

Conflict Studies Research Centre

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**Uzbekistan in the Mirror of Military Security:
A Historical Preface to Current Events**

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Introduction

After the collapse of the USSR, a problem appeared for Uzbekistan: to achieve real political self-sufficiency and to create a system of national security. As fundamentals of its external policy Uzbekistan selected the principles of flexible balancing and neutrality. Simultaneously, the best means of integrating Uzbekistan in the world community were being studied. The priorities in foreign policy were first of all tightly connected to economic interests and a search for the capability to join the world market. There was a need to search for a strategic partner. Since the first days of independence, Uzbekistan followed Russia in hopes of financial, economic and political assistance.

However, at this time in Russia complex political processes were taking place, which led to its unambiguous and unchanging orientation to the west, and first of all on the USA. After the currency reform of 1992 Uzbekistan, as well as other republics, has appeared displaced from the financial space of Russia. From this moment the process of destruction of the economic unity and structural-economic relations between republics of the former USSR began. Uzbekistan started actively to develop relations with Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and other countries of the Islamic world.

A special role was given to development of relations with Turkey. Uzbekistan believed that Russia would have acted as the guarantor of stability in the region, and Turkey would become the main economic partner and bridge for development of relations with the west and first of all with the USA. Russia, being in crisis, could take up only defensive problems, which do not require any additional charges. Turkey, because of geographical remoteness and limited military-strategic resources, was not capable of supplying military support and becoming the guarantor of stability in the region. Russia was at this time busy with its internal problems and had no foreign policy doctrine concerning Central Asia, whereas Turkey aimed to play a leading role in forming the Central Asian Union and was actively widening its cultural expansion. Cooperation with Turkey was speedily implemented in the economic, political and cultural spheres. Turkey aimed to use its influence with the USA to obtain help for the poor Central-Asian republics.

Adjacent to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were searching for partners in the West and ignored Uzbekistan's attempts to adjust the old economic ties. Even creation of the Central Asian Union did not result in radical change in the situation. Turkmenistan and Tajikistan cooperated closely with Iran. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were conducting western-style reforms.

The visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Southeast Asia (South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia) in 1992 expanded the range of external economic and political links. Certain improvements in foreign policy strategy were brought about. Uzbekistan gave up a unilateral orientation (focussed only on Turkey or only on Russia). Expanding the scope of its external ties, Uzbekistan started to create a large field for

external manoeuvre, not attaching itself to any one country or region. Study of the models of development in South Korea, China, Japan and other countries appeared to be fruitful in this context.

Since 1991 China has become the second largest trading partner in Central Asia after Russia. During Li Peng's visit, Uzbekistan and China signed four agreements designed to increase trade, including the granting of a Chinese loan to Uzbekistan, the establishment of air freight transport between the two countries, and the Chinese purchase of Uzbek cotton and metals. The two countries also agreed to settle all territorial disputes by diplomatic means alone, and they found common ground in their desire to reform their economies without relinquishing strict political control. At the same time, however, policy makers in Uzbekistan also viewed China as one of Uzbekistan's chief potential threats, requiring the same kind of balanced approach as that adopted toward Russia. Indeed, despite the large volume of trade between China and Central Asia, China was the lowest on the list of desired trading partners and international donors among Uzbekistan's population. In a 1993 survey, only about 3 percent of respondents believed that China was a desirable source of foreign financial assistance.

Uzbekistan started distancing itself both from politically unstable Russia and from the fundamentalist modes of Iran and Saudi Arabia. However, Uzbekistan did not freeze relations with these countries. The Foreign Department did not undertake any steps either to reduce, or to develop relations with these countries. Uzbek policy did not aim at the immediate breaking of communications with the CIS states like Ukraine and Turkmenistan were, but at the same time it did not exhibit any desire for approaching them, like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan did.

After failures by Western companies in developing the Tengiz petroleum deposits in Kazakhstan due to the inefficiency of petroleum distribution in Europe through Russia and the failure of the plan to construct an alternate oil pipeline through Iran (because of the rigid position of the USA); and because of the worsening ethnic situation in the region where its Russian population lived, Kazakhstan changed its external policy and turned towards close partnership with Russia. In Kyrgyzstan, after scandals connected with the illegal export of Kyrgyz gold by some western businessmen and due to the aggravation of the ethnic situation in Uzbek populated regions of the republic, the government also turned its orientation towards Russia.

