

Fear of Democracy or Revolution: The Reaction to Andijon

In the early morning of May 13, 2005, a small band of well-armed men stormed the central prison in the city of Andijon, in Uzbekistan's Ferghana Valley.¹ The assault freed 23 local businessmen, held since July 2004 on suspicion of membership in a radical Islamic group and scheduled for sentencing, along with hundreds of other inmates. Several guards were killed or wounded in the prison break. Some of the prisoners and leaders of the attack then seized the Andijon city government's offices and took hostages. As word of the events spread, a crowd gathered in Andijon's central square throughout the morning and early afternoon. Some local citizens arrived knowing about the prison break, but others came simply after hearing about a protest.

Although the militant leaders were organized and committed a willful criminal act by breaking into a prison and killing its guards, the crowd was more spontaneous. Interviews, surveys, and first-hand accounts all emphasize that people came to express their social and economic frustration but that the protest had no clear political message. A portable microphone was passed through the crowd, and individuals began to air pent-up complaints about everything from government repression, poverty, and corruption to poor schools and hospitals. People continually asked for government representatives, including Uzbek president Islam Karimov, to address their grievances. Reports suggesting Karimov had left the capital, Tashkent, for the Ferghana Valley in response to the developing crisis led some to believe he would make a personal appearance. When a helicopter flew over the square, rumors circulating that Karimov had arrived apparently caused cheers to

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erupt. Although Karimov later admitted that he had flown to Andijon to control the situation, he refused to meet with protesters. Instead, later in the afternoon, government troops drove around the assembled crowd, shooting civilians.

There is legitimate disagreement over the number of citizens that were in the square and even the number injured and killed, but it is clear from our interviews conducted with survivors who fled to the Kyrgyz Republic that government forces fired indiscriminately, killing men, women, and children, and that troops pursued those who fled the square. It was the bloodiest protest in Uzbekistan since it gained independence in 1991.

A year after Andijon, Karimov's government continues to refuse an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) investigation into the events. Local human rights activists are being rounded up and imprisoned on trumped-up charges, and international media and watchdog organizations have been expelled from the country. Uzbekistan's relationship with the United States and Europe has unraveled. The Uzbek government has forced a U.S. military air base at Karshi-Khanabad, which played an important role in the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan, to close. The country's foreign policy orientation has shifted dramatically toward Russia, China, and South Asia. The cycle of protest and repression in Uzbekistan has raised questions about the future stability of this erstwhile U.S. ally in the heartland of Central Asia.

In the wake of Andijon, Western and regional analysts wonder if protesters in Uzbekistan have now been cowed by the regime's vicious response or if there are similar events on Uzbekistan's horizon with the potential to undermine the government. Why did Karimov's government suddenly resort to such brutality to bring the protests to an abrupt end? Given the fact that none of the protestors' grievances have been addressed, will elections in 2007 become a touchstone for opposition? Is there any prospect for a democratic opening or reform in Uzbekistan?

The Road to Andijon

The events in Andijon and the Karimov regime's reaction were symptoms of a complex and deep-rooted crisis in Uzbekistan. Economic problems and popular discontent have collided with a struggle over political succession in advance of Uzbekistan's 2007 presidential election, all against the backdrop of the growing influence of militant Islamist movements and the Colored Revolutions in Eurasia, which produced dramatic political change in Georgia, Ukraine, and the Kyrgyz Republic in 2003–2005.

On the economic front, since he became president in 1990, Karimov has preferred to tinker at the margins of Uzbekistan's economic system

rather than institute the highly coordinated, comprehensive reforms necessary to tackle the country's problems. Although Uzbekistan has the considerable advantage of energy self-sufficiency and has demonstrated healthy gross domestic product (GDP) growth in recent years (rising from just less than 3 percent in 1998–2003 to 7 percent in 2004), the country's macroeconomic successes can be attributed to favorable world prices for cotton and gold, its two major exports.² The situation is not as positive on the microeconomic level. The agricultural and natural resource sectors that underpin the economy are not generating sufficient jobs to keep pace with Uzbekistan's growing population and expanding labor force. New foreign direct investment has almost completely dried up as the economy has closed in on itself. Residency restrictions keep the unemployed in place, driving increasing numbers of Uzbeks to seek work illegally in Kazakhstan and Russia. Some international institutions estimate that as much as 10 percent of the Uzbek GDP now comes from migrant worker remittances.³

Karimov saw Andijon as a sign that Uzbekistan was 'infected with the contagion of revolt.'

