

**U.S. SECURITY POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA
(PART I)**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND CENTRAL ASIA
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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U.S. SECURITY POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA (PART I)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND CENTRAL ASIA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:33 a.m. in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Thaddeus G. McCotter presiding.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Without objection, we will open the hearing, and take testimony. On panel one will be our distinguished colleague, Representative Chris Smith from New Jersey, who is here to talk about his Central Asian Democracy and Human Rights Act of 2005.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for providing me this opportunity to speak to the Subcommittee, and I have a much fuller statement that I would ask be made a part of the record.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SMITH. It is a pleasure to speak before you today. I want to commend the Subcommittee for organizing this important hearing, and for your work and your ongoing work concerning the problems of Central Asia.

I am also submitting a longer statement like I just indicated, which is now a part of the record. Mr. Chairman, the peoples of Central Asia are all confronting the legacy of 70 years of Soviet Communism.

Despite our hopes and modest expectations that these nations would matriculate from dictatorships to democracies, the disappointing reality over the last 15 years is that most are moving in the wrong direction.

Moreover, in all countries of the region, super presidents dominate the political arena while their families, friends, and favorite few exploit the country's natural resources.

Legislatures and judiciaries have languished, while the leaders maintain tight control of the most important media outlets. Yet, despite these similarities, the five countries of Central Asia run the gamut from the standpoint of democratization and human rights observance.

Kyrgyzstan represents one positive advance as the only country in Central Asia where the head of state, President Bakiev, won his job in a fair contest after last March's Tulip Revolution.

The people of Turkmenistan, on the other hand, endure and suffer under the iron hand of President for life Niyazov. He permits no dissent or religious freedom, and all media glorify the great leader.

The United States Department of State says that the government's human rights record remains extremely poor, and the government continues to commit human rights abuses. Tajikistan is the only state in Central Asia where Muslim political parties are legal, but lately President Rakhmonov has been concentrating power.

In oil-rich Kazakhstan, Mr. Nazarbaev has been President since the late 1980s, and is running for re-election in December. Kazakhstan also wants to be Chairman of the OSCE in 2009, and while I would like to see a Central Asian country in that position, the chairmanship of the OSCE must be earned.

A grade of excellent from OSCE election monitors on the Presidential contest in December is the minimum requirement, and I would just point out parenthetically that both the State Department—and I have done this personally as chairman of the OSCE—and myself have conveyed that repeatedly to delegations from that country.

Uzbekistan's President Karimov has banned all opposition, and all rights are severely limited, and torture is pervasive as recently documented by Human Rights First. Uzbek authorities last week subjected one of the country's most prominent human rights defenders, Elena Urlaeva, to forcible psychiatric treatment, injecting her against her will with powerful psychotropic drugs.

Elena's troubles began when she was put under house arrest during this summer to prevent her protesting the violence in Andijon. Last May, armed men assaulted a prison in Andijon where local businessmen were being held for alleged Islamic radicalism.

Troops responded as you know, Mr. Chairman, the next day, by shooting indiscriminately at large crowds. According to eyewitnesses, hundreds, perhaps thousands, were killed.

The United States Government, along with the OSCE, the United Nations, and the European Union, have all called for an independent investigation into Andijon. As you can see the countries of Central Asia have much in common, but have different prospects for future development.

I believe that the United States can help move them in a positive direction, while balancing the priorities of security cooperation, energy supplies, and democratization. It is worth recalling President Bush's 2003 Whitehall speech, in which he acknowledged past mistakes in United States foreign policy.

And he said, and I quote in pertinent part:

"In the past, we have been willing to make a bargain; to tolerate oppression for the sake of stability. Yet this bargain did not bring stability or make us safe. It merely bought time while problems festered and ideologies of violence took hold."

Mr. Chairman, considering this, United States policy must support those Central Asian governments which have made progress towards democratization, especially in Kyrgyzstan. We must also use our influence to urge those in the middle to improve their performance, and those on the extremes to begin moderating their behavior.

If we are to defeat terrorism, and to instill democracy and human rights in this region, we must do more. That is why I have introduced H.R. 3189, the Central Asian Democracy and Human Rights Act of 2005.

It encourages the five Central Asian republics to work toward democratization, and the protection of human rights, and to ensure that American policy reinforces that goal. In short, the bill facilitates engagement with those countries that want to engage.

My bill would provide constructive foreign assistance to support democratization and human rights, while conditioning all non-humanitarian United States assistance to the individual governments of Central Asia, both economic and military, on whether each is making "substantial, sustained, and demonstrable progress towards democratization and full respect of human rights."

The legislation would require that the President make an annual determination whether such progress is being made by examining five categories: Democratization, free speech, freedom of religion, torture, and the rule of law, and the trafficking of persons.

If a country is not certified, economic and military assistance would be withheld in a graduated format, and redirected towards NGOs that are working in that country. My bill provides greater flexibility to the President, as it allows the United States to express dissatisfaction in a significant way, while not immediately ending all aid programs to the central governments in this strategic region of the world.

The President is also provided with a national security waiver. The United States, Mr. Chairman, must use every means at its disposal to encourage democratization in Central Asia. Democracy, and not maintenance of the status quo, will ultimately promote the long term stability and security in the region.

That is the objective of my legislation, and I hope that the Members of this Committee will look favorably upon it. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Mr. MCCOTTER. I have none. Thank you, Representative Smith, and thank you for your important legislation. At this time, I would like to invite up panel two, and while you are coming up, let me just point out that I am privileged to sit in this chair because our Chairwoman, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, had to go down to her district, which has been decimated by Hurricane Wilma, and that is the reason that she is not here.

So I would like to ask, and again without objection, if I could submit Chairperson Ros-Lehtinen's remarks, her opening remarks that she would have given had she been able to be here, in to the record.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ros-Lehtinen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA, AND CHAIR, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA

The terrorist events of September 2001 brought a profound and lasting transformation to U.S. policies and priorities toward the counties of Central Asia. Regions and nations that had been at the periphery of concern have taken on new importance because of the threat posed by terrorists and the states that sponsor them.

Expanding U.S. security engagement and cooperation with Central Asian States has been viewed as a key mechanism to promote their integration into Western political-military institutions, encourage civilian control over militaries, and institutionalize cooperative relations with the United States military, while dissuading other parties—such as Russia and China—and threats to U.S. national security—particularly Iran—from seeking to dominate the region.

However, this approach to Central Asia must also continue to be focused on the central tenet that freedom and democracy are long-term antidotes to terrorism, instability and economic stagnation, a position that Secretary Rice reiterated to the leaders of those countries in her visit to the region earlier this month.

In this respect, there are legislative efforts to increase assistance to bolster independence and reforms in Central Asia and to leverage and condition other U.S. programs and security assistance on progress on the human rights front.

This Subcommittee has previously held hearings on these issues but questions remain, however, about what constitutes the appropriate balance between competing U.S. priorities.

This hearing seeks to address the security component of our bilateral relationships with the countries in Central Asia, focusing on terrorism and proliferation, while placing the discussion into a broader policy context that takes into account other U.S. policy equities.

On the one hand, the March 2005 popular revolt ended President Askar Akaev's authoritarian fourteen-year rule and gave the people of Kyrgyzstan the opportunity to take their fate into their own hands and provide themselves with a chance for democracy.

However, the new leaders face significant obstacles. It is imperative that the constitutional council drafts its new constitution in open partnership with parliament and the full range of society by the end of the year.

I remain concerned by the assassinations of politically recognized people have taken place since the deposition of the former regime, along with other aspects of potential political instability.

Thus, Kyrgyzstan remains a vivid example of the need to strengthen our efforts to support reformist and democratic governments and entities in Central Asia.

In Uzbekistan, in the aftermath of the Andijon massacre, the government of the country has expanded its policies that target innocent civilians and reformers, and has enacted further policies that have only exacerbated security problems.

After the United States, the U.N., and others interceded so that refugees who fled from Uzbekistan to Kyrgyzstan could fly to Romania, Uzbek authorities, on July 29th, demanded that the United States vacate the K2 airbase within six months.

This event marked the first time that a U.S. ally has not only abrogated its commitments in the war against terror but has expelled American servicemen from its territory.

In response, Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns on August 2nd asserted that the Administration "made a clear choice, and that was to stand on the side of human rights," even though the Administration "knew" that the Uzbek government would then demand that the base be vacated.

The situations represented by Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are but a microcosm of current challenges in the region. However, we must also identify potential problems and sources of concern before they evolve into threats to U.S. national security, our interests and our close friends and allies.

Such an approach is authorized through legislative provisions in the 9/11 bill enacted last year regarding U.S. policy actions on terrorist sanctuaries, as well as multilateral terrorism interdiction efforts.

Earlier this year, the Department of State issued an advisory to Americans noting ongoing security concerns and the potential for terrorist actions in Central Asia. This announcement summarizes well the developments regarding terrorism in the region.

The April 29th advisory said: "Elements and supporters of extremist groups present in Central Asia, including the Islamic Jihad Group, Al-Qaida, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, have

expressed anti-U.S. sentiments in the past and have the capability to conduct terrorist operations in multiple countries.”

It further stated that: “Previous terrorist attacks conducted in Central Asia have involved the use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers and have targeted public areas, such as markets, local government facilities, and the U.S. and Israeli Embassies in Uzbekistan. In addition, hostage-takings and skirmishes have occurred near the Uzbek-Tajik-Kyrgyz border areas.”

The Subcommittee would appreciate a threat assessment regarding terrorist organizations and extremist groups operating in the region, to include their organizational structure, sources of support, and capabilities.

We would also appreciate it if our witnesses would advise us if there are specific countries in the region that the U.S. would classify as terrorist sanctuaries. To this extent, has the Administration has considered implementing Section 7102 of the “9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act” regarding the countries of Central Asia?

As you know, this section of the 9/11 Act would be triggered if governments in the region know of the use of their territory for terrorist activities and are allowing it to continue.

Are the governments engaged and cooperating with the U.S. to prevent the use of their territory as a terrorist sanctuary?

What do you believe would be the impact on our relations with those nations if the Administration extends restrictions on certain exports to countries meeting the designation of terrorist sanctuary?

