 (2008).

<sup>15</sup> Roger McDermott, *Kazakhstan's Defense Policy: An Assessment of the Trends*, Strategic Studies Institute (2009) [on-line]; available from <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=904>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010, VI.

(NPT), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Between 1998 and 2007, the US Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme provided \$107 million to liquidate the infrastructure at Stepnogorsk, where pathogenic agents had been reworked and tested by Soviet scientists. In 2007, the five Central Asian States ratified a treaty that gave rise to the Central Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ), the first nuclear-free zone in the northern hemisphere. This zone is bordered by nuclear powers such as Russia and China, and those about to acquire nuclear capability, such as Iran. Astana is an important player in the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

## **2. Is the Fight Against Non-Traditional Threats the Main Driving Force of SSR?**

The Kazakh authorities have become acutely aware of the non-conventional threats to the security of the Central Asian region as a whole. Founded in 2002, BOMCA is funded by the EU and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), originally intended to facilitate the crossing of borders while increasing security controls. In particular, the programme helps to develop cooperation between border guards and security agencies, and to streamline procedures for the crossing of borders. The EU's Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP), which was established in 2003, has a more specific goal: to aid the Central Asian states in their fight against drug trafficking. Based in Bishkek and with a budget of €16 million for the 2001-2010 period, CADAP seeks to replicate the model developed by the EU Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, which combats drug trafficking by focusing on border security, information sharing, intelligence, and prevention. BOMCA and CADAP merged in 2004, and they now focus on the securing of borders. Part of the original mission of the first programme has been set aside in favour of promoting the legal movement of goods and people.<sup>16</sup>

In the BOMCA-CADAP framework, Kazakh units have displayed a willingness to cooperate with both western teams and their Central Asian colleagues. Stretching over 12,000 km, and policed by more than 20,000 members of the Border Guard Service, Kazakhstan has the longest border in the region. Thanks to substantial funding, Kazakhstan has been able to equip itself with sophisticated equipment that largely conforms (although not yet entirely) to European norms. An active member of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), the country also desires to minimise administrative barriers in order to facilitate the development of economic exchange. On this point, Kazakhstan's position is close to that of Europe: it aims to simplify its

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<sup>16</sup> George Gavrillis, "Beyond the Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA)," *EUCAM Policy Brief* 11 (December 2009).

border regime, while simultaneously strengthening its policing of the clandestine economy. For example, Kazakhstan has developed United Border Crossing Points, or 'one-stop shops' (single customs posts with harmonised requirements for the two countries). These currently operate at 20 border posts with Russia, and this number will be extended to close to 200 over the coming years. A similar pilot project was conducted with Kyrgyzstan at two border posts, Ak-Jol and Kayindi, and the Kazakh government is currently negotiating with China to extend the concept. Moreover, training programmes for instructors have multiplied in recent years, in order to provide local agencies with more autonomy. The Almaty-based Military Institute has become one of the main educational structures hosting linguistic training courses offered by BOMCA and the American Embassy. As a result, western specialists can be received on site, and study visits for Kazakh officers and customs officials can be organised. At a technical level, drug detectors have been installed at some sensitive border posts (such as Korday on the border with Kyrgyzstan), equipment has been modernised, and the Health Ministry has procured some phytosanitary equipment.<sup>17</sup>

Within the framework of the CSTO, a collective rapid deployment force can be used in operations to secure borders in the case of a terrorist attack. Annual joint military exercises are carried out in the member states. These simulate terrorist attacks ('Rubezh') or anti-narcotics operations ('Kanal'), and allow for greater interaction between border guards and other police and military units. New operations have been organised along similar lines: Operation Arsenal against arms trafficking, Operation Nelegal against illegal immigration, and Operation Proxi to counter technological criminality.<sup>18</sup> Operation Kanal, which was set up in 2008, is alleged to have resulted in the seizure of more than 300 tons of drugs and illicit substances, and has reportedly become a permanent institution.<sup>19</sup> The creation of a council in 2008 for coordinating the relevant organs of CSTO member states in the fight against clandestine immigration shows the extent to which the border services are now devoting their energy to this previously neglected issue.

Kazakhstan is also active in wider SSR domains: it participates in all regional meetings on water management and strives to be cooperative on this issue. On several occasions, Kazakhstan has indicated that it would be willing to invest, even modestly, in the construction of the hydroelectric stations requested by Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which would allow for the better

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<sup>17</sup> For more information, see <http://bomca.eu-bomca.kg/en/about/history>.

<sup>18</sup> "Problemy sotrudnichestva ODKB i SHOS v oblasti bezopasnosti" [Problems of Cooperation between the CSTO and the SCO in the security sector]. *East Time*, 3 July 2009. Available from <http://www.easttime.ru/reganalitic/1/212p.html>.

<sup>19</sup> "Spetsoperatsiia ODKB 'Kanal' poluchila status postoianno deistvuiuchshego proekta" [The CSTO special operation 'Channel' has gained the status of permanent project]. *Novosti Belarusi*, 5 June 2009. Available from <http://www.interfax.by/news/belarus/56181>.

regulation of energy shortages. Astana has also taken a constructive policy approach to the issue of migration. The country hosts between one and two million migrant workers, and has accepted that these should be allowed to undergo regular legalisation, and has partially reformed its reception structures (such as those relating to the schooling of migrant children, access to social benefits, work contracts, and so forth).<sup>20</sup> Although unquestionably imperfect, these attempts confirm that the authorities have become aware of the social aspects of SSR. Less progress has been made in more sensitive areas, such as judicial reform and human rights awareness in the police, due to the fact that these touch on more 'political' issues.

In addition, experience in Central Asia suggests that micro-operations function much better than macro-operations, as they are better understood by the individuals involved, and have limited objectives that do not necessitate wide-reaching reforms on the part of established political regimes. The promotion of interstate cooperation on border security proves to be complex when the state apparatuses involved are themselves directly involved in drug trafficking, which is the case in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan; when states are unwilling to share sensitive information and remain suspicious of any regional collaboration; and when competition between the various security services (military, police, customs) hinders programme implementation. Lastly, as is always the case in Central Asia, the human aspect continues to receive insufficient attention. Low wages and poor living standards have caused many soldiers and security service employees to turn to trafficking. The Central Asian states have refused to professionalise their massive security organs or change their use of conscript troops at the borders. The sustainability of the infrastructure provided by international organisations, especially the training centres, equipment, and cynological technology centres, is being undermined by the inability of the governments involved to manage it independently.

One aspect of SSR – international and regional cooperation in the fight against transnational threats – is therefore relatively well understood by Kazakhstan, especially given its difficult security environment. However, many other aspects of SSR remain largely unaddressed in the country.

### **3. The Challenge of Reforming the Intelligence Services**

It is important to highlight the longstanding rivalries (now reactivated) between the security services and the army corps. As in Russia or Uzbekistan, the Kazakh security sector is divided into two major 'clans'. On one hand, the traditional army, which is under the jurisdiction of the Defence Ministry, is loyal to the state and is politically relatively neutral. On the other hand, the special

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<sup>20</sup> On migration in Central Asia, see Marlène Laruelle, ed., *Dynamiques Migratoires et Changements Sociétaux en Asie Centrale* [Migratory dynamics and societal changes in Central Asia] (Paris: Petra, 2010).

units of the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the National Security Committee (the KNB, the successor of the KGB), the Arystan (Lion) Special Task Force, and the Border Guard Service, not to mention the Presidential Guard, are all very close to the circles of power. Their leaders benefit from protection in high places, and their careers depend upon the success or failure of their protectors in the Ak-Orda (the term used to describe the presidential house in Astana and the presidential clan). In addition, these security service units are often involved in lucrative illegal activities. During the Soviet period, the KGB worked in close collaboration with the customs and border control services, enabling it to oversee commercial import/export flows, and this situation essentially remains unchanged. Such circumstances reveal the complexity of the challenges posed by SSR. For a start, the rivalry between the various corps impedes their ability to function well, exchange information, and conduct collective operations. What is more, the units in question are frequently involved in the very operations that they are supposed to be countering.<sup>21</sup>

One of the best examples of the ambiguity surrounding intelligence service reform is that of the decision taken by Nursultan Nazarbaev in March 2009 to dissolve the Barlau foreign intelligence service, which had been created in 1998, and to replace it with a new one, Syrbar. Barlau's director, Omitay Bitimov, was dismissed, despite his wealth of experience. It is likely that Barlau was partly paying for the KNB's mishandling of the Rakhat Aliev affair. The leader of the KNB between 1997 and 2001, Alnur Musaev, who stands accused of colluding with Aliev, managed to flee abroad, thereby making a mockery of the Kazakh intelligence services. The latter's management of the Aliev affair in Vienna has compounded error upon error.<sup>22</sup> The Austrian secret service has opened an inquiry into the KNB's activities on Austrian territory, in particular the Kazakh services' attempts to corrupt Austrian state employees in order to obtain the extradition of the president's disgraced son-in-law. The unsophisticated methods used by the Kazakh secret services – which are used to working in the former Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China – patently failed in Austria. As a result, the KNB's first major mission in Western Europe turned into an utter fiasco.

Syrbar is an autonomous agency that is endowed with far greater means than its predecessor, Barlau, which only had a few hundred employees and was obliged to work in close collaboration with Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR). Syrbar has been tasked with reducing the Kazakh services' dependence on Russia, and helping Nazarbaev to maintain the international reputation of his regime. Ak-Orda has become concerned about

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<sup>21</sup> Kazakhstan is unique in Central Asia insofar as it has separated its intelligence agencies.

<sup>22</sup> Farkhad Sharip, "Nazarbayev Embarks on Foreign Intelligence Reform," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 6, no.46 (10 March 2009).

the development of a political opposition movement abroad, comprised of dissidents and asylum seekers. The recurrent scandals that have shaken the Kazakh elite over recent months have led tens – indeed, hundreds – of individuals to apply for asylum in Europe, and Rakhat Aliev's declared desire to foment political resistance against Nazarbaev from abroad is becoming more strident. It is therefore no coincidence that Amanzhol Zhankuliev, an expert on Western Europe and a former ambassador to Switzerland, Liechtenstein and the Vatican, has been given the leadership of Syrbar. In 2006, the special unit of the KNB, Arystan, was already serving as both the armed wing of the authorities and as its scapegoat in the assassination of political opposition figures, such as Altynbek Sarsenbaev. With its direct links to the presidency, it is unlikely that Syrbar will show great transparency in pursuing its objectives, which are more concerned with the intimidation of political opponents and recalcitrant businessmen than with the protection of Kazakhstan's citizens.

One of the difficulties of undertaking SSR in Kazakhstan is related to the country's regional environment. Since independence, the Kazakh security services have been modelled on Russian intelligence policy. Despite some distrust between the Kazakh and the Russian security services, the institutions cooperate closely, share intelligence information, and prohibit the gathering of intelligence by other states. Within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Anti-Terrorist Centre, which was created in 2000, has offered Central Asian security services 'South Anti-Terror' training and joint exercises, which are managed by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB). In addition, the CIS Council of Heads of the Border Guards coordinates cooperation between the various services. The growing weight of the CSTO is also impeding the approach to SSR that is being advocated by the EU and NATO. Thus, as in other post-Soviet states, there is no question of reforming the successor to the KGB, the KNB, or making its practices more transparent. SSR is being curbed as soon as it comes close to the heart of the system.

## **Conclusion**

The fundamental idea of SSR, which implies that security is indivisible, is problematic insofar that it raises notions that are clearly contrary to the political agenda of the Kazakh authorities. For a start, the notion that there should be a broad coalition of state and private actors involved in SSR has not been well received, since at present, civil society is coming under greater pressure and has been accused of fomenting political instability. In addition, achieving the 'effectiveness' condition has proved to be equally challenging. Although Kazakhstan is the most effective state in Central Asia, the organs in charge of security in the broadest sense – military personnel, the police, customs officers, border guards, organs of justice – are largely corrupt. While the Kazakh authorities are keenly aware that corruption erodes good governance, they are

only able to combat it on a modest and localised scale. The authorities cannot dismantle the larger networks, which involve powerful state figures, without undermining their own position. As such, the authorities are at once the judge and the accused party. Moreover, the fact that Central Asian security agencies lack sufficient analytical capacity makes it difficult for them to elaborate strategies and reforms. Lastly, genuine accountability looks to be an unrealistic prospect in the short- and medium term. The Kazakh political regime is grounded in the president's monopolisation of power, the de-legitimisation of the parliament, a growing opaqueness in public authority, and a refusal to accept the notion of transparency; the authorities do not believe that they are beholden to give explanations to citizens.<sup>23</sup> In these conditions, comprehensive SSR is a challenging task. However, it is clear that for Kazakhstan, as for the region as a whole, the extent to which the regime is able to implement SSR, even if only partially, will determine the future.

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<sup>23</sup> M. Emerson, et al., *Into EurAsia: Monitoring the EU's Central Asia Strategy* (Brussels-Madrid: CEPS-FRIDE, 2010).

### 3. Security Sector Reform in Kyrgyzstan

*Erica Marat\**

Kyrgyzstan inherited a modest military infrastructure when the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. This partly explains why the Kyrgyz government paid limited attention to the military sector throughout the 1990s, instead prioritising political and economic reforms. Only in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the Kyrgyz national army failed to counter a group of armed guerrillas that had crossed the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, did President Askar Akayev finally see the military as an institution that was vital for preserving national sovereignty. At this point, Akayev realised that the Soviet-style military structure that Kyrgyzstan had inherited had failed to meet the requirements of the post-cold war period, and that it would have to be reformed. He proposed significant changes to the military's structure, the revision of national security documents, and increased civilian oversight.

These efforts, however, largely came to nothing after Akayev was overthrown on 24 March 2005. His replacement, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, prefers to use a loyal military to bolster his own regime, instead of increasing its capacity to respond to national security threats. The new president has negated the importance of taking a holistic approach to the security sector that would democratise control over security structures and involve a greater number of political and civil society actors in policymaking. Instead, he has politicised the defence sector by converting it into an institution that is designed to protect his regime against opposition forces.

Military institutions have played a hidden, yet important, role in Kyrgyzstan since 1991. Like other former Soviet states, Kyrgyzstan inherited a military that was subject to civilian control. However, since Bakiyev gained power in 2005, he has continually granted military and security institutions political control over civilian institutions and civilian life in general. The military in Kyrgyzstan has changed from occupying a marginal role in state politics during the first few years of post-Soviet independence into being the primary coercive instrument of the Bakiyev regime. Although SSR was not achieved during the Akayev regime, the former president nevertheless convinced the public and some military officials that reform would be necessary. Bakiyev, on the contrary, realised that the military could serve as an important instrument for centralising his power, and promoted loyal supporters to the highest ranks of the country's military and security institutions.

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This paper has three sections: 'The Soviet Inheritance', which will discuss the military institutions that Kyrgyzstan inherited in 1991; 'Changes in the Late 1990s', which shows how Akayev sought to reform the military to meet new security threats, how he failed, and how he was successful; and 'The Politicisation of the Military in the 2000s', which illustrates how Bakiyev sought to increase control over military institutions to sustain his regime and put pressure on his opponents.

Since Bakiyev has disregarded the importance of reforming the broader security sector and has instead focused mainly on the defence sector, this paper will also focus on changes in the defence sector. Kyrgyzstan highlights the general disparity between western approaches to SSR and the policies that are often undertaken by authoritarian countries, where the need to secure the ruling regime overshadows national security. Regime holders mould the security sector in line with their own needs, concentrating on taking steps that protect their own, often illegitimate, hold on power. In Kyrgyzstan and in other Central Asian states, the security sector has turned into an institution that serves a presidential regime that has scant legitimacy.

### **1. The Soviet Inheritance**

The October Revolution in 1917, and the subsequent emergence of the Soviet Workers and Peasants' Red Army in Central Asia, predated the creation of the region's five republics. Over time, the Red Army reinforced the Soviet regime. As General William Odom argued, 'The Red Army conquered and sustained the Soviet Empire', while the Soviet political and economic systems cannot be understood without considering the military sector.<sup>24</sup> The military and the Party were mutually reinforcing: the Red Army needed an ideological justification for claiming resources, while the Party greatly relied on the army's coercive power at home and its formidable prestige in the international arena. This interdependence significantly influenced the Soviet economy, which ran on a permanent war footing.

When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, Central Asian military institutions, like other Soviet state structures, had to reorient their loyalty from Soviet Central Command to the newly-established national governments. With the exception of Tajikistan, which succumbed to civil war, this process was fairly smooth because Soviet officers had also functioned as Party bureaucrats during the Soviet era. Most non-Russian officers were promoted when their Russian colleagues returned to the Russian Federation. All Central Asian states were able to unanimously adopt new legal frameworks for the armed forces, and began to nationalise the Soviet military property located on their individual

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<sup>24</sup> William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 389.

territories. The new legislation also empowered governments to encourage private manufacturers to produce goods for the armed forces. External financial support was sought from bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

As in other former Soviet states, civilian political elites control Central Asian military institutions. The Soviet tradition of subordinating the military to the Communist Party rule has been continued, which at least partly explains the military's limited participation in political life in the 1990s. The situation changed in the 2000s, when ruling regimes sought to preserve their hold on power despite their declining popularity. Although the military was deployed against real or perceived threats only in a few cases, the Central Asian ruling regimes adapted the post-Soviet militaries to their own needs. Presidents appointed loyal military men to head powerful ministries, and sidelined parliaments from decision-making processes in the military and security domains. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have passed laws that allow the army to intervene in domestic affairs.

Central Asian ruling regimes typically formed one pro-regime political party (*Ak Zhol* in Kyrgyzstan) that held a majority in parliament and the government, and they did not change the principle of political control over the military. These parties are led by their national president and require allegiance from all public structures. National security structures and powerful ministries have been co-opted by the parties, which also control parliamentary committees dealing with security issues and military planning. All defence and interior ministers, as well as the heads of the National Security Services, National Guards, and Border Guards, are members of the ruling party. Party members and military officials are expected to actively disseminate state-constructed ideologies to strengthen loyalty to the ruling regime.

In the mid-2000s, it became increasingly difficult to predict whether the military authorities would support the incumbents or switch their loyalty to new political forces in a transition crisis. Without effective state mechanisms for peaceful transfers of power, Central Asian leaders constantly feared violent removal by opposition groups or coups d'état. Facing a high risk of armed confrontation, regime incumbents sought to shore up support among military officials. Both political and military elites knew that appeals to nationalism would be more effective than appeals to democracy and civil liberties.

In Kyrgyzstan, a vast part of the national armed forces was constructed specifically to counter external instabilities that were capable of provoking internal tensions. In 1998, two motorised rifle divisions were established in mountainous regions. Like in Tajikistan, domestic economic constraints meant that the Kyrgyz government had to seek external sources of military finance or use off-budget expenditures. In addition to support from the international community, Kyrgyzstan relied on export profits from a number of armament and military-equipment manufacturers that had remained in the country after the Soviet Army's dissolution. For the US-led 'Enduring Freedom' military operation

in Afghanistan, the Kyrgyz government agreed on allowing Coalition troops to use the Manas National Airport. The number of troops varied over time, but the main contingent consisted of US and NATO forces.

## **2. Changes in the late 1990s and the New Military Doctrine**

In the 1990s, Kyrgyzstan quickly earned the reputation of being the most liberal state in Central Asia. President Akayev touted democratisation, economic liberalisation, human rights and the institutionalisation of citizenship. Most of these were distant ideals for neighbouring Central Asian states. Unlike its neighbours, however, Kyrgyzstan lacked the natural resources and infrastructure needed to sustain a viable economy. The state budget operated in a continuous deficit, while its external debt grew by the year. Still, Kyrgyzstan's political liberalism unfolded despite the country's economic weakness, and remained unchallenged by any significant social tensions that would require an armed response. In 1997, Akayev proposed to substantially decrease the number of army personnel because the country, positioning his view, was not facing any significant security threats that would require a military response. The proposal suggested retaining the National Guard for symbolic purposes.<sup>25</sup> However, the clash between Kyrgyz troops and the IMU guerrillas in Batken in 1999 and 2000 completely changed perceptions of the army's role in national security. After the conflict, the Kyrgyz government implemented a number of significant reforms in the military.<sup>26</sup>

The unexpected armed clashes propelled the Kyrgyz Security Council to revise its military and security planning and policymaking. After Batken, the local mass media and NGOs criticised the Ministry of Defence and the Security Council for inefficient military planning and control. Reacting to public pressure, the Security Council endorsed a fairly ambitious document that sought to fundamentally reform the army. Following two years of preparation, the first Kyrgyz military doctrine was endorsed in May 2002, and covered the period until 2010. The 2002 doctrine put forward two main reforms to the security structure, which would be implemented in several stages. The principal change targeted by the doctrine was the restructuring of the army into small, mobile forces, which would form a capital-intensive, professionally trained and well-equipped army. A second reform would convert the army into contract-based service over the following decade. The Kyrgyz doctrine assumed that additional funds would become available through more efficient administration of military units and better control of public spending. According to statements accompanying the doctrine, the government would be able to meet the

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with a Kyrgyz parliamentarian Adakhan Madumarov, Bishkek, April 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Igor Grebenshchikov, "Kyrgyz Army in Crisis: The Lessons Learned in Two Recent Military Campaigns have Failed to Usher Major Reforms of the Cash-Strapped Kyrgyz Army," Institute for War and Peace Reporting (14 March 2001).

anticipated increase in military spending in the coming years, above and beyond its intentions to enhance the scientific and engineering foundations of the military-industrial complex.

The doctrine identified two types of conflicts: 'just' and 'unjust'.<sup>27</sup> The difference between the two types was based on the general legal norms contained in United Nations (UN) resolutions, according to which armed aggression by one state against another is classified as 'unjust', while a 'just' conflict is an act of armed defence. Before the 2002 doctrine, the activity of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Defence was governed by the National Security Strategy, which simply reflected Soviet threat identification, military planning and procurement. The new doctrine was adopted as a reaction to the general realisation of the need for better military management in future.

The CSTO and NATO's PfP programme are the primary channels for military collaboration. It was anticipated that armed conflicts at the national border would involve parts of the indigenous civilian population, and troops were readied for interstate conflict should border-clashes follow this turn of events. Thus, the doctrine postulated that a local conflict could escalate into a regional struggle between states. The doctrine categorised intensities of conflict as localised, regional, and international.

However, although Kyrgyz security officials tried to draw on international experience in creating a new military doctrine, the 2002 doctrine turned out to be yet another superficial document that only partially defined the rationale for the existence of the armed forces, military planning and procurement in Kyrgyzstan. Most decision-making and reform implementation was to be executed in an *ad hoc* manner, with the goals largely depending on the composition of the Security Council. In effect, the doctrine had been crafted by an insular circle of military officials. These officials would not be able to follow the document's statutes once they had been endorsed by parliament.

Kyrgyzstan's main military formations include Rapid Reaction Forces, Immediate Reaction Forces, and Border Guard Forces. According to the 2002 military doctrine, all of these forces are to provide a mobile response to frontier-zone and regional conflicts. A former National Guard commander, Colonel-General Abdykul Chotbayev, claimed that the military doctrine's reforms had been carried out successfully, despite the remaining plethora of financial and logistical problems.<sup>28</sup> However, no analogous assessment of the military reform has been reported by other sources. The local media has largely criticised the reforms for being unrealistic in view of the deteriorating economy.

The change of regime in March 2005 influenced the internal dynamics of the Security Council and the Ministry of Defence. The new president,

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<sup>27</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Kyrgyz Republic*, 2002, < <http://www.mil.kg/>>, last accessed January 2009.

<sup>28</sup> "Kyrgyzstan: Commander Profiles National Guard on 11th Anniversary", *Obshestvenny Reiting*, 25 September 2003.

Kurmanbek Bakiyev, quickly lost popularity among the masses. He turned out to be reluctant to make any substantial changes to either the public sector or the military. Appointing Ismail Isakov as defence minister in 2006, however, gave a substantial boost to the internal morale of the military. Isakov actively implemented better incentives for service and recruitment. He put special emphasis on military life, such as the need to improve living conditions. Numerous public events were organised under Isakov's leadership to encourage civilians to reflect on the armed forces' activities. Isakov's success demonstrated how efforts to reform public institutions in the context of a decentralised Kyrgyz government are contingent on initiatives by individual agents. Bakiyev sacked Isakov in 2008, and in January 2010, Isakov was imprisoned for eight years on charges of corruption.

