External Support for Central Asian Military and Security Forces

Working Paper

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January 2014

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Summary

As the drawdown of United States and coalition forces in Afghanistan has accelerated in preparation for the end of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2014, media attention has come to focus on the extent to which equipment being withdrawn from the region will be left behind for Central Asian states to use. At the same time, recent agreements for the extension of Russian military basing agreements in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have drawn attention to the extent to which Russia is providing military equipment and other forms of security assistance to the region. This raises questions about the actual extent of external support for military and security forces in Central Asia and the potential impact augmentation of these forces could have on regional security.

In recent years, all Central Asian governments have increased spending on their military and security forces. This increase has been most pronounced in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The result of this increase in expenditures is a gradual increase in capabilities, although the extent of improvement varies significantly from country to country. While Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan appear to be on their way to building military forces that are relatively capable by developing world standards, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan still have significant problems maintaining even a small rapid reaction force in a high state of readiness. Turkmenistan remains an odd case, with the wealth to develop a serious military force but without the human resources to develop a strategic plan for creating a military that meets its security needs.

Russia remains the main source of military and security assistance for most Central Asian states. Russia's primary goal in the region is to keep the Central Asian states in Russian orbit while making sure that US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces leave the region after the completion of the operation in Afghanistan. Russian military assistance to the weaker Central Asian states can be described as a quid pro quo arrangement, wherein Russia provides political and military support for the ruling regimes in exchange for basing rights and a certain level of acquiescence on Russian foreign policy priorities in the region.

Although Russian military and security assistance to Central Asian states is relatively limited in nature, the small size of the market and the limited starting capabilities of the Central Asian military and security forces mean that even relatively limited assistance can have a sizeable impact on security and stability in the region. Going forward, this impact is likely to be relatively mixed. On the one hand, efforts to create a unified air defence system and to improve counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency capabilities are likely to help local armed forces protect their countries from the threat of infiltration by radical Islamic groups. However, the extent of this danger to Central Asian security has been repeatedly overstated, by both local leaders and their Russian partners, in order to justify assistance requests and subsequent security cooperation. Most local leaders face a greater threat from internal

instability and regime collapse than from outside infiltration. Especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and 2011–12 electoral protests in Russia, Russian and Central Asian leaders see regime stability as their highest security priority. To the extent that Russia provides equipment and training to security services without regard for how such assistance may be used, it may prove to be useful for helping local leaders protect themselves from popular protests by repressing internal opposition movements.

For much of the last decade, assuring continued access for transferring supplies and personnel to Afghanistan has been the highest priority for the USA in Central Asia. Other goals, including counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and democracy promotion, have been pursued, but only rarely have they been allowed to infringe on the priority of the Afghanistan mission. In a period of reduced budgets and limited resources, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan will inevitably result in a decreased emphasis on all forms of assistance to Central Asia. The region will once again become a relatively low priority for the US Department of Defence. Security assistance budgets for states in the region have already been cut in recent years and are likely to be cut further in years to come.

Central Asian leaders sense that the withdrawal period presents a final opportunity to receive significant amounts of military assistance from the USA. The countries that are most interested in such equipment include Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have the financial wherewithal to buy new equipment and are not very interested in donations of used armaments. Much of the discussion about the extent of such assistance has overstated both the amount and significance of equipment likely to be provided and the potential impact of such assistance on regional security. To date, the US Government has not agreed to transfer any excess defence equipment from the Afghanistan operation to Central Asian states. While it is likely that at least some Excess Defence Articles (EDA) equipment will be transferred to Central Asian states at some point in the future, the equipment is not likely to include major weapons systems or even small arms. The security consequences of such donations will be limited.

The greater threat to regional security is posed not by the potential provision of excess military equipment from International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops leaving Afghanistan, but by long-standing training programmes for the region's special forces. In recent years, special forces troops trained by the US military have engaged in combat against local insurgents and have fired on unarmed protesters and other civilians in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and possibly Kazakhstan. Training programmes such as these are much less costly than equipment donations and are more likely to be maintained as part of general military assistance programming after ISAF forces leave the region.

While Russia and the USA are the primary providers of military and security assistance to Central Asian states, other countries also play a role in the region. The European Union (EU) and its member states have been particularly active in efforts to improve local capacity in counter-narcotics and

border control. European defence industry has also become the preferred alternative for Central Asian states seeking to diversify their sources of military equipment. Turkey has sought to use cultural ties with the region to establish its role as a senior partner, though with mixed success. India has made an effort to hedge against China and Pakistan, its traditional rivals, by seeking to establish a military presence in Tajikistan, though this effort has met with little success to date. China's limited role has been most significant, from a strategic point of view. While it has quickly come to dominate regional economic life, it has limited its role in the region's military and security affairs in order to avoid alienating both Russia and local populations.

Overall, this report concludes that external military assistance to Central Asian states is unlikely to have a serious negative impact on regional stability and security. With the end of the ISAF operation in Afghanistan, the region's decade-long position of prominence on the international arena is likely to fade. Instead the states of the region will increasingly be left to their own devices, with internal instability the most serious threat. External military assistance will be limited and will do little to strengthen local armed forces, though steps have to be taken to ensure that such assistance does not enhance the ability of internal security forces to harm civilians.

Abbreviations

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EDA	Excess Defence Articles
GDP	Gross domestic product
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MRL	Multiple rocket launcher
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UAV	Unmanned aerial vehicle

1. Introduction

As the drawdown of United States and coalition forces in Afghanistan has accelerated in preparation for the end of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2014, media attention has come to focus on the extent to which equipment being withdrawn from the region will be left behind for Central Asian states to use. At the same time, recent agreements for the extension of Russian military basing agreements in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have drawn attention to the extent to which Russia is providing military equipment and other forms of security assistance to the region. Central Asian states have been receiving external military assistance since the mid-1990s, though the amount of such assistance grew substantially in the last decade due to a combination of US interest in using the region to provide access to Afghanistan and Russian desire to ensure its continued predominance in regional security affairs.

Local leaders sense that the heightened interest in the region from foreign powers may fade once the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops from Afghanistan is complete. They are therefore using the current situation to highlight the potential threats to the region and how these threats might affect the rest of the world. The goal is to ensure that outside powers provide the maximum possible amount of assistance in the short term, before their focus shifts to other parts of the world.

This report examines the extent of external support for military and security forces in Central Asia, with an eye on the potential impact of the augmentation of these forces on regional security during and after the scheduled 2014 departure of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops from Afghanistan. Chapter 1 addresses the existing military capabilities of the five states that make up the region, as well as their plans for future development. Chapter 2 reviews Russian military assistance and sales to the region, as well as joint training and military education programmes. Chapter 3 looks at assistance provided to the region by the USA. Chapter 4 reviews assistance and sales programmes carried out by other states, with a primary focus on NATO member states, China and India. Chapter 5 analyses the possible effects of external support for Central Asian military forces on the security situation in the region and offers recommendations for future action.

2. Central Asian military capabilities and plans

This chapter describes the current military capabilities and plans of the five Central Asian states. Although the five countries that are addressed in this report are commonly grouped together, they diverge widely in resources and face very different threat environments. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are relatively wealthy countries that can afford to purchase new weapons and equipment from a variety of potential partners. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are quite poor and largely depend on foreign assistance to maintain and equip their military forces. Uzbekistan is in an intermediate position. Furthermore, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan inherited fairly significant defence industrial plants from the Soviet Union. While both countries' defence industry largely came to a standstill in the 1990s, Kazakhstan has made great strides in reviving its industry over the last five to eight years. Uzbekistan has not. The other three countries inherited little to no legacy defence industry from the Soviet Union.

In terms of threat environments, most of the countries face a risk of internal unrest that could rise to the level of regime overthrow. The overthrow of two successive regimes in Kyrgyzstan, in 2005 and 2010, has highlighted the danger of such an event for all of the region's leaders. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are also threatened by internal ethnic and regional divisions, while Uzbekistan is concerned by the possibility of a resurgence of domestic Islamist terrorism. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are particularly concerned about the possibility of instability in Afghanistan spreading into the region, although the threat is not nearly as serious as portrayed to the outside world. While several countries have territorial disputes with each other and with neighbouring states, the likelihood of such disputes escalating into armed conflict remains relatively low. The greater risk is of an escalation in low level conflict in border zones and enclaves, as power differentials and strict border regimes between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan lead to conflicts between local inhabitants and security forces guarding borders in the region.[1] Conflicts over water between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on one side and Uzbekistan on the other are also likely to escalate over time.

These differences in resources and threat perceptions have led to differences in military capabilities and development plans. Kazakhstan in particular is focused on developing a modern military, while Turkmenistan's many purchases of new weaponry are primarily for show. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are more focused on ensuring that their security services are able to deal with the possibility of internal threats. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

[1] 'Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves', *OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin: South Caucasus and Central Asia,* Jan 2013.

seek to secure their borders and develop special forces capabilities to counter attacks by insurgent groups.

I. Kazakhstan[2]

Kazakhstan's 2011 military doctrine declares socio-political instability within the region and possible conflicts on the country's periphery as the gravest threats facing the country.[3] Terrorism and the potential for instability related to the situation in Afghanistan are considered lesser dangers.[4] A retired Kazakhstani military officer describes the threats facing Kazakhstan as follows:

> The greatest threat to Kazakhstan's security and regional stability over the mid-term are an unstable domestic, economic and social climate; growth of ethnic and demographic tension in some neighbouring countries, which could push much of the population toward extremist fighting methods; transnational terrorism and religious extremism; organized crime; arms and drug trafficking; shortage of natural resources, especially water; and deterioration of the environment.[5]

The Kazakh Government sees the most serious internal threats as coming from the emergence of illegal armed groups seeking to overthrow the government or to engage in separatist activity, as well as from extremist and separatist organizations that are willing to use armed methods or terrorist acts to achieve their goals.[6] Separatist activity by ethnic Russians was considered a major threat to the country's territorial integrity in the 1990s, but subsequently disappeared as a serious issue.[7] Kazakhstan is the only country in Central Asia to have settled all of its border disputes with neighbouring states. It has fairly good relations with all of these states, including substantial defence and security cooperation with Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Afghanistan is sufficiently geographically distant to be seen as a lesser threat, especially when compared to attitudes toward the threat from Afghanistan in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.[8]

Non-state actors are potentially far more threatening to Kazakhstan than any neighbouring state. The threat from Islamist militants has become more serious in recent years, with the country's first suicide bomb attack taking

[2] Except when otherwise cited, information in this section is taken from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2013*, pp. 221–22; and 'Russia and the CIS, Kazakhstan', *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, 6 June 2013.

[3] Presidential Decree No. 161, Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 11 Oct. 2011, <http://mod.gov.kz/mod-en/index.php/2009-06-26-02-25-27>.

[4] McDermott, R., 'Central Asian security post-2014: perspectives in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan', Danish Institute of International Studies Report No. 12 (2013), p. 16.

[5] Dubovtsev, G., 'The Republic of Kazakhstan update: military doctrine and policy', Foreign Military Studies Office, 7, <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/Kazakhstan/Republic-Update-Military-Doctrine-and-Policy.pdf>.

[6] Presidential Decree No. 161 (note 3).

[7] Peyrouse, S., 'Nationhood and the Minority Question in Central Asia: The Russians in Kazakhstan', *Europe-Asia Studies,* vol. X, no. X (May 2007), pp. 481–501.

[8] McDermott (note 4).

place in Aqtobe in May 2011. Another bombing occurred in October 2011 in Atyrau. Gun battles with members of extremist groups also took place that year in Shubarshi, Taraz, and Almaty.[9] Although no attacks occurred in 2012 or the first half of 2013, Kazakhstani authorities remain highly concerned about the threat of a domestic Islamist network and have publicized the arrest of several groups building homemade explosive devices and maintaining ties with extremist groups in Afghanistan.[10] Religious radicals are not the only potential source of internal instability that concerns the government. Violent clashes between protesting oil workers and police in Zhanaozen in December 2011 highlighted the potential threat of economically discontented citizens to the Nazarbayev regime.[11] Some reports note that the Kazakhstani Government particularly fears the convergence of economic protest groups and religious extremists.[12] Although the government may overstate the extent of the potential threat of violent activity by non-state actors, the number of incidents in recent years shows that future acts of violence by extremist groups are a legitimate security concern for Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's military is arguably the most capable of the five Central Asian states, although it is far less capable than the technologically advanced forces of NATO countries or the simply more numerous forces of the larger Middle Eastern and South Asian states. Several sources have noted that it is the only country in the region that has the resources and knowledge base to modernize its armed forces.[13] In recent years, the Kazakhstan military has begun to emphasize inter-service coordination, a high degree of combat readiness and mobility. The total strength of the country's armed forces is variously estimated at between 30 000 and 45 000 total troops. In addition to the regular military, Kazakhstan also has approximately 30 000 other troops, primarily assigned to the Ministry of Interior and to the border guards. This places Kazakhstan between Portugal and the Netherlands in size of active military and close to Australia for total numbers of troops in all security and armed services. The 2012 defence budget totalled $2.4 billion, the highest in the region.

The ground forces officially include 10 motorized brigades, 4 air assault brigades, 10 rocket and artillery brigades, a coastal defence brigade and a combat engineer brigade. However, many of these units are not fully staffed and some may exist only on paper.[14] With the exception of a coastal defence brigade on the Caspian and a few other units near the capital, the forces are located on the country's southern and eastern borders. This placement

[9] Lillis, J., 'Kazakhstan: Astana jolted by terror incidents', *Bug Pit*, 16 Nov. 2011.

[10] Zenn, J., 'Salafists challenge Kazakh future', Asia Times Online, 19 Sep. 2012, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/NI19Ag01.html>.

[11] 'Kazakh oil strike: 10 dead in Zhanaozen clashes', BBC News, 16 Dec. 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16221566>.

[12] Nichol, J., *Kazakhstan: Recent Developments and US Interests*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, 22 July 2013, pp. 6–9.

[13] 'Russia and the CIS, Kazakhstan' (note 2); and McDermott, R. N., 'Kazakhstan–Russia: Enduring Eurasian Defence Partners', Danish Institute of International Studies Report No. 15 (2012).

[14] McDermott (note 13), pp. 22–23.

demonstrates the expected direction of potential threats to the country's security. Some of the ground forces units are part of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) rapid reaction force. One of the brigades, labelled KAZBRIG, is dedicated to international peacekeeping operations. Parts of this brigade have served in international coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade.

The ground forces are armed primarily with Russian weapons and equipment, including 300 T-72 battle tanks, 500 BMP-2 and 100 BTR-80A/82A infantry fighting vehicles, and 150 MT-LB and 190 BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers. Artillery systems include 120 Akatsiia, 120 Gvozdika, and 25 Nona, as well as Fagot, Konkurs and Metis anti-tank systems. The armed forces also have 100 Grad multiple rocket launcher systems and 12 Tochka short-range tactical ballistic missile systems, with additional Grad and Uragan multiple rocket launcher (MRL) systems in storage. In recent years, the military has begun to acquire import weapons and equipment from Western states and to establish joint ventures to manufacture armaments domestically according to foreign designs, including Cobra and Humvee armoured vehicles, Lynx MRL systems, and Semser artillery systems (see chapters 3, 4 and 5).

According to estimates by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and IISS, the Kazakhstani air force has between 11 000 and 13 000 personnel. Its main function is air defence, as it possesses very limited strike capabilities. Combat pilots average 100 hours of flight time per year, which is lower than the NATO standard but is considered relatively high by regional standards. Operable combat aircraft include 14 MiG-29, 42 MiG-31, and 25 Su-27 fighters; 24 MiG-27 and 4 Mig-23 ground attack planes; and 14 Su-25 close air support aircraft. Transport aircraft include 6 An-26 and 2 CN-295 light aircraft and 2 An-12 medium aircraft. An An-72 light transport plane belonging to the armed forces crashed in December 2012, killing all 27 people on board who included a number of senior officials. A second such plane may have been taken out of service after the accident.[15] Approximately 40 Mi-24 attack helicopters are under the ground forces' operational control. Transport helicopters are operated by the air force and include 2 Mi-26s and 6 Mi-6s. Multi-purpose utility helicopters include 50 Mi-8s, 20-30 Mi-17s and 2 Huey II helicopters. Ground based air defence systems consist primarily of leftover Soviet-era assets, including 12 S-300PS systems.[16] In addition, Kazakhstan has agreed to acquire 10 S-300PMU SAM batteries for its joint air defence system with Russia, though no contracts have been publicly announced to date.

Kazakhstan's navy was only reconstituted as an independent organization in 2006. Initially, its capabilities were very limited. It had only 100 sailors and just a few patrol boats, several of which were not maintained and had therefore lost their seaworthiness. Since approximately 2010, the navy has

[15] 'Kazakhstan plane crash kills border chief, 26 others', CBC News, 25 Dec. 2012.
[16] McDermott (note 13), p. 24.

been undergoing a dramatic expansion and modernization. It now has 3000 personnel and has introduced a number of new patrol boats and missile boats, including a number built domestically at the Zenit shipyard in Uralsk under Russian license. Other ships have come from the USA, Russia, Turkey and South Korea, as described in more detail in subsequent chapters on military assistance. The navy's missions are focused on territorial defence and protection for offshore oil platforms and tankers.

The border guard has 15 000 troops dedicated to patrolling the country's land and maritime borders. While the border with Russia is largely unguarded, the borders with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are subject to heightened scrutiny because of the perceived danger of infiltration by religious extremists, terrorists, and/or criminal groups. They are equipped with armoured vehicles, helicopters, and patrol aircraft, all based near the southern border. The border guard has received mobile and static area surveillance systems from Russia and the USA and has trained teams of special operations forces to intercept threats identified by this equipment. The Maritime Border Guard is equipped with 20–25 patrol boats, the majority of which have been produced domestically in recent years. Its main tasks include fisheries protection and counter-smuggling operations in the Caspian Sea.[17]

The interior ministry controls an approximately 20 000-strong paramilitary force tasked with riot control, counter-insurgency operations, and providing combat support to army and border guard units in the event of a crisis. The units located in southern parts of the country were strengthened after Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) incursions into Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 1999 and 2000, with increased levels of manpower and newer equipment. The interior ministry also operates three special forces units: the Sunkar and Arlan counter-terrorist and counter-insurgency commando units, based near the southern border, and the Kyran SWAT team, based in Almaty and responsible for hostage rescue. These forces were used in response to some of the attacks by Islamic radical forces in 2011.

A recent report on developments in Central Asian security noted that Kazakhstan has 'prioritized developing its armed forces and security structures so as to respond to low- and medium-intensity conflicts'. To accomplish this task, it has focused on building professional and mobile forces while improving C^4ISR systems used during combat operations.[18] The government has particularly emphasized the development of a robust special forces element, including the procurement of modern equipment for such units. There have also been efforts to promote interoperability across agencies, through improved coordination between the defence and interior ministries and through joint exercises that include units from the regular armed forces with border guards and the Interior Ministry's paramilitary troops.[19]

[17] US Defense Department officials, interviews with author, Arlington, VA, Oct. 2010.
[18] McDermott (note 4), p. 21.
[19] McDermott (note 13).

Kazakhstan's determination to play a more visible role on the international scene has led to the establishment of KAZBRIG, a dedicated peacekeeping brigade. The brigade at the moment exists mostly on paper, with only one of three battalions fully formed.[20] The further development of this brigade is one of Kazakhstan's main military modernization goals for the next five years.

Kazakhstan inherited from the Soviet Union a fairly extensive and robust set of military education institutions. Each of the three military services has its own institute, while the National Defence University provides more advanced education for officers from both Kazakhstan and other CSTO member states.[21] The defence minister has noted that education and training are a major focus area for the armed forces, with an emphasis on increasing the level of mobilizational readiness and the cohesiveness of command and control institutions. As part of recent military reform efforts, the military has created a non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps that is expected to play a key role in training and educating enlisted soldiers.[22]

Of all the Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has the most well-developed defence industry. It inherited several hundred plants and facilities from the Soviet Union, mostly located in the northern part of the country. In the Soviet era, Kazakhstani factories produced a wide range of armaments, primarily for the navy. These included various missiles, mines, control systems, navigational equipment, and radars. Non-naval equipment included armaments for tanks, infantry weapons, air defence system components, radio-electronic equipment and howitzers.[23]

Although numerous plants were forced to close in the 1990s due to a lack of orders, at least 50 factories and research centres continue to function at present. The most important enterprises have been united in a single state-owned holding company, Kazakhstan Engineering (KE). These include:

1. The Kirov plant in Petropavlovsk, which makes communications equipment;
2. The Zenit plant in Uralsk, which builds ships, including minesweepers and patrol boats;
3. The Ziksto plant in Petropavlovsk, which makes anti-ship missiles;
4. The Metalist plant in Petropavlovsk, which manufactures high-caliber machine-guns;
5. The Petropavlovsk heavy machine-building plant, which makes targeting systems and parts for ballistic missiles;
6. The Granit plant in Almaty, which builds air defence systems; and

[20] McDermott, R., 'Kazakhstan hosts Steppe Eagle 2012', *Eurasia Daily Monitor,* 11 Sep. 2012.

[21] Peyrouse, S., 'The Central Asian armies facing the challenge of formation', *Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies*, vol. 11 (2010), <http://pipss.revues.org/3799>.

[22] Khairullin, S., '20 лет на страже мира', *Krasnaia Zvezda,* 3 May 2012.

[23] Baizakova, Z., 'Оборонно-промышленный комплекс Казахстана - свое или чужое', unpublished paper.

7. The Kirov machine-building plant in Petropavlovsk, which makes torpedoes.[24]

A long term absence of defence orders has led most of these plants to shift to civilian production, especially making equipment for the energy industry, though varying amounts of defence construction expertise remain. The Zenit plant is an exception, as it has been building a range of ships in recent years for the Kazakhstan Navy.[25]

Other companies make infantry weapons, anti-ship cruise missiles, and torpedo guidance systems. Most of these legacy plants are dependent on Russian orders, due to their inclusion in Russian defence industry manufacturing supply chains. In 2008, the Kazakhstan Government publicly announced the intention of establishing Kazakhstan as a leading player in military production and export, with the goal of transforming the country's defence industry as part of the required modernization process. The defence minister has ordered that 80 per cent of defence purchases must come from domestic suppliers.[26]

As part of its focus on multi-national interoperability, Kazakhstan has in recent years begun to emphasize the procurement of Western weapons and equipment. As part of an effort to combine this goal with the goal of supporting domestic defence industry, the state holding company Kazakhstan Engineering has engaged in a concerted effort to establish joint ventures with Western companies to build military equipment in Kazakhstan according to Western designs. The most prominent such ventures include an agreement with the Turkish company Aselan to modernize armoured vehicles and helicopters and to jointly produce communications systems for Central Asian militaries. A venture with Eurocopter has led to the production of two types of helicopters at a new facility in Astana. At the same time, the Kazakhstan military has maintained its long-standing ties with Russian defence industry (see subsequent chapters). In the future, Kazakhstan plans to modernize its military equipment by purchasing equipment from both Western states and Russia while also continuing to develop its domestic defence industry.

II. Uzbekistan[27]

The Karimov regime faces a number of threats, both internal and external. The regime has viewed radical Islamist militancy as a grave danger to its continued rule since bomb attacks in Tashkent in 1999 and raids by the IMU in 1999 and

[24] Peyrouse, S., 'Russia–Central Asia: advances and shortcomings of the military partnership', S. Blank (ed.), *Central Asian Security Trends: Views from Europe and Russia* (Strategic Studies Institute: Carlisle, PA, April 2011), p. 24.

[25] Baizakova (note 23).

[26] 'Russia and the CIS, Kazakhstan' (note 2).

[27] Except when otherwise cited, information in this section is taken from International Institute for Strategic Studies (note 2); and 'Russia and the CIS, Uzbekistan' (note 2).

2000.[28] Further bomb attacks by the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), an IMU offshoot, took place in Tashkent in 2004 and in Andijan in 2009.[29] The killing of senior IMU and IJU leaders by coalition forces in Afghanistan and IMU's shift to focus on fighting in Pakistan in recent years has significantly lowered the threat of attacks by radical Islamic groups in recent years, although the Uzbekistan Government continues to describe radical Islam as the greatest danger facing the country.[30] Internal repression has occasionally led to mass protest that has been attributed by Karimov to Islamist forces, most notably in May 2005 in Andijan, when several hundred people were killed by interior ministry troops firing into unarmed crowds.[31] Statements by government officials place the potential threat of radical elements entering the country from an unstable Afghanistan at the top of their security agenda going forward.[32] While threats from non-state actors undoubtedly pose some level of danger to Uzbekistan, the extent of the threat has been exaggerated by the Karimov regime in order to justify its policies of repressing regime opponents.

Smuggling and drug trafficking also present problems for Uzbekistan, although not at a level that threatens regime survival. Furthermore, as with most Central Asian states, government officials and members of the security forces are themselves reputed to be heavily involved in the smuggling operations.[33]

Uzbekistan has tense relations with several neighbouring states. The greatest potential for conflict is with Tajikistan, due in part to complex ethnic politics related to the presence of sizeable Tajik minorities in Uzbekistan and Uzbek minorities in Tajikistan. Uzbekistan has mined most of its border with Tajikistan, ostensibly to protect against IMU incursions. More significantly, the two countries have had a long-running dispute regarding payment for energy exports and water rights, with Uzbekistan threatening to close its border with Tajikistan if the latter follows through on plans to build a new hydro-electric power station that could threaten water supplies for the Uzbekistani cotton industry.[34] Relations with Kyrgyzstan suffer from very similar issues, with Uzbekistan occasionally cutting off energy supplies in retaliation for Kyrgyzstan drawing water for domestic use from rivers flowing into Uzbekistan. Border disputes between the two countries and the placement of landmines by Uzbekistan along a section of the border have also strained

[28] There is some dispute about the perpetrators of the bombings in Tashkent, with some analysts arguing that the bombing was a diversion carried out by Uzbekistani security services. See Polat, A. and Butkevich, N., 'Unraveling the mystery of the Tashkent bombings: theories and implications', *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2000), pp. 541–53.

[29] Nichol, J., *Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, 9 Jan. 2013, pp. 22–24.

[30] Tolipov, F., 'Военных силы Узбекистана спустя двадцать лет после обретения независимости', *Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies*, vol. 11 (2010), p. 6, <http://pipss.revues.org/3785>.

[31] 'How the Andijan killings unfolded', BBC News, 17 May 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4550845.stm>.

[32] McDermott (note 4), p. 18.

[33] Tuluoglu, M. Y., 'Drug trafficking in Uzbekistan', *Eurasia Critic*, May 2010.

[34] Kucera, J., 'The roots Of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan's water conflict', *Bug Pit*, 10 June 2013.

relations in the last decade. The Uzbek minority in Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, has not been a source of inter-state conflict. Uzbekistan has consistently refusing to take measures to support Kyrgyzstan's Uzbek population, even during the violent events of 2010.[35]

Uzbekistan's military is the second strongest in the region, after Kazakhstan's. It is comparable to Kazakhstan's in numbers, but has less modern equipment and has not modernized its training practices. Total defence spending is at approximately $2 billion. The military is focused on improving its capabilities to defeat asymmetric challenges in order to counter potential challenges from either irregular militants arriving from abroad or internal opponents of the Karimov regime. As a result, the primary stress of military commanders is on improvements in mobility, intelligence and command and control systems.

