Uzbekistan in Perspective
An Orientation Guide

Curriculum Development Division
Educational Technology Department
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# Uzbekistan in Perspective

## UZBEKISTAN IN PERSPECTIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 1 - PROFILE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTS AND FIGURES</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## UZBEKISTAN CIP: CHAPTER 2 GEOGRAPHY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UZBEKISTAN’S NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPOGRAPHY</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIMATE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BODIES OF WATER</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMU DARYA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYR DARYA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZARAFSHAN</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARAL SEA</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAJOR CITIES</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASHKENT</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMARKAND</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUKHARA</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHAKHRISABZ</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## UZBEKISTAN CIP: CHAPTER 3 HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EARLY HISTORY</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENGHIS KHAN</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAMERLANE</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UZBEKS</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSSIAN CONQUEST</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SOVIET EMPIRE</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEPENDENCE</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECENT EVENTS</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## UZBEKISTAN CIP: CHAPTER 4 ECONOMY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURE</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANDARD OF LIVING</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDUSTRY</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENERGY</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATURAL RESOURCES AND Trade</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### UZBEK CIP: CHAPTER 5 SOCIETY

**Ethnic Groups and Languages**
- Uzbeks
- Kazakhs
- Kyrgyz
- Tajiks

**Traditions**

**Gender Issues**

**Cuisine**

**Sports**

**Dance**

**Literature**

### CHAPTER 6: SECURITY

**The U.S.–Uzbek Strategic Partnership**

**National Defense**
- Armed Forces
- Internal Security

**Internal Security Threats**

**Poverty**

**Neighboring Countries**
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Afghanistan
- China
- Russia

**Areas of International Security Cooperation**
Chapter 1 - Profile

Introduction
Uzbekistan is a doubly landlocked country in Central Asia. In contrast to its neighbors, which were nomadic societies, settled farming emerged here much earlier. Urban centers like Tashkent and Samarkand grew up around transit points on the ancient Silk Road that connected Europe and Asia. The country was subsequently ruled by Persians, Arabs, Mongols, Turks, and Russians who saw it as a place to cultivate cotton. Since independence in 1991, the government has taken few steps to implement multi-party democracy or privatization of Soviet era industries. The threat of Islamic fundamentalism has been used as a pretext for harsh and repressive rule. Since cotton is the primary source of foreign exchange earnings, the government is also reluctant to privatize the agricultural sector, which would enable farmers to keep more of the wealth generated through their efforts. Their extreme poverty and the lack of outlets to voice their dissatisfaction with official policy have opened the door to radical groups that promote political violence.

Facts and Figures

Location: Central Asia, north of Afghanistan

Area: slightly larger than California
  total: 447,400 sq km (172,742 sq mi)
  land: 425,400 sq km (164,247 sq mi)
  water: 22,000 sq km (8,494 sq mi)

Border countries: Afghanistan 137 km (85 mi); Kazakhstan 2,203 km (1,368 mi);
Kyrgyzstan 1,099 km (682 mi); Tajikistan 1,161 km (721 mi); Turkmenistan 1,621 km
(1,007 mi)

Population: 27,780,059

Age structure: 0–14 years: 32.4% (male 4,587,338/female 4,416,014)
  15–64 years: 62.8% (male 8,636,226/female 8,817,633)
  65 years and over: 4.8% (male 543,417/female 779,431)

Median age:

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total: 22.9 years
male: 22.3 years
female: 23.5 years

Population growth rate: 1.732%

Birth rate: 26.46 births/1,000 population

Death rate: 7.73 deaths/1,000 population

Net migration rate: -1.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population

Infant mortality rate:
total: 68.89 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 73.5 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 64.05 deaths/1,000 live births

Nationality:
noun: Uzbekistani
adjective: Uzbekistani

Ethnic groups: Uzbek 80%, Russian 5.5%, Tajik 5%, Kazakh 3%, Karakalpak 2.5%, Tatar 1.5%, other 2.5% (1996 est.)

Religions: Muslim 88% (mostly Sunnis), Eastern Orthodox 9%, other 3%

Languages: Uzbek 74.3%, Russian 14.2%, Tajik 4.4%, other 7.1%

Literacy:
definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 99.3%
male: 99.6%
female: 99% (2003 est.)

Country name:
conventional long form: Republic of Uzbekistan
conventional short form: Uzbekistan
local long form: Ozbekiston Respublikasi
local short form: Ozbekiston
former: Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic

Capital: Tashkent (Toshkent)

Government type: The government is a republic based on authoritarian presidential rule with little power outside the executive branch.
Administrative divisions: 12 provinces (viloyatlar, singular - viloyat), 1 autonomous republic (respublika), and 1 city (shahar); Andijon Viloyati, Buxoro Viloyati, Farg'ona Viloyati, Jizzax Viloyati, Namangan Viloyati, Navoiy Viloyati, Qashqadaryo Viloyati (Qarshi), Qoraqalpog'iston Respublikasi (Nukus), Samarqand Viloyati, Sirdaryo Viloyati (Guliston), Surxondaryo Viloyati (Termiz), Toshkent Shahri, Toshkent Viloyati, Xorazm Viloyati (Urganch)

note: Administrative divisions have the same names as their administrative centers (exceptions have the administrative center name following in parentheses).

Independence: 1 September 1991 (from Soviet Union)


Constitution: Adopted 8 December 1992

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Legal system: The legal system is based on civil law system and has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction.

Executive branch:
chief of state: President Islom Karimov (since 24 March 1990, when he was elected president by the then Supreme Soviet)
head of government: Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyayev (since 11 December 2003)
cabinet: The Cabinet of Ministers is appointed by the president with approval of the Supreme Assembly.
elections: The president is elected by popular vote for a seven-year term (eligible for a second term. It previously was a five-year term and was extended by constitutional amendment in 2002.). Elections were last held 9 January 2000 and are next to be held in 2007. The prime minister, ministers, and deputy ministers are appointed by the president.
election results: Islom Karimov was reelected president; percent of vote - Islom Karimov 88.1%, Aslidden Rustamov 3.2%, Dilorom Tashmukhamedova 2.9%, Akmal Saidov 2.6%

Legislative branch: The bicameral Supreme Assembly or Oliy Majlis consists of an upper house or Senate (100 seats; 84 members are elected by regional governing councils and 16 appointed by the president to serve five-year terms) and a lower house or Legislative Chamber (120 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms).
elections: Elections were last held 26 December 2004 and 9 January 2005. They are next to be held December 2009.
election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - NA; Legislative Chamber - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - LDPU 41, NDP 32, Fidokorlar
17, MTP 11, Adolat 9, unaffiliated 10

*Note:* All parties in the Supreme Assembly support President KARIMOV.

**Judicial branch:** The judicial branch is made up of the Supreme Court. Judges are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Supreme Assembly.