### **3. The Politicisation of the Military in the late 2000s**

When Akayev was ousted on 24 March 2005, the Kyrgyz military remained neutral. Akayev did not call on the military to protect his regime, and the military switched its loyalty to the new president within 48 hours. Whether the military will remain equally neutral should opposition forces mobilise a similar attempt is now doubtful. As Bakiyev's regime lost popularity in 2007-2008, however, the president began reshuffling security personnel, appointing his brother as chief commander of the National Security Service (NSS). President Bakiyev was not able to remove every authoritative military official who enjoyed popularity among national army conscripts, preferring to transfer them to other high-ranking governmental positions. As opposition movements began consolidating in early 2008, Bakiyev increased the salaries of Interior Ministry personnel, effectively buying support among internal armed troops.

In 2008-09, Bakiyev appointed his son Marat to lead the NSS, and his former personal guard Bakytbek Kalyev as defence minister. Opposition leaders were well aware of Bakiyev's intentions, but still sought to establish their own ties with the armed forces. Bakiyev, however, is sabotaging such attempts by prosecuting Isakov, who might still have considerable influence in security organisations.

This oppressive environment leaves less and less space for independent mass media, public debate and NGO activity. In the early 2000s, civil society groups actively participated in government decisions regarding the security sector, while local mass media outlets offered opportunities for NGO activists to publicly share their concerns. For instance, civil society groups criticised the OSCE's efforts to reform the police force and train them to react peacefully to civilian demonstrations. The local NGO community saw these reforms as potentially dangerous, arguing that the ruling regime would be likely to use a skilled police force for its own purposes. Although Kyrgyz NGOs objected to the government's decisions more than they objected to ongoing

changes in the military sector, the NGO community still prompted public debate in local media.

Partly as a result of the increasingly muted NGO community and independent mass media, from approximately 2008 onwards, security officials showed an inclination to impose more coercive rules upon society. In August 2009, the head of the National Security Committee, Murat Sutralinov, and the then-head of the Security Council, Adakhan Madumarov, proposed reinstating the death penalty. Both officials reject the human rights standards promoted by western organisations, such as the OSCE. According to both security officials, not only is capital punishment needed in Kyrgyzstan, but executions must also be staged publicly.

In this environment – one in which regime loyalty among military officials had become a litmus test for career advancement – the government began developing a new military doctrine in 2008-09. The efforts made by the former president, individual military leaders and civil society were quickly overturned under Bakiyev's watch. The next military doctrine is likely to be yet another ineffective document that lacks substantial SSR. As with other legislative acts, Kyrgyz officials will refer to security documents developed by Kazakhstan and Russia. As such, the new doctrine is likely to indicate that religious extremism and terrorism are the most pressing threats to national stability. The document might also further blur the boundary between threats to the nation and challenges to the ruling regime. As such, the military doctrine could place secular opposition movements and civilian demonstrators in the category of subversive activities calling for military intervention.

#### **4. What Lies Ahead?**

With its growing influence over the civilian sector, the Kyrgyz military is becoming increasingly politicised under Bakiyev. What will happen when the president and the military eventually clash? Experience in post-colonial states shows that the continuous proliferation of the role of military in the protection of the state and nation often leads to tensions within civilian regimes and increased authoritarianism. The military's own perceived or real supremacy over the civilian leadership might prompt it to take autonomous political decisions, turn against individual political leaders or reject the ruling regime altogether. The military might use its coercive power against its rulers in times of economic difficulty, social instability, natural disaster, or in the face of growing security threats. Therefore, in order to prevent autonomous behaviour among the military, ruling regimes must balance fostering loyalty to the regime among the military against the prevention of intra-military and intra-ethnic splits.

Bakiyev's ability to physically remove and threaten his political opponents indicates the growing role of the military and security officials in the political domain. The military's forceful engagement in politics could lead it to

take up arms against civilian demonstrators or individual opposition leaders, engage in rent-seeking and extortion, and could lead to disagreements among military commanders, resulting in further violence. Lacking effective state mechanisms for the peaceful transfer of power, the Bakiyev regime is seeking to secure the support of military officials. When threatened, both political and military elites are likely to resort to coercive methods, rather than protecting democracy and civil liberties. In the future, if the military sees its role as being responsible for the national well-being in a way that is independent of the political decisions of the ruling regime, it is likely to play an increasingly political role at times of dissatisfaction with the civilian leadership. If, however, the military defines its role as that of executing the political decisions of the civilian leadership, it is likely to accept any regime change.

The question today is whether the military and police will continue to support Bakiyev's authoritarian regime or become a more autonomous institution. The military could remain loyal to the ruling regime and support Bakiyev's policies, regardless of how authoritarian the latter's regime becomes. In the case of regime change, the military could turn its loyalty to new regime holders, regardless of their political views. Alternatively, the military could take autonomous political decisions at times when the state's security is challenged by internal or external threats. These might include mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, or aggressive opposition among secular or religious groups. Since the growing role of the military also provides justification for the use of violence against the state by regime opponents, it increases the risk of violent conflict between competing groups. The future of Kyrgyzstan's civil-military relations is therefore more unpredictable today than during the early 1990s, and even the Soviet period.

That said, the international community should continue to promote SSR in Kyrgyzstan. The challenge for the international community is to explain to regime members that democratic control of the armed forces, as well as effective cooperation between the government, parliament and civil society in the formulation of a national security strategy, would bring about a policy that is able to respond to the existing problems of religious radicalism, drug trafficking, and organised crime. Today, while civil society and the mass media have an advanced understanding of how they can contribute to the formation of security policy, the government structures (ministers and the parliament) still see the security sector as the prerogative of top officials. International organisations should address these actors directly. Special training sessions, roundtables and conferences must bring together western donors and the Kyrgyz regime, and the concept of democratic SSR must be carefully explained. These activities should demonstrate that the regime would largely benefit from having a greater number of actors involved in security policy formation. To date, however, the international community has largely focused its efforts on civil society.

## 4. Security Sector Reform in Tajikistan

Anna Matveeva\*

### Introduction

Tajikistan is a small Central Asian country bordering on Afghanistan, a location that has significant implications for its security. The country survived a brutal civil war between 1992 and 1997. Following the instability of the post-conflict period (1997-2001), Tajikistan proved to be reluctant to pursue SSR, despite the considerable military assistance and development aid that the country received from international donors. This chapter will provide a brief overview of the security sector in Tajikistan, outline the current security challenges facing the country and the government's response to them, discuss external assistance, and explore the reasons for Tajikistan's slow progress towards SSR. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future action.

### 1. The many players in Tajikistan's security sector

When analysing the security sector in Tajikistan, it is unclear which agencies are included in the sector, how many agencies there are and, indeed, how large they are. The government's website offers the official version:

The means and forces of security enforcement are created in accordance with the decisions of the *Majlis-i Oli* [the parliament] and presidential decrees. They are exercised in accordance with legislation. The security forces consist of military forces; security institutions; institutions concerned with internal affairs; bodies providing for the security of the legislative, the executive and judicial authorities, and the supreme administrative authority; tax institutions; emergency response institutions; civil defence; border troops; internal military forces; and also institutions providing for the secure functioning of industry, energy facilities, transport, and agriculture; emergency communication and information systems; and the customs office. The Security Council is appointed and headed by the President.<sup>29</sup>

According to the Constitution, the President is Commander-in-Chief of the armed and security forces. The *Majlis-i Namoyandagon* (the lower chamber of parliament) exercises oversight via its Committee on Law, Order, Defence and Security. Operationally, the agencies are supervised by a vice-premier who

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<sup>29</sup> Tajikistan Development Gateway [on-line]; available from: <http://www.tajik-gateway.org/index.phtml?lang=en&id=885>; Internet; accessed 30 October 2009.

is responsible for defence and security affairs, and by the Security Council. The latter is headed by Amirkul Azimov, a long-term presidential lieutenant.

The most prominent security-related structures are the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of the Interior, the Traffic Police, the Ministry of Emergencies and Civil Defence, the Customs Committee, the Drug Control Agency and the Presidential Guard. All of these agencies have armed detachments. The Officer Corps mainly receive their education in Russia, China, India, and the newly-opened Military Institute in Dushanbe.<sup>30</sup> Estimates vary considerably as to the numerical strength of the Tajik armed and security forces and their equipment levels, and the government does not publish any official statistics. Russian experts believe that the combined strength of the armed and security forces is approximately 20,000, of which between 7,000 and 10,000 work for the army. The air and air defence forces have about 1,000 men each. The country's mobile forces were established in September 2003, and consist of paratroopers, special forces and a mountain brigade. Three mobile battalions are included in the CSTO Rapid Reaction Forces. The border troops consist of 1,200 men, and the remainder is composed of various Interior Ministry forces, which number some 3,500 special troops. Military expenditure is estimated to be at 1.5% of the national gross domestic product. The International Institute for Strategic Studies' figures for 2009 are slightly different: it puts the army at 7,300 men, the air and air defence forces at 1,500 men each, 'paramilitary' forces at 7,500, interior troops at 3,800, the national (presidential) guard at 1,200, and the Ministry of Emergencies at 2,500. The number of border troops is not known.<sup>31</sup>

Official accounts give the impression that Tajikistan is a security state, with agencies that penetrate deep into its fabric. However, the severity of this image is somewhat softened in practice by mismanagement, corruption and shortages of funds and manpower. Given that there is no contract service, the armed forces rely solely on conscription, which starts at 18 years of age and usually lasts for two years. It is thought that every year, between 9,000 and 12,000 men are conscripted. One reason why it is difficult to obtain firm figures is that conscription rates often fall short of targets, and the security agencies frequently suffer from shortages of manpower. Supplies of food, shelter and heating are also inadequate, especially in remote mountainous areas, forcing soldiers to seek additional income by working in local agriculture.

Tajikistan's security sector is both a product of the Soviet development model and of the country's civil war. The power-sharing agreement that ended

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<sup>30</sup> Bahodur Zairov and Valentina Kasymbekova, "Таджикистан: «Рабоче-деханская» армия встречает юбилей боеготовой" [Tajikistan: Workers-Dehkan Army meets jubilee combat-ready], 23 February 2008 [on-line]; available from: <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=5607>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>31</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2009* (London: Routledge, 2009), 357.

the civil war provided for a demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process. DDR in Tajikistan was a little-appreciated success. The process was conducted on the basis of distributing state positions to former civil war opponents, giving them access to the country's assets. The power-sharing deal led to the formation of an elite cartel, with field commanders becoming pillars of authoritarian stability.<sup>32</sup> The President took charge of the political economy, and successfully prevented former commanders from upsetting the peace. The reintegration process preceded that of demobilisation, whereby commanders were allowed to join the armed forces and security sector agencies with their units intact. Many kept their arms, which became part of the state arsenal.<sup>33</sup>

## **2. Mounting Instability**

The current fragile stability in Tajikistan remains a remarkable achievement, in view of the country's civil war. The situation saw a steady deterioration in 2008-09, however, and the country faces multiple and interrelated challenges.<sup>34</sup>

First, the deterioration of the security situation in Pakistan has made Central Asian states a crucial chain in the supply route for the NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In 2009, the US established new transit corridors for the delivery of non-military goods to Afghanistan. The supply lines enter Afghanistan's northern borders from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan via two routes. The first begins in Latvia, crosses Russia and ends in Tajikistan, while the second goes via Georgia and Uzbekistan. Alternative routes for supplying Coalition and NATO-ISAF troops became necessary due to the increased US force presence and over-reliance on routes from the Pakistani port of Karachi. These new routes are collectively known as the Northern Distribution Network (NDN). The route via Tajikistan provides a backup to the Uzbek route that enters Afghanistan at the Termez border crossing. The facilities and infrastructure on the latter route are more developed; the Tajik route, meanwhile, features some extremely bad stretches of road, and is used less actively.

As the north of the country experiences more fighting, there is an escalating threat of instability spilling over from Afghanistan. The Taliban has moved its offensive to Kunduz and the Afghan provinces close to the Tajik border. The Taliban's foreign fighters operate in these areas, including those belonging to the IMU, which has its roots in Central Asia. One of the fighters' tasks is to disrupt the supply lines through Central Asia, but some may also be

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<sup>32</sup> John Heathershaw, *Post-Conflict Tajikistan: The Politics of Peacebuilding and the Emergence of Legitimate Order* (London: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Stina Torjesen and S. Neil MacFarlane, "R before D: The Case of Post Conflict Reintegration in Tajikistan," *Conflict, Security and Development* 7, no.2 (2007): 311-332.

<sup>34</sup> For an overview, see International Crisis Group, "Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure," *Asia Report* 162 (12 February 2009).

pursuing their own political goals in their efforts to undermine regimes to which they are opposed.<sup>35</sup> One can draw parallels between the current situation on the border and the events of the early 1990s, when a deterioration in the situation within Afghanistan plunged Tajikistan into crisis. The situation also contrasts with that over the last decade, when incidents on the southern border were mostly drug-related and had no wider ramifications.

Second, there has been no decrease in drug trafficking from Afghanistan to markets in Russia and Western Europe, as production in Afghanistan continues to grow. In 2008, Tajik law enforcement agencies intercepted 6 tonnes of drugs, and they seized a further 3 tonnes between January and June 2009.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, there are mounting concerns about the impact of the burgeoning drug economy on the formal economy.

Third, rather than subsiding, Islamist-related attacks have spread across the country. According to the deputy chair of the Committee on National Security, Abdullo Navzarov, between 2007 and 2009, IMU members conducted five bomb raids, resulting in the deaths of 13 people. In 2009, 28 IMU members were detained, compared to 18 in 2008. A number of violent incidents occurred in mid-2009: a suspected IMU member was killed outside the capital in a shoot-out with the security forces, increasing numbers of alleged IMU members were arrested over the summer, and a summit involving the leaders of Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Russia in Dushanbe was bombed.

Fourth, seemingly 'integrated' former field commanders are once again undermining the country's stability. In February 2008, an attempt in Gharm to arrest the head of the organised crime police squad, Mirzohoja Ahmadov, an ex-United Tajik Opposition (UTO) commander, resulted in fatalities among the troops that had been sent to arrest him. More serious fighting broke out in Tavildara in July 2009. The militant leader, Shaykh Nemat Azizov, was killed by the Tajik Interior Ministry's Special Forces when his group of men was tracked down in Tavildara. The Interior Ministry claimed that Shaykh Nemat had entered Tajikistan to sell narcotics from Afghanistan, in order to fund militant operations in Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, the former commander and ex-civil emergencies minister, Mirzo Ziyeev, joined forces with Mullo Abdullo, his old comrade-in-

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<sup>35</sup> Sanobar Shermatova "По эту сторону от афганской границы. В Центральной Азии готовятся отразить атаки боевиков" [This side of the Afghan border. Central Asia prepares to counter militants' attacks] *Новости Центральной Азии*, 2 November 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6355>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Prime-TASS Business News Agency, 21 October 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.prime-tass.ru/news/0/%7B60616938-0435-44C4-82CB-8E098166F318%7D.uif>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew McGregor, "Counterterrorism Operations Continue in Tajikistan," *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 25 (13 August 2009) [on-line]; available from [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=35410&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=13&cHash=e6ebe55615](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35410&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=13&cHash=e6ebe55615); Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

arms on the opposition side. Abdullo's 100-strong detachment allegedly crossed from Afghanistan, where the fighters had been based for several years, and raided Tajik police and administration buildings. The security forces countered the attacks, in which Ziyeev and five Russian citizens were killed, along with other fighters. The fact that Ziyoev switched sides to join the militants in 2009 demonstrated the dangers that could result from letting former security commanders walk free, and the leadership is unlikely to let them do so in future.

Fifth, there have been popular protests over economic and social hardships. A humanitarian crisis in February 2008 led to protests in Dushanbe, and in the cities of Kulyab, Panjakent and Khorog. Prior to this, the country had seen very low levels of social unrest, due to fear of repression.

### **3. Reform in the midst of insecurity?**

So far, the Tajik state has proved resilient to these multiple challenges. This can be explained by the state's strict and centralised control over the security forces, the fear of repression among the population, the general reluctance to join ex-UTO and foreign militants, and the fact that mainstream society regards Islamist groups as radicals. Although social, economic and political conditions provide clear grounds for discontent, no mobilisation has occurred that could lead to serious escalation. The legacy of the civil war tends to act as a brake on social unrest, along with the phenomenon of labour migration, which removes the potential threat of 'angry young men'. As a result of this popular lack of support, militant groups have an unfriendly terrain in which to operate, recruit, procure supplies and hide weapons.

Given the increasing number of incidents within the country, the agencies that are responsible for domestic security are playing a key role. The most prominent actors are those of the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Interior, both of which play a critical role in addressing the country's political and security needs. Both have extensive coverage throughout the country and armed detachments, which were deployed in Tavildara to counter the July 2009 attacks.

The rising number of drugs seizures demonstrates that Tajik law enforcement agencies have improved their capacity to deal with trafficking. In 2008, the Special Forces succeeded in countering drug dealers who hailed from prominent field commanders' families in Kulyab, and who had previously been regarded as untouchable, including Langagiyev and Safarov. Still, given the magnitude of the problems facing the country, combating drug proliferation remains a secondary priority, and one that is largely promoted by external actors. The situation on the Afghan border remains precarious, and it is possible to smuggle drugs over the border. Russian border troops withdrew in 2004-2005, and responsibility for guarding the border was transferred to the Security Ministry. The latter incorporated the national border troops, which had

previously formed part of a separate structure under the Committee on the Protection of the State Border (KOGG). The border remains porous and the defences are weak, despite international efforts.

In conditions of high uncertainty, intelligence gathering becomes particularly important. However, intelligence remains one of the weaker points of the Tajik security infrastructure. This was demonstrated by the incidents involving ex-field commanders, which took security officials by surprise, and by the fact that some militants, including Abdullo, continue to be at large within the country. So long as security challenges remain isolated incidents in different parts of the country, the security sector appears to have the capacity to deal with them. However, it is unclear how security agencies would perform in an event of a significant deterioration in the security situation.

#### **4. Political authority is paramount**

SSR can bring many benefits. In the long term, it can ensure that security agencies become more efficient and better integrated into society. Gaining public trust, obtaining independent expertise and fostering competent parliamentary oversight can significantly improve accountability and help in the fight against corruption. Political education for the military and increased interaction between the military and their civilian counterparts, meanwhile, can enhance the sense of common purpose and help to break down barriers. Increased openness can make it easier to rectify potential abuses of the system. At the same time, it is worth remembering that SSR always unfolds in a particular context, and reflects the nature of the state in question. The reform process must form part of the bigger political picture, and cannot run contrary to the preferences of local elites. Tajikistan's political order thus presents some formidable obstacles to SSR.

In Tajikistan, the security sector is firmly under the control of the supreme civilian authority. The provision of security is the regime's trump card, and forms the basis of much of its legitimacy. While the President retains a monopoly on political power, he is unlikely to reform the security sector; as such a model of governance requires a consolidation of authority. There is a perceived conflict between democratic control and the effectiveness of the security forces in the eyes of local elites, which the leadership capitalises upon. As an opposition politician has noted, 'the security sector is immune to reform, since security has been given an almost religious status in the state. Liberalisation in the security sphere will be perceived negatively as a weakness of the state, therefore the population has to be educated about it'.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Remark by Mugutdin Kabiri, Member of the Parliament of Tajikistan and Chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Party, at the conference *Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Identifying National Approaches, International Involvement and Prospects for Cooperation*, organised by CESS in Almaty, 24–25 September 2009.

The concentration of power in the presidency and of decision-making within the presidential entourage has resulted in a situation in which loyalty to the regime is the key to staying in public office. In view of mounting grievances, the President might have to rely upon the security agencies to protect his regime against domestic discontent. The Kyrgyz 'Tulip Revolution' of March 2005 taught Central Asia's authoritarian leaders that the consolidation and loyalty of security agencies around the presidency could play a determining role in whether a leader stayed in power. Indeed, pre-emptive action has already been taken. The period between 2003 and 2006 witnessed dismissals and the imprisonment of ex-commanders who were capable of acting independently, or whose loyalty to the President could not be trusted. With the retirement of Sukhrob Kasymov, an Interior Ministry special forces commander, no former field commanders are left in the security ministries.

The Law on State Secrets is another impediment to SSR, as it creates barriers to transparency and accountability in the security sector. Adopted on 10 May 2002, the Law on State Secrets is essentially a revision of the Soviet law. For example, it prohibits the publishing of information on gold and silver production forecasts, the capacity of railway junctions, the execution and burial places of convicts, and funding for research and development for the purposes of defence or dual use technology.<sup>39</sup> Seemingly benign actions can easily be made into punishable offences. Fear of persecution therefore contributes to the dearth of public information.

A further problem is that there is limited financing available for the security sector, meaning that it is chronically under-funded. While Russia funded its border troops, international donors could not do the same for the Tajik border guard, and salaries have dropped considerably. A number of events have almost emptied the state coffers and undermined the state's ability to fund the security sector. These include the 2008-09 financial crisis, and the financial scandal of March 2008, when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) determined that between 2003 and 2006, the Tajik National Bank had supplied the IMF with 'inaccurate information' and doctored data on the size of international reserves, net domestic assets and credit policy. The IMF ruled that the government must pay back the three non-complying disbursements (a total of US\$47.4 million), together with any interest accrued, by September 2008. They also include the protracted litigation, and the most expensive case in British legal history, initiated by TALCO (formerly the Tajik Aluminium Plant) against its ousted former management and the Russian company, RusAl, in the High Court in London and in Switzerland. This case allegedly seeks redress for losses suffered, and has led to highly-publicised corruption claims and

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<sup>39</sup> Law of the Republic of Tajikistan no.57, "О перечне сведений, составляющих государственную тайну" [On the List of Information which Constitutes State Secrets], 10 May 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://www.medialaw.ru/exussrlaw/l/tg/secret.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

counterclaims. Lastly, there has been a fall in the prices of Tajikistan's main export commodities, including aluminium and cotton. As a result, the security agencies have largely been left to fend for themselves, raising funds from the population and the private sector. This has also proved to be difficult, however, as this informal 'tax base' has become much narrower due to a sharp drop in labour remittances and the deterioration in living standards. Moreover, the different agencies have varying degrees of 'fundraising' power. Those with positions on the border, where corruption is rampant, are much better placed to appropriate additional income than Ministry of Defence conscripts based within the country. Corruption and under-funding, which go hand-in-hand, have created a situation in which power can be used to extract bribes and channel money to higher echelons. Given the entrenched vested interests controlling these financial flows, challenging the *status quo* by embarking on SSR would clearly be a very difficult task.

Heinemann-Grüder argues that while some officers in the security forces may push for reforms due to their sense of professionalism, the main impetus for SSR should come from a state's parties and deputies.<sup>40</sup> Opposition parties in Tajikistan have a tiny degree of representation in parliament, and have to function within the strict limits of government-sanctioned space. Tajik legislation does not openly challenge the executive, and many MPs do not have sufficient security expertise to demand answers from the government.

Despite the authoritarian nature of the state, there are some non-governmental organisations, and security sector expertise does exist within civil society. Journalists make an effort to provide objective reports, despite the dearth of official information and access to key figures. However, much of what is available is published on the Internet, and is therefore only accessible for a small, westernised, English-speaking elite. Non-governmental organisations and independent experts receive support from international donors. This gives them a certain power to get their voices heard by the government, while at the same time making them vulnerable to suspicions concerning their allegiance.

## **5. The outsourcing of security**

While the regime focuses on maintaining domestic order, external security has largely been outsourced to external actors. Given the magnitude of the threat emanating from Afghanistan, regional and international actors have an understandable interest in security provision in Tajikistan. Russia continues to play a pivotal role as the main security guarantor. Its military facilities and troops on the ground represent its largest deployment abroad, numbering 5,500 mobile rifle division troops and five military air force crews (five Su-25 aircraft). Fifteen

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<sup>40</sup> Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, "Security Sector Reform in Post-Socialist Transition States," lecture held on 15 January 2009, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, Dushanbe.

per cent of servicemen at the Russian military base are Tajiks who have been given Russian citizenship. Using the CSTO framework, Russian troops are able to intervene to counter any major threat from Afghanistan. At the same time, it is unlikely that the CSTO would deal with domestic unrest unless it had a distinctly jihadist and external character. The Russian Interior Ministry cooperates with its Tajik counterpart, and its assistance is driven by Russian concerns about labour migration and drug trafficking.