Living standards in Uzbekistan have generally declined since 2000 for all but a small, privileged group, and subsistence survival strategies are now the norm across the country. In fact, living standards have dropped to the bottom quintile of all countries, putting the Central Asian state on a par with Laos and Sudan rather than its more comparable regional neighbor, Kazakhstan. In purchasing power parity, Uzbekistan's per capita GDP has fallen in the last few years to the level of its much smaller neighbor, the Kyrgyz Republic, a country with none of Uzbekistan's natural resources or industry.⁴

Since 2003, most international financial institutions from the International Monetary Fund to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank have scaled back their programs in Uzbekistan. In the meantime, Karimov's misguided efforts at reform have often exacerbated the hardship for the poorest Uzbeks. Attempts in 2003–2004 to introduce new tariffs and government licenses to regulate bazaars and cross-border shuttle trading, for example, resulted in the dramatic disappearance of goods, the rapid rise of prices on basic staples, and the loss of livelihoods for members of extended families engaged in small-scale trade. These interventions triggered protests, especially in the trading centers of the Ferghana Valley.

Although there have been a number of terrorist attacks by Islamist militant groups, most protests in Uzbekistan over the last 15 years have been motivated by economic and social grievances and the arbitrary actions of lo-

cal government officials. In March 2003, for example, thousands of students protested in Karimov's home region of Samarkand after the local government sacked a popular university rector. This incident sparked broader demonstrations about the poor state of the country's higher education system.⁵ Protests of this nature have occurred in almost every region of Uzbekistan, and their frequency increased in the months leading up to Andijon. In November 2004, thousands of people protested in the ancient Ferghana Valley city of Kokand against government taxation and trade policies. Similar protests sprang up elsewhere in the Ferghana Valley, as well as in southern Uzbekistan. In April 2005, just prior to the events in Andijon, a large demonstration in Jizzakh province, about 100 miles southwest of Tashkent, was sparked by farmers gathering to criticize the regional government's confiscation of small, private agricultural plots.

Local authorities showed considerable restraint in responding to most of these protests even when protestors damaged property, often moving to defuse the situation with promises of concessions. Yet, there was a notable change in the government's response just before Andijon in early May 2005, when riot police forcibly broke up a small rally outside the U.S. embassy in Tashkent. Protestors, including women and children, were beaten by police.⁶

Faulty Interpretations of Colored Revolutions

Karimov's harsh response in Andijon was not just a reaction to economic and social discontent in Uzbekistan. Karimov saw Andijon as a clear sign that Uzbekistan was now infected with the "contagion of revolt" from the Colored Revolutions: the Rose Revolution in Georgia that toppled President Eduard Shevardnadze in November 2003; the December 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine that brought Viktor Yushchenko to power; and the Tulip Revolution in the Kyrgyz Republic that resulted in President Askar Akayev's abdication of power in March 2005, only two months prior to Andijon. In each case, mass protests and dramatic regime change followed international condemnation of electoral fraud in parliamentary and presidential elections.

The events in the Kyrgyz Republic were a particular shock for Karimov. They also began with protests in the Ferghana Valley. Although the local and international press immediately jumped on these Kyrgyz protests as precursors to the same kind of opposition-led demonstrations that occurred in Georgia and Ukraine, they were actually quite different. In Georgia and Ukraine, coordinated crowds mobilized in the capital cities of Tbilisi and Kiev. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the protests erupted in isolated communities in the southern Jalalabad province, just 25 miles from Andijon, in Naryn in

the center of the country and only briefly in the capital, Bishkek. The spark was the exclusion of popular politicians from local parliamentary races by the Kyrgyz election commission, and there was initially no coordination between protest leaders in these different regions.⁷

In the provinces, the protestors' attentions drifted away from their initial political grievance toward the persistent economic crisis in the Kyrgyz Republic, one of the poorest countries in Eurasia. In numerous, in-depth interviews in the country in October–December 2005, people who had participated in these local protests underscored that they gathered in city squares in Jalalabad and elsewhere to complain about their economic and social hardship. The elections triggered general expressions of discontent with the government's failures to improve living standards.