**Political parties and leaders:** Adolat (Justice) Social Democratic Party [Dilorom Tashmuhammedova]; Democratic National Rebirth Party (Milly Tiklanish) or MTP [Hurshid Dosmuhammedov]; Fidokorlar National Democratic Party (Self-Sacrificers) [Ahtam Tursunov]; Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan or LDPU [Adham Shadmanov; People's Democratic Party or NDP (formerly Communist Party) [Asliddin Rustamov]

**Political pressure groups and leaders:** Agrarian and Entrepreneurs' Party [Marat Zahidov]; Birlik (Unity) Movement [Abdurakhim Polat, chairman]; Committee for the Protection of Human Rights [Marat Zahidov]; Erk (Freedom) Democratic Party [Muhammad Solih, chairman] was banned 9 December 1992; Ezgulik Human Rights Society [Vasila Inoyatova]; Free Farmers' Party or Ozod Dehqonlar [Nigora Khidoyatova]; Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan [Talib Yakubov, chairman]; Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan [Mikhail Ardzinov, chairman]; Mazlum; Sunshine Coalition [Sanjar Umarov, chairman]

**International organization participation:** Asian Development Bank (AsDB), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC), Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Criminal Court (ICCT) (signatory), International Development Association (IDA), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Federation of Trade Unions (ITUC), International Labor Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Interpol, International Olympic Committee (IOC), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Telecommunications Satellites Organization (ITSO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Partnership for Peace (PFP), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), United Nations (UN), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO),
Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Customs Organization (WCO), World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), World Health Organization (WHO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Trade Organization (WTO) (observer)

**Diplomatic representation from the U.S.:**
*chief of mission:* Ambassador Richard B. Norland  
*embassy:* 3 Moyqo'rq'on, 5th Block, Yunusobod District, Tashkent 100093  
*telephone:* [998] (71) 120-5450

**GDP per capita:** $2,000 (2006 est.)

**GDP composition by sector:**
*agriculture:* 27.6%
*industry:* 29.4%
*services:* 43% (2006 est.)

**Labor force:** 14.43 million (2006 est.)

**Labor force - by occupation:**
*agriculture:* 44%
*industry:* 20%
*services:* 36% (1995)

**Unemployment rate:** 3% officially by the Ministry of Labor, plus another 20% underemployed (2006)

**Population below poverty line:** 33% (2004 est.)

**Agriculture products:** cotton, vegetables, fruits, grain, livestock

**Industries:** textiles, food processing, machine building, metallurgy, gold, petroleum, natural gas, chemicals

**Telephones - main lines in use:** 1.793 million (2005)

**Telephone mobile cellular:** 1.1 million (2005)

**Internet hosts:** 11,832

**Internet users:** 1.7 million (2006)

**Airports:** 54
Airports with paved runways:
total: 33
over 3,047 m: 6
2,438 to 3,047 m: 13
1,524 to 2,437 m: 5
914 to 1,523 m: 5
under 914 m: 4

Airports with unpaved runways:
total: 21
2,438 to 3,047 m: 2
under 914 m: 19

Pipelines: gas 9,594 km (5,961 mi); oil 868 km (539 mi) (2006)

Railways:
total: 3,950 km (2,454 mi)
broad gauge: 1.520-m gauge (620 km/385 mi electrified) (2006)

Roadways:
total: 81,600 km (50,703 mi)
paved: 71,237 km (44,264 mi)
unpaved: 10,363 km (6,439 mi) (1999)

Waterways: 1,100 km (683 mi) (2006)

Ports and terminals: Termiz (Amu Darya)

Military branches: Army, Air and Air Defense Forces, National Guard

Military service age and obligation: 18 years of age for compulsory military service
conscript service obligation: 12 months (2004)

Manpower available for military service:
males age 18–49: 6,340,220
females age 18–49: 6,432,072 (2005 est.)
Chapter 2 - Geography

Introduction
Central Asia, a dry and arid region, boasts a diverse topographical landscape which includes high mountains and glaciers. At lower elevations, dry steppes and deserts predominate. Arable land is estimated to be less than 11% of the total land area. While the region is abundantly endowed with water resources, they are unequally distributed. More than 90% is concentrated in the mountains of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan although Uzbekistan, located downstream, is the largest user. Most of the Uzbek population lives in the Fergana Valley, which was divided between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the 1920s by Russian administrators in Moscow.

Uzbekistan’s Neighborhood
Uzbekistan, which is the size of California, shares borders with Afghanistan for 137 km (85 mi), Kazakhstan for 2,203 km (1,369 mi), Kyrgyzstan for 1,099 km (683 mi), Tajikistan for 1,161 km (721 mi), and Turkmenistan for 1,621 km (1,007 mi). The dissolution of the communist bloc resulted in the creation of the latter five countries in 1991 in which Soviet-drawn republic boundaries were recognized as international nation-state borders.

With the exception of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the rest are landlocked. They share transportation linkages established by Moscow in accordance with the needs of the USSR. Moreover, they are mutually dependent on each other in other important areas, such as sharing scarce water resources. Aside from disputes over natural resources which include hydrocarbons, the ambitions of outside powers including Russia, Iran, Turkey, and China heighten the prospect of conflict in Central Asia.

Topography
Steppe and rolling dune sandy desert comprise 80% of the country. The central part of the country is dominated by the sprawling Kyzylkum desert. To the west lies a vast region of flat plains known as the Turan Plain. Additional plains exist to the south and east of the Kyzylkum.

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The east and northeast is dominated by mountains. The Tian Shan⁶ and Pamirs-Alai mountain ranges, which cut across from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, have peaks in excess of 4,500 m (14,763 ft).⁷ Uzbekistan’s location, between two rivers, ensures its commercial importance and its ability to support larger populations than elsewhere in Central Asia.

**Climate**

Uzbekistan has a harsh continental climate marked by four distinct seasons. Accordingly, it experiences extremes of temperature. During the summer, temperatures may rise as high as 45°C (113°F) in southern Uzbekistan while the average temperature in July ranges from 26°C (78°F) to 32°C (89°F). Winter temperatures in the north may drop as low as -37°C (-34°F), and daily average temperatures throughout the country in January range from -6° (21°F) to 2°C (35°F).⁸ Humidity is low and precipitation is mainly confined to the winter and spring months. The plains receive the least amount of precipitation, 80–90 mm (3.2 to 3.5 in) per year. To the east and south, the amount rises to 890–1,000 mm (2.9 to 3.2 ft) annually.⁹

**Bodies of Water**

*Amu Darya*

The Amu Darya is one of the longest rivers in Central Asia.¹⁰ From its origins in the Hindu Kush it flows to the Pamir Mountains in Afghanistan. From there it cuts west and marks the short border between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan before emptying into the southern shore of the Aral Sea in Uzbekistan after a 2,540 km (1,578 mi) journey.¹¹ Its high silt level is the result of overuse for irrigation, which has prevented this river from replenishing the shrinking Aral Sea.¹²

*Syr Darya*

The Syr Darya, which travels 2,137 km (1,327 mi), has its origins in a remote part of Kyrgyzstan before descending from the Tian Shan into the Fergana Valley. Skirting Tashkent, it flows through southern Kazakhstan before reaching the Aral Sea. It is the

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⁶ Tian Shan is the Chinese name for “Celestial Mountains.”
primary source of water for irrigation in the areas through which it passes.\textsuperscript{13} Owing to the overexploitation of its water resources, the amount of flow into the Upper Aral Sea has been greatly reduced.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Zarafshan}