We are also interested in the status of proliferation in the region, the existence of unconventional weapons programs, and the occurrence of ballistic missile trafficking.

Major U.S. security interests have included the elimination of nuclear weapons remaining in Kazakhstan, for example, after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. There are active research reactors, uranium mines, milling facilities, and nuclear waste dumps in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, many of which reportedly remain inadequately protected.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan reportedly had significant chemical and biological warfare facilities during the Soviet era.

U.S. efforts to dismantle chem-bio and nuclear facilities in the region to prevent terrorists from procuring these deadly weapons is a priority concern for this Subcommittee.

What actions are we taking and considering in conjunction with the countries of Central Asia regarding the interdiction of unconventional materials and technologies? How are these agreements structured?

More broadly, we would appreciate it if Assistant Secretary Fried would describe on what our security policy and our priorities are toward the region, and how do those priorities translate into activities, operations, programs, and assistance.

The U.S. approach to the question of Central Asia not only must represent a multifaceted effort that integrates the military, political, and economic components of U.S. policy—both as incentives and reprimands—but a prospective approach that identifies and addresses potential threats before they become malignant.

As Machiavelli wrote: “Political disorders can be quickly healed if they are seen well in advance . . . when, for lack of diagnosis, they are allowed to grow in such a way that everyone can recognize them, remedies are too late.”

I would like to thank our distinguished witnesses for appearing before the Subcommittee today.

Mr. MCCOTTER. On panel two will be the Honorable Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, from the United States Department of State. Try not to blush while I read your intro.

Ambassador Daniel Fried was appointed Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs on May 5, 2005. Before taking the helm of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Ambassador Fried served as Special Assistant to the President, and Senior Director for European and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Counsel since January 22, 2001.

Among other postings, Ambassador Fried was Principal Deputy Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States from May of 2000 until May of 2001, and was Ambassador

to Poland from November of 1997 until May of 2000. It is an honor to have you here, sir.

Also, I understand that there will be Mr. Frank C. Record, who will be accompanying you, though not testifying, as will David Franz, who will also be accompanying you and not testifying.

Mr. Record is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Security and Non-Proliferation, Department of State; and Mr. Franz is the Central Asia Regional Officer, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, United States Department of State.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. FRIED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the kind introduction, and thank you also for this opportunity to discuss with you today developments in, and the Administration's policy towards, Central Asia.

I would like briefly to outline our policy goals and the challenges we face in implementing them. Mr. Chairman, the United States pursues three sets of strategic interests in Central Asia.

These are security, including counterterrorism, energy and regional economic cooperation, and third, freedom through democratic and free market reform. We believe that these interests are mutually reinforcing.

In her visit earlier this month to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, Secretary Rice significantly advanced our objectives in all three areas, and demonstrated our strong interests in the region.

We face challenges in Central Asia; terrorism, Islamic extremism, poor and rapidly growing populations without economic opportunity, as well as a legacy of authoritarianism and corruption, all hamper their economic and democratic development.

Retrograde regimes in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan hold their peoples back and detract from regional cooperation and development. The results are social stresses, temptations of radicalism, tragedies, such as modern slavery, the so-called trafficking in persons.

But we have opportunities as well in the region. Kazakhstan is taking its place among the world's top energy producers, and is a leader among the region's economic reformers, and may be on the verge of opening its political system to democratic reforms.

Kyrgyzstan had a major democratic advance this year. Throughout the region, there are traditions of tolerant faith and scientific learning that provided a natural shield against extremism and violence, and a natural base for democratic reforms in the future.

History is accelerating in Central Asia. The forces of reform are active. So, too, are forces of reaction. We, the United States, support the forces of reform. This fiscal year, we estimate once the accounting is done, that the United States would have spent approximately \$320 million in assistance to Central Asia, focusing our efforts on building civil society, promoting democratic and free market reform, and combating criminal activities and terrorism,

and promote regional security through counterproliferation, counterterrorism, and counternarcotics cooperation.

We pursue all three sets of our strategic interests together, because failure in one area would tend to undermine the change of success in the others. Let me review these three areas briefly.

Security. Since September 11th, 2001, the United States has implemented a forward strategy in Central Asia in support of the global war on terrorism, and all five countries in the region have provided support to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Since independence, Central Asian countries have been an integral part of the United States' proliferation strategy. Kazakhstan deserves special mention as it renounced its nuclear arsenal, and became one of the first countries included under the Nunn-Lugar Counter-Proliferation assistance.

Kazakhstan's cooperation with the United States in these programs has set a benchmark. Central Asia is a crossroads for weapons traffickers, particularly via air routes. But the Central Asian States have endorsed the proliferation security initiative, which provides a strong deterrent, useful in stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Department of State provides assistance that is central to efforts to engage former weapons experts in the area in transparent, sustainable cooperative civilian research projects.

Our assistance also helps deliver basic equipment and training to secure borders and detect nuclear materials transient. The second area is energy and economic cooperation.

We in the Administration, and in the State Department, and USTR work together to attract investment for infrastructure projects and seek to stimulate regional trade by operationalizing the Central Asia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.

Energy is a key sector in that region. It can power economic growth or become a lever of pressure for fuel for corruption. Kazakhstan's gas and oil reserves are enormous. Kyrgyzstan enjoy significant hydropower potential. We encourage intra- and inter-regional energy trade, investment and competition, by providing technical assistance and helping governments coordinate with international financial institutions.

We also promote the use of energy resources to support economic reform so that energy becomes an economic blessing, and not an economic curse. We also encourage governments to do what they must to provide conditions for foreign investment and expansion of entrepreneurialism within their own countries.

The third set of policy goals, which our Congressman Smith spoke to most eloquently, is our effort to advance freedom through reform, particularly democratic reform. Progress on the rule of law, respect for human rights and religious freedom, the building of civil societies. Viable civil societies are essential to our bilateral relations with each country.

We emphasize to the leaders of these countries that democracy and the rule of law are not destabilizing, but in fact generate legitimacy and therefore stability, while repression and the lack of the respect for human rights and religious freedom only radicalize the population and generate recruits for extremist organizations.

These are central themes today, and in our relations with these countries. Let me describe briefly the state of play in each of the countries. Kazakhstan is a potential regional leader. The upcoming Presidential elections in that country on December 4th gives Kazakhstan a chance to demonstrate whether it will become one of the region's pioneers in democracy.

We are watching closely to see what steps the government takes to allow freedom of assembly, access to the media, and an overall level playing field for opposition candidates, some of whom Secretary Rice met during her recent visit, and who I met during my visit two weeks before that.

We welcome the positive measures aimed at moving towards more transparent election processes that Kazakhstan announced on the eve of Secretary Rice's visit, and we look to the government to implement these.

Kazakhstan does have the potential to merge as a regional model for sustained economic growth, tolerance, and perhaps democratic reform. We have a vision of a reforming and prosperous Kazakhstan, leading a new corridor of reform in Central Asia by spearheading energy development, trade, and productive investment in neighboring countries. We hope that potential is realized.

We see Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as possible emerging reformers, especially Kyrgyzstan. We believe that Kyrgyzstan is at the threshold of a new era of stability if its leaders can consolidate the steps towards democracy emerging from the Tulip Revolution last March.

Kyrgyzstan's Presidential election earlier this year was one of the best elections in the region since independence. We encourage the Government of Kyrgyzstan to press ahead with constitutional and electoral reform, anti-corruption measures, and market economic reforms.

Our belief in the stabilizing and transformative powers of freedom is the core principle of the Millennium Challenge Account Program, and we are committed to working with the government and people of Kyrgyzstan to advance the reforms necessary for that country to participate.

Tajikistan has moved from civil war in the 1990s to a stable parliament. Long term stability requires faster progress on democratic reform, and our assistance to Tajikistan increasingly reflects this priority. Both of these countries' regional cooperation is an economic lifeline.

Both need urgently foreign investment and economic reform to stimulate growth and eradicate poverty, and they look towards Afghanistan as a land bridge towards Indian Ocean ports and south Asian markets. We seek to stimulate this regional cooperation by working with international financial institutions.

Turkmenistan remains unfortunately an autocratic state. Reforms there have been minimal since independence. We are concerned as a result of border security due to the potential trafficking in persons and weapons of mass destruction, and ongoing problems with drug trafficking.

We are nevertheless pursuing a policy of engagement with the government, seeking cooperation where we can, and where there

are clear benefits to our interests and the interests of the people of Turkmenistan.

We will continue to press that government for progress and freedom of religion, assembly, and movement of its citizens. Simultaneously, we must help provide the people of Turkmenistan with the tools for progress, such as educational and professional exchanges, and broad support for civil society.

Let me speak about Uzbekistan where I traveled weeks ago, during which trip I met with President Karimov. During our long meeting, I urged him—and not for the first time—from the United States, urged him to conduct an independent inquiry into the May killings in Andijon, and made clear our concerns regarding the bad and deteriorating human rights situation in that country.

The United States still sees a basis for cooperation, and engagement with Uzbekistan, but our relationship cannot be compartmentalized. It cannot be limited to security interests. It must be a broad relationship, including attention to political and economic reform as was agreed when President Karimov visited Washington in 2002.

The United States will continue to speak privately and publicly about these concerns. We will continue to urge the Government of Uzbekistan to change its current path, and to embrace reform as the only way to achieve long term stability.

In conclusion, our policy challenges in Central Asia are formidable, but they are not unassailable. Pursuing all of our interests—security, energy and regional cooperation, and freedom through reform—offers the best chance of success.

If we can succeed in this effort, we believe that Central Asia can reemerge as a key interchange of commerce and culture as it was for centuries during the period of the great Silk Road. Mr. Chairman, and Members, I look forward to working with you in this effort, and I would be pleased to take any questions that you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fried follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Madame Chair, Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you today developments in, and the Administration's policy towards, Central Asia. I would like to take this opportunity to outline our policy goals and the challenges we face in implementing them. We pursue three sets of strategic interests in Central Asia. These are:

- Security;
- Energy and regional economic cooperation; and
- Freedom through reform.

We believe that these objectives are indivisible and ultimately consistent. Political reform, economic reform and security all are mutually reinforcing.