The army currently has around 40 000 personnel, divided into 11 motorized brigades, 1 tank brigade, 3 artillery brigades, and an MRL brigade. It also maintains a rapid reaction force that includes a light mountain infantry brigade, an air assault brigade, and an airborne brigade. Equipment consists of 170 T-62, 100 T-64, and 70 T-72 main battle tanks, 270 BMP-2, 120 BMD-1, and 9 BMD-2 infantry fighting vehicles, and 50 BTR-D, 24 BTR-60, 25 BTR-70, and 210 BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers. Artillery systems include 18 Gvozdika, 17 Akatsiia, 48 Pion, and 54 Nona, while anti-tank systems include Maliutka and Fagot. 60 Grad and 48 Uragan multiple rocket launcher systems complete the list of the ground forces' major armaments. All of this equipment is left over from the former Soviet Union.

The air force is considered to be fairly large and well-equipped, although its planes suffer from disrepair and a lack of upgrades while its pilots average only 10 hours of flight time per year. The air force can theoretically deploy on a range of missions, including close air support for counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations, bombing, aerial assault, transport, and air defence missions. Combat airplanes include 30 MiG-29 and 25 Su-27 fighters, 23 Su-24 bombers, 20 Su-25 close air support aircraft, and 26 Su-17M fighter-bombers. Transport planes include 1 An-24, 1 Tu-134, and 13 An-26s that can also be used for electronic intelligence purposes. Electronic intelligence is also conducted by 11 Su-24MR aircraft. Rotary-wing forces include 29 Mi-24 attack helicopters, 2 Mi-6AYa C2 helicopters, 26 Mi-6 and 1 Mi-26 heavy transports, and 52 Mi-8 medium transports. Air defences are provided by S-75, S-125, and S-200 systems.

The Uzbekistan border guard service is highly trusted by the Karimov regime, which has provided it with modern weapons and equipment in order to ensure that the country's borders are protecting against infiltration by Islamist radicals and other insurgent groups feared by Karimov. The border guard has established a number of relatively capable and mobile paramilitary units that are designed to engage in low-intensity combat against irregular opponents.

[35] Human Rights Watch, 'Kyrgyzstan/Uzbekistan: governments should open border', 20 July 2010.

They have their own armoured vehicles and helicopters, so they can operate independently of the regular armed forces.

As with most post-Soviet states, the interior ministry has its own paramilitary troops. The force has 20,000 personnel tasked with guarding government facilities and putting down civilian unrest. It also has a commando unit. The National Security Service (NSS) also has an elite commando unit, which is assessed to be a highly capable and well-equipped counter-insurgency force that is descended from a Soviet military intelligence commando unit. The NSS also commands a national guard force with 1000 personnel, who are responsible for protecting top officials and strategic facilities.

For many years, Uzbekistan's defence industry was closely tied to Russian aircraft manufacturing. In the post-Soviet period, the Chkalov Tashkent Aviation Production Association was responsible for assembling Il-76 transport planes, Il-78 aerial refuelling planes, and Il-114 reconnaissance planes in conjunction with Russian design firms and component manufacturers. Due to a variety of technical and financial problems, the plant was unable to fulfil its contracts, eventually forcing the Russian United Aircraft Corporation to shift production of the Il-76 and Il-78 aircraft to Russian factories. Despite entering bankruptcy proceedings in 2010, the Tashkent plant continued to slowly build Il-114 aircraft. However, efforts to further develop cooperation with United Aircraft Corporation ended and the plant is essentially operating on its own at this point.[36] A more successful joint venture model has been pursued by UzRosAvia. This venture, established in 2007, will create a regional service and repair centre for Mi-8, Mi-17, and Mi-24 helicopters.[37] In addition to these joint ventures, the Uzmashprom corporation produces small arms, such as the AK-74M assault rifle and the SVD-7 sniper rifle under Russian license.[38]

According to President Karimov, the key priorities for the country's military development include improving combat readiness and mobility, modernizing equipment, and increasing professionalism among the officer corps. The goal is to decrease the overall size of the force in order to increase available resources for creating and training more mobile units. Heavy armour formations and high-calibre artillery units are being disbanded in favour of lighter infantry units with counter-insurgency and mountain warfare capabilities.[39] New reconnaissance and sniper units are also being created and air force units are being adjusted and trained to provide support for light infantry engaged in counter-insurgency warfare. The remaining heavy infantry

[36] Sharifov, O., 'Мертвая петля для ТАПОиЧ', Fergana.news, 15 Nov. 2010, <http://www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=6798>.

[37] Russian Helicopters Corporation, 'ОАО Вертолеты России и ООО Узросавиа развивают сервисное обслуживание российских вертолетов в центрально-азиатском регионе', Press release, 4 Dec. 2009, <http://www.russianhelicopters.aero/ru/press/news/2749.html>.

[38] Kenzhetaev, M., 'Uzbekistan's military-technical cooperation with foreign states', *Moscow Defense Brief*, no. 4 (2013).

[39] Sevastianov, M., 'Мы располагаем современной армией', *Красная звезда,* 7 Nov. 2012, <http://redstar.ru/index.php/component/k2/item/5675-myi-raspolagaem-sovremennoy-armiey>.

units are considered sufficient to win any potential conflict with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the most likely state-level adversaries. These plans should be considered very much a work in progress, as both re-armament and organizational transformation are proceeding slowly. The military training system, for example, is still based on the Soviet model.[40]

III. Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan faces fewer internal and external threats than most of its Central Asian neighbours. It went through an unexpectedly smooth regime transition after the sudden death of President Niyazov in December 2006.[41] His successor has consolidated power and does not currently face any obvious internal threats. Income from natural gas exports provides enough money to both keep the country functioning and provide patronage to key members of the elite in order to prevent defections.[42]

The only serious external source of tension is the maritime border dispute with Azerbaijan, which has in the past led to minor naval skirmishes, most recently in June 2012. In recent years, such disputes have generally been followed by discussions about making efforts to reach a settlement through international mediation, which have generally had little impact.[43] The potential for conflict in the Caspian has been one of the factors encouraging the government to strengthen its naval capabilities.

Threats from external militant groups are less of a factor than elsewhere in the region. The sole known incident involved a major gun battle on the outskirts of Ashgabat in September 2008 that involved various security agencies, which used grenade launchers and armoured vehicles against the gunmen. Various sources declared the opponents to be radical Islamic groups, drug traffickers, or organized criminal groups engaged in gas siphoning.[44] No further attacks of this type have been reported and over time the theory that this was a confrontation with regular criminal groups has come to the forefront. Narcotics smuggling is certainly widespread in the country, but the likely involvement of senior government officials means that it is unlikely to lead to violent conflict or that an effort to stamp it out is likely to be undertaken by the country's security agencies.[45]

[40] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 4.

[41] Except when otherwise cited, information in this section is taken from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2013*, pp. 237–38 and 'Russia and the CIS, Turkmenistan', *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment.*

[42] Horak, S., 'Turkmenistan's shifting energy geopolitics in 2009-2011: European perspectives', *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 59, no. 2 (Mar. 2012), pp. 18–is a30.

[43] Abbasov, S., 'Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan: renewing Caspian Sea energy dispute', Eurasianet.org, 11 July 2012, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65646>.

[44] Frost, J., 'The Battle of Ashgabat', *Columbia Journalism Review*, 19 Sep. 2008, <http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/the_battle_of_ashgabat.php>.

[45] Peyrouse, S., *Turkmenistan: Strategies of Power, Dilemmas of Development* (M. E. Sharpe: Armonk, NY, 2011), p. 208.

Despite a recent willingness to spend money to acquire modern weaponry, Turkmenistan's armed forces are considered among the weakest in the region. The weakness is primarily the result of unwillingness on the part of the government to spend money on personnel training and equipment maintenance, with the priority instead being placed on the acquisition of modern weapons that largely remain unused due to a lack of qualified personnel able to operate the new equipment.[46] The military is also struggling with corruption, hazing, and drug problems among its conscripts. These problems are both a cause and consequences of the government shifting primary responsibility for national security to domestic security services, which are focused on combating internal dissent rather than protecting the country against external threats. As a result, military budgets have remained insufficient to finance regular functioning. The 2012 defence budget is estimated to be about $210 million, with another $70 million spent on other security services. The military's lack of training is further exacerbated by the country's refusal to join any regional security arrangements. Some sources believe that the main purpose of the military is to engage in showy military parades, rather than to defend the country.[47]

The total strength of the armed forces is estimated to be between 22 000 and 30 000 personnel, with 18 000–24 000 in the army, 3000–4000 in the air force, and under 1000 in the recently reconstituted navy. This force level is comparable to Switzerland or Norway, though the equipment and level of training is of course much lower. The army consists of three active motor rifle divisions, an air assault battalion, 2 surface-to-air missile brigades, a surface-to-surface missile brigade, an artillery brigade, an MRL regiment, and an anti-tank regiment. The troops are located at three bases on the country's southern border with Iran and Afghanistan. While the army has not undertaken any operations since Turkmenistan's independence and conducts relatively few training exercises, soldiers are regularly delegated to perform economic tasks such as serving as traffic police, road building, and even farming. Command is also weak, with the vast majority of officers being selected through personal connections and bribery rather than individual ability. As a result, the extent to which officers would be willing or capable to lead troops into danger in the event of a conflict is suspect.[48]

As with the other Central Asian militaries, the army's equipment consists primarily of around 700 Soviet-era T-72 tanks, over 850 BMP infantry fighting vehicles and 829 BTR armoured personnel carriers, although some reports indicate that only 10 per cent of these vehicles are operable.[49] Artillery includes 40 Gvozdika and 16 Akatsiia self-propelled guns, 65 Grad and 60 Uragan multiple rocket launcher systems, and 40 Osa and 13 Strela surface-to-air missiles. Newer equipment, including 10 T-90 tanks and

[46] US Embassy officials, interviews with author, Ashgabat, Nov. 2010.

[47] US Embassy officials (note 46).

[48] 'Turkmenistan rearms', Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 9 July 2010, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/turkmenistan-rearms>.

[49] 'Turkmenistan rearms' (note 48).

6 Smerch multiple rocket launcher systems have been purchased in recent years from Russia in small quantities.[50]

The air force is constituted as a defensive force meant to provide air cover to the ground forces in the event of an armed conflict. In theory, it also has the mission of patrolling the Caspian Sea, though this mission is not carried out due to a lack of assets appropriate for a maritime patrol mission.[51] It inherited a great deal of older Soviet aircraft. The government has neither the money nor the technical expertise to maintain the stock of equipment it inherited from the Soviet Union. The lack of any kind of modern command and control or communications capability means that the aircraft that remain serviceable do not truly have an integrated fighting capability. Annual flying hours for the few remaining qualified pilots are close to zero. Aircraft in service include 22 MiG-29 fighters, 43 Su-25 close air support aircraft, one An-26 light transport plane, 10 Mi-24 attack helicopters, and 8 Mi-8 utility helicopters. Air defence systems include older Soviet-era S-200 and S-125 systems.

The navy was only re-established as an independent force in the past 2–3 years. Until 2010, it was merely a department within the country's general staff. Theoretically, the navy's missions include defending the country's coastline and offshore energy deposits and ensuring maritime navigation. Until recently, however, none of its boats were capable of leaving their piers. This situation has slowly started to change, as the government has focused on improving naval capabilities through the construction of a base at Turkmenbashi, the procurement of new ships from Russia and Turkey, and the establishment of an institute for training naval officers. Ships in service currently include 5 Grif class and 2 Sobol class patrol boats, 4 Kalkan class inshore patrol boats, and a former US Coast Guard cutter, all inherited from the State Board Service. These boats are used to conduct daily patrols, though these boats do not go beyond sight of land.[52] Recently, the navy purchased two Molniya class (upgraded Tarantul) corvettes from Russia and two patrol craft from Turkey, the first step of a planned upgrade in capabilities that has the goal of making Turkmenistan's navy competitive with other Caspian powers, and especially with Azerbaijan.

The primary task of Turkmenistan's 12,000-strong border guard is to counter the flow of illegal drugs into the country. The force is considered highly corrupt and ineffective, with a high likelihood that both its leaders and personnel are themselves involved in cross-border smuggling operations. Such smuggling was officially tolerated during the Niyazov presidency as a way of providing patronage to senior officials in the security forces; there have not been indications of changes under President Berdymukhammedov. A separate counter-narcotics agency was formed in 2008 to improve the situation, though it does not appear to have made a significant impact. In addition to corruption

[50] SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>.
[51] US Embassy officials (note 46).
[52] US Embassy officials (note 46).

problems, the border guard does not have the manpower and surveillance equipment to effectively observe and patrol the entire border.

The country's other security forces are under the direct control of the president and his high-level State Anti-terrorism Commission. The National Security Service (NSS) is the direct descendant of the Soviet-era KGB. In addition to conducting intelligence and counter-intelligence operations, the NSS controls the country's communications infrastructure. The Presidential Security Service has 2,000 personnel tasked with both physical protection of the president and with maintaining the security of the regime. It also has responsibility for maintaining the physical security of key military and civil infrastructure. The Aliens' Registration Service is tasked with monitoring all foreign nationals on the country's territory.

Turkmenistan is the only country in the region that did not inherit any Soviet military production facilities. President Niyazov reportedly sought to build a plant to produce personal weapons and repair facilities for a wide range of Soviet armaments, including tanks and armoured vehicles, combat aircraft, and ships. However, none of these plans had amounted to anything by the time of Niyazov's passing in 2006. His successor has not sought to develop indigenous military production capabilities, preferring instead to use the country's newfound energy revenues to purchase weapons systems from abroad.[53]

In terms of future planning, President Berdymukhammedov has made military reform a central aspect of his policy platform. In 2010, the government adopted a five-year military modernization programme. Although the text has not been published, reports indicate that it is focused almost entirely on rearmament, rather than needed structural reforms.[54] Despite the procurement of more modern armaments, without such reforms the Turkmenistani military will remain primarily a show force that can look impressive in military parades without much improvement in capabilities to defend the state.

IV. Kyrgyzstan

Internal instability is the greatest threat to Kyrgyzstan.[55] The violent overthrow of two successive governments has created a danger that popular uprisings could become the norm for challenges to state authority. In fact, there have been several unsuccessful popular uprisings, both against the Bakiyev regime in 2006-07 and against the current government in the last year. The deadly ethnic riots that engulfed Osh in 2010 highlighted divisions between northern and southern Kyrgyz leaders, which in turn showed the limits of government

[53] 'Russia and the CIS, Turkmenistan', *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment.*

[54] 'Turkmenistan draws up army, navy modernization plan', BBC Monitoring International Reports, 23 Jan. 2010; and 'Turkmenistan rearms' (note 48).

[55] Except when otherwise cited, information in this section is taken from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2013*, pp. 222–23 and 'Russia and the CIS, Kyrgyzstan', *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment.*

authority in southern Kyrgyzstan. A subsequent international commission report on the causes of the riots showed that security forces were complicit in the violence while the government itself failed to provide security to the region.[56] The Kyrgyzstan government blamed the Uzbek minority and Kyrgyz groups loyal to the ousted Bakiyev regime.[57] Regardless of who the specific instigators were, these events highlighted the potential danger of the country's disintegration into a failed state with different regions controlled by rival warring factions.

Kyrgyzstan is also threatened by the potential of infiltration by external insurgent groups and terrorist attacks by local Islamic radicals. IMU infiltrations occurred in 1999, 2000 and possibly 2006.[58] Although this group was almost completely destroyed during the conflict in Afghanistan, members of an offshoot group that claimed responsibility for a suicide attack in nearby Uzbekistan were killed in Osh in 2009 by security forces. In addition, a local terrorist group called the Jamaat Kyrgyzstan Jaish al-Mahdi (Kyrgyz Army of the Righteous Ruler), 'bombed a synagogue and sports facility and attempted to bomb a police station in late 2010, and killed three policemen in early 2011. The group also allegedly planned to attack the US embassy and US military Manas transit centre'.[59]

The Kyrgyzstan Government feels greatly threatened by the possibility of infiltration by Taliban or other religious extremists coming out of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of international forces in 2014. The country's National Security Concept, adopted in July 2012, states:

> A serious threat to security throughout the region is posed by the complex military political situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where terrorism and religious extremism have concentrated their main ideological and combatant forces…. In the contemporary context, especially following the 2014 US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, this will create real conditions for emissaries and militants of these organizations to move in and fuel terrorist and extremist manifestations in Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan.[60]

It also casts Afghanistan as the cause of the region's emergence as a major corridor for the smuggling of narcotics.[61]

[56] Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry Into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010*, May 2011, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf>.

[57] International Crisis Group, 'Kyrgyzstan: widening ethnic divisions in the south', Asia Report no. 222, 29 Mar. 2012, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/kyrgyzstan/222-kyrgyzstan-widening-ethnic-divisions-in-the-south.aspx>.

[58] Pylenko, Z., 'IMU accused of attack on Tajik, Kyrgyz border posts', *CACI Analyst*, 17 May 2006, <http://cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/10871-field-reports-caci-analyst-2006-5-17-art-10871.html>.

[59] Nichol (note 12), p. 19.

[60] McDermott (note 4), p. 15.

[61] McDermott (note 4).

Finally, Kyrgyzstan has a difficult relationship with Uzbekistan, caused by conflicts over energy and water supplies and tensions over the role of Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks in promoting opposition to the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan. The latter set of tensions has been heightened by repeated instances of Uzbekistani security services entering Kyrgyzstan to apprehend or kill individuals wanted by the Uzbekistani government. There are also border disputes with both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which have led to low-level incidents along both borders between both state agents and local inhabitants on both sides.

The Kyrgyzstani armed forces are relatively weak, with gaps in command and control, training, and discipline. Total spending on military and security services is just over $100 million, with about half of that amount allocated to the Defence Ministry. The violent events that occurred in Bishkek and Osh in 2010 demonstrated that the military is not capable of carrying out counter-insurgency or violence containment operations. Morale is low, and a lack of funding means that the country is dependent on external assistance for equipment and training. In the aftermath of the 2010 outbreaks of violence, the government initiated reforms in inter-service and inter-agency coordination so as to subordinate all military and security forces to the Ministry of Defence in the event of a future conflict.

The army's total strength is 8500 personnel, comparable to Lithuania or Macedonia among European states. Ground forces units include a newly formed infantry division, two infantry brigades, a mountain infantry brigade, an artillery brigade, an air defence brigade, and a special operations brigade. Two new mountain battalions and a new tank battalion are in the process of formation as part of reforms undertaken after the 2010 events. The reforms have also led to a gradual shift to a focus on low-intensity mountain warfare, rather than the frontal conventional war approach inherited from the Soviet Union. The lack of airlift and air support capabilities limits the military's ability to successfully prosecute such a strategy, highlighting the country's dependence on assistance from Russian forces in the event of an emergency. Army equipment includes 150 T-72 battle tanks, over 300 BMP-1 and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, 35 BTR-70 and BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers, and 30 BRDM-2 reconnaissance vehicles. Artillery includes 18 Gvozdika and 12 Nona SAM units. The ground forces also have 26 Maliutka, 24 Fagot, and 12 Konkurs anti-tank missile systems, 15 Grad and 6 Uragan MRL systems, and an unknown number of Strela and Igla man-portable SAMs.

The air force is considered one of the weakest and smallest in Central Asia, with most planes not operational and poor training for pilots and other personnel. Given limited resources, the country's leadership has chosen to refrain from upgrading the air force's capabilities. Instead, in the event of a crisis it hopes to receive assistance from Russian air forces based at Kant. Total personnel are variously estimated at either 2400 or 4000. Equipment in service consists of 4 L-39 training aircraft (out of 100 total units) and 3 An-26

transport planes. The 29 MiG-21 fighter jets are not operable at the present time. The country's large number of helicopters are also largely out of service, though 2 Mi-24 attack helicopters and 8 Mi-8 utility helicopters are operational. Seven of the Mi-8 helicopters were recently upgraded in Russia and are now equipped with new avionics, targeting systems, and night vision equipment, given them the ability to operate in difficult weather conditions and in mountain terrain. Air defence systems include an unknown number of quite old S-75 systems.

Kyrgyzstan's border guard relies on 5000 poorly trained conscripts to guard a long and complex border. Its main missions are to interdict movements of insurgents and drug traffickers. Its funding and equipment are inadequate to fulfil these tasks, though its officers receive training at Russian staff colleges. The lack of an indigenous helicopter capability is particularly problematic, given the country's mountainous terrain. When available, air force helicopters are used to transport border guard troops. The lack of equipment is only part of the problem facing the border guard, with official and local corruption, lack of cross-national cooperation, and inability to maintain donated technology al contributing to ineffective border policing.[62]

Other security services include a 4000-strong paramilitary force under the interior ministry's command that is used for riot control, counter-insurgency operations, and counter-terrorism. This force includes the special Scorpion unit dedicated to counter-terrorism operations and assigned to both CSTO and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) joint forces.

The leadership of Kyrgyzstan's armed forces believes that their weakness endangers the country's future integrity. As with other military forces in the region, the main goal is to produce significant improvements in readiness and mobility in order to allow the military and security forces to respond to sudden events both on the country's borders and internally. In a 2011 interview with a Russian newspaper, the defence minister noted that the armed forces sought to 'strengthen military security in the country's South and establish a reliable defensive screen against religious extremism and international terrorists there'. To accomplish these goals, the military established a new Southwestern Regional Command and stationed a newly formed motorized infantry division and a tank battalion in Osh. It also established a mountain rifle battalion at a newly built facility in Batken Oblast and transferred another mountain rifle battalion to Jalal-Abad oblast. An air defence brigade, equipped with S-75 missile systems, has also been deployed to Osh. The country's northern borders were also strengthened, with the re-establishment of the Panfilov infantry division in Tokmok and the formation of a reconnaissance battalion in that region. The border guard was also strengthened in order to prevent infiltration of insurgent groups from abroad.[63]

[62] Gavrilis, G., *The Dynamics of Interstate Boundaries* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2008), pp. 135–65.

[63] Sevastyanov, M., 'На южных границах', *Красная звезда*, 8 July 2011.

Future plans are mostly focused on greater professionalization, with the defence minister calling for the gradual transition to a fully professionally staffed armed forces. At present, contract soldiers account for over 70 per cent of army personnel, including 90 per cent in units stationed in the country's more unstable southern provinces. while their number reaches nearly 90 per cent in all the formations and units in the country's south. Conscript soldiers are no longer being assigned to combat roles.[64]

Junior officer training is carried out at the Higher Military Institute and at military faculties at three state universities. Officers are also trained at a special training centre that opened in 2005 and at a Centre for Advancement within the Defence Ministry, which was set up in 2007 to provide one-month training courses for senior officers.[65] The most qualified candidates are also sent for training abroad, in Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Turkey the USA, and other countries. Plans are in place to improve combat training, including monthly tactical drills and annual command and staff exercises. Such training is focused on operations in mountainous areas, planning and carrying out counter-terrorism operations, and improving logistical support operations.[66]

The country's legacy defence industry makes a number of products that are useful for export but not needed for domestic forces. The most important facility is the Dastan plant that builds the VA-111 Shkval rocket torpedo, as well as proximity fuses and guidance and homing systems that are used by the Russian Navy. The plant, located in Bishkek, has in the past produced as many as 400 torpedoes per year, though annual production in recent years has dropped to no more than 40 and the plant is reputed to be in dire need of modernization. The torpedoes have been exported to Russia, India, and China. The Dastan corporation also controls a torpedo testing site on Lake Issyk-Kul.[67] The ownership of this plant has been contested for several years, with Russian efforts to take control of the plant in 2009 stymied as a result of corrupt activities on the part of relatives of then-President Bakiyev.[68] In recent months, the two countries have renewed efforts to conclude a deal. The Kyrgyzstan government has taken control of the plant and is planning to put it up for auction by the end of 2013, with all indications that Russian investors will be favoured.[69] Regardless of the eventual outcome of this sale, it is clear that torpedoes will not be needed to equip the armed forces of a landlocked country such as Kyrgyzstan. The plant will therefore continue to subsist on export sales.

[64] Sidorov, S., 'Kyrgyz Defense Minister outlines army reform priorities, future plans', *V Kontse Nedeli,* 22 Apr. 2011, Open Source Center CEP20110501950043.

[65] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 5.

[66] Sidorov (note 64).

[67] 'Дастан - единственный завод, выпускающий торпеды', *De Facto*, 13 Dec. 2011, <http://www.gezitter.org/economics/7417_dastan_-_edinstvennyiy_zavod_vyipuskayuschiy_torpedyi>.

[68] 'Россия получит в счет долга завод по производству торпед в Киргизии', Vesti.kz, 8 July 2010, <http://vesti.kz/polit/56895/>.

[69] Kucera, J., 'Kyrgyzstan readies torpedo plant for sale to Russia', *Bug Pit*, 19 Sep. 2013, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67523>.

The government has, in recent years, sought to develop defence companies that would produce equipment that could be used by local forces. In December 2009, the government created a new enterprise called Kyrgyzkural, under the auspices of the Defence Ministry. It is expected to provide the country's military units with arms and hardware. One of its first projects is a joint venture with Kazakhstan's Technoexport company, signed in May 2011, to build a facility in Balykchy to upgrade Soviet-era armoured vehicles and tanks.[70] Kyrgyzstan has two other privately-owned defence plants, both located in Bishkek. The Ainur company produces cartridge cases for infantry weapons at the Bishkek Stamping Works, while Zhanar, a former maker of computer equipment for military aircraft, now makes radar beam and magnetometric sensors for alarm systems used in border protection.[71]

Re-armament plans are limited by the country's poor financial situation. Although the military's three key priorities are strengthening its special forces, developing a ground attack capability for the air force, and establishing a functional air defence system, the limited budgets available mean that some of these goals cannot be achieved even if the needed equipment is provided through foreign assistance. For example, the defence minister has noted that the armed forces cannot afford the cost of operating fixed-wing aircraft and therefore will not seek to acquire any or to modernize its existing fleet of grounded MiG-21s.[72] They are hoping to increase the number of transport and utility helicopters in service, possibly by acquiring new ones through military assistance programmes, as well as by modernizing existing armoured vehicles through a joint venture with Kazakhstan. Both types of equipment are needed to increase mobility and improve the military's effectiveness in mountainous terrain. Air defence systems will be acquired through military assistance programmes, most likely through the donation of S-125 systems that Russia no longer needs. In addition, Kyrgyzstan is hoping to procure wireless mobile communication systems and logistical equipment, in part from domestic producers.[73]

V. Tajikistan

In many ways, Tajikistan is still recovering from the civil war that tore the country apart from 1992–97.[74] It remains deeply divided along regional lines. Its ability to defend itself from external threats is limited by a dearth of resources; it is the poorest country in the region. After more than a decade of

[70] Kucera, J., 'Kyrgyzstan to upgrade its tanks with Kazakhstan's support', *Bug Pit*, 21 Apr. 2011, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/63348>.