When both rounds of the Kyrgyz Republic's parliamentary elections were declared fraudulent by the OSCE and other international observers, protests spread to more provinces and eventually reached the capital. During the first large gathering in Bishkek, Akayev suddenly fled the country. His abrupt abdication of power was an unexpected development for protestors, opposition leaders, the general populace, and outside election monitors. After the fact, opposition leaders desperately tried to play up their role to give some political coherence and legitimacy to what was a more spontaneous and chaotic situation. In the final reckoning, however, Akayev's failures and personal fears played the primary role in the regime's collapse.

The international and regional media coverage of the Kyrgyz events and the Colored Revolutions glossed over Akayev's failings as well as the domestic crisis and misguided actions that hastened the government's demise. Instead, in the case of all three states—the Kyrgyz Republic, Ukraine, and Georgia—the role of the international community, the individual countries' domestic civil societies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the local media was hyped and often misconstrued. A nefarious role was also assigned to the United States. Because of the active presence of U.S.-supported NGOs in all the “afflicted” countries working on democracy promotion and issues such as political party development, voters' rights, and electoral reform, media observers portrayed a pattern of blatant U.S. intervention to install its allies in key countries on Russia's borders.⁸ All of this fed Karimov's perception both of a revolutionary contagion in the region and the external manipulation of the Colored Revolutions by U.S. and international NGOs.

There is no large-scale united or organized opposition in Uzbekistan.

Karimov, however, based his diagnosis on faulty interpretations. In the case of the Kyrgyz Republic, international assistance to the protestors and the opposition was marginal. U.S. government money kept an opposition printing press open when the government tried to shut it down, and a U.S.-backed Radio Liberty production, Radio Azzatik, broadcast late at night across the country. In interviews, however, people who took to the streets confided that they did not get much information from these sources. The Internet, mobile phones, and rumor played a more important role in spreading information. Although several of the Kyrgyz opposition leaders had some experience of Western democratic practices thanks to U.S. government and international NGO visitor and training programs dating back to the 1990s, these leaders were not

An Islamist underground has served as a scapegoat to demonize all political opposition.

heavily involved in the protests outside Bishkek. Few of the primary beneficiaries of Akayev's overthrow were known for their Western ties. The protests originated in some of the Kyrgyz Republic's most isolated and least cosmopolitan villages and cities and became social rather than political in nature. The impact of international organization activity was highly overestimated.

Looking more broadly at the other revolutions, in each case domestic factors were the primary cause of political change, not international intervention. Political scientist Michael McFaul argues in his analysis of the democratic movements in Georgia and Ukraine as well as Serbia that almost all of the key factors leading to the governments' collapse "would have still been present had no Western assistance been forthcoming." McFaul identifies seven of them: a semiautocratic regime with a degree of political competition, an unpopular incumbent, a united and organized opposition, independent electoral-monitoring capabilities, a modicum of independent media, the opposition's capacity to mobilize large numbers of protestors, and splits among the state's military, police, and security forces. He notes that "foreign aid played no independent role in any of these breakthroughs (and rarely does), but contributed to the drama by increasing or decreasing the relative value of each of the seven factors."⁹

The collapse of the Kyrgyz government that gave Karimov such a jolt is absent from McFaul's case studies of new democratic breakthroughs in post-Soviet states. Although some of McFaul's seven factors were present in the Kyrgyz Republic, interviews in the country underscore that there was no single leader, organizer, or coalition mobilizing the protests. This critical element was notably missing. The unique factor in the Kyrgyz Republic was that Akayev

grossly overestimated his opposition, panicked as the first protestors massed in Bishkek, and fled, leaving chaos and consternation in his wake.