In her visit earlier this month to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, Secretary Rice significantly advanced our objectives in all three areas. Her travel there, including the first visit ever by a U.S. Secretary of State to an independent Tajikistan, reflects our strong interest in supporting the development of these countries as sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous nations.

These countries have long been at the crossroads of world history. So they are again today. And despite the geographic distance between our country and those of Central Asia, we find ourselves faced with many challenges of immediate and pressing concern.

Terrorism is one such challenge. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and other extremist groups, including The Islamic Jihad Group, continue to pose a threat to security and stability. Poor and rapidly growing populations still lacking in economic opportunity and feeling a sense of injustice are potentially susceptible to the call of violent extremism, particularly when legitimate avenues of dissent are foreclosed. A legacy of authoritarianism, as well as endemic corruption, continue to hamper the development of public institutions, good governance and the rule of law. Retrograde regimes in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan hold their peoples back, and detract from regional cooperation and development.

Yet there is also ample cause for optimism. Every year, more and more people throughout the region are finding new opportunities to thrive in economies that are privatizing and diversifying, and growing rapidly. Kazakhstan is the best example of the region's potential economic dynamism, as it moves to take its place among the world's top energy-producing nations. In Kyrgyzstan, civil society is gradually finding new political space to assemble freely and call for reform. Throughout the region, 1000-year-old traditions of tolerant faith and scientific learning continue to provide a natural shield against imported and narrow interpretations of Islam that breed extremism and violence.

We are doing what we can to support these positive trends. In FY 2005, we budgeted over \$240 million in assistance to Central Asia, focusing our efforts on building and strengthening civil society, promoting democratic and economic reform, and combating criminal activities and terrorism. We are also directing assistance toward promoting regional security—through counter-proliferation, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics cooperation. This is money well spent.

We pursue all three sets of our strategic interests in tandem, because failure in one area will undermine the chance of success in another. We are therefore supporting political and economic reform, rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights, religious freedom and tolerance, free trade and open markets, development of small businesses, energy investment, and cooperation in the fight against terror and weapons of mass destruction, all at the same time.

Security

Since September 11, 2001, the United States has undertaken an ambitious forward strategy in Central Asia in support of the global war on terrorism. Three of the five countries in Central Asia border on Afghanistan, and all five have provided support to Operation Enduring Freedom in various forms—bases, over-flight rights, and re-fueling facilities. Our cooperation with these countries is underpinned by our common interest in fighting terrorism and in securing a stable and democratic future for Afghanistan. And this cooperation has been strengthened and made easier by the participation of these countries in military training and exercises through NATO's Partnership for Peace.

We are grateful for their contributions. During Secretary Rice's visit to Bishkek, Kyrgyz President Bakiyev emphasized his continued support for the presence of coalition forces at Manas air base until the mission of fighting terrorism in Afghanistan is completed. In Dushanbe, Tajik President Rahmanov also voiced strong support for coalition efforts in the global war against terrorism. Their continued support is all the more important with the departure of our forces from Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airbase in Uzbekistan.

In the period since their independence, the countries of Central Asia also have been an integral part of the United States' nonproliferation strategy. Kazakhstan's role in the former Soviet Union's nuclear missile launch capacity and weapons grade nuclear fuel generation goals made it one of the first countries included under Nunn-Lugar Counter-proliferation assistance. Kazakhstan's cooperation with the United States under these programs has set a benchmark. We later included the other four countries in a regional Export Control and related Border Security (EXBS) strategy to control the spread of Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiological (CBRN) weapons.

Central Asia's location as a crossroads for trade also makes it a crossroads for traffickers in weapons of mass destruction, missiles, and related technologies, particularly through their air routes. The Central Asia Republics have almost unanimously endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The strong stance by these governments in support of PSI will serve as a deterrent to would be proliferators, and will ensure strategically important partners to the United States and other PSI participants in our global efforts to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Department of State provides nonproliferation assistance in Central Asia drawing on funding from Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR). The multi-million dollar efforts of the Science Centers Program,

Bio-Chem Redirect Program, and Bio-Industry Initiative, are central to our efforts to engage former weapons experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, in transparent, sustainable, cooperative civilian research projects. This work is carried out through two multilateral Science Centers: the International Science and Technology Center in Moscow, and the Science and Technology Center in Ukraine in Kyiv.

Due to increasing concerns regarding terrorist access to biological and chemical expertise, the Department of State has recently targeted significant resources toward engaging biological and chemical experts in Central Asia through our scientist redirection efforts.

The Export Control and related Border Security (EXBS) Program uses funding from Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR), and the FREEDOM Support Act (FSA) to achieve the United States Government's nonproliferation goals. The lack of delineated and demarcated internal borders among these five countries under Soviet rule made the need for assistance to border security projects a priority. Most EXBS program funding in Central Asia during Fiscal Years 2000–2005 delivered basic equipment and training to customs officials and border guards to secure borders and detect nuclear materials transit.

Through the Nonproliferation and Disarmament Fund (NDF), the Department of State has assisted the Department of Energy in funding the draining of sodium and spent fuel disposition at the BN-350 reactor at Aktau, Kazakhstan, and is also providing funds to enhance pathogen security legislation in Georgia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Through NDF, the Department has also funded additional physical security upgrades at the Uzbekistan Institute of Nuclear Physics, including perimeter fencing, conversion of the reactor to utilize low-enriched uranium fuel, upgrades to the control room, and return of 70kgs of Highly-Enriched Uranium to Russia.

Energy & Economic Cooperation

Regional economic development is one of our top policy priorities in Central Asia. We are deepening our support of the countries of Central Asia to expand regional trade and investment. The trade links of the ancient Silk Road need to be revitalized to provide Central Asia with greater access to the global economy, through both South Asia and Europe. To advance these goals, we are working with the U.S. Trade Representative to operationalize the Central Asia trade and Investment Framework Agreement. We are also hard at work with our partners in Afghanistan and Tajikistan to build the roads and bridges essential to revitalizing regional and global trade. In addition, we are exploring hydropower as a potential major source of revenue for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and a possible catalyst for economic growth in Afghanistan.

Energy is a key sector, especially in Kazakhstan. Revenues from the energy sector can power regional economic growth, but only if these revenues are managed wisely. We are encouraging inter- and intra-regional energy trade, investment, and commercial competition by providing technical assistance and helping the governments coordinate with relevant international financial institutions.

But oil and gas is not enough. Small-to-medium size businesses outside the energy sector are crucial to growing new jobs in the region, and extending prosperity to all. Under Secretary Shiner's meetings with entrepreneurs in these countries during Secretary Rice's recent trip to Central Asia and our longstanding enterprise assistance programs are evidence of our strong support for economic diversification.

To realize their full potential, each of the countries in Central Asia must do more to fight corruption, which is simply a tax on those least able to pay it. The family farmers, small businesspeople, and school teachers of Central Asia must know that government officials cannot arbitrarily seize their property. They must have confidence in their banking system and free access to credit and capital.

Governments in the region also need to do more to create welcoming environments for foreign trade and investment. There must be clear rules, transparency in how the rules are made, well-functioning judicial systems, and respect for rule of law.

Advancing Freedom Through Reform

I said earlier that freedom and democracy, including respect for human rights and religious freedom, provide the only path to genuine stability—as well as economic prosperity—in the region. Progress on reform—on both democratic and economic fronts—rule of law, respect for human rights and religious freedom, and the building of vibrant civil societies are also essential to our ability to sustain strong, positive and lasting bilateral relationships with these nations.

Allow me to cite a few brief examples of U.S.-funded programs in the region. In Kyrgyzstan, we have brought human rights defenders together with Kyrgyz secu-

rity, justice, and election officials for unprecedented discussions on torture, freedom of assembly, and the handling of elections. In Uzbekistan, we are working to strengthen microfinance institutions to create opportunities for self-employment and allow entrepreneurs to create new jobs; to date, this program has created twenty savings and credit unions nationwide, with total membership expected to reach 40,000 in 2006. In Tajikistan, we are providing assistance to the critically important agricultural irrigation sector; recent economic analyses estimate that the impact of this assistance in terms of improved water delivery, depending on actual crop yields, is between \$250,000 and \$1 million annually.

These are examples of programs that help create improved social and economic conditions. By creating employment, supporting education, improving health care, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, we combat the attraction of extremist groups. Our concurrent message to these governments is that economic opportunity—and respect for human rights—is the best possible antidote to extremist ideas still plaguing the region.

While there are barriers to reform and challenges to the establishment of civil society that face the region as a whole, our approach needs to be fine-tuned for each of these unique states. Let me discuss each of them in turn.

Kazakhstan—Potential Regional Leader

In her visit to Astana, Secretary Rice expressed our interest in taking our bilateral relationship with Kazakhstan to a qualitatively new level. However, to make this possible, Kazakhstan will need to take forward the bold commitments put forward by President Nazarbaev to carry out further democratic reform.

The presidential election this December gives Kazakhstan an opportunity to demonstrate whether it is becoming one of the region's leaders in democracy. We welcome the Central Election Commission's recent announcement of a series of measures aimed at clearing the way for what we hope will be an election that meets international standards. During this critical pre-election period, we are watching closely to see what steps are taken to allow for freedom of assembly, access to media, and an overall level playing field for opposition candidates, some of whom Secretary Rice met during her recent visit.

Sustained progress on democratic reform up to and beyond the election will be crucial for Kazakhstan's ambitions to serve as Chairman of Office of the OSCE. We believe that the OSCE has a vital role to play in Central Asia and hope that Kazakhstan's interest in this translates into leadership in the region on the OSCE's values.

Kazakhstan has already been a leader in economic reform, implementing bold programs that have attracted investment, created jobs, and established a vibrant banking system. The Government of Kazakhstan has made a wise choice to begin diversifying its economy and ensure that its vast oil wealth contributes to social mobility, not social stagnation. The United States supports the Government of Kazakhstan's effort to develop non-energy sectors of its economy through the "Houston Initiative," developed during President Nazarbayev's visit to the United States in December, 2001. We are committed to working with Kazakhstan as it implements necessary requirements for admission to the World Trade Organization.

Most recently, Secretary Rice unveiled in Almaty a new Central Asian Infrastructure Integration Initiative, led by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. This initiative will target activities in the areas of energy, transportation and communications that promote cooperation among the countries in the region and their integration into the global economy. While the initiative will initially involve Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, other countries could be invited in the future.