[71] Paramonov, V. and Stolpovski, O., 'Russia and Central Asia: bilateral cooperation in the defence sector', Advanced Research and Assessment Group Central Asian Series No. 08/15E (May 2008), p. 9.

[72] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71).

[73] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71).

[74] Except when otherwise cited, information in this section is taken from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2013*, p. 237; and 'Russia and the CIS, Tajikistan', *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*.

relative peace and stability, Tajikistan has become significantly less stable over the last five years. A number of militant attacks took place in the Rasht Valley in the eastern part of the country in 2010–11. A new round of violence occurred in the Badakhshan region in the summer of 2012.[75] The conflict is the result of a complicated mix of conflicts over control of narcotics trafficking routes, the settling of scores left over from the country's civil war, and the return to the region of militants possibly connected to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).[76] The Badakhshan violence was linked to both discontent among the local Pamiri population about their exclusion from power and government jobs and to narcotics trafficking.[77] The drug traffickers, in turn, are connected to groups in Afghanistan that government sources claim have ties to the Taliban. The Tajikistan government has attempted to pin the blame for all these violent incidents solely on Islamic radicals tied to the IMU, though concrete evidence of such ties remains elusive. Although there has been little evidence of IMU attacks in recent years, the government clearly feels threatened by the potential of a resurgence of violent radical Islamic groups, particularly as a potential set of challengers to the Rakhmon regime.

In addition to the threat from local insurgent groups and the potential for the return of the IMU, Tajikistan faces a serious threat from drug trafficking. A significant percentage of Afghanistan's massive opium crop passes through the country on its way to Russia and Europe. Tajikistan's security forces have largely proven ineffective at interdicting this illegal trade, which has corrupted state institutions and strained the country's already limited health care system.[78]

Tajikistan has also had strained relations with some of its neighbours. Border disputes with Kyrgyzstan have led to occasional shooting incidents and border closures. The dispute with Uzbekistan is far more serious and long-lasting, as it concerns the existential issue of water and energy use. Tajikistan is dependent on Uzbekistan for its energy needs, while Uzbekistan requires water from rivers that flow from Tajikistan for its cotton industry. The long-planned construction of a new hydroelectric dam at Rogun would eliminate Tajikistan's dependence on Uzbek natural gas, but Uzbekistan claims that the resultant water shortages would devastate its crops. Uzbekistan has on occasion closed its border with Tajikistan to commercial and private traffic in retaliation for the latter's water plans. While the potential for an inter-state

[75] 'Tajikistan: President to head east as battle for Badakhshan control continues', Eurasianet.org, 14 Sep. 2012.

[76] International Crisis Group, 'Tajikistan: the changing insurgent threats', Asia Report No. 205, 24 May 2011, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/tajikistan/205-tajikistan-the-changing-insurgent-threats.aspx>.

[77] Ismail-Beben, Z., 'Framing the conflict in Khorog', *Registan*, 27 July 2012, <http://registan.net/2012/07/27/framing-the-conflict-in-khorog/>.

[78] Nichol, J., *Tajikistan: Recent Developments and US Interests*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, 31 Aug. 2012, p. 6.

conflict between the two neighbours is not high, it cannot be completely excluded.[79]

Tajikistan is the only Central Asian state that did not build its military from equipment left behind by the Soviets. A guerrilla-style military was established during the civil war. This force was subsequently transformed into a regular standing military, with motorized infantry brigades and a rudimentary air force. In recent years, the military has sought to increase its mobility by establishing airborne and mountain infantry units. At the same time, budgets remain inadequate and the country is highly dependent on the presence of Russian forces for its security. Total spending on military and security services is estimated at $164 million, with two-thirds of that amount allocated to the defence ministry proper and the rest going to the interior ministry and other security agencies. The Tajikistani military continues to suffer from integration problems stemming from the decision to merge the armed forces of the civil war's opposing sides into the military. Pamiri groups complain of systematic exclusion from both the armed forces and the country's other security forces, leading to tension that has at times turned violent.[80]

The army has about 7000 personnel, comparable to Slovenia, divided into 2 infantry brigades, 1 artillery brigade, and the separate Mobile Forces airborne and mountain infantry units. Equipment consists of 30 T-72 and 7 T-62 tanks, 23 BMP-1 and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, 23 Soviet-made armoured personnel carriers of various types, and a few Soviet-made howitzers and mortars. Three Grad MRL systems remain in service, while air defence is provided by S-75 and S-125 systems and Strela-2 MANPADS.

The country's token air forces are divided among various ministries and agencies. One cohesive unit is reported to be under the control of the interior ministry section responsible for riot control and counter-insurgency. Forty per cent of this unit's forces were lost in a helicopter crash during the fighting in Rasht in October 2010. According to interviews with Western officials in the region, the unit only had 32 troops left after the crash.[81] Tajikistan's air forces have only a few hundred personnel with 4 Mi-24, 8 Mi-8 and 1 Mi-17TM helicopters. These are in relatively poor condition and primarily used for search and rescue operations in mountainous areas, though some reports indicate that missions have been undertaken against militant groups. Tajikistani air space is patrolled by Russian air force units operating out of Kant, Kyrgyzstan.

Tajikistan's security forces include the border guards and various paramilitary forces reporting to the interior ministry. The 20 000-strong border guards have only had sole authority over the country's borders since 2005, when Russian border guard forces withdrew from the country. Their focus has been almost entirely on preventing drug trafficking across the border from

[79] Juraev, S., 'Central Asia's Cold War? Water and politics in Uzbek–Tajik relations', PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo no. 217, Sep. 2012.

[80] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 7.

[81] International Crisis Group (note 76).

Afghanistan. Due to a lack of funding, poor training and equipment, and endemic corruption, the border guard seizes only around 3–6 per cent of narcotics coming into the country. As a result of endemic corruption, the Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has ceased to provide sophisticated equipment to the border guard, due to repeated instances of such material being sold to private interests in Afghanistan.[82] Its weakness has led to the establishment of a separate Drug Control Agency, funded and controlled by the United Nations to deal directly with narcotics smuggling without being subject to local interests. This initiative has not been particularly successful in reducing narcotics smuggling, though it has allowed some officials involved in the drug trade to remove rivals.[83]

In recent years, infiltration of the country by militants has led to clashes at the border that has led to casualties among border guard personnel. Although their positioning on the country's borders has involved them in this conflict, paramilitary forces have generally taken the lead in fighting against militants. These paramilitary forces include the 1200-strong National Guard, dedicated to guarding the President and securing the longevity of his regime. In recent years, they have led the fight against warlords in remote regions of Tajikistan, such as the Rasht Valley region. The interior ministry's First Special Operations Brigade is considered the most capable military unit in the country, with 200–300 personnel trained and equipped for rapid deployment and high-intensity warfare. Most unit members have graduated from the Russian airborne college in Ryazan. The brigade consists of four light infantry battalions armed with tanks and armoured vehicles, with support provided by an attack helicopter unit. A second special forces unit is controlled by the State Security Committee, the government's intelligence service. It specializes in counter-insurgency operations and has also been involved in the recent fighting in the Rasht Valley region.

Tajikistan has virtually no domestic defence industry. Its few Soviet-era military plants, located in the northern part of the country, were involved primarily in the processing and enrichment of locally mined uranium for the Soviet nuclear industry. The Vostokredmet plant in Chkalovsk, the successor to the Soviet-era Leninabad Mining and Chemical Combine, resumed uranium processing in 2009, supposedly from Chinese sources.[84] In nearby Istiklal, the Zaria Vostoka plant was involved in producing fuel for missiles. After almost two decades in mothballs, the plant has recently concluded an agreement with a Russian company to resume production of unspecified military components.[85] Given their nature, neither of these plants can be useful for producing weapons or equipment for Tajikistan's military.

[82] International Crisis Group (note 76).

[83] 'Addicted', *The Economist*, 21 Apr. 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21553092>.

[84] 'Производственное Объединение Востокредмет', <http://www.tajik-gateway.org/index.phtml?lang=ru&id=4186>; and 'Таджикистан возобновляет переработку урана', *Izvestiia*, 14 June 2009, <http://izvestia.ru/news/452589>.

[85] 'Россия намерена восстановить работу оборонного завода в Таджикистане', *Rosbalt*, 4 Mar. 2013, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/exussr/2013/03/04/1101572.html>.

Looking toward the future, Tajikistan is hoping to develop its military through the acquisition of new and modern weapons and equipment, without increasing the size of the force. Given the state's financial problems, this emphasis requires foreign assistance. Although Russia remains the country's primary security partner and equipment donor, Tajikistan has been willing to take assistance from a broad range of foreign actors, including the USA, China, India, and several European states. It has also engaged with all major regional organizations, such as the CSTO, SCO, and NATO. Beyond access to bases, the main security interest of most outside actors vis-à-vis Tajikistan remains limited to maintaining internal stability and ensuring narcotics interdiction. Assistance is likely to be limited to equipment relevant for these tasks. Given its lack of resources and the limited nature of potential assistance, the capabilities of Tajikistan's military and security forces are likely to remain quite constrained for the foreseeable future.

VI. Overall trends in Central Asian military and security force capabilities

In recent years, all Central Asian governments have increased spending on their military and security forces (see table 2.1). This increase has been most pronounced in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The use of this additional financing has varied by country. Kazakhstan has spent primarily on equipment, including both purchases of new armaments and modernization of existing equipment. Uzbekistan has spent primarily on officer salaries and improving conditions for conscripts, in order to ensure their loyalty. Given the differences in the size of each country's economy, the strain defence spending puts on national budgets varies a great deal. One report shows that in terms of defence spending as a percentage of each country's gross domestic product (GDP), Uzbekistan is the highest in the region, spending 3.5 per cent on defence in 2010. Turkmenistan is close, at 3.4 per cent, with Tajikistan at 1.5 per cent. Although Kazakhstan spends the most on defence in absolute terms, the large size of its economy this amounts to only 1.1 per cent of its GDP. Kyrgyzstan spends the least, at only 0.5 per cent of GDP.[86]

The result of this increase in expenditures is a gradual increase in capabilities, although the extent of improvement varies significantly from country to country. While Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan appear to be on their way to building military forces that are relatively capable by developing world standards, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan still have significant problems maintaining even a small rapid reaction force in a high state of readiness. Turkmenistan remains an odd case, with the wealth to develop a serious military force but without the human resources to develop a strategic plan for creating a military that meets its security needs.

[86] 'Uzbekistan: where conscripts are eager to serve', Eurasianet.org, 16 May 2012.

Table 2.1. Annual defence spending in Central Asian states, 2004–12

Figures are in US$ millions.

State	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Kazakhstan	2 270	1 770	1 120	948	1 610	1 183	648	458	357
Kyrgyzstan	105	102	96	44	46	41	36	73	64
Tajikistan	164	146	84	88	79	87	72	50	45
Turkmenistan	. .	210	261	250	84	209	183	173	165
Uzbekistan	. .	1 420	1 420	1 240	n/a	94	84	55	54

Source: IISS, *Military Balance*, 2005–13.

Of course, defence spending is only one part of the equation when it comes to discussing Central Asian armed forces. Given local leaders' concerns with threats such as terrorism, internal political opposition, and popular protests, it is not surprising that many of the states devote significant resources to internal security services. In most of the Central Asian states, serving in the police force and various security services is far more prestigious and lucrative than serving in the military proper. This situation is primarily the result of greater opportunities for corrupt activities in these services. For most security officers, the ability to collect bribes provides a steady source of income. Officers in services connected to border control also benefit from revenue streams tied to drug trafficking.[87]

The relationship between security forces and governing elites varies from state to state in the region. In the poorer countries, security forces tended to fragment, leading to civil war in Tajikistan in the 1990s and continuing limits on the state's ability to exercise control over remote regions in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In the other three relatively resource-rich countries, security forces were more closely tied to the state. This was particularly the case in Uzbekistan, whose resources were of a type that required state investment, a circumstance that promoted dependence on the regime for both local elites and members of the security apparatus.[88]

The division of labour between the military and security services in Central Asia is similar to that elsewhere in the world. While the military is focused primarily on repelling external threats, security services cover internal ones. Given the perceived risk throughout the region of internal unrest and the fear of terrorist acts carried out by radical Islamist forces, it is not surprising that security forces have higher status and attract more resources. Unfortunately, the more sensitive nature of their role means that information about their capabilities is much scarcer to find.

[87] Marat, E., 'Kyrgyzstan's fragmented police and armed forces', *Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies*, vol. 11 (2010).

[88] Markowitz, L. P., 'Unlootable resources and state security institutions in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 44, no. 2 (2011), pp. 156–83.

3. Assistance from Russia and former Soviet states

Russia seeks to maintain a dominant role in Central Asia. It is relatively suspicious of outside powers, and especially the USA. Russian leaders believe that influence in the region is a zero-sum game, in part because of their interpretation of US interests in the region. They believe that the USA has itself been playing a zero-sum game through its efforts to build energy corridors that bypass Russia, its promotion of coloured revolutions that have replaced pro-Russian leaders with ones that lean toward the West, and its efforts to establish military bases in the region.

Russia has been the primary source for military equipment and training for Central Asian states since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Because the Central Asian states are in large part Soviet legacy forces, stocked with Soviet equipment and still largely following Soviet doctrine, military personnel are familiar with Russian equipment and with Russian training methods. For the first ten years or so after independence, the Central Asian states felt that this leftover hardware was sufficient for their needs, especially since their poor economic situations made the purchase of new equipment virtually impossible. When they began to feel the need to acquire more modern equipment in the last decade, Russian weapons were most familiar, easiest to acquire, and technically compatible with existing Soviet-made equipment. It also helped that as members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), most Central Asian states could pay the lower Russian prices for defence equipment.[89] Russian defence industry needed exports to continue to function and found Central Asian states to be willing customers. Russia also has developed an extensive programme of military training and exercises with Central Asian armed forces, primarily through the CSTO.

I. Equipment sales and donations

Kazakhstan

For years, Russia has been the main supplier of military equipment to the Kazakhstan military. Early deals were primarily focused on aircraft. In the late 1990s, Russia provided Kazakhstan with 14 Su-25 ground attack aircraft, 14 Su-27 fighter aircraft, 12 MiG-29 fighter aircraft, and 13 L-39 trainer aircraft, as part of a deal that included Kazakhstan giving up its nuclear arsenal and strategic bombers.[90] Kazakhstan began to purchase Russian military hardware soon thereafter, with deals for an Il-76M transport airplane

[89] Likhachev, M., 'Где закупает оружие член ОДКБ Казахстан?', Newskaz.ru, 6. Jun 2013, <http://newskaz.ru/comment/20130606/5175238.html>.

[90] Thomsen, D., 'Defenders of the Great Steppe', *Air Forces Monthly*, May 2010.

and an S-300P air defence battery armed with 36 surface-to-air missiles concluded in 1998.[91]

In subsequent years, the focus shifted to helicopters and armoured vehicles. Between 2004 and 2011, Kazakhstan acquired a total of 30 Mi-17 and Mi-17V5 helicopters for use in counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics operations, as well as two light multi-purpose ANSAT helicopters.[92] Many of these helicopters were equipped with European electronics, such as the Titan 385ES multi-sensor turret system manufactured by the British-Italian Selex Electronic Systems.[93] In addition to purchasing new helicopters, its existing Mi-24 attack helicopters were upgraded to the Mi-24PN configuration that enabled them to operate at night and in bad weather conditions.[94]

Russia supplied several types of armoured vehicles to Kazakhstan in the mid-2000s. These included 14 BTR-80A infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) and at least 25 BMP-97 armoured vehicles for the border guard.[95] A second contract led to the import of an additional 70 to 80 BTR-80A IFVs.[96] Whereas Kazakhstan has recently sought to shift its procurement to European suppliers in aircraft and helicopters, it appears to be committed to Russian-made platforms for its ground forces. In the last 2 to 3 years, Kazakhstan has made significant additional purchases of Russian armoured vehicles, including a total of 190 BTR-82A IFVs procured through 2 contracts signed in 2010 and 2012. The first set were delivered in 2011–12, while the second batch of 90 is to be delivered in 2013–14.[97] Kazakhstan also became the first foreign purchaser of BMPT tank support fighting vehicles. An initial test party of three was received in 2011.[98] After these performed satisfactorily, Kazakhstan agreed to further purchases. A contract for nine additional vehicles was signed in 2012, with deliveries of three a year starting in 2013. Additional units are likely to be purchased in the future to bring the total number to 30. In 2011, the ground forces also received a test party of three TOS-1 Buratino units, which is a multiple rocket launcher armed with thermobaric rockets and mounted on a T-72 tank chassis. Discussions are still underway on whether

[91] SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[92] 'Kazan Helicopter Plant Wins $100M Kazakhstan Contract', *Moscow Times,* 8 Sep. 2004; Nikolskii, A., 'Нефтедоллары за оружие', *Vedomosti,* 14 Aug. 2007; 'Россия готовит в Казахстан и Лаос четыре вертолета Ансат', *Oruzhie Rossii,* 26 May 2009; and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[93] Selex S&AS, 'New Titan EO Turret order for Russia heralds another export first for SELEX S&AS', Press release, 10 Oct. 2007.

[94] Novichkov, N., 'Kazakhstan air force receives upgraded Mi-24Vs', *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 23 Nov. 2005.

[95] 'Итоги военно-технического сотрудничества России с иностранными государствами в 2009 году', *Eksport Vooruzheniia* (Nov.–Dec. 2009), pp. 2–16; 'Основные события в области ВТС России и новых независимых государств в сентябре -- октябре 2008 года', *Экспорт Вооружений* (Sep.–Oct. 2008), pp. 72–74; and Barabanov, M., 'Рыночные перспективы Российской легкой бронетехники', *Eksport Vooruzheniia* (Sep.–Oct. 2006), pp. 17–23.

[96] Nikolskii, A., 'Нефтедоллары за оружие', *Vedomosti,* 14 Aug. 2007; and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[97] 'Казахстан заказал у России крупную партию БТР-82', *Vzgliad,* 17 Apr. 2012.

[98] 'Россия впервые поставила за рубеж БМПТ, их закупил Казахстан', RIA-Novosti, 25 Oct. 2011.

Kazakhstan will purchase additional units of this weapon.[99] Kazakhstan is also discussing the possibility of buying T-90S tanks and T-72 amphibious tanks from Russia.[100]

In recent years, Kazakhstan has sought to modernize its fleet of combat aircraft. Contracts for the modernization have been signed with plants in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The Russian component of the programme includes the modernization of at least 20 MiG-31 interceptors and at least nine MiG-29 fighters.[101] The MiG-31s were upgraded to the MiG-31BM configuration, 'which includes a new avionics architecture, hands-on throttle and stick controls and color multifunction displays in the cockpit as well as an in-depth modernization of the . . . fire-control radar . . . [to] make the aircraft fully multirole'.[102] Two An-72 transport planes, at least seven Mi-26 and an unknown number of Mi-24V helicopters are being modernized in Russia. There have also been discussions that Kazakhstan's aged an inoperable Su-24 bombers will be modernized at the Novosibirsk Aircraft Production Association, though no contracts have been signed to date.[103] To facilitate further repairs, Kazakhstan and Russia have agreed to establish an aircraft maintenance centre in Kazakhstan.[104]

Other recent aircraft contracts include two Ka-32A11BC rescue helicopters for the Emergency Situations Ministry that may be used for emergency medical situations, rescue operations and fire-fighting. The Emergency Situation Ministry is also considering purchasing some Ka-226T light utility helicopter for medical missions.[105] Kazakhstan has also bought Russian reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) from Irkut corporation. These include one Irkut-2M and 12 Irkut-10 systems.[106] Discussions are also under way to also purchase an unspecified number of Irkut-3 UAVs.[107] Until recently, the Kazakhstani air force was expected to buy 6-12 Yak-130 trainer aircraft. This deal was recently cancelled because officials from the Kazakhstan Ministry of Defence had decided to observe the use of the airplanes in the Russian Air Force before making a commitment.[108]

[99] 'Россия впервые поставила за рубеж БМПТ, их закупил Казахстан', RIA-Novosti, 25 Oct. 2011; Ivan Safronov, 'Терминатор готов послужить Астане', *Kommersant*, 5 May 2012; and 'Kazakhstan signs memorandum to buy nine Russian tank support combat vehicles', Interfax, 5 May 2012.

[100] 'Kazakhstan plans to buy amphibious tanks from Russia', Interfax, 28 Apr. 2011; and 'Kazakhstan may buy Russian modernized tank T-90s', Interfax, 15 Sep. 2011.

[101] 'Russian arms to remain core of Kazakh arsenal', Interfax, 25 Aug. 2007; and 'Производство и модернизация самолетов МиГ в 2011 году', BMPD blog, 22 June 2012, <http://bmpd.livejournal.com/268665.html>.

[102] Johnson, R. F., 'Kazakhstan signs MiG-31 upgrade deal with Russia', *Jane's Defense Weekly,* 12 Sep. 2007.

[103] Thomsen (note 90); and 'Kazakhstan's upgraded military aircraft arrives from Russia', Khabar Television, 27 Nov. 2012, Open Source Center CEP20121205950151.

[104] 'Russia to set up military maintenance centers in Kazakhstan', RIA-Novosti, 4 May 2012.

[105] 'Ka-32A11BC delivered to EMERCOM of Kazakhstan', Rotorhub, 10 May 2012.

[106] 'Казахстан купит партию российских беспилотников', Lenta.ru, 27 Sep. 2012.

[107] 'Russia to present Irkut-3 drone to Kazakh military commanders', Interfax, 21 Jan. 2013.

[108] Safronov, I., 'Як-130 сориентируется на Казахстан', *Kommersant*, 4 May 2012; and 'Kazakh Yak-130 deal abandoned', *Air Forces Monthly*, July 2012.

Russia and Kazakhstan have long been in negotiations to develop a joint air defence system. An agreement to this end was signed in January 2013.[109] As part of such a system, Kazakhstan would receive Russian S-300PS surface-to-air missiles. Since such missiles are no longer being produced in Russia, they would almost certainly not be new. Instead, these would be systems that were previously in use in Russia, where they are in the process of being replaced by more advanced S-400 systems. In 2009-10, numerous news reports indicated that a contract for the transfer of 10 battalions of S-300s had been signed. It appears that these missiles were not transferred at that time and that negotiations continue, with some indications that a contract may be signed in the next year.[110]

Finally, Kazakhstan has initiated some joint ventures with Russian ship designers to upgrade its navy. The most significant of these projects was the Katran missile boat, designed by the Russian Almaz design bureau. Two of these 250 ton boats, built at the Zenit shipyard in Kazakhstan, have been commissioned into the Kazakhstan navy in the last two years, with one more under construction.[111] These boats are designed to navigate in the shallow waters of the northern Caspian and are armed with Kh-35 Uran anti-ship missiles and Igla-1 surface-to-air missiles, both acquired from Russia.[112] The Zenit shipyard has also built a number of types of patrol boats under license from Russian designers for both the navy and the maritime border guard.[113] Future projects may include 500 ton missile corvettes based on the Russian Buyan class. A contract for six such ships was signed in 2008, but it is not clear whether construction has started on the project.[114]

Equipment modernization in Belarus

Two modernization projects were concluded with Belarus. The first was for the modernization of six battalions of S-125 Pechora anti-aircraft missile complexes to the 2T level that features improved guidance and anti-jamming capabilities. The contract was signed in 2005 and completed over the next

[109] ‘Russian defence minister praises new air defence agreement with Kazakhstan’, Interfax, 30 Jan. 2013.

[110] ‘Российские дивизионы ЗРК С-300 будут поставлены в Казахстан поэтапно до 2011 года’, Interfax, 4 Mar. 2009; ‘Kazakhstan’s defense strategies against China’, *Kanwa Asian Defense Review*, Dec. 2010, pp. 30–32; Isby, D., ‘S-300PMU-1 systems for Belarus, Kazakhstan’, *Jane’s Missiles and Rockets*, Sep. 2012; and ‘Казахстан заявил о намерении получить на вооружение системы С-300’, *Vzgliad*, 11 July 2012.

[111] ‘В Казахстане состоялся спуск на воду первого ракетно-артиллерийского корабля, построенного на национальной верфи’, Centre for Analysis of World Arms Trade, 25 Apr. 2012, <http://www.armstrade.org/includes/periodics/news/2012/0425/155012650/detail.shtml>.

[112] Voloshin, G., ‘Kazakhstan continues to upgrade its military presence on the Caspian in the face of growing uncertainty’, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 24 Apr. 2013; and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[113] ‘В Уральске спустили на воду корабль Семсер’, Zona.kz, 10 May 2012, <http://zonakz.net/articles/48080>; and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[114] Gavrilov, Y., ‘Russia pursuing joint warplane, warship production with Ukraine, Kazakhstan’, *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 3 June 2010; and ‘Казахстан приобретет у России шесть малых ракетно-артиллерийских кораблей проекта 21632 Торнадо’, Army.lv, 30 Oct. 2008, <http://army.lv/ru/proekt-21632-tornado/356/14656>.

several years.[115] The second was the modernization of ten Su-27 fighter aircraft to the Su-27M2 standard that includes the Belarusian Satellite-M electronic warfare suite, an Israeli navigation and targeting system, improved radars and a target data link with ground control. The upgrade also included improvements in navigation and avionics systems and a new engine control system. The upgrade also expanded the range of weapons that the planes can use. This project was completed between 2007 and 2010. Belarus has recently offered a further upgrade to these planes with an improved and lighter reconnaissance system.[116]

More recently, the two countries' defence industries have sought to increase cooperation through joint ventures on producing automated control systems and anti-aircraft missile and electronic warfare complexes for the Kazakhstan military. These efforts are still at the discussion stage at this point.[117]

Equipment purchases and modernization contracts with Ukraine

Kazakhstan's cooperation with Ukraine began with aircraft modernization. Two Su-27s and an unknown number of Su-25s were overhauled at the Zaporozhie Aircraft Repair Factory, two MiG-23UBs and all L-39 trainers were modernized at CHARZ Chuguev, and 12 MiG-27s and 15 MiG-29s were repaired at the Lviv Aircraft Repair Plant. At least four An-26 transport aircraft were modernized in recent years at the Kiev Civil Aviation Aircraft Repair Plant. Plans are underway to establish a joint centre to assemble, repair and maintain both civilian and military aircraft in Kazakhstan.[118] This cooperation appears to be continuing despite a recent corruption scandal, in which the former head of the Kazakhstan military's armaments department was arrested for taking kickbacks from representatives of a Ukrainian company in exchange for turning a blind eye to substandard repair work on Kazakhstani An-72 transport aircraft. The crime came to light after one of the planes crashed in December 2012 while carrying senior officials of Kazakhstan's border guard.[119]

Ukraine also sold 50 R-27 air-to-air missiles to Kazakhstan for use in their upgraded Su-27 and MiG-29 fighter aircraft. Most recently, the Kazakhstan

[115] 'Belarus to supply upgraded S-125 air defence systems to Kazakhstan', *Belapan* via BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 24 Oct 2005; and 'Minsk-based Tetraedr upgrades three S-125 Pechora for Kazakhstan over three years', Belta, 29 Jan. 2008, <http://news.belta.by/en/news/econom/?id=197078>.