The influence of other regional players is growing. Since independence, Iran has played an active role in equipping the Tajik army and intelligence cooperation. A new Protocol on Military-Technical Cooperation was signed between the two countries' Ministries of Defence in May 2007. China has increased its operations in the military training and security assistance field, as has India, which has a small aircraft base at Farkhar.

Western efforts to provide security assistance to Tajikistan started after 11 September 2001, when the US, the EU and bilateral donors launched a number of train-and-equip programmes. A French military air facility was established to support the contingent in Afghanistan. International organisations such as the OSCE and the UN agencies have also developed security-related programmes.

The US is the largest bilateral donor. In the financial year 2004, US security assistance funding to Tajikistan stood at US\$6.9 million, and remains sizeable.

*Table 1: US security assistance funding to Tajikistan (thousands of US\$)<sup>41</sup>*

Account	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY2009
	Actual	Estimated	Requested
Foreign military financing	250	372	675
International military education and training	359	538	500
Non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, demining, and related programmes	3,004	3,976	1,450
Total	3,613	4,886	2,625

In addition, in the 2007 financial year, the US Department of State authorised the export of defence articles and services valued at US\$22,096,814, while the Export Control and Related Border Security Programme (EXBS) supplied training and equipment to enhance the border control capabilities of the customs authorities, border guards and other security forces.

<sup>41</sup> US Department of State, "2009 Congressional Budget Justifications for Foreign Operations" and "2007 Section 655 Report" [on-line]; available from <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/64482.htm>; Internet; accessed 29 October 2009.

Between 2003 and 2009, the EU provided €38 million to fund the interrelated BOMCA and CADAP programmes in five Central Asian countries. The UK government allocated a further £2 million for assistance to the Tajik-Afghan border sector. The OSCE also has a border management programme on the Chinese and Afghan borders, and in May 2009, the OSCE opened its Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe. Several individual European states provide assistance through multilateral institutions. The UK, for instance, channels its assistance through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and various EU programmes. In 2007, this amounted to £500,000 for infrastructure improvements and training on the Tajik side of the border, and £500,000 for the Afghan side, while a further £50,000 was allocated to a UNODC regional intelligence-sharing project. Moreover, France has an airbase in Dushanbe for transport aircraft, where 160 personnel support operations in Afghanistan.

Tajikistan's police force has received international attention, albeit not on the same scale as the country's border control agencies. The OSCE's Counter-terrorism and Police Unit works with law enforcement bodies on organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, focusing on police training, structural and operational reforms, and the introduction of community policing. Prior to this, between 2003 and 2005, the United Nations Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding (UNTOP) provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Interior. This consisted of a forensics laboratory and a police training programme that aimed to improve professionalism. Phase II of this programme included modules on 'human rights and policing'. In 2003, the Danish Institute for Human Rights initiated activities on law enforcement reform.

Such a multiplicity of projects has produced a number of coordination challenges. This has also proved to be the case for western donors, who have yet to find a way to cooperate effectively with countries which are not members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), such as Russia, China and India. Western donors have sought to utilise a developmental approach to security assistance that is concerned with local ownership and sustainability, but the impact so far has not been very pronounced. The biggest dilemma for the international community is the tension between the need to strengthen the security of a vital country on the Afghan border, and the absence of any reform or change within Tajikistan, along with the government's resistance to international recommendations.

International security programmes frequently encounter the following types of problem:

- Recipients show readiness to sign documents and engage in reform on paper, but action lags behind;
- The preferences of local security officials do not always coincide with those of donors (for example, requests for ammunition rather than computers);

- There is an absence of full and objective information to verify official claims;
- Political agendas in headquarters sometimes conflict with operational effectiveness;
- International programmes suffer from local corruption, over which donors have no leverage;
- Nominated trainees are not always of an appropriate calibre for the training offered, and study tours tend to embrace the same people time and again;
- Checks on how equipment is used or misused are essential, but seldom occur in practice;
- It is hard to achieve sustainability in training and equipping (for example, equipment needs a power supply to function, leading to requests for generators, which in turn require fuel; or sniffer dogs are provided, and a request for dog food follows their despatch);
- An integrated approach to border management proves to be theoretically sound, but does not match local realities.

### **Conclusion**

The security challenges in Tajikistan are more potent than in the rest of Central Asia, a fact that explains how those in power view SSR. Their view that expanded openness might undermine effectiveness should not be dismissed, even if it does not correspond to the international community's vision. The key question is thus, how can SSR be pursued in a situation in which basic security is barely functioning, precarious, and cannot be taken for granted? In such circumstances, the concern of powerful elites that public oversight over the security sector might undermine its effectiveness has to be addressed.

A broader question is whether it is meaningful to discuss SSR in a highly authoritarian context in which the regime has a vested interest in presenting itself as a bastion of security to maintain its legitimacy; when the institutions that are in theory responsible for oversight are themselves puppets of the regime; and when objective information is too scarce to be able to adequately assess security developments.

Since international actors are already involved, and will continue to be involved, in the security field in Tajikistan, it is worth considering which incentives might persuade a highly authoritarian leadership to pursue SSR. In the present circumstances, we are unlikely to see radical change, but the following aims could be pursued:

- SSR needs to be more effectively mainstreamed into security assistance programmes, with conditionality attached;
- Western actors need to work together more effectively and to engage with non-OECD countries, as their security interests are essentially the

same. Different actors have different forms of leverage and access, and would be more effective if they were to combine their strengths;

- Anti-corruption measures are critical, as combating corruption in the security sphere is a major SSR goal;
- Investing in public education on SSR and promoting the concept would create the foundations for future reform, and would prepare people to take up opportunities when the political conditions change.

## 5. Security Sector Reform in Turkmenistan

*Michael Denison\**

### **Introduction**

The analysis of the security sector and the formulation of SSR proposals in Turkmenistan are beset by several challenges related to the country's closed and opaque domestic political culture. Turkmenistan is therefore an extremely difficult terrain in which to undertake SSR, even within the Central Asian context.

In any overview, an initial task is to map out the security sector. Unfortunately, information is generally made available on an unsystematic and piecemeal basis, a problem that is compounded by the government's decision not to participate in the military structures of the CIS, the SCO and the CSTO, and its historically minimal engagement with the NATO's PfP programme. Domestic security structures are not subject to external scrutiny. Consequently, information about intelligence agencies, the police and the prison service can often be gained from selective official reports and anecdotal evidence channelled through expatriate dissident networks based in Western Europe.

The second challenge relates to the structure of Turkmen political society itself. There are no legal opposition parties and no genuinely competitive elections. The mode of governance can fairly be described as personalistic, with all major policy decisions subject to presidential approval. The Majlis (parliament) effectively rubber-stamps legislative proposals from the presidential administration. The State Security Council is staffed by compliant presidential appointees. The presidency makes full use of its powers of decree. There is no transparency in policy formulation which, historically, has been determined by presidential direction, rather than a transparent and formal process. There is no legal independent print and domestic broadcasting media, and civil society organisations are effectively proscribed, thereby closing the space for the initiation of domestic policy debates on SSR and the subsequent monitoring of reforms.

The limited space for influencing SSR that does exist is created by international organisations working on specific projects, such as border management and transportation of NATO equipment to Afghanistan, and informally (and very rarely) through domestic community pressures on particular institutions deemed to have grossly breached community norms. The purpose of this chapter is to assess how the Turkmen government conceptualises national security, discuss how this then flows into national security policy, and to critically review the modest reforms undertaken in the security sector since the

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accession to power of President Gurbanguly Berdymuhamedov in December 2006, following the death of former President Saparmurat Niyazov. A short concluding section identifies modest proposals for commencing the process of SSR in the Turkmen context.

### **1. National security threat perception**

Shortly after independence, Turkmenistan adopted a policy of permanent neutrality, which was subsequently recognised by a UN General Assembly resolution passed in December 1995. The decision of the Turkmen government not to sign the CIS Collective Security Treaty (CST) in Tashkent in May 1992 and, thereafter, not to participate in the CIS and other post-Soviet security structures in the following years can be explained by several factors.

First, the permanent neutrality doctrine is based on the implicit recognition that Turkmenistan is surrounded by more powerful states against whom it would not be possible to prevail in any military conflict. Rather than 'bandwagoning' with more powerful neighbours, notably Russia, in order to cement national security, Turkmenistan made the very rational calculation that being beholden to Russia for both state/regime security as well as economic security (virtually all Turkmen gas exports, which constitute the bulk of national export revenues, are transited through the Soviet-era Central Asia gas pipeline system and therefore through Russia) would constitute an unacceptable loss of national sovereignty. Furthermore, there was recognition that national identity remained a fragile construct: pursuing an independent defence and security policy would minimise the chances of external powers, possibly Uzbekistan, manipulating national minorities or engendering ethnic and clan discord. Crucially, the CST provided a security guarantee against external threats but was silent on threats emanating from other signatories, which arguably represented the most serious national security problem for Turkmenistan. Nevertheless, the Turkmen government accepted that, in the short-term, it was unable to provide the basic functions of national security. Accordingly, a bilateral treaty with Russia was signed in July 1992 which provided for Russian and then joint interim command of units of the border guard, air force and air defence for a defined transitional period for training purposes. This term effectively expired on 20 December 2000 when the last Russian border guards left Turkmenistan, although bilateral arrangements with Russia in the training of special forces almost certainly persist.

Second, Turkmenistan is largely dependent on export revenues from natural gas to meet its most basic budgetary requirements. As such, economic security depends on Turkmenistan not prejudicing its relations with either potential gas customers or potential and existing transit routes. The Turkmen government's underlying presumption is to avoid getting locked into adopting hostile positions, through institutional memberships, towards difficult and

potentially unstable neighbours such as Iran, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, thereby increasing the risk of conflict overspill, or preventing the diversification of gas transit routes to new markets in the east and south. This was a particularly germane calculation in the mid-1990s, when the CIS was faced with the expansion of Taliban power in Afghanistan. President Niyazov maintained conspicuously good relations with the Taliban right up until September 2001, largely to prevent overspill of the conflict across the poorly guarded and porous Turkmen-Afghan border, but also because of the intention to export natural gas through Afghanistan to Pakistan and, possibly, India following the construction of a projected gas pipeline linking Turkmenistan to the South Asian market. The pipeline has still not got off the drawing board, but neither has it been completely abandoned.

Thirdly, on a domestic level, the Turkmen socio-political model is one in which large subsidies are provided for many basic goods such as fuel, water, salt and bread, the trade-off for which is a severely circumscribed menu of social and economic freedoms. Internal security for the regime and the perceived threat of division along ethno-tribal faultlines are central concerns of the political elite. The Turkmen government accordingly wants to minimise international scrutiny and criticism of its domestic record, including on policing and prison issues, and therefore promotes a wider international model of non-interference, non-alignment and neutrality in relation to domestic affairs.

The selective and security-focused nature of the neutrality model is reinforced by Turkmenistan's willingness to join other multilateral institutions, such as the Economic Cooperation Organisation and the Non-Aligned Movement and, in fact, the CIS, although participation here has been limited to sporadic attendance at heads of state summits and the rather incomplete provision of economic data for the statistical arm of the CIS. Although an early signatory to NATO's PfP programme in 1994, Turkmenistan's participation has been sporadic and minimal, limited to hosting disaster preparedness seminars, and prompting occasional past discussions within NATO as to the utility of Turkmenistan's continued membership.

## **2. Security sector profile and problems**

This strategic posture of self-imposed isolation from the Central Asia-Caspian regional security complex has had significant ramifications for the shape and content of the domestic security sector.

The Turkmen armed forces consist of around 26,000 contracted personnel supplemented by an annual inflow of up to 50,000 conscripts (in comparison with 810,000 service personnel in Iran and 91,000 in Uzbekistan). The army, artillery and rocket forces comprise 21,000 troops, the navy has 700

personnel and the air and air defence forces number around 4,300.<sup>42</sup> The conscripts are, by numerous independent accounts, poorly fed, housed and trained and often used for civilian work on farms, in hospitals or in factories at minimal wages, often informally contracted out by superior officers for their personal gain.

Visitors to Ashgabat will become immediately aware that conscripts are used for municipal gardening tasks such as planting flowers and street sweeping. President Niyazov's decision to abolish the posts of hospital orderlies and porters in 2004 resulted in conscripts being drafted in to cover the gaps in services, with reports that patients were actually sharing their own food with servicemen because the army was not looking after them.<sup>43</sup>

Military service for two years is compulsory under Article 38 of Turkmenistan's Constitution, with all males between 18 and 30 years of age eligible. University graduates serve for 12 months as of mid-2008 (down from 18 months), and conscripts into the navy and coastguard, both of which are under the command of the border service, serve for 30 months. There is no alternative to military service, although 25% of recruits are assigned to purely civilian work. There is a twice-yearly call up, with recruits ordered to present to the local *vinkomat* (draft board), failing which the Office of the Prosecutor-General can initiate criminal proceedings. Draft evasion is punishable by two years of corrective labour or imprisonment.

Corruption and bullying (*dedovshchina*) are reportedly rife in the Turkmen armed forces.<sup>44</sup> A Turkmenistan Helsinki Federation (THF) report (2006), based on information from four of the country's five regions highlighted several individual cases in which conscripts had received closed head injuries, broken bones and soft-tissue injuries.<sup>45</sup> In many cases, the victims were too afraid to give any reason for the injuries. One former conscript, identified as Bairam O., stated that officers encourage *dedovshchina* because it spreads fear and prevents complaints about inadequate food and unsanitary conditions in the

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<sup>42</sup> Alexei Aleyev, "The Armed Forces of Turkmenistan," *Ekspert Vooruzheniy Journal* 3 (May-June 2002). See also International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2010* (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Monica Whitlock, "Troops to replace Turkmen medics," 1 March 2004 [on-line]; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3522855.stm>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>44</sup> *Dedovshchina* is simply defined as 'violence exerted by older conscripts on younger ones' (Françoise Daucé and Elisabeth Sieca-Kozłowski, "Introduction: *Dedovshchina*: From Military to Society," *Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies* 1, no.1 (2004), 1. A more substantive definition has been provided by Andrei Petukhov: 'A system of mutual relations between servicemen, based on half-criminal habits of senior draftees against junior ones when the age of the serviceman, when their rank and responsibility play a secondary role or does not play a role at all' (quoted in Dale R. Herspring, "*Dedovshchina* in the Russian Army: The Problem that Won't Go Away," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 18 (2005), 607.

<sup>45</sup> THF, "*Dedovshchina* in the Turkmen Army," *THF Report*, 22 May 2006.

army. He reported that *dedovshchina* is often related to inter-tribal tensions. Previous THF reports from March and April 2005 also mention the prevalence of *dedovshchina*, and the extremely poor conditions in which conscripts are kept.<sup>46</sup> Wealthier families can secure a more congenial posting that is often based at the family home, or exemption from military service altogether. There is also evidence of pervasive discrimination on tribal/regional or ethnic grounds against younger recruits throughout the security sector, with conscripts usually assigned to posts away from their home region to prevent the coalescence of tribal groups.<sup>47</sup>

According to reports filed by groups such as the Turkmenistan Initiative on Human Rights (TIHR), which have credible in-country information, the intelligence, police and prison services operate with a culture of impunity towards the public. Ill-treatment almost certainly occurs during security service interrogations, and within domestic penal institutions. As in the Soviet period, psychiatric incarceration is used instrumentally, with 'political' patients mixed indiscriminately with the criminally insane. According to numerous TIHR and Amnesty International reports, conditions in many institutions, including remand centres (SIZOs), have deteriorated since the Soviet period. According to a former senior officer in the army medical corps interviewed by the author, conditions in military prisons visited in Tejen, Turkmenbashi and Sady are 'truly appalling', with a large proportion of patients contracting tuberculosis.<sup>48</sup>

The picture across the security sector in Turkmenistan throughout the post-Soviet era has been somewhat bleak. While senior army and police officers are believed to live well, supplemented by generous housing, medical provision and opportunities for corruption, many ordinary recruits are barely paid at all and receive very little training. The lack of independent political, judicial or civil society scrutiny means that the only restraint on behaviour lies in the periodic removal of senior officials and their dependant clients lower down the ranks to ensure that patronage networks do not become so sufficiently engrained as to represent a potential alternative power base to the political elite.

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<sup>46</sup> THF, "The Peculiarities of Turkmen Military Service," *THF Report*, 7 March 2005; THF, "The Truth about the Turkmen Army," *THF Report*, 18 April 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Interviews with former military personnel conducted in Ashgabat between 2001 and 2008; see also numerous reports issued by the Turkmen Initiative on Human Rights (<http://www.chrono-tm.org/>).

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Captain MT, September 2005 (UK). See TIHR, *TIHR Bulletin* 113, 20 May 2005; *TIHR Bulletin* 273, 25 April 2006; *TIHR Bulletin* 288, 1 June 2006; Amnesty International, "Turkmenistan: The Clampdown on Dissent and Religious Freedom Continues," 2 May 2005, AI Index EUR 61/003/2005 [on-line]; available from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR61/003/2005>; Internet; accessed 15 February 1020. See also: Emmanuel Decaux, *OSCE Rapporteur's Report on Turkmenistan*, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), 2003; Open Society Institute, "Human Rights Violations in Turkmenistan: 25 November 2002 – 24 January 2003," Open Society Institute (OSI) Turkmenistan Project, 2003.

### **3. Signs of reform**

Notwithstanding these problems, there has been a step-change in engagement with the international community since President Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov took office in December 2006. While not presenting a basis for comprehensive SSR engagement, this does offer a foundation for incremental and piecemeal change. The major domestic developments include a reversal of Niyazov's policy of overt discrimination against national minorities in security structures; a more strategic approach to national security to encompass so-called 'soft' security threats, such as narco-trafficking, alongside greater engagement with international agencies, such as the UNODC; and reforms to improve the living standards of not only senior personnel, but also cadets and recruits. Taking each in turn:

There has been a fall in informal discrimination against non-Turkmen in the upper echelons of the security sector since 2007. Ethnic discrimination against non-Turkmen or mixed heritage service personnel was a cause of the assassination attempt on President Niyazov in November 2002. Berdymuhammedov has moved to repair relations with minority ethnic groups since 2007 by adopting a more emollient public stance towards Russian speakers and ethnic Uzbek communities in border areas, although ethnic Turkmen continue to occupy virtually all senior positions in the military, intelligence services and police, and informal discrimination remains common.

Second, Berdymuhammedov has also worked to combat drug use in the armed forces and in Turkmen society more generally. He has attempted to end the complicity of senior regime figures in the drugs trade from Afghanistan and improved cooperation with the UNODC on asset tracing and the EU's BOMCA programme since 2007 through the establishment of sniffer dog training centres. A Counter-Narcotics Service was created in January 2008, and cooperation has been formally established on a regional level, although the volume of implementation remains somewhat untested.

Third, the new military doctrine announced in 2008 emphasises the importance of modernised military facilities, and has resulted in a construction programme to create cantonments and enhanced border checkpoints. A central component of the doctrine and associated reforms is to improve living conditions for service personnel and their families. In August 2009, Berdymuhammedov signed the Law on the Status and Social Protection of Military Personnel and their Families, which guaranteed free healthcare and recreation facilities, and minimum standards in relation to housing conditions. While the implementation of these reforms may be some distance away, they do represent a culture shift within the political elite in acknowledging existing problems publicly and staking political capital on improving the position of servicemen.

Data on the numbers of personnel and conditions in the police, prison and intelligence services are more difficult to come by. The Ministry of National

Security (MNS), responsible for internal security, has been instrumental in the suppression of internal dissent. There is no available data on SSR in the MNS, but the MNS was subject to a substantial shake-out following the November 2002 attempt on the life of Niyazov, in part because elements were rumoured to have knowledge of the plot in advance, and because its tribal configuration in the upper echelons was believed by Niyazov to be inimical to his own power base.<sup>49</sup> The agency is now subject to much greater scrutiny by the presidency, but there is no evidence of any systematic attempt at SSR.

Turkmenistan's police force is synonymous with corruption and has frequently been used instrumentally to deal with cases of political or religious dissent. In February 2010, for example, police raided a congregation of Protestants, seizing Bibles and harassing worshippers. The government has recognised the need for improved training. Berdymuhamedov opened a new police academy on 31 August 2009, and stated his commitment to improving training and living conditions for recruits. There was dialogue with the EU in June 2009 in relation to prison inspections by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participation in the EU's CADAP programme has begun with some training sessions conducted on the treatment of incarcerated drug addicts. At the same time, there is evidence that the government can be responsive to informal protests: the MNS was criticised by Berdymuhamedov in 2007 for over-zealous detention and interrogation, and the government has made concessions when confronted by family members over conditions in female prisons.

## **Conclusion**

Even in comparison with other Central Asian states, Turkmenistan's exposure to SSR is embryonic. The political elite needs to look after the upper echelons of the military and intelligence service for its own security, but claims of fundamental reform are sometimes used to mask purges and reshuffles of senior officers. Not all reform claims can be taken at face value. In many respects, Turkmenistan remains a society constructed around informal and personal ties. Networks of influence and protest are unofficial rather than systematic and formal. Egregious abuses are typically corrected through vertical patronage and kinship networks, rather than the more formal horizontal civil society activities that underpin effective SSR partnerships with monitoring

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<sup>49</sup> The forerunner of the MNS, the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic KGB, traditionally recruited individuals of mixed parentage who subsequently provided a natural base of opposition to Niyazov's attempts to indigenise Turkmen power structures. According to interview testimony to the author of individuals who subsequently went into exile, a principal motivation of the November 2002 plotters, who were led by former Foreign Minister Boris Shikmuradov (himself half-Armenian), derived from the perception of an artificial ceiling on career advancement created by Niyazov's preference for promoting 'pure' ethnic Turkmen, who were seen as more politically reliable.

organisations. Occasional small and spontaneous protests against specific abuses in the prison system or by the police force can be highlighted, but probably not captured or used as a template for broader engagement to promote SSR under the current system of government.

The current level of engagement with the international community should not be overstated either: implementation remains a problem, and there is a tendency to 'whitewash' the government's record on human rights in the hope of inducing further reform. This raises the tactical question of how the international community can best open a dialogue on reform, given that the fundamental premise of SSR is that it should be domestically driven. The answer probably lies in selectively and incrementally developing cooperation from a limited base where there is a confluence of interest between the Turkmen government and external partners. Consequently, border management, drug interdiction and training for prison officers through BOMCA, UNODC and CADAP are the most promising avenues for SSR engagement, all of which are somewhat less politicised areas than those that touch on issues of political dissent.

In the longer-term, although Turkmenistan is almost certainly the least fertile ground of any Central Asian state for effecting SSR, the increasing diversification of the country's economic relations is likely to bring more opportunities for interaction with external partners across a broader range of activities. Cooperation on security issues has limited potential but is likely to rise in line with the complexity of perceived threats to national or regime security. Given the limited effectiveness of Turkmen security structures across the board, it may be that SSR practitioners may need to wait until the government reaches out, possibly through necessity, rather than extending a hand to the government. This might eventually create the more fundamental and universal dilemma of whether to help provide life support to a regime that has lost domestic credibility.

### **Summary of recommendations**

1. Encourage dialogue and capacity building through BOMCA, UNODC, CADAP, and NATO PfP, by setting concrete objectives on military, police and prison reform and training on interrogation/legal process.
2. Develop the EU-Turkmenistan Human Rights Dialogue to encompass independent ICRC inspections of detention centres, prisons and military establishments and end the psychiatric incarceration of political dissidents.
3. Establish a dialogue on training for prison officers on the basis of professionalising the job and the creation of a framework of minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners.
4. Support Turkmenistan's policy of permanent neutrality as an important contributor to regional security, but support full participation, if not integration, with regional security structures to improve transparency.