Karimov's Reaction

In many respects, Karimov also seems to have panicked in Andijon in May 2005. Guided by the media coverage of the Colored Revolutions and his own particular anxiety about the rapid unraveling of the Kyrgyz government, Karimov saw Andijon as a coup attempt against his government. According to high-level U.S., Russian, and Kazakh officials whom he met in the immediate aftermath, as well as a report by British scholar Shirin Akiner, Karimov firmly believed that the assault on the prison was perpetrated with international support, including from NGOs sponsored by the U.S. government.¹⁰ For Karimov, Andijon had to be the last major protest.

After Andijon, the Uzbek government took immediate steps to stamp out any possible sources and instigators of future incidents. Large numbers of people allegedly involved in the organization of the prison break in Andijon were rounded up and put on trial, often secretly. International institutions promoting increased political openness or free and fair elections and supporting local media development were quickly singled out for harassment or were expelled, as were Uzbek activists associated with these same causes. The government also turned on outspoken campaigners for social reform, accusing them of treason and an often bizarre array of purported crimes ranging from slander and extortion to polluting the environment.¹¹

Karimov now faces an acute dilemma. His regime wants to ensure its survival. Technically, Karimov cannot run for reelection in the 2007 presidential election. He has already extended his term several times through referenda, similar to his neighbor, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, who has now successfully won reelection for another seven-year term through 2012. Karimov can try to do this again or opt for an executive succession. Any method, however, raises difficult questions for the regime.

Applying McFaul's factors for democratic transition, Uzbekistan is an autocratic regime with very little political competition. The country's economic problems are a complication, making the incumbent president and his government very unpopular. Yet, there is no united or organized opposition in Uzbekistan that could conceivably mobilize large-scale protests; there are no independent electoral-monitoring capabilities; the media has been quashed; and the splits that may exist among the state's military, police, and security forces are carefully concealed.¹²

In Uzbekistan's super-presidential system, all political authority is concentrated in a tiny ruling group around the president and his administra-

tion. Uzbekistan's parliament, political parties, and judiciary have no independent role. Charismatic leaders and political movements that have emerged to challenge the ruling group's authority have been thoroughly emasculated. The only semblance of organized opposition in Uzbekistan is rooted in underground groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir and focused around a crude version of political Islam that is unpalatable for most Uzbeks hoping for political change. Hizb-ut-Tahrir has spearheaded protests in Tashkent

Would-be promoters of democracy both inside and outside Uzbekistan face a dilemma.

against the state's persecution of observant Muslims and was blamed for orchestrating a series of suicide bomb attacks and battles with police that wracked the capital city in March 2004. The existence of this Islamist underground opposition has proven extremely useful as a scapegoat for Karimov to demonize all political opposition. In Andijon, for example, the Karimov regime depicted the 23 jailed businessmen as members of a splinter group of Hizb-ut-Tahrir aiming for the

violent overthrow of the government. The militant assault on the prison and the subsequent protests were presented as proof of these aims.

Karimov has also moved against other independent businessmen in Uzbekistan to prevent them from becoming alternative sources of funding and influence, targeting not just observant Muslims but also people such as Sanjar Umarov, who pioneered telecommunications, energy, and agricultural ventures in the country. Umarov is now imprisoned after launching the Sunshine Coalition to promote a dialogue with the government on economic and political reform.¹³ As a result, the only genuine political competition that exists in Uzbekistan is between regional and central elites and among individual clan groupings represented in the government. Uzbek politics are thus the product of deal-making among vested interest groups with concessions by the government to these groups. Over the last several years, Karimov has reined in regional elites and strengthened the center by exerting state control over the revenue streams from commodities exports and redistributing resource rents to regional favorites. As the scholar Kathleen Collins has written, post-Soviet politics in Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic is "about bargaining among three or four major clans for the control of economic resources."¹⁴

In this kind of political system, leaders such as Karimov seek a successor they can trust not to persecute them or their family if they are to step aside. New presidents must be sought within the ruling group to ensure that they share the same views, interests, and goals as the outgoing presidential team. Elsewhere in Eurasia, there has been a strong preference wherever possible for succession to an immediate family member, such as

Ilham Aliyev in Azerbaijan, who succeeded his father as president in October 2003, or to a political protégé such as Vladimir Putin in Russia, who succeeded Boris Yeltsin in January 2000. Even in these highly managed successions, however, the new team usually purges the old guard. If the presidential succession process in Uzbekistan goes awry en route to the 2007 election, there is a real danger of the complete loss of control by the regime, the degeneration of political power, and a sudden coup or change of power by rogue members of the political elite if they can get the backing of key security services and vested interests.