Turkmenistan, concerned by the situation on the borders with Afghanistan, addressed to Russia a request for military support from Russian military personnel (under contracts). Besides, through Russia were routed the pipelines connecting Turkmenistan with the buyers of Turkmen gas (for example, with Ukraine). Turkmenistan was also named as the strategic partner of Russia. In all three countries a law on dual citizenship and bilinguicity was adopted.

Tajikistan, being in a state of civil war, asked Russia for military help. On the Tajik-Afghan borders the 201st Russian Division was relocated. The declaration about the creation of military bases in Tajikistan based on the 201st Division only legalised its presence there and gave it a new status.

While the majority of the Central Asia countries for different reasons declared their strategic partnership with Russia, the Uzbek government came to the conclusion that partnership with Russia would be ineffective, and Uzbekistan started to search for partners in the East, in Europe and the USA.

During the consultations conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1994-1995 it was made clear that the European countries were not interested in close political cooperation with Uzbekistan and did not see in Uzbekistan a prospective partner. In some countries of Europe it was considered that Central Asia had totally entered the area of national interests of Russia and without Russia no direct contacts with the Central Asian states of the CIS would take place.

After the beginning of NATO's military campaign against Yugoslavia and NATO's open opposition to Russia, the interest of western countries for Uzbekistan sharply increased. Between Uzbekistan and the European countries and USA closer economic and military-political communications started to develop.

The difficult situation in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and the February terrorist acts in Tashkent pushed the government of Uzbekistan to radical revision of its military strategy and to change its external political orientation. If earlier Russia was officially declared as the strategic partner of Uzbekistan, now it became the USA.

Convinced of the inefficiency of Russian support, Uzbekistan started to find military partners among other CIS countries on a bilateral basis. An agreement was signed with Georgia on military cooperation and training of personnel. Military contacts were set up with Ukraine. The Military Doctrine of the Republic of Uzbekistan was revised.

Events in Yugoslavia, a result of which is to intensify Russia's confrontation with Western countries, have compelled Russia to consolidate its own position in Central Asia. Russia has intensified pressure on Uzbekistan, to include it in its sphere of influence. Confrontation with Russia on some geostrategic questions has intensified an interest in Uzbekistan on the part of the USA and NATO.

After the signing of the agreement between Tajikistan and Russia about accommodation of a Russian military base on the territory of this republic, the President of Uzbekistan did not rule out the possibility of accommodating an American military base on the territory of Uzbekistan.

The Present Principles of the National Security Strategy of Uzbekistan

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has proclaimed at the first session of Oliy Majlis the Concept of National Security of the Republic. Its main points are:

1. Uzbekistan has an exceedingly advantageous geographical position, being in the centre of regional transport and water, and independent energy systems;
2. Uzbekistan exceeds its neighbours in the region in number of population, in its research potential, and in other possibilities;
3. Its location offers unique natural-climatic conditions, long-standing agriculture and is rich in its mineral resources, that allows it to be self-sufficient in the production and export of the most valuable types of technical agricultural produce.
4. The Republic has oil, oil products and gas, which are the bases of the economy. It has strong possibilities for the growth of economic potential.

5. Uzbekistan has a rich spiritual heritage and influences different spiritual and political processes in the world.¹
6. Uzbekistan on all factors can reach a high position in the world in culture, science, economy and technology and can become the integrative centre in Central Asia.

In this regard one may mention following remarks by Jed Snyder: "The components of a national security strategy are essentially universal. The context within which a nation pursues the development and implementation of that strategy will vary widely, influenced by a series of factors, including: the state's geopolitical position; the range of threats to its interests; its strategic assets; access to financial, economic, and political resources; and historical patterns and predilections."²

In the national security policy of a country the most important point is the problem of preventing aggression. However in both the economic and in the political sense it is hardly possible to create a stable situation by the power of Uzbekistan alone. So, alongside efforts to create on a constitutional basis a limited defence power, a regional security system was accepted as necessary. Together with that concrete steps were taken in the field of integration with countries of Central Asia: the tactic of selective strategic partnership for preventing concrete threats was selected.

The legal base for Uzbekistan's national security strategy is The Concept of National Security of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted by the Oliy Majlis in 1997. On this base the Law on National Security of the Republic of Uzbekistan was designed.

