Peter K. Forster

THE TERRORIST THREAT AND SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE UZBEK CASE

Introduction

> "*At Istanbul, we will enhance our Partnerships to deliver more. We will concentrate more on defence reform to help some of our partners continue with their democratic transitions. We will also focus on increasing our co-operation with the Caucasus and Central Asia – areas that once seemed very far away, but that we now know are essential to our security right here.*" - NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer June 2004.

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer comments speak not only to an increased awareness in NATO and the West of the importance of Central Asia but also illustrate the importance of security sector reform as a component of the democratization process. The responsiveness of the security sector to reforms that inculcate civil and ultimately democratic control procedures is a measure of a state's progress toward democratization. Notwithstanding, it is widely admitted that there is no commonality among security sector reform. The security sector encompasses all state institutions that have a formal mandate to ensure the safety of a state and its citizens against violence and coercion. However, it may also include non-government armed political action

groups.[98] This study will assess the level of security sector reform within those organizations that traditionally have held the state's monopoly on the use of force, the military and the internal state security apparatus.[99]

The progress in security sector reform is dependent, to varying degrees, upon a state's past experiences, both cultural and taught, the domestic relationship between society and the security sector including how of the state's military and internal security forces developed, and the geo-political conditions under which reform currently is occurring including the influence of foreign countries. Each of these variables contributes to or detracts from the probability that successful reform with be accomplished. This article explains the development of Uzbekistan's independent security sector. It examines the extent to which reform of the security sector has occurred and the obstacles to further reform in Uzbekistan. It also analyzes the impact of American influence and renewed Russian engagement in its "near abroad" as a result of war on terrorism and Moscow's increased resources. Third, it assesses the potential impact that the war on terrorism has had on the security reform process. The goal is to provide an assessment of the current state of security sector reform in Uzbekistan, to discuss the opportunities for development in this area, and to evaluate which variables most directly influence security sector reform.

The importance of such a study is that democratically reformed armed forces represent an institution of stability, encourage social unification, reduce regional security dilemmas, and contribute generally to the democratization process. The importance of establishing democratic control of the armed forces and ultimately the entire security sector cannot be minimized. As a Defense Department official noted when asked to evaluate the effectiveness of American military assistance programs, the United States Congress does not have quantifiable measures but instead inquires whether officers, participating in a range

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[98] See Hänggi, Heiner, "Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction" in Bryden and Hanggi (eds.) *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, Transaction Publishers, Piscataway NJ 2004 page 5 - 6 for a range of definitions of the security sector.

[99] In Uzbekistan, the latter forces will include the *Sluzhba Natsionalnor Bezopasnosti* (SNB or National Security Service, the National Guard, the *Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del* (MVD) or internal troops including border guards, and police.

of training and education activities, return to their service and country with a better understanding of civil-military relations. Thus, the ultimate success of training programs is the extent to which they succeed, through a "leavening process," in producing society's new elites who gradually emerge to help shape ideas.[100] Events surrounding Georgia's "Rose Revolution" in November 2003 provide a poignant example. The Georgian Minister of Defense, a graduate of the US International Military Education Training (IMET) program, recognized that military involvement during the ouster of Eduard Shevardnadze would simply exacerbate an already inflammatory situation. As a result, he made the decision to keep the troops who had participated in the US-sponsored Georgia Train and Equip Program, the most reliable Georgian forces, in the barracks. [101] The involved units responded with professionalism and commitment to civilian control that result in a peaceful transition of power. Why are democratic reforms so essential? Operationally, democratic reform improves the competence of the armed forces in securing territory thus reducing the flow of drugs, small arms, high explosives, and possibly the materials used in the development of weapons of mass destruction. They are more effective at combating terrorism and insurgency. They enhance the interoperability of regional forces with those NATO member units. Strategically, democratic reforms of the security sector can promote societal integration and raise the awareness of common societal objectives that ultimately enhance regional and domestic stability by eliminating regime separation, reducing regional security dilemmas, and promoting ethnic equality.