The Zarafshan is the third largest river of Uzbekistan. The river is known, upstream, where it flows through Tajikistan, as the Mostchokh Darya. It enters Uzbekistan through the Zarafshan Valley, located in the Samarkand region.\textsuperscript{15} It provides water for some of the most important oases in the country.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Aral Sea}

The Aral Sea, half of which is in Uzbekistan, is situated in a large, flat desert basin. In 1960 it was the fourth largest lake in the world. Since then its surface area has decreased by 50\% in recent decades while the volume has registered a 75\% drop.\textsuperscript{17} Wetlands disappeared owing to the lack of water while the falling water tables caused oases to dry up. The Aral Sea is now divided into two bodies of water and, if current trends are not arrested, it will eventually morph into a series of isolated salt lakes. Numerous rusted boats dot the landscape as reminders of the once strong fishing industry. Today, the salinity of the lake has diminished the fish population and left the surrounding land hostile to plants and people.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{Major Cities}

\textit{Tashkent}

The capital city’s name means “Stone Fortress” and its origins date back to the 1st century C.E. By the 8th century, it had become a Muslim city.\textsuperscript{19} The city became part of the Mongol empire in 1220 and then the Russian empire in 1865. The establishment of a Trans-Caspian rail link in 1889 through Tashkent facilitated transportation and brought Tashkent more closely into the Russian orbit. Today little remains of historic buildings as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Yale Center for Earth Observation. “Syr-Darya River/Chu Watershed.” No date. http://www.yale.edu/emcwa/Syr-Darya/syrdarya_chu_watershed2.htm
\item \textsuperscript{16} Uzbekistan: The Golden Road to Samarkand. MacLeod, Calum and Bradley Mayhew. 1997. Passport Books.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Visualizing Earth. “The Aral Sea.” No date. http://visearth.ucsd.edu/VisE_Int/aralsea/index.html
\end{itemize}
a result of the 1966 earthquake and subsequent Stalinist-inspired architectural rebuilding under Soviet rule. The population numbered approximately 2.1 million.\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{Samarkand}  
The city of Samarkand is situated on an oasis and is home to approximately 366,000 people.\textsuperscript{21} It developed as an urban center from the 10th century B.C.E. because it lay on the Silk Road. As such, it is also known as the “Crossroads of Cultures.”\textsuperscript{22} It was conquered in succession by the troops of Alexander the Great, the Arab Caliphate and Genghis Khan, whose army burned the town to the ground in 1220.\textsuperscript{23} Samarkand, with its distinctive blue roofed buildings, was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites in 2001.\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Bukhara}  
Bukhara is known as the historical city of Uzbekistan. When Genghis Khan’s forces burned down the city in 1220, the city’s most famous landmark, the Kalyan Minaret, remained standing. Lore has it that Genghis Khan, impressed by the beauty of the structure, ordered it not to be touched.\textsuperscript{25} For a time it was the tallest building in Central Asia. Subsequent urban development survived and today, a population of 276,000 lives in Bukhara.\textsuperscript{26} Bukhara’s edifices have earned the distinction of being the most representative of medieval architecture in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{27}

\textit{Shakhrisabz}  
Located in the foothills of the Pamir Mountains, Shakhrisabz is home to a population of almost 67,000 people. It is the birthplace of the famed nomadic warrior Tamerlane (1336–1405) who, in his lifetime, conquered more territory than anyone other than Alexander the Great.\textsuperscript{28} Originally known as Kesh, its current name means “Green City” after its verdant gardens.

Environmental Issues

Uzbekistan, contrary to its comparative advantage, became one of the largest cotton producers in the world. This was achieved through massive increases in irrigation. In 1913 there were 1.2 million hectares (2,965,264 acres) of irrigated land. By 1950 the amount had increased to 2.3 million hectares (5,683,423 acres) and then further expanded to 4.2 million hectares (10,378,426 acres) by 1990, the year before the USSR was disbanded. In the process, however, an ecological disaster was created.

Decades of intensive cultivation of a plant that requires a lot of water (cotton) have altered the water table, resulting in salinization. In areas that were once covered by the Aral Sea, salt now blankets the ground like snow. In addition to killing off the fish, salinization has rendered the water unsuitable for irrigation, forcing Uzbek cotton farmers to rely on the dwindling supply brought by the two rivers. Although cotton, or white gold, as it is referred to locally, continues to be a mainstay of the Uzbek economy, production has declined in large part as a result of environmentally-induced constraints.

The Aral Sea, in short, is considered to be the biggest environmental disaster of the 20th century. As the water receded, more than 33,000 sq km (12,741 sq mi) of former seabed has been left bare. It is covered by a thick layer of chemical fertilizer residue, in addition to the salt. This debris is ultimately deposited elsewhere by strong winds, affecting crop quality and yields, natural ground cover, air quality and the life expectancy of livestock and humans. Most cleanup projects have been underwritten by the international

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29 Comparative advantage refers to a country’s superior conditions for producing a particular good, which is then traded for another good, with a country that has an advantage in producing that good. Foundation for Economic Education. Lee, Dwight. “Comparative Advantage.” 1999. http://www.fee.org/Publications/the-Freeman/article.asp?aid=4962
community. Yet, aid agencies typically work on a bilateral basis and rarely coordinate efforts, while an ecological disaster of this magnitude requires large-scale assistance to several governments.

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Chapter 3 - History

Introduction
Over the centuries waves of conquest came crashing in on Central Asia. From the West came Alexander the Great, from the East Genghis Khan and the Mongols, and Russian Czarists and Soviets from the North. Under Soviet rule, Uzbekistan became a vast cotton plantation. It was the third most populous former Soviet republic behind Russia and the Ukraine. Expectations that independence would give way to political pluralism have been dashed as the government reverted to Soviet-style rule in which dissent is not tolerated.

Early History
During the 1st century B.C.E., Persian nomads arrived in present-day Uzbekistan; they discovered small settlements in which the group leader controlled access to water. They constructed irrigation systems along the rivers of Central Asia and established settlements in Samarkand and Bukhara. These towns became stopping points on the Silk Road through which Europe and Asia were commercially linked, and they became extremely wealthy.

By the 4th century B.C.E., after the campaigns of Alexander the Great, the area had assumed a prominent role as a trading center. Cultural mixing intensified as reflected in the number of religions that claimed adherents. In the 6th century B.C.E., western Turks migrated into the area. They became attached to the land and gave up their previously nomadic way of life.

In the 7th century C.E., expanded trade and commerce were dominated by Arabs who introduced Islam to the region. It replaced Buddhism as the dominant faith. By the 10th century, present-day Uzbekistan had become an important part of the Muslim world. The region, renamed Mawarannahr by the Arabs, continued to thrive under Arab, then Persian and finally Turkish rule.

Genghis Khan
Genghis Khan’s Mongolian army waged a war in central Asia that lasted from 1219 to 1225. This conquest changed the people of Mawarannahr and hastened the Turkification of the region. Although Genghis Khan was a Mongol, his army was primarily made up of Turks who had been conscripted as he moved southward.\(^{40}\) In the process, cities were burned to the ground and irrigation systems destroyed. In addition, the Mongol armies intermixed with the population, resulting in a minority Iranian population in Mawarannahr.