Potential sources of challenges and threats for the republic include those most serious problems, which exist in the neighbouring regions. Here it is possible to list several kinds of main threats:

1. Internal conflicts in Afghanistan and Tajikistan on national-ethnic, territorial, religious and other grounds.
2. The India-Pakistan conflict, in the light of both states now having nuclear armament.
3. The competition between Pakistan, Iran and Turkey for influence over the whole Central Asian region.
4. The export of Islamic extremism. Uzbekistan is concerned with this, first of all because of its location in this region, as well as certain links of part of the Muslim population with the Muslims of the Near and Middle East. For Uzbekistan it is officially declared by the President as desirable to stop the reinforcement of Islamic Fundamentalism, the revival of Islam as a political power, and to search for means of reducing its sphere of influence on the states bordering Uzbekistan.

A strategy of stability supposes preventive measures against allowing the entry into the territory of Uzbekistan of terrorists and weapons from neighbouring states. An example of the real use of such a strategy is the recent attempts by a large group of terrorists to pass from Tajikistan through Kyrgyzstan to the territory of Uzbekistan. The Uzbek Air Force in coordination with the Kyrgyz authorities inflicted preventive strikes on their base in Tajikistan. It is important to note that despite being

arranged with the Kyrgyz and Tajik governments these actions caused some serious consequences in international relations, which are considered further below.

Some Aspects of the Military Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan in its proposals on ensuring national and regional security concentrates on the following directions:

1. For national security: the construction and strengthening of national armed forces.
2. For a regional security system: strengthening trust with neighbouring countries. Coordination of defence activity in Central Asia on the basis of a Central Asian alliance (with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) as well as on the basis of bilateral cooperation (with the other countries of the region and CIS, including Russia).
3. For collective security: an agreement on collective security within the framework of the CIS.
4. For the system of security on a Eurasian scale, for providing of general tolerance for peacekeeping activity: strengthening of relations with the OSCE and NATO.
5. For a global security system: cooperation with UNO.

Strengthening of national armed forces

In his report on the first session of Oliy Majlis, the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov said: "In the uneasy world surrounding us there are our friends, but there are also those who should like to draw Uzbekistan into the sphere of their influence. To this end they will use any available methods, including military ones. So we shall have a mobile, well trained army, capable of ensuring our border protection, our independence, our sovereignty".³

The first step in strengthening security after proclaiming independence was the creation of the national armed forces (this was not done in Tajikistan and that caused the present state of civil war). The structure of Uzbekistan's Military Forces comprises the Army itself, Frontier Troops, Air Forces, and National Guard.

The president of Uzbekistan is the Commander in Chief of the Army, and he has authority to appoint and dismiss all senior commanders. The Minister of Defence and the Chief of the General Staff have operational and administrative control. Since early 1992, President Karimov has exercised his supreme authority in making appointments and in the application of military power.

The Staff structure of the armed forces retains the configuration of the former Turkestan Military District. The structure includes Operational, Intelligence and Mobilisation Directorates, and signals, transport, CIS affairs, aviation, air defence, missile troops and artillery departments. The armed forces are divided into four main components: ground defence forces, air force, air defence and National Guard. Ground defence forces are the largest of the four branches. About 30 percent are professional soldiers serving on contract and the remainder are conscripts. The German model has been accepted for the basic army structure. The forces are

divided into an army corps of three motorised rifle brigades, tank regiment, engineer brigade, artillery brigade, artillery regiments, airborne brigade, and aviation, logistics, and communications support units. Combined headquarters are in Tashkent; the headquarters of the 360th Motor Rifle Division is at Termez, and that of the Airmobile Division is in Fergana.

The agreement signed in March 1994 by Russia and Uzbekistan defines the terms of Russian assistance in training, allocation of airfields, communications, and information on air space and air defence units. Air Force and Air Defence are subordinate to the Secretary of Defence.

The National Guard was created immediately after independence (August 1991) as an internal security force under the direct command of the president. Although plans called for a force of 1,000 troops including a ceremonial Guard Corps, a special purpose detachment, and a motorised rifle regiment, reports indicate that only one battalion of the motorised rifle regiment had been formed by 1994. The National Guard forces in Tashkent, thought to number about 700, moved under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Security in 1994.