## 6. Security Sector Reform in Uzbekistan

*John Schoeberlein\**

### 1. Defining security in Uzbekistan

With the emergence of a new state in Uzbekistan following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the leadership of the country faced a wide array of institution-building challenges associated with state-building, among which security institutions were undoubtedly a high priority of the government. Each of the new post-Soviet states inherited a portion of the Soviet military and other security institutions, and Uzbekistan fared relatively well in this regard, since Tashkent and other localities in the republic had served as regional headquarters for Central Asia. However, in terms of external security, very little of the agenda which had been driving the development of Soviet security institutions remained relevant. If the main points in this agenda had included defending the Soviet Union's southern border and projecting Moscow's regional dominance in relation to neighbouring countries, most notably Afghanistan and Pakistan, the new international borders of Uzbekistan included only a small segment of the former-Soviet border with Afghanistan – the rest faced former Soviet states. While Uzbekistan remained concerned about security threats emanating from Afghanistan, particularly after the Taliban government consolidated its control in the mid-1990s and seemed to threaten a spread of radical Islamist militancy northward, these issues assumed diminished importance as Uzbekistan focused on projecting its regional dominance in relation to other former Soviet states, and developed a particularly difficult relationship with Tajikistan. On the one hand, Uzbekistan sought to protect itself from the spread of militancy and flows of refugees coming from Tajikistan's civil war (1992-97), while at the same time Tashkent engaged in some limited military interventions into Tajikistan, provided support to elements seeking to destabilise Tajikistan's regime (most notably by failing to prevent or possibly supporting an insurgency conducted from Uzbekistan's territory led by Mahmud Khudaiberdiev in 1998), and put at times tremendous political and economic pressure on its war-stricken neighbour. While concerns related to Afghanistan featured prominently in Uzbekistan's appeals to the West for assistance in developing its security institutions, problems with former Soviet neighbours contributed much more to the day-to-day concerns related to external security. By the late 1990s, these problems included frequent tensions with all of these neighbours, the introduction of

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border control measures such as barriers and land-mines, and shooting incidents involving border control personnel.

Thus, the 1990s saw the formation of a completely new external security agenda for Uzbekistan which involved not only such practical measures as building up the military, internal security forces and border control forces, but also the fundamental matter of conceptualising security policy. The latter was most often not publicly articulated *per se*, but became evident through actions often taken unilaterally, through accusations levelled at neighbouring countries, and through the warming or cooling of relations with major powers. Western governments, chiefly through NATO's PfP programme, sought to foster the security capacity of Uzbekistan like other former Soviet states, in order to make it a more able partner in defending western interests, which included preventing the possible spread of radical Islamism, ensuring western access to oil and gas supplies, and reorienting these countries away from Russian leadership or domination. A key point on the agenda of NATO-PfP was the promotion of regional cooperation, a goal which runs counter to Uzbekistan's aspirations to assert its dominant regional role and to the actions which led to tensions with neighbours such as unilateral border security measures. While Uzbekistan participated in some of the largely symbolic initiatives to foster regional cooperation that marked the early period of independence, in practice, Uzbekistan's relations with all of its neighbours were characterised by tensions and distrust.

In contrast to policy on external security that had to navigate entirely new terrain, the internal security policy of Uzbekistan largely reflected continuity with Soviet times. In the brief period of independence before 1993, state control was relaxed – probably reflecting less the wishes of the government and resulting more from the carry-over effect of Soviet Perestroika-era reforms and the disarray accompanying the transformation of Soviet institutions into independent ones. By the mid-1990s, internal security policy was again effectively suppressing political pluralism, public debate and criticism of state policy, expressions of the aspirations of ethnic minorities, unsanctioned religious activities, and so on. Imprisonment of citizens for political reasons reached levels far exceeding those of late Soviet times. The tightening of controls was justified as a measure to avoid internal conflict, such as had occurred in Tajikistan, and the threats that were said to be posed by militant opposition groups with external backing (a wide range of external actors came to be accused of seeking to promote instability in Uzbekistan, ranging from international radical Islamist groups and immediate neighbours to Russia, Turkey and western countries). The institutions of internal security came to occupy a much more visible position even than during Soviet times, with checkpoints operating on many of the country's major roadways, and a higher likelihood of citizens being detained, searched or stopped for questioning, particularly in the capital.

Many of the assumptions that are characteristic of security thinking in western contexts do not apply in Uzbekistan's apparent conceptualisation of its security agenda. Anyone expecting Uzbekistan to follow any of the following 'obvious' approaches would be mistaken: to reduce tensions and promote cooperation with neighbours, to foster stability on its borders, to seek clear and consistent alignment with one or more major powers, to aim for transparency and predictability in its own behaviour, and so on. Furthermore, a real commitment to the model of multi-dimensional security implied by Uzbekistan's membership of the OSCE would require a dramatic move away from the Soviet model of tight state control for internal security, toward an emphasis on ensuring the economic well-being of all segments of the population, and diffusing potential tensions through greater openness and wider political participation. Thus, the approaches to both internal and external security that were adopted by the state of Uzbekistan in its first five-to-ten years leave a considerable distance to be traversed by SSR.

## **2. The evolving security priorities of Uzbekistan since independence and the direction of reform**

Given the security agenda that was adopted immediately after independence, a great deal of practical institution-building, personnel development, acquisition of technology, and so forth, was needed in order to make a functioning whole from the fragment of the Soviet security institutions which fell to Uzbekistan. In contrast to neighbouring republics, in Uzbekistan very substantial resources were devoted to building independently-functioning institutions, filling gaps in staffing and training, and building military and border control infrastructure along its new international borders.

Capacity-building for internal security did not require as dramatic a reorientation as for external security, since the goal was to provide the same general type of internal security as had been prioritised during Soviet times. However, the great challenge was to reorient loyalty, which had been oriented to Moscow, toward the newly independent regime. In both the military and the internal security apparatus (the National Security Service, based on the former KGB, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, responsible for the police forces, including special forces), efforts to assure new orientations of loyalty were implemented through a dramatic reduction in officers of Russian background, thus forming an overwhelmingly Uzbek officer corps by the mid-1990s. Despite these changes, meanwhile, there was no significant change in the control agenda or *modus operandi* of the internal security services from Soviet times after a brief period of looser control immediately following independence, which was the result less of policy than of capacity.

These developments had the goal of stemming the threat of internal unrest, as well as threats emanating from the ongoing civil war in Afghanistan

and the armed conflict in Tajikistan. The potential for internal instability following independence seemed high after a series of events involving ethnic conflict and opposition unrest which accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Soviet economy and institutional disarray seemed likely to exacerbate these prospects. The new military functioned as an instrument of state-building, not only serving to consolidate the new state's sovereignty and control of territory, but also as a symbolic and practical means for building loyalty through mandatory universal conscription of young men. Early on, the military and security services were involved in supporting the government of Tajikistan's struggle against armed opposition in their civil war, as well as in implementing a tight internal security regime within Uzbekistan. While building the military, the government of Uzbekistan took care to ensure that it was strictly under civilian control, making sure that it would not become an independent political force in the new state.

During this early period of independence, in its international relations – both in relation to immediately neighbouring former-Soviet republics and in relation to major powers including Russia – Uzbekistan sought to establish a position of strength, including aspirations for a role of regional dominance to match its central position, its overwhelming share of the region's population, and its large share of the region's economic capacity. It also sought greater autonomy of action from Russia and other former Soviet states by seeking only limited inclusion in the CIS and other Russia-oriented post-Soviet structures, and greater efforts to build links with the US and other international arrangements with a non-post-Soviet orientation. This quickly led to often tense relations with all of its neighbouring countries, which reacted negatively to Uzbekistan's efforts to seek regional dominance.

The new security institutions and orientations that were formed in the first five years of independence, meanwhile, have undergone much less significant reform in the subsequent decade-and-a-half. The most significant developments include practical implementation of that capacity, as manifest in the suppression of incursions by the IMU in 1999 and 2000, followed by implementation of much tighter border controls and fortifications, and the suppression of opposition and discontent. The growing confrontation between the state and a militant segment of the population, albeit very small, and a much wider, non-militant but increasingly dissatisfied segment of the population, was evident in the greater frequency of protests, despite government efforts to crack down on them, and in a series of bomb attacks and attempted bomb attacks in 2004 and the mass disorder of May 2005 in Andijan. Uzbekistan's orientation amongst the major powers of Russia, China and the US has shifted in response to international developments such as the US-led intervention in Afghanistan and in a continuing effort to ensure its ability to act independently from any of these powers. Multilateral efforts at regional cooperation have met with scepticism in Uzbekistan, and while some issues of tension such as the conflict

in Tajikistan and the border control regime have stabilised, many issues remain fraught with tensions.

### **3. The contrast between the assumptions of the government of Uzbekistan's security policy and internationally-accepted premises of SSR**

The most difficult challenge for international involvement in SSR in Uzbekistan is bridging the gap between how security is conceptualised by the government of Uzbekistan and western international security actors. This makes it difficult for international actors to engage in a reform agenda of which Uzbekistan itself would be inclined to take ownership. In many realms of security policy, the government of Uzbekistan conceptualises security in a much narrower sense, which could be described as regime security as opposed to national, international or human security. The result is that trade-offs are made between what would improve national and human security in favour of what aims to improve regime security.

If we consider that there are very close links between international, national and human security, some of the most pressing security concerns for Uzbekistan, by any assessment, would include the following:

1. Economic conditions in Uzbekistan have deteriorated, in large part due to continued government control over the agricultural sector, the suppression of trade by small and medium traders, and the monopolisation of the trade and productive sectors by a narrow elite. Consequently, vast numbers of Uzbekistan's citizens have been forced to seek a livelihood through labour migration to neighbouring countries. This has been a blow to Uzbekistan's prestige as regional leader, but more importantly, it has subjected its citizens to difficult, dangerous and exploitative conditions, and makes Uzbekistan vulnerable to the potential for mass expulsion of labour migrants if economic or political conditions turn against them in host countries, in particular Russia.
2. Persistent tensions with neighbouring countries are a great hindrance to the development of economic relations, limiting Uzbekistan's ability to develop its economic potential through regional trade and cooperation. Instead of developing its natural position as a hub of regional distribution and markets, would-be traders from and with Uzbekistan have had to contend with tight borders and limitations on trade, resulting in suppressed economic development, and favouring the neighbouring countries as trade centres even for Uzbekistan's market.
3. The reservoir of good faith that the regime enjoyed with its population in the early years of independence has now largely been exhausted, due to the failure to address economic problems and the sense that the government protects the interests of a narrow elite to the detriment of

the broader population. This introduces the risk of popular unrest, increases the potential support for radical political movements, and creates a potential for power struggles amongst elements of the elite who have been marginalised and who may seek support among discontented populations, especially in the event of a leadership succession struggle.

These are probably the most serious security issues facing the country, but the conceptualisation of regime security as of higher priority than national, international or human security hinders the resolution of these issues. The priority of regime security has led to the following:

Uzbekistan has sought to increase its ability to act without regard to external factors such as pressures from major powers and international institutions, as well as neighbouring states. This has led to severely limited foreign investment and engagement in the country, which could otherwise have improved human and national security. In an effort to minimise dependence on particular potential friends, the government of Uzbekistan has played major powers off against one another in periodic shifts in orientation, especially between Russia and the West. Instead of building stable relationships to address its economic needs, it has favoured national self-sufficiency at the expense of economic benefits, such as by producing its own wheat and rice on land that would be better suited to other crops. Independence from outside pressures also allows for lower standards of accountability, reducing the need for adherence to commitments on democratic and market reforms and human rights. This has protected the regime from pressures, allowing it to strengthen the patronage system that assures its position in power, but exacerbates the broader security problems outlined above.

Similarly, Uzbekistan has sought to minimise pressures on the regime that could come from within, by allowing almost no space for alternative voices in the media or for political opposition, dealing harshly with critics and opponents, and reducing the central government's vulnerability to potential regional or other interest groups within the country.

The government of Uzbekistan has sought to bolster its profile at the expense of good relations with neighbouring states, by issuing harsh critiques of its neighbours and adopting measures which demonstrate Uzbekistan's strength and disregard for neighbouring states' interests, such as refusing to cooperate on water issues and unilaterally closing its borders with its dependent neighbours. These strategies were effective in the early years of independence in elevating the prestige of the regime both internally and regionally, but they have proven unsustainable as the failure to address economic problems and the closely interlocking problem of Uzbekistan's economic isolation have rendered this strategy ineffective.

The strengthening of security institutions in the first five years of independence was perceived both within Uzbekistan and in the region as aimed

at guaranteeing national and regional security and enhanced the image of Uzbekistan as a well-run state, but increasingly this has been perceived as an orientation towards regime security to the detriment of the broader national security. This is typified in the severe measures implemented to limit small traders – measures that are seen as protecting the interests of powerful figures close to the regime who control trade within the patronage system. The use of security forces to violently suppress unrest in Andijan in May 2005 is widely perceived, not as a clash with militant Islamists (as it is portrayed by the government), but rather as the state's suppression of a popular reaction on the part of those who benefited from economic activity which the government preferred to keep more tightly under its patronage system.

#### **4. Evaluation of prospects and benefits of SSR in Uzbekistan**

One major obstacle to effective reform of the security sector in Uzbekistan – and the one that is probably most easily overcome – is the continued reliance on the symbolism of a strong state for regime legitimacy and the orientation toward asserting a position of strength in relation to neighbours. While this strategy has proved unsustainable, as it has lost its effectiveness for building regime prestige, and it is clear that the regime must find more substantive means to build the loyalty and trust of its population, the goal of regional dominance has clearly undermined regional security, limiting economic prosperity and hindering security cooperation on vital issues such as defending regional interests against the dominance of major powers, and combating militant opposition and narcotics trafficking. While building regime legitimacy on other bases does present a significant challenge, there is little to be lost by abandoning practices which antagonise its neighbours.

A much more difficult problem is how the government of Uzbekistan can build an adequate base for regime security, which would not be overly destabilising and would allow it to embrace SSR and address the pressing security issues outlined above. The heart of this problem is that currently, the regime relies for its continuity on the support of a narrow elite that controls the country's economy, rather than on broader popular support or on strong institutions. The maintenance of that control of the economy has limited economic reforms that would allow the agricultural sector to develop, foreign investment to come in, and flourishing small-scale trade to satisfy consumer demands and provide a livelihood to traders. The current structure of security priorities is oriented to maintaining the position of this economic elite. Changing this would require either a change in regime, which could negatively affect national and regional security given the lack of institutions for succession and transition, or a reorientation of the regime to ensure its security on a different basis. Given the serious deterioration of security that accompanies the declining economy and the problem of succession, reforms that could lead to a more

productive economy and wider approval of the government among the population could become the regime's preferred choice.

An important part of the security rhetoric to date has been the emphasis on external threats, justifying tight border controls and police measures. As long as this contributed to a sense of creating greater security, it contributed to confidence in the regime. However, the overall economic decline that has forced massive labour migration, and the growing perception that security measures are aimed at protecting the economic elite as opposed to the general national well-being, have led wide segments of the population to associate their problems more with government policies than with external threats. Appeals to the threat of Islamist radicalism have helped strengthen cooperation with major powers such as Russia, China and the US, but this cooperation yields diminishing benefits for the regime and cannot assure its long-term security.

To date, Uzbekistan has yet to realise the benefits of an integrated approach to security which treats international, national and human security as interdependent, and which involves a diversity of actors across society. Nearly 20 years after independence, the limitations of an approach which gives overwhelming priority to regime security have become evident, and one may hope that a shift could occur towards reforms which would put greater emphasis on furthering diminished tensions with neighbours, stronger intraregional ties, and greater economic opportunity for the broader population in the agricultural and trade sectors. It is not impossible for the elite to build an adequate economic base for itself with a model that allows broader prosperity and less tension with neighbours, as elites have done in many other parts of the world, including in other former Communist countries.

It is also possible, meanwhile, that the regime will lack the vision to conduct needed reforms and will continue to rely on the concept of security which has characterised the entire post-Soviet period. If this is the case, then we are likely to see increased unrest, growing tensions and competition within the elite, and a difficult and destabilising transition to a new regime in the relatively near future.

## 7. NATO and Security in Central Asia

*Martha Brill Olcott\**

NATO has had very mixed success in Central Asia, both in terms of advancing reform of the various national militaries and of the security forces. Its success appears even more limited if one uses the measure of integrated SSR that has been promoted by CESS.

The Central Asian states have partly reformed militaries, which are now better able to meet externally-initiated security threats than they were several years ago. In most cases, however, reform of the security sector has been undertaken in a somewhat piecemeal fashion, with each country taking advantage of the 'good deals' that are on offer from foreign partners in terms of both equipment and training. This has left them with partially-reformed security sectors that cannot yet effectively be linked to NATO. None of these countries have militaries, security services, police or judiciaries that meet western norms of electoral or civilian accountability or the rule of law. Some of these countries come closer to western norms than others, and the fact that Kazakhstan sponsored the conference on which this volume is based speaks to the government of Kazakhstan's commitment to further incorporating these goals.

### 1. NATO in Central Asia

NATO's leadership maintains that the Alliance is committed to a values-based approach. A review of NATO's policies in the Central Asian region calls this into question, however, at least as far as whether it is a NATO priority. This has been especially true since 11 September 2001, as the War in Afghanistan has served as a trump card against any more nationally specific or Central Asian regional concerns. Initially there was pressure for basing and, since 2008, for participation in the Northern Distribution Network (NDN). So while it is true that NATO training programmes serve to introduce the Central Asian military to how armed forces operate in democratic societies, there has been no use of conditionality that requires the Central Asian nations to incorporate such military practices in order to receive continued assistance. Even in the case of Uzbekistan, following the Andijan unrest in 2005,<sup>50</sup> pressure for sanctions came from the EU and the US Congress rather than from the military.

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<sup>50</sup> For a discussion on the civil unrest that occurred in Andijian, see International Crisis Group, "Update Briefing: Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising," *Asia Briefing* 38 (25 May

NATO was quick off the mark, beginning its engagement with the Central Asian states immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In December 1992, all five Central Asian countries participated in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (which was replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership in 1997). Currently, all of the Central Asian countries participate in bilateral military cooperation with NATO through the PfP programme. Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan joined the PfP at its formation in 1994; Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan joined soon after in 1995, and Tajikistan entered in 2002.<sup>51</sup>

The PfP is designed to help each country take the shards of the Soviet military that they inherited at the time of independence and turn them into forces that are able to meet their potential defensive needs. In recent years, NATO has also worked with these states to improve their capacity in the area of disaster relief, and has broadened its engagement with the scientific and technical communities engaged in the defence sector. There have also been outreach activities that are designed to foster a commitment to democratic values in the militaries of these countries and in their societies more generally.

Through a US initiative, NATO sponsored the creation of 'CentrazBat' with Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek brigades in 1995, in the hope that these three nations could work in concert and participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations. NATO sponsored exercises that were held for the battalion in the US each year from 1996 through 1998, as well as in 2000 in the region.<sup>52</sup>

The three countries found it difficult to cooperate effectively, leading to NATO's current almost wholly national approach to working with the Central Asian countries. NATO country programmes have worked with military reform, border controls, and reform of the police. The presence of multiple types of internal security forces in these countries (a Soviet-era legacy) has proved a confounding problem for NATO.

In 2002, NATO introduced a new partnership mechanism called the Individual Partnership Plan (IPAP), which was designed to enhance the military capacity of the partner nations. This would either prepare them for eventual membership in NATO (for which a membership action plan, or MAP, would be the next stage), or for cooperation with NATO in NATO military operations.

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2005) [on-line]; available from <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3469&l=1>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>51</sup> For a complete account of these through November 2007, see NATO, "Partners in Central Asia," *NATO Backgrounder*, November 2007 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/ebookshop/backgrounder/partners\\_central\\_asia/partners\\_central\\_asia-e.pdf](http://www.nato.int/ebookshop/backgrounder/partners_central_asia/partners_central_asia-e.pdf); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>52</sup> At various times Latvia, Georgia, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, the UK and Mongolia all also participated in CentrazBat exercises. See Kenley Butler, "US Military Cooperation with the Central Asian States," CNS James Marti Center for Nonproliferation Studies, 17 September 2001 [on-line]; available from <http://cns.miis.edu/archive/wtc01/uscamil.htm>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

## 2. NATO and Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is the only country in Central Asia to have entered this programme, developing its first IPAP plan that took effect in 2006 and ran through 2008. It is now in the middle of its second IPAP,<sup>53</sup> which covers key areas including political, military and security-sector reforms that are being developed in consultation with NATO member states. The country's Ministry of Defence has come under increasing judicial oversight in recent years, and is headed by a civilian minister.

As a result of Kazakhstan's military reforms in recent years, the country's level of international security engagement has increased. Kazakhstan contributes to the fight against terrorism through its participation in the Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism (PAP-T). This includes sharing intelligence and analysis with NATO, enhancing national counter-terrorist capabilities and improving border security. Kazakhstan hosted major counter-terrorism exercises, named 'Steppe Eagle', in 2006, 2007 and 2009.

In 2009, Kazakhstan also hosted the annual Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) exercise in the Almaty region, thus becoming the second Central Asian nation (following Uzbekistan) to do so. The EADRCC was formed in 1998 to coordinate disaster relief efforts among NATO Allies and Partner nations. As the UN remains the world's primary international disaster relief coordinating body, EADRCC works to support and consult UN relief efforts. Since its inception, the Centre has mainly served as an information-sharing and coordinating body, although its annual exercises provide on-the-ground training.<sup>54</sup> Apart from its participation in the exercise, Kazakhstan's contributions to disaster-relief efforts have otherwise been limited.<sup>55</sup>

Kazakhstan seeks to attain interoperability between elements of its armed forces and those of NATO Allies, and to this end has created a Kazbat (Kazakh Battalion) and a Kazbrig to be deployed in NATO-led peace support operations, under UN Security Council mandates. Kazbat was deployed in Iraq

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<sup>53</sup> NATO, "NATO's Relations with Kazakhstan," 24 February 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-kazakhstan/index.html#framework>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>54</sup> For instance, during Kazakhstan's hosting exercise, 500 of the 1000 participants were from Kazakhstan. NATO, "Exercise 'Zhetysu 2009'," September 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_57090.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_57090.htm); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Out of all of the available EADRCC reports online, Kazakhstan is listed as having provided support twice: in response to the 2008 floods in Ukraine, and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. See NATO, *EADRCC Situation Report No. 5 Floods - Ukraine Final Report*, September 2008 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2008/08-ukraine/ops\(eadrcc\)\(2008\)0041\\_final\\_sitrep6.pdf](http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2008/08-ukraine/ops(eadrcc)(2008)0041_final_sitrep6.pdf); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010. See also NATO, *EADRCC Final Situation Report No. 23 Earthquake Pakistan*, 15 February 2006 [on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2005/pakistan/060215-final.pdf>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

in a de-mining mission. The current emphasis is on its air-mobile forces and the navy. NATO nations are working with Kazakhstan to enhance Kazakh naval capacity in the Caspian Sea.

Kazakhstan has also offered strong support for the ISAF mission, and its support has increased since Kazakhstan was named the OSCE's Chairman in Office for 2010. In addition to providing transport links in the new NDN, it offered Afghanistan a \$3 million bilateral assistance package in 2007, which was the first time that Kazakhstan had provided such foreign assistance. Kazakhstan's programmes for the construction of schools, hospitals and highways have since been expanded to include an additional \$5 million to improve the water supply and distribution infrastructure for shipments of grain and other commodities, and in 2009, Kazakhstan offered a five-year \$50 million programme for educating Afghans who will receive training in Kazakhstan.

### **3. NATO and Kyrgyzstan**

NATO has been working to reform Kyrgyzstan's defence sector through the country's annual IPP, which has focused on capacity-building in counter-terrorism cooperation and border security, crisis management, and civil emergency planning, with special emphasis on mountain search and rescue capabilities, and its military command and control structures.<sup>56</sup> Kyrgyzstan also joined the PfP PARP in 2007 to work more closely with the Allies on military interoperability, among other goals. In addition, scientists from Kyrgyzstan have received grant awards in a range of subject areas under NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) programme.