A Conceptualization of Military Reform Process

At a minimum, newly independent states face three levels of military development. The initial strategic level requires the creation of an independent military force. The development of autonomous and effective military forces and security policy provide independent policy options thus establishing the state as a viable international entity.[102] With

[100] Author interview with informed Department of Defense source 6/03
[101] Author interview with informed Department of Defense source 6/03 and 10/04
[102] Allison, Roy, *Military Forces in the Soviet Successor States* Adelphi Paper 280 International Institute for Strategic Studies October 1993:56

no existing doctrine or military organization and limited qualified personnel and funding, this process can take a significant amount of time. In the case of Central Asia, a dependence on and the legacy of the former Soviet Union as well as a lack of regional bilateral security ties has further curtailed the process.[103] Prior to independence, decisions were made in Moscow. Thus, the economic and political resources needed to support the development of a military force were limited. For example, 90% of the Soviet Army's officer corps, including the units from Central Asian unit, had been Slavic with a large number being Russian.[104] Additionally, those military units that served in the Central Asian region focused on territorial defense and internal security.

The second stage of military development shifts the focus from strategic development to the creation of an operational organization. During this stage narrow civil control should emerge. In 1991, such a situation occurred in Russia when Yeltsin initiated a de-politicization of the military that included eliminating Communist Party control in the military and established government control over the armed forces. The most difficult process of the second stage is the de-politicization of the security sector in which its loyalty shifts from regime to a state concept. The Soviet legacy of multiple armed services as well as the regional leaders' desire to maintain their tight control over society have proven to be an obstacle to progress. Multiple services competing for limited resources and seeking to advance their own interests and priorities retard the development of national militaries, the establishment of civil control, and shift in loyalty.

However, civil control does not equate to democratic control, which is the essential characteristic of the third stage of development. Moving from the second to third stage military development is the most difficult and requires a significant re-order of general governing principles including the development of civil society. As a result, this transition faces resistances from multiple sectors. By their nature, military and security organizations tend to be conservative and are reluctant to

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[103] Ibid:54

[104] Helre, Gunnar, *The Great Game Re-visited: Politics and Security in Central Asia* (Cmd. Norwegian Navy), 1997 –'98:4

change. Second, moves by the Central Asian leaders are quite calculated. All are cognizant of the instability caused by Gorbachev's reforms and the civil war in Tajikistan, thus they avoid most systemic political, economic, or security reforms that might erode their control over society. Third, social stability is based upon loyalty to the family and clan; therefore, regimes have eschewed any substantial differentiation between themselves and the state. This approach eliminates any potential quandary among the security sector over whether their role is to protect the state or the regime and by so doing negates shifting the security sector's loyalty from the regime to the state. The lack of progress in this transition is evident in conversations with officials from the region. When discussing military reform, they refer to the creation of staff and organizational structures, appropriate procurement, and training, all of which are significant issues related to the second stage in development.[105] While reference is made to establishing democratic control over the armed force, the steps being taken to implement such reforms are limited. The following discussion of the efforts being undertaken in Uzbekistan helps to better define these levels of development as well as provide some insight into the future.

The Case of Uzbekistan

Examining the strategic and operational levels of development provides an understanding of how far reforms have progressed. It also helps identify the obstacles to further reform and provides a framework in which to recognize the possibilities regarding a transition to democratic control of the security sector. Uzbekistan has experienced three distinct periods of security sector development. The first from 1991 – 1997 corresponded to Uzbekistan securing independence from the Soviet Union and establishing itself as the region's pre-eminent military force. During this period, Tashkent developed its own military. The second phase, from 1997 until September 2001, focused on combating the insurgency initiated by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's (IMU) incursions into the Ferghana Valley. While the circumstances resulted in shifts in military operations and planning it also corresponded to an

[105] Author interview with informed Ministry of Foreign Affairs source 2004

increase in domestic suppression and heightened regime separation. The third phase emerging from September 11th attacks on the United States has been characterized by an increased American attention and presence in the region that has stimulated military reform, a re-focusing of Uzbek military doctrine from counter-insurgency to counter-terrorism, and more recently closer ties with Moscow.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the Central Asian states had 'statehood' thrust upon them and suddenly found themselves responsible for the fundamental responsibility of being a state – security. In May 1992, the security crisis deepened as Moscow nearly simultaneously concluded the Treaty on Collective Security and announced that it would no longer financially support former Soviet forces serving outside of Russia. The successful development of an independent military and ultimate establishment of strong civil-military relations is essential to the existence of a new state.[106] Thus, the Central Asian states initially focused on the monumental task of creating an independent military force without consideration to democratic reform. Tashkent, having served as the headquarters for the Soviet's Turkestan Military District, benefited from a military organizational structure and the best equipped military in the region. As Napoleon once noted, creating an army without an organizational structure is a difficult task.[107]