All of these steps stem from our belief that Kazakhstan has the potential to emerge as a regional leader in powering economic growth, promoting tolerance, and perhaps even advancing democratic reform. Our vision is of a reforming and prosperous Kazakhstan, leading a new corridor of reform in Central Asia by spearheading energy, trade and investment in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and other neighboring countries.

This is the kind of leadership that Kazakhstan has shown in the past when, at the end of the Cold War, it renounced its nuclear weapons and freely transferred over half a ton of weapons-grade uranium to secure sites outside the country. Today, as the spread of nuclear weapons takes new forms, Kazakhstan is expanding its cooperation with the United States through the Proliferation Security Initiative. President Bush has in fact cited Kazakhstan as a key example of how a state rids itself of weapons of mass destruction when it has the will to do so.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—Emerging Reformers?

We believe Kyrgyzstan stands on the threshold of a new era of stability, provided its leaders can consolidate the steps toward democracy emerging from last March's "Tulip Revolution." Although Kyrgyzstan's Presidential election earlier this year fell short of international standards, it demonstrated tangible progress and genuinely reflected the will of Kyrgyz voters and deserves our praise for its pioneer move forward towards genuine participatory democracy.

Working with the OSCE, we are encouraging the Government of Kyrgyzstan to sustain this momentum and press ahead with constitutional and electoral reform, anti-corruption measures, and market economic reforms. We are confident that such reforms will unleash the dynamism of Kyrgyzstan's civil society by providing the Kyrgyz people a way to participate in the civic life of their country, to earn a decent living, and to lift their entire country toward prosperity and democracy. Absent such opportunities, Kyrgyz society may face a resurgence of the sense of injustice that spawned the "Tulip Revolution."

Our belief in the stabilizing and transformative power of freedom is the core principle of the Millennium Challenge Account. We are committed to working with the Government and citizens of Kyrgyzstan to help advance the reforms necessary to participate in this innovative program.

Tajikistan, having generally recovered from its 1992–97 civil war, has taken credible steps toward reform. All major participants in Tajikistan's past fighting are now sharing power in parliament. This includes the only legal Islamic political party in all of Central Asia, which is also represented in President Rahmonov's government. But long-term stability requires faster progress on democratic reform; our assistance to Tajikistan must reflect that priority.

Our security cooperation with Tajikistan is increasingly significant. Following the withdrawal of Russian Border Guards from the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border in July 2005, we have helped Tajikistan to secure its borders and fight narco-trafficking and weapons proliferation by budgeting approximately \$33 million in FY 2005. We hope to continue such cooperation in FY 2006.

For Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, regional cooperation is an economic lifeline. Both are in urgent need of investment and natural gas from Kazakhstan—and Russia—to eradicate poverty. The two poorest member states of the OSCE, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan increasingly look toward Afghanistan as a land bridge toward Indian Ocean ports and south Asian markets. The United States seeks to stimulate such regional and intra-regional cooperation by working with international financial institutions.

During her visit to Bishkek, Secretary Rice announced \$1.4 million in new U.S. assistance to reduce regional trade barriers and stimulate foreign investment in energy, transportation, and telecommunications infrastructure. We hope in particular to encourage the development of hydroelectric power generation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with electricity exports to Afghanistan and Kazakhstan. We also want to improve their North-South energy transmission routes, and in Kyrgyzstan's case, help develop a sustainable solution to current dependence on Uzbekistan for energy in the south.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan remains an autocratic state. We are concerned about border security due to the potential for trafficking in WMD and persons, and ongoing problems with drug trafficking.

Political and economic reform in Turkmenistan has been minimal since independence. Nevertheless, we are pursuing a policy of engagement with the government, and modest cooperation where there are clear benefits to our interests and to the people of Turkmenistan. We will continue to press the government for progress in freedom of religion, assembly and movement for its citizens. Simultaneously, we must provide the people of Turkmenistan with the tools they need to build a more stable, free and prosperous future. These tools are principally educational and professional exchanges, and support for civil society.

Turkmenistan recently publicly agreed to support the Proliferation Security Initiative, and adopted a decree banning over-flights of planes suspected of carrying WMD or missile technology. These are positive steps. We plan to continue our assistance in counter-narcotics training, and to enhance Export Control and related border security program activities. We also support increasing Turkmenistan's IMET participation, focusing on junior officers, and inviting participation in the Department of Defense's Counterterrorism fellowship program.

Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, the aftermath of the May 2005 events in Andijon and the government's indiscriminate use of force in response continue to color our evolving policy. Despite repeated calls by the international community for an independent investigation into these tragic events, the government of President Islam Karimov has refused to allow for a transparent accounting of what took place. Instead, the Uzbek government has engaged in an escalating campaign of harassment against the independent media, NGOs and other civil society groups.

Several weeks ago I traveled to Tashkent and met with President Karimov. In my discussion, I reaffirmed the need for an independent inquiry into Andijon, and I made clear our concerns regarding the deteriorating human rights situation there, including our concerns about religious freedom. The United States still sees a basis for cooperation and engagement with Uzbekistan, but our relationship cannot be compartmentalized nor limited to our security interests. Rather, it must be a broad relationship including attention to political and economic reform, as we agreed when President Karimov visited Washington in 2002.

As we move forward, we will continue to speak up both publicly and privately about our concerns. At the same time, we will continue to make clear that our intent is to help develop civil society and encourage peaceful democratic reform, not foment revolution, as some have falsely charged. We will continue to urge the government of Uzbekistan to reverse its current path and to embrace reform as the only way to achieve long-term stability. But we will not wait idly by for that day to come, but instead move forward now with our partners in Central Asia who seek stability through freedom.

To accomplish these goals, we need to step up democracy programs, including providing increased Uzbek language broadcasts and expanding programming for civil society, political parties and NGOs. We are also seeking ways to support local traditions that embrace both tolerant faith and reason, as well as protecting the religious freedom of minority religious groups.

On the economic front, we intend to continue our development agenda in Uzbekistan, pushing for the removal of trade and transit barriers, as well as seeking ways to expand trade, energy and transit contacts with Afghanistan.

In addition, we are working to shift economic engagement towards rural and small-medium enterprise development.

Conclusion

Our policy challenges in Central Asia are formidable but not unassailable. Pursuing a balance among our three sets of core interests—security, energy and regional cooperation, and freedom through reform—offers the best chance of success. If we can succeed in this effort, we believe that Central Asia can reemerge as a key interchange of commerce and culture, as it was for centuries during the period of the Great Silk Road, a region that contributes to Afghanistan's stability as well as to our own security. Accomplishing this goal will require wise use of our limited resources. We look forward to working with the committee in this important effort.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Thank you, Mr. Assistant Secretary. I would like to point out that we have been joined by Representative Shelley Berkley from Nevada, and I would like to start the questioning with you.

Ms. BERKLEY. And I defer to you.

Mr. MCCOTTER. She is going to defer to me, and I am unfortunately—

Ms. BERKLEY. As I always do, Mr. McCotter.

Mr. MCCOTTER [continuing]. Unable to defer to anybody else. Can you perhaps touch upon the relations in the region, of Central Asian countries with China, Russia, and Iran, and specifically the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and its role in the region.

Mr. FRIED. If you put that question to most of the leaders in the region, they will tend to tell you that they live in a difficult neighborhood, with very large neighbors, following which they will tell you that if you a visiting American that they are very glad to see you.

Their relations with Russia are complicated by history. Russia has and will always have a very large presence in the country. There are large Russian minorities in some of the countries.

Russia has interests there. And Russia and the United States share overlapping interests, such as an interest in combating terrorism and narcotics trafficking. China also has strong economic interests and security interests in that region.

We do, as I said, support regional cooperation. We certainly believe that the countries of the region should have good and productive relations with all of their neighbors, including Russia, China, and all of their neighbors to the south.

But we believe that regional cooperation should not be zero sum. We believe that American cooperation with these countries in no way detracts from Russia's interests. We are not in a competition with Russia. We believe that the region's interests with and relations with Russia could also be seen in a non-zero sum context.

I will say that this summer statements coming out of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization seemed to question whether American military presence in Central Asia, which we established after 9/11, was necessary.

Well, my response to this when I was in the region was that while we are making progress in Afghanistan, the conflict is continuing, and we have good reason to remain militarily in the region for the purposes of completing what we started.

And I am happy to report to you, sir, that Secretary Rice not only made those points, but received support from the Government of Kyrgyzstan and the Government of Tajikistan about military cooperation with the United States.

Mr. MCCOTTER. What about their relations with China and Iran more specifically?

Mr. FRIED. The countries in the region believe that they face a challenge from Islamist radicalism.

Ms. BERKLEY. Say that again? I am sorry.

Mr. FRIED. The countries in the region believe that they face a challenge from Islamist radicalism. In fact, there are Islamist terrorist groups in the region, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which we consider to be a terrorist group.

At the same time, Iran is a powerful presence in the region. These countries want to develop their relations with the United States, with Russia, and with China, so that they strengthen their sovereignty and maintain their strategic freedom of choice.

In other words, they don't want to come under the domination of any large neighbor. They want to be independent, and they want to be prosperous. They want to enjoy the fruits of the independence they inherited in 1991. And it is our policy to help them in this respect.

Mr. MCCOTTER. And you can jump in at any time you like, Representative Berkley. This would be considered what Putin talked about as near abroad. Would that be a fair assessment when he spoke of that?

And, secondly, I am just fascinated by if they are threatened by radical Islam, and I would point out to the Russians that Chechnya is not the only place where this is occurring. It would seem odd

that Russia and others—I mean, what is their position towards Russia?

I believe they made an approach to have Iran join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and if these Central Asian States are participating with that, would that not seem in congruous to the domestic concern that they have, as well as to their international concern, to then—I think they would then have to take a position wouldn't they, one way or another, as to whether Iran should be a part of that organization or not.

And as for the Chinese, I was just more curious as to what they are doing in that country, in terms of helping to develop those democracies, and helping to stem the flow of terrorism or radical Islamism movements within those countries, and especially because they have so much of the energy that the Chinese Government is going to need over a long period of time.