[116] Gyurosi, M., 'New weapons and targeting pod underpin Kazakh Flankers' multirole capability', *Jane's International Defense Review*, July 2010; and Gyurosi, M., 'Upgrade package offered for Kazakh Su-27s', *Jane's International Defense Review*, July 2012.

[117] 'Kazakhstan cooperates With Russia, Ukraine, Belarus in defence sector', Interfax, 26 Sep. 2012.

[118] Thomsen (note 90); 'Military magazine lists main arms sales by Ukraine for 2006-08', BBC Monitoring Service, 9 July 2008; and 'Kazakhstan cooperates With Russia, Ukraine, Belarus in defence sector' (note 117).

[119] Lillis, J., 'Kazakhstan: evidence emerges of government jobs for sale', *Inside the Cocoon*, Eurasianet.org, 15 Apr. 2013, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66823>.

Interior Ministry announced that it has purchased an An-74TK-200 transport aircraft for its troops and is planning to buy several more in the future.[120]

Cooperation has also flourished in the area of tanks and armoured vehicles. It began with the purchase of two BTR-3E armoured vehicles in 2005.[121] In 2011, a contract was signed for the establishment of a joint centre in East Kazakhstan to conduct capital repairs of T-72 tanks.[122] This was followed by a deal to initiate licensed production of BTR-4 armoured personnel carriers in Kazakhstan, with 100 expected to be built in 2012-2013.

Uzbekistan

Although almost all of Uzbekistan's military equipment is of Soviet and Russian origin, it has not pursued nearly as extensive a rearmament and modernization programme as Kazakhstan has. As a result, its equipment acquisitions from Russia are similarly modest. Since 2000, it has had an ongoing programme of purchasing small arms from Russia, including machine guns, sniper rifles, and night vision equipment. In 2001, it also bought 50 BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers. These were in addition to around 170 units that were bought earlier in the 1990s. In 2007, the two countries signed an agreement for Uzbekistan to purchase Strela and Igla man-portable surface-to-air missiles, but it remains unclear whether any of these weapons were actually transferred to Uzbekistan.[123]

Russia has been involved in several efforts to modernize existing Uzbekistani military equipment. This includes upgrades on MiG-29 and Su-27 fighter aircraft in 2004 to allow for their operation in poor weather conditions and at night, the repair of several An-12 military transport planes in 2006 and servicing of electronic equipment on Uzbekistani MiG-29, Su-27, and Su-24 combat aircraft beginning in 2008.[124] In 2009, a Russian-Belarusian joint venture modernized Uzbekistan's S-125 Pechora air defence systems to the 2M standard that 'features a longer range, an increased kill probability, better resistance to jamming, and the ability to engage multiple targets, including cruise missiles'.[125]

[120] Goncharov, S., 'Позиция Украины на рынке авиационных управляемых ракет', *Eksport Vooruzhenii*, Sep.–Oct. 2007; 'Kazakh interior troops obtain new aircraft', *Kazinform,* 26 Apr. 2013; and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[121] Starostin, A., 'Укрспецэкспорт учится срывать контракты?" Komments.ua, 24 Sep. 2010, <http://comments.ua/?art=1285237656>.

[122] 'Kazakhstan and Ukraine agreed on joint armor overhaul', *Tengri News,* 24 Nov. 2011; 'Kazakhstan cooperates With Russia, Ukraine, Belarus in defence sector' (note 117); 'Ukraine, Kazakhstan sign $150 mln armored vehicle deal', RIA-Novosti, 3 May 2012; and 'Iran says willing to expand defence ties with Tajikistan', *Tojnews,* 25 Feb. 2013.

[123] Barabanov (note 95); SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50); and Paramonov, V. and Stolpovskii, O., 'Двустороннее сотрудничество России и Узбекистана в военной сфере', Easttime.ru, 28 Dec. 2008, <http://www.easttime.ru/analitic/1/1/550.html>.

[124] Paramonov and Stolopovskii (note 123); and Kucera, J., 'Centre of attention', *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 14 Oct. 2009.

[125] 'Russia-Belarus firm to export Pechora-2M systems to 5 countries', RIA-Novosti, 26 May 2009.

Uzbekistan has in the past expressed interest in buying other weapons from Russia, including defensive weapons such as anti-aircraft systems and antitank missile systems.[126] A 2009 summary discussed Uzbekistan's interest in upgrading its Su-25 fighter aircraft and desire to acquire Russian-made guided air-to-surface missiles, heads-up display systems, laser rangefinders and night-vision equipment for its Su-24 tactical bombers. The same article noted that priorities for the ground forces include repairs and modernization of its T-72 tanks and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles.[127]

Turkmenistan

Until the last five years, Russia's arms trade with Turkmenistan was practically non-existent. President Niyazov's isolationist foreign policy, combined with the country's relative poverty, prevented Turkmenistan from engaging in significant arms purchases, while its desire to avoid excessive dependence on Moscow ensured that Russia in particular was kept at a distance. In addition, Turkmenistan had inherited more than enough arms and equipment from the Soviet Union to keep its military supplied through the last two decades. The situation has changed radically in recent years. The aging Soviet equipment has become increasingly unreliable. At the same time, revenues from natural gas exports have provided financing for purchases of new weapons. As a result Turkmenistan has been procuring military equipment from a wide range of suppliers, including Russia.

Initial interest focused on air defence systems. The first contract signed by Turkmenistan with Russian arms exporters was for six Smerch multiple rocket launcher systems. Two units were delivered in 2008, and the rest in 2009.[128] Around the same time, a Russia-Belarus joint venture agreed to provide modernized S-125 Pechora 2M anti-aircraft missile systems to Turkmenistan.[129] Turkmenistan has also expressed interest in buying Pantsir-S1 air defence missile systems, though no contracts have been signed as of yet.[130]

Aviation contracts included the 2009 purchase of two Mi-171V helicopters, which were delivered the following year. In the same year, Turkmenistan purchased several UAVs for use by the country's interior ministry.[131]

Several contracts have been concluded for tanks and armoured vehicles. These included 8 BTR-80A infantry fighting vehicles, delivered in 2009, 6 BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles armed with 60 9M117 Bastion anti-tank

[126] 'Российские спецекспортеры рассчитывают в ближайшее время получить от Узбекистана заявку на закупку новейших систем оружия', Interfax, 3 Sep. 2008.

[127] Kucera (note 124).

[128] Abdullaev, N., 'Russia to sell Turkmenistan Smerch systems', *Defense News*, 26 June 2008.

[129] Nikolskii, A., 'Простой, как Калашников', *Vedomosti*, 26 Dec. 2008.

[130] *Army Recognition Newsletter*, 27 Feb. 2012.

[131] 'President satisfied with new Mi-17 helicopters', Interfax, 4 May 2010; and 'Основные события в области ВТС России и новых независимых государств в январе—феврале 2009 года', *Eksport* Vooruzhenii (Jan.–Feb. 2009), pp. 75–77.

missiles, delivered in 2011, and 1040 KamAZ trucks and other vehicles.[132] The military has also signed two contracts to buy T-90S tanks, with a first party of 10 delivered in 2009–11 and an additional contract for 30 more tanks signed in 2011.[133]

Russia has also been instrumental in equipping Turkmenistan's fledgling navy. Turkmenistan has bought two Molniya class missile corvettes, each armed with 16 Kh-35 Uran missiles, and two Sobol class patrol boats. The patrol boats were delivered in 2009 and the corvettes in 2011. There have been reports that a contract for three more corvettes of the same type has been signed, with deliveries to take place in 2013–14.[134]

Equipment from Ukraine and Belarus

Ukraine was one of Turkmenistan's earliest military trading partners. In 2002, Turkmenistan purchased nine patrol boats for its maritime border guard from Ukraine.[135] It also traded supplies of natural gas for three Ukrainian Kolchuga radar systems in 2003.[136] It also bought a small number of Fort pistols.[137] After a quiet period, purchases resumed after Niyazov's death. In 2008, Ukraine sold 100 KralAZ trucks and carried out a contract to modernize four Turkmen BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles to the BMP-1U standard. In 2011, Turkmenistan bought six Msta-B howitzers and an equal number of 130mm towed field guns from Ukraine.[138] Interaction with Belarus has been limited to a 2010 contract for four Karakal anti-tank weapons and a 2011 contract for Su-25 flight simulators.[139]

Kyrgyzstan

Since the late 1990s, Russia has regularly provided military assistance to Kyrgyzstan, although the specific items being given are often not specified. As early as 1999, Russia provided a $1 million military aid package to help Kyrgyzstan repel the militant groups that had invaded the country. Shipments of military assistance became more regular after the signing of an agreement in 2003 that allowed Russia to station its forces at the Kant air base. The

[132] 'Туркмения купит более тысячи автомобилей КАМАЗ', RIA-Novosti, 20 Feb. 2009.

[133] 'Turkmenistan signed the contract with Russia for the supply of T-90 tanks', Fergana.ru, July 9, 2009; and 'Russia to supply T-90 tanks to Algeria, Turkmenistan', *Army Technology*, 15 Feb. 2012.

[134] Suleymanov, R., 'Turkmenistan buys two Sobol patrol boats from Russia', APA Azeri Press Agency, 9 Dec. 2009; and 'Рейтинг 10 наиболее значимых поставочных программ и экспортных контрактов России по итогам 2011 года в сегменте ВМТ', Centre for Analysis of World Arms Trade, 22 Dec. 2011.

[135] Muzalevsky, R., 'Turkmenistan's naval plans: promoting its maritime and energy interests', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 16 Feb. 2010.

[136] 'Turkmenistan buys hi-tech defence radars from Ukraine', Agence France Presse, 12 Nov 2004.

[137] Goncharov, S., 'Украинское стрелковое оружие: от амбициозных планов к мелкосерийному копированию', *Eksport Vooruzhenii* (Sep.–Oct. 2010), pp. 47–52.

[138] Badrak, V., 'The defence industry's coming of age', *Defence-Express*, 25 Jan. 2010, Open Source Center CEP20100218950208; and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[139] 'Основные события в области ВТС России и новых независимых государств в мае -- июне 2011 года', *Eksport Vooruzhenii* (May–June 2011), pp. 65–69.

agreement provided for $4.5 million of military assistance to be provided annually, split between equipment and training.[140] The 2003 package included two modernized Mi-17 helicopters. The 2004 package was worth $2.2 million and included small arms, night vision devices, ammunition, body armour, uniforms, and radio transmitters. The equipment was allocated to units of the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces.[141]

In 2005, Russia provided $3 million worth of assistance, including 10 KamAZ trucks, a Mi-8MTV helicopter, light weapons, and spare parts for army trucks and armoured vehicles. An additional $2 million was promised for 2006. In 2007, $2 million of equipment was provided for Kyrgyzstan's mobile troops. $2.4 million of equipment was transferred in 2008, though the types of materiel provided were classified. It is possible that the equipment included new radars and surface-to-air missile systems that were installed on Kyrgyzstan's southern border by the end of 2009.[142]

In the aftermath of unrest in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010, negotiations began on additional equipment to be provided for interior ministry troops. At the time, the discussions included the possibility of BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers, Mi-17 helicopters and special-purpose weapons for crowd control being provided in exchange for nominal payment. It is not clear whether any of the equipment was actually transferred.[143]

After the 2010 events, Russia also provided extensive assistance for Kyrgyzstan's border guard. The equipment in the initial shipment provided included vehicles, tractors, excavators, engineering machinery, communication means, technical equipment for border protection and uniforms.[144] Subsequent assistance, provided in three shipments over the course of 2012 and designed to reinforce the country's southern border, included 20 Niva cars, 30 UAZ vehicles, 16 Kamaz lorries, various construction equipment, a petrol tanker and fuel supplies, rapid deployment systems, anti-mine boots, alarm devices, search kits, night-vision devices, uniforms and thermal imagers. It also modernized the country's air defences to include S-125 Pechora-2M systems.[145]

[140] Kucera (note 124).

[141] 'Russia delivered new consignment of arms to Kyrgyzstan', *RIA-Novosti*, Apr. 26, 2004; SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (note 50).

[142] Baryshev, A., 'Три миллиона долларов помощи', *Gazeta*, 22 Sep. 2005; Golts, A., 'Playing with fire in Central Asia', *Moscow Times*, 27 Sep. 2005; 'Kyrgyzstan to buy 2m-dollar military equipment from Russia', *Akipress*, 19 Feb. 2007; 'Russia supplies USD 2,4 mln worth of weapons to Kyrgyzstan', *ITAR-TASS*, 6 Apr. 2009; and Galeotti, M., 'Multi-player games', *Jane's Intelligence Review* (Apr. 2009).

[143] 'Talks under way on sale of Russian arms to Kyrgyzstan', Interfax-AVN, 23 Aug. 2010.

[144] 'Russia sends military aid to southern Kyrgyzstan', *AKIpress,* 30 Dec. 2011, Open Source Center CEP20111230950004.

[145] 'Kyrgyz border troops get some 16m dollars' worth of Russian military aid', *KyrTAG*, 18 Jan. 2012; 'Russia supplies military engineering equipment to Kyrgyzstan', *Kyrgyz Television 1*, 2 May 2012, Open Source Center CEP20120502950074; 'Kyrgyz border troops get Russian military vehicles in aid', *AKIpress*, 27 Mar. 2012; 'Russia: military daily carries roundup of CIS military news', *Krasnaya Zvezda,* 16 Sep. 2011, Open Source Center CEP20110923365001.

The 2012 assistance package included parts for armoured vehicles, 14 tank machine guns, 60 AN-94 Abakan machine guns, and other equipment. Much of the materiel was delivered to troops stationed in Osh, near the Uzbekistan border, which was read as a signal of disapproval to Uzbekistan after the latter's suspension of its CSTO membership.[146]

In 2012, as part of a new bilateral agreement to extend Russian military presence in Kyrgyzstan, Russia offered $1 billion worth of military and security assistance to Kyrgyzstan. While the list of equipment to be provided has not been publicized, information has appeared on Kyrgyzstan's requests as part of this package. The wish list includes armoured vehicles, artillery, portable surface-to-air missiles, and field hospitals.[147] The country's military forces also need motorcycles, reconnaissance vehicles, helicopters, portable mortars, and satellite equipment. About half of the equipment is expected to go to the border guards and interior ministry troops.[148] The interior ministry has requested two helicopters, five armoured personnel carriers, 15 buses, 18 trucks, 30 minibuses, several hundred firearms, and 40 000 Russian police uniforms, at a total cost of several hundred million dollars.[149]

Tajikistan

Russian assistance to Tajikistan has focused more on maintaining a troop presence in the country than on providing new equipment. Nevertheless, some weapons and platforms have been transferred in recent years. These transfers have included two Mi-24 attack helicopters and two Mi-8 utility helicopters in 2006 and four upgraded L-39 training aircraft in 2007.[150] In 2009, Russia provided a modernized S-125 Pechora-2m air defence system, equipped with digital components, a new radar, and a modernized missile. It also provided various small arms.[151]

Some reports have indicated that Russia is expected to donate all of the 201st Russian military base's older equipment as new equipment arrives to replace it. These armaments include 160 T-62 and T-72 tanks, 160 BTR-70 and BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers, and 140 BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles. They also include 72 D-30 howitzers, 72 81mm and 120mm mortars, and 30 Igla, Shilka, and Osa air defence systems. It is not clear whether any of

[146] Dzhamanbayev, M., 'Почему они вооружают Кыргызстан?', *Belyy Parus*, 4 Apr. 2013.

[147] Kucera, J., 'Reports of Russian base in Osh resurface', *Bug Pit*, 28 Feb. 2013, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66622>.

[148] 'Киргизию и Таджикистан вооружат российскими деньгами', *Kommersant*, 6 Nov. 2012; and 'Kyrgyz border guards to receive substantial aid from Russia', Interfax, 15 May 2013.

[149] Rotar, I., 'Will Russia support not only Kyrgyzstan's army, but also the police?', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 7 Dec. 2012.

[150] Baikova, E. and Mukhin, V., 'Третий срок для президента Таджикистана', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 7 Nov. 2006; and 'Россия передала Таджикистану четыре учебно-боевых самолета L-39', *Izvestiia*, 25 July 2007.

[151] 'Tajikistan receives new Pechora-2M', *Jane's Missiles and Rockets* (Feb. 2009); and Nikolskii, A., 'Weapons instead of money', *Vedomosti* via BBC Monitoring, 27 Oct. 2009.

this equipment has been transferred and if not, whether it may still happen in the future.[152]

The recent agreement to renew Russia's basing rights in Tajikistan includes $200 million in military assistance, mostly for air defence system upgrades and equipment repairs.[153] Tajikistan's leadership delayed ratification of the agreement for over a year because it was dissatisfied with the amount of assistance promised in this deal and hoped that it could negotiate to receive a larger amount of assistance.[154] As of October 2013, the situation appears close to resolving itself, with the lower house of Parliament ratifying the agreement on October 1, in exchange for Russian agreement to ease restrictions on Tajik nationals visiting Russia.[155]

II. Cooperation in military exercises and joint operations

Exercises organized by the Collective Security Treaty Organization

As Russia began to focus on restoring its international status and its influence in former Soviet republics, the CSTO became a key vehicle for Russian security interaction with most Central Asian states. The CSTO grew out of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Collective Security Treaty, which was signed by most former Soviet republics in 1992. In the early years of its functioning, it conducted several military exercises, including the Yuzhnyy shchit Sodruzhestva series that was held annually in the period 1999–2002 (see table 3.1). For the first two years, participants included Russia and all of the Central Asian states except Turkmenistan. In the final two years, Uzbekistan did not participate. The series was prompted by infiltration of Central Asia by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and scenarios generally focused on countering incursions by armed insurgent groups. The 2002 iteration was the first instance in which units from the CSTO's Rapid Deployment Force were activated.[156]

In 2000, the CIS heads of state agreed to establish an anti-terrorism centre. This centre has held annual training exercises since 2001, although Central Asian states have not participated every year. The exercises tend to include representatives of security and intelligence agencies and special forces units, as well as police and border guard units when scenarios call for their

[152] Matveev, A., 'Военная мощь - за счет Москвы', *Voenno-Promyshlennyi Kur'er*, 31 Oct. 2007; and 'Military and technical cooperation between Tajikistan and Russia', *Biznes i Politika*, 9 June 2011, Open Source Center CEP20110628950065.

[153] Rotar, I., 'Russia offers generous support for the Kyrgyz Army', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 14 Nov. 2012.

[154] 'Tajikistan re-opens bargaining over Russian military base deal', *RT*, 19 Mar. 2013.

[155] 'Tajik lawmakers ratify Russian military base lease', RIA-Novosti, 1 Oct. 2013, <http://en.ria.ru/world/20131001/183878412/Tajik-Lawmakers-Ratify-Russian-Military-Base-Lease.html>.

[156] Stein, M., 'Compendium of Central Asian military and security activity', Foreign Military Studies Office, 3 Oct. 2012, pp. 12–13.

Table 3.1. Exercises organized by the Collective Security Treaty Organization and bilateral exercises organized by Russia

Exercise name	Country	Dates	Exercise type
CSTO exercises			
Boevoe Sodruzhestvo		1998–2013	Air defence forces
Yuzhnyy Shchit Sodruzhestva		1999–2002	CIS counter-insurgency
Rubezh		2004–12	Rapid deployment force counter-terrorism
Vzaimodeistvie		2009–13	Rapid reaction force
Kobalt		2010, 2013	Interior ministry counter-terrorism
Tsentr		2011	Rapid reaction force and regular Russian units
Nerushimoe Bratstvo		2012–13	Peacekeeping forces
Bilateral exercises (Russia)			
Air defence	Kyrgyzstan	?	Annual air defence
Combat Brotherhood	Uzbekistan	2005–06	Special forces
Yug	Kyrgyzstan	2006	Counter-terrorism table-top
Air defence	Uzbekistan	2008–?	Air defence
Tsentr	Kazakhstan	2008, 2011	Ground forces, naval forces, interior ministry
Aldaspan	Kazakhstan	2008, 2012	Airborne and aviation forces
Shygys	Kazakhstan	2011, 2013	Airborne and aviation forces
Clear Sky	Kazakhstan	2012	Air forces
Shagala	Kazakhstan	2013	Naval forces
Dostuk	Kyrgyzstan	2013	Counter-terrorism

participation. Scenarios have included hostage rescue, protecting energy infrastructure, and countering armed incursions.[157]

After the CIS member states established the CSTO as a fully-fledged organization in 2002, the body initiated a new series of exercises. The Rubezh series of counter-terrorism exercises has been organized by the CSTO's Central Asian collective rapid deployment forces on an annual basis in 2004–2008 and biannually since then. The first exercise took place in Kyrgyzstan and included both military and security forces from member states.[158] Subsequent exercises were held mostly on the territory of Central Asian states. The 2008 exercise, which took place in Armenia and included Tajikistani and Russian forces, focused on repelling a cross-border attack from a hostile state. The most recent iteration took place in August 2012 at the Cherbarkul range in Chelyabinsk oblast of the Russian Federation and included forces from Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan working jointly to destroy a terrorist group's training camps and bases. It involved a mountain infantry company from

[157] Stein (note 156), pp. 8–9.

[158] 'В учения Рубеж-2004 внесены коррективы с учетом терактов в Ташкенте', Interfax, 4 Aug. 2004, <http://www.odkb.gov.ru/u/azc.htm>.

Kyrgyzstan, a mountain commando assault company from Tajikistan, a motorized infantry battalion, and a tank company, some artillery and fixed and rotary wing aircraft from Russia.[159] As with many CSTO exercises, there is some question as to whether this series is truly focused on counter-terrorism, given the common use of air assets and tactics that are inappropriate to counter-terrorist operations.[160]

In 2009, CSTO members formed the Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF), which is composed of troops from several CSTO member states. Russian CRRF units include the 98th Guards airborne division based in Ivanovo and the 31st Guards air assault brigade based in Ulyanovsk. Kazakhstan has provided the 37th air assault brigade in Taldykorgan and a naval infantry battalion. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have each provided an infantry battalion to the force. Belarus and Armenia have also provided troops to the CRRF.[161]

Since their founding, these forces have engaged in several exercises. The first major exercise on Central Asian territory took place in October 2009 at the Matybulak range in southern Kazakhstan. It included over 7000 troops, almost entirely from Kazakhstan and Russia. Armenia and Kyrgyzstan sent token forces and Tajikistan just sent observers. The exercise, entitled Vzaimodeistvie-2009, was described by independent observers as simply a test of the Russian military's ability to conduct operations in Central Asia. The scenario included destroying a terrorist group that had seized a chemical plant, hostage rescue, and reconnaissance operations in mountain terrain.[162] Subsequent exercises in this series took place in 2010 and 2012, in Russia and Armenia respectively, with no more than 2500 troops participating and roughly similar scenarios. The exercise will be repeated in 2013 on Belarusian territory. [163]

The 2011 CSTO exercise was much larger, as it was part of the Russian Tsentr-2011 exercise. Participation included 12 000 soldiers from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Events took place in all four countries, including a table-top command-level exercise in Tajikistan for the CSTO's rapid reaction force that simulated an effort to stop an attempted coup. The rapid reaction force concurrently conducted tactical training in Kyrgyzstan. There was also a naval component: the Caspian Flotilla worked with the Kazakhstani military and security forces to secure offshore energy infrastructure of the Kazakhstan coast. One source argued that the naval part

[159] 'Подразделения КСБР провели спецоперацию на учениях Рубеж-2012', RIA-Novosti, 10 Aug. 2012.

[160] McDermott (note 13), p. 63.

[161] <http://military-kz.ucoz.org/index/vojska_odkb_ksor/0-63>.

[162] 'First exercise of the CSTO Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF)', *Eastweek*, 21 Oct. 2009, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/eastweek/2009-10-21/first-exercise-csto-collective-rapid-reaction-force-crrf>.

[163] 'Группа белорусских офицеров принимает участие в учениях ОДКБ', RIA-Novosti, 25 Oct. 2010, <http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20101025/289260722.html>; Kucera, J., 'CSTO exercises tiptoe around Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict', *Bug Pit*, 19 Sep. 2012, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65934>; and 'Kazakh Army to hold over 80 'events of operational training' in 2013', Interfax, 11 June 2013.

of the exercise was aimed at countering a potential Iranian attack on energy platforms in the northern Caspian Sea.[164] The exercise was focused on fighting local wars, with a major emphasis on defeating irregular combatants and terrorists. Part of the scenario included the liberation of a town captured by terrorists or rebels. The high command described the exercise as focusing on the action of small combat units, the use of precision guided munitions and the ability to use automated command and control systems at the tactical level.[165]

The CSTO's first peacekeeping exercise, entitled Nerushimoe Bratstvo-2012, took place in October 2012 in Kazakhstan. Less than 1000 troops took part, with the majority coming from Kazakhstan and smaller contingents from Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia and Belarus. During the exercise, participants practiced working together to settle a crisis involving international extremist and terrorist organizations and ethnic tensions in one of the CSTO member countries. The exercise will be repeated in 2013 on Russian territory.[166]

The CSTO has also conducted counter-terrorism exercises involving special forces units from police and interior ministry troops. The first of these exercises, entitled Kobalt-2010, took place in Russia's Rostov Oblast in June 2010.[167] A second exercise took place in the same location in July 2013, with 500 troops and air support used to eliminate an armed group that had entered an inhabited area.[168]

Going forward, the CSTO plans to move beyond exercises by setting up a unified air defence system and possibly a joint air force. The CIS states have had a joint air defence system since 1995, though not all CIS member states are included. Most of the Central Asian states do participate, except Turkmenistan which withdrew from the system in 1997. Uzbekistan participates, but only on a bilateral basis with Russia.[169] Participating states have held regular joint air defence exercises since 1998, with annual events through 2005 and biannual ones since then. The exercises, labelled Boevoe Sodruzhestvo, take place at the Ashuluk range near Astrakhan, Russia, although other ranges have been used on occasion in addition to Ashuluk. Oddly enough, exercises in this series have on occasion been labelled counter-terrorism exercises, despite the unlikeliness of terrorists acquiring capabilities that would require a response from air defence assets.[170]

In recent years, member states have pursued efforts to further increase air defence integration, with the eventual goal of establishing a fully integrated

[164] Kalinin, I., 'Россия готова сражаться за американскую нефть', *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 26 Sep. 2011.

[165] Gorenburg, D., 'Center-2011 begins today', *Russian Military Reform blog*, 19 Sep. 2011, <http://russiamil.wordpress.com/2011/09/19/center-2011-begins-today/>.

[166] Kucera, J., 'CSTO holds first-ever peacekeeping exercises', *Bug Pit*, 28 Oct. 2012; and 'Kazakh Army to hold over 80 'events of operational training' in 2013' (note 163).

[167] CSTO, Press release, <http://www.odkb.gov.ru/cobalt/aza.htm>.

[168] 'Киргизские милиционеры примут участие в антитеррористические учениях ОДКБ "Кобальт-2013" ', *IA Regnum*, 1 July 2013, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1678374.html>.