The Uzbekistan Border Troops Command was established in March 1992, based on the former Soviet Central Asian Border Troops District. In 1994 the Frontier Guard, as it is also called, came under the control of the Chairman of National Security. The force, comprising about 1,000 troops in 1996, is under the command of a Deputy Chairman of the National Security Committee. Before 1992 protection of the Uzbek-Afghan border was done with the help of Russian border guards, however in 1993 Uzbekistan declared that Uzbek guards were able to protect their own borders themselves. Apart from the protection of the Afghan-Uzbek border, after the events of 16 February 1999 (when Uzbekistan terrorists exploded 6 bombs in the capital, causing casualties) the need appeared to fortify borders with the neighbouring CIS countries too. This is necessary not only to prevent gangs of terrorists entering the territory of Uzbekistan, but also in the struggle against drugs transit. At last by a presidential decree a separate State Committee for Border Guards was created, with its own Headquarters and reporting directly to the President.

Professional military staff preparation and training

The Uzbekistan Military Academy was established as the only one amongst the CIS Central Asian Republics, on the basis of the previous Tashkent Higher Military School of the Ministry of Defence of the USSR. The structure and educational programme of the Academy has been created on a completely new concept stemming from the Military Doctrine of the Independent Republic of Uzbekistan. The main task of the Academy is to provide military officers with the latest international experience in military command and structuring. An important fact is that officers from the neighbouring Central Asian countries also improve their qualification in this Academy.

The material base of other military colleges has been considerably strengthened. A special programme for military and patriotic education of youth has been designed for the whole civil secondary education system.

The General Weapons Command Academy in Tashkent is responsible for providing officers with higher professional qualifications.

Initial military education for officers is provided by a number of special military colleges.

Tashkent Military College provides the Army with professionals having a common army training.

The Military Driving Academy in Samarkand is a school for military transport officers.

The Chirchik Tank School trains armour professionals. Bilateral agreements with Russia and Turkey also provide for training of Uzbek troops in those countries.

The Chirchik Military Aviation College prepares personnel for Uzbek military aviation. However, many pilots pass preparation and education in Russian military schools. At present more than 60% of military pilots are Uzbeks.

Because aviation is the most powerful military force in contemporary armies, Uzbekistan supports very wide scale cooperation in military aviation development. This suggests that it benefits from a wide range of international experience in military aviation. For aircraft training, Uzbekistan retains some Aero L-39C Albatross turboprop trainers and piston-engine Yak-52 basic trainers. Many officers of the army high command pass preparation in German, USA and other NATO countries' schools. The major training facilities are the foundation of the military training programme.

Reshaping and rearming the Army

For more efficient use of the Army considerable structural reforms are necessary. In the Uzbek Army General Staff several models were proposed for reshaping the Army. Reshaping an army expects deployment of the army to comply with the most strategically important directions. Uzbek Deputy Defence Minister Qosimjon Mamedov outlined the main tasks of Army reform as follows: "The first task includes the restationing of units... The Soviet era stationing of troops is no long suitable for defending and maintaining the combat readiness of the army of our independent country. As we are living in an independent state, to defend its territory our military units should be stationed across our territory in such a way that they can ensure the defence of our country. A lot has been done in this respect... Unfortunately, the 16th February events have a thousand times over revealed many of our shortcomings. Our army puts the issue of vigilance above everything else. Combat readiness is no less an important issue and is the number one priority today. The work being carried out in localities shows that irrespective of where a threat comes from, our army is always ready. We have enough force and defence capabilities".⁴

Role of Central-Asian Battalion in Regional Stability

In the context of the complicated social and economic situation in the CIS Central Asian states it had been necessary both to provide military security for the region and to prevent national budgets becoming overstretched, which is an inevitable condition of creating a national army. The need to have military forces sufficient for regional peacekeeping was realised after the civil war in Tajikistan got into full swing.

In July 1994 the heads of the three states, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed an Agreement on Establishing an Interstate Security Council at Presidential and Prime Ministerial levels. As executive bodies for the Council were to be three sub-councils: of Prime Ministers, of Foreign Secretaries and of Defence Secretaries. In the April 1995 at the Working Meeting in Shymkent (Kazakhstan) the heads of the three states, considering the high conflict potential in the region, called on the countries of the CIS, UN and OSCE to promote a national reconciliation and determination of peace and stability in Tajikistan.

In December 1995 at the Meeting in Jambule an Agreement on Creation of a Collective Peacekeeping Battalion under UN supervision was signed by the heads of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Consultations on the international experience of this kind of initiative were to be delivered by UN and NATO military experts.