Mr. FRIED. To answer your first question, the Russians do use the phrase near abroad, and when they use it, they do have these countries in mind. We don't use that phrase, nor do we want to look at these countries through the prism of the Soviet Union, or the legacy of the Soviet Union.

We look at them as independent countries, and we respect Russia's interests in the region, but we don't believe in spheres of influence, or dividing the world, or great gains.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has the potential to be a vehicle for legitimate regional cooperation. But as I said earlier, we were troubled by the statements coming out of it which seem to be inconsistent with what we understood was the position of most of the governments; fighting terrorism in general and fighting remnants of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan as something that they share.

We are going to watch the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization very, very carefully. The best thing we can do to help these countries realize their best potential is to help them with their reforms, help them with regional cooperation, and have confidence that principles of democracy and principles of a free market are not simply good principles. They are also powerful principles.

And that countries will be attracted by them as they develop. Kazakhstan is emerging as a country with considerable resources, and has managed its relations with China, Russia, and the United States rather cleverly, rather well.

As its oil wealth comes in, if this oil wealth is managed well—and economic reform in Kazakhstan has proceeded well so far—they will have the ability to strengthen their sovereignty, and we hope that their democratic reforms keep pace. It will make them a good partner for us in the region.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Representative Berkley.

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you. I think you have a large burden, and I think that this is a most challenging part of the world. I fully appreciate the United States' security interests in the area, and national interests in the area.

But it almost seems insurmountable when we talk about—when you say in your opening remarks that a thousand year old tradition

of tolerant faith and scientific learning, I am having trouble finding the tolerance in this area.

And I worry about—I would love for you to talk more about that. I am also concerned about the threat posed by radical Islam, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and Kyrgyzstan's three tons of weapons grade, spent nuclear fuel, and any former Soviet chemical, biological leftover weapons.

I mean, there are a lot of issues going on over there, and I am not sure that they have the interests—I am not sure that the United States and this part of the world have mutual interests, or that we are both going in the same direction, or we are all going in the same direction.

We may be thinking we are, and it is wonderful to talk to these leaders about freedom, and democracy, and the rule of law. But if there is no tradition of it, it is very difficult to impose that from outside, and I think that oftentimes the United States, in our belief that everybody will—you know, if we just give people a little taste of American democracy, and freedom, and rule of law, that they are going to naturally embrace it. I am not thinking that is the case in many parts of the world.

And maybe we are kidding ourselves. And I wish I had a better question to ask you. I mean, I could formulate this better, but I am at a loss.

Mr. FRIED. Ma'am, this is an excellent question and worthy of a serious discussion. Are the problems in surmountable? Well, the history of Europe and Eurasia from 1989 is often a history of good developments which were regard as possible until they became inevitable.

Twenty years ago it was impossible that the Berlin Wall would fall. It was impossible that the Soviet Union would withdraw from Eastern Europe. It was impossible that the Balkan countries would retain their independence.

The Prime Minister of Georgia was in Washington this week, and he said democracy used to be thought of as something only within the former communist world as something only for the Poles and the Czechs.

Now people are wondering whether we might make it, too, and they are even thinking about Central Asia. I thought a lot about this since 1989, and I do not believe that democracy is the cultural property only of Europeans. I think it is potentially universal in its application.

That does not mean that it will be universal in practice. Democracy has succeeded on every continent, and in countries of every religious tradition, and if democracy and democratic transformations can take place in countries as diverse as Chile, Poland, and South Korea, then there is no reason in principle that it cannot take place in Central Asia.

It doesn't mean that it is, or that it isn't, but it doesn't mean that it will in every case. But it does mean that it can. And that is an argument and a debate worth having. Now, that is the basis of what is sometimes called President Bush's freedom agenda, the potential universality of democracy.

Not its universality in every case every time, but its potential universality. Radical Islam and the tradition of tolerant Islam. Yes,

the Silk Road was a long time ago, and since then, you have had the Soviet legacy, and now the post-Soviet period, which has not been edifying these past 15 years.

Nevertheless, you still had a democratic outburst and perhaps breakthrough in Kyrgyzstan. You nevertheless will find civil society and democracy activists in every country in the region, including Uzbekistan. I can't look those people in the eye and say democracy isn't for you, and it isn't for your country.

And especially given the track record of democratic success that we have seen in the post-Communist world since 1989. Now, this is a philosophical point, and there are counterpoints to be made. And it is also true that while we in the Administration may be ambitious, or idealistic in our objectives, we are of course realistic in what we think we can achieve in any given election, and in any given country, and in any given year.

Putting those two together, realism of the day to day, and the vision of freedom, is actually the hardest part of the job, because you come up clashing between what you want to see and what you can achieve. That is not a full answer. I don't think that your question could be answered fully, but that is my best attempt.

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Assistant Secretary, on what you were kind of picking up from Representative Berkley's threat, I would agree with you specifically in this sense, that democracy is not imposed. It is emancipated.

But it also can be relapses into totalitarianism. The grand view of human history is that I think we are the most successful democracy to date, and the Athenian city state didn't work out so well, and the Roman Republic didn't hang around too long, and the Wymar and Duma, and Corinsky. We have seen relapses backwards.

Which is why in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that I find it disturbing when you talk rightly that basically there are three essential things that these countries need I think philosophically, because they have to be viewed as independent nations.

And yet within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, you have Russia, which terms them their near abroad, a phrase that we do not use. For some reason the Russians feel the need to.

I would think that they also do not want to go backwards towards the Communist past, which also enslaved them. And yet within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, you have China, which is a communist and totalitarian state. And finally I would think that they would also need to be free of radicalism of terrorists, the people who have perverted Islam for their own nefarious purposes, and yet potentially now they are flirting with the prospect of having Iran, which is a terrorist state, a radical Islamic state, also joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

What steps are we taking to ensure that whether or not we view this as a zero sum gain, that others share our view rather than view it as a zero sum gain in Central Asia; and what steps are we taking with these governments to make sure that whatever the disposition of their larger neighbors in the area, that the association with these will not help to bring about a relapse into totalitarianism within these countries?

Mr. FRIED. That is a very good question, and you have outlined a challenge that we face right now. We do want to work with the Russians, both operationally, cooperate in areas where we have genuinely overlapping interests—counterterrorism and counter-narcotics, and that cooperation is taking place, and in some areas, it is going rather well.

We also want to be clear that our relations with the countries of Central Asia are not a function of our relations with Moscow. We regard these countries as independent sovereign countries. We do not and will not ask them to choose between the United States and Russia.

We don't see things as a zero sum gain. We don't expect them, or we expect that they will have good relations with Russia. They have tremendous interests with Russia. So we are not in a contest.

But of course you also asked what if other countries see it differently. The answer to that has to be that we need to work to strengthen these countries' sovereignty, both through economic reform and political reform.

One of the arguments that I made when I was in the region is that democracy increases sovereignty, because it means that government can rely on support from within and does not have to rely on support from without.

It is my hope that the governments in the region will take heed of this and will find that reform is in their interests, and in the interests of their future. That is why the developments in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which are very, very countries, are so hopeful.

Kazakhstan—I don't want to speak for them, but the leaders of Kazakhstan take a kind of Singapore argument. If they say that we have to get the economics rights, and we have to have a society which is developing, and then open up democracy, then the counter to that is, well, you had better do it soon because sometimes—it is never a good time. There is always an excuse.

But now Kazakhstan has begun to say that now is the time, and we are going to do it. We will see what they do. I never take a word at face value, but I do note that the words are the right ones, and we will see.

If the elections in Kazakhstan are good, you will have a country that is both large, wealthy, developing, and democratizing, with its sovereignty therefore secured. That is a great model for the region. I am not saying that we are there. I am just giving you the best case. But it is not utterly out of play.

Ms. BERKLEY. Can you tell me or would you share with the community the European Union's relationship with these countries, and how does it interface with our own?

Mr. FRIED. So far, more limited than I would like.

Ms. BERKLEY. I am sorry?

Mr. FRIED. More limited than I would like. The European Union is active in the south caucuses, and some of these same discussions apply there. But not as active in Central Asia.

Now, there is an important caveat. Some countries have military forces in the region working with us. The Spanish and the French are part of the United States military base in Manas. I saw their

contingents when I was out there. The Germans have been operating a base in Uzbekistan.

We want to work with the European Union to advance reforms in the region, and to advance security, and sovereignty as I have outlined. We think that the European Union is a natural partner.

We think that the European Union has the potential to do more. They have the ability. There are a lot of very capable people there. The European Union has—I should give them due credit.

They have taken a very forward-leaning position with respect to Uzbekistan and the human rights situation there. We are working very closely with the EU on the problems of Uzbekistan, and it is a good partnership.

Ms. BERKLEY. Let me ask you something. It seems that the European Union, or not seems, but that the European Union imposed arms export and visa sanctions on Uzbekistan. It would seem to me that Iran's record on human rights violations is as egregious as Uzbekistan. Why is the European Union not in fact imposing the same sanctions on the Iranians, and ought we not be pressuring them to do so?

Mr. FRIED. Well, we are working very closely with the European Union and the so-called EU-3—France, Britain, and Germany—to develop a common approach to Iran. The centerpiece of that has been the problem of Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions, and there has been a lot in the press, and there is a lot of material available. The problem is a somewhat larger one. President Mohammad Khatami was quoted today as saying yesterday that Israel was a blot on the map which should be exterminated. I don't know whether that is an accurate quote, but we get the general idea.

Ms. BERKLEY. Well, some things never change.

Mr. FRIED. The problem that we have with Iran has been centered around the nuclear weapons issue, but is broader than that, and we have been working over the past year progressively closer, and more cooperatively with the European Union.

They have had—they have been quite firm in their negotiations with Iran, and the fact that negotiations were not successful is not the fault of the European Union. I give them a lot of credit for negotiating well, and in good faith, and maintaining a strong position.

We are going to be working with them as we proceed to deal with the overall issues and challenges that Iran poses.

Mr. MCCOTTER. We have been joined at the dias by Mr. Delahunt from the International Relations Committee. Do you have any questions?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I do, and I thank the Chairman. Just to pursue the line of questioning or alluding to the questioning of my friend from Nevada about the EU. They have imposed sanctions on Uzbekistan. When are we going to impose sanctions on Uzbekistan, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. FRIED. Starting a couple of years ago, we began cutting our assistance programs to Uzbekistan because of human rights problems. We have not had or have not provided military assistance to Uzbekistan since Fiscal Year 2004 if memory serves.