The Democrats' Dilemma

Similar to Karimov, would-be promoters of democracy inside and outside Uzbekistan face a dilemma. The situation has been exacerbated by the Uzbek government's and the international community's responses to the Andijon events. The Uzbek government forced international organizations and media to leave the country, in addition to expelling the U.S. military air base. The European Union reacted to Andijon by refusing visas to a large group of government officials and enacting an embargo on arms exports, and the United States has decreased foreign aid support.¹⁵ Although these gestures by the international community are an important human rights statement, they are generally symbolic and have done little either to exert real pressure on the Uzbek government or to promote constructive engagement. They also indicate the international community's loss of any significant influence with the Karimov regime. There is little if any prospect for a democratic opening in Uzbekistan in the near term. A coup is far from an optimistic scenario, and any potential new regime in 2007 would likely be just as authoritarian in its approach as Karimov has been.

Although protests in Uzbekistan are a clear indication of widespread discontent and there is considerable, festering resentment among the elites outside the privileged circles favored by the government, no viable political opposition provides a focal point for these sentiments. Although the Uzbek people seem ready for change, they are not necessarily ready for political change. In surveys conducted across Uzbekistan and Central Asia by the World Bank with the United Nations Development Program and The Brookings Institution in the fall of 2004, Uzbek citizens cited their primary concerns as unemployment, poverty, and political instability. They wanted a more responsive government that could deliver on critical issues such as jobs, higher wages, and improved living standards. The surveys did not show a country strongly dissatisfied with the state of the media, political rights, or the national government.¹⁶

Historical examples of regime change, as well as the process and outcome of the March 2005 upheavals in the Kyrgyz Republic, suggest that democracy is rarely achieved through mass street protests or through elections alone. Although either may lead to a change in power, allowing nascent democratic movements to emerge, political democracy is solidified through the development of strong civic institutions and a fair and impartial legal system. Furthermore, the goal of democracy promotion is not simply to ensure free and fair elections. It is supposed to be the creation of a system of governance that enhances the political, economic, and social welfare of as large a group of the population as possible. An open, democratic political process theoretically provides more opportunities for a government to emerge that is in tune with the majority of the population's demands.

Yet, as the World Bank survey suggests, in Uzbekistan and the rest of Central Asia the population's demands focus on the alleviation of economic hardship. Economic development also plays an important role in democratic consolidation, and in Uzbekistan both the current economic conditions and the prospects for broad-based growth are not propitious.¹⁷ Although the country's intelligentsia and civil society groups may have clear aspirations for a different political system, they are out of step with the basic concerns and desires of the population. Hardship can just as easily be alleviated by an authoritarian government that emphasizes populist policies, increases pensions as well as minimum wages, and launches employment and education programs as by a democratic government. In states such as Russia and Venezuela, for example, high world oil prices have boosted government revenues, enabling the state to redistribute resources to the population as well as to key elites. As a result, despite their authoritarian tendencies and rampant government corruption, both Putin and Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez remain very popular among their respective domestic constituencies.

In contrast, the democratic governments of Georgia and Ukraine are now foundering after the initial euphoria of their success in overthrowing incumbents. Georgia was mired in economic crisis before the Rose Revolution, and its situation has not improved dramatically since. Ukraine's more robust economic performance has taken a downturn owing to missteps by the new government. In both countries, public disillusionment has returned as the new democrats have failed to deliver.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the situation is even worse than in the past. The government is strapped for cash and has almost no revenue streams, and investors as well as local businessmen have been scared off by the nature of the political upheaval. Citizens have seen almost no economic or social improvements at the local level, and at the national level the government

faces constant political turmoil. The future viability of the governments that came to power with the Colored Revolutions now depends on their ability to ensure economic growth and an improvement in general living standards, as well as the further development of civic institutions.