The shares of the countries in funding for the Central Asian Battalion are: Kazakhstan: 40%, Kyrgyzstan: 20%, Uzbekistan: 40%. The annual budget is 2 million US Dollars.

The Battalion is located at Zhibek-Zholy (Chernyayevka) village in Kazakhstan. The structure, location and command of the Battalion were approved by the Defence Ministers of the three countries. The Battalion is intended for performing missions in the framework of UN peacekeeping activity. It is manned on contract and voluntary bases. The Battalion consists of Command, Staff, main subdivisions (3 motorised companies), reconnaissance detachment, first-aid station and reinforcement subunits: mortar battery, air defence missile battery, grenade launcher and engineering platoons.

The Battalion's mission was to be similar to the usual ones of UN peacekeeping troops. However certain active exercises have been provided for the Central Asian Battalion by NATO, and given changing political relations, its status and the real role being played in regional security radically changed. In 1998-1999 Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan considerably decreased their activeness in the Battalion's exercises and development. Only Uzbekistan has been continuing its participation in this activity on the same level of responsibility. Presently the Central Asian Battalion might turn into a purely nominal military division if Uzbekistan were not calling the attention of its partner countries to the necessity of supporting and developing this tool of regional security. A reason for this surprising shift might be seen in analysis of another security question: the CIS Agreement on Collective Security.

CIS Agreement on Collective Safety

In its period of independence, Uzbekistan has found it advantageous to preserve existing links with Russia and the other former Soviet republics. Created in 1991, "the Alliance of independent states, into which the majority of former USSR countries entered in the hope of having economic help from Russia, was ignored, first of all by Russia, and gradually turned into a purely nominal formation. Each country has chosen its own way of economic development. Many CIS countries were re-configured for western market standards. Economic relationships with former partners quickly decayed.

The victory of Fundamentalists' Iran-oriented power in Afghanistan and the prospect of formation of links between Islamic regimes in Iran, Afghanistan and

Tajikistan could destabilise the situation in the Republic of Uzbekistan, where a large part of the population belongs to the Muslim religion. Fearing the repetition of a Tajikistan scenario in Uzbekistan, when united but destructive opposition put direct pressure on the authorities by using force, and realising the danger of the last war in Afghanistan, the Uzbek government kept taking preventive measures.

President of Uzbekistan I Karimov was optimistic in his assessments of CIS prospects.⁵ Happy circumstances for the strengthening of the CIS were marked, first of all, in the military-political sphere. On the initiative of the Uzbek government in Tashkent on 15 May 1992 a meeting of the heads of CIS states was held, when an Agreement on Collective Security was signed. The Agreement was signed by Russia, Armenia, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states. It stipulated active military cooperation, mutual military support, in case of aggression from outside.

In practice the Agreement appeared not to have been provided with any appropriate mechanisms of implementation and did not work (this is acknowledged for all interstate relations except those of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). Western CIS countries, Belorussia and Moldova, considered that the problems of Afghanistan and Tajikistan did not concern them, uniquely declared their non-participation and refused military help. Russia only proclaimed its own intentions, requiring that its military contingent be placed along Uzbek-Afghan borders, which certainly would make the difficult situation on the border even more so.

For pragmatic reasons, since the beginning of 1994 Uzbekistan has made particular efforts to improve relations with the other CIS countries. Between 1993 and 1996, regional cooperation was most visible in Tajikistan, where Uzbek troops fought alongside Russian troops, largely because of the two countries' shared emphasis on Islamic fundamentalism as an ostensible threat to Central Asia and to Russia's southern border. In 1994 and 1995 increased efforts were made to widen economic and military ties with Russia and the other CIS states. Economic and trade treaties have been signed with Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Largely because of its important role in Uzbekistan's national security, Russia has retained the role of preferred partner in non-military treaties as well. On 10 February 1995 at the meeting of heads of state and on the advice of heads of governments of CIS states was accepted the Declaration of the Agreement of Participant States on the Collective Security of the Agreement Participant States. Convinced of the uselessness and ineffectiveness of the Agreement on Security Uzbekistan in 1999 declared it was leaving the agreement and starting to search for alternative western partners. After undertaking a number of consultations with European countries, a number of meetings with French, Italian and German military representatives were held. A decision was made to develop actively military cooperation with the USA.