Genghis Khan’s ability to conquer and hold territory despite the fact that the Mongols lacked a written language—and in the absence of any sophisticated appreciation of science and agriculture—has been much noted by historians.\(^{41}\) Following his death, his empire was divided between his three sons and orderly succession prevailed for the next few generations. By the early 14th century, however, the breakup of the empire was caused by princes of various tribal groups who began to compete for influence.\(^{42}\)

Tamerlane
One tribal chieftain, Tamerlane, fought his way to the top in the 1380s and became the unchallenged ruler of Mawarannahr Province. From there he proceeded to conquer all of western Central Asia, Iran, Asia Minor, the southern steppe region north of the Aral Sea, and Russia.\(^{43}\) After Alexander the Great, Tamerlane, whose Turkish name Timur means “Iron,” established the second-largest empire and made Samarkand, his birth place, the capital.

As he conquered new lands, he sent the best architects and artisans back to the capital because he recognized the value of cultural preservation in addition to the importance of scientific inquiry. Though his empire did not remain intact for long after his death in 1405, it left a rich architectural history, much of which survives intact in Samarkand. After independence in 1991, his legacy was promoted as part of an effort to create an indigenous non-Russian historical narrative. Once considered a brutal nomad, he is now praised as a wise and compassionate leader. Statues of him have cropped up around the country.

Babur, another Turkic-Mongol warrior revered in Uzbekistan, was the father of the Mogul dynasty of India. His memoirs, written in a variant of Turkish, not Persian or Arabic, hold an acquired place in Uzbek and Indian literature. He marched his army through Afghanistan into India where he established an empire that was still in place when the British Raj arrived.

**Uzbeks**

By the 15th century, the Uzbeks, who migrated into the area as Turkish nomads, had established several states. Of these, the khanate of Bukhara was the most powerful. The khanate controlled the Fergana Valley, the most fertile region in Central Asia. However, the declining fortunes of the region affected them. New routes and modes of transportation, including freight shipping around the Cape of Good Hope, meant less commerce traveling the Silk Road, condemning the region to economic stagnation. It also made it more difficult to maintain standing armies necessary for indigenous leaders to maintain their influence and expand their empires.

The Sunni Uzbeks’ uneasy relations with Shi’ite Iran served to isolate them from the Muslim World. Invasions from Iran, as well as incursions by the nomad tribes in the North, furthered weakened the khanate. Russians also appeared on the scene in part to protect their lands from possible conquest by the British who were developing colonial

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interests in the region.\textsuperscript{51} Caught between these two powers, Central Asians continued to fight among themselves.

\textbf{Russian Conquest}

By the 19th century, Russian interest in Central Asia had increased greatly. This was partly driven by concern the British might acquire control over the region. Shortly after the Russians began asserting control over central Asia in the mid 19th century, the U.S. civil war broke out. Reliant on cotton grown in the American South, Europeans needed to find an alternative source. The czarist rulers of Russia saw Uzbekistan and surrounding regions as a suitable replacement site to grow cotton.\textsuperscript{52}

By 1876, the area that comprises present-day Uzbekistan had fallen under Russian control. This change had little effect on the daily lives of most Uzbeks. Farmers grew more cotton, but Russians did not mingle with the locals. Although transportation links were established, the light textile industry was slow to develop because the cotton was sent to Russia for processing. As the crop balance shifted from food to cotton, the czarist government laid the ground work for its successor, the USSR, to embark on a program of self-sufficiency in cotton after it came to power in 1917.

\textbf{The Soviet Empire}

When Central Asia was put under Russian rule, the conquerors needed to create an administrative structure to govern their empire.\textsuperscript{53} After the Soviet Union was established, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic was created in 1924. The southeastern part was made into the separate Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic, five years later.\textsuperscript{54}

These borders were established and adjusted with three goals in mind: 1) to prevent a resurgence in loyalty to the traditional khanate boundaries that would pose a challenge to Soviet authority; 2) to distribute ethnic groups across political boundaries, in order to avoid domination by one group and to impede the formation of a unified opposition; 3) to ensure dependence on Moscow for political power, and to that end, adopt Russian as the common language.

Imposing an administrative structure was not difficult; changing long-standing cultural norms was another matter. In fact, preexisting ties simply adapted to the new empire. The


Soviet practice was to install local elites in top administrative positions served by Russian deputies. Since the local elites had no prospect of appointment to a position outside of Uzbekistan, those in national positions had every incentive to build up local patronage networks.\(^{55}\)

In the mid 1980s, Uzbekistan was the number one target of newly appointed president Mikhail Gorbachev’s anti-corruption campaign. Over 2,000 functionaries were dismissed. The death of First Secretary Sharof Rashidov, the leader of Uzbekistan’s communist party, exempted him from the purge. Moscow viewed him as corrupt, whereas Uzbeks lauded him for diverting resources that benefited the Republic.\(^{56}\)

**Independence**

The prospect of independence presented opportunities and posed challenges. In April 1991, Uzbekistan and eight other republics agreed to extend the union treaty. The August coup against Gorbachev, though unsuccessful, led to a court decision disbanding the USSR.\(^{57}\) While independence offered autonomy, it also meant the loss of Soviet subsidies.

Since gaining independence, Uzbekistan has been led by Islom Karimov, who had been appointed leader in March 1990. In the December 1991 election, which most observers considered neither free nor fair, Karimov was declared President. In 1995, his presidency was extended by a plebiscite. In 2000, Parliament ruled the extension to be part of his first term, which allowed Karimov to run for a second term in 2000. He won with 92.5% of the vote.\(^{58}\) However, this subsequent election was judged unfair owing to the Karimov government’s pre-election machinations.\(^{59}\)

In Uzbekistan, as well as its Central Asian neighbors, governments have been cognizant of how an Islamic revival could provide “an alternative means of mobilization and expression” one scholar observed in 2000.\(^{60}\) In February 1999, a series of bombings shook Tashkent and led to an immediate crackdown on those perceived to be Islamic

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fundamentalists—*Wahabists* in local vernacular—which in reality extended to a broad range of regime opponents.

**Recent Events**

In early May 2005, several dozen of armed men, believed to be Islamist extremists, stormed the prison where some 20 businessmen were being held, on trial for allegedly forming an Islamist terrorist group. They were freed along with 2,000 other persons incarcerated for various offenses. The commandos took several guards hostage and set off in a convoy. As the army followed, a scene of guerilla warfare filled the streets of Andijan.61

Feelings of anger toward the government for repressing individuals such as these businessmen led to a peaceful gathering of civilians in the streets of Andijan. Men, women, and children protested deteriorating economic and social conditions in what witnesses say was a public discussion about the people’s grievances against the current government. The army was called in, but their violent reaction is now known as the Andijan Massacre. The government claimed its reaction was appropriate to provocation by armed Islamist groups. Most outside observers agree that possibly hundreds of victims who turned out to demonstrate the next day were mostly unarmed civilians, including minors.62 It was, moreover, the climax of six months of widespread dissatisfaction with the economic situation.63 Those who could contradict the official version of events, such as foreign journalists, faced difficulties remaining in the country. Many NGO staff and other types of assistance organizations such as the Peace Corps volunteers also did not have their visas renewed.64

The refusal of the government to convene an outside commission infuriated governments in the West who imposed sanctions or took other measures to register their disapproval.