Civil emergency planning also remains a key area of cooperation for Kyrgyzstan. Having thrice utilised NATO's EADRCC services, Kyrgyzstan has requested and received support more times than any other Central Asian nation.<sup>57</sup> However, apart from providing assistance in the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan and sharing information during the H1N1 outbreak, there are no other

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<sup>56</sup> NATO, "NATO's Relations with the Kyrgyz Republic," 15 December 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49607.htm#framework](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49607.htm#framework); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Kyrgyzstan received support with regard to flooding in 2005, heavy snowfall in 2006, and an earthquake in 2008. See NATO, *EADRCC Final Report Floods - Kyrgyz Republic*, 9 August 2005 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2005/kyrgyz\\_rep/050809a.pdf](http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2005/kyrgyz_rep/050809a.pdf); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010. See also NATO, *EADRCC Final Report No. 5: Assistance to Kyrgyz Republic after Heavy Snowfall*, 24 April 2006 [on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2006/kyrgyz/060424-5.pdf>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010. Also NATO, *EADRCC Situation Report No. 1 (Final) Earthquake - Kyrgyzstan*, 16 October 2008 [on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2008/10-kyrgyzstan/081016-sitrep1.pdf>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

recorded measures of support provided by the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to other nations.<sup>58</sup>

Viewed from the outside, it looks like NATO's main interest is in retaining its base at Manas, which was threatened with closure in early 2009, with Kyrgyzstan's legislature going so far as to pass a resolution annulling the basing agreement.<sup>59</sup> The US responded by increasing the amount of money paid as the rent for the facility was increased, and efforts were made to make the total US assistance package offered to Bishkek seem more attractive. The US also renegotiated the basing agreement to downgrade the base to a transit facility. The latter designation means that US service personnel stationed in country enjoy no extraterritorial rights.

While there may have been progress in making Kyrgyzstan's armed forces more responsive to NATO norms in recent years, since the opening of the NATO air base there has been a marked drop in western pressure for enhanced democratisation of the country more generally. While former President Askar Akayev blamed his downfall after the March 2004 parliamentary elections on foreign support for Kyrgyzstan's political opposition, the opposition that brought current President Kurmanbek Bakiyev to power was very critical of these same western governments for continuing their support of Akayev until the very last moments of his presidency. Similarly, western governments were muted in their criticisms of the 2009 election that resulted in Bakiyev's re-election,<sup>60</sup> and of the parliamentary elections 18 months previous to this, despite the very critical judgments of both elections that were issued by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).<sup>61</sup>

#### **4. NATO and Uzbekistan**

The situation with regard to Uzbekistan is more complex. The country was NATO's closest partner in the region between 2001 and 2004. Some limited military and security operations in Afghanistan originated from Uzbek territory even before 11 September 2001, and from 2002 onwards, Uzbekistan played a key role in supporting Allied operations in Afghanistan, including allowing the opening of an airfield at Karshi-Khanabad. Uzbekistan also granted over-flight

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<sup>58</sup> See NATO, *Influenza A(H1N1) EADRCC Report No. 5 (Final)*, 11 May 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2009/04-influenza/ops\\_eadrcc\\_2009\\_0037.pdf](http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2009/04-influenza/ops_eadrcc_2009_0037.pdf); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010. See also NATO, *EADRCC Final Situation Report No. 23 Earthquake Pakistan*.

<sup>59</sup> Jim Nichol, "Kyrgyzstan and the Status of the US Manas Airbase: Context and Implications," Congressional Research Service, 1 July 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40564.pdf>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>60</sup> See ODIHR, *2009 Presidential Election*, 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.osce.org/odhr-elections/37567.html>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>61</sup> See ODIHR, *2007 Pre-term Legislative Elections*, 2007, 2008 [on-line]; available from <http://www.osce.org/odhr-elections/27921.html>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

and transit permission for Allied forces and supplies. However, western engagement with Uzbekistan, including in the security sector, was already becoming more limited even before Andijan, due to growing concern in the EU and US about Uzbekistan's human rights record. After the disturbances in Andijan and the requested withdrawal of US troops from the Karshi-Khanabad base, security cooperation with Uzbekistan declined still further, and sanctions introduced against Uzbekistan effectively ended any significant western engagement in judicial or police reform, as no EU or US funding could be spent on Uzbek government projects. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan did permit Germany the use of its airfield at Termez.

Engagement with Uzbekistan increased from 2008 onwards, despite only marginal increases in the human rights and personal security situations in Uzbekistan. President Islam Karimov attended the NATO Summit in Bucharest that same year, and made a strong plea for an international negotiating effort to resolve the Afghan conflict. The country continues to be a main transit route for humanitarian supplies to Afghanistan, the majority of which are delivered via the Hairaton bridge. Specialists from Uzbekistan have assisted in implementing tangible infrastructure projects in Afghanistan, including the reconstruction of ten bridges connecting the northern part of the country with Kabul,<sup>62</sup> and Uzbekistan is hoping to provide electricity to the northern part of Afghanistan as well.

As with other Uzbek-NATO activities, Uzbekistan had an early start in cooperating with NATO's disaster relief coordination efforts. It was the first Central Asian nation to host an annual EADRCC exercise, holding the training in the Ferghana Valley in 2003.<sup>63</sup> Although Uzbekistan has never requested EADRCC assistance, it has provided support to other countries several times, including once to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>64</sup>

Uzbekistan's participation in the PARP since 2002 aims at attaining interoperability between elements of its armed forces and those of NATO Allies. Under the SPS programme, Uzbekistan has received grant awards for over 50 projects for scientific and environmental collaboration. These include studies into radiological risks in Central Asia, solar water supply and desalination for the

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<sup>62</sup> NATO, "NATO's relations with Uzbekistan," 11 December 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_22839.htm#framework](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_22839.htm#framework); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Conference information can be found at NATO, "Ferghana 2003," 2 August 2006 [on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2003/ferghana/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Uzbekistan offered support to the Pakistani 2005 earthquake relief efforts and to Kyrgyzstan in 2008. It has also provided construction materials, food items, and tents to Tajikistan following floods and mudflows this past spring. See NATO, *EADRCC Situation Report No. 3 Floods and Mudflows - Tajikistan*, 4 June 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2009/05-tajikistan/ops\\_eadrcc\\_2009\\_0048.pdf](http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2009/05-tajikistan/ops_eadrcc_2009_0048.pdf); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

Aral Sea region population, and a modelling project to assess environmental security in Khorezm.

Uzbekistan participates in the Virtual Silk Highway project, which aims to improve Internet access for academic and research communities in the Caucasus and Central Asia through a satellite-based network. These NATO projects have been used to fund much of the modernisation of the Academy of Sciences and its institutions, and the SPS programme is an area that NATO could have made more extensive use of in both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to help to strengthen the non-governmental sector.

In general, Uzbekistan attaches great significance to its participation in NATO activities, given its desire to distance itself from Russia in the security dimension. This would give western governments considerable leeway to use in their relationships with Uzbekistan, if they were ever able to figure out how to successfully employ it.

## **5. NATO and Tajikistan**

Tajikistan joined PfP in 2002,<sup>65</sup> following a trip to that country in November 2001 by the then US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld had visited Tajikistan to try to secure this critical border country's participation in the ISAF efforts. By 2004, an agreement allowing an ISAF supply route to cross Tajik territory was reached. Supply routes aside, Tajikistan also plays an important role in supporting Allied operations in Afghanistan through the hosting of French military aircraft at Dushanbe Airport. Furthermore, Tajikistan has become an important centre for the transit and trade with Afghanistan, following the construction of three bridges across the Panj river, Tajikistan's long border with Afghanistan.

Apart from Afghanistan, key areas of engagement between Tajikistan and NATO include security and peacekeeping cooperation, especially counter-terrorism cooperation and border security, crisis management and civil emergency planning. Tajikistan has requested EADRCC support twice, once in 2009 in response to mudflows and flooding, and most recently in January 2010 due to an earthquake in the Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast.<sup>66</sup> Tajikistan has also twice provided support using the EADRCC mechanism – once to Pakistan and once to Kyrgyzstan.

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<sup>65</sup> For a full discussion of Tajikistan's engagement with NATO, see NATO, "NATO's relations with Tajikistan," 11 December 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50312.htm?selectedLocale=en#framework](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50312.htm?selectedLocale=en#framework); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>66</sup> NATO, *EADRCC Situation Report No. 3 Floods and Mudflows – Tajikistan*. See also NATO, "Euro-Atlantic Disaster Coordination Centre (EADRCC)," 13 January 2010 [on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

NATO and Tajikistan are working to further cooperate in strengthening the country's border security and countering international terrorism and cross-border crime, especially drug trafficking. However, while these latter efforts have led to substantially improved rates of interdiction, they have not been sufficient to do much more than cut a small dent into Afghanistan's growing drug trade through the region, especially since the increase in heroin production within Afghanistan means that drug enforcement officials are searching for an easier-to-conceal product than opium. The drug trade continues to have a corrosive effect on law enforcement officials and on Tajik government officials more generally.

While NATO-sponsored programmes have substantially increased the capacity of Tajikistan's border guards, including through the introduction of computerised passport controls, the country's borders remain effectively open to penetration by outside groups, save at specially designated border points. Similarly, the declining educational standards and the general impoverishment of the Tajik population have created a serious quality problem in the ranks of conscripts and non-commissioned officers.

In keeping with its formal obligations to NATO, Tajikistan has nominally committed to develop sustained and effective democratic control of its armed forces. But as with Kyrgyzstan, NATO's needs have caused skewed policies in other bilateral and multilateral spheres of foreign policy for both the US and for the EU.

## **6. NATO and Turkmenistan**

While Turkmenistan joined the PfP framework in 1994, its engagement with NATO has been limited as a result of the policy of positive neutrality that the country adopted in 1995, and which was recognised by the UN on 12 December 1995 (a date that is still celebrated each year as a national holiday).<sup>67</sup> As a result, Turkmenistan does not offer any armed forces units or infrastructure for use in the context of NATO-led operations.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, Turkmenistan has played a major role in facilitating the transport of humanitarian goods to Afghanistan through its granting of over-flight rights, and by allowing transport through Turkmenistan to north-western Afghanistan. This participation falls outside of the NDN, as Ashgabad has opted not to join. The unstated reason is said to be that Turkmen officials do not want the Russians to have any excuse to try and obtain preferential access to Turkmenistan's borders, and they are

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<sup>67</sup> UN General Assembly, *UN General Assembly A/Res/50/80*, 11 January 1996, Fiftieth Session, Agenda item 81 [on-line]; available from <http://www2.un.int/Countries/Turkmenistan/1161289614.pdf>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

<sup>68</sup> NATO, "NATO's Relations with Turkmenistan," 11 December 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50317.htm#framework](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50317.htm#framework); Internet; accessed 2 March 2010.

concerned that convoys originating in Russia (or even Latvia, but transiting all of Russia to the Kazakh border) would become a source of this. Turkmenistan does participate in some of the NATO science and technology programmes, and is connected to the NATO-supported Virtual Silk Highway. President Gurbanguly Berdymuhamedov also attended the Bucharest NATO summit in 2008 that focused on Afghanistan.

## **Conclusion**

Even though all of the NATO member states have either deliberately or *de facto* advanced the idea of SSR, in which democratic values are advanced and broad human security protections are generally provided, NATO has not been a terribly effective advocate of this approach in Central Asia.

Advancing SSR has not played a central role in NATO activities in the region. While NATO seeks to advance both civilian oversight of the military and the notion of legal accountability in the security sector, it has not yet made this a priority. Moreover, even NATO's main concerns in the region – enhancing the military (largely defensive) capacities of the national armies and security forces in ways that are potentially supportive of, or able to be integrated with, NATO forces – have not been pursued with particular fervour, at least as measured by the amount of money spent on achieving these goals.

NATO has not offered any of these countries a 'magic bullet' to use for the creation of modern militaries, and for this reason, the ability of the NATO nations to urge these states into moving towards democratising their political systems (which has how they interpret many of the features of an integrated security approach) is in fact very limited. It is far from clear that these states would have been willing to make significant strides towards developing rule-of-law-based security systems had NATO aid been more comprehensive, but certainly NATO's efforts in this direction could have emphasised these values more, in an environment of potentially much greater financial engagement by the NATO states.

At best, NATO has offered these states support for partial military reform, and has often been more interested in helping these countries develop long-term road maps and in training selected cadre than they have been in helping them to develop strategies for realising these plans. NATO's approach has been project-specific, and the organisation has sought to learn from earlier mistakes (of which Centrazbat can be considered one), and has moved from a regional approach to one that is almost entirely bilateral and nation-specific. At most, NATO has been willing to offer these countries an enhanced capacity (through training and the sale of weapon systems, usually with some form of deep discount) to begin fundamental security-sector reform, to help them plan, and to achieve solutions in specific sectors or specific aspects of security problem-solving.

And while NATO claims that it is offering integrated SSR, the Alliance has a much more limited institutional focus, which includes customs and the police (in part), but not the judiciary. In addition, NATO generally does not seek to integrate its activities with those of other western actors, such as the EU, or the OSCE's ODIHR, or with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), or any other member country assistance projects.

As a result, after more than 15 years of NATO cooperation, the militaries of the Central Asian states, as well as other forms of security organisations, are all partially reformed (albeit to varying degrees) and partly compatible (again, to varying degrees) with NATO. Even in Kazakhstan, the country in which the goal of serving alongside NATO countries in combat-related circumstances has been of the greatest mutual interest, only one brigade is compatible, and this only recently increased from a battalion.

It is also unclear whether any of these countries would have accepted full western-style reform of their militaries, and certainly Russia would have tried to press them not to accept this. In the case of Kazakhstan, with a 7000 kilometre border with Russia, there were lots of good reasons to be concerned about the possible consequences of angering its powerful northern neighbour. But NATO's sense of timing could have been a critical factor in its success in influencing the development of SSR, so that it proceeded in a more integrated fashion. There have been many periods over the last 18 years in which Russia's influence and ability to deliver military assistance (or serve as a serious security spoiler) was more limited than it is at the present. Moreover, Russian-sponsored military reform (which has generally occurred under the auspices of the CSTO and its predecessors) has also been undertaken in a piecemeal fashion, and has not led to fully-compatible command and control functions between the member-state militaries either.

But the biggest limitation on the effectiveness of NATO in stimulating the development of SSR in Central Asia is that NATO's priority in this region has been enhancing the security of the NATO member states, rather than enhancing the security of the Central Asian states and helping them mirror NATO's values. This latter goal has been of second-order interest to NATO since the beginning of the ISAF activities in Afghanistan.

Today, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan heightens the tension between using Central Asia to help NATO achieve its most pressing goal – the stabilisation of Afghanistan – and helping the Central Asian states to come closer to meeting the norms that NATO exists to try to uphold. This means that an SSR approach to security has become even less of a priority today than it was in the early 1990s.

## 8. The Collective Security Treaty Organisation: New Regional Security Patterns and Prospects for Reforming Regional Peacekeeping

Alexander Nikitin\*

The CSTO is a new kind of emerging multifunctional security structure. Over the last decade, it has been fine-tuned to combine two major functions: on the one hand, countering traditional external military threats (the creation of a military union, and the unification and merger of the military infrastructures of the seven participating states); and on the other, countering new threats and challenges.

As far as its membership is concerned, the specific character of the CSTO lies in the existence of three *de facto* autonomous segments, united by the central and uncontested role that Russia plays in the organisation. Belarus, Armenia and the Central Asian countries face different external threats. This places serious and objective obstacles to the fostering of horizontal ties between them, and limits the possibility of developing more general military and political cooperation within the CSTO framework. Russia has thus emerged as the main integrating force in the CSTO's territory, and the only country that is genuinely being able to ensure the security of its partners in the three above-mentioned territorial segments.

In 2009, the CSTO members agreed to set up the Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF). In contrast to earlier attempts, CORF was established on a common basis, not on a regional one. Every CSTO member state has agreed to contribute military contingents: Russia will contribute a division and a brigade, Kazakhstan will contribute a brigade, and the rest will contribute one battalion each.<sup>69</sup> The total strength of the CORF is planned at about 16,000. The CSTO is also planning to set up a joint air defence system and a joint chemical and biological warfare threat identification system. Military and technical cooperation has been actively promoted, and a system for the joint training of military personnel has been developed.

As far as countering 'new threats' is concerned, the CSTO approved a set of documents regulating joint peacekeeping missions, and significant efforts are being made to promote counterterrorist activities (information exchange,

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<sup>69</sup> In mid-2009, the CORF conducted its first military exercises in Kazakhstan in the presence of the presidents of all CSTO member-states. The exercises not only involved the infantry, but also tanks, aviation, airborne and anti-terrorist special forces. They were conducted according to a scenario of interference by foreign forces, such as Taliban fighters from Afghanistan.

joint exercises, and so forth). One of the key elements of the CSTO's work is the fight against drug trafficking.

The CSTO may become a critical element of the European security architecture, due to a number of current and potential factors. The CSTO is the only multilateral structure in the post-Soviet area that is capable of conducting military operations. In this capacity, it can function independently or as a partner (counterpart) of the EU, the NATO or the OSCE. It may well play an essential role in the effort to stop drugs being trafficked from Afghanistan to Europe. Moreover, supporting US and NATO efforts in Afghanistan could prove to be of paramount importance for raising the CSTO's international political profile. More generally, the organisation's focus on certain 'new threats' (such as drug trafficking and terrorism) could be interpreted as a move away from traditional approaches to providing security.

Russia is interested in promoting the CSTO as an element in the new European security system. At the same time, it is important to identify the factors that work against it and, at the very least, to make efforts to alleviate them. Among these, for instance, is the notion – widespread in the West – that the CSTO is first and foremost a 'Russian tool', and that the organisation interprets strengthening security and fighting terrorism as the perpetuation of existing 'undemocratic regimes'. To that effect, efforts should be made to achieve greater transparency within the CSTO, broader informational support, and interaction with non-governmental organisations.

Above all, it is imperative to ensure that the CSTO's actual military functions are strengthened, which will in turn create greater interest in the CSTO as a partner within NATO and the EU.

### **1. The CSTO as the successor to the Commonwealth of Independent States**

The CSTO is the second attempt to create a regional security system for the post-Soviet space. The first attempt had been made a decade earlier, in the form of the CIS. Initially, the Treaty on Collective Security that was signed on 15 May 1992 provided the foundations for the CIS-centred security system. The staff for coordinating military cooperation between CIS member-states was established on Leningradsky Avenue in Moscow, in the former Warsaw Pact headquarters. The Council of CIS Defence Ministers started to operate in early 1990s as the CIS's security coordination centre. However, by the beginning of next decade, it had become clear that the attempt to create a CIS-based security system had failed. All of the elements that had been established were then transferred to the new CSTO format, with a smaller number of participating states.

Does this mean that CIS is 'dead'? By no means. The CIS continues to be important to Russia for a number of reasons. However, the fully-fledged and

effective participation of this structure in the resolution of problems related to ensuring European security, as well as its involvement in the process of upgrading the pan-European security architecture, has proved to be beset by problems. There are at least two main reasons for this.

First, one can point to the limited viability of the CIS, which has resulted in its vague positioning in the European international political space. Second, Russia's unmistakably dominant role in the Commonwealth prompted some of its members to exercise caution in entrusting the structure with any meaningful authority and powers. Moreover, the CIS's external counterparts refuse to see it as a 'powerful' figure in the international arena, because in their view, this would be tantamount to agreeing to Russian domination in the organisation.

The biggest joint project by CIS countries in the military field has been cooperation to set up the Unified Air Defence System. However, Ukraine favours bilateral cooperation, while its prospective NATO membership adds to the uncertainty of its role in the project. The logic of moving the system to the CSTO, itself a more compact and homogeneous body, thus became more convincing.

Meanwhile, early expectations of the important role to be played by the CIS in the settlement of conflicts in its member states' territories proved to be unwarranted. The only peacekeeping mission ever to have taken place under the auspices of the CIS (which was also approved by the UN Security Council) was dispatched to Abkhazia.

The role of the CIS in the process of upgrading the European security architecture thus has to be defined with caution and realism. Trying to artificially reanimate this structure would doubtless lead to further problems, and would limit its ability to carry out tasks relating to European security.

## **2. The prospects for regional peace operations in Central Asia and Eurasia**

The term 'international peace operations', in a narrow sense, refers to the system of UN operations in conflict regions that are conducted on behalf of the international community, on the basis of the principles of Chapter VI (mediation and safeguarding of an already-established peace) and Chapter VII (peace enforcement) of the UN Charter. The system of collective operations in conflict regions began to take shape in late 1940s, soon after the establishment of the UN. It has been developing for about 60 years, and now encompasses over 60 operations of varying natures. In 2009, 20 UN operations employing 110,000 people were in progress on four continents. As the UN has no armed forces of its own, the operations have always been performed by military contingents that are temporarily dispatched for the purpose by a total of 118 countries.

Along with operations conducted by the UN proper, a practice of conflict intervention (including the use of force) by regional organisations has emerged over time. Such operations have been conducted by the African Union and other African sub-regional organisations, by the Organisation of American States (for example, in Grenada in 1983), and in Eurasia by the EU, NATO and the CIS. One of the trends in the 1990s was the emergence of coalitions of countries that realised an international mandate to intervene on behalf of international organisations, or according to their own collective decisions. Examples of such interventions included the US-led coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Australia-led coalition in the UN operation in East Timor.

In contrast to 'classic' international wars and conflicts, as an ever-growing number of modern conflicts are of a non-interstate nature and occur within states or involve non-state actors, the issue of peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations is becoming ever more tightly entwined with the problem of intervention by the international community (or its members) in the internal affairs of states. Indeed, the issue of the legitimate or illegitimate nature of various types of intervention has become very acute.

### **3. Intervention involving armed force**

The principles and the practice of the use of armed force by international organisations in conflicts have evolved considerably over the last two decades. Serious differences in approach have emerged between Russia and other countries, first and foremost the US, regarding the goals, nature and legitimacy of intervention in conflicts on foreign territories, including conflicts in newly independent states.

Replacing the standard practice of UN-sponsored peace operations under a UN Security Council mandate with equal and joint participation by eastern and western countries, two basic and increasingly divergent models of international conflict intervention have been established.

The first is the continuation of 'classic' UN peacemaking operations under the mandates (political resolutions) of the Security Council or the General Assembly. This approach has seen failure (Rwanda, Somalia) as well as universally recognised success (East Timor, for example).

The second approach involves conflict intervention by regional organisations and coalitions of countries, in the absence of UN authorisation. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by an international coalition is neither the only nor the first instance of such an intervention. The same pattern has been repeated at least ten times over the decade. In certain cases, NATO, the US, Russia and the CIS have all acted in the absence of a UN mandate.

The grounds for intervention in a conflict may be categorised as follows:

- During the Kosovo crisis, the formula of ‘humanitarian intervention’ prevailed (military intervention aimed at averting or stopping a humanitarian disaster or genocide). This rationale was widely cited by western countries in their doctrinal and political statements, and was conceptually finalised in the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ report to the UN;
- After 11 September 2001 and during the military campaign in Afghanistan, a new formula emerged: that of intervention in a conflict on the grounds of conducting a ‘counter-terrorist operation’.<sup>70</sup>
- During the preparation stage for the Iraq invasion and after North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT, a new type of intervention legitimisation emerged: intervention to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). It was proclaimed that this goal could be achieved by means of a preventive strike against the country arousing suspicion.
- On the same grounds, and with the additional motivation of ‘exporting democracy’, the coercive ‘regime change’ formula has been developed. As a result of this, the spectre of options for ‘regime change’ in Iran, North Korea, Sudan and even Pakistan at some point has been raised.

#### **4. Is peacekeeping a ‘battlefield’ for Russia and the West, or an opportunity for cooperation?**

The military interventions in a series of conflicts by the US, NATO and western countries on one side, and Russia’s involvement in certain conflicts (sometimes with CIS authorisation) on the other, have created the impression of two opposing camps. Each side has dismissed the other’s actions as having nothing to do with ‘true’ peacekeeping.

The West refused to recognise the legitimacy of Russia’s peacekeeping efforts under a CIS mandate in Tajikistan and Abkhazia (until 2008), as well as under bilateral agreements with Moldova (Transnistria) and Georgia (in South Ossetia until 2008). After the events of August 2008, the West argued that the notion of Russian peacekeeping operations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia made little sense.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, Russia has not recognised the legitimacy of western- and (in particular) NATO-led action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, and the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Military intervention in conflicts has become a tacit ‘norm’ of international relations, both in cases where the case for intervention is legally

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<sup>70</sup> A reassessment of the formula can be found in International Crisis Group, “Afghanistan: New U.S. Administration, New Directions,” *Asia Briefing* 89 (13 March 2009).