[169] <http://military-kz.ucoz.org/index/vojska_odkb_ksor/0-63>.

[170] Stein (note 156), pp. 10–11.

unified air defence system. Kazakhstan would be the key Central Asian partner for Russia in any such system, given Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan's lack of resources and capabilities and Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan's reluctance to participate in regional integration efforts.[171] In January 2013, Russia and Kazakhstan signed a bilateral agreement to establish a unified air defence system. In February 2013, the secretary general of the CSTO stated that Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan could join the system in the future.[172] Russia has given this effort a relatively high priority, in part to ensure that its CIS partner states do not develop ties with NATO and Western defence companies in this rather sensitive sector of the military.[173]

At an April 2013 meeting, the CSTO announced that it will be creating a collective air force capability that would provide both transport aircraft to move CSTO forces to zones of conflict and combat aircraft to provide them with air cover. Initial reports stated that Russia's Kant air base in Kyrgyzstan would be a key facility for this force.[174] However, few details have been provided. Furthermore, the CSTO has a track record of announcing new initiatives and capabilities at a much faster rate than it can actually create them.[175]

III. Bilateral exercises and training agreements

Kazakhstan

The defence relationship between Russia and Kazakhstan is much more of a partnership than is the case for Russia's relationship with any of the other Central Asian states. Kazakhstan has made great progress in creating its own defence planning infrastructure and has promulgated guidelines for military development that treat Russia as one of several potential partner states. Although it is increasingly looking to the USA, China, and especially Europe for military partnership, Astana continues to consider Russia its most significant military partner.

In addition to the procurement plans discussed in the previous section, Kazakhstan has a robust bilateral exercise programme with Russia. Kazakhstan's participation in Tsentr-2008 and Tsentr-2011 was the most significant of these. In 2008, Kazakhstan sent 700 troops to the Chebarkul training range to participate in a scenario where Russian forces came to Kazakhstan's assistance in the event of an attack on the latter's territory.[176]

[171] McDermott, R., 'Central Asia commits to Russian joint air defense plans', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 25 July 2012.

[172] 'Iranian Radio: Russia said intending to increase influence in Central Asia', *Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 7 Feb. 2013, Open Source Center IAP20130208950028; and 'Kazakhstan, Russia sign deal on setting up joint regional air defense system', Interfax, 30 Jan. 2013.

[173] McDermott (note 13), p. 55.

[174] Mukhin, V., 'Зонтик для ОДКБ модернизируют в Канте', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 17 Apr. 2013, <http://www.ng.ru/armies/2013-04-17/1_odkb.html>.

[175] Kucera, J., 'CSTO planning joint air forces', *Bug Pit*, 17 Apr. 2013.

[176] 'Russian and Kazakhstan military training in Chebarkul', RIA-Novosti, 2 Sep. 2008.

Kazakhstan's participation in Tsentr-2011 was larger, with the involvement of 3500 troops including ground forces, border troops, interior ministry troops, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and the Committee for National Security. A total of 19 aircraft and several naval vessels were also activated for the exercise.[177]

The Aldaspan exercise, first held in 2008 and focused on improving interoperability and readiness, included airborne and aviation units from Kazakhstan's Southern Command and special forces and Russian aviation (including strategic aviation) units.[178] The exercise was held again in 2012, with a scenario that focused on eliminating an armed insurgent group from its mountain stronghold. It included both a command post element in which officers from the two sides created and deployed a combined bi-national force, and an active element that was focused on containing and then defeating the militant group. It involved 3000 soldiers from Kazakhstan's Southern Command, from the interior ministry, the MES, and the border guards. Russian forces included an air assault brigade, military transport aircraft, and air support from the Kant air base.[179] Although advertised as a counter-terrorist exercise, 'the size of the force structure and the firepower involved were more consistent with a combined-arms exercise'.[180]

The Shygys exercise, held in June 2011, focused on developing interoperability among Kazakhstan's regional commands and between these commands and Russian forces. This exercise focused both on joint operations and independent action in the field by deployed units. Elite airborne units from both countries participated in live-fire practice. The exercise also had an air force component that included the first instance of an exercise in the region using aircraft to counter enemy cruise missiles. The exercise also indicated that in the event of a crisis, Russian air force assets might be deployed to Taldykurgan in southeast Kazakhstan.[181]

The Clear Sky air force exercise, held in October 2012, involved Russian and Kazakhstani pilots intercepting illegal border crossers. Although it was officially billed as a CSTO exercise because it took place in part over Kyrgyzstani and Tajikistani airspace, it was essentially bilateral in nature.[182]

Bilateral exercises are set to continue in coming years. Although Shygys was not held in 2012, there are plans for it to take place in 2013, with the involvement of rapid reaction groups from Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus. Russia and Kazakhstan also plan to hold a naval exercise called Shagala in the

[177] Kharmchikhin, A., 'Tsentr 2011', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 7 Oct. 2011.

[178] Baitenov, A., 'Не стреляйте в белых лебедей', *Novoe Pokolenie*, 10 Oct. 2008.

[179] Weitz, R., 'Kazakhstan and Russia complete Aldaspan-2012 military exercises', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 23 July 2012.

[180] McDermott (note 13), p. 67.

[181] McDermott, R., 'Shygys 2011: the mysterious hypothetical opponent', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 28 June 2011.

[182] 'Russian Mig-31 relocated to Kyrgyzstan for drills', Interfax, 9 Oct. 2012; and 'Russian warplanes take part in joint CSTO drill in Central Asia', *Rossiya 24*, 25 Oct. 2012, Open Source Center CEP20121025950219.

Caspian sea this year.[183] In the future, we should expect for the Aldaspan series to continue and for Kazakhstan to participate in the Russian Tsentr exercise the next time it is held.

Training extends beyond exercises to include military education. Kazakhstan sends more military personnel to school in Russia than any other post-Soviet state. According to an agreement signed in 1994, Russia is committed to hosting at least 500 Kazakhstani officers at its military academies each year. In 2013, 600 Kazakhstani military personnel were studying at Russian military universities. Between 1993 and 2006, 2500 Kazakhstani officers received their military education in Russia, while another 15 000 took short-term courses.[184] Kazakhstan's military education institutions use Russian instructional programmes. Russian instructors teach at Kazakhstan's National Defence University. Members of other Kazakhstani security services, including MES and intelligence personnel, also receive training in Russia.[185]

The Russian military uses a number of facilities on Kazakhstani territory. The best-known of these is the Baikonur cosmodrome, used for most Russian space launches. Other facilities include a number of firing and test ranges, used for tests of air defence and ballistic missiles. A node of Russia's missile attack warning system is located near Lake Balkhash.[186] While the Russian military does not have any permanent bases on Kazakhstani territory, there are indications of agreements that would allow Russia to use Kazakhstani facilities in the event of a regional crisis.

Russian efforts to build a joint air defence system with Kazakhstan have recently gained steam. As part of the agreement signed in January 2013, Kazakhstan will be included in Russia's version of the Identify Friend or Foe (IFF) system, including its radar beacon transponders. It is also likely to receive the long-promised additional 10 battalions S-300 air defence systems.[187]

Uzbekistan

Military cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan is relatively limited. Uzbekistan does not host any Russian forces or military facilities on its territory. The two countries have only rarely conducted bilateral military exercises. The first case of such an exercise took place in September 2005, at a time when Uzbekistan was trying to improve its relationship with Russia in the aftermath of the Andijan massacre and the ensuing break with the USA.[188] This exercise, as well as an analogous exercise called Combat Brotherhood

[183] 'Kazakh Army to hold over 80 'events of operational training' in 2013' (note 163).

[184] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 8; and 'Over 600 servicemen from Kazakhstan study in Russian military universities', *Interfax,* Jan. 30, 2013.

[185] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71); and McDermott (note 13), p. 48.

[186] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71).

[187] McDermott (note 13), pp. 56–57.

[188] Pannier, B., 'Uzbekistan: military exercises with Russia timely for Tashkent', RFE/RL, 23 Sep. 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1061630.html>.

held the following year, focused on special forces training for counter-terrorism operations. There have also been occasional joint bilateral air defence exercises between the two countries, starting in 2008.[189]

Relatively few Uzbekistani military personnel receive their training in Russia, because Uzbekistan has a well-developed domestic network of military education institutions. One source indicates that only 250 officers received Russian military training between 1992 and 2005. There was a brief increase in cooperation as part of the 2005 rapprochement, followed by a slowdown in 2007 as relations began to cool.[190]

The decline in bilateral relations was confirmed by Uzbekistan's decision in July 2012 to suspend its membership in the CSTO. Tashkent disliked the establishment of the CRRF because of concerns that the force might be used without consensus by all member states. It also sought to ban the use of the force to stop conflicts between member states. Uzbekistan's refusal to participate fully in the alliance hindered Russian efforts to increase CSTO integration. Its departure was thus welcomed in many quarters, as it was seen as the elimination of a serious obstacle to strengthening the organization.[191]

Turkmenistan

Russian military cooperation with Turkmenistan is even more limited than its interaction with Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan has consistently refused to participate in any military organizations in the region. Despite signing a friendship treaty in 2002, it has also avoided any bilateral military interaction with Russia beyond the occasional purchase of military equipment. It does not host any Russian military facilities and has sent few officers to Russian military educational institutions. Some Turkmenistani officers have been sent to Ukrainian educational facilities over the years, though the vast majority have been trained domestically.[192]

Kyrgyzstan

Russia has played a key role in the development of Kyrgyzstan's armed forces. The two countries have regularly conducted joint training activities, focusing especially on counter-terrorism operations. In the Yug-2006 exercise held near Osh in October 2006, the two countries 'developed procedures for repulsing an attack by a theoretical enemy in the form of a band of international terrorists making an incursion into Kyrgyzstan'.[193] Subsequent exercises have also focused on counter-terrorism activities. Dostuk-2013, the

[189] Paramonov and Stolopovskii (note 123).

[190] Paramonov and Stolopovskii (note 123); and Peyrouse (note 24), p. 8.

[191] McDermott, R., 'Uzbekistan Prepares for the NATO Drawdown', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 18 July 2012.

[192] Paramonov and Stolpovski, 'Двустороннее сотрудничество России и Туркменистана в военной сфере', *Tsentralnaia Evraziia*, 2 July 2010, <http://ceasia.ru/bezopasnost/dvustoronnee-sotrudnichestvo-rossii-i-turkmenistana-v-voennoy-sfere.html>; and Peyrouse (note 24), p. 8.

[193] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71), p. 6.

most recent such exercise, was conducted in June 2013 near Batken, with Russian and Kyrgyzstani soldiers practicing a joint operation to eliminate armed groups holding a village in a mountainous region. The scenario included the use of Russian helicopters to airlift troops into the region and air support by Russian bombers.[194] The two countries' air defence forces also conduct annual joint firing exercises at Russian ranges. Russian personnel are highly involved in maintaining Kyrgyzstan's air defence systems.[195] In addition to military exercises, the two countries' border guards have also conducted joint exercises, with the goal of reducing smuggling and narcotics trafficking in the region.[196]

The bulk of Kyrgyzstan's senior military personnel received their military education in Russia. From 1992–2007 over 800 specialists from Kyrgyzstan received training in Russia. Between 2000 and 2007, more than 40 Kyrgyzstani senior officers attended courses at Russian defence colleges. Kyrgyzstani air force personnel also receive training from Russian officers at the Kant air base. Most of this education is provided at a discounted rate.[197]

Russia operates a vital network of military facilities in Kyrgyzstan. The most important of these is the Kant air base, which has served as both a Russian and CSTO air base since its transfer to Russian control in 2003. It currently hosts Su-25 close air support and Su-25 fighter aircraft, as well as Mi-8 utility helicopters. Other Russian facilities in the country include a weapons test range in Karakol, a signals centre in Kara-Balt, a radio-seismic laboratory in Mayly-Suu. The signals centre is used for naval communications with ships and submarines patrolling the Pacific and Indian Oceans, as well as for electronic surveillance activity. The seismic laboratory is used for verification of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. In 2012, the two countries agreed to extend the lease for these facilities for an additional 15 years, with the option of a further give year extension. The agreement also combined all of these facilities into a unified Russian military base, making it less vulnerable to political manipulation by Kyrgyzstani authorities.[198]

Tajikistan

Russian military ties with Tajikistan are more extensive than with any other Central Asian state. Until 2004, Tajikistan's borders were patrolled by Russian border guards. After the force was withdrawn, some Russian security service representatives have remained as advisors, though they do not guard the borders. As concerns rise about potential infiltration from Afghanistan in the aftermath of NATO forces' impending withdrawal, there has been some

[194] 'Kyrgyzstan and Russia hold joint military exercise', *KirTAG*, 7 June 2013.

[195] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71), p. 6.

[196] 'Kyrgyz, Russian, Kazakh, Tajik border troops hold joint exercises', *Kyrgyz Television 1*, 17 Sep. 2012, Open Source Center CEP20120918950049.

[197] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71), p. 6; and Peyrouse (note 24), p. 8.

[198] Paramonov and Stolpovski (note 71); and Kucera, J., 'Russia cements control over military bases in Kyrgyzstan', *Bug Pit*, 20 Dec. 2012.

discussion about Russian border guards resuming joint border patrols on the Afghanistan border.[199] Official statement from Moscow have refused to rule out this possibility should a request from Tajikistan be forthcoming.[200] However, given the relatively tense relationship between Dushanbe and Moscow, such an eventuality appears unlikely to occur any time in the near future.

Russian troops remain in Tajikistan, stationed at the 201st Military Base. The base includes facilities in Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tyube, and Kulyab. Most of the approximately 7000 troops are stationed in Dushanbe, though the other two locations each host a motor-rifle regiment. In addition to the 201st base, Russia controls the Okno space surveillance system, located near Nurek. Its task is to detect and track ballistic missiles aimed at Russian and Central Asian territory.[201] In the fall of 2012, Russia and Tajikistan agreed to extend Russia's lease of its facilities in Tajikistan for 49 years. Since then, Tajikistan has dragged its feet on ratification of the agreement, leading most analysts to conclude that it is seeking additional financial assistance in exchange for letting Russia use the base. In addition, Tajikistan has so far refused to grant Russia use of the Ayni air base, despite repeated assurances that such permission was forthcoming.[202] Some analysts in Moscow believe that President Rakhmon is not necessarily seeking financial assistance, but rather hopes to get guarantees that Moscow will continue to support his rule in Tajikistan. Given local perceptions that the overthrow of President Bakiyev in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 was supported, if not engineered, by Moscow, such claims are potentially plausible.[203]

The majority of senior Tajikistani military and security personnel are trained in Russia. Between 2002 and 2007, Moscow provided training free of charge to approximately 500 Tajikistani officers. Specialists are also trained at the Russian military base in Dushanbe. Seventy per cent of Tajikistani special operations forces officers have graduated from Russian military institutes, such as the Ryazan parachuting school and Interior Ministry schools in Perm and St. Petersburg. Furthermore, the Federal Security Service (FSB) Operational Border Guard Group continues to support the border guard by training specialists and providing technological assistance.[204]

Despite this extensive record of Russian military assistance, no information is available on bilateral military exercises conducted by Russian and Tajikistani armed forces. It may be that Tajikistan's armed forces do not have the capabilities or financial means to participate in such exercises with Russian forces. They do send limited contingents to multilateral exercises

[199] Russian experts, Interviews with author, Moscow, May 2013.

[200] 'Russia may send military personnel to Tajik-Afghan border', Interfax, 16 Dec. 2012.

[201] McDermott, R., 'Moscow's military muscle in Central Asia: Tajikistan exposes Russian hard power', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 30 July 2012.

[202] Panfilova, V., 'Russian flag over Osh. The new RF military base will acquire a residence permit in South Kyrgyzstan', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 28 Feb. 2013, Open Source Center, CEP20130228008005.

[203] Russian experts, Interviews with author, Moscow, May 2013.

[204] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 8.

involving Russian troops and have on occasion hosted both CSTO and SCO exercises on Tajikistani territory.

IV. Goals and consequences of Russian military assistance

While Russia remains the Central Asian states' primary supplier of both military equipment and training, much of this interaction is simply the result of historical legacies. Common culture, familiarity with Soviet military equipment, and geographic proximity all encourage the majority of Central Asian states to continue to focus on maintaining strong military ties with Russia. The wealthier and more developed states are beginning to diversify their options. Both Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have recently rejected offers of Russian equipment in favour of making major weapons purchases from European states. Since they continue to buy Russian equipment as well, the goal appears to be diversification, rather than a wholesale shift away from Russian arms. The goals for the two countries appear somewhat different. Turkmenistan has sought to play potential suppliers off against each other in an effort to ensure that it gets the best deal. This tendency was in evidence during bargaining over a contract to build a new naval base, with representatives from each country being told in turn that they were the leading contender.[205] Kazakhstan has focused on establishing joint ventures with European defence companies for licensed domestic production, while continuing to buy equipment outright from Russia. Poorer states such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, on the other hand, depend on receiving military assistance and buying low-priced used equipment, which limits their options with respect to foreign suppliers.

Russia does not have a real strategy in its military assistance policy toward the region beyond seeking to keep the Central Asian states in Russian orbit while making sure that US and NATO forces leave the region after the completion of the operation in Afghanistan. As one Russian interlocutor put it recently, 'If the price of stability in Central Asia is [continued] US presence, that price is too high for Russia'.[206] To ensure that the situation does not deteriorate to the point where that choice has to be made, Russia has been shoring up Central Asian regimes as best it can, both through efforts to modernize their military forces and security services to improve their capabilities both to take on externally-based insurgents and to suppress potential domestic revolts. The recently adopted Foreign Policy Concept mentions the goal of working jointly to ensure mutual security by combating terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, and illegal migration in order to neutralize threats coming from Afghanistan and to prevent destabilization in Central Asia.[207] By providing assistance, Moscow has also sought to ensure

[205] Interview with author, Ashgabat, Nov. 2010.

[206] Interview with author, Moscow, May 2013.

[207] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation', 12 Feb. 2013.

that the region's governments remain relatively pliable. The entire policy was described by one Moscow observer as 'playing pre-emptive defence'.[208]

Russian concerns about the possibility of successful popular uprisings in Central Asia rose in the aftermath of the events of the Arab Spring and the 2011–12 electoral protests in Russia. Although most Western analysts did not foresee the Arab Spring as having the potential to spread to the region, both Russian and Central Asian leaders believed that demonstration effects from the Middle East increased the likelihood of such a scenario occurring. This led them to increase their focus on counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism training as part of CSTO and bilateral activities. Although these exercises are inevitably billed as aimed at external forces, many of the same tactics can be applied against domestic opposition. Russian military assistance to the weaker Central Asian states can be described as a quid pro quo arrangement, wherein Russia provides political and military support for the ruling regimes in exchange for basing rights and a certain level of acquiescence on Russian foreign policy priorities in the region. Kyrgyzstan provides the clearest case of this type of arrangement, with the institutionalization of a major Russian military presence in the country coming in conjunction with Russian expressions of support for the Atambaev government. Tajikistan's reluctance to give final approval to the recent military base agreement may be related to Russia's refusal to provide guarantees of continued support for President Rakhmon's rule.[209] Moscow has been highlighting the potential danger of instability spreading from Afghanistan to Central Asia even as the USA and its NATO allies leave the region as a means of ensuring that local states feel the need to maintain close ties with Russian security forces. At the same time, Central Asian leaders are capable of using Russian foreign policy priorities to ensure that their own goals, including developing more capable military and security forces, are met.[210]

Finally, it should be clear from the details provided in this chapter that there is less to Russian military assistance than meets the eye. Both Russia and the CSTO have made numerous promises of assistance and expanded cooperation to Central Asian states. Only some of these promises have been met. In part, Russian military assistance is constrained by the limited capacity of Russian defence industry. Exports to Central Asia remain the lowest priority for Russian defence corporations, behind both domestic military procurement requirements and exports to countries that pay full price for weapons and equipment. Central Asia is a small market for Russian military exports, with relatively low volumes and little potential for export growth. The lower prices paid by most Central Asian states further reduce the priority of Central Asian contracts for Russian defence exporters. As a result, most military equipment provided to Central Asia consists of old, used systems that are being replaced

[208] Interview with author, Moscow, May 2013.
[209] Interview with author, Moscow, May 2013.
[210] Cooley, A., *Great Games, Local Rules* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2012).

by more modern weapons and are therefore no longer needed by the Russian military.[211]

Although Russian military and security assistance to Central Asian states is relatively limited in nature, the small size of the market and the limited starting capabilities of the Central Asian military and security forces mean that even relatively limited assistance can have a sizeable impact on security and stability in the region. Going forward, this impact is likely to be relatively mixed. On the one hand, efforts to create a unified air defence system and to improve counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency capabilities are likely to help local armed forces protect their countries from the threat of infiltration by radical Islamic groups. However, the extent of this danger to Central Asian security has been repeatedly overstated, by both local leaders and their Russian partners, in order to justify assistance requests and subsequent security cooperation. Most local leaders face a greater threat from internal instability and regime collapse than from outside infiltration. Especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the 2011–12 electoral protests in Russia, Russian and Central Asian leaders see regime stability as their highest security priority. To the extent that Russia provides equipment and training to security services without regard for how such assistance may be used, it may prove to be useful for helping local leaders protect themselves from popular protests by repressing internal opposition movements.

[211] Turkmenistan is an exception. Since it is not a CIS member, it buys new equipment from the Russian defence industry and pays full price. Interview with author, Moscow, May 2013.

4. Assistance from the United States

The US Government considers Central Asia to be strategically important for both internal and external reasons.[212] It is a critical trade and transport overland link between Europe and both East and South Asia. As such, it plays a critical role as a supply corridor for coalition operations in Afghanistan. For the US military, maintaining access for the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) and overflights to Afghanistan has been the most critical goal in the region throughout the last decade. As Central Asia gradually replaced Pakistan as the primary access route for goods and personnel entering and leaving Afghanistan, maintaining the diplomatic relationships necessary to sustain this network became the top priority for the US Government in Central Asia.

Recent discoveries have shown that the region's hydrocarbon resources are significant on a global scale. The US Government has long sought to use the region's energy resources as a strategically important alternative to Russian supplies in Europe, though China's entry into the region and recent changes in global markets due to technological innovation in the USA have reduced the likelihood of Central Asian oil and gas flowing to Europe in significant quantities. The US Government is concerned about protecting critical energy infrastructure in the region, and therefore has focused on helping Central Asian states maintain the security of their offshore oil and natural gas platforms. US officials recognize that sabotage or an accident at one of these sites would not only have a significant negative impact on the economic health of the affected country but also affect world supplies of hydrocarbons, potentially negatively affecting the world economy.

A third priority is securing the borders of partner states in Central Asia, all of which face problems with weak border controls and existing and potential border disputes with neighbouring states. Border security is critical for a number of US goals in the region, including counter-proliferation, preventing the transit of terrorists through the region, and countering the trafficking of narcotics. These are all essentially forms of smuggling, presenting similar challenges to law enforcement authorities. Measures that work against one of these security threats can usually help to reduce the other threats as well.

Central Asian states are particularly concerned with potential internal unrest, low state capacity and extensive corruption, all of which leave these states potentially vulnerable to internal and external threats. In part to assuage their concerns and in part to promote regional stability, the US Government has undertaken a number of initiatives to build state capacity, particularly in the realm of internal and external security. According to one recent government report, the main threats to regional security include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, trafficking in persons and drugs, terrorism, and

[212] This section is based on open source materials and interviews with US officials. For another perspective on this topic see Kucera, J., 'US military aid to Central Asia: who benefits?', Open Society Institute Occasional Paper #7 (Sep. 2012).

internal instability resulting from poor governance and low levels of economic development. Measures to this end include providing security assistance to states in the region and being involved in regional conflict prevention initiatives. Such measures include bolstering regional border and customs controls, promoting counter-narcotics programmes, encouraging regional integration with South Asia and Europe, and advancing resource security. Support for these goals is also expected to contribute to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.[213]

US Government assistance is often criticized for its potentially negative impact on regional security, especially to the extent that it appears to be at least in part provided as a quid pro quo for continued access to Afghanistan rather than as a result of a realistic assessment of local needs. However, the officials in charge of such programmes are quite vocal about the importance of US assistance programmes for maintaining stability in the region and securing it against hostile outside forces, all while seeking to improve the region's admittedly poor human rights record.[214] In the aftermath of criticism in the 1990s about human rights violations by US trained and equipped forces, in 1998 the US Congress included a human rights vetting requirement for units receiving assistance from the US Government. This requirement, usually called Leahy vetting in reference to the Senator who sponsored the law, forces US Government agencies that sponsor assistance programmes to certify that units receiving such assistance have not committed human rights violations.[215] All Central Asian units receiving assistance go through this process. Some US officials have privately complained about this requirement for creating additional hurdles to assistance without actually doing anything to substantively improve the human rights situation in the region.[216]

In recent years, US security assistance programmes for Central Asia have increased their focus on providing training over equipment. These programmes are primarily funded by the US Department of State and the Department of Defence, with the latter coming to play an increasingly important role over time. The key programmes through which assistance is provided include traditional military assistance programmes such as Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for equipment donations and International Military Education and Training (IMET) for training. In recent years, the majority of assistance funding to the region has come through targeted programmes such as the Department of Defence's Section 1206 programme for counter-terrorism funding, Section 1033 programme for counter-narcotics funding, and International Counterproliferation Program for preventing the smuggling of nuclear materials. Other US Government agencies also fund targeted

[213] Nichol (note 29).

[214] US Government officials, interviews with author, June 2013.

[215] US State Department, 'An overview of the Leahy vetting process', 9 July 2013, <http://www.humanrights.gov/2013/07/09/an-overview-of-the-leahy-vetting-process/>.

[216] On these objections see Striffolino, K., 'Deconstructing the Leahy Law: fact vs fiction', Amnesty International Human Rights Now Blog, 9 July 2013, <http://blog.amnestyusa.org/africa/deconstructing-the-leahy-law-fact-vs-fiction/>.

programmes, including the Department of Energy's Second Line of Defence and State Department's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) counter-proliferation programmes and the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) counter-narcotics programme. Given that the extent of these programmes and the amount of money allocated to them have been described in detail in previous reports, this report will focus instead on discussing the specific equipment donations and training exercises and their impact on Central Asian security.[217]

I. Equipment sales and donations

Kazakhstan

Military cooperation with the USA has focused far more on training and exercises than on the transfer of weapons or equipment. The most highly publicized equipment transfer was the donation of two modernized UH-1H (Huey II) helicopters to be used for rapid deployment of special operations forces in the Caspian region. The initial programme was developed in 2004 and the helicopters were transferred in 2007–08 through the Excess Defence Articles (EDA) programme. As of 2010, the helicopters were based near Almaty due to a lack of appropriate facilities near Aktau and therefore could not be used for their intended purpose due to the distance between the two cities. Furthermore, the USA had originally promised to provide eight such helicopters; the elimination of the other six due to a rapid increase in costs and concurrent declines in US funding damaged Kazakhstani trust in US promises and inhibited cooperation for several years.[218] It appears that the fallout from this situation was at least partially responsible for Kazakhstan's decision not to pursue the transfer of six used C-130J transport aircraft and to go with a European supplier instead.[219]

Other cooperation programmes have been more successful. In 2005, the USA supplied six speedboats for the country's coast guard. Although five of the boats sank in a storm, one remains in use. Another four boats were provided in 2010.[220] The USA has provided a significant amount of equipment for KAZBRIG, including 45 up-armoured and 69 unarmoured HMMVVs. The vehicles are used for training peacekeeping forces. Some reports indicated that these vehicles were used by security forces that responded to riots in Zhanaozen in December 2011, implying that either the peacekeeping brigade

[217] Lumpe, L., *US Military Aid to Central Asia, 1999–2009: Security Priorities Trump Human Rights and Diplomacy*, Open Society Institute Occasional Paper No. 1 (Oct. 2010), p. 33.