Islom Karimov remains largely unbowed. Elections are scheduled for 23 December 2007. Despite the fact that he is legally barred from running, few believe the election will end Karimov’s rule.65 He is expected to remain in office either by exploiting existing loop-holes or amending the constitution.66

Uzbekistan Timeline

1st century B.C.E. – Central Asia’s home to nomads becomes part of the Silk Road. Prosperous trading towns with settled populations appear in present-day Uzbekistan.

7th–8th century – Arabs conquer region and introduce Islam, which displaces Buddhism as the dominant faith.

13th century – Mongol Genghis Khan conquers Central Asia with a Turkish Army.

14th century – Turkic Tamerlane establishes a vast empire with his birthplace of Samarkand as the capital.

15th century – Babur establishes a dynastic empire in India to the south. This lasts until the 19th century when the British create the Raj Empire.

17th–18th century – Uzbekistan becomes a series of independent emirates and khanates under ethnic Uzbek rule.

1865 – Czarist Russia colonizes present-day Uzbekistan and makes Tashkent the capital.

1924 – Uzbekistan becomes a Central Asian Socialist Republic of the Soviet Union.

1990 – Islom Karimov is appointed leader of the Uzbek Communist Party by Moscow.

September 1991 – Uzbekistan becomes an independent nation and joins the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

December 1991 – Islom Karimov becomes President in an election in which opposition candidate participation is limited.

1995 – Referendum extends Karimov’s term for another five years.

February 1999 – Bombs in Tashkent kill more than a dozen people. Islamic extremists are blamed by the government.

December 2000 – Islom Karimov is re-elected president in an election viewed as unfair by outsiders.


January 2002 – Karimov government extends presidential term from five to seven years.

May 2005 – Demonstrators in Andijan fired upon by government troops; scores are killed.


December 2007 – Islom Karimov wins another term in office as President.
Chapter 4 - Economy

Introduction
Uzbekistan’s present-day economy was created under Russian colonial tutelage in the 19th century. After the establishment of the Soviet Union (USSR), it was administered via a planned economy until the USSR was disbanded in 1991. Member republics of the USSR became specialized producers for distribution within the union without regard for transportation costs. In Uzbekistan, cotton was the dominant product and the area under cultivation was vastly expanded. Twentieth-century industrialization was geared toward raw material extraction and processing rather than manufacturing finished products.

Following independence, a dilemma developed in trying to raise the rural standard of living while at the same time diversifying the economy. Diversification requires capital investment and this could only come from taxing the agricultural sector by forcing farmers to buy inputs, e.g., seed and fertilizer, at the market price and to sell their crops to the state at an artificially low price. This arrangement, known as the “scissors effect,” clearly deprives farming communities of income and makes them poorer than they would be in a full market economy.

Agriculture
Cotton cultivation requires large amounts of water, which became available by vastly increasing irrigation. Laborers were recruited on an unpaid basis to work on the Great Ferghana Canal built in 1939. Water was siphoned off the major rivers and fertilizer was applied in generous amounts to increase the yields. Today, Uzbekistan is the fifth largest cotton producer and the second largest cotton exporter after the U.S.

Agriculture accounts for about 30% of Uzbekistan’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). After independence Uzbekistan achieved self-sufficiency in food production by

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69 The “scissors’ effect” describes the state’s power over input and output prices when it is used to price agricultural output at below market value.
72 GDP. The total market value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a given year.
expanding the area in which wheat was planted. Cotton and wheat are compatible for crop rotation.

Instead of using harvesting machines, human labor is deployed to pick the cotton crop. Schools are shut down and everyone helps with the harvest. The blatant use of child labor has become a corporate social responsibility issue. In Europe, the major market, there have been calls for boycotting Uzbek cotton (which is made into clothing primarily in Bangladesh). Those who grow and harvest the cotton receive little of the revenues from sales estimated to be over USD 1 billion. The government maintains control of the hard currency earnings.

**Standard of Living**

Uzbek per capita GDP fell more than 40% between 1998 and 2006. As a result the per capita income dropped during the same period. With a per capita income of USD 520 in 2006, Uzbekistan ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world. Continued heavy state involvement in the economy does not portend well for an economic turn around.

The scarcity of agricultural employment options has led to an exodus of young men from rural areas. After Ukrainians, Uzbek males from their late teens to their early 30s constitute the second largest migrant nationality in Russia, where they seek jobs in the construction industry. The wages are high enough to enable them to support their families at home.

Women have traditionally not fared well in Uzbekistan’s post-independence economic transition. The move from full employment, low individual productivity and planned economy under the Soviets to a free market in which creating new jobs lies largely in the private, service sector has been difficult. Women, who lack access to credit, also face cultural taboos in running their own businesses. Central Asian culture does not give much latitude to women entrepreneurs, married or single. As for their hiring prospects in the

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formal sector, a law granting women three years maternity leave has made them more expensive to hire than men.  

Industry
The Soviet model of development was based on “extensive growth” in which increased output is accounted for by increased inputs, e.g. hiring more workers. The opposite of this is “intensive growth” whereby greater efficiency is achieved by internal mechanisms, e.g. use of computers to increase efficiency and output. To improve efficiency and protect new industries from foreign competition, the government has adopted a policy of import substitution. This requires industries to use local resources wherever possible. The advantages and drawbacks of import substitution are well known. Without protection in the early stages, new industries cannot hope to compete against foreign competition.

However, in a protected environment there is little incentive for factories to reach competitive standards. A further problem for Uzbekistan is that the domestic market is too small for factories to achieve economies of scale in production.

Stiff duties on imports, particularly consumer goods, have led to smuggling. Although the Karimov government has denounced smuggling as the work of organized criminal syndicates, it has done little to stop it. Uzbekistan has also become a source for imported goods smuggled to neighboring countries.

Energy
Uzbekistan has some hydrocarbon resources. It is the 13th largest natural gas producer in the world and the third largest among the former Soviet republics, after Russia and Turkmenistan. Energy exploitation has been inefficient, however. Artificially low fuel prices for domestic consumption have made it difficult for energy companies to service their debts. These debts were accumulated in the immediate post-independence period when they modernized their production facilities to make Uzbekistan self-sufficient in energy. Additionally, energy production has stagnated due to lack of investment. Heavy state involvement in the economy is a strong disincentive to most foreign investors.

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82 An economy of scale is achieved when the cost per unit is reduced as output increases.
In November 2007, Uzbekistan signed a deal with China to build a 530 km (329 mi) natural gas pipeline between the two countries. Since they do not share a common border, it’s unclear exactly where the pipeline will run. It will have the capacity to carry 30 billion cubic meters (1,059 cubic ft), roughly half of Uzbekistan’s current annual natural gas production.86

Natural Resources and Trade
Other than cotton, a considerable portion of Uzbekistan’s international exports consist of extracted natural resources, particularly gold. Uzbekistan lays claim to the largest open-pit gold mine in the world.87 Reliance on commodity exports renders the country’s earnings vulnerable to international price fluctuations.88 For other exports to be profitable in overseas markets, transportation costs need to be low.89 Given the number of border crossings the goods must pass, costs remain high.