<sup>71</sup> Amnesty International, *Human Rights in the Modern World: Amnesty International Report 2009* [on-line]; available from <http://thereport.amnesty.org>; Internet; accessed on 15 February 2010.

sound, and where intervention contravenes traditional international law. Many of the operations that have been conducted over the last 15 years in conflict regions have been questionable and controversial as far as international law is concerned, including those conducted by the West and by Russia.<sup>72</sup>

The instances of military intervention in conflicts have multiplied, providing new material for a thorough examination of the political consequences. The multilateral structures that aspire to having a tangible international presence, including NATO, the EU and the CSTO, are testing the instruments of intervention at their disposal, or are creating new instruments for the future. NATO has set up the NATO Response Force (NRF), the EU has its own Rapid Reaction Force, and the CIS/CSTO has a Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF) for Central Asia and has decided to create the CORF. Thus Russia, NATO, the EU, the US and the West as a whole are searching for new forms of and acceptable norms for intervention.

Against this background, it is important that the interactions between the CSTO and the West with respect to international peacekeeping are characterised by cooperation rather than competition or, worse still, confrontation. Embarking on a cooperative path should involve resolving the following issues:

- The CSTO and the West must take steps to overcome their mutual refusal to recognise the legitimacy of each other's peacemaking efforts. Each actor must be able to view the controversial situations through the eyes of the 'other side', and look for joint or mutually acceptable formulae for forceful conflict settlement;
- Both the CSTO and the West should turn their attention to the same conflicts and regions. In such cases, cooperation could be particularly useful, in the sense of coordinating peace operations and parallel use of some of their elements;
- The eventual creation of a common peace operations mechanism could serve to protect Eurasian security (and possibly also that of the Eurasian heartland) and as a beacon for cooperation.

This would certainly seem to be a realistic course of action. Despite the serious impasse in Russia-NATO relations, interaction between the two in peacekeeping operations in conflict regions is likely in the medium term. It is worth recalling that the crises in the former Yugoslavia allowed Russia and NATO to gain some joint peacekeeping experience in the field.

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<sup>72</sup> See US Congress Commission on Wartime Contracting, *At What Cost? Contingency Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Interim Report of the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan* (June 2009) [on-line]; available from <http://www.wartimecontracting.gov/>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

## **5. Reforming the peacekeeping mechanism to promote the new security architecture: potential models**

The formation of a joint conflict settlement mechanism is an important goal for reforming the relations between Eurasian (the CSTO) and western (NATO, the EU) regional organisations. Virtually any new international security system will have to tackle not one, but a multiplicity of tasks:

- Creating a monitoring system for early conflict warning and preventive action (aimed at averting armed conflicts);
- Establishing a system for effective international mediation;
- Creating a mechanism for political decision-making on conflict intervention (necessary for legitimising intervention);
- Facilitating the selection of the right level and means of international intervention;
- Providing for the creation and maintenance of an arsenal of intervention tools (from humanitarian aid to military force);
- Making advance provisions for post-conflict settlement, stabilisation, humanitarian aid, and the restoration of peace in conflict regions;
- Ensuring that the problem of how to eradicate the roots of conflict (social, economic, political, and so forth) is addressed, so as to avoid any recurrence.

It is doubtful that all of these tasks could be undertaken within the framework of a single organisation. It seems more likely that an international crisis response and conflict settlement force would have multiple components. Such a force would consist of existing international organisations and elements, with the various tasks distributed and coordinated among them.

In such a situation, featuring several regional structures, each with different participating countries and a history of rivalry and competition over the same geo-political space, it would clearly be logical for the UN to provide an overarching structure that would be able to encompass any peacekeeping mechanism.

With this in mind, we can put forward three models for reforming the conflict settlement and crisis response mechanisms in the European security architecture:

*The joint conflict-monitoring model*, with independent follow-up action to be undertaken by various international actors.

As the security structures in the Euro-Atlantic space are rather heterogeneous, Russia and the CSTO could propose that a joint monitoring mechanism be created within the framework of this model. This would apply in regional conflict zones, on the basis of a common UN mandate.

According to this model, observers dispatched by common agreement and on the basis of a common, coordinated UN mandate could be present in regional conflict zones on behalf of the main Euro-Atlantic security-related

organisations (the UN, the OSCE, the EU, NATO, the CSTO, and possibly the SCO and the Council of Europe). This would improve the organisation and coordination of conflict settlement efforts. Further action with regard to the conflict in question would be undertaken independently by each international organisation, on the basis of its own special procedures, mandates and mechanisms.

*The CSTO-US-EU model.* This model would take account of the existing objective limits to the power of international organisations, and would focus instead on the traditional role of states as the main protagonists in the international political space.

The CSTO states would propose to the US and the EU that they undertake a joint programme of action that is based on a clear understanding and delimitation (geographically and functionally) of each sphere of interest and area of responsibility, both individually and collectively. At the same time, joint – rather than competitive – action would be undertaken by CSTO states, the EU and the US to settle conflicts. In order to achieve this, it would be necessary for both the East and the West to overcome serious political and psychological barriers and stereotypes.

The chances of pursuing this option would be seriously undermined by the lack of interest and possible passive resistance on the part of some actors in former Soviet territories, including some states participating in the CIS and the CSTO. Some post-Soviet states may even benefit from a certain degree of tension between the three centres of power, which provides them with a wider playing field (multi-vector policy) and allows them to exploit disagreements between Russia, the US and the EU.<sup>73</sup>

*The OSCE-2 model.* This model would presume the overhauling of the role and functions of existing organisations and security mechanisms. The OSCE-2 format could comprise a number of principles and formulae, such as:

- Regular (possibly even annual) OSCE-scale summits and emergency country summits in the region, in the event of a sharp escalation in a regional conflict;
- The creation of a mechanism of pan-European political consultations on the issue of security;
- The development of the Conflict Prevention Centre's monitoring role;
- The creation of an autonomous or integrated OSCE coordinating structure on the issue of regional conflict settlement and crisis response;
- Agreement on which tool to select from the existing set of emergency response instruments at the disposal of the participating organisations

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<sup>73</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, "Finding Common Ground With Russia," *The Washington Post*, 8 July 2008.

(the EU, NATO and the CSTO), depending on the location, type of conflict, and so forth.

In the event of the formation of a new security and conflict settlement structure along the lines of a transformation of the first OSCE 'basket', it would also be important to:

- Ensure the continuity of the practices and the legal basis of the UN and OSCE systems;
- Employ all of the existing OSCE elements dealing with security issues (conflict prevention, counterterrorism, anti-drugs activities, and so forth), having provided for their enlargement and a more tangible mandate, which could be formally issued by an OSCE summit;
- Look into the possibility of creating additional mechanisms, such as:
  - the Centre for the Monitoring of the Politico-Military Situation (in conjunction with the consultations and conciliation mechanism involving stakeholders, as a mechanism for a new adaptation or radical upgrade of the CFE);
  - the Coordination Service for Regional Peacekeeping Operations, including those authorised by OSCE-2 (this would seek agreement on the part of participating states on the joint or separate use of crisis response instruments by regional organisations, primarily the EU, NATO and the CSTO);
  - the International Regional Organisations Coordinating Committee (which would involve the EU, the Council of Europe, NATO, the CIS, the CSTO, the SCO, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and so forth), which would exchange information and agree common positions on peacemaking and conflict settlement issues.

Regardless of which path is chosen for the restructuring of peacekeeping capabilities in Eurasia, it is clear that the CSTO, with Russia playing a significant role within it, should and would play an important part in the restructuring process. Peacekeeping and conflict prevention in Central Asia, the Caucasus and other parts of the post-Soviet space remain the kinds of tasks that can only be undertaken on the basis of cooperation between Eurasian and western regional organisations.



## 9. The European Union Strategy for Central Asia and Security Sector Reform<sup>74</sup>

*Jos Boonstra\**

### **Introduction**

Central Asia faces a broad range of security challenges. Due to its position at the crossroads between Russia, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the Caspian Sea, the region has to deal with various transnational challenges, including drug trafficking, human trafficking, organised crime and terrorism. Central Asia also faces specific regional threats, such as a scarcity of water resources for power generation and irrigation that is currently causing tension. At the national level, the five Central Asian republics are also threatened by internal instability, due to bad governance and the harsh impact of the recent international economic crisis.

Although the Central Asian republics have established themselves as independent states with reasonably strong security forces and multi-vector foreign policies, when it comes to security, they are largely dependent on cooperation with influential external actors. There are no 'home-grown' security cooperation mechanisms in Central Asia. NATO has included the Central Asian republics in its PfP programme; Russia leads the CSTO, whose members include several former Soviet republics; and China and Russia cooperate with Central Asian republics through the SCO. Russia is undoubtedly the main security actor in the region. It became clear in August 2008 that Russia is willing and able to act with military means in its 'near abroad', for better or for worse. This message was strengthened in August 2009, when President Medvedev amended Russia's defence law to allow for the possibility of deploying Russian forces abroad to defend Russian interests. It is highly unlikely that China, the EU and the US would intervene in the event of a conflict in Central Asia, even though the EU and the US have military bases in the area (Germany at Termez in Uzbekistan, France at Dushanbe Airport in Tajikistan and the US at Manas in Tajikistan, all of which provide support to the war in Afghanistan).

The EU does regard itself as a security actor, however, and takes a keen interest in working with Central Asian states on the basis of joint security interests. In June 2007, when the EU presented its 'European Union and

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<sup>74</sup> A similar version of this text appeared in November 2009 as Jos Boonstra, "The EU Strategy for Central Asia says 'Security'. Does this Include Security Sector Reform?" *EU-Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM) Policy Brief* no. 10 [on-line]; available from [www.eucentralasia.eu](http://www.eucentralasia.eu) or [www.fride.org/publication/682/the-eu-central-asia-and-security-sector-reform](http://www.fride.org/publication/682/the-eu-central-asia-and-security-sector-reform); Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

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Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership' document,<sup>75</sup> Brussels argued that security and stability were its main strategic interests in the region. Many of the EU's activities, from political dialogue to assistance programmes, fall under the Strategy's security objective. One security aspect that is key to both national security and international and regional security cooperation is the concept of SSR, which aims to support locally-driven reform of all agencies and oversight mechanisms related to national security. Although EU policy documents concerning Central Asia do not refer to SSR, this chapter will argue that some EU activities are directly related to the holistic concept of SSR. Others, in turn, contribute indirectly to reform of the security sector.

This chapter assesses the nature of the EU's SSR engagement in Central Asia, and the background to potential EU activities. We will focus on direct engagement with security issues, such as the EU BOMCA Programme for Central Asia. We will also consider indirect activities that can benefit security and stability in Central Asia, such as education programmes. Having examined EU security interests in Central Asia, in the second section, we focus on national and regional threats to the security of the Central Asian republics and EU engagement in the region. The chapter concludes with a number of recommendations for EU institutions and member states that could help to strengthen EU-Central Asia security cooperation, including aspects of SSR.

### **1. The EU and Security in Central Asia**

The 2007 EU-Central Asia Strategy states that the EU has an interest in promoting security, stability, human rights and the rule of law in Central Asia. This is due to a number of factors, including: trans-regional challenges; EU enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which have brought Europe and Central Asia closer together; and the region's substantial energy resources, which can contribute to building up the EU's energy security.<sup>76</sup> Of the seven specific priorities that are outlined, number six – 'combating common threats and challenges' – is most directly related to security. In this area, the EU offers to work further with Central Asia on border management and customs, in order to counter crime and to tackle the challenges presented by migration through and from the region. The Strategy calls for a series of high-level visits by Central Asian leaders to Europe, and *visa versa*. Consequently, in September 2008, the French EU Presidency organised a Ministry of Foreign Affairs-level security forum that focused on Afghanistan, terrorist threats and trafficking. One year later, the Swedish Presidency followed up on this event with a Ministerial Conference on regional

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<sup>75</sup> Council of the European Union, *The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership* (June 2007) [on-line]; available from [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/librairie/PDF/EU\\_CtrlAsia\\_EN-RU.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf); Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

security issues, water, energy and the impact of the international economic crisis. Javier Solana's Special Representative, Pierre Morel, continues to travel through the region with a portfolio that focuses on energy and security issues. Moreover, the EU holds regular Human Rights Dialogues with all of the Central Asian republics.

The European Commission has drafted a Regional Assistance Strategy (2007–2013)<sup>77</sup> and a more detailed Indicative Programme (2007–2011)<sup>78</sup> to guide technical assistance to the region. One-third of the 750 million Euros of assistance available until 2013 has been earmarked for regional cooperation programmes, while two-thirds is intended for bilateral programmes. The funding is thinly spread over the wide range of priorities outlined in the EU's political strategy, many of which touch on security. Only the BOMCA border management programme and the EU CADAP Programme are directly related to security, while in the EU's view, several bilateral programmes that focus on the judiciary, parliament and ministries should also have a positive impact on security and stability. In that sense, the regional EU Rule of Law Initiative that is coordinated by Germany and France, which focuses on reforming the rule of law, might also have a positive effect on Central Asian regional cooperation and security. Still, only a little of the technical assistance provided through the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) – the two main EU assistance instruments that apply to Central Asia – can be regarded as SSR assistance. Some initiatives, however, such as a project on human rights awareness in the Kyrgyz police force or assistance for judicial reform in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, are clearly SSR-related,<sup>79</sup> even though Brussels presents them otherwise. Meanwhile, the EU Instrument for Stability (IfS), which would have been a suitable instrument for providing SSR assistance until now, is hardly used in Central Asia.

Although the EU does not have an SSR strategy for Central Asia, overall, the EU has become one of the foremost international donors and promoters of SSR in the region. This position has been achieved through Commission funding and long-term projects, and through EU Council-driven European Security and Defence (ESDP) missions in Afghanistan, Africa, the

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<sup>77</sup> The European Commission, *European Community Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007-2013* [on-line]; available from [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/central\\_asia/rsp/07\\_13\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/rsp/07_13_en.pdf); Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>78</sup> The European Commission, *Central Asia Indicative Programme (2007-2010)* [on-line]; available from [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/central\\_asia/rsp/nip\\_07\\_10\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/rsp/nip_07_10_en.pdf); Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>79</sup> Presentation by Joaquin Tasso Vilallonga, SSR Focal Point, Crisis Response and Peace Building Unit, RELEX, European Commission, during the conference on *SSR in Central Asia: Identifying National Approaches, International Involvement and Prospects for Cooperation*, 24-25 September 2009, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Balkans, the South Caucasus and the Middle East. EU SSR focuses mainly on police forces, border guards and the judiciary, while it generally excludes reform of the military. The division of labour and coordination between the Commission and Council is weak and badly defined, however, which can occasionally lead to competition in programme implementation. This lack of clarity partly stems from the fact that both EU entities have their own concept of SSR.<sup>80</sup> The EU sees SSR as a tool that can help achieve the EU's broad external and security policy objectives, such as poverty reduction and strengthening human rights, democracy, good governance and the rule of law. Moreover, the Commission is focusing its attention on SSR in fragile states, as outlined in the 2003 EU Security Strategy.<sup>81</sup>

Whereas the Commission is involved in SSR or SSR-related assistance in Central Asia and is expanding its presence on the ground,<sup>82</sup> the European Council only has its Special Representative, Pierre Morel, and has few staff in the region. With no ESDP missions active in a region that is beset by a range of security challenges, it would be advisable for the Special Representative to discuss potential EU-Central Asia SSR cooperation in his regular meetings with Central Asian political elites. Security structures in Central Asia are characterised by a lack of training and resources (in the armed forces in particular), corruption (in police forces, for example) and an absence of mechanisms for scrutinising presidential power (the internal security forces and intelligence services that are controlled by the Presidents and their families are obvious examples). If the EU is serious about promoting stability and security in the region, and sees political dialogue as the basis of engagement, the Special Representative should at least 'test the water' in all five countries. It is unlikely that he would encounter much interest in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, but he might find willingness to cooperate on the part of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, countries that tend to take a more open and active approach towards working with the EU.

A final aspect of EU engagement in SSR in Central Asia is related to the OSCE and NATO, due to their large overlap in membership and activities in Central Asia. Cooperation between the EU and NATO in Central Asia is limited, and cooperation on SSR in the region is non-existent. All five Central Asian countries are members of NATO's PfP, but only Kazakhstan is actively engaged

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<sup>80</sup> Maria Derks and Sylvie More, "The European Union and Internal Challenges for Effectively Supporting Security Sector Reform," *Clingendael Conflict Research Unit*, June 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/archive/?volume=2009>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>81</sup> The European Commission, *A Secure Europe in a Better World*. European Security Strategy, Brussels, 12 December 2003 [on-line]; available from <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>82</sup> For example, through the Commission delegation in Astana, and the soon-to-be established delegations in Bishkek and Dushanbe; the cooperation office in Almaty; and the Europe Houses in Ashgabat and Tashkent.

in SSR activities through the IPAP that it agreed with NATO, which incorporates aspects of security-related reform of the armed forces and oversight mechanisms. Kazakhstan also participates in the Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building (PAP-DIB) initiative, by which NATO liaises with partners from Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Kazakhstan on good governance in the defence sector. NATO holds consultations with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on defence and SSR, but is not directly involved in substantial cooperation or assistance programming. NATO's interests in Central Asia are largely the same as those of the EU – partnership, stability and security – but its activities are mostly limited to military cooperation and, most importantly, political dialogue and diplomatic exchanges with a view to increasing the ISAF mission's access to Afghanistan.

With a view to SSR, the OSCE is an interesting partner for the EU in Central Asia. The OSCE has a presence in all five countries and has broad experience in supporting SSR, both in a political-military and in a human sense. Over 70% of the OSCE budget is funded by EU member states although the complete yearly budget is modest and is mostly consumed by the OSCE's field missions. The OSCE centres in Central Asia have the smallest budgets especially compared to Balkan missions. One way for the EU to increase its support for SSR in Central Asia would be to provide so-called 'extra-budgetary support' to projects that could be implemented by the OSCE. This would have the advantage of giving Central Asian countries a stake in defining and implementing SSR activities, as they are themselves members of the OSCE. Although it is likely that some Central Asian countries, particularly Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, would be unwilling for the OSCE to work on democratisation of the security sector, the other three states would be more open to this. The OSCE is also working on less sensitive SSR-related issues in Central Asia, such as police- and border guard training. The EU and OSCE should cooperate and coordinate carefully with one another on such issues, since the EU's SSR support also tends to focus on these areas. In that sense, close cooperation is expected between the EU's BOMCA programme and the OSCE's newly-opened Border Management Staff Office in Dushanbe. The EU and the OSCE might also cooperate in the area of education, through the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and several educational initiatives that the EU is undertaking in the region. Lastly, the Kazakh 2010 OSCE Chairmanship presents a further opportunity for the EU and OSCE to increase their engagement with Central Asia, including cooperation on reforming the security sector.

## **2. Security threats and EU Activities**

Central Asia faces transnational, regional and national security threats. The main transnational threat derives from Afghanistan in the form of drug trafficking, and the risk of the conflict spilling over into Central Asia as Taliban factions try

to establish a foothold in the region. The EU is increasingly active in its support of SSR in Afghanistan. The main programmes are EUPOL and the Commission's involvement in justice reform. Individual member states – especially those that contribute to the ISAF mission – still largely provide the EU's SSR support, and the EU's programmes continue to need additional funding and qualified personnel. The key issue that links EU SSR support to Afghanistan and Central Asia is that of border control, for instance through the Border Management Badakhshan, Afghanistan project (BOMBAF). This project, which has been largely funded by the EU and implemented by the UNDP, focuses on building three border-crossing points on the Tajik-Afghan border, while also training Afghan border guards and providing equipment. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan share a border with Afghanistan that is over 2000 km long. In Central Asia, the Commission has supported the BOMCA programme<sup>83</sup> and CADAP since 2003. These substantial Commission-funded and UNDP-implemented programmes have been heralded as EU flagship projects in the region. BOMCA has focused on training Central Asian border guards, providing technical equipment and facilitating regional cooperation on border management. The main objective is to promote integrated border management that enables all of the agencies involved (border guards, customs services, police forces, and so forth) to work closely together, and enhances contact between these agencies within individual Central Asian countries. Regardless of whether these approaches are successful, the challenge posed by improving border control in Central Asia and Afghanistan will remain enormous. It would be advisable for the EU to increase its support to BOMCA through increased funding, bringing in more partners and, in a broader sense, applying the lessons learned from the BOMCA experience to other parts of the security sector, such as the police or disaster relief.

The most substantial regional threat facing Central Asia derives from tensions over water management. Energy-rich Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan lack sufficient water resources for crop irrigation, while the mountainous and water-rich countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan lack sufficient fossil fuel resources. Over the past few years, the relationship between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan has become particularly strained. The former plans to construct an enormous dam in the Vakhsh River, which would enable the Tajiks to generate much-needed electricity whilst simultaneously allowing them to control water flows to Uzbekistan and other countries in the region. Uzbekistan is fiercely resisting Tajikistan's water projects, fearing that they would prevent Uzbekistan from having enough water to irrigate its

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<sup>83</sup> For more information about BOMCA, see George Gavrillis, "Beyond the Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA)," *EUCAM Policy Brief*, no. 11 (December 2009) [on-line]; available from <http://www.eucentralasia.eu> or <http://www.fride.org/publication/690/beyond-the-border-management-programme-for-central-asia-bomca>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

extensive cotton fields. Uzbekistan has already restricted the flow of gas to Tajikistan on a number of occasions. Regional cooperation between the Central Asian countries has not yielded substantial results, and international organisations and key powers such as Russia, the EU and the US have been reluctant to get involved in regional disputes over water resources. With climate change having a further negative effect on the available water resources, the risk of regional conflict is rising, especially between Uzbekistan and its water-rich but devastatingly poor Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The EU is involved in water management issues through its regional Initiative on Environment and Water, which focuses mostly on donor coordination. Within this initiative some attention is devoted to governance in the water sector although Uzbekistan mostly abstains from participation. Although not directly related to SSR, EU good governance engagement on topics such as these, which have an indirect bearing on security, is a crucial aspect of implementing its security-related strategy for the region.

Lastly, the countries in the region have to deal with varying degrees of internal instability. At first sight, all five regimes seem to have a strong grip on power. Strong presidential regimes and authoritarianism are no guarantees for staying in power, however. This became clear in Kyrgyzstan in 2005, when President Akayev was ousted by frustrated elites in favour of the current President, Bakiyev. It is also unclear whether the handover of power following the sudden death of a leader will always run as smoothly as it did recently in Turkmenistan, following Niazov's death in December 2006. Disloyal political and business elites, poor and disillusioned populations (who may become more impoverished as a result of the recent economic crisis) and radical Islamic groups all threaten the *status quo* in the Central Asian republics. These factors provide reason enough for Central Asian leaders to have strong intelligence services that can detect potential threats, or internal security forces that can quell unrest. An extreme example of the deployment of such services is the situation that arose in the Uzbek city of Andijan in 2005, when hundreds of protesters were massacred. In this sense, if Central Asian leaders interpret SSR as the democratic reform of security structures, they are likely to consider it a threat to their regimes.

Although all five Central Asian states have strong presidential regimes, there are substantial differences between their leaderships, the conditions in which they work, levels of freedom, and possibilities for reform. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan there might be interest in EU-supported small-scale SSR projects that touch on governance and even aspects of democratisation. Large reform projects would be unlikely, but smaller civil society-driven projects should be encouraged and supported through the EIDHR, the Non State Actors and Local Authorities in Development programme, and above all, through EU national government funding. In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the prospects are bleak for EU involvement in SSR and governance support. Nonetheless, the

EU should make an effort to liaise closely with NATO, which maintains reasonably positive diplomatic and military contact with these two countries. Cooperating with the OSCE's Project Coordinator in Tashkent and the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat might also yield some successes, for instance in the form of jointly-organised, small-scale public discussion sessions.

Whereas SSR would enhance stability and good governance in Central Asia, the countries in the region seem to be mostly unaware of the concept. Moreover, should they grasp the full extent of the implications of reforming security structures along EU, NATO and OSCE lines, they are likely to object to the governance and democracy aspects of SSR. The EU, meanwhile, is unlikely to push SSR in the region. Other objectives are more important – energy, for instance, or issues that are indirectly related to SSR, such as general rule of law programming or conducting regular human rights dialogues – and it is thought that SSR might undermine the EU's increasingly friendly relations with Central Asian regimes. The EU also understands that at this point, Central Asia might not present the most fertile soil for successfully implementing SSR.