Within the chaos of independence, Uzbekistan's unique position among the Central Asian states enables it and its president, Islam Karimov, to provide for the corporate needs of the military thus establishing a strong link between the regime and the military. In the wake of separation from Moscow, Karimov established a national defense committee to oversee the nationalization of Soviet forces deployed in Uzbekistan. He accelerated the nationalization process by recalling Uzbek officers serving overseas, prohibiting expatriate Russians from serving in the military, nationalizing the military schools, and requiring Uzbek recruits

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[106] Feinberg, Jared, *The Armed Forces in Georgia*, Center for Defense Information, Washington DC, March '99:1

[107] Napoleon I, *Napoleon on the Art of War*, translated by Jay Luvass, Free Press, New York, NY 1999:10

to serve in the Turkestan district.[108] In 1992, 85% of the officers including 10 of 15 generals were Slavs, by 1997, 60% of the officers and 85% of conscripts were Uzbeks.[109] Karimov further legitimized the concept of national forces by having Uzbek units assume border control responsibilities from the Soviet border troops in 1995 thus eliminating much of the foreign military presence. Other cases such as Abkhazia have shown that the continued deployment of foreign troops erodes local support for national forces.[110] Uzbekization served both the corporate and individual interests of the officer thus linking it to the regime. In essence, the officer corps owed its position to the regime.[111]

Concurrently with establishing the Uzbek military, Karimov followed a policy of creating paramilitary units outside of the military structure. By creating a division of power between the Ministry of Defense (MoD), the Ministry of Internal Security (MoIS) and the *Sluzhba Natsionalnor Bezopasnosti* (SNB), he balanced the security apparatus to an extent. [112] This was achieved by creating a new indigenous National Guard that replaced the Soviet *Ministerstvo Vnutrennykj Del* (MVD) troops and was under direct command of the President through the MoIS. Furthermore, command of the National Border Guards was vested with the Chairman of National Security and the MoIS. Integration of the internal security services is enhanced by a close connection between the border guard commanders, who are the third and fourth ranking officers in the SNB and will return to the SNB upon completion of their duty. Moreover, all internal security services are ultimately subordinate to the SNB, which has approximately 8,000 paramilitary troops. Notwithstanding, the border troops remain the poorest trained, equipped, and cared for part of the security sector. Internal security sector integration obviously resulted in the creation of armed units outside of the military command structure

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[108] Smith Dianne L., *Opening Pandora's Box: Ethnicity and Central Asian Militaries* Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle PA 1998:18-19

[109] Smith Dianne L, *Breaking Away from the Bear,* Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle PA 1998:35

[110] Feinberg, March '99:1

[111] Smith Dianne L., *Opening Pandora's Box: Ethnicity and Central Asian Militaries* Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle PA 1998:20

[112] Rustam Inoyatov, a member of the Tashkent clan that is closely linked to Karimov's Samarqand clan and is a rival to the MoD, commands the National Security Service.

but also allowed for a high level of military spending outside of the MoD's budget and ultimately inhibited cross sector permutation of ideas, which slows reform.

Regardless of common problems resulting from the Soviet experience, Uzbekistan achieved success in implementing strategic or first level development and transitioned to operational development. A military and national security doctrine is critical to establishing civil control, as distinct from democratic control, over the armed forces. Doctrine is essential for initiating a re-direction of the military's role from protector of the regime to one of protector of the state. In spite of Uzbekistan's efforts at developing a doctrine, it is unclear to what extent this re-direction has been successful. The 1992 Law of Defense established Uzbekistan's military for strictly defensive purposes with no territorial aspirations. However, Uzbekistan's doctrine was quickly overtaken by the shifting geo-political environment of the 21st century. As a result, Tashkent has struggled to keep its doctrine relevant. In 1997, the Concept of National Security and Military Doctrine were announced. Responding to both the Tajik Civil War and increasing radical Islam pressures particularly in the strategically important Ferghana Valley, the new doctrine united traditional security concepts with a broader application of military force to protect the domestic population against extreme situations, expatriate Uzbek minorities, and maintain similar (e.g. authoritarian) regimes in the region.[113] The 1997 Concept made no reference to limiting the military's domestic powers. The implementation of the new doctrine also corresponded with attempts by the regime to criminalize the practice of Islam outside of state-sanctioned mosques.[114] The crackdown on Islamists has been relatively consistent since 1997 and was institutionalized with the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations in May 1998. The crackdown has eroded national trust in the security apparatus although not necessarily the military which continues to be viewed by society as a necessary institution that has a limited domestic role and growing