In Uzbekistan, the Karimov government knows that it cannot deliver to everyone. It cannot even deliver to a larger proportion of the population without imposing austerity measures on its key supporters who benefit from the resource rents. These vested interests block any genuine attempts to reform the system as well as more populist policies. In the 1990s, the provisions of a social safety net and popular support for Karimov were key features of governance in Uzbekistan. Today, and especially since Andijon, repression is the primary tool.¹⁸ The regime's stability and survival is rooted in the strength, capacity, and loyalty of the internal security services. The Karimov government is gambling that it can keep discontent in check by clearly broadcasting its determination to keep on repressing, with increasing force if necessary. One Uzbek journalist who was forced to flee the country after Andijon referred to the country in a recent interview as "a concentration camp" with constant government surveillance and intimidation.¹⁹

Internal repression has been complemented by strengthened restrictions on international travelers to the country and a pullback from engagement with Western countries that have called for the liberalization of Uzbekistan's political space. Initially, after September 2001, the Karimov regime used the United States, especially its military presence and security assistance, to bolster Uzbekistan's defense capacity. Yet, when Karimov became convinced that Washington was determined to play a decisive role in regime change in Eurasia, the United States suddenly became a liability and a threat. Because the services provided by the United States to help modernize the Uzbek military and security services were crucial to maintaining repression at home and a strong, defensive posture on its borders, Karimov has turned more recently toward countries such as Russia, India, and China, which he hopes will provide both a degree of physical protection and support for a managed succession. Karimov fully expects that these states will ignore the political and economic reform issues that the U.S. government continually pressed.

Unfortunately for Western governments, democracy promotion, as leading expert on democracy Thomas Carothers has written, "has come to be seen overseas ... as a code word for 'regime change.'"²⁰ Karimov believes the

Responses to Andijon by the international community have generally been symbolic.

United States and other Western governments, along with international NGOs, are plotting his demise. In the wake of the Colored Revolutions, democracy promotion is now linked in the region with U.S. intervention. The Bush administration's new "freedom agenda" and after-the-fact emphasis on elections and nation building in Afghanistan and Iraq have also been major factors in shaping interpretations of the U.S. approach to democratization in the Middle East and elsewhere. Democracy promotion is seen as a tool for

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nefarious goals such as ousting leaders who are out of favor with the West and not as an altruistic end that will bring benefit to individual countries.

Regional leaders such as Karimov claim that they are trying to stop their sovereignty from being undermined by rebuffing international calls for democratization and clamping down on local and international NGOs and the media. In pursuing repression, Karimov depicts himself as protecting the motherland,

not just his regime, from subversion and terrorism and as maintaining the political stability that prevents radical Islamist groups from seizing power. As a result, there is currently little space for national-level engagement and political dialogue with the Karimov government.

The only option for a U.S. government and international community that wants to continue to engage with Uzbekistan is to keep pushing the government to open up lines of communication in the hope of identifying elites interested in a gradual opening. Any strategy for engagement at this juncture will also have to put its stress on evolution, not revolution, underscoring the fact that the United States simply wants to see Uzbekistan reform for the benefit of its people. As a recent International Crisis Group report states, "The emphasis rather should be on longer term measures, amounting essentially to a lifeboat strategy to maintain political activity, civil society and educational opportunities in the expectation of future change to a more reasonable government."²¹ As the history of U.S. engagement with authoritarian governments in Chile, the Philippines, and South Korea at earlier critical junctures has demonstrated, it is important to maintain long-term support for local civil society while at the same time delivering a clear, consistent message to the regime to encourage democratic reform.²² In this context, the United States and the international community will have to work with Russia and China, the two regional states with the most leverage, in emphasizing the importance of gradual change in Uzbekistan. Although neither of these countries will push Uzbekistan on human rights or political reform issues, it is not in their

self-interest to see more political instability or economic collapse in the most populous and strategically significant state in Central Asia.