[218] US Government officials, interviews with author, Washington, DC, Oct. 2010. There are varying reports on the total number of helicopters provided through the programme. According to the US State Department's Office of Regional Security and Arms Transfers, only two had been transferred as of July 2013. US State Department official, personal communication, July 2013.

[219] 'Kazakhstan mulls buying six US C-130J military transport aircraft', Interfax-Kazakhstan, 19 Oct. 2010; and Kucera, J., 'Kazakhstan buys Airbus military transport planes', *Bug Pit*, 1 Mar. 2012.

[220] Khramchikhin, A., 'ОСК Центр против Центральной Азии', *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 22 Oct. 2010; and Voloshin (note 112).

was used to quell the unrest or that at least some of the vehicles had been transferred to internal security forces.[221] A US State Department investigation determined that vehicles provided by the USA were not used in this operation. However, regardless of whether US equipment was used in the operation, it is quite likely that the troops that participated in the operation received at least some training from the US military. The USA has also provided equipment for improving border security, including radiation and narcotics detection equipment and communications systems, and for counter-narcotics, including vehicles for interior ministry troops and equipment for an interagency counter-narcotics training centre.

Uzbekistan

US military assistance to Uzbekistan increased substantially in the mid-2000s in exchange for US access to the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) military base for use in operations in Afghanistan. This assistance included two armoured river patrol boats, radios, upgrades for helicopters and navigation systems, facilities upgrades, and various training support. Various assessments indicated that US assistance did not help to improve Uzbekistan's human rights record and may have actually allowed the Karimov regime to become more repressive.[222]

After high-level US criticism of the 2005 Andijan massacre, the USA was expelled from K2 and for several years was legally prohibited by Congress from providing military assistance to Uzbekistan. This led the US Government to suspend IMET and FMF funding to Uzbekistan for several years. However, the Pentagon found ways to continue as much cooperation as possible given legal constraints. Initially, this consisted of allowing purchases of equipment with FMF credits that had been approved prior to the aid cut-off. This included fast patrol boats provided in 2007.[223] CENTCOM also encouraged Uzbekistani participation in regional exercises. Counter-terrorism funding was resumed in 2008 and expanded IMET funding for training in human rights and civil-military relations in 2010.[224] The ban was waived in January 2012, though the US has for now continued to refrain from sending lethal equipment to Uzbekistan as a policy decision. This has not prevented Uzbekistan from submitting a long list of equipment that it would like to receive through the Excess Defence Articles programme. According to some sources, this list includes lethal equipment, including small arms and Apache helicopters.[225]

[221] Kucera, J., 'What were American Humvees doing in Zhanaozen?', *Bug Pit*, 24 Jan. 2012.

[222] A good summary of US assistance to the region during this period can be found in Oliker, O. and Shlapak, D. A., *US Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles* (RAND Corporation, 2005).

[223] Lumpe (note 217), pp. 21–22.

[224] Lumpe, L., *A Timeline of US Military Aid Cooperation with Uzbekistan*, Open Society Foundation Occasional Paper No. 2 (Oct. 2010), p. 5.

[225] 'US suspends ban on military assistance to Uzbekistan', RFE/RL, 2 Feb. 2012, <http://www.rferl.org/content/uzbekistan_united_states_military_assistance/24470588.html>; Human Rights Watch, 'Uzbekistan: Kerry should raise rights abuses at talks', 7 Mar. 2013, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/03/07/uzbekistan-kerry-should-raise-rights-abuses-talks>; and US State Department and Defense Department officials, interviews with author, June 2013.

There have not been any official indications of items on this list, although Russian and US newspaper reports have mentioned UAVs, global positioning systems (GPS), mine detection equipment, MRAP armoured vehicles, air defence systems, helicopters and small arms equipped with night vision targeting devices.[226]

To date, the equipment that has been provided to Uzbekistan by the USA has included items such as night vision goggles, bulletproof vests, and GPS equipment.[227] The USA has also provided assistance with border security, including $6 million for construction of a border post and $10 million for strengthening counter-narcotics operations at the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan border. As part of the latter effort, the US has provided x-ray rail scanners for the border.[228] The USA has agreed to supply Uzbekistan with 20 Raven UAVs for border surveillance.[229] Some sources believe that an Uzbekistani drone that supposedly entered Kazakhstani airspace in early 2012 was US-made, though others believe it was more likely to have been Israeli or Chinese.[230] Another possibility is that the UAV was a commercially available radio-controlled model and that the whole crisis was a hoax.[231]

Turkmenistan

The USA has provided very little in the way of major platforms and equipment to Turkmenistan. It donated the *Point Jackson* retired Coast Guard cutter in 2000, which was provided without a service agreement or spare parts. As recently as 2010, the cutter was out of service because of generator problems.[232] In 2004, Sikorsky agreed to sell two S-92 helicopters to Turkmenistan for presidential transport. These helicopters were delivered by 2006.[233]

Other cooperation programmes have focused primarily on providing equipment that could reduce smuggling at border posts. This has included radiation detection and container scanner equipment at border crossings; vehicles, drug test kits, and other equipment for the counter-narcotics service; port security equipment; and new border crossing stations. Several US Government agencies indicated that they were in the process of reducing material assistance either because they felt that the Turkmenistan government

[226] Konovalov, S., ‘Пентагон завалит оружием Центральную Азию’, *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 5 Dec. 2011; and Kramer, A., ‘As NATO prepares for Afghan withdrawal, Uzbekistan seeks war’s leftovers’, *New York Times*, 31 Jan. 2013.

[227] Kucera, J., ‘Uzbekistan to get US night-vision, GPS, body armor’, *Bug Pit*, 2 Feb. 2012.

[228] ‘Uzbekistan to attract US$24.404m grants to modernize customs service’, Uzdaily.com, 10 Apr. 2013, <http://www.uzdaily.com/articles-id-22675.htm#sthash.g8pGOmgx.dpbs>; and US State Department and Defense Department officials, interviews with author, June 2013.

[229] Human Rights Watch (note 225).

[230] Kucera, J., ‘Kazakhstan accuses Uzbekistan of drone incursion’, *Bug Pit*, 10 Feb. 2012; and Voloshin, G., ‘Russian-US military competition in Central Asia threatens to compromise regional security’, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 18 Mar. 2013.

[231] Kucera, J., ‘Uzbek-Kazakh drone spat turns both farcical and serious’, *Bug Pit*, 21 Feb. 2012.

[232] US Embassy officials, interviews with author, Ashgabat, Nov. 2010.

[233] Sikorsky, ‘Turkmenistan purchases wwo VIP S-92 Helicopters’, Press release, 18 July 2004.

could afford to pay for its own equipment or because they felt it had not been responses to US proposals.[234]

Kyrgyzstan

The USA has provided extensive assistance to Kyrgyzstan through a range of programmes. In 2004, it bought two Mi-8MTV helicopters in Kazakhstan and donated them to the Kyrgyzstan border patrol to be used to counter drug smuggling. The decision to donate Mi-8 helicopters was made in order to reduce the need for additional training that would have been required for US-made helicopters.[235] In 2006, four An-2 transport planes were provided to the Defence Ministry for the same purpose. Additional assistance included refuelling equipment, avionics, and the repair and construction of military installations and infrastructure.[236]

More recently, the USA has continued to support the border guard's counter-narcotics operations while also increasing support for military special operations forces. The latter received 45 jeeps, 45 ATVs, and 30 passenger and cargo vehicles in 2011 for use in mountain conditions.[237] The USA has financed the construction of various facilities for the country's border guards. These included barracks, checkpoints, and a new command centre for southern Kyrgyzstan. In 2012, a new staff building, residential quarters, dormitory and dining room were completed for the Batken border guard detachment. In 2013, US Central Command announced that it will fund construction of additional border posts in Jalal-Abad region, on the board with Uzbekistan.[238] At one time, the USA planned to build a series of military training facilities in Kyrgyzstan. In October 2009, a training centre for Kyrgyzstan's special forces Scorpion Battalion was opened in Tokmok. This facility was built with $9 million in funding provided by the USA. As a follow-on project, the US Government's Office of Military Cooperation in Kyrgyzstan sought to build a counter-terrorism training centre in the Batken region. After widespread press coverage of the announcement of plans to build the centre in early 2010, it appeared to fall victim to political chaos in Kyrgyzstan. It remains unclear whether plans to build the centre have been cancelled altogether or just delayed.[239]

[234] US Embassy officials and US Departments of State and Energy officials, interviews with author, Ashgabat, Nov. 2010.

[235] 'US donates Mi-8s to Kyrgyzstan', *Air Forces Monthly*, Mar. 2004.

[236] 'US hands over four An-2 Aircraft to Kyrgyzstani Defense Ministry', Interfax-AVN, 20 Sep. 2006.

[237] Sevastyanov, M., 'На южных границах', *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 8 July 2011.

[238] Smith, M. G., 'Borders hardening throughout Central Asia in anticipation of NATO pullout', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 21 May 2012; 'US-sponsored border facilities commissioned in Kyrgyz south', *Kabar*, 14 Aug 2012; and 'Border outposts will be built in Ala-Buka', Press.kg, 21 Feb. 2013.

[239] Tynan, D., 'Kyrgyzstan: US intends to construct military training center in Batken', Eurasianet.org, 3 Mar. 2010, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav030410.shtml>; and Kucera, J., 'US sucked into Central Asia strife?', *The Diplomat*, 27 Apr. 2011.

Tajikistan

The vast majority of US security assistance to Tajikistan has been provided to the border guard and to special forces units. According to a recent report, US border management assistance to Central Asia has a long history. Programmes such as EXBS have provided training and equipment for Tajikistan's border guards and special forces units.[240] Between 2005 and 2011, the USA spent $20 million on equipping the border guard. In 2011 alone, the assistance plan included $5 million for equipment for a special counter-narcotics unit, including AK-74 rifles and Makarov 9mm pistols.[241] It also broke ground on a $3.1 million joint military training centre that is to be used for training special forces from countries throughout the region. Although it was scheduled to be completed within a year, the construction dragged out and even initial work had not been completed near the end of 2012.[242] The US Government also funded rehabilitation and construction at a number of border posts throughout the country.[243] The report's author notes that although the overall impact of foreign assistance on border security has been limited, infrastructure improvement is one area where major strides have been made. He is sanguine about the overall impact of the assistance, arguing that it has allowed Tajikistan's government to abdicate fiscal responsibility and has done little to create a more professional border control system that balances security and openness.[244]

In 2012, the USA budgeted $9 million for assistance to special forces in the border guards and counterterror and counter-narcotics units.[245] The border guard received two sets of thermal imaging devices, radio and data communications equipment, body armour, and cold-weather uniforms to be used by rapid reaction teams. Two border posts were also commissioned.[246] The USA also provided various vehicles, computers, cameras, and communications equipment to the Tajik Drug Control Agency.[247]

[240] Gavrilis, G., 'Central Asia's border woes and the impact of international assistance', Open Society Foundation Occasional Paper No. 6 (May 2012).

[241] 'Киргизию и Таджикистан вооружат российскими деньгами', *Kommersant*, 6 Nov. 2012; and Kucera, J., 'What role did the US play in this summer's violence in Tajikistan?', *Bug Pit*, 5 Sep. 2012.

[242] Kucera, J., 'US, Tajikistan break ground on special forces training center', *Bug Pit*, 7 July 2011; and Bulychev, O., 'Таджикистанский филиал ЦРУ?', *Biznes i Politika*, 29 Nov. 2012.

[243] 'US Government rebuilds border guard facilities in Tajik south', *Asia-Plus*, 30 June 2011.

[244] Gavrilis (note 240), pp. 32–36.

[245] Kucera (note 241).

[246] 'US embassy gives thermal imaging devices to Tajik border troops', *Avesta*, 17 Mar. 2012; 'USA gives radio equipment to Tajik border guards', *Avesta*, 30 Apr. 2012; 'US embassy hands over telecom equipment to Tajik border guards', *Avesta*, 27 Sep. 2012; and Shustov, A., 'The struggle for Central Asia: the scale of the announced Russian military aid to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is unprecedented', ca-news.org, 16 Nov. 2012.

[247] 'US, OSCE give cars, equipment to Tajik drug control agency', Interfax-AVN, 13 Apr. 2012.

Table 4.1. Exercises organized by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and bilateral exercises organized by the United States

Exercise name	Country	Dates	Exercise type
NATO/PfP exercises			
Combined Endeavor		1995–2013	C4
Cooperative Nugget/Osprey		1995–2002	Peacekeeping
CENTRASBAT		1997–2000	Peacekeeping
IWER		1999–2004	Disaster response
Regional Cooperation		2001–13	Peacekeeping
Ferghana		2003	Disaster response
RESCUER/MEDCUER		2005	Disaster response
Bilateral exercises (USA)			
Balance Kayak	Kazakhstan	1996–99	Combat medical training
Balance Ultra	Uzbekistan	1996–99	Medical and mountain training
Balance Zhardem	Kazakhstan	1999, 2002, 2005	Crisis response
Balance Bars	Kazakhstan	2002	Reconnaissance
Balance Umbra	Uzbekistan	2000	Counter-insurgency
Balance Umpire	Uzbekistan	2001	Desert conditions training
Strong Resolve	Uzbekistan	2002	Crisis response
Cooperative Safeguard	Uzbekistan	2002	SAR/HADR
Cooperative Zenith	Uzbekistan	2002	Air force interoperability
Balance Knight	Kyrgyzstan	2003	Rapid response
Balance Knife	Kyrgyzstan	2003	Mountain combat
Steppe Eagle	Kazakhstan	2003–13	KAZBAT/KAZBRIG
Counter-terrorism	Kyrgyzstan	2012–13	Special forces

In 2013, the US Government allocated $9.5 million to support the military and to fight smuggling and drug trafficking in Tajikistan. Vehicles and equipment provided to the border troops included 20 all-terrain vehicles, 10 snowmobiles, 650 Motorola radios, 33 solar power systems, 44 computer kits and tactical individual protective gear.[248]

II. Cooperation in military exercises and joint operations

Multilateral cooperation

Although most US exercises and training programmes in Central Asia are bilateral in nature, it has conducted several multilateral exercises and training sessions over the years (see table 4.1). From a military point of view, the most important of these exercises is Combined Endeavor, a long-standing EUCOM exercise that includes participants from over 40 NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) states and is billed as the 'largest command, control, communications and computers (C^4) interoperability event in the world'. The

[248] 'US embassy gives military kit to Tajik border unit', *Tojnews*, 6 Mar. 2013; and 'US embassy donates vehicles, equipment to Tajik border guards', *Avesta*, 11 Apr. 2013.

goal of the exercise, which has been conducted annually since 1995, is to increase C^4 interoperability among NATO and PfP states working together in crisis response and combat operations.[249] Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan participated in this exercise in the period 1998–2004. Kazakhstan resumed its participation in 2009.[250]

Peacekeeping was a central focus of US military assistance to Central Asian states in the 1990s. Two exercise series, Cooperative Nugget and Cooperative Osprey, were focused on developing these countries' peacekeeping capabilities. The exercises, held a total of seven times between 1995 and 2002, emphasized interoperability with NATO and PfP members. The exercises took place in the USA, Canada and Europe, with participation in various years from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, as well as several European countries.[251]

In the late 1990s, the USA provided extensive support to CENTRASBAT, the peacekeeping battalion formed in 1995 by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The battalion conducted exercises in the region with US involvement in 1997–2000. The 1997 exercise, which took place in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, included a parachute jump, mine clearing, humanitarian assistance, and riot control.[252] CENTRASBAT disbanded in 2000, though the exercises have continued under the name Regional Cooperation. Regional Cooperation exercises have usually focused on simulated training, rather than field operations, with significant involvement from US National Guard units. The early exercises took place at training centres in Germany and the USA, while exercises since 2006 have been held in the region (except for 2010, when the revolution in Kyrgyzstan caused the exercise to be moved to Germany). Scenarios have usually focused on disaster response or counter-terrorism, though issues such as border security, drug trafficking, and responding to mas unrest have also been dealt with. The participating countries have varied from year to year, though Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been involved every year. Uzbekistan participated in 2001, while Turkmenistan and Russia have occasionally sent observers. Tajikistan and Pakistan began to participate regularly in 2004 and Afghanistan in 2005. Pakistan has not been involved since 2011, after a downturn in relations with the USA. The June 2012 iteration took place in Kyrgyzstan and included participation from the armed forces of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, as well as border troops and representatives from interior and emergency situations ministries. The scenario focused on disaster response

[249] US European Command, 'Exercise Combined Endeavor', [n.d.], <http://www.eucom.mil/key-activities/exercises-and-operations/exercise-combined-endeavor>.

[250] Stein (note 156), p. 11.

[251] Stein (note 156), pp. 13–14.

[252] Gillert, D. J., 'After jumping, battalion learns to crawl', *American Forces Press Service*, 1 Oct. 1997, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=41525>.

and emergency management.[253] The 2013 exercise, with the same countries participating, was held in July, with Kazakhstan serving as the host country.[254]

From 1999 to 2004, the International Workshop for Earthquake Response (IWER) conducted a series of joint, interagency table-top exercises conducted from 1999-2004 that involved most Central Asian states. In the first year, participants included all Central Asian states except Tajikistan, with the exercise focused on coordinating civil protection response during emergencies. Subsequent iterations were bilateral: an earthquake response exercise with Kyrgyzstan in 2002 and a chemical disaster response scenario with Uzbekistan in 2003.[255]

Other disaster response exercises included Ferghana 2003, which involved personnel from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the USA in an exercise testing the ability of civilian and military authorities to coordinate a response to an earthquake and flooding.[256] The 2005 iteration of RESCUER/MEDCUER, which took place in Georgia, included participants from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.[257]

All of these exercises share the problems common to Central Asia. The predominance of conscript soldiers means that skills learned in training and exercises are usually lost as cohorts are demobilized and replaced by new recruits.[258] The changing line-up of countries willing to participate in US-led multilateral exercises highlights the changing nature of relationships among the states in the region, as well as ups and downs in their bilateral relationships with the USA.

Bilateral cooperation

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's self-image as an emerging regional leader requires the US Government to pay increasing attention to this relationship. Military cooperation with Kazakhstan is based on a five year plan of mutual objectives that are formulated jointly by the Kazakhstan Ministry of Defence and the US Department of Defence. The most recent such plan was approved last year and covers 2013–17, with training declared an area for special focus.[259] Bilateral cooperation with Kazakhstan is more advanced than with any other Central Asian state, though in the past it has been somewhat limited by a lack of trust

[253] McDermott, 'Regional Cooperation 2012 and US security assistance efforts in Central Asia', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 28 June 2012.

[254] US Central Command, 'Regional Cooperation 13 (RC13) Planning Conference held in Germany', [n.d.], <http://www.centcom.mil/news/regional-cooperation-13-rc13-planning-conference-held-in-germany>.

[255] Stein (note 156), p. 15.

[256] North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 'Ferghana 2003 Final Press Release', 30 Apr. 2003, <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2003/ferghana/a030430b.htm>.

[257] Zagursky, E., 'Services Airmen provide shelter, food to RESCUER/MEDCEUR participants', USAFE Press release, 12 Sep. 2005, <http://www.usafe.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123017453>.

[258] McDermott (note 253).

[259] 'Kazakh, US defence delegations sign five-year cooperation plan', *Kazinform*, 11 Dec. 2012.

toward the USA among some Kazakhstani senior defence and security officials. These officials expressed these attitudes by denying permission for US assessment teams and, in some cases, trainers to travel to the region.[260]

Until recently, transit to Afghanistan has been the primary focus for US policymakers working on cooperation with Kazakhstan. All Northern Distribution Network routes pass through Kazakhstan and all US personnel heading to or from the Manas Transit Centre on their way in or out of Afghanistan fly through Kazakhstani airspace. This makes Kazakhstan the most critical node in the region for access to Afghanistan. Needless to say, ensuring that this route continues to function remains the top priority for US policymakers.[261]

Beyond transit issues, counter-proliferation has long been a focus of the bilateral relationship. Ever since it agreed to remove all Soviet nuclear weapons from its territory in the early 1990s, Kazakhstan has portrayed itself as a leader on counter-proliferation issues. In recent years, it has worked with US agencies to secure nuclear materials in Kazakhstan and this remains a particular priority for the relevant agencies at the US State Department and the US Department of Energy. However, in the recent past, assistance programmes in this area were cut back because potential Kazakhstani partners showed a reluctance to engage with US partner agencies, leaving events cancelled and allocated funds unused.[262] Kazakhstan has a better record with the Department of Energy, which has a long history of engagement in the removal of nuclear materials from Kazakhstan in the 1990s and in radiation monitoring more recently. The Second Line of Defence Program run by the department is mostly about providing monitoring equipment, rather than training.[263] The Defence Department's International Counterproliferation Program (ICP) has been conducting training in Kazakhstan since 1995. In recent years, courses conducted through this programme have included basic WMD investigative analysis, cyber crimes investigation, and combating maritime WMD proliferation.[264]

The USA provides training in counter-narcotics to all of Kazakhstan's security organizations. These courses have included basic training for interior ministry and security service personnel, canine training for interior ministry and border guard personnel, and train-the-trainer programmes for all three bureaus.[265]

The USA has had an extensive programme of cooperation in military education with Kazakhstan. Several hundred Kazakhstani officers receive training annually at US military educational facilities, with some attending

[260] CENTCOM staff, Interviews with author, Feb. 2011.

[261] US State Department officials, Interviews with author, June 2010; and US Embassy officials, Interviews with author, Astana, Dec. 2010.

[262] US State Department officials, Interviews with author, July 2010.

[263] US Department of Energy officials, Interviews with author, Aug. 2010.

[264] Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Interviews with author, June 2010.

[265] Department of State, '2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report'.

long-term courses. The USA has helped Kazakhstan establish an institute to train professional non-commissioned officers.[266]

The US military has a long history of conducting bilateral military exercises with Kazakhstan. The Balance exercise series provided the main venue for cooperation in the early years of the relationship. Balance Kayak, which took place annually in 1996–99 focused on combat medical training. Balance Zhardem took place in 1999, 2002, and 2005, with a focus on crisis response, humanitarian assistance, and refugee management. The 1999 iteration also included combat mountain training, artillery raids, and defending against a combined arms assault. Balance Bars, conducted in 2002, focused on reconnaissance and small unit tactics in desert and mountainous environments.[267]

The US Department of Defence has been particularly interested in increased the capabilities of Kazakhstan's military for peacekeeping operations. It has sought to improve the capabilities of KAZBAT, the country's peacekeeping battalion, and to help Kazakhstan expand the force to brigade strength by forming KAZBRIG. The long-running Steppe Eagle series of exercises has been focused on improving KAZBAT/KAZBRIG's capabilities. Steppe Eagle has been conducted annually since 2003, with participation of military elements from the US and U.K. In various years, special forces, national guard units, and regular military units have worked with elements of KAZBAT/KAZBRIG, Kazakhstani airborne forces, and regular units. Although participating in international peacekeeping operations was the ostensible goal of KAZBAT/KAZBRIG, the exercises have focused on a wide variety of military tasks over the years, including combating insurgency and counter-terrorism, as well as peacekeeping. In recent years, the main training goal has been to improve Kazakhstan's interoperability with NATO forces, in order to send elements of the brigade to participate in international peace support operations under either NATO or United Nations auspices. In 2008, an assessment team certified that Kazakhstan had reached a level of interoperability with NATO.[268] Since then, Kazakhstan has focused on increasing KAZBRIG's interoperability with NATO forces by sending the brigade's officers to courses in the USA and United Kingdom (UK) and setting up a training centre in Kazakhstan. At the recent Steppe Eagle 2013 exercise, the rest of KAZBRIG was evaluated for NATO interoperability. If it is assessed as meeting that standard, the entire brigade would be qualified to participate to participate in NATO or UN peace support operations.[269]

[266] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 9.

[267] Stein (note 156), pp. 7, 22.

[268] Stein (note 156), pp. 19–20; and McDermott (note 20).

[269] Richard Weitz, 'Kazakhstan Steppe Eagle Exercise Helps Sustain NATO Ties', *CACI Analyst*, Sep. 18, 2013.

Uzbekistan

The US military cooperation programme with Uzbekistan has gone through several phases. In the 1990s, cooperation took place through the framework of the Partnership for Peace, though some purely bilateral programmes were also scheduled. After 2001, cooperation accelerated as Uzbekistan granted the US basing rights for its operations in Afghanistan. All official bilateral cooperation ceased after Uzbekistan expelled the USA military from its territory in 2005 as a result of US criticism of the Andijan massacre, though interaction continued in multilateral settings. The relationship was almost completely severed for two years, leading to regret on both sides. Since 2009, cooperation has gradually been increasing.[270]

In the 1990s, Uzbekistan participated in the Balance series of Joint Combined Training Exercises with the USA. Balance Ultra was a set of joint US–Uzbekistan exercises conducted annually in the Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan in 1996–99. The exercises focused on combat medical and mountain training. These were succeeded by Balance Umbra, which took place in April 2000 near Chirchik, Uzbekistan and involved US and Uzbek special forces practicing counterinsurgency operations in mountain areas. Balance Umpire took place in June 2001 with a focus on desert operations, medical and first aid treatment, helicopter insertions, ambush techniques, and logistical planning for desert conditions. Between 1995 and 2000, 150 Uzbek officers were trained in American military institutions.[271] Starting in 1996, Uzbekistan was partnered with the Louisiana National Guard. This programme lapsed sometime after 2005. In 2012, the Mississippi National Guard was introduced as Uzbekistan's new national guard partner.[272]

Between 2001 and 2005, the USA had a fairly substantial military cooperation programme with Uzbekistan. The lynchpin of the relationship in that period was the presence of US military forces at the Karshi-Khanabad airbase. The base was used for search and rescue operations and deliveries of humanitarian aid in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Around 1,500 US soldiers were stationed at the base. In July 2005, the government of Uzbekistan gave the US notice to withdraw all units from the base within six months. The last units departed in November 2005.[273]

During this period, Uzbekistan participated in a number of US-led military exercises, especially in 2002–03 which has been described as the high water mark of the relationship.[274] These included Strong Resolve 2002, which was a multi-national NATO and PfP exercise that included participants from

[270] US State Department officials, Interviews with author, June 2013.

[271] Stein (note 156), pp. 7–8; and Peyrouse (note 24), p. 9.