[113] See Smith Dianne L, *Breaking Away from the Bear,* Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA 1998:36 for a more depth discussion of the 1997 Concept.

[114] *Uzbek Prison Deaths Raise Human Rights Concerns*" Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reported on-line www.isn.ethz.ch, 8/15/02

respect continues to improve.[115] On the other hand, human rights abuse has become a method of political control.[116] The domestic use of force campaign is contributing to increasing regime-society separation that ultimately is a threat to stability.[117]

The most recent shifts in doctrine occurred in 2000 when the Defensive Doctrine and more significantly in 2001 when a new edition of The Law on Defense were adopted. These adjustments reinforced an internal security focus by concentrating attention on terrorist and extremist activities. It also provided for a domestic role for the military when confronting a military force or counter-insurgency. The IMU could have been considered both until late 2001. With the ouster of the Taliban regime by the United States in 2001, the IMU shifted its tactics from insurgency to terrorism. The corresponding shift in military mission has provided an opportunity for reform. Counter-terrorism requires professionalism among the forces and a high level of training. Appointed in 2002, the Uzbek Minister of Defense, Kadyr Gulyamov a civilian, has grasped the opportunity to initiate changes in the military structure.[118] A trusted lieutenant of Karimov, Gulyamov has emerged as an advocate for reform. In a relatively short time, he has succeeded in attacking some of the operational challenges associated with the second level of military development. He has sought to establish interoperability among units that tends to promote a national command function rather than a service command structure. More importantly, the 2000 and 2001 revisions to doctrine and structure vested increased responsibility in the Defense Minister for managing all national security relationships. Efforts to advance this initiative include integrating the border committee, the MoD, SNB, and the MOIS under a joint staff and increased control of financial resources by the MoD.

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[115] Author interview with informed Department of Defense source 6/03 and interview with S. Masurenko, Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome April 2003

[116] *Central Asia: The Politics of Police Reform*, International Crisis Group (*hereafter* ICG Asia Report #42) Asia Report #42 Osh/Brussels, December 2002:2

[117] See Forster, Peter K. *Balancing American Involvement in Uzbekistan*, Connections, April 2003 for a broader discussion of social and regime separation.

[118] Author interview with informed Department of Defense source 10/04

While seeking to increase the exchange of information within the security sector, Gulyamov has made progress in separating military training from that of security forces and is committed to professionalizing forces. Aided by the early efforts at creating a homogenous military, Gulyamov has sought to empower non-commissioned and young commissioned officers as part of the professionalizing process. His initial goal is to improve manpower quality, reduce the traditional Soviet top-down management, and develop individual initiative. Efforts at increasing responsibility and leadership at the NCO ranks have corresponded with reduced conscription times to twelve months and increasing the number of "contracted" troops.[119] This is important because effective development of a soldier typically takes a minimum of two years. Conscription barely allowed for adequate training let alone inculcating any ideas regarding the military's role in society. Currently, all Uzbek Special Forces and 30% of the army are "contract forces." Gulyamov also has assumed a major role in improving combat readiness. He has re-organized forces into smaller units, increased mobility, and advocated the procurement of new armaments and the maintenance of the infrastructure that focuses on logistics and equipment repair.[120] Finally, Uzbek forces have participated in a number of joint exercises with NATO troops as well as regional exercise. Realistic training exercises are essential to implementing new operational and tactical functions. They also allow troops of different countries to interact that can be an important part of inculcating ideas such as civilian control and authority. Thus, exercises in which Uzbek forces are integrated with NATO or NATO-member forces tend to be beneficial; however, the benefit of exercises in other environs is often unproven.[121]

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[119] Contracted is often viewed as being interchangeable with professional; however, in the case of the former Soviet Union it is better to assume a narrow definition of contracted meaning soldiers are paid at a sufficient level to make military service a profession. Professionalism among the armed forces from a western perspective involves the integration of a set of values and principles. It is not clear that this has yet occurred among contract troops in the former Soviet Union.