Most Central Asian governments see radical Islam as the primary threat to their internal security. Until now, the EU has been wary of exchanging experiences with Central Asian countries on how to work with moderate Islamic groups on social issues, including security. In the EU-Central Asia Strategy, the final priority is 'Building bridges: inter-cultural dialogue'.<sup>84</sup> In their June 2008 and summer 2009 reports, the Council and the Commission failed to even address this point.<sup>85</sup> Although not directly related to SSR, both moderate and radical Islam is a social force to be reckoned with; the former as a partner for dialogue, the latter (if violent) as a potential issue for the security services. The EU should outline what it plans to do with regard to this strategic priority, with a view to helping to build stability and enhance mutual security.

### **3. Recommendations for EU Institutions and Member States**

Strong EU involvement in Central Asia, including a united vision in support of SSR, is an unlikely prospect in the foreseeable future. The political landscape in Central Asia is largely unreceptive to key aspects of SSR, such as democratic control of the armed forces and other state security institutions via powerful ministries, parliaments and civil society. Nonetheless the EU is active in certain

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<sup>84</sup> Council of the European Union, *The EU and Central Asia*, 26.

<sup>85</sup> Council of the European Union and the European Commission, Joint Progress Report by the Council and the European Commission to the European Council on the Implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy, 2008 [on-line]; available from <http://delkaz.ec.europa.eu/joomla/images/Strategy/joint%20progress%20report%20on%20eu%20ca%20strategy.pdf>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010; and the European Commission, EU Strategy Implementation, 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/central\\_asia/docs/factsheet\\_strategy\\_implementation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/docs/factsheet_strategy_implementation_en.pdf); Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

areas of SSR, and its modest role will probably grow in the future. With a view to this, EU institutions and member states might consider the following recommendations:

- Although security is the underlying theme of the EU's Strategy, it would be worth looking into ways of feeding aspects of SSR into the political dialogue between the EU and the Central Asian republics. First, in their meetings with Central Asian leaders, the Special Representative Pierre Morel and his team of advisors might investigate whether there are aspects of SSR in which the republics might take an interest. For instance, EU Council advisors could provide assistance on issues such as the legal aspects of reforming security structures.
- The EU is not implementing significant SSR programmes in Central Asian states. BOMCA is largely being coordinated by the UNDP. It would be feasible for the EU to increase its political and financial support, however, through the OSCE. Supporting OSCE field offices with extra-budgetary funds for specific projects would be an ideal way for the EU to get involved in SSR, through a joint effort involving OSCE member states and by using the OSCE's 'eyes and ears' on the ground.
- The EU will need to take a broad approach to security concerns that go beyond narrowly defined regions such as Central Asia, and conflict areas such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is imperative that Brussels and its EU programmes on the ground liaise closely with each other and that they integrate their activities in Central Asia and Afghanistan. This principally applies to the BOMCA and CADAP programmes, which need to further expand 'cross-border' international border management assistance programmes in Afghanistan and the Central Asian states.
- BOMCA has received a number of positive assessments. The fact that all five Central Asian countries participate in this regional endeavour is already an important achievement. It would be worth drawing on this experience to try to transfer the BOMCA model to other parts of the Central Asian security sector. The EU might consider applying the integrated (border management) approach to less politically sensitive sectors, such as emergency response, in which security services and ministries need to work together closely during emergencies.
- In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, there might be interest in EU-supported SSR projects. The EU and its member states might increasingly look into how they might support SSR projects that are implemented by local and international civil society organisations, in cooperation with the governments of the three countries.
- In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, there are few prospects for substantial EU involvement in SSR that goes beyond BOMCA's current activities. Nonetheless, the EU should make an effort to closely liaise

with NATO and the OSCE, and should take practical steps in the form of small-scale awareness-raising exercises.

- With regard to Islam and society, the EU should develop its EU Strategy priority number seven, 'Building bridges: inter-cultural dialogue', clarifying how it plans to help to build stability and enhance security in Central Asia.

## **Conclusion**

In contrast to its recent role in the Western Balkans, or its current activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Georgia, the EU will not be an influential player with regard to security issues or SSR in Central Asia. There is room for the EU to play a more concerted and substantial role in the region, however. In the security domain, it will be crucial for the EU to draw links between its efforts and partners in Afghanistan, and those in Central Asia. In this sense, the political dialogue with Central Asian republics that intensified as a result of the publication of the 2007 EU Strategy for the region should now bear fruit. Increased contact and engagement could also have a positive impact on managing water-related tensions in the region, especially those between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

As far as SSR is concerned, the EU does not have much room to fund or work on genuine SSR projects with a strong good governance focus. Beyond BOMCA, the EU has little to show in terms of SSR support, and has left most aspects of SSR to the OSCE and EU member states' initiatives. For the time being, the Central Asian republics remain largely unreceptive to SSR programming. The EU is unlikely to push the issue in future, because Brussels prefers to focus on other priorities, which range from hard energy interests to the difficult process of bringing Central Asian states to the table in regular human rights dialogues. Nonetheless, the EU and its member states should make the most of the opportunities that are available. This is especially important in light of the fact that SSR provides the perfect link between the EU's prioritisation of human rights, democracy, good governance and rule of law in the region, and the security concerns that underpin EU engagement with Central Asia.

## 10. Central Asian Regional Security Cooperation: Constraints and Prospects

*Nargis Kassenova\**

The SSR approach promotes local solutions to local problems. Regional cooperation between states is needed to tackle a whole range of security problems, from drug trafficking and organised crime to water management. While Central Asian governments have so far shown readiness to accept assistance and coordination support from external actors, locally-generated security cooperation efforts remain weak and largely rhetorical. This chapter offers a brief overview of these attempts, identifies three levels of constraint on cooperation (external, intra-regional, and domestic), discusses the prospects for cooperation, and concludes with some recommendations for Kazakhstan.

### 1. Regional security cooperation: weak attempts and poor results

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the five Central Asian republics inherited fragments of the Soviet armed forces and equipment stationed on their territories. The subsequent 'nationalisation' process was coordinated with Moscow. The Central Asian states signed bilateral military cooperation agreements and received Russian security guarantees and assistance with border control.

Multilateral security cooperation arrangements were also carried out under Russian leadership. In May 1992 in Tashkent, four Central Asian newly-independent states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), together with Armenia and Russia, signed the CST. This committed signatories to refrain from using force against one another, to render the necessary assistance (including military assistance) in a case of aggression against one of the parties, and to consult one another on key issues.<sup>86</sup> Entering into a security treaty with Moscow was a logical step for the newly independent Central Asian states: weak and vulnerable, they needed security guarantees and assistance, and Russia was the only possible provider.

In 1992, Central Asian leaders were operating in a difficult and confusing environment. On the one hand, they were concerned that Russia would lose interest in the region and withdraw, leaving them to their own

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<sup>86</sup> CSTO, *Treaty on Collective Security* [on-line]; available from [http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index\\_azbengl.htm](http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index_azbengl.htm); Internet; accessed 12 February 2009.

devices. On the other, they were fearful of Russia's tradition of dominating its neighbours and using heavy-handed methods to promote its interests. In this latter sense, Central Asian political elites regarded Moscow's policies in the Caucasus as particularly instructive. The Central Asian states were thus reliant on Russia for protection and help, while at the same time they had an incentive to develop greater independence from Moscow.

This situation resulted in a series of attempts to create a platform for regional (Central Asian) security cooperation. The most consistent efforts were made within the framework of the Central Asian Union (CAU), an organisation set up by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 1994 to develop a 'common economic area' (inspired by the EU). In 1995, these countries decided to form a joint Council of Defence Ministers to consider regional security issues and the coordination of military exercises, air defence and defence supplies. The Council's activities failed to yield significant results, with the exception of the launch in 1996 of the joint Centrazbat under the aegis of the UN. Each country contributed a company (200 troops) that would be based on national territory and would participate in annual military exercises.

While the initiative was regional, it was inspired and sponsored NATO countries, particularly the US.<sup>87</sup> Centrazbat was modelled on the Baltbat (Baltic Battalion) that was created by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1994 to promote regional defence cooperation and interoperability with NATO forces in the framework of the PfP programme. The Central Asian states also joined PfP in 1994, and NATO assisted with all of Centrazbat's military exercises.

The first set of exercises took place in 1997 in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Along with Central Asian troops, 500 US soldiers and units from Latvia, Georgia, Russia and Turkey underwent training in checkpoint control, vehicle inspections, riot control, minefield clearance and humanitarian operations. The following year (Centrazbat-98), the exercises were held in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, with the participation of troops from the US, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Turkey.

The Centrazbat-2000 exercise in Kazakhstan was joined by participants from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mongolia, Russia, Turkey, the UK and the US. This turned out to be the last Centrazbat training exercise. Regional military cooperation, along with economic and political integration, failed to live up to the expectations of the Central Asian governments. In 2001, the Council of Defence Ministers was dissolved and the CAU became the Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU). In 2005, the CAEU merged with the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and thereafter ceased to exist.

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<sup>87</sup> It was reported that during his visit to Kazakhstan in 1994, NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana hinted that NATO would assist with setting up autonomous (CST and Russian) forces in Central Asia. See Murat Laumulin, "Kontinent", No.18 (105), 24 September-7 November 2003; available from <http://www.continent.kz/2003/18/12.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 August 2009.

The only regional security initiative that was successfully implemented was the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (CANWFZ). In September 2006, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan signed a treaty banning the production of, and assistance with the production of, nuclear weapons in the region.<sup>88</sup> This was an important development, particularly in light of ongoing nuclear proliferation in Asia. However, the challenges that the Central Asian states managed to overcome to reach agreement on setting up a nuclear-weapons-free zone cannot be compared with the constraints affecting comprehensive security cooperation.

It is worth noting that while regional security cooperation initiatives largely failed, Kazakhstan was able to set up an international security forum, CICA, which has the ambitious goal of creating a structure for promoting Asian security, similar to the OSCE. With the exception of Turkmenistan, all Central Asian states are CICA members. However, the forum has not been used to seriously tackle specific security issues in Central Asia.

## **2. External, intra-regional and domestic constraints**

As we have seen, the Central Asian states largely failed in their efforts to create regional security arrangements. A variety of factors, which both facilitated and impeded cooperation, contributed to this state of affairs. Among the factors stimulating the drive for regional cooperation and integration were the states' common historical backgrounds and cultural similarities, a budding sense of regional identity, transboundary security threats, and the global trend towards regionalisation. It can be speculated that an additional factor was the realisation that together, these small states would be better placed to resist external pressures, particularly those emanating from their large neighbours.<sup>89</sup>

The Central Asian states share a common pre-Soviet and Soviet history, which allowed them to develop a sense of regional identity when they became independent. Under the Soviet Union, the five Central Asian republics had been referred to as Middle Asia and Kazakhstan (*Sredniaya Aziya i Kazakhstan*). After independence, however, they chose to identify themselves as Central Asia and engaged in the creation of various Central Asian organisations (the CAU

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<sup>88</sup> The CANWFZ Treaty entered into force on 21 March 2009. For more on CANWFZ, see William Potter, et al., "Central Asia Becomes a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone," *CNS Feature Stories*, 11 December 2008 [on-line]; available from [http://cns.miis.edu/stories/081201\\_canwfz.htm](http://cns.miis.edu/stories/081201_canwfz.htm); Internet; accessed 13 September 2009.

<sup>89</sup> In their study on regional security cooperation, Alyson J.K. Bailes and Andrew Cottey note that the strongest dynamics in regions other than Europe seem to run either towards the projection of shared regional economic interests, or towards fending off unwanted external security influences. See Alyson J.K. Bailes and Andrew Cottey, "Regional Security Cooperation in the Early 21st Century," *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* [on-line]; available from <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2006>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

being the most ambitious). The external recognition of the region as Central Asia by policymakers, the development community, scholars and so forth also contributed to this trend.

In practice, the formation of regional identity was sidelined by nation-building and processes of national identity formation. Above all, local political elites were interested in creating loyalty to the nation-state in the making. Resources were poured into the reconstruction of national histories, the promotion of official languages (at the expense of Russian and the languages spoken by other minorities), and other means of shaping national identity, while the emerging Central Asian identity received very little practical support.<sup>90</sup> The existing visa regimes in the region – only Kazakhstan has a visa-free regime with all its neighbours, except Turkmenistan – illustrates the rather embryonic state of regionalisation in Central Asia.

The growing political, economic and social differences between Central Asian states have also undermined the process of regional identity formation. Kazakhstan, which has the biggest and most dynamic economy and is politically oriented towards the West, increasingly sees itself as a Eurasian country, whose interests would be better served by closer connections to countries external to the region than to those within it.

As suggested in the introduction, the Central Asian states face a number of transboundary security threats that require regional responses, such as drug trafficking, illegal migration and environmental pollution. The porosity of the countries' borders further highlights the commonality of these problems. Cooperation that is aimed at tackling such security problems has not taken place at the regional level, however, and it has proved more effective to pursue broader approaches with the participation of external actors (Russia, the EU, and the US).

To counter the threat of drug trafficking, the Central Asian states participate in the Russia-led CSTO's 'Kanal' ('Channel') operations that intercept drug shipments from Afghanistan. They also cooperate via the EU-funded BOMCA and CADAP programmes, which aim to transfer European best practice in these fields to states in the region.

The newly-independent Central Asian states have been learning to socialise in the international environment, and they have been affected by the general trend towards regionalisation. The Central Asian states have been receptive to the discourse on the benefits of integration that is promoted by international organisations and external actors such as the EU, although implementing such initiatives has turned out to be a lot more challenging than expected.

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<sup>90</sup> Ironically, the weakening position of the Russian language is making regional cooperation and integration more difficult, since it has historically served as a *lingua franca* in the ethnically diverse states of Central Asia.

The factors impeding the development of regional security cooperation have proved to be more significant. These can be divided into three categories: external (to the region), intra-regional and domestic. The external constraints are twofold: Russia's domineering role, and the existence of a competitive dynamic between external powers.<sup>91</sup>

Russia's determined presence in the region has been welcomed by the Central Asian regimes to a considerable extent, since Moscow is seen as a provider of armaments and political support. At the same time, Russia has been unable to retain a monopoly in Central Asia, and other external actors have increased their influence in the region. The Central Asian states also appreciate this development as a counterbalance to Russia's excessive assertiveness. This approach has found expression in the states' 'multi-vector' foreign policies and their readiness to establish multiple 'strategic partnerships' that, if pushed to their logical conclusions, would not always be complementary (a country can hardly have substantive strategic partnerships with Russia, China, the US, and the EU simultaneously).

As part of their multi-vector policies, the Central Asian states have joined or cooperate with several security organisations. With the exception of Turkmenistan, they are all members of the Russian-led CSTO. They also conduct joint military exercises with NATO in the framework of the PfP programme, and with China as members of the SCO. Central Asian states also engage in bilateral security cooperation with the US.

Since none of the 'stans' have expressed a desire to join NATO, there are no tensions between the alliance and Russia similar to those that resulted from Ukraine's and Georgia's intentions to join. However, the military bases set up by NATO member states in the region (Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan and Termez airbase in Uzbekistan) are a source of concern for Russia, who is unhappy to see such a military presence in its backyard. In response, Moscow opened a CSTO base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan and sponsored the SCO Astana summit declaration requesting that states using these facilities set a final deadline for their departure.<sup>92</sup>

Such competition is even more clearly evident in US and Russian security projects and arrangements in the region. The US Caspian Guard initiative, which was launched in 2003 to help Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan strengthen their navies, alarmed Russia. In response, Russia decided to push on with its Caspian Force (CASFOR) programme of creating a joint fleet to

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<sup>91</sup> The external threats have been thoroughly analysed by a prominent expert on Eurasian security, Roy Allison. See further Roy Allison, "Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia," *International Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2004); Roy Allison, "Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey* 27, no.2 (2008).

<sup>92</sup> SCO, Declaration of the Member States of the SCO, Astana, 5 July 2005. Unofficial translation by the SCO Secretariat [on-line]; available from [http://english.scosummit2006.org/en\\_bjzl/2006-04/21/content\\_145.htm](http://english.scosummit2006.org/en_bjzl/2006-04/21/content_145.htm); Internet; accessed 9 February 2010.

counter transnational threats.<sup>93</sup> The competitive dynamic has opened up a range of strategic choices for states in the region, and has resulted in their forming different allegiances (or a lack of such). A case in point is Uzbekistan's oscillation between security cooperation with the US and Russia, marked by the country's leaving and then rejoining CSTO, then once again taking distance from Moscow and signing a new bilateral security cooperation agreement with Washington.

On the one hand, competition between external powers impedes regional integration (despite the fact that some actors support it); on the other, it creates opportunities for the Central Asian states. Namely, they enjoy access to much-needed resources (technical, financial, expertise) that they would not otherwise have had.

The intraregional constraints consist of existing territorial disputes, weak borders, competition over water resources, a lack of trust, and a lack of readiness to compromise among the Central Asian states. In addition, the rivalry for regional leadership between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan has not stimulated regional integration.

The collapse of the Soviet Union left Central Asian states with multiple territorial disputes. During the Soviet period, the countries' borders were drawn in a rather arbitrary manner, but this did not matter very much as the borders were purely administrative. After independence, the need to clearly define the new states' borders became a major source of potential interstate conflict in Central Asia.

Some progress was made over the decade-and-a-half following independence. The states signed delimitation agreements and proceeded with demarcation. However, a number of territorial disputes remain between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Unlike the relatively amicable resolution of the demarcation dispute between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, ongoing Kyrgyz-Uzbek, Tajik-Uzbek and Kyrgyz-Tajik border disputes provoke anger on all sides. The Kyrgyz and Tajiks feel that Uzbekistan is taking advantage of their weakness and is unilaterally demarcating the frontiers. They find Uzbekistan's use of landmines – a practice that has led to the deaths of people and cattle – particularly upsetting. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, justifies its actions by referring to incidents in 1999 and 2000, when militants from the IMU entered its territory from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, profiting from poorly-guarded borders. Although on better terms with its neighbours, Kazakhstan has also been strengthening its southern frontiers, fearing that instability might spill over into its territory. In this sense, having 'good fences' – that is, clearly demarcated and

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<sup>93</sup> Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, "Militaryization of the Caspian Sea: 'Great Games' and 'Small Games' Over the Caspian Fleets," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no.2 (2009) [on-line]; available from <http://www.chinaeurasia.org/images/stories/isdp-cefq/CEFQ200905/mcsgsgocf20090517-35.pdf>; Internet; accessed 9 February 2010.

protected borders (on the proviso that these are not mined and people are not shot down) – would make Central Asian states into better neighbours.

Another source of potential conflict is competition over water resources. The upstream countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, want to build more hydropower plants and produce electricity for export, which would allow them to improve their overall poor economic prospects. The downstream states view water as a common asset, and think that their water intake and other concerns should be taken into account by upstream states. The dispute over water between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is particularly tense. Both sides consider the issue to be of vital importance, and have not shown any willingness to compromise.

*Table 1: The military capabilities and defence budgets of the Central Asian states*

	<b>Capabilities (active service)</b>	<b>Defence budget (2007)</b>
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Army 30,000 Navy 3,000 Air 12,000 MoD 4,000	\$1.16bn
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<i>Total 49,000</i> Army 8,500 Air 2,400	\$39m
<b>Tajikistan</b>	<i>Total 10,900</i> Army 7,300 Air Force/Air Defence 1,500	\$87m
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	<i>Total 8,800</i> Army 18,500 Navy 500 Air 3,000	\$209m
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	<i>Total 22,000</i> Army 50,000 Air 17,000 <i>Total 67,000</i>	\$94m

*Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2009 (London: Routledge, 2009).*

These various factors – territorial disputes, rivalry over water resources and porous borders – make regional security cooperation difficult, because the countries see each other as potential threats, if not intentionally then due to weakness. The states lack the basis of trust that is essential for cooperation. In the absence of sufficient trust, the Central Asian states would prefer to take care of their own security than to invest in regional solutions, as is the case at the moment.

Finally, the domestic constraints on the Central Asian states include the fact that they have little ability to provide for their own security, which drives them to seek foreign assistance and engagement, and their political structures. As a result of the former, they cannot create effective regional security arrangements; as a result of the latter, they do not even want to.

To differing extents, all of the Central Asian states suffer from a weak ability to deal with serious security threats, whether these are external or internal. The region is sandwiched between two big powers, Russia and China, with overwhelmingly superior military capacities. Furthermore, there is the problem of Afghanistan. Even if they were to combine their forces, the states in the region would be unable to withstand an attack or a spill-over of instability. The possibility that the Central Asian states might join forces to deal with an internal conflict is even less likely, considering the distrust that exists between them.

The Central Asian states' authoritarian political systems can also be considered a factor that impedes regional security cooperation. These systems are characterised by highly-centralised decision-making and the exclusion of civil society actors from the process of defining foreign and security policies.<sup>94</sup> Key issues, such as whether to join or leave an international organisation, and whether to form an alliance with a particular country on particular conditions, are left to the discretion of one leader.

This personalistic form of decision-making accounts for the u-turns in Uzbek foreign policy. Kazakhstan's foreign policy is more predictable, but major decisions in this country are also made in the absence of much discussion. In all of the Central Asian countries, external and internal policy reflects the world-views and personalities of their presidents. While Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev has assumed the role of integrationist of the Eurasian space, Uzbekistan's leader Karimov has placed more emphasis on sovereignty, and participates in cooperation initiatives when they promise to provide clear and immediate benefits. The Turkmen former President Niyazov decided on a course of almost complete isolation. The country's current head of state, Berdymukhamedov, is interested in limited cooperation, but is not eager to open up the country. Due to their limited size and resources, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have less room for manoeuvre, but the personalities of the presidents and their ability to get along with their counterparts do play a very important role.

On the other hand, it can also be speculated that democratisation, especially in its more chaotic initial stages, could provoke conflict in the region by triggering nationalist sentiments and domestic instability. In this regard, the Central Asian states have to pass between the *Scylla* of authoritarianism, which

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<sup>94</sup> Annette Bohr offers a good analysis of the constraints placed on regional projects by internal politics. See Annette Bohr, "Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order," *International Affairs* 80, no.3 (2004).

is blocking their development, and the *Charybdis* of political reform, with its destabilising potential.

### 3. Prospects for regional security cooperation

On the basis of the above discussion, it can be concluded that there is little chance of a breakthrough in regional security cooperation in Central Asia, despite the existence of rhetoric to the contrary. Into the foreseeable future, Central Asian states will remain weak and unable to independently provide for the region's security. As such, they will continue to rely on foreign assistance.

Some consolidation of regional identity might result from the realisation of an external threat or challenge. There are no strong signs at present, however, that such a process is taking place. The concept of regional interest is being trampled by national interests and the interests of the political regimes in power, and this trend is likely to persist.

There is also lack of clarity with regard to who might act as the locomotive of regional integration. Kazakhstan has tried to play this role, but its ambitions have not been backed up with sufficient resources. Besides, the country has not been entirely clear about its identity, and has gravitated towards both Russia and the West. At the present time, Uzbekistan's stance is more unilateral.

External actors will therefore continue to play a leading and coordinating role. The security and wellbeing of Central Asia will depend to a large extent on the dynamics of relations between the big powers engaged in the region (Russia, China, the EU and the US). None of these powers has an interest in the destabilisation of the region, and it is therefore reasonable to hope that competition for influence among these powers will be muted.

Of the four big players, the EU has been most open to developing cooperative frameworks that involve other actors. The EU's political strategy for Central Asia, adopted in 2007, states that the EU is prepared to maintain a dialogue with regional organisations in Central Asia, such as the EuraAsEC, the SCO, CICA, the CSTO and others.<sup>95</sup>

Such partnerships would benefit security in Central Asia. However, it is not clear how this could be reconciled with the *realpolitik* considerations shaping US-China, EU-Russia, and potentially China-Russia and China-EU relations, and the different approaches to security taken by these external actors. While the EU and the US see the promotion of human rights and democratisation as the basis of the region's long-term security, Russia and China perceive the West's push for political reforms as a tool for enhancing geopolitical influence.

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<sup>95</sup> The European Commission, *The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*, June 2009 [on-line]; available from [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/central\\_asia/docs/2010\\_strategy\\_eu\\_centralasia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/docs/2010_strategy_eu_centralasia_en.pdf); Internet; accessed 12 February 2010.

The major security threats and challenges facing Central Asia, such as environmental degradation, water and energy management disputes, and the growth of Islamic radicalism, have internal roots. Solving them will require an improvement in governance. The states' failure to deal with drug trafficking and the instability spilling over from Afghanistan also is due to their poor condition of statehood and rampant corruption. Long-term, sustainable solutions to the region's security problems cannot be achieved in the absence of political reform, even if this would admittedly have some destabilising potential. External actors who promote better governance and reform in the region are therefore also contributing to its long-term security.