Although President Karimov has periodically praised the Chinese model of economic reform, his government never dismantled the state-controlled command economy left over from the Soviet Union. This does not easily allow the sort of decentralized foreign trade that has been widely credited for China’s economic take-off.90

Banking
The Central Bank of Uzbekistan is chartered by the Parliament (Majlis) to whom it is responsible. It is responsible for standard central bank functions such as controlling the movement and transfer of currency. Underneath the central bank are various specialized state-owned institutions which are responsible for lending in particular sectors. In November 2007, the government used a decree that outlines the liberalization of the financial sector as well as a program to increase competition and expand services. One of the requirements for new financial institutions is that, from 2008, they maintain their nominal capital in Euros, not U.S. dollars as in the past.91 The largest Uzbek banknote, 1000S, is worth USD 0.80. While a black market existed for awhile, the official and unofficial exchange rates for the U.S. dollar and the Uzbek sum are now roughly equal.

Tourism
Tourism in Uzbekistan represents an underexploited source of jobs. As such, outside groups have become involved in developing the industry.⁹² One obstacle is that there are formal barriers to getting a visitor’s visa to Uzbekistan. A letter of invitation is required as part of the visa application. Some travel agencies specializing in travel to Central Asia sell such letters, or an invitation can be issued through a government office. The difficulties and length of time involved relate to the level of criticism which the visitor’s government has made of Uzbekistan’s human rights record.

Chapter 5 - Society

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Uzbekistan as originally created by the Soviets is an artificially created administrative entity that encompasses groups other than Uzbeks. At its creation in 1924, some Uzbeks were left in neighboring Central Asian countries. Before independence, Russians were the largest minority, comprising 8% of the population. After the Soviet Union was disbanded, all long-term residents were offered Uzbek citizenship. Most non-ethnic Uzbeks chose not to accept the offer despite, in some cases, generations in residence. Emigration to countries where their ethnicity constituted the majority became an alternative, particularly for Russians few of whom were fluent in Uzbek. Reflecting the same phenomenon, ethnic Uzbeks in neighboring states returned to their cultural homeland. Thus, the population of Uzbekistan has become more homogenous since it became an independent state in 1991.

Uzbeks

The Uzbeks, who account for 80% of the population, are primarily of ethnic Turkish origin with some Mongolian and Persian ancestry. Their language is related to Turkish. Uzbeks practice the Salafi school of Sunni Islam. The household division of labor has men working outside while women remain responsible for all activities within the home.

Kazakhs

Kazakhs are descendants of nomadic livestock herders. They are found in the northern border region of Uzbekistan and comprise 3% of the population. Their Turkish-derived language is one of the most widely spoken in Central Asia.

Kyrgyz

The small Kyrgyz minority inhabits the Ferghana Valley, a fertile area that was split into separate administrative entities by the Soviets. These areas then became parts of different nation-states including Uzbekistan. The Kyrgyz language is also derived from Turkish.

**Tajiks**
The Tajiks are an Indo-European people. They officially comprise 5% of the population of Uzbekistan. Most experts agree this is an undercount, however. Tajikistan was engulfed in civil war after independence in 1991 making the return to their ancestral homeland unlikely for many Tajiks. Islom Karimov, president of Uzbekistan since it became independent in 1991, is of Tajik descent. He is reputed to speak better Russian and Tajik, related to Farsi, than he does Uzbek.

**Traditions**
The tea ceremony is part of Uzbek culture and the preparation ritual is strictly observed. In Tashkent people drink black tea whereas elsewhere green tea (kok choi) is the beverage of choice. A porcelain teapot is first rinsed with boiling water. Dry tea leaves are then placed in the pot with a special spoon. Finally, boiling water is poured over the tea leaves. The teapot and small porcelain tea cups (pialas) are then placed on the table. The tea will be poured into the teacups three times and then poured back into the teapot before offering it to guests as this process helps to reveal the tea’s special taste and aroma. When the tea is served, the cup will be filled only to one-third of its volume. This enables the recipient to avoid burning his fingers since the cup has no handles. While the amount can be consumed in a few gulps, requiring a quick refill, each refill is a sign of respect. As the tea flows people talk. In reflecting on this a traveler observed, for Uzbeks, “conversation without tea is no conversation at all.”

**Gender Issues**
Traditionally for Uzbeks, a daughter is referred to “as a guest in her own home” meaning the household she was born into. When she marries, which can be as early as the mid teens, she becomes a member of her husband’s household. She is then expected to wait on her mother-in-law, a service that will be reciprocated when her own sons marry.

Soviet rule was a source of female empowerment, particularly in Islamic cultures, which traditionally restricted the movement of women outside the home. Mandatory job assignments provided women with an independent base of power within society and the family. In some ways this was a double burden, however. Housework remained largely a female responsibility.

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Cuisine

In contrast to their nomadic neighbors, the forebears of present-day Uzbeks were settled farmers who grew grain centuries ago.\footnote{Uzbek Cuisine. 2004. “Uzbek National Cuisine.” \url{http://namangan5.connect.uz/cooking/}} Rice was successfully cultivated in the lower reaches of the Ferghana Valley as well, irrigated by water from the three major rivers.\footnote{Travel Centre. “Uzbek Plov.” No date. \url{http://www.travelcentre.com.au/FoodWineBeer/uzbek_food.htm}} As a result, Uzbekistan can claim a long culinary heritage. *Plov* has the status of a national dish although the specific ingredients are regional. It is typically rich in meat, sweetened by diced onion and shredded carrot, and spiced. Cooked in a cast iron pot (*kazanchik*), it is served over rice.\footnote{University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. “Plov.” No date. \url{http://llvm.cs.uiuc.edu/~brukman/food/recipes/plov/index.html}} The recipe was passed from merchant to merchant on the Silk Road. Variants are consumed from Azerbaijan to Xinjiang, northwestern China.\footnote{iExplore. “Uzbekistan Food and Dining.” No date. \url{http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Uzbekistan/Dining}}

In addition, a staple part of the daily diet is fruit. Grapes and apricots are dried to extend their life beyond summer. Melons can be found as per seasonal availability.

Sports

A game known as *kok boru* (goat grabbing), is a national pastime in Uzbekistan. Traditionally this game is played on Friday afternoons, the Muslim day of rest. Regional tournaments can include teams from Afghanistan, China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It is said to have been introduced throughout the Central Asian region by Genghis Khan.\footnote{La Verne, Peter James. “The Great Game.” 1 March 2005. \url{http://buzkashi.wordpress.com/}}

When the game starts, eight players on horseback compete to get their hands on the carcass of a calf or headless goat, typically weighing between 30 and 40 kg (66 to 88 lbs). They fight to grab it by one of its limbs. The two teams then compete to drag it around a
pole. The number of players is fluid; it can be as small as a few dozen to many hundreds. Play is supposed to stop if a rider falls off his horse and is at risk of being trampled, but injuries are part and parcel of the game and born with pride by the players.109

**Dance**

Uzbekistan has a long tradition of dance. It is characterized by facial gestures, arm and finger movements. The costumes are too tight fitting to allow for leaping and large steps, though performers get down on their knees. The dancers are typically women and girls, always performing solo, usually accompanied by music.110 Historically, dancers were men who played female parts but after incorporation into the Soviet Union, which outlawed female veiling, public dances were performed by females. Since the end of Soviet rule, dances celebrating *Navruz*, the Persian spring solstice holiday, have made a comeback. Dance companies compete for prizes awarded for the best *Navruz* festival program.