So we started early. We have cut back other assistance programs because of the human rights problem. I went to Uzbekistan now I guess 3 or 4 weeks ago, to urge the government—and this was the

first trip of any senior United States official since the Andijon killings which precipitated these current cycle of problems.

My message was we want to have better relations with you, but there is a serious problem. We wanted to wait and see as the Uzbek Government responded, and we wanted to take the measure of this and then we will consult with our European friends and evaluate whether what we are doing is sufficient.

So I can't answer your question about decisions that have not been made yet, but this is something that we are actively reviewing.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And you can't answer my question is the bottom line?

Mr. FRIED. That is the bottom line.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And I think it is really unfortunate that you can't answer that question, particularly when we note that the EU—I think your term was forward looking, went ahead and had the courage to impose sanctions on Uzbekistan.

I have a real concern about the magnitude of anti-American sentiment that is pervasive all over the globe at this point in time, and I subscribe that part of the rationale for that sentiment is based on a perception of hypocrisy, because we speak eloquently about bringing democracy to the dark corners of the world.

I hope that we can agree that Uzbekistan is certainly one of the darkest corners of the world. And let me just note for the record that I think we should have acted much more quickly. Cutting assistance is not the same as imposing sanctions.

We rail against some regimes, and we tighten sanctions, and yet we have this thug over in Uzbekistan who is clearly one of the most egregious violators of human rights anywhere, and we are dancing around it.

I just think that the rest of the world is out there saying that America, you talk a lot, and you preach democracy, and you talk about human rights, but in the end, when it comes down to some narrow self-interest, you are not really walking the walk.

I mean, Islam Karimov is not—you know, Andijon was the most recent in a long series of human rights abuses, and clearly it was the most egregious, but here is somebody who according to our own Department of State allegedly burned somebody alive, boiled them alive, and we are dancing with him?

Mr. FRIED. I don't believe that our record is as you have just described it.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I would like to hear otherwise.

Mr. FRIED. In the region, America's reputation for support for democracy and human rights is very strong. Everywhere I went, democracy activists with whom I met, and I met with them in every country, including Uzbekistan.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am not talking, Mr. Secretary, just simply about Central Asia. I am talking about a sentiment and a perception that exists everywhere. We just cannot be so inconsistent in terms of our selectivity when it comes to playing hardball and imposing sanctions.

Mr. FRIED. Well, I am proud that the Administration has spoken out so strongly for democracy, including in parts of the world where previous Administrations had not done so. A good example of this

is beyond the area that we are concerned with is Egypt, where the Secretary of State made a very strong speech about democracy at Cairo University, and answering the question, will you speak out about democracy in countries that are your friends.

My answer suggested that our policy on Uzbekistan was not finished. You have spoken out strongly and immediately about the killings in Andijon. We made massive efforts and successful ones to rescue 450 Uzbek refugees from the Andijon killings who were under threat—

Mr. DELAHUNT. In Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. FRIED. In Kyrgyzstan. We did so knowing that by doing so we might lose our basing rights in Uzbekistan and Karshi-Khanabad, and indeed the very day that the 747 took off from Kyrgyzstan with the 450 refugees, we receive a diplomatic note that terminated our basing rights.

We knew that we ran that risk, and we did the right thing, and we saved those people. I am glad that we did. Now, this was a UN operation and not ours, but we were, let us say, very involved working the diplomacy.

I believe we are walking the walk, as well as talking the talk. We have programs which support civil society throughout the region. When I am in Washington, I am sometimes asked questions much like those that you just posed, sir.

When I was in the region, the question that I got was aren't you Americans really the promoters of democratic revolutions? Aren't you here to overthrow the government? Well, my answer was we can be too soft on democracy, or too hard for democracy, but we really can't be both at the same time.

I think we stand for democracy. I think it is appreciated in the region that we stand for democracy, and the problem that you outlined—and you are fair to do it, okay? It is a fair question, which is how fast do you go, and how hard do you hit, and how do you balance all of the other interests. That is a fair point, but our job in the Administration is to try to balance that and remain true to our principles.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I understand that, and I understand that it can be difficult, but what I also hear from dissents in Uzbekistan, who tell me that they are disappointed that there has not been tougher action against the Karimov regime clearly.

So I guess what I am saying is the disparity between rhetoric and action, particularly in the case of Uzbekistan, and we can throw Turkmenistan in there. I mean, these people are thugs. They are thugs, and you know what? In the end, if we are going to preach about democracy, we are going to have to make some difficult decisions.

We are not going to sell our values out for basing rights, particularly when Secretary Rumsfeld himself noted that there were options to the base in Uzbekistan. So when we go elsewhere in the world, and we complain of abuses that clearly are not of the same order of magnitude that exists in Uzbekistan, and we hear from representatives of those governments say please give me a break, Mr. Congressman. Look what you are doing over in Uzbekistan.

The EU is far ahead of you, and you are bringing democracy to the dark corners of the corner? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McCOTTER. Thank you. My only final remark would be, number one, thank you for your service to our country. You are doing a fine job under difficult circumstances. I would also like to echo Mr. Delahunt's remarks.

It is critical of the American republic, which is a revolutionary experiment in democracy, never forget that, and that is our role in the world, and we can argue about the tactics to get there, but we must never forget that one of the goals of people who have emancipated themselves from a tyrant have an affirmative duty to do so and assist all the others that are trying to.

And finally, just so you understand my frame of reference. I was born in 1965, grew up in the 1970s and early 1980s. I remember Ronald Reagan, and I remember that the enemies of this country were the Soviet Union, China, and Iran.

So I am very concerned about the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, especially with Russia going backwards on democracy, and with China remaining a communist totalitarian state, and Iran remaining Iran.

So, without objection, the record will remain open for five legislative days to allow Members to submit questions for the witnesses, that will then be included in the hearing record. This meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE DANIEL FRIED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE HENRY J. HYDE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Question:

Does the State Department support the Central Asia Democracy and Human Rights Act and its proposal to withhold non-humanitarian assistance for human rights certification and conditions?

Response:

As I noted at the hearing, the Administration fully shares the goals of H.R. 3189 with respect to promoting democracy and human rights in Central Asia and is doing a number of things to realize these same objectives, which are outlined below.

We are prepared to work with Congress to advance these goals, but we have reservations about certain provisions in this bill.

We appreciate the desire of the sponsors of H.R. 3189 to give us more tools to influence change in Central Asia, in the spirit of pursuing the President's freedom agenda. We likewise appreciate the creative thought that went into Section 4(a)(c) (Purposes of Assistance, Activities Supported) and Section 5 (Radio Broadcasting). We are supporting many of the activities outlined, including regional information dissemination projects. As far as human trafficking is concerned, we should promote victim-centered investigations and prosecutions of this crime, ensuring that victims receive the services and benefits necessary to restore their lives. A victim-centered approach to combat human trafficking is important for both prevention and enforcement.

We already have a range of diplomatic and programmatic tools to move the countries of Central Asia to greater respect for democracy and human rights, including the authority to stop and start assistance programs in response to a country's human rights record and attitude toward democratic reform. We have exercised this authority in Central Asia, and not only in response to legislated sanctions. For example, in 2004 we terminated a number of economic reform projects in Uzbekistan when it became clear that government was not committed to market reform.

H.R. 3189 would impose an overly complicated formula for using our assistance to change the behavior of Central Asian governments. Far from giving the Administration another useful foreign policy tool, the "one-third, one-third, one-third" formula for cutting official assistance to these countries would give us less flexibility than we now have.

For example, Uzbekistan has failed to satisfy certain existing legislative requirements over the past two years, forcing us to cut a substantial amount of bilateral security, law enforcement and economic assistance. Yet we have been able to use existing authorities to continue programs in a few carefully targeted areas, such as counter-narcotics and anti-trafficking in persons, where the United States has important national interests.

We also believe it is a flawed assumption that withholding assistance (and the threat of more being withheld the next year) would necessarily change the policies and behavior of the Central Asian states. What may work with some countries in some situations does not work universally. H.R. 3189 would treat all five Central Asian states identically. The current regime in Turkmenistan, for example, would surely accept a 100 percent cut in our assistance before undertaking fundamental democratic reform.

Finally, the new reporting requirement in H.R. 3189 would be redundant. The Department's annual report to Congress, required by the FREEDOM Support Act, already enumerates in great detail U.S. assistance to the Central Asian states.

Question:

Can you comment on the recent advisory that the State Department issued to Americans noting ongoing security concerns and the potential for terrorist actions in Central Asia? Do elements and supporters of extremist groups present in Central Asia possess the capabilities to conduct terrorist operations in multiple countries? Please elaborate.

Response:

The U.S. Government continues to receive information that terrorist groups in Central Asia may be planning attacks in the region, possibly against U.S. Government facilities, Americans, or American interests.

Elements and supporters of extremist groups present in Central Asia, including the Islamic Jihad Union/Group (IJU/IJG), al-Qaida, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), have expressed anti-U.S. sentiments in the past and have the capability to conduct terrorist operations in multiple countries.

Because terrorists have not distinguished between official and civilian targets, we have issued the Public Announcement for Central Asia advisory on April 29, 2005, to help U.S. citizens make informed choices about their personal security. The State Department reviews security in Central Asia on a continuous basis and recently extended the Central Asia Public Announcement until April 27, 2006, due to the ongoing potential for terrorist attacks and instability in the region.

Question:

Reportedly, terrorist forces belonging to the IMU, Iran's Revolutionary Guards, and Al Qaeda assisted the Tajik opposition during the civil war. What is the current status of the Iranian overt and covert presence in Tajikistan? Is Iran engaged in supporting terrorist organizations in the region? Please elaborate.

Response:

Iran maintains regular diplomatic and commercial relations with Tajikistan—with whom it shares an Iranian heritage and similar language—and other Central Asian republics. Meanwhile, sales of military equipment and technology to Iran by Russia and other countries are a concern to Iran's neighbors.