[272] 'Надежность и высокое качество', *Jahon Information Agency*, 4 Mar. 2010, <http://www.jahonnews.uz/rus/rubriki/politika/nadejnost_i_visokoe_kachestvo.mgr>; and US Embassy, Tashkent, 'First Action Officer Working Group meeting for FY 13 held in Tashkent', 15 Mar. 2012, <http://uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/031512en.html>.

[273] Synovitz, R., 'Uzbekistan: US confirms end of air base agreement with Tashkent', RFE/RL, 31 July 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1060306.html>; and Stein (note 156), p. 24.

[274] US State Department officials, Interviews with author, June 2013.

Uzbekistan, that took place in March 2002 in Poland and Norway. Uzbekistan participated in a crisis response scenario in which participating states deployed outside of NATO's traditional area of responsibility in order to mediate a conflict between two hostile states. In Cooperative Safeguard 2002, NATO and its partners conducted search and rescue and humanitarian relief operations off the coast of Iceland. Finally, in Cooperative Zenith 2002, NATO and its partners conducted exercises at Moody Air Force Base in the US that were aimed at improving interoperability in multi-national air operations.[275]

The two countries resumed military ties sometime in 2008, with the first sign being the granting of US personnel permission to transit through the German airbase in Termez. In May 2009, the USA was given permission to use the Navoi airport to transport nonlethal goods to Afghanistan. In August 2009, General Petraeus signed an agreement to increase military educational exchanges and training with Uzbekistan, in exchange for military overflights of weapons to Afghanistan. The two countries resumed bilateral diplomatic consultations in December 2009, which included signing a military cooperation plan.[276] Although the two countries have not conducted any exercises since resuming cooperation, a group of newly appointed generals and admirals visited Uzbekistan as part of a National Defence University educational programme.[277]

Turkmenistan

Although the US Government officially considers Turkmenistan a partner, bilateral engagement remains relatively limited. This is an enduring consequence of Turkmenistan's profound self-isolation during the Niyazov presidency. Although President Berdymukhamedov has taken steps to re-engage Turkmenistan with the outside world, progress in the bilateral relationship has been slow. US efforts to engage Turkmenistan have been focused on maintaining an overflight corridor to Afghanistan and border policing. During the latter years of the Afghanistan operation, Turkmenistan provided limited assistance by allowing overflights and refueling of aircraft carrying humanitarian cargo to Afghanistan.[278]

Turkmenistani leaders have been interested in improving their border policing capabilities in order to deal with a serious narcotics trafficking and consumption problem in the country. This has presented the US Government with an opportunity for developing cooperation with Turkmenistan's border

[275] NATO, 'Exercise Strong Resolve 2002', Press release, 8 Apr. 2003, <http://www.nato.int/ims/2002/p020302e.htm>; NATO, 'Exercise Cooperative Safeguard 2002', Press release, 24 June 2002, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-0C096E4A-76B20995/natolive/news_19341.htm>; and NATO, 'Exercise Cooperative Zenith 2002', Press release, 5 Sep. 2002, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-856225BC-1394AB20/natolive/news_19259.htm>.

[276] Nichol (note 29), pp. 54–55.

[277] 'Seventeen US top servicemen to visit Uzbekistan', Gazeta.uz, 3 Oct. 2012.

[278] Tynan, D., 'Turkmenistan: Ashgabat hosts US military refueling, resupply operations', Eurasianet.org, 7 July 2009.

guards. While this cooperation focused initially on counter-narcotics, it also extends to preventing WMD proliferation.[279] Training programmes have focused on land and maritime interdiction, including courses on border interdiction of radioactive materials, English language, canine narcotics detection, seaport interdiction and others. Most of these courses are conducted at the country's counter-narcotics training centre.[280]

Military cooperation with Turkmenistan remains limited. Planners assess that the total number of planned events equals about five per cent of the number of events with Kazakhstan, the country with the most robust cooperation programme. Furthermore, only about half of the planned events are actually accomplished while the rest are cancelled because the Turkmenistani side changes its mind about participating. Planned events in recent years have included workshops and seminars on disaster response, consequence management, and offshore energy platform security.[281] Turkmenistan has a partnership programme with the Nevada national guard. Activities have been underway since 2002 and have included fire response, border control and search and rescue training.[282]

Kyrgyzstan

For over a decade, the security relationship between the USA and Kyrgyzstan has been centered on the Manas airbase. Kyrgyzstan allowed the USA access to this base almost immediately after the terrorist attacks on the USA of 11 September 2001. Since becoming operational in December 2001, Manas has become the main air hub supporting US military operations in Afghanistan. It is the main transit point for both personnel and cargo entering and leaving Afghanistan, and is also used for aerial refuelling, airdrops of equipment, and medical evacuations. About 1500 US military personnel are stationed at the base, while nearly 300 000 troops have passed through it annually on their way in or out of the theatre.[283] The potential closing of the base has dominated the security relationship in recent years, with an increased rent payment heading off closure in 2009 but the question arising again after the election of President Atambaev in 2011. As it currently stands, the transit centre is slated to close in 2014, and US negotiators have recently given up hope of keeping it open.[284]

In addition to the basing relationship, the USA trains Kyrgyzstan's troops in several areas. Through a partnership with the Montana National Guard that began in 1996, Kyrgyzstan's troops have received training in medicine, search

[279] US State Department officials, Interviews with author, July 2010.
[280] US Embassy officials, Interviews with author, Ashgabat, Nov. 2010.
[281] US Department of Defense officials, Interviews with author, Aug. 2010.
[282] Stein (note 156), p. 25.
[283] Nichol (note 12), p. 14.
[284] 'Kyrgyz Parliament sets date for Manas transit center closure', RFE/RL, 30 June 2013; US Department of Defense, 'DOD to relocate from the transit center at Manas International Airport and return facilities to the Government of Kyrgyzstan', Press release, 18 Oct. 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=16323>.

and rescue, and emergency response. The National Guard also works with Kyrgyzstan's Drug Control Agency.[285]

The US military has engaged in several military exercises with Kyrgyzstan. In 2003, two exercises in the Balance series took place in Kyrgyzstan. Balance Knight, conducted in January 2003, focused on mountaineering, rapid response, helicopter manoeuvres and first aid. Balance Knife, conducted in March 2003, focused on mountain combat and military medicine.[286] Over the last three years, a number of small exercises and training courses were held with Kyrgyzstan. In November 2011, US army commando instructors initiated a six-week course for Kyrgyzstan's special forces.[287] In the summer of 2012, a computer war game sought to improve computer network connectivity and data exchange as part of an effort to promote security and stability in the region.[288] In November 2012, US special forces units conducted a counter-terrorism exercise with Kyrgyzstani border troops in Batken. The scenario included a rescue operation, victim evacuation, and setting up a military field hospital. Some of the participants were then sent to a three-month training course in the USA.[289] Most recently, a joint counter-terrorism exercise was held in Tokmok in June 2013, with the programme including mountain warfare, rock climbing, firing exercises, and evacuation of wounded.[290]

Kyrgyzstan may provide an example of a case where US training has reduced violence against civilians. According to Defence Department sources, during the 2010 events in Kyrgyzstan, US-trained units returned to their barracks rather than participate in the violence. Similarly, during the May 2013 unrest in Kumtor, Kyrgyzstani special forces units fell out of communications, possibly in order to avoid shooting their own civilians.[291] This account of course cannot be independently confirmed and may be instance of Pentagon officials trying to present the most positive possible spin on a difficult and potentially embarrassing situation. However, unlike other instances of conflict between security forces and civilian protestors, the action in Kumtor, both in May and October 2013, was undertaken by police forces, rather than active military or Interior Ministry special forces units. Furthermore, it appears that there were no deaths during clashes, which confirms that restraint was used by the security forces that were present on the scene.[292]

[285] National Guard Bureau of International Affairs (J-5-IA), 'Montana National Guard state partnership program in Kyrgyzstan', <http://www.ng.mil/ia_backup/states/states/mt_kyrgyzstan.htm>.

[286] Stein (note 156), p. 7.

[287] 'Kyrgyz, US commandos begin joint training', *AKIpress*, 4 Nov 2011.

[288] 'US, Kyrgyz servicemen to have joint war game in mid-2012', Interfax, 19 Dec. 2011.

[289] 'US-Kyrgyz counter-terrorism exercise held', *Vecherniy Bishkek*, 16 Nov 2012; and Dzhamanbayev, M., 'Почему они вооружают Кыргызстан?', *Belyy Parus*, 4 Apr. 2013.

[290] 'US Central Command trains Kyrgyz commando to fight terrorists', *KirTAG*, 13 Jun 13 2013.

[291] US Department of Defense officials, Interviews with author, June 2013.

[292] 'Dozens hurt, emergency declared as Kyrgyz protesters, police clash', RFE/RL Kyrgyz Service, 31 May 2013, <http://www.rferl.org/content/kyrgyzstan-gold-mine-violence-kumtor/25002830.html>; and Trilling, D., 'Kyrgyzstan: another gold mine attacked as Kumtor protests continue', *Inside the Cocoon*, 21 Oct. 2013, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67650>.

Tajikistan

The security partnership between Tajikistan and the USA began in 1998, after the conclusion of Tajikistan's civil war. In that year, the USA began to send trainers to Tajikistan through the Joint Combined Exchange Training programme. In 2003, the Tajikistan military formed a partnership with the Virginia National Guard, which has led to exchanges on disaster response, military medicine, peacekeeping operations, and officer development.[293] In 2010, the Guard expanded its role in the partnership from purely military-to-military training to efforts to improve Tajikistan's civilian-military medical readiness and disaster response capabilities. As part of this effort, personnel from the Virginia Guard, are overseeing efforts such as an intestinal parasite eradication programme, an HIV/AIDS prevention programme, and seminars focused on developing Tajikistan's peacekeeping unit.[294]

Tajikistan offered the USA the use of its airfields in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, but the lack of capacity has largely precluded the emergency of a sizeable US military presence in the country. A small percentage of goods heading to and from Afghanistan along the Northern Distribution Network transit through Tajikistan.[295]

Formal bilateral cooperation has been stepped up in recent years, with the launch of annual bilateral consultations in 2010. The USA has particularly focused on helping Tajikistan counter smuggling and narcotics trafficking across its borders. As part of this effort, the USA funds a dedicated counter-narcotics office at its embassy in Dushanbe. The US Drug Enforcement Agency also has an office in Tajikistan. The embassy coordinates programmes to train and equip police, border guards, and other security personnel involved in counter-narcotics operations. As part of this effort, the USA is providing training to Tajikistani border guards and teaching assistance to the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.[296] Military cooperation has also focused on improving Tajikistan's peacekeeping capabilities, with the goal of eventually training and equipping a peacekeeping battalion that could deploy an infantry company for operations abroad. Enhancing Tajikistan's humanitarian demining capacity represents another area of concern.[297]

The training provided by the US military has created some controversy, notably as a result of US-trained special forces units being deployed during a conflict in Khorog in the summer of 2012. During a conflict with forces under the command of a local warlord, special forces units from the regular military, Interior Ministry, Committee for National Security, and National Guard fired at homes belonging to local commanders. Facing stronger than expected resistance, they subsequently began firing at civilians, before ultimately being

[293] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 9; Virginia National Guard, 'Virginia-Republic of Tajikistan State Partnership Program', <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/SPP/index.html>.

[294] US Central Command, 'CENTCOM, Tajikistan expand security partnership', Press release, 29 June 2010, <http://www.centcom.mil/press-releases/centcom-tajikistan-expand-security-partnership>.

[295] Nichol (note 78), pp. 13–14.

[296] Nichol (note 78), p. 15.

[297] US Central Command (note 294).

driven back. Although the total number of casualties is unclear, locals report that approximately 20 civilians were killed. These units had received a total of $9 million in funding from the US Government in 2012. This event is unlikely to be an exception, as Tajikistan's security forces are seen as frequently engaging in repressive actions against civilian opponents of the Rakhmon regime. The Committee for National Security in particular has been described by a representative of Freedom House as 'a notoriously corrupt and repressive institution, allegedly involved in drug smuggling and openly engaged in repression of legitimate political dissent'.[298] The incident highlights the danger of providing training for special forces troops in the region, since training intended for use against insurgents or terrorists may easily be used against civilian opponents of the regime.

III. Goals and consequences of US military assistance

For much of the last decade, assuring continued access for transferring supplies and personnel to Afghanistan has been the highest priority for the USA in Central Asia. Other goals, including counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and democracy promotion, have been pursued, but only rarely have they been allowed to infringe on the priority of the Afghanistan mission. The clearest example of such an infringement is the criticism of Uzbekistan in the aftermath of the Andijan massacre, which led to the severing of military cooperation for several years. These actions were regretted by both sides, leading to the gradual restart of military cooperation beginning in 2008. In a period of reduced budgets and limited resources, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan will inevitably result in a decreased emphasis on all forms of assistance to Central Asia. The region will once again become a relatively low priority for the US Department of Defence. Security assistance budgets for states in the region have already been cut in recent years and are likely to be cut further in years to come.[299]

Central Asian leaders sense that the withdrawal period presents a final opportunity to receive significant amounts of military assistance from the USA. Several Central Asian states have developed so-called wish lists of military equipment that they would like to receive from the USA and its NATO allies through the donation of equipment that is being left behind as NATO forces leave Afghanistan.[300] The countries that are most interested in such equipment include Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have the financial wherewithal to buy new equipment and are not very interested in donations of used armaments.

Much of the discussion about the extent of such assistance has overstated both the amount and significance of equipment likely to be provided and the potential impact of such assistance on regional security. Legally, the US

[298] Kucera, J., 'The Tajiks who fight their own government', *The Atlantic*, 28 June 2013.
[299] US State Department officials, Interviews with author, June 2013.
[300] Kucera, J., 'Uzbekistan's weaponry wish list getting bigger', *Bug Pit*, 1 Feb. 2013.

military is obliged to declare equipment to be excess before it can be donated to other countries. This means that Excess Defence Articles (EDA) cannot be replaced with similar but new equipment back in the USA, whereas it can be replaced if it is brought home and then turns out to be unserviceable. Therefore, the EDA process cannot be used to avoid the expense of shipping equipment out of Afghanistan if the unit might still need such equipment in the future. Furthermore, countries receiving EDA equipment would be responsible for its shipment from Afghanistan to their territory. Most Central Asian states would not be able to afford the cost of such a transfer.[301]

To date, the US Government has not agreed to transfer any excess defence equipment from the Afghanistan operation to Central Asian states. Most equipment is currently being returned to the US or scrapped onsite in Afghanistan. According to one recent report, only one per cent of equipment being withdrawn from Afghanistan is going through Central Asia.[302] Nevertheless, it seems likely that at least some EDA equipment will be transferred to Central Asian states at some point in the future. The extent of transfers will depend on whether the US signs a bilateral status of forces agreement with Afghanistan and its terms. These terms will determine the force posture in the region going forward, which will in turn affect how much equipment will need to be removed from Afghanistan and how quickly. In any case, the equipment is not likely to include major weapons systems or even small arms. More likely, it will be limited to items such as night-vision goggles, trucks, mine detection equipment, or reconnaissance UAVs to be used for border surveillance.[303]

The timing of these donations reduces the likelihood that they will be provided as a quid pro quo for Central Asian states' permission to allow the reverse transit of personnel and equipment leaving Afghanistan. At this point, agreements on transit have all been signed and the process of withdrawal from Afghanistan is well under way. Since no public announcements of equipment donations have been made to date, it appears that the two processes have been working in parallel, with limited linkage. It is of course possible that promises of assistance have been made secretly and will be announced at a later date. However, even if such announcements are made in the coming months, the security consequences of such donations will be limited. The types of donations being considered are more or less in line with the types of equipment that have been provided by the USA to states in the past. The amount of equipment being provided by the USA has always been much smaller and less strategically significant than that being provided by Russia. This trend is likely to increase over time, as the USA reduces its assistance to the region.

[301] US State Department and Defense Department officials, Interviews with author, June 2013.

[302] Ratnam, G., 'US to triple Afghan cargo shipments on Pakistan routes', Bloomberg, 13 Sep. 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-09-13/u-s-to-triple-afghan-cargo-shipments-on-pakistan-routes.html>.

[303] Ratnam (note 302).

Although the real impact of equipment provided through US military assistance is likely to be limited, the perceptions created by the potential transfer of equipment have had some impact on regional security. The public discussions of potential equipment transfers to Uzbekistan have raised concerns among its neighbours, especially Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.[304] Uzbekistan was already considered a potential threat by leaders of those two states, based on its past behaviour during periods of border tension and in conflicts over access to water resources. The prospect of Uzbekistan's acquisition of more powerful armament had the potential of completely undermining the regional balance of power. If it does turn out that the equipment provided by the US is not sufficient to pose a threat to regional security, then the perceptions of other states in the region are likely to shift back as well.

The greater threat to regional security is posed not by the potential provision of excess military equipment from ISAF forces leaving Afghanistan, but by long-standing training programmes for the region's special forces. Although the USA is by no means the only outside actor working with these forces, for well over a decade it has made special forces training a priority as part of its counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency efforts. In recent years, special forces troops trained by the US military have engaged in combat against local insurgents and have fired on unarmed protesters and other civilians in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and possibly Kazakhstan. Training programmes such as these are much less costly than equipment donations and are more likely to be maintained as part of general military assistance programming after ISAF forces leave the region. Given the ways in which forces trained by the USA have been utilized in Central Asia, both the US Government and outside observers should focus on the impact these training programmes are having on regional security and consider the extent to which they need to be modified going forward.

[304] Kucera, J., 'Are the US and Russia fueling tension between Uzbekistan and its neighbors?', *Bug Pit*, 26 Mar. 2013.

5. Assistance from other countries

While Russia and the USA are the primary providers of military and security assistance to Central Asian states, other countries also play a role in the region. The EU and its member states have been particularly active in efforts to improve local capacity in counter-narcotics and border control. European defence industry has also become the preferred alternative for Central Asian states seeking to diversify their sources of military equipment. This applies primarily to states that can afford to purchase new equipment, as donations have been limited. Turkey has sought to use cultural ties with the region to establish its role as a senior partner, though with mixed success. India has made an effort to hedge against China and Pakistan, its traditional rivals, by seeking to establish a military presence in Tajikistan. This effort has met with little success to date. China's limited role has been most significant, from a strategic point of view. While it has quickly come to dominate regional economic life, it has limited its role in the region's military and security affairs in order to avoid alienating both Russia and local populations.

I. Equipment sales and donations

Kazakhstan

Equipment from European Union member states

In recent years, Kazakhstan has shifted to European suppliers for its aircraft procurement. This was the culmination of several years of effort. The first indication that this shift was bearing fruit was the agreement in 2010 to build a facility in Astana to assemble EC145 light utility helicopters as part of a joint venture between Eurocopter and Kazakhstan Engineering. The plant will produce 45 of these helicopters through 2016, with an initial contract for six helicopters that were delivered in 2011 for use by the Emergency Situations and Defence Ministries for medical airlift and search and rescue missions, respectively. The initial agreement also called for the development of local maintenance and training capabilities in Kazakhstan.[305] Another eight helicopters were ordered in 2012, including six to be used for medical evacuations by the Ministry of Emergency Situations and two to be operated by the Ministry of Defence for search and rescue missions. These will be the first to be assembled at the new facility.[306]

In 2012, the facility expanded to include assembly of EC725 Cougar tactical transport helicopters for military use. Twenty of these helicopters are to be

[305] Eurocopter, 'Eurocopter Kazakhstan Engineering agreement signed', Press release, 29 June 2011.

[306] Eurocopter, 'Kazakhstan orders eight more Eurocopter EC145s in a government framework agreement for 45 of the twin-engine helicopters', Press release, 3 May 2012; and Francis, L., 'Back door: Russian-Kazakh free trade agreement gives EADS incentive to invest in Central Asia', *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 5 Nov. 2012.

delivered by 2020 and will be used for a range of missions to include transport, search and rescue, special operations, and naval operations.[307] In March 2013, the two companies announced plans to start assembly of EC645T2 helicopters at the facility. These helicopters are a more advanced military version of the EC145, equipped with optical and night vision systems and armed with guided missiles and a heavy machine gun. Production is expected to start in 2014, though no announcement has yet been made on the number of units that Kazakhstan will procure.[308]

As a result of these projects, the helicopter assembly joint venture has quickly become one of the most successful defence enterprises in Kazakhstan, with a capacity of 10–12 helicopters per year. Once the maintenance centre is up and running, it will be able to service 90 helicopters a year with the goal of becoming a regional centre.[309]

In 2012, Kazakhstan ordered two C-295 light transport planes from Airbus, which were delivered in January 2013. These aircraft will be based near Almaty and will be used for military transport. [310] Two more aircraft were recently ordered and Kazakhstan has an option on four more of these planes. Kazakhstan has also expressed interest in buying two A400M transport planes, which are much larger.[311] If these are procured, it would imply that discussions about the transfer of American C-130J aircraft have ended.

Kazakhstan Engineering (KE) and other Kazakhstani defence companies are also engaged in a number of other joint ventures with European companies. These include KE plans with Sagem, signed in 2010, to produce UAVs for military, border patrol, and civilian use.[312] Also in 2010, Thales and KE opened a facility in Almaty to produce secure voice and data communications devices, with 400 units scheduled to be produced by the end of 2011. The goal is eventually to manufacture these devices for export.[313] The Finmeccanica subsidiary Selex Galileo has operated a joint venture since 2007 to provide electro-optic turrets for Kazakhstan's T-72 tanks.[314]

There are also possibilities of additional projects. Kazakhstan is currently choosing a partner to engage in a joint venture to produce 3-D air defence radars, with Thales' Ground Master 400 and Indra's LANZA as the likely options. And a letter of intent between KE, MBDA France, and Indra was

[307] Eurocopter, 'The Kazakhstan government to acquire 20 multi-role Eurocopter EC725 helicopters', Press release, 10 May 2012.

[308] 'EC 645 T2 new copter presented in Astana', *Kazinfo*, 19 July 2013, <http://www.inform.kz/eng/article/2575535>.

[309] Francis (note 306).

[310] Airbus, 'Airbus Military delivers first two C295 to Kazakhstan', Press release, 16 Jan. 2013.

[311] 'Kazakhstan to buy two military transport planes made in Seville', ABC.es, 12 June 2013.

[312] Sagem, 'Sagem and Kazakhstan Engineering sign an agreement to create joint venture for drones', Press release, 2 Nov. 2010.

[313] Kucera, J., 'Kazakhstan eyes foreign partnerships', *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 9 June 2010; and 'Thales establishes an industrial presence in Kazakhstan through its joint venture company Thales Kazakhstan Engineering', *ESDPA*, 1 Aug. 2011, <http://www.esdpa.org/2011/08/thales-establishes-an-industrial-presence-in-kazakhstan-through-its-joint-venture-company-thales-kazakhstan-engineering/>.

[314] Selex, 'New Titan EO Turret order for Russia heralds another export first for SELEX S&AS', Press release, 10 Oct. 2007.

signed in 2012 to produce Exocet Block 3 anti-ship missiles as a coastal defence weapon on the Caspian Sea. Renault may become involved as the supplier of platforms for these systems.[315]

Equipment from other states

Kazakhstan Engineering has established joint ventures with several Israeli companies to develop a comprehensive set of artillery systems for the Kazakhstani armed forces. The first project was the development of the Naiza multiple rocket launcher system, signed in 2006 and based on Israel Military Industries' Lynx system. The Naiza is based on a KamAZ chassis and can fire legacy Russian Grad and Uragan rockets, although it can also use more advanced rockets. The venture produced 18 of these systems in 2008–09, which were armed with 50 Extra rockets purchased from Israel. The second project involved the production of the Semser 122mm truck-mounted howitzer, which is a derivative of the Atmos system produced by Soltam. Like the Naiza, these weapons are mounted on a KamAZ truck platform. Six of these weapons were produced in 2008–09. Soltam was also the partner for the Aibat 120mm self-propelled mortar, a version of Israel's Cardom system mounted on an MT-LB platform. Eighteen of these were produced in 2008–09. All of these artillery systems are operated through automated command and control systems provided by Soltam and Elbit. They also include integrated Orbiter mini-UAVs with a range of 30-40 kilometers, which provide aerial reconnaissance, target data and live battle damage assessment that is fed into the units' control systems.[316]

This joint venture was expected to lead to export orders from other states in the region, as well as the possibility of developing new weapons based on other Soviet legacy artillery systems, but the venture was derailed by corruption allegations against senior Kazakhstani officials involved in the original contract negotiations. The resulting investigation led to the firing of Kazakhstan's defence minister and to the cancellation of further work on the venture.[317] Although it has taken several years, cooperation with Israeli defence industry has recently shown signs of resuming. According to reports from 2012, Kazakhstan is in negotiations with Elbit to establish a joint venture to build tactical UAVs and to purchase medium UAVs directly from the company.[318]

Kazakhstan Engineering has recently signed several agreements with Turkish companies. These include joint production of Cobra wheeled armoured vehicles with Otokar. In line with other recent deals, the agreement

[315] Kucera (note 313); and Gyurosi, M., 'Kazakhstan studies Exocet as weapon for coastal defense', *Jane's Missiles & Rockets* (Oct. 2012), p. 14.

[316] Holdanowicz, G., 'Kazakhstan improves artillery with Israeli support', *Jane's International Defense Review* (Aug. 2008), p. 13.

[317] Holdanowicz, G., 'Kazakh officials arrested over alleged procurement irregularities', *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 29 Apr. 2009; Holdanowicz, G., 'Kazakh defense minister sacked', *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 1 July 2009; and 'Hopes up for Israeli arms dealer's release', UPI, 1 July 2009.

[318] Kucera, J., 'Kazakhstan outlines procurement wishlist', *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 16 May 2012.

is to assemble the Turkish vehicles in Kazakhstan. It follows a contract to buy 40 of the vehicles that was concluded in 2012.[319] A second deal will allow the Aselsan company to produce avionics systems and integrate them into EC145 helicopters being assembled in Kazakhstan. The company will also partner with KE to produce military communications systems and to provide advanced electronics for Kazakhstani tanks and armoured vehicles. Finally, the company is building a factory in Astana to produce night vision equipment for the military[320] There has also been discussion of Turkish involvement in the construction of a shipbuilding yard on the Caspian Sea.[321]

Cooperation with South Korea has been predominantly in the development of Kazakhstan's naval forces. In 2006, the navy received three Sea Dolphin class patrol boats donated by South Korea after they were retired from the South Korean Navy.[322] According to some reports, Kazakhstan failed to maintain these boats, leading to their rapid deterioration.[323] More recently, it has been negotiating a deal to purchase three Yoon Young-ha missile patrol ships from South Korea. These ships would likely replace the older Korean ships and may be armed with Korean anti-ship missiles.[324] The South Korean STX shipbuilding company has also announced that it is going to be involved in a project to build a shipbuilding yard on the Caspian that would be capable of producing ships with over 1000 tonnes of displacement.[325]

Although the two countries have extensive ties in training and education, which are described later in this chapter, Kazakhstan has procured little to no military equipment from China. China has provided some limited non-lethal defence equipment to Kazakhstan, it has largely refused to provide weapons or advanced equipment in order to avoid infringing on Russia's self-perceived role as the primary military supplier to Central Asia.[326] There have been some recent discussions about Kazakhstan purchasing Chinese UAVs, but they have not resulted in any contracts to date.[327]

Uzbekistan

Although it is clear that European defence companies have been involved in arms sales and modernization contracts with the Uzbekistan armed forces in

[319] Bekdil, B. E., and Enginsoy, U., 'Turkish Otokar to launch production in Kazakhstan', *Defense News*, 18 Oct. 2012.