[120] Author interview with informed Department of Defense source 10/04

[121] See McDermott, Roger N. *Kazakhstan's Armed Forces: Reform or Decay?* Conflict Studies Research Centre, June 2002:11 for a discussion of viability in non-NATO led operations.

On a systemic scale, Gulyamov believes the development of individual initiative will ultimately strengthen Uzbekistan. Occasionally quoting Harry S. Truman on the use of the military as an implement of democratization and social change, Gulyamov believes once these officers and NCOs have completed their military service they will continue to demand a decision-making role in their country's affairs. His efforts are being directly supported by the United States who now deploys permanent NCO trainers in Uzbekistan and regularly interacts with the Uzbek MoD. These actions in themselves have separated the MoD from the internal security services and the judiciary, a separation that is essential to promote broader reforms. Moreover, there is evidence of increased de-politicization of the military and increased social integration. Goals such as improving the social and living conditions of armed forces, integrating information technology and computer simulation in training, and general improvement in the training are encouraging. These processes represent significant steps towards developing a professional national army capable of responding to Uzbekistan's threats and to its civilian leadership. However, Gulyamov's reforms reflect a "leavening process" and will take time to translate to strategic changes. Thus, the extent to which these reforms will drive Uzbekistan towards democratic control of the armed forces not to mention the internal security sector remains dubious.

The Future of Reform: Challenges, Threats, and Opportunities

Notwithstanding the successes inherent with codifying the country's use of armed force and military power, separating the military from the internal security forces, and improving the capabilities and procurement processes, many other strategic issues of reform have been ignored. Generally, reforms associated with the development of civil society are lagging in Uzbekistan and thus threaten the security sector's ability to transition to democratic control. Little progress has been made in establishing a bicameral legislature that was promised to be in place by late 2004. Moreover, the *Majlis* has no oversight power or control of the budget. Second, media censorship continues in spite of statements that it ended in May 2002 and independent media outlets remain limited and under close scrutiny. There is little open discussion surrounding the role

of the military or internal security services nor is the budget transparent. Finally, only marginal steps have been made towards making the *som* convertible that is essential to opening the economy.[122] As a result of limited reform in civil sector, progress in crucial measures of security sector reform such as planning, programming, budgeting is lacking. Furthermore, the reforms that have enhanced capability do not necessarily translate into democratic reform in the command and control structure. Assistance used to improve anti-terrorist capabilities and to procure new equipment has had limited impact on meaningful reforms in other cases.[123] Also, the extent to which training permeates beyond those officers and forces initially involved is limited. Another concern arises from the missions being assigned to newly trained units. American law prohibits the US military from training security sector personnel, thus Washington focuses on improving the military's counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist capabilities to meet the identified threats. While such training requires professionalism, it also establishes a precedent for increasing the use of the military domestically. There is an infusion of confidence among the forces and a level of reliability that is enticing to a regime confronting domestic unrest. Under such scrutiny, one also cannot completely discount either the willingness of the regime to use reliable forces in a domestic situation or the dual use capabilities of new equipment such as the BARS, light armored vehicles, which can be used for crowd control as well as combating insurgents.

A second challenge to broader security sector reform is the competition between the various parts of the security sector. The SNB because of its size and capabilities is a rival to the MoD. While inter-service rivalry exists in most states, enmity is further exacerbated by the competition for limited resource. In this context, governments have a tendency to support those organizations that best serve their interests at the moment. In the case of Uzbekistan, the SNB and the MoIS fill this role most significantly as the enforcer of the government's domestic policy as well as its efforts at counter-terrorism.