**Literature**

Uzbekistan is known for a developed literary tradition. However, artists of all stripes, including writers, suffered greatly as a result of the Stalinist purges of the 1930s. They faced the prospect of being tarred with an “enemy of the people” label making them eligible for the death penalty. As a result, Uzbekistan’s flourishing literary scene went into a state of decline under Soviet rule. In order to earn a living, writers were forced to create socialist realist prose depicting communism in a positive light.

After the introduction of *perestroika* and *glasnost*111 in the 1980s, writers began to produce works that were mildly critical of their society and its leaders. After the USSR was disbanded, restoring the Uzbek language became their mission. Use of Russian lexicon was intentionally minimized. The constitution promulgated in 1992 declared Uzbek to be the official language of the newly independent state.112

Since independence, literary guilds such as the Booklovers’ Society and the Union of Writers have emerged to promote poets and novelists. Among the most prominent writers are the poet Abdulla Oripov and the novelist Erkin Vohidov.113 Yet, censorship under

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111 *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* signaled official openness to constructive criticism for the purpose of improving the system.


President Karimov persists, and works of fiction that have won international prizes abroad have been banned at home.\footnote{Ferghana.ru Information Agency. “Day of Uzbek literature at the Edinburgh Book Fair.” 23 August 2006. http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=1563}
Chapter 6: Security

The U.S.–Uzbek Strategic Partnership

The abrupt demise of the Soviet Union (USSR) necessitated a change in U.S. foreign policy which had been driven by the need to contain communism during the Cold War.115 With respect to Central Asia, U.S. initiatives were regional rather than country specific. U.S. engagement was primarily through NGOs like the National Republican Institute, a type of organization with which Uzbeks were completely unfamiliar. In addition to NGOs, groups like the Peace Corps were sent as volunteers to the field.117 Grassroots initiatives meant that career public servants in agencies of the Uzbek national government received little attention. They missed out on assistance that might have broadened their horizons and eased the transition from the Soviet system.

After the 1999 terrorist bombing in Tashkent, Uzbekistan put terrorism higher on its list of concerns than Washington had done prior to 11 September 2001. Following the attacks of 9/11, Uzbekistan had a higher profile in the United States.118 Tashkent became a partner in the war on terror since both governments shared a desire to avoid a “Talibanization” of Central Asia.119 In March 2002, a bilateral strategic partnership agreement was signed during Uzbek President Islom Karimov’s official visit to the U.S. Joint counterterrorism-training exercises were initiated and Washington nearly tripled its economic aid package to approx. USD 300 million.120

Yet, coordination remained haphazard. To sum up, “the U.S. had programs affecting Uzbekistan, but not an overall policy, let alone strategy.”121 Emerging from decades of Soviet rule, Tashkent had very little experience interacting with democracies, which do

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116 NGOs are non-governmental organizations. Created by private individuals or organizations, they function independently from the government.
not speak with a single voice. Nor did it have the expertise to engage in public relations exchanges to counter mounting criticism from different quarters of the U.S. government. Tashkent’s lack of progress in marketizing the Uzbek economy, as well as its rampant human rights abuses, was criticized.

American law requires the State Department to conduct reviews of the democratization performance of bilateral aid recipient governments.\textsuperscript{122} After an unsatisfactory review in 2004, aid was terminated. However, the U.S. continued to use the air base at Karshi-Khanabad to facilitate operations in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{123}

The May 2005 Andijan massacre brought things to a head for Washington because Uzbek government security forces had killed unarmed civilians.\textsuperscript{124} Bilateral tensions increased when Tashkent refused to convene an independent inquiry to review the massacre. Accordingly, American usage rights to the air base were rescinded; Uzbekistan signed a security treaty with Russia and rejoined a regional collective security group.\textsuperscript{125} It also moved into the Russian and Chinese economic orbit. In some sense this was a return to its roots. The Chinese and Russians are comfortable working in a business climate in which bribery and kickbacks are the norm.\textsuperscript{126} The promotion of human rights, moreover, is not part of their respective foreign policy agendas. On the contrary, all three governments have rejected the efforts of outsiders to promote democratization.

**National Defense**

Uzbekistan’s defense establishment extends from divisions of the Ministry of Defense and combat units within the Ministry of the Interior, as well as the Ministry of Emergencies and the Customs Service. In 1995, Uzbekistan elaborated its first national security declaration as an independent country. Tashkent vowed not to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD), renounced territorial claims on its neighbors, and stated it would only intervene in regional conflicts if its own internal stability was threatened. Defensive in orientation, it called for combat ready troops to defend its territorial integrity. The civil war that engulfed newly independent Tajikistan and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in neighboring Afghanistan after the Soviet troop withdrawal certainly raised concerns in this regard.

**Armed Forces**

The Ministry of Defense includes ground, air assault, and airborne troops, as well as Special Forces of the National Guard. From 2001, the total number of personnel in uniform has stood around 50,000, including 40,000 troops that form one armored, ten motorized, one mountain, one air assault, and four infantry brigades. The motorized


\textsuperscript{125} Members include Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

brigades are based near Bukhara, Samarkand, Termez, Nukus, and Andijan while the air assault brigade is stationed around Ferghana City.  

Uzbekistan’s armed forces are the largest in Central Asia. Conscripts are procured through a lottery type system entailing 18 months of service. This selective recruitment gives local officials a lot of power over whom they can induct. However, local officials are prone to accept bribery from individuals seeking to avoid service or to have their service term reduced. This engenders corruption of the armed forces.  

Internal Security

The Ministry of the Interior oversees the work of the police as well as some paramilitary units. The involvement of both in alleged human rights abuses, including the Andijan massacre, have complicated U.S. efforts to provide training assistance. Under its direct command is the National Security Service (NSS) which is responsible for eliminating dissent and suppressing all Islamic-inspired activity that falls outside narrowly defined state parameters. The NSS receives no effective oversight, however, making it one of the most powerful internal security forces in Central Asia.  