In the meantime, NGOs and international organizations can undertake some activities. Some organizations, such as the World Bank, are already opting to maintain a low level of programs in Uzbekistan targeting local engagement on basic economic issues rather than working with the central government. Mercy Corps, a humanitarian organization, has adopted a similar approach in its regional programs, including those in the Ferghana Valley. NGOs interested in political and economic transformation in Uzbekistan can still operate outside the country, pursuing broader cross-border programs that include Uzbekistan. This approach is particularly important. As indicated by the exodus of 500 refugees across the border from Andijon to the Kyrgyz Republic in May 2005, political turmoil in Uzbekistan has the potential to destabilize its neighbors; Uzbekistan is the one Central Asian state that shares a border with all the other states in the region, as well as Afghanistan. International organizations and governments can increase their support to border regions in Central Asia and to other national governments to assist them in responding to spillover problems from Uzbekistan.

It seems implausible that Uzbekistan can keep the lid on its problems over the long term.

One year after Andijon, Karimov is aiming for short-term stability through 2007. Yet, it seems implausible that the government can keep the lid on its economic and social problems over the long term. Uzbekistan's governing elite is out of step with the population. Pressure will continue to build for reform as citizens' frustration mounts over economic hardship and the lack of education, jobs, and general opportunity. Uzbeks will also find a way to leave the country, despite the restrictions, to make a living elsewhere in places such as Russia and Kazakhstan that are much more prosperous and open. Political dissident groups are already forming abroad and may eventually create a groundswell for change. As one prominent international representative in Uzbekistan put it in November 2005, "Karimov cannot stop people from moving across borders and bringing money into Uzbekistan. Eventually, Uzbekistan will be pried open again."²³

Notes

1. The depiction of the events in Andijon is based on four key reports, as well as first-hand interviews by the authors during May 2005, of Uzbek refugees who fled from Andijon to the Kyrgyz Republic. See "Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising," *Interna-*

- tional Crisis Group Asia Briefing* no. 38 (May 2005), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3469&l=1>; "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain: The Andijon Massacre, May 13, 2005," *Human Rights Watch Report* 17, no. 5 (D) (June 2005), <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/uzbekistan0605/>; "Burying the Truth: Uzbekistan Rewrites the Story of the Andijon Massacre," *Human Rights Watch Report* 17, no. 6 (D) (September 2005), <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/uzbekistan0905/>; Amnesty International, "Uzbekistan: Lifting the Siege on the Truth About Andizhan," EUR 62/021/2005, September 20, 2005, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR620212005>.
2. International Monetary Fund, "Republic of Uzbekistan: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper—Joint Staff Advisory Note," *IMF Country Report*, no. 05/159 (May 2005).
 3. Regional World Bank officials, interviews with authors, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, and Washington, D.C., November 2005.
 4. World Bank, "World Development Indicators 2005," International Comparison Programme database, 2005.
 5. See Nemat Sultanov, "Student Protest Unsettles Authorities in Uzbekistan," Eurasianet.org, April 1, 2003, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav040103.shtml>.
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 8. See, for example, Ian Traynor, "U.S. Campaign Behind the Turmoil in Kiev," *Guardian*, November 26, 2004, p. 17.
 9. Michael McFaul, "Transitions From Postcommunism," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 3 (July 2005): 5–19.
 10. Interviews with authors, Washington, D.C., November–December 2005. See Shirin Akiner, "Violence in Andijan, 13 May 2005: An Independent Assessment," *Silk Road Paper*, July 2005, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/0507Akiner.pdf>.
 11. See, for example, Human Rights Watch, "Uzbekistan: Police Seal Off Town for Activist's Trial," January 31, 2006 (press release).
 12. See, for example, Alisher Ilkhamov, "Speculation Continues Over Appointment of New Uzbek MVD Chief; Resignation of SNB Chair Seems Inevitable," *Eurasian Daily Monitor* 3, no. 21 (January 31, 2006), http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2370725.
 13. For more information, see the Sunshine Coalition's Web site, <http://www.sunshineuzbekistan.org/about.html>.
 14. Kathleen Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (July 2002): 137–152.
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