Uzbekistan and Russia

Uzbekistan sought a close partnership with Russia, while other Central Asian countries set up contacts with Western states. In 1992 the President of Uzbekistan in an interview to foreign journalists noted that Russia would undertake guarantees to maintain stability in Central Asia.⁶ The government of Gaydar, however, was configured for Western partners and did not show any interest either in the development, or in the conservation of economic relations with former soviet republics of Central Asia, preoccupied by its own decision of economic and political problems. The President of Uzbekistan repeatedly emphasised need for economic cooperation within the framework of the CIS, but if Russia did not take into account the interests of other states of Commonwealth during the period of reform, it could bring about economic chaos and ruin.

Uzbekistan intended to establish equal and mutually beneficial relations with Russia. However, in Russia the great-power tendencies were still alive, and the majority of Russian policies proclaimed democratic slogans only in words. In reality Russia did not build with any former soviet republic truly equal relationships. Russian policy in respect of CIS Republics was of a market nature and unpredictable.

Serious irritants in the relationship were Russia's demand that Uzbekistan deposit a large portion of its gold in the Russian Central Bank in order to remain in the rouble zone (which became a primary rationale for Uzbekistan's introduction of its own national currency in 1993) and Russia's strong pressure to provide Russians in Uzbekistan with dual citizenship. In 1994 and 1995, a trend within Russia toward reasserting more control over the region, boosted by the seeming dominance of conservative forces in this area in Moscow, only compounded Uzbekistan's wariness of relations with Russia.

At the same time the military potential of Russia gave Uzbekistan a hope of military help not only in the event of direct aggression from the south, but also for strengthening of borders and of the Uzbek army. In 1992 before a trip in Moscow for signing a bilateral agreement, Islam Karimov declared: "We are to think on the safety of our southern borders"⁷, letting it be understood that from Russia military support was expected. On 30 May 1992 in Moscow an Uzbek-Russian agreement was signed. The majority of items in the agreement concerned military questions, including preparing personnel for the Uzbek army in Russia military schools.

Together with Russia, Uzbekistan had been managing to support a "buffer zone" in Northern Afghanistan through protection of the authority of Uzbek General Dustum. This "buffer zone" provided safety for Uzbekistan's southern borders. After Taleban came to power in the north of Afghanistan in 1998, the "buffer zone" was practically destroyed. A critical situation emerged on the border. Uzbekistan referred to Russia for military-technical help within the framework of the Agreement on Security and the bilateral Agreement between Uzbekistan and Russia. Russia promised a combat technician and missiles, but no help came to Uzbekistan. Russia rendered active military help to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan appeared to be considered by Russia as a "buffer zone", protecting the pro-Russian republics of Central Asia - Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan - from the not-quite South.

Cooperation of Uzbekistan with NATO

In 1992 the President of Uzbekistan declared: "I espouse the armed forces scheme accepted in NATO".⁸ In 1994 Uzbekistan, like most of the other former Soviet republics, became a member of the Partnership for Peace programme of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, providing the basis for some joint military exercises with Western forces.

The most real help in creation of a national army was provided by NATO member countries: USA, Germany and Turkey. First of all this was help in the field of studying the principles of construction of modern armed forces. Uzbekistan has chosen a German model of Army structure. Within the Partnership for Peace programme many officers, military officials and analysts have been able to participate in military training in the USA and European countries. Russia ceased being the only country to prepare military personnel for Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan participated in different military-political actions aimed to provide national and global safety. The main forms of cooperation were participation of government representatives in seminars, conferences and councils on problems of partnership, but participation in training of peacekeeping divisions as participants or observers also took place.

Uzbek Army detachments participated in training in USA (state of Louisiana) in 1995 and in North Carolina in 1996. In September 1997 within the framework of the programme, training of peacekeepers exercises were held on the territory of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, "Centrazbat-97". Aside from subdivisions of Centrazbat, American, Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Latvian and Turkish soldiers and officers took part in the training.

In 1999 joint training of US and Uzbek armed forces took place in Uzbekistan. In the course of training Uzbek servicemen studied the strategy of preparation for peacekeeping operations. In June 1999 Uzbekistan held open joint courses of NATO and the Ministry of Defence of Uzbekistan for civilian agencies engaged in coping with emergencies. In February 1999 Uzbekistan opened its official mission at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

Cooperation with NATO has become for Uzbekistan a strategic task. NATO delegations of different levels repeatedly visited Uzbekistan. The President of Uzbekistan participated in the celebration of the NATO 50th-year jubilee in USA. During the visit a number of important meetings took place, including with President Clinton and State Secretary Albright.