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[122] *Uzbekistan's Reform Program: Illusion or Reality?* International Crisis Group (*hereafter* ICG Asia Report #46) Asia Report #46, February 18, 2003:1

[123] McDermott, *Kazakhstan's Armed Forces: Reform or Decay?* June 2002:15

What all this means is that Gulyamov's reform efforts have placed him in conflict with the more status quo oriented internal security services. Ultimately this could be to his detriment. His close connections to the Karimov and his control of some resources allow him to remain a player in Uzbek politics. He is well liked in Washington, which also is not insignificant. Notwithstanding, the MoD is not a power ministry in the traditional sense in spite of a traditional role as an influential player behind the scenes. Gulyamov's lack of an intelligence gathering operation such as the Defense Intelligence Agency or the service intelligence operations makes him beholden to other security sector forces to be effective. It is widely accepted, that like the KGB, the SNB is more powerful than and tends to dominate the army. Its ability to gather intelligence on elites, its financial resources, and its tight ties to Karimov's clan, reinforce the rivalry. This point should not be minimized, if one considers that more than three years after 9/11, the American intelligence community still refuses to cooperate effectively. The inability of Uzbekistan's Minister of Defense to get relevant and pertinent information leaves him susceptible. At a minimum, he could quickly become marginalized. A worse case scenario results in him being blamed for failures that he may have prevented with appropriate sharing of information.

A third structural challenge is the lack of willingness among the internal security services to reform. The internal security services retain broad responsibilities beyond counter-espionage and intelligence gathering and have overlapping powers that include intelligence, law enforcement, and prosecution. Their ethnic homogeneity; the KGB's legacy for secrecy and autonomy, and the government's propensity to use all security sectors, including law enforcement components, as a political entity designed to protect the regime further obfuscate reform and separate them from society. Relative to the military, internal security forces tend to reflect the attitudes of their leadership largely because their recruitment comes from clans loyal to the regime rather than through national conscription.[124] The Interior Minister, Zohirjon Almatov, is perhaps Uzbekistan's most powerful minister and has succession

[124] Smith Dianne L., *Opening Pandora's Box: Ethnicity and Central Asian Militaries,* Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle PA 1998:16

possibilities. More critically, even as Uzbekistan continues to weather a public relations debacle surrounding its human rights abuses, Almatov has never reported to the Prime Minister or parliament and certainly has not been forced to face the press.[125]

The prevalence of corruption, the regime separation emerging from increased suppression and the lack of reform, and the possibility of coalescence both between government and criminal elements and the IMU with other regional terrorist groups hinder reforms and potentially threaten the Uzbek state. It is within the context of coalescence and corruption that the close integration of the internal security services is a disservice to Uzbekistan. A case in point is the circumstances surrounding the National Border Guards. Although the first line of defense against infiltration by criminals and terrorists, these forces have been accused of being unwilling to take on tough and dangerous assignments.[126] Part of their inefficiency may result from poor treatment and training. However, part also may be attributed to complicity with criminal elements and potentially terrorists attempting to infiltrate Uzbekistan or trafficking illicit goods through Uzbekistan. The pay structure and living circumstances, for example border guards are expected to find their own transportation home for leave or at the end of their tours often from remote posts, make these forces susceptible to bribes. However, corruption is systemically endemic, is a barrier to reform, and promotes a coalescence between the government and criminal elements. Corruption flows throughout the system. At a micro-level, it is individual guard's being willing to accept a bribe to ignore the smuggling of drugs or small arms contributes. An example of the extent to which corruption is institutionalized within the security sector is the practice of parents bribing recruiters to ensure their sons are placed in "good" units or at a minimum to keep them out of the border guards. These payments are distributed throughout the chain of command.

The extent to which the security sector is corporately and individually profiting from smuggling and trafficking, conscription graft, and other illicit activities contributes to an unwillingness to accept reform. In

[125] Author interview with informed Department of Defense source 10/04
[126] ICG Asia Report #42 Osh/Brussels, December 2002:2

addition, corruption erodes civil control of the security sector. Corruption and related criminal activities increase the power and wealth and perpetuate a lack of accountability and increased autonomy. Finally, corruption broadly contributes to the creation of a sub-economy that subverts legitimate economic development and provides funding to subversive groups.