In regard to its support for terrorist organizations, Iran remains the most active state sponsor of terrorism. Its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Ministry of Intelligence and Security are involved in the planning and support of terrorist acts and they continue to exhort a variety of groups to use terrorism in pursuit of their goals.

Question:

Would the Administration please provide the Subcommittee a threat assessment regarding terrorist organizations and extremist groups operating in the region, to include their organizational structure, sources of support, and capabilities?

Response:

The United States Government is aware of four terrorist organizations and one extremist group operating in Central Asia. The terrorist organizations include the Islamic Jihad Union, al-Qaida, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement.

All of these groups are present throughout the region and have the capability to conduct attacks in every country in the region. These groups share the al-Qaida ideology favoring overthrowing regimes deemed "non-Islamic," and expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries with the eventual goal of establishing a pan-Islamic "caliphate" throughout the world.

While not a designated terrorist organization, the extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir promotes hate and praises acts of terrorism, despite a proclaimed commitment to nonviolence. It has a presence throughout Central Asia, although several governments have banned it.

Question:

We would also appreciate it if our witnesses would advise us if there are specific countries in the region that the U.S. would classify as terrorist sanctuaries. To this extent, has the Administration considered implementing Section 7102 of the "9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act" regarding the countries of Central Asia?

Response:

We monitor countries all over the globe to assess whether they expressly consent to or knowingly tolerate the use of their territory as sanctuary for terrorists. We also consider whether the territory of these countries is being used by terrorists without government consent.

Whether a state expressly consents to or knowingly tolerates the use of its territory as terrorist sanctuary is one of the factors we take into account in designating state sponsors of terrorism. We have not determined that any of the Central Asian countries either expressly consents to or knowingly tolerates the use of its territory as sanctuary for terrorist activity.

Terrorists may, however, exploit the territory of certain Central Asian countries against their will. To address this situation, we are providing assistance to them to build their capacities—particularly in the areas of law enforcement, border controls, and financial controls—to identify and interdict terrorists, to extend full control over their territory, and to encourage cooperation among them on a regional basis to defeat terrorism.

Question:

As you know, Section 7102 of the 9/11 Act would be triggered if governments in the region know of the use of their territory for terrorist activities and are allowing it to continue. Are the governments engaged and cooperating with the U.S. to prevent the use of their territory as a terrorist sanctuary? What do you believe would be the impact on our relations with those nations if the Administration extends restrictions on certain exports to countries meeting the designation of terrorist sanctuary?

Response:

We monitor countries all over the globe to assess whether they expressly consent to or knowingly tolerate the use of their territory as sanctuary for terrorists. We also consider whether the territory of these countries is being used by terrorists without government consent.

Whether a state expressly consents to or knowingly tolerates the use of its territory as terrorist sanctuary is one of the factors we take into account in designating state sponsors of terrorism. We have not determined that any of the Central Asian countries either expressly consents to or knowingly tolerates the use of its territory as sanctuary for terrorist activity.

Restrictions on certain exports to Central Asia would not be appropriate at this time because of the cooperation these countries provide in the Global War on Terror.

Question:

Can you comment on Saudi influence in Central Asia? What Saudi religious and educational institutions operate in those countries? Have Saudi materials and religious doctrine been incorporated into official or clandestine religious and educational activities?

Response:

Saudi Arabia has established diplomatic and trade relations with each of the five Central Asian states. Although the Saudi government did build mosques and orphanages in several countries in the 1990s, Central Asia has thousand-year-old traditions of tolerant faith and scientific learning that provide a natural shield against imported radical interpretations of Islam. In the past, many individuals from Central Asia have gone to Saudi Arabia to study, bringing back narrower approaches to religion than found in local customs, as well as books and qualifications that entitled them to teach or lead religious study or prayer.

Question:

Can you comment on the status of proliferation in the region, the existence of unconventional weapons programs, and the occurrence of ballistic missile trafficking?

Response:

Given Central Asia's geographic location as a crossroads between Asia, Europe and the Middle East, we remain concerned about the potential for countries to take advantage of the expansive and porous borders in the region to traffic in weapons, including ballistic missiles. As a result, U/S Joseph recently traveled to the region to highlight this issue and encourage cooperation in the Proliferation Security Initiative. Since then, Central Asian states have almost universally endorsed the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles, and expressed their support for cooperative efforts to ensure their territories are not abused by proliferators. We also have a range of cooperative assistance programs in place to address proliferation concerns in Central Asia. Through these programs we have made progress in securing fissile

material stockpiles and other dangerous materials. The U.S. Government does not believe any Central Asian countries currently maintain any active WMD programs.

Additionally, through State Department Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise programs and complementary programs at the Defense and Energy Departments, and programs administered by several other U.S. agencies, we are engaging and re-directing former Soviet WMD experts throughout Central Asia. Through the Pentagon's Biological Weapons Proliferation Prevention Program we are bolstering bio-safety and biosecurity at facilities housing dangerous pathogens in several Eurasian countries, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and are encouraging consolidation of dangerous pathogen collections.

Question:

Can you address U.S. efforts aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons remaining in the region? Are there active research reactors, uranium mines, milling facilities, and nuclear waste dumps in the countries of the region that remain inadequately protected?

Response:

All nuclear weapons in Central Asia have been removed and the United States has continued to help ensure the security of research reactors in the region that still use highly-enriched uranium (HEU). The use of HEU in research reactors with poor security is a proliferation concern and with the help of the Department of Energy (DOE), the security of these facilities has been upgraded to meet international standards. Specifically, three research reactors in Kazakhstan that use HEU, and one in Uzbekistan that previously used HEU, have received physical security assistance. We have also offered to convert one of the research reactors in Kazakhstan to use low-enriched uranium (LEU) instead of HEU. LEU cannot be used in a nuclear device. The fresh HEU from the research reactor in Uzbekistan has already been repatriated to the Russian Federation. Further, we have removed the spent fuel from the BN-350 reactor in Kazakhstan to safe and secure temporary storage, and are working with the Government of Kazakhstan to provide for long-term storage of the material.

There are uranium waste dumps in the region that remain inadequately protected, most notably in Kyrgyzstan, but these sites are not considered a serious proliferation concern. Similarly, uranium mines and milling facilities do not represent a significant proliferation risk because the uranium ore at these sites would require sophisticated technologies and facilities to be enriched to a weapons-usable grade.

Question:

Kazakhstan, in the mid-1990s, signed onto the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and began the process of securing nuclear materials and dismantlement of its facilities. It did, however, ask for both positive and negative security assurances from the nuclear weapons states. You mentioned Kazakhstan's management of reactions with the United States, Russia, and China—three nuclear weapons states. What types of assurances is Kazakhstan seeking and in exchange for what? Considering that the United States seeks nonproliferation in the area, is this commitment shared by Russia and China?

Response:

The break-up of the Soviet Union produced four states with nuclear weapons on their territories: Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine. Kazakhstan ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in December 1993 and in February 1994 deposited its instrument of accession with the United States, which, along with Russia and the United Kingdom, is a NPT depositary.

As part of the process of securing their accession as non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) to the NPT, the three NPT depositary states, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, signed a "Memorandum on Security Guarantees" to Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine at the December 1994 Summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Budapest. The memorandum, signed by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin and Prime Minister Major, provides the three states with negative and positive security assurances drawn from the Helsinki Final Act, the UN Charter, and security assurances previously provided to NPT parties. Specifically, it reaffirms the commitment of Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to 1) refrain from the threat or use of force against the political independence and territorial integrity of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, 2) apply to these states the negative security assurance extended to all NPT NNWS, and 3) seek immediate UNSC action to provide assistance in the event that any of these states is subject to an act of aggression involving nuclear weapons. France made a unilateral

statement at the same time. China extended security assurances to Kazakhstan in February 1995.

In addition, UN Security Council 984 (1995) took note of the negative security assurances extended by the five NPT nuclear-weapon States—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—to NPT NNWS and extended a positive security assurance to all NPT NNWS.

Both Russia and China used the 2005 NPT Review Conference to voice their strong support for nonproliferation, including in Central Asia.

Question:

What actions are we taking and considering in conjunction with the countries of Central Asia regarding the interdiction of unconventional materials and technologies? How are these agreements structured?

Response:

The U.S. Government continues to work with counterpart homeland security agencies in Central Asian countries to build capacity to detect and interdict the transfer of WMD and missile-related materials.

A key challenge for these governments is to develop laws and regulations that meet international standards such as the Wassenaar Arrangement, Australia Group, European Union. Many of the legal regulations in the Central Asian governments are based on model language for legislation developed by these international regimes.

The United States believes our assistance provides multiple benefits to the host government and to the region. In addition to some specialized technical equipment and training, local officers are trained to use similar techniques and equipment to interdict chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear smuggling, narcotics smuggling and trafficking in persons, since inspection, search, seizure, and interdiction methods are largely comparable for different kinds of smuggling.

Question:

Earlier this month, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Bob Joseph, was in Kazakhstan and underscored the rewarding cooperation between the U.S. and Kazakhstani authorities against the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Under Secretary Joseph noted that: "with the help from the Nunn-Lugar program, Kazakhstan has eliminated the weapons and related infrastructure inherited from the Soviet Union," but he added that "much remains to be done." Please elaborate on specific accomplishments regarding Kazakhstan's nuclear weapons facilities; what benchmarks are yet to be met; and how does this impact U.S. efforts throughout the region.

Response:

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited a large nuclear weapons infrastructure. This included 1,140 nuclear warheads, the Semipalatinsk nuclear weapons testing site, missile silos and other nuclear testing tunnels. Most notably, with help from the Nunn-Lugar program all 1,140 nuclear warheads were transferred to Russia by 1995, all missile silos and heavy bombers were destroyed by 2000, and the Semipalatinsk nuclear infrastructure was destroyed by July 2000. Today, Kazakhstan has no nuclear weapons and has shuttered or destroyed its entire nuclear weapons infrastructure.