At present the relations of Uzbekistan with NATO have entered a new stage and are successfully developing. Uzbekistan will acknowledge NATO as an international military organisation capable of ensuring peace in different regions of the planet.

Uzbekistan and OSCE

Strengthening security and cooperation, including in Central Asia, is the main mission of the OSCE. Participation of Uzbekistan and other states of the region in OSCE activity promotes their security, independence and territorial integrity, and creates conditions for the development of the European and Central Asian security system. Central Asian states gain the possibility of joining the sphere of the

European security process, to spread in the region the principles of the OSCE. The OSCE gains a possibility of influencing events in Central Asia. The integration of Central Asian States into the European security system and the triumph of OSCE principles in the region will certainly have a positive influence on other, neighbouring countries.

Within the framework of cooperation with the OSCE in Uzbekistan were held a number of seminars on regional security. As part of the OSCE programme technical, material and educational help has been tendered to different departments of Uzbekistan to spread OSCE principles.

However, in the opinion of Uzbek authorities, the potential for cooperation with the OSCE is used insufficiently. During the last meeting of the President of Uzbekistan with an OSCE delegation, Islam Karimov voiced a number of critical remarks. He noted that within the framework of the cooperation the main attention of OSCE had been paid to legal questions and rights protection, but in the field of security cooperation has been practically discontinued. Uzbekistan, first of all, is interested in security cooperation. There is no Uzbek representative in OSCE headquarters, to represent the interests of the Republic. In the opinion of the President, cooperation with OSCE should take into account Uzbekistan's interests as well.

Uzbekistan and UN

Uzbekistan co-operates with the UN in different actions on peace strengthening all over the world and supports all initiatives of UN member countries on creating a global security system. Trying to attract the attention of the world community to the situations in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, the President of Uzbekistan repeatedly raised these questions from a UN standpoint, during official meetings with the heads of European countries. At the 48th Session of UN General Assembly President Karimov offered to create in Tashkent a Constantly Acting UN Seminar on Security Problems, Prosperity and Cooperation in Central Asia. The last international seminar on problems of adjusting the situation in Afghanistan "6 plus 2" was held in Tashkent in July 1999. Representatives of all fighting parties, bordering states, and also Russia and USA took part in the seminar.

Cardinal Principles of Uzbekistan External Policy

1. Uzbekistan as a sovereign state and the subject of international relations builds its policy with the states of the world community on a basis of common principles of international rights and equal cooperation and does not consider any state its enemy in military and political attitude.
2. State military policy is based on the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law "On Defence", the Military Doctrine of the Republic of Uzbekistan, on the obligations of Uzbekistan as a member of UN, OSCE, CIS, NATO's Partnership for Peace and other international organisations.
3. In the Law on Defence of 1992 Uzbekistan's military doctrine is strictly defensive, with no territorial ambitions against any other state.
4. Uzbekistan's overall military doctrine does not permit strategic or battlefield chemical weapons in the inventory of the Uzbek armed forces.

5. Although its armed forces are small in comparison with international standards, Uzbekistan is rated as the strongest military power among the five newly independent Central Asian nations.
6. Particular urgency is paid to preventive diplomacy, targeted first of all on adjusting and preventing conflicts of an international or regional scale.
7. At the same time the experience of prevention and solution of military conflicts of different types both in the world, and on the territory of CIS countries shows that peaceful capability is more efficient when it is based on sufficient military power and support.

Endnotes

¹ "Truth of Orient", 24 February 1995.

² Jed Snyder, Institute for National Security Studies, US National Defence University, report on the International Conference "Democratic Civilian Military, Defence Planning and management, and Regional Stability in Central Asia", sponsored by the George C Marshall European Centre of International Institute of Strategic Studies, 12-16 August 1996, Tashkent Uzbekistan.

³ "Pravda Vostoka", 24 February 1995.

⁴ Uzbek Television first channel, Tashkent, in Uzbek, 1530, 18 July 1999. Cited according to BBC CAS Bulletin.

⁵ "Vecherny Tashkent", 15 May 1992.

⁶ "Nezavisimaya Gazeta", 15 May 1992.

⁷ "Narodnoye Slovo", 2 June 1992.

⁸ "Independent Newspaper", 15 May 1992, interview to foreign journalists.

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