Systemic corruption also contributes to increasing social dissatisfaction and anti-regime sentiment. According to the International Crisis Group, the oil workers strike in the summer 2003; women's demonstrations in Tashkent, and even the April 2004 bombings in Tashkent are evidence of popular discontent.[127] Increased social discontentment results in animosity towards the security forces, which are primarily responsible for perpetrating the violence against society. The resulting regime separation de-legitimizes the government, gradually heightens sympathy for radical groups and ultimately enhances the recruitment of individuals by radical groups.

A second form of coalescence is that between radical groups and the government. While much more gradual and less obvious than the coalescence with criminal elements, heightened sympathy for radical Islamic groups inevitable threatens to permeate the government. Sympathy for groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir is growing across Central Asia because it offers an alternative to the current governance. Ahmed Rashid contends that Hizb ut-Tahrir sympathizers have been active in the military, intelligence services, and upper bureaucracy since 1999.[128] Such infiltrations are worrisome because it erodes the security sectors capability and willingness to combat those groups that are the greatest long-term threat to stability. It also ultimately may result in the internal security service actually supporting radical groups similar to the Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence's support for Islamists. In this case, co-opted security services see democratic control as western neo-imperialism.

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[127] Lewis, David, *Bad Analysis Makes for Bad Policy in Uzbekistan*, International Crisis Group EurasiaNet 5/20/40

[128] Rashid, Ahmed, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* Yale University Press, New London CT 2002:125

The regime's pre-occupation with Hizb ut-Tahrir also has inhibited its ability to effectively analyze the threat posed by a re-constitute IMU. In March 2004, then Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet commented that the greatest threat facing American forces in Iraq was the coalescence of groups opposed to coalition presence and goals in that country.[129] According to the Tajikistan National Security Service head, the IMU has united with other groups to form the Islamic Movement of Central Asia. The IMU's coalescence with other Islamists and nationalist groups in Central Asia is a concern. Although probably possessing insufficient strength to be considered more than an annoyance to Uzbekistan at this time, it is a real threat to governments with less proficient security sectors such as Kyrgyzstan. An assessment by the International Crisis Group that the IMU is unorganized and small scale as a result of the defeat of the Taliban is contradicted by other reports, including those from US intelligence, that indicate the IMU has the capability to recruit and train nearly 5,000 guerrillas in a year and is suspected in a number of recent terrorist attacks.[130] Finally, the IMU continues to be involved in the Central Asian drug trade with a network of couriers that indicates a level of influence across the region as well as significant financial resources to fund operations.[131]

Regardless of whether the Uzbek government concentrates on Hizb ut-Tahrir, the IMU, or more probably both, the war on terrorism will continue to influence security sector reform. From a positive perspective, it will be a catalyst to on-going military re-organization that has already engendered a level of reform and caused a re-assessment of the traditional military concepts breaking the dominance of Russian strategic and operational thinking. The war on terrorism already has increased Western attention, boosted the distribution of resources to Central Asian governments, and augmented the presence of American and NATO forces in the region. Since 9/11, Karimov has combined a

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[129] *The Worldwide Threat 2004: Challenges in a Changing Global Context,* DCI Worldwide Threat Briefing, March 2004

[130] Blank, Stephen, *Pakistan Emerges as Threat to Regional Stability*, 6/18/04 and additional Eurasia Insight on-line www.eurasianet.org: 5/15/02 and 5/14/03

[131] Miller, Justin L., "The Narco-Insurgent Nexus in Central Asia and Afghanistan" *National Interest* vol. 2 Issue 18 5/7/03. The IMU reportedly controlled as much as 70% of the heroin trafficking in 2000,

policy of bilateralism, focusing primarily on relations with the United States with discriminate regional collective security. Uzbekistan sees its partnership with the United States and NATO has an effective means of modernizing the armed forces and improving its capability against modern security threats.[132] The Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework, which was concluded in July 2002, is a key feature in this relationship. It has produced a range of cooperative initiatives at multiple levels in the military. It also has stimulated a stable process for military diplomacy between the United States and Uzbekistan and improved the operational capabilities of Uzbek special operation forces, which is critical due to size and needs of the country.

However, some aspects of the war on terrorism such as the regime's use of the issue to suppress all opposition and even a long-term American presence have resulted in negative responses. American presence has not succeeded in achieving political, economic, and social reform. The impact of multiple interests including Iraq, and a growing dissatisfaction with the progress of reforms risks deflecting attention from Uzbekistan and Central Asia generally and encouraging fatigue in Washington. A decrease in engagement would simply feed extremism and should not be permitted. Opportunities for reform are greater with American and NATO presence than without.