#### **4. Recommendations for Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan lacks the necessary resources, appeal and sense of commitment to become the locomotive of regional integration in Central Asia. However, the country could contribute to regional security cooperation in several key ways:

- 1) Kazakhstan could become a focal point of expertise on regional security. In general, quality research on this issue is currently lacking in Kazakhstan. Greater expertise would mean a better understanding of the threats and challenges facing the region. Less investment in large-scale security initiatives (such as CICA, the European security architecture, and a global energy security treaty) and more investment in smaller-scale projects that have a direct impact on security problems in the region would be a step in the right direction.
- 2) Kazakhstan could make a concerted effort to reform its security sector. Having effective and professional military, intelligence and police forces would not only make Kazakhstan and its people more secure, but would also serve as an example for the rest of the region. Kazakhstan could become a beacon for high standards through joint training, exercises and regular interaction.

## 11. Corruption and Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia

Donald Bowser\*

### Introduction

The greater Central Asia region, including Afghanistan, was thrust onto the international stage during the last decade. The Central Asia region is becoming one of the world's most important sources of hydrocarbons and other extractive resources. As of yet, the region's states have been unable to make a successful transition to democratic, market-based governance and to provide the majority of their citizens with security, stability and development. Fifteen years after independence, there still is a need for a comprehensive approach to increasing transparency and accountability in the region, in order for its countries to become stable and prosperous.

The issue of corruption and its impact on the current conflict are becoming increasingly dominant themes in discussions on Afghanistan. In early 2006, when the world's attention was focused on Iraq, the 'good war' (as the conflict in Afghanistan was called) was considered to be a successful response to a low-level insurgency, and corruption was a subject that the international community was hesitant to breach, or address seriously. Three years later, corruption and governance have become dominant themes in the dialogue on how to defeat the insurgency and strengthen the Afghan state. On a daily basis, articles have been appearing that outline how Afghan corruption is threatening the achievement of the overall objectives pursued by the Afghan government, ISAF and the international community.<sup>96</sup> As one of the key civilian analysts of the current conflict has argued, weak governance (including corruption) is one of the two prime factors driving the Afghan insurgency.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> One of the first articles to tackle the subject seriously was Anthony Loyd, "Corruption, Bribes and Trafficking: A Cancer that is Engulfing Afghanistan," *The Times*, 24 November 2007 [on-line]; available from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article2933472.ece>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010. See also Doug Saunders, "Corruption Eats Away at Afghan Government," *Globe and Mail*, 30 March 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/article683261.ece>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>97</sup> Seth Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: Norton & Co., 2009), xxix.

## 1. Corruption in Afghanistan and Central Asia

It has been said by a number of members of the international community in Kabul that Afghans either do not understand what corruption is, or they are so corrupt that they cannot be reformed. The real picture is slowly emerging from a small but increasingly detailed database on corruption across the country. The picture shows a complex mosaic of attitudes towards corruption, but a clear understanding of what constitutes corruption in the mind of the average Afghan. Corruption is usually defined in the West as the misuse of public office for private gain. One can also glean from focus group discussions undertaken by Integrity Watch Afghanistan<sup>98</sup> that the Afghan definition of corruption centres on petty corruption inflicted by poorly-paid civil servants. The respondents in the survey listed the most commonly-used words (which in turn indicated the most commonly-encountered corruption mechanisms). These were: 'gift' (75%), 'low income' (59%) and 'tea money' (55%).<sup>99</sup> 'Tea money', 'sweets' or 'gifts' are euphemisms that are used across the Persian-speaking and parts of the Arabic world, and signify the acceptability of corruption.

Corruption in Afghanistan has numerous aspects, as well as deep roots within Afghanistan's complex society. Lying behind the outsider's perception of the Afghan 'culture' of corruption, such as the giving of facilitation payments or '*baksheesh*', is actually a complex set of informal rules and codes of conduct that can both facilitate and hinder corruption. The societal structure in Afghanistan is a sophisticated and interwoven arrangement of varying (and occasionally shifting) loyalties and obligations that run across a wide range of ethnic and tribal groups. The rules and calculations for all behaviour, including malfeasance, cover a large number of factors. Some of these follow purely economic interests, and others are based on the expectations of family, clan and other cultural aspects – often in ways that may not be understood by the average westerner. As explained by one observer of the region: 'complex and sophisticated conflict-resolution mechanisms, legal codes, and alternative forms of governance have developed in the region over millennia'.<sup>100</sup>

## 2. Corruption and Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia

Corruption is increasingly seen as a key obstacle to stability and development in any country. There is strong (and growing) evidence of a nexus between the perception among Afghans that corruption is increasing and the deterioration in the country's security situation. Surveys over the last few years demonstrate

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<sup>98</sup> Yama Torabi and Lorenzo Delesgues, *Afghan Perceptions of Corruption: A Survey Across Thirteen Provinces*, Integrity Watch Afghanistan, Kabul, January 2007.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>100</sup> Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "No Sign until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 55.

that 60% of all Afghans see corruption as undermining the legitimacy of the Afghan state, and 82% think that corruption impedes economic development.<sup>101</sup> These findings are supported by earlier surveys that show that the majority of Afghan citizens (77%) see corruption as a major national problem.<sup>102</sup>

Security forces that are susceptible to bribery and malfeasance can be used to facilitate terrorist attacks and the illicit movement of goods and people. Certainly, the sums that are offered to corrupt security officials are significant enough to tempt even officers with a high degree of integrity. There is growing consensus among policymakers in the former Soviet Union that corruption within the military, the police and border forces is a major factor in the destabilisation of the region. The entire NATO's PfP region has learned about the dangers of corruption in the security forces. Russia is one country that has made serious efforts to 'cleanse' its security forces. Even the Russian government has seen the level of malfeasance affecting Russian forces as one reason for its poor performance in the North Caucasus.<sup>103</sup> The same could be said of the Kyrgyz armed forces, which were initially unable to repel attacks in Batken Province by elements of the IMU. It is clear that corrupt security forces cannot provide effective security for a state or its citizens and that this, in turn, de-legitimises the state.

### **3. Corruption in the Security Sector**

The concept of 'violent entrepreneurship' (or use of force for economic gain) is a useful tool for analysing corruption in the security sector. The term refers to the use of socially organised violence (real or potential),<sup>104</sup> and its practitioners range from state law enforcement agencies (the police, army and security apparatus) operating in a private capacity, to private security firms, and finally to organised criminal groups. Or, as Volkov categorises them: (1) state and illegal, (2) non-state and legal, and (3) non-state and illegal.<sup>105</sup> The armed forces, border troops and law enforcement bodies across Central Asia are state bodies that often act in their own private interests. They use control over the means of force as a commodity in the economic sphere and as a tool for private gain. Corrupt security forces act in both their own interests and those of others to violate the law and to fail to perform appointed tasks. By acting in their own interests and those of non-state actors, corrupt security forces not only fail to

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<sup>101</sup> Torabi and Delesgues, *Afghan Perceptions of Corruption*, 50.

<sup>102</sup> The Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2006: A Survey of the Afghan People*, Kabul, October 2006 [online]; available from <http://www.asiafoundation.org/pdf/AG-survey06.pdf>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>103</sup> RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 14 October 2005 [on-line]; available from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143500.html>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>104</sup> Vladimir Volkov, "Violent Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 5 (1999): 741.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 741.

protect the interests of the state, but indeed act against the state and undermine its entire legitimacy.

One of the core functions of any state is to have a monopoly on the legitimate use of force and the ability to provide security for its citizens. Corrupt security forces will not work in the interests of the state, but will perform their duties to serve their own personal interests. In Russia, for example, military officers embezzled more than 500 million roubles over the first six months of 2004. A total of 7,300 servicemen were convicted of crimes during the same period, and of these, according to the military's top prosecutor, 800 were officers.<sup>106</sup> Such malfeasance is equalled, if not exceeded, by Russian forces in Central Asia. A case in point is the main unit of the Russian Army in the region, the 201<sup>st</sup> Motor Rifle Division stationed in Tajikistan, which has been accused of involvement in the trafficking of heroin. The armies of Central Asia can be assumed to be no less corrupt, given the lower level of oversight and generally weaker state structures.

Despite the dire levels of corruption in the security sector, there is some room for optimism. The terrorist attacks in Moscow (Nord-Ost), Beslan and more recently Nalchik (Russia) were all cases in which terrorists used bribery to facilitate their operations. The Russian President Putin's comments regarding the inability of leaders in the North Caucasus to provide security due to pervasive corruption prior to the attack in Nalchik were later echoed, after the event, by those of the former KGB Colonel, Sergei Goncharov (chair of a veterans' association for the Alfa anti-terrorism force), who stated that: 'I cannot name any republic in the North Caucasus where the law enforcement system is working. There is pervasive corruption and complete treachery everywhere'.<sup>107</sup> Goncharov's comments were in turn reinforced by those of Gennadii Gudkov of the United Russia party, a member of the Russian Duma's Security Committee and a former security service officer, who noted that the events in Nalchik revealed the 'helplessness of the FSB, the Interior Ministry, and other law enforcement agencies riddled with corruption'.<sup>108</sup> The same could be said of the Kyrgyz armed forces, which were initially unable to repel attacks in Batken Province by elements of the IMU. Corrupt security forces cannot provide the state or its citizens with effective security, a lesson that has clearly been learned in Russia. As one local expert pointed out: 'it took four major terrorist attacks in ten days and 450 dead civilians to bring the Russian leadership to acknowledge a fact that observers have been pointing out for many years'.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Andrew Osborn, "Red Army Shamed by Thievery and Corruption," *The Independent* (London), 29 July 2004.

<sup>107</sup> RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 14 October 2005.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Nabi Abdullaev, "Tough Lessons for Putin in Hostage Showdown," *ISN Security Watch* (Fall 2004) [on-line]; available from <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=9595>; Internet; accessed 27 January 2006.

#### **4. Endemic Corruption in the Afghan National Police**

The police are seen the world over as a cornerstone of law and order. The reality of the current law enforcement environment in Afghanistan far from meets this global ideal. Afghan law enforcement agencies are widely believed to be fundamentally corrupt, with stories abounding of police protection for armed robbers, killers and drug traffickers. The open and enthusiastic approach taken by the police to the eliciting of bribes from those involved in activities such as gambling and prostitution, as well as from those trying to maintain legitimate businesses, constantly undermines the image of the struggling Afghan National Police (ANP) in the eyes of both the Afghan people and the international community. In short, as stated in a recent article, many see the ANP as 'corrupt and brutal, and still not fit for purpose'.<sup>110</sup>

Despite growing pressure from within Afghanistan and from the international community, the ANP's ability to carry out its internal security and conventional police responsibilities is far from adequate, and the obstacles to establishing a fully professional ANP are formidable. Among the many challenges are the lack of effective field training officer (FTO) programmes, illiterate recruits (estimated to be as high as 70% of all recruits),<sup>111</sup> the history of low pay and pervasive corruption, and the insecure environment.<sup>112</sup> The almost complete inability of the ANP to maintain law and order and to proactively combat widespread criminality in Afghanistan hinders the pursuit of stability and development, as well as creating an environment in which corruption not only persists, but also flourishes.

The use of police checkpoints to target civilians and other forms of criminal behaviour by the police undermines the legitimacy of the state.<sup>113</sup> The failure of the international community and the Afghan government to address effective policing and root out corruption in the force is feeding the insurgency. One of the means of winning the current conflict will be to tackle the corruption that exists within the police force, and to provide officers with the technical skills and resources to provide security for citizens. If the government is unable to protect its citizens, the latter will turn to non-state actors for help.

#### **5. Organised Crime, Narcotics and the State**

There is a very real and impending danger that the state-building process and economic development in Afghanistan will be almost entirely subverted by the

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<sup>110</sup> Nadene Ghouri, "Afghan Police: Corrupt and Brutal, and Still Not Fit for Purpose," *The Guardian* 6 November 2009 [on-line]; available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/06/afghan-police-mired-in-controversy>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>111</sup> Editorial, "Losing the Good War" *International Herald Tribune*, 5 December 2006.

<sup>112</sup> US Department of State, Office of the Inspector General, *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness*, November 2006.

<sup>113</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 317.

expansion and consolidation of the illicit narcotics trade. 2007 and 2008 were bumper crops of opium. UNODC estimated 2006's production to have been approximately 165,000 hectares, a 59% increase in cultivation that resulted in a 49% increase in production on last year, providing over 90% of the world's opium.<sup>114</sup> The freedom to cultivate opium poppies in such quantities, and to process and distribute the opium, results in no small part from the ease with which large, well-organised and well-funded narcotics producers are increasingly subverting the activities of law enforcement and border control agencies.

One of the key dangers is that growing corruption within the security sector will reach a point at which the organs of the state function as state-sponsored organised criminals. In many fragile states, there is substantive evidence of a nexus between law enforcement bodies, the military and organised crime. As noted by one long-time observer of the greater Central Asia region: '...the role of non-state actors such as international narcotics-trafficking rings and the pervasive corruption that allows them to operate freely and profitably'.<sup>115</sup> Certainly the sums available to corrupt security officials are often significant enough to tempt even officers with a high degree of integrity. At the present time, the increase in the volume of opium production (estimated to have increased by 25% in 2006 to 6,100 tons)<sup>116</sup> gives those involved in the drug trade the means to bribe any security or border forces. The monetary rewards of involvement in narcotics trafficking are tempting for even the most sophisticated armies.

The organised criminals that operate the drug trade across Central Asia are, like the insurgents, non-state wielders of violence. They are often insurgents themselves, or are increasingly integrated into the structure of the insurgency. As has been demonstrated in Central Asia and especially in Afghanistan, wherever weak state structures and governance exist, alternate forms of authority emerge. The narcotics trade provides the means and organised criminals the muscle for a parallel state-making process. In Afghanistan, organised crime can alongside or in conjunction with the insurgency wield violence on a scale that is usually reserved for legitimate state bodies.

Through a process of competition (or natural selection), and with the fusion of a number of organised criminal groups with state structures, a smaller

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<sup>114</sup> UNODC, "Afghan Opium Cultivation Soars 59 per cent in 2006, UNODC Survey Shows," Press Release 1 September 2006 [on-line]: available from [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/press\\_release\\_2006\\_09\\_01.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/press_release_2006_09_01.html); Internet; accessed 15 February 2010.

<sup>115</sup> RFE/RL, "Post-Imperial Eurasian Games," *RFE/RL Report* 4, no.12 (23 March 2004).

<sup>116</sup> UNODC, Press conference by Executive Director Antonia Costa, 18 September 2006 [on-line]; available from [http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2006/060918\\_Costa.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2006/060918_Costa.doc.htm); Internet; accessed 15 November 2006.

number of actors has emerged that is capable of wielding even greater force. In Afghanistan, however, the state is far from being able to challenge even minor warlords. These actors are becoming increasingly wealthy and organised narcotics producers and traffickers, and are able to control the law enforcement bodies that would otherwise threaten them by offering them lucrative bribes. In this way, the narcotics trade is rapidly becoming one of the greatest threats to Afghanistan's development, providing the main source of funding for the increasingly powerful drug traffickers and warlords that compete with the fledgling state for political and territorial control.

## **6. Corruption and Terrorism**

Having the ability to pass unchecked and unnoticed across borders and through checkpoints is a key tool for any terrorist. The tragic massacre in Beslan, which would not have occurred if the Russian state had been able to fully control its security forces, was preceded by a double airplane bombing perpetrated by female bombers who bribed their way onto an aircraft. Anyone who has flown into Dushanbe, Tajikistan - on the frontline of the war on terror - can observe how, for a relatively small amount of money (or in certain cases, no money at all), people are 'helpfully' escorted by border staff through passport control without having to wait in line or have their documents examined. Thankfully such practices have ceased at the airport in Almaty, Kazakhstan, where previously, for several dollars, customs officers could be persuaded to turn a blind eye. Many entry points remain along the vast borders of Central Asia, however.

Countries with rampant corruption offer perfect operational environments for terrorists. The latter can buy accommodation that is hidden from prying eyes and ears, access to weapons and intelligence, and protection from rivals and law enforcement agencies. In general, the weaker the state, the smaller the bribes, and the lower the 'operating costs' for terrorists. Potential or failing states provide optimal bases for terrorists and, as argued above, a corrupt state is a potential failing state. In addition, corruption feeds terrorism, as corrupt governments give a form of legitimacy to terrorists acting against their own states. Internal (and some external) terrorist threats in Central Asia use corruption as a rallying call for attacking the state. Corrupt governments will be unable to combat terrorism effectively, neither in the short nor in the long term.

## **7. The Shadow State in Afghanistan and Central Asia**

As noted previously, the geographical space occupied by the Afghan state consists of a complex web of intersecting interests and obligations. These

create an alternative state that is capable of delivering services, reallocating resources, and providing an informal justice system.

The combined effects of poverty, corruption, abundant resources and the weakened states across Central Asia have culminated in the emergence of shadow states. The term 'shadow state' refers to a system of governance imposed by public officials acting to serve private interests, and external (non-state) actors that are capable of gathering rents and delivering goods and services that would ordinarily be provided by the state, were it not incapable of doing so due to its own weakness and public malfeasance. The shadow state consists of interwoven networks that exist to dictate public policy (to rent-seek); engage in economic activities (especially plundering the country's assets and resources) through formal state structures; and wield coercive force, while serving private interests.

The idea of the shadow state is not unique to Afghanistan; indeed, the concept emerged from studies of Africa. In his seminal work on corruption in West Africa, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*, Will Reno established the concept of a 'shadow state' that existed as a parallel system of governance constructed behind the façade of laws and government institutions. As he notes, 'the shadow state is a form of personal rule; that is, an authority that is based upon the decisions and interests of an individual, not a set of written laws and procedures, even though these formal aspects of government may exist'.<sup>117</sup>

This form of personal rule is typified by the use of a semi-feudal system of patronage, and supported by a regulatory environment and system of contract enforcement that is provided by organised (or in some cases, disorganised) criminal structures or other non-state actors that use illegitimate force. In general, a number of groups outside the government (including international financial institutions) exert considerable pressure on the emerging state structure, and form the core of a governance system that functions in parallel to formal governance structures. Just as the modern state is defined by its formal structures and functions, the shadow state has developed 'institutions' that collect taxes, wield coercive force, dispense justice, and regulate the market and distribute resources.

Shadow states can consist of vast structures that lie beneath the formal 'shell' of the legitimate state, with their own wide-reaching institutions, rules and regulations. The 'rulers' of the shadow state, the political and economic elite, have an interest in maintaining the appearance of a functioning formal state. They are assisted in this, to an extent, by 'foreign' partners, such as financial institutions or multinational corporations, who confer recognition and legitimacy. The state then becomes a façade state, whose government institutions are

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<sup>117</sup> Will Reno, "Clandestine Economies, Violence and States in Africa," *Journal of International Affairs* 53, no.2 (2000): 433.

recognised as genuine edifices, but are in fact mere 'cut-outs' of the state apparatus that hide the true power and influence that lie beneath.

The shadow state presents a particular danger for a country such as Afghanistan, which is attempting to overcome its recent history as a failed state. Given the fragility of the nascent Afghan state, current levels of corruption and poverty, and the volatile geo-political space that it occupies, Afghanistan has the potential to rapidly and catastrophically fail once again, with all the consequences that were first observed in 2001. Little effort has been made to examine or understand how the 'shadow state' functions in Afghanistan, and as a result, little has been done to plan or implement the steps that need to be taken to mitigate it.

### **8. Corruption and the Current Conflict in Afghanistan**

The nexus of corruption, organised crime and narcotics trafficking presents a grave threat to security in Afghanistan, and not only with respect to the development of the Afghan state. The Taliban, who were removed from power in late 2001, are staging a powerful resurgence across Afghanistan, and are making strong territorial and political gains on their previous positions by using the issue of Afghan government corruption as a recruitment tool. The perceived levels of corruption in the country and the state's weak presence in many areas have allowed the insurgency to gain strength and have played a role in Taliban successes. Corruption has dual roles in the current conflict which are outlined below.

The first is that corrupt officials and law enforcement officers can be easily bribed to facilitate the freedom of movement for people, weapons and equipment needed by the Taliban for their increasingly large-scale and better-organised offences against NATO, the ISAF and the Afghan National Army. Corrupt government officials are also far less likely to be motivated to actively combat or pursue groups such as the Taliban or their sympathisers and support networks, thereby facilitating the activities of these groups through negligence as much as through complicity. Weak governance has been shown to be a factor behind the success of many insurgencies over the past century.

The second avenue for the use of corruption by anti-corruption elements is a de-legitimisation of the current government. The perceived levels of corruption within the Karzai government, and the law enforcement and security services in particular, works in the interest of groups such as the Taliban and subverts the legitimacy of the state, which cannot provide security (or even function) in some areas of the country. The Taliban, with its strong Islamic rule and anti-corruption platform, is winning back support in those areas where it has a firm presence. The movement is gaining support despite the hostility that had previously resulted from its oppressive and violent period of fundamentalist rule between 1995 and 2001, as it offers an ordered alternative

to the corrupt chaos that reigns in many parts of Afghanistan. This is not to say that the Taliban would be the popular choice for the majority of Afghans. In some areas, however, people are turning to the former ruling party, its harsh fundamentalist policies and increasing military power, as they see it as the lesser of two evils. In their view, at least the Taliban offer some semblance of structure, order and (perhaps) development. This loss of what little support the Karzai government had begun to generate, predominantly in the peripheral southern provinces but increasingly in the north, is in large part due to corruption and the very minor effort that has been made to eradicate it. As such, this constitutes a real threat to the stability and continued development of Afghanistan as it struggles to rebuild.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the increasing level of corruption in the Afghan security sector and in those of some other Central Asian countries, there is some room for optimism. At present, a strong response is needed from the international community to tackle corruption within the security sector, and to ensure that security forces are reformed and made more accountable. All current and future training and assistance efforts should include comprehensive anti-corruption and accountability programmes.

The local authorities must genuinely engage in combating corruption and using all the accountability mechanisms that are currently available. A number of high-profile corrupt officials will have to be convicted in order to gain public confidence in such efforts. The government's failure to wage an effective and visible campaign against corruption has assisted the insurgency. In addition, better means of detecting and controlling corruption within the security forces are needed. This can be accomplished through the development of internal affairs or internal control units that are able to monitor, detect and sanction corrupt elements. This approach would be in line with past practice, and is indeed currently being successfully (if inhumanly) used by the Taliban to show that they are willing to tackle corruption within their own forces.

There is a growing danger that the conflict in Afghanistan will spread across the region. Should this occur, corruption could seriously undermine the ability of many of the security forces in the region to deal with the consequences. The transit of narcotics through the region is already undermining the integrity of regional forces, and a further deterioration in the security forces in the region could prove to be fatal.

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## List of Acronyms

ANP	Afghan National Police
Baltbat	Baltic Battalion
BOMBAF	Border Management Badakhshan, Afghanistan
BOMCA	Border Management Programme in Central Asia
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CAEU	Central Asian Economic Union
CANWFZ	Central Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone
CASFOR	Caspian Force
CAU	Central Asian Union
Centrazbat	Central Asian Battalion
CESS	Centre for European Security Studies
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CORF	Collective Operational Reaction Force
CRDF	Collective Rapid Deployment Force
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
CST	Collective Security Treaty
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DDR	Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration
EADRCC	Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUPOL	European Police Mission in Afghanistan
EXBS	Export Control and Related Border Security Programme Tajikistan
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FSB	Federal Security Service Russia
FTO	Field Training Officer Programme
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IPAP	Individual Partnership Action Plan
IPP	Individual Partnership Programme

ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
Kazbat	Kazakh Battalion
Kazbrig	Kazakh Brigade
KNB	National Security Committee
KOGG	Committee on the Protection of the State Border Tajikistan
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MNS	Ministry of National Security Turkmenistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDN	Northern Distribution Network
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRF	NATO Response Force
NSS	National Security Service Kyrgyzstan
OCC	Operational Capabilities Concept
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAP–DIB	Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building
PAP-T	Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SPS	Science for Peace and Security Programme
SSR	Security Sector Reform
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SVR	Foreign Intelligence Service Russia
THF	Turkmenistan Helsinki Federation
TIHR	Turkmenistan Initiative on Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNTOP	United Nations Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTO	United Tajik Opposition
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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