Internal Security Threats

The principal terrorist organization is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU has known ties to Al-Qaeda. Adherents fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan, where they suffered serious losses, and against coalition forces in Iraq. Initially it aimed to overthrow the government of President Islom Karimov. Over time, its goal shifted to creating an Islamic state in all of Central Asia and Muslim-dominated Xinjiang,

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130 Under Soviet rule, the Muslim Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan regulated Islamic worship and education. Its responsibilities included the registration of mosques, appointing imams to lead local congregations, as well as dictating the content of sermons and approving specific practices. After independence in 1991, the agency was renamed the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan but retained its original mandate. Human Rights News. “Memorandum to the U.S. Government Regarding Religious Persecution in Uzbekistan.” 10 August 2001. http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/uzbek-aug/islam.htm
China. It engages in guerrilla warfare and its combatants retreat to villages after insurgent attacks where they can blend in with the local population.\textsuperscript{133}

The IMU is based in the Ferghana Valley, a contiguous community that was divided into three countries: Kyrgyzstan, containing half its population, Tajikistan with one-third, and Uzbekistan. Although the Ferghana Valley comprises only 4\% of Uzbekistan’s territory, it is home to 27\% of the Uzbek population.\textsuperscript{134} A neat delineation of the area into national states, or even ethnic groups, is fraught with difficulty for several reasons. Patterns of human settlement and a regional economy supported by transportation links predates modern-day administrative governance. The IMU can take advantage of the difficulty this poses to national law enforcement agencies.

The roots of political Islam developed during the waning years of the USSR, when harsh political controls were relaxed. The revival of religion proved appealing in the absence of alternative outlets of expression. After the collapse of the former Soviet system, outsiders were able to take advantage of the lack of authority to radicalize the indigenous Islamic community. In an environment in which dissent is not tolerated, political violence emerged in the place of political pluralism.

\textbf{Poverty}

Rural poverty is severe, even in places like Namangan Province in the Ferghana Valley, which has fertile agricultural conditions.\textsuperscript{135} One cause of poverty is that cotton, the main crop, is procured under conditions which approximate slavery.\textsuperscript{136} Given that the government collects most of the revenues, there is little incentive to marketize the rural economy and privatize land ownership. Thus, the rural poor have little prospect of seeing an improvement in their standard of living. As a result, Islamic militancy may prove attractive. Without any legitimate outlets to vent their grievances, extremist groups become the only avenue for protest. All protest channeled through non-Islamic outlets is invariably labeled by the government as dissident Islamist activity in nature. This provides a pretext for harsher repression.

Neighboring Countries

Kyrgyzstan
Uzbekistan’s relations with Kyrgyzstan have been problematic. One issue is a piece of borderland over which Uzbekistan gained usage rights under Soviet rule and which has not been restored to Kyrgyz sovereignty.\textsuperscript{137} The bombings in Tashkent in 1999 were blamed on Islamic fundamentalists who entered the country from Kyrgyzstan. This led Uzbekistan to implement more restrictive border-crossing measures and to plant antipersonnel landmines in border regions. Another source of tension was Kyrgyzstan’s refusal to repatriate hundreds of Uzbeks who had fled across the border after the Andijan Massacre in 2005.\textsuperscript{138} These Uzbeks were instead granted refugee status and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has since arranged for their resettlement in third countries.\textsuperscript{139}

Tajikistan
Uzbekistan’s relationship with its small neighbor has been tense.\textsuperscript{140} Tashkent’s decision to mine parts of the border to prevent passage by fundamentalists is a source of tension. The mines were haphazardly laid, resulting in casualties among residents of border communities. Tajikistan lost territory to Uzbekistan when the Soviets drew up borders for the republics. In the words of one American historian, “The Tajik situation in some ways resembles that of post-colonial Africa. Tajiks have been given an impossible piece of territory with a disparate population and have been forced to make a nation out of it.”\textsuperscript{141} Poor, remote and engulfed in civil war after independence, Tajikistan’s one resource is control of water in a landlocked, desert region. Glaciers inside its territorial borders supply 55% of Central Asia’s water.\textsuperscript{142} In the past it has withheld water for irrigation from Uzbekistan.

Turkmenistan

Relations between Turkmenistan, a state which has minimized contact with the outside world, and Uzbekistan have been tense. Each country has ethnic minorities owing to the way the Soviets drew the boundaries. Both the Uzbek minority in Turkmenistan and the Turkmen minority in Uzbekistan have experienced discrimination in contexts of economic decline. The border was drawn without regard for existing human settlements. As a result, residents of villages located on one side of the border must pay for visas to visit their ancestral graves on the other. In addition, charges of Uzbek complicity in a late 2002 assassination attempt on Turkmenistan’s president temporarily heightened tensions. Since 2004, relations between the two countries have improved marginally. The President of Turkmenistan paid a visit to Uzbekistan in 2004. In October 2007, President Karimov paid a state visit to Turkmenistan, now under new leadership, sparking hopes for an improved bilateral relationship.

Afghanistan

The government of Islam Karimov viewed the Taliban and its fundamentalist Islamic vision of the future as a threat to its own survival. As a result, they have backed coalition efforts to topple the Taliban. Until the Karzai government is stabilized and in control of Afghanistan, Tashkent will continue to view Afghanistan with some alarm.

China

Several months after the Andijan massacre in 2005, the Chinese Deputy Prime Minister visited Tashkent when it was feeling the sting of international condemnation. He emphasized the importance of their bilateral economic and trade ties. The Chinese are particularly interested in Uzbek oil and natural gas. Chinese companies are involved in extraction work. The potential for China (and Russia) to stimulate the economy is great, given the present low level of foreign direct investment, i.e., 2% of GNP. China’s total investment in Uzbekistan stands at about USD 2 billion, some USD 600 million of which is in the oil and gas sector. In the spring of 2007, the Chinese and the Uzbek government signed an agreement to build a pipeline to supply Uzbek natural gas to China. Exactly what countries the pipeline will run through remains unclear.

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Russia

China and Uzbekistan’s proposed oil pipeline poses a challenge to Russia.\textsuperscript{148} Russia's reluctance to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty and Transit Protocol serves to complicate efforts by third parties to gain access to Central Asian natural resources. Using this mechanism, Russia can block access to alternative markets, particularly Europe. Moscow’s objective is to maintain monopoly control on the transport of hydrocarbons out of Central Asia. The understandable interest of Central Asians, including Uzbeks, to gain greater control over the sales rights of their natural resources, has created tensions. The Chinese, in signing a deal with Uzbekistan among other Central Asian states to buy natural gas, may cause problems in this regard. In January 2006 Uzbekistan became a member of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Community.\textsuperscript{149} Russian President Vladimir Putin sees one benefit of the group as promoting the use of nuclear energy. In this regard, Uzbekistan’s extensive uranium ore stock offers a stable source of a critical component.

Areas of International Security Cooperation

During the Soviet era, Uzbekistan provided the majority of the uranium utilized by the Soviet military-industrial complex. Prior to 1992 all uranium mined in Uzbekistan was shipped to Russia for refinement and enrichment. Afterwards, it came to the United States.\textsuperscript{150} The disposition of Uzbekistan’s vast and rich ore deposits is an ongoing effort involving the United States.\textsuperscript{151} While Uzbekistan does not have enrichment capabilities, possession of high grade ore still makes it a sought after commodity given that proliferation is an ever present threat.\textsuperscript{152}

Despite Uzbekistan’s falling out with the U.S., Tashkent has maintained its role in NATO’s “Partnership for Peace” initiative. In 2006, 163 soldiers from the German Armed Forces remained stationed around Termez. They comprise part of Germany’s contribution to the UN International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.