Second, the inability to meet expectations has resulted in a decline in Uzbek public support for American involvement. In late 2001, support for American presence was nearly unanimous. In July 2002, that support had dropped to 60%. [133] Of greater concern is the increasing perception that American involvement in Central Asia is part of a broader war on Islam. Nearly, 5% of the Uzbek population view the war on terrorism as a war against Islam and believe that American military cooperation has increased Karimov's confidence and willingness to use force to oppress society.[134] Paraphrasing former US Speaker of the House Tip O'Neil, all politics is local and the Uzbek's care only to the extent that American

[132] Author interview with informed sources in Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[133] Khadjimukhamedov, Marat, Deputy Director Ijtimoiy Fikr Public Opinion Center, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty www.isn.ethz.ch 2/26/02
[134] EurasiaNet Eurasian Insight on-line www.eurasianet.org 3/20/02

presence helps them solve their problems. Notwithstanding, Washington should evaluate this information and other circumstances realistically to avoid any misperception that Uzbekistan is an "island of stability."

As previously noted, American efforts have been instrumental in helping Uzbekistan transition from developing a national military to establishing civil control. Three initiatives should be considered as a continued catalyst to reform. First, the United States should encourage Uzbekistan to maintain its internal security services and special operation forces as size appropriate for confronting the threat posed by terrorism. Within this context, it needs help identify the real threats to Uzbekistan. Second, it needs to apply real pressure on the Uzbek government to implement reforms needed to create civil society. The State Department's decision to withhold $18 million in funding was important but primarily symbolic as most, if not increased military funding erased all, of the deficit. Real pressure with consequence for non-compliance is needed to improve human rights, increase political participation, and allow the formal recognition of political opposition groups willing to seek change through a democratic process. Third, the United States should support the increase in the size of training initiative to include groups beyond the military. Within this context, it should consider supporting the permanent deployment of police trainers either from other NATO countries or private companies to complement military training efforts being made under the Strategic Partnership Agreement. Major parts of this training need to include changing the perceptions regarding the role of security services as protectors of the state and its population and de-militarizing services that serve human security needs such as emergency workers.

The final external factor influencing security sector reform is Uzbekistan's relationship with Russia. Uzbekistan eschewed Russian influence for a majority of its independence in favor of ties with the United States and other collective security arrangements. It provided 40% of the forces for *Centrazbat* and joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Partnership for Peace (PfP), and GUUAM, among other regional organizations. Although an original member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty, which has metamorphosed into

the Collective Security Treaty Organization, it withdrew when Karimov became increasingly concerned about Russian motives. Karimov sought to separate but not completely divorce from Moscow even if the latter had been feasible. Beyond economic and cultural ties, Russia shares Uzbekistan's concerns regarding Islamic fundamentalism. Moscow also often is viewed by the regime as being less demanding than the United States and NATO with regard to reforms. Finally, it remains a source of military training, new equipment and spare parts. Uzbekistan views its cooperation with Russia and the 2004 Strategic Partnership with Moscow as complementing its ties with the United States.[135] However, these ties remain an obstacle to further reform particularly of the internal security services.

Security sector reform is dependent upon the internal and external environment. The circumstances in Uzbekistan are no exception. Internally, the lack of broader efforts at reform will retard, if not eliminate, security sector reform. The impact of external events including the intensification of the war on terrorism as exemplified by the April and July 2004 bombings in Tashkent, a re-constituted IMU, the continued American presence, and the recent rapprochement with Moscow also will continue to influence Uzbekistan's willingness and efforts at security sector reform. At this point, the best hopes for reform are continued support for the efforts of Defense Minister Gulyamov; a continued development of ties between Washington and Tashkent that corresponds with heightened American awareness of democratization as a method for establishing sustainable security and expanded efforts in this area, and balancing of Russian involvement that complements areas of common interest but also establishes the United States as a viable choice for reform.

Dr. Peter K. Forster
Associate Director, Lecturer
Penn State University, World Campus, Department of Political Science
University Park, Pennsylvania

[135] Authors interview with informed Ministry of Foreign Affairs source.