However, we are still engaged in other related nonproliferation activities in Kazakhstan. We have offered to convert a research reactor that uses highly-enriched uranium (HEU) to use low-enriched uranium (LEU). LEU cannot be used in a nuclear weapon. We have removed the spent fuel from the BN-350 reactor to safe and secure temporary storage, and are working with Kazakhstan on long-term secure storage. We are also working with Kazakhstan to redirect Kazakhstani scientists who possess nuclear weapons expertise to peaceful sustainable civilian work. Through the Nonproliferation of WMD Expertise program, over \$20 million has been funded to redirect these scientists to discourage them from working for proliferator states.

Our nonproliferation efforts in Kazakhstan have a positive impact on Central Asia. The cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. demonstrates the progress that can be achieved in combating the proliferation of WMD and serves as an example throughout the region.

Question:

Are the nuclear research reactors in Central Asia under IAEA safeguards? If so, how frequently are safeguard inspections conducted? Is the U.S. satisfied that there

have been no breaches by any of the Central Asian governments in their disclosures of their nuclear activities?

Response:

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the only Central Asian states with nuclear research reactors. These reactors are all under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. In addition, the Department of Energy has provided material protection control and accounting (MPC&A) upgrades to three research reactors in Kazakhstan and one in Uzbekistan. For example, U.S. MPC&A assistance has led to significant safeguards and security upgrades at Alatau, where as late as 1996 there were literally no visible signs of physical protection.

The IAEA has technical safeguards criteria for each type of facility under safeguards. The nature and scheduling of inspections for research reactors depends on the power of the reactor, and the types and quantities of materials at the reactor. For example, research reactors with small quantities of nuclear material may be selected at random each year for inspection, while those with larger amounts of nuclear material may be inspected at least annually, with a maximum inspection frequency of 12 times per year. During these inspections, the IAEA seeks to detect any misuse of the reactor to produce undeclared nuclear material. The IAEA also has additional robust containment and surveillance measures on research reactors over 25MW in order to detect undeclared irradiation.

No breach of safeguards by any Central Asian states has been brought before the IAEA Board of Governors, and the U.S. is not aware of any failure by these states to disclose their nuclear activities.

Question:

Recent news reports state that the Administration is accelerating an effort to place radiation detectors at land crossings and at airports throughout Central Asia to monitor the traffic of nuclear weapons material that could be removed from facilities in the region. Please elaborate on these and other efforts aimed at preventing the trafficking of WMD in and through Central Asia.

Response:

Securing borders from the transfer of fissile material is a serious challenge, given the relatively small size of the material. Given Central Asia's geographic location as a crossroads between Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and the size of the region, we will continue working closely with our Central Asian counterparts to prevent the transit of nuclear materials.

The United States is doing all it can to address this threat. U.S. agencies have already installed a number of portal radiation monitors at a variety of border crossings and ports of entry (vehicle, rail, pedestrian, airport) in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (list attached). Passive portal monitors, able to detect radiation and alert the Customs Inspectors or Border Guards, are a part of U.S. Government assistance for nonproliferation. The Department of State is working with our colleagues in the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy to install additional monitors. Sites proposed for future portal monitors installation are listed separately in the attachment.

In addition, the Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Non-proliferation oversees the Export Control and related Border Security (EXBS) program. Under the EXBS program, the Department trains local officials and donates a substantial amount of supporting equipment to support host country work in inspection, search, and interdiction methods for both cargo and personnel; licensing of dual use items; and outreach to industry and intergovernmental coordination. EXBS program funds will train more Customs, Border Guard inspectors, and licensing officials in each Central Asian country in the coming year, in order to strengthen the host country's ability to use available technology. In each training series; EXBS continues to work to institutionalize U.S. training techniques and methods through "train-the-trainer" programs with local government training academies.

LIST OF CURRENT PORTAL MONITOR SITES IN CENTRAL ASIA*

COUNTRY	PROVIDER AGENCY	YEAR INSTALLED	MONITOR TYPE (IF KNOWN)
KAZAKHSTAN	ISN/NDF (active between 1998–2002) installed portal monitors		
1 Vehicle	ISN/NDF	1998–2001	Aspekt (gamma detection only)
1 Vehicle	GOKZ Customs	2003	Aspekt (gamma-neutron rail monitors)
KYRGYZSTAN	—NONE CURRENT—		
TAJKISTAN	—NONE CURRENT—		
TURKMENISTAN			
7 Vehicle	ISN/NDF	1998–2002	Ludlum
2 Rail	ISN/NDF	1998–2002	Ludlum
1 port	ISN/NDF	1998–2002	Ludlum
UZBEKISTAN			
3 Rail	DOD—WMD/PPI	2004–2005	Aspekt (Gamma-Neutron)
7 Vehicle	DOD—WMD/PPI	2004–2005	Aspekt (Gamma-Neutron)
1 Airport	DOD—WMD/PPI	2004–2005	Aspekt (Gamma-Neutron)

*The Department is prepared to make actual locations where portal monitors have been installed available for the members and staff of the Committee, but prefers not to have the information placed into a public record.

LIST OF PLANNED FUTURE PORTAL MONITOR SITES IN CENTRAL ASIA*

COUNTRY	PROVIDER AGENCY	ESTIMATED YEAR FOR DELIVERY
KAZAKHSTAN	See currently installed portal monitors listed separately	
	DOE/SLD—currently negotiating an Implementing Arrangement to upgrade and install 21 land border crossings, airports, and seaports	2006–2008
KYRGYZSTAN	None currently installed	
	ISN/ECC & DOE/SLD to install monitors at truck crossing port in Calendar Year 2006. The GOKG is has been presented with draft Implementing Agreement text approved by the USG.	2006
TAJKISTAN	None currently installed	
	No plans at this time to install portal monitors.	
TURKMENISTAN	See currently installed portal monitors listed separately	
	No plans at this time to install additional portal monitors	
UZBEKISTAN	See currently installed portal monitors listed separately	
	DOD currently plans to install 7 land border crossings, airports, and railroad sites.	2005–2007

*The Department is prepared to make actual locations where portal monitors have been installed available for the members and staff of the Committee, but prefers not to have the information placed into a public record.

Question:

News reports earlier this week referred to a previously undisclosed incident in June of this year, when U.S. satellites tracked an Iranian cargo plane in North Korea. Given the Iranian-North Korean history of missile trade, the U.S., according to the report, sought the cooperation of nations in the region to deny the plane the right to fly over their territory. One Central Asian nation cooperated. Are you able to divulge which nation agreed to provide such assistance? Why did others refuse to cooperate? Was this an isolated incident or is this type of activity a frequent occurrence in the region?

Response:

North Korea's proliferation of missiles and related technology has long posed a significant threat to the security of the U.S. and its allies, as have Iran's destabilizing missile development activities. The U.S. works to counter North Korea's missile-related trading activities through a variety of means, including working closely with other like-minded countries. Regarding the October 24 *New York Times* article concerning missile trade between Iran and North Korea, it would be inappropriate to comment on such a matter in a public forum. However, we would be prepared to discuss this issue more fully in a classified setting.

Question:

Do the countries in Central Asia support the Statement of Interdiction Principles of the Proliferation Security Initiative?

Response:

U/S Robert Joseph traveled to the region in early October to discuss Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) cooperation and participation by the States in Central Asia. As a result of this visit, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have endorsed the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles, and the new government of Kyrgyzstan indicated positive support but is still studying the endorsement of the Principles.

Question:

Do the Central Asian nations have the necessary legal authority to take the steps outlined in the Statement of Interdiction Principles? If not, please elaborate on the steps that each country needs to take to improve their national legal authority so that they can assist in interdiction activities under the PSI? How is the U.S. contributing to this process? If they do have the legal authority, what is their contribution to interdiction efforts—that is, is it operational or informational assets?

Response:

Yes, Central Asian nations have the necessary international and national legal authority to fulfill their commitment to the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and its Statement of Interdiction Principles. We have, nevertheless, offered expert consultations on legal and any other issues that Central Asian nations may wish to discuss regarding practical implementation of their commitment.

Question:

Has the U.S. conducted an evaluation of the capabilities and strengths of the Central Asian countries and, after doing so, requested any particular cooperation from these governments? What has been their response?

Response:

Given the important location of Central Asia as a crossroads for proliferation activity, the Governments of Central Asia have an important role to play in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). As PSI partners we seek to work with them to ensure their territories, including their airspace, are not abused by proliferators. Any cooperation with these governments will be handled in sensitive channels. Additionally, the Government of Turkmenistan recently made a public statement indicating it would deny overflight to aircraft seeking to ship WMD and missile-related goods.

Question:

Have any of the governments in the region signed any PSI relevant agreements, such as boarding agreements?

Response:

We have not sought any agreements with these governments. They already have broad national and international legal authority over their territory, including their airspace. Additionally, they are party to multilateral agreements, such as the Chi-

cago Convention, which elaborate international legal authorities dealing with their airspace.

Question:

What has been in impact on the Central Asian states of Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons? How would Iran's possession of nuclear weapons threaten current U.S. efforts aimed at controlling and decommissioning nuclear sites, materials, and technology? Please elaborate.

Response:

Iranian attempts to acquire nuclear weapons have a destabilizing impact on the region and the world. While Central Asian governments have given up Soviet legacy WMD capabilities and are working to keep the region free of nuclear weapons, Iran's nuclear ambitions are counterproductive. The United States will continue to cooperate with Central Asian governments to reduce threats posed by the Soviet Union's WMD legacy.

Question:

Can you comment on the effect of the European Union's imposition of arms export and visa sanctions on Uzbekistan?

Response:

It is still too early to comment on the effects of the EU's October 3 decision to implement sanctions against Uzbekistan, which were implemented in response to the Government of Uzbekistan's refusal to allow for an independent, international investigation into the tragic events at Andijon, as called for by the international community, including the United States. The Government of Uzbekistan has not heeded that call.

We continue to urge Uzbekistan to undertake an independent, international, transparent investigation into Andijon and to undertake fundamental democratic and economic reforms and to uphold internationally recognized human rights, including religious freedom. We have made our concerns clear to the Uzbek government at the highest levels, and continue to consult closely with our international partners, including at NATO, the EU, and the UN.

Last year, in close consultation with Congress, the United States withheld \$10.5 million in FY04 assistance funding to the Government of Uzbekistan because the Secretary could not certify Uzbekistan was meeting its commitments, including on human rights, under our 2002 Strategic Framework Agreement. This year, \$24 million is subject to a similar determination.