[320] Kucera, J., 'With help from abroad, Kazakhstan's weapons business booming', *Bug Pit*, 5 May 2012; 'Defense firms ink three Kazakh deals', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 8 May 2012; and 'Kazakh, Turkish firms sign accord on modernizing military hardware', Interfax-Kazakhstan, 25 May 2012.

[321] 'Kazakhstan, Turkey discuss military technical cooperation', Kazinform, 13 May 2013.

[322] Nguyen, D., 'South Korea enters the Great Game', *Asia Times*, 13 May 2006.

[323] Khramchikhin, A., 'ОСК Центр против Центральной Азии', *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 22 Oct. 2010.

[324] 'Kazakhstan to purchase South Korean vessels', *Naval Technology*, 27 Jan. 2010; Dickerson, L., 'Kazakhstan may purchase Korean-built anti-ship missile', Forecast International, 25 Jan. 2010; and Voloshin (note 112).

[325] Kucera (note 320).

[326] Weitz, R., 'Kazakhstan-China military exchanges continue', *Eurasia Daily Monitor,* 9 Nov. 2012.

[327] 'Kazakhstan eyes buying Chinese drones', *Tengri News*, 10 Dec. 2012.

the post-Soviet period, very little information is available on specific programmes or contracts. In the early 2000s, France's Sagem Corporation modernized 12 Uzbekistan Mi-24 helicopters.[328] British Land Rover Defenders, manufactured under license in Turkey, were used by Uzbekistani security forces during the massacre of protesters in Andijan.[329] After those events, the European Union initiated an arms embargo against Uzbekistan that lasted for several years and included both military equipment and items that could be used in police work.[330] The sanctions were eventually lifted in 2009, allowing for the resumption of military ties as Uzbekistan became a key stop on the supply route to Afghanistan.[331] European states are also expected to provide excess military equipment to Uzbekistan as part of their withdrawal from Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has reportedly asked Germany for Eurcopters and the UK for Land Rovers or other military vehicles, though the only such transfer publicly announced to date is the donation of Land Rover parts by the UK as part of a $700 000 assistance package agreed in February 2013.[332]

Several Asian countries have recently agreed to provide border security equipment to Uzbekistan. China has allocated $4.4 million for large-scale scanning equipment at customs posts, Japan is to provide X-ray equipment worth $2.57 million, and South Korea will donate IT and communications equipment worth $1.23 million for the State Customs Committee.[333]

Turkmenistan

Israel and Georgia cooperated on an aircraft modernization project for Turkmenistan. Georgia had overhauled 43 Turkmenistani Su-25s in the early 2000s in exchange for natural gas supplies. In 2004, it upgraded one Su-25 to the Su-25KM variant, which includes improved avionics and targeting equipment supplied by Israel's Elbit Systems. There have not been any reports of additional planes being upgraded to this variant.[334]

EU states have entered the Turkmenistan arms market in recent years. The largest contract was for seven helicopters from Finmeccanica, including five AW139 transport helicopters for government use and two AW101 helicopters for VIP transport. Turkmenistan also bought from Austria 10 Survivor-2

[328] 'Aircraft Profile: Mi-24 Hind', *Air Forces Monthly* (Jan. 2008).

[329] Lyons, J., 'British equipment used in Uzbekistan massacre—claim', *The Scotsman*, 26 May 2005.

[330] Chivers, C. J., 'Europeans set arms embargo to protest Uzbeks' crackdown', *New York Times*, 4 Oct. 2005. Some European countries did not consistently adhere to this embargo. See the 'Exercises and Training' section in this chapter for more information.

[331] Castle, S., 'Europe ends its attempt to penalize Uzbekistan', *New York Times,* 28 Oct. 2009.

[332] 'Kyrgyz PM says US airbase closure not affect relations with NATO countries', *AKIpress*, 15 Feb. 2013; McDermott, R., 'NDN reverse transit, Uzbekistan and the failure of western grand strategy (part two)', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 2 Apr. 2013; and Kramer (note 226).

[333] 'Uzbekistan to attract US$24.404m grants to modernize customs service', *Uzdaily*, 10 Apr. 2013, <http://www.uzdaily.com/articles-id-22675.htm>.

[334] Mladenov, A., 'Flying Fortress', *Air Forces Monthly*, (July 2009).

armoured personnel carriers and five Diamond DA42 aircraft for border patrol, pipeline surveillance and detecting drug smuggling.[335]

In 2010 Turkmenistan ordered two P-1200 patrol boats from Turkey, equipped with Thales Variant 2D radars, Oto Melara 40mm gun systems, and Aselsan STOP turrets. These boats are being assembled and fitted out in Turkmenistan. The first was delivered in 2012, while the second is expected this year.[336] Just recently, Turkmenistan signed a contract to buy eight additional ships of this type, with improved armaments including 'four anti-ship missiles, two remote-controlled MANPADS-sized surface-to-air missile launchers, a 40 mm main gun, a six-barreled anti-submarine mortar, two remote-controlled 12.7 mm guns and two remote-controlled 25 mm guns'.[337] The maritime border guard also operates several Iranian patrol boats that it leased a decade ago. In the future, if plans for Hyundai Amco to build a $130 million shipbuilding and repair facility in Turkmenbashi come to fruition, it may build more ships domestically.[338]

Kyrgyzstan

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Turkey has been one of the main suppliers of equipment to the Kyrgyzstan armed forces, providing military and technical assistance worth $9 million.[339] In recent years, this has included items such as ambulances, transport vehicles, night vision goggles, uniforms, gas masks, body armor, and portable radios. Much of the equipment has been providing to law enforcement bodies as part of an effort to improve effectiveness in policing public protests. Uniforms were also provided for the border guards.[340] Turkey renovated the Kyrgyz national military school and has agreed to build an Armed Forces Military Institute in Osh.[341] Most recently, Turkey agreed to give Kyrgyzstan $1 million of assistance to be used to buy products and services from Turkey's defence industry.[342]

In 2011 Kazakhstan began to provide military assistance to Kyrgyzstan. The $3 million package included nine GAZ-66 vehicles, 11 ZIL-131 vehicles, five BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers with weapons and 30 PM-120 mortars. It

[335] Chuter, A. and Peniston, B., 'Market expands for light ISR aircraft', *Defense News*, 27 June 2011; Walters, B., 'Austrian vehicle penetrates Middle East market', Eurosatory 2010, 14 June 2010; and Kington, T., 'Finmeccanica sells Helos to Turkmenistan', *Defense News*, 4 Nov. 2010.

[336] Oto Melara, 'A 2010 right on the mark!', Press release, 17 Jan. 2011; 'Turkish And Turkmen presidents take a ride on a Coast Guard vessel', Turkish Navy blog, 4 Mar. 2012; and AMI International Inc., 'Turkmenistan moves to revamp its Soviet-era sea services', *Seapower International*, Dec. 2011, <http://www.seapower-digital.com/seapower/201112?pg=56#pg56>, pp. 54–55.

[337] Kucera, J., 'Turkmenistan makes another quiet purchase of warships', *Bug Pit*, 6 June 2013.

[338] Kucera, 'Turkmenistan developing locally made coast guard ship', *Bug Pit*, 9 Apr. 2012.

[339] 'Turkey to extend more support to Kyrgyz armed forces', *Anatolia*, 2 Feb. 2011.

[340] Andreyev, D., 'The Caspian force aspires to conquer', *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 27 Sep. 2011; 'Turkey has provided assistance to Kyrgyzstan in the framework of military-technical cooperation', *Trend*, 4 Nov. 2011; and Dzhamanbayev, M., 'Почему они вооружают Кыргызстан?" *Belyy Parus*, 4 Apr. 2013.

[341] 'Kyrgyz, Turkish defence ministers discuss cooperation', *AKIpress*, 16 Jan. 2012; and Kucera, J., 'Turkey promises to boost military aid to Kyrgyzstan', *Bug Pit*, 19 Jan. 2012.

[342] 'Turkey to give Kyrgyzstan 1.1m dollars in military aid', *AKIpress*, 19 June 2013.

also agreed to set up a joint venture in Kyrgyzstan to repair and upgrade Kyrgyzstan's tanks.[343]

Around the same time, India offered to establish a joint high-altitude military research centre in Bishkek. 'The centre is to host 20 Indian soldiers at a time, and be based in Bishkek with a field station in the mountains outside the city'.[344]

China has reportedly provided several million dollars of military assistance to Kyrgyzstan over the last decade, though almost no information is publicly available on the extent to which equipment was included in the effort. One recent announcement noted that in April 2013, 52 buses and one set of musical instruments were provided by China to the Kyrgyzstani military. The equipment that has been transferred over the years is thus unlikely to be significant in military terms.[345]

Several countries and organizations have provided assistance to Kyrgyzstan's border guard. NATO is helping Kyrgyzstan to renovate its border posts and arms depots.[346] Japan has provided funding for a $1.5 million automated border control system being implemented with assistance from the International Organization for Migration. The system can register personal data of persons crossing the border and automatically exchanges data among 15 border checkpoints.[347]

Tajikistan

India has provided extensive aid to Tajikistan, beginning in 2002 with a long running project to renovate the Ayni air base. This project sought to enable the base to be used for fighter jet operations by repaving and extending the runway, building new air traffic control facilities, installing perimeter fencing, and building three hardened shelters. Indian leaders were clearly hopeful that Tajikistan would grant India permission to base units of its air force at Ayni, but these plans were dashed because of resistance on the part of Russian authorities. The base became operational in 2006, though all of the construction was not completed until 2010.[348] Since then, India has provided other military equipment to Tajikistan, including some Mi-17 helicopters, some trucks, and a commitment to establish a hospital in southern Tajikistan.[349]

[343] Kucera, J. 'Kyrgyzstan to upgrade its tanks with Kazakhstan's support', *Bug Pit*, 21 Apr. 2011; and 'Kyrgyzstan gets 3m dollar military hardware in aid from Kazakhstan', *KirTAG,* 9 Dec. 2011.

[344] Kucera, J., 'India boosts military ties with Kyrgyzstan', *Bug Pit*, 5 July 2011.

[345] 'China granted Kyrgyzstan military-technical assistance', *Kabar.kg*, 22 Apr. 2013, <http://kabar.kg/eng/society/full/6935>.

[346] Kucera, J., 'NATO to aid Kyrgyzstan on border posts, arms depots', *Bug Pit*, 11 May 2011.

[347] 'Foreign partners to allocate $1.5 mln to automate Kyrgyz border control system', Interfax, 13 Feb. 2012.

[348] Kucera, J., 'India reportedly basing helicopters, fighter jets in Tajikistan', *Bug Pit*, 14 Dec. 2011; and Kucera, J., 'India sets up military hospital in Tajikistan', *Bug Pit*, 18 Apr. 2013.

[349] 'Indian Defense Ministry donates helicopter, trucks to Tajikistan', Interfax, 20 Feb. 2013; 'India to help Tajikistan set up hospital', *Deccan Herald*, 7 June 2013; and Bhatia, V. K. J., 'Deepening strategic ties India-Tajikistan', *India Strategic* (May 2013), pp. 40–43.

In past years, Tajikistan has received small arms from Central European states, including 120 rifles and carbines, 200 submachine guns, 76 assault rifles, 100 light machine guns, 200 handheld grenade launchers, and 6 60-mm mortars from Bulgaria and 100 rifles and carbines, 29 light machine guns, and 195 heavy machine guns from Serbia.[350]

Kazakhstan has recently agreed to donate unspecified weapons and ammunition to Tajikistan, as well as offering to training Tajik servicemen at Kazakh military educational establishments.[351]

II. Exercises and training

China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

China has strenuously avoided taking any steps that might be seen as infringing on Russia's position as the key security partner for Central Asian states. It prefers to free ride on Russian security initiatives, while cementing its economic links in the region. Although China has provided very little in the way of weapons and equipment to Central Asian states, it has had a long-term programme of conducting training and military exercises with them. The majority of these exercises are carried out under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in order to assuage Russian sensitivities about Chinese dominance in the region. In fact, bilateral Chinese initiatives in Central Asia are often labelled as SCO initiatives in order to make them more palatable for Russia.

The earliest SCO exercise, entitled Vzaimodeisvie (Cooperation) 2003, took place in August 2003 in Kazakhstan and China, with additional participants from Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The scenario involved hostage rescue and counter-terrorism operations.[352] Beginning in 2005, Peace Mission has served as the main SCO military exercise series. Peace Mission has been held more or less biannually. Although the 2005 and 2009 and 2013 iterations were essentially bilateral Russian–Chinese military exercises held in the Far East, the 2007, 2010, and 2012 exercises included participants from most SCO member states. Peace Mission 2007 took place in Russia and China with participation of all SCO member states. The scenario involved training to deal with a terrorist group with local popular support taking over an urban area, a situation that had parallels to actual events in Dagestan in 1999 and Andijan in 2005. Assessments of the exercise showed that China remained somewhat leery of increasing military cooperation through the SCO.[353] Peace Mission

[350] Kucera, J., 'Tajikistan buying guns; Ukraine selling weapons to both Armenia and Azerbaijan', *Bug Pit*, 8 Aug. 2011.

[351] 'Tajikistan, Kazakhstan agree to boost military cooperation', Tajikistan Television First Channel, 15 Apr. 2013, Open Source Center CEL2013041558278020.

[352] Zhagiparov, T., 'Охота на террористов. Итоги учений ШОС Взаимодействие-2003', *Novoe Pokolenie*, 15 Aug. 2003, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1061153340>.

[353] de Haas, M., 'The Peace Mission 2007 exercises: the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation advances', Central Asian Series 07/28, Advanced Research and Assessment Group, Sep. 2007, <http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20070900_cscp_paper_haas.pdf>.

2010 focused on improving interoperability among SCO states in responding to armed separatists and terrorists. China showed a willingness to increase its involvement, sending air assets outside its territory for the first time. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, refused to participate, showing signs of a cooling relationship with Russia and China.[354] Peace Mission 2012 took place in Tajikistan, once again without Uzbekistani participation. The scenario involved a combined arms assault on a village in mountainous terrain held by armed terrorists. Statements by Chinese officials indicated that they remained wary of increasing the military and security component of the SCO, while Russia used the exercise to train forces dedicated to the CSTO. This showed the differences in approach between the two regional powers toward Central Asian security.[355]

The SCO has also conducted since 2006 conducted annual counter-terrorism exercises with the involvement of a range of security agencies. The first of these was the Vostok 2006 anti-terror exercise, held in Tashkent in March 2006 with participation of all SCO members. The exercise was conducted through the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) and included both special forces and law enforcement units. The scenario focused on hostage rescue and protecting infrastructure (including a nuclear reactor) from terrorist groups.[356] The following year, the Issyk-Kul anti-terror exercise was held in Kyrgyzstan, again with participation of all SCO members. It also included observers from India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan. The scenario was the somewhat familiar one of hostage rescue and defeating militants holding a village in a mountainous area. As with the previous exercise, participants included both special forces and members of law enforcement.[357] The Norak 2009 anti-terror exercise was held in Tajikistan and focused on special forces dealing with a crisis situation that results in a hostage negotiation.[358] Similar exercises have been held in subsequent years. Most recently, Kazygurt 2013 took place in Kazakhstan.[359]

In addition to the SCO exercises, China has carried out occasional bilateral exercises with Central Asian states. The earliest of these was Exercise-01, an exercise with Kyrgyzstan that took place in 2002 and involved border protection against an armed group.[360] Vzaimodeistvie 2006 was a bilateral exercise with Tajikistan that took place near Kulyab. It involved 450 soldiers and a Chinese aviation unit in a mountain warfare scenario that also included a

[354] Boland, J., 'Learning from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's 'Peace Mission-2010' Exercise', Brookings, 29 Oct. 2010, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2010/10/29-asia-war-games-boland>.

[355] McDermott, R., 'China Leads SCO Peace Mission 2012 in Central Asia', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 26 June 2012.

[356] 'RATS held anti-terrorism exercise in Uzbekistan', *CEF Weekly Newsletter*, 6 Mar. 2006, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/CEF/Weekly/March_6-12_2006.pdf>.

[357] Sidorov, O., 'Иссык-Куль - Антитеррор 2007 - уравнение с тремя неизвестными', Gazeta.kz, 5 June 2007, <http://articles.gazeta.kz/art.asp?aid=92028>.

[358] 'SCO exercises Norak-Antiterror-2009 began in Tajikistan', *Trend*, 17 Apr. 2009, <http://en.trend.az/regions/casia/tajikistan/1457283.html>.

[359] 'Kazakh security chief praises anti terror exercises', Interfax-Kazakhstan, 13 June 2013.

[360] Stein (note 156), p. 14.

hostage rescue.[361] Chinese law enforcement, border police, and special forces personnel have been involved in the two Tianshan exercises held to date. The first of these took place in 2006 with Kazakhstan and included an armed confrontation between border police and terrorists, albeit with the use of helicopter gunships and armoured vehicles. The second exercise took place in Xinjiang and included Chinese, Tajikistani and Kyrgyzstani law enforcement and security personnel fighting against terrorists in the border region. The most interesting aspect of the Tianshan exercises is that they appear to be quite openly aimed against the threat of Uyghur separatists, which is a topic close to the heart of Chinese security services.[362] Small numbers of officers from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have also received training at Chinese military academies.[363]

China and Kazakhstan have developed a relatively close security partnership in recent years. Kazakhstan considers China one of its priority defence partners. Their interactions are focused on non-traditional threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, humanitarian crises and border security. More than 100 members of the Kazakhstani armed forces have received education and training in Chinese military academic institutions since 2003. The two countries have conducted joint border patrols since 2009.[364] In December 2012, the two countries signed an agreement to increase military cooperation, though no specific activities were announced publicly at the time. Bilateral cooperation remains limited by differences in military culture, language barriers, Chinese reluctance to challenge Russia's pre-eminence in Central Asian security, and Kazakhstan's fears of Chinese domination.[365]

European states and multi-national organizations

NATO and European states have been involved in a number of training and education initiatives with Central Asian states. All five states are members of the Partnership for Peace programme, though only Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan have been involved in the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP), though cooperation with Uzbekistan was suspended from 2005 to 2010 because of the Andijan incident. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have both sent troops to NATO exercises. Turkmenistan has not been involved in any exercises with NATO because of its neutrality status.

[361] 'Китай и Таджикистан проводят совместные антитеррористические учения Взаимодействие-2006', 23 Sep. 2006, <http://russian.china.org.cn/international/txt/2006-09/23/content_2262418.htm>.

[362] 'China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan complete anti-terror drills', RIA-Novosti, 7 May 2011; and Kucera, J., 'Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan take part in anti-Uyghur terror exercise in China', *The Bug Pit*, 9 May 2011.

[363] Peyrouse (note 24), p. 10.

[364] Parpura, O., 'High impulse to military education', Kazakhstan Ministry of Defense, 2 Nov. 2012, <http://www.mod.gov.kz/mod-en/index.php/faq/740-high-impulse-to-military-education>; and 'Chinese and Kazakhstani militaries hold 1st joint border patrol in 2011', *Jiefangjun Bao*, 11 Feb. 2011, Open Source Center CPP20110214708009.

[365] 'China, Kazakhstan agree to enhance military-to-military cooperation', Xinhua, 5 Dec. 2012; and Weitz, R., 'Kazakhstan-China military exchanges continue', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 9 Nov. 2012.

Kazakhstan has the most extensive relationship with NATO and is the only country to have an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with the organization. It is the only Central Asian country to have hosted NATO exercises on its soil. In addition to the Steppe Eagle exercises discussed above, Kazakhstan hosted a disaster response exercise called Zhetysu in 2009 as part of its work with the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).[366] Since 2008, NATO has operated a training centre in Almaty, though some analysts believe that the centre's impact on the functioning of the Kazakhstan armed forces is marginal at best.[367]

The OSCE is also involved in security cooperation in Central Asia. The organization has offices in all five countries. Its activities in Kazakhstan are focused on countering international terrorism, border security improvements, controlling small arms, and assisting with police reform. In Uzbekistan, the organization works on combating terrorism, violent extremism, and drug trafficking by training police and interior ministry troops. In Turkmenistan, the OSCE has trained personnel from the border guards, customs service, interior ministry and national security service to combat terrorism and organized crime, prevent smuggling of narcotics and human trafficking, and strengthen border security. In September 2012, it conducted a training session to improve the navy's sea patrol capabilities.[368] OSCE training in Kyrgyzstan has focused on policing, border security and counter-terrorism. In Tajikistan, the focus is on counter-terrorism and police assistance, border management, and weapons disposal activities. The OSCE has taken primary responsibility for training Tajikistan's border guards since the departure of Russian border guards in 2005. This has included developing a national border strategy and training border guards to detect and prevent illegal movement across the border. The OSCE has also set up a Border Management Staff College, which provides training for senior officers from border services throughout the region.[369] Despite a long history of engagement with Central Asian states on security assistance, OSCE programmes have suffered from the lack of an overarching strategy for transforming internal security services. This has at times led the organization to support initiatives that are ineffective and may undermine the OSCE's core mission of promoting democratic principles and human rights.[370]

Several NATO member states have developed bilateral relations with Central Asian states. Turkey has the longest history of cooperation, providing training to officers from the region since the 1990s. Turkey and Kyrgyzstan have developed an extensive military training programme. The two countries

[366] 'Zhetysu 2009', NATO news, 14 May 2009, <http://www.nato.int/eadrcc/2009/09-zhetysu/090306.html>.

[367] McDermott, R., 'Kazakhstan downplays NATO's role in Central Asia', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 9 Oct. 2012.

[368] 'OSCE-run naval training under way at Turkmen sea port', *Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, 15 Sep. 2012, Open Source Center IAP20120916950124.

[369] Stein (note 156), pp. 27–29.

[370] Lewis, D., 'Reassessing the role of OSCE police assistance programing in Central Asia', OSCE Occasional Paper No. 4, Apr. 2011.

have an arrangement that allows Kyrgyzstani soldiers to receive free training from Turkey. In recent months, Turkish trainers have taught courses in Kyrgyzstan on landing and diversionary skills, while Kyrgyz specialists were sent to Istanbul for training in communications. Turkmenistan has sent officers and security services personnel to Turkish military academies.[371] France has also conducted regular exercises in Central Asia, including annual exercises with Tajikistani and Kyrgyzstani military forces.[372] France has stationed forces at Dushanbe airport since 2002 in support of its Afghanistan operations.[373] Since 2002, Germany has leased facilities at Termez that it has used as a support base for its operations in Afghanistan. It continued to use this base during 2005–09, when EU sanctions against Uzbekistan were in place due to the Andijan massacre, and allowed US forces access starting in 2008. In fact, it appears that desire to ensure continued access to the base played a role in Germany's ultimately successful efforts to have the sanctions lifted.[374] Germany has also trained Uzbekistani officers throughout the last decade. In fact, there are some indications that this training continued during the period sanctions were in place.[375]

India

In the last decade, India has sought to increase its influence in Central Asia. It has approached this goal primarily by focusing on building a relationship with Tajikistan. In 2002, the two countries signed a bilateral defence agreement in 2002, which led to India refurbishing the Ayni air base. In 2003, the two countries conducted a joint military exercise that focused on counter-terrorism operations and involved a special forces unit from India and an air assault brigade from Tajikistan. India has also trained hundreds of Tajikistan's military officers at its educational facilities in specialties such as helicopter pilots and navigators, paratroopers, signals and artillery officers. However, India's role in Tajikistan has remained limited. Possibly because of Russian pressure, it was not allowed to base its military forces at Ayni after renovating the base. And the bulk of Tajikistan's military personnel continue to be trained in Russia.[376]

[371] 'Kyrgyz, Turkish commandos hold exercises', *KirTAG*, 23 Oct. 2012; Dzhamanbayev, M., 'Почему они вооружают Кыргызстан?', *Belyy Parus*, 4 Apr. 2013; and Peyrouse (note 24), p. 10.

[372] 'Tajik-French joint military drills under way near capital', *Central Asian News*, 26 May 2011; and 'French instructors to teach Kyrgyz special task forces to use paragliders', Interfax, 28 Nov. 2011.

[373] Peyrouse, S., 'France and Central Asia', EUCAM European National Policies Series, Nov. 2012, p. 3.

[374] Tynan, D., 'Uzbekistan: veil is lifted on German payments for Termez base', *Eurasianet.org*, 24 Mar. 2011.

[375] Holtom, P. and Bromley, M., 'The Limitations of European Union Reports on Arms Exports: The Case of Central Asia', SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security 2010/5, Sep. 2010, pp. 13–14.

[376] Plater-Zyberk, H., 'Tajikistan, waiting for a storm?', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Central Asian Series 04/13 (May 2004), <www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/04(13)-HPZ.pdf>, p. 10; Sodiqov, A., 'India's relations with Tajikistan: beyond the airbase', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 22 Feb. 2011; and Sodiqov, A., 'The limits of Indian military's role in Tajikistan', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 31 Jan. 2012.

India has also made some moves for influence in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, though these have not been very significant. The relationship with Kyrgyzstan has been focused primarily on defence industrial cooperation, with plans mooted for India to take over the Dastan plant, which produces rocket-propelled Shkval torpedoes.[377] In 2011, India and Kazakhstan signed a series of cooperation agreements, though these were primarily focused on trade, energy, and space exploration, rather than military and security issues.[378] Overall, India is poised to remain a second-tier player in the Central Asian military and security sphere, with a much less significant role than even China.

III. Goals and consequences of military assistance from other states

Military assistance to Central Asia from states other than Russia and the USA has been limited in nature. European states are primarily focused on improving border security in the region, in part because of the threat posed to Europe by narcotics flows from Afghanistan. They have also pursued arms sales to countries that can afford to buy equipment from European defence industry, primarily Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The emergence of numerous joint ventures between European defence firms and Kazakhstan Engineering may be a sign of the future direction of military cooperation between European and Central Asian states.

Israel has played a surprisingly large role in security assistance to the region. Israel's foray into the region is consistent with its long-term effort to build security partnerships with those Muslim states that are willing to work with it. Central Asia is particularly important for this effort given the proximity of Iran. The existence of sizeable community of immigrants from the region living in Israel has helped to establish contacts and to build trust between Israel and its Central Asian partners.

After experiencing disappointment in the 1990s when its hopes of being the senior partner in a grand pan-Turkic alliance did not bear fruit, Turkey has scaled down its ambitions in the region. Nevertheless, it remains one of the primary providers of military equipment and training assistance to the region's Turkic states. Aid is provided primarily on Kyrgyzstan, while Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are the targets of efforts to develop commercial ties by Turkish defence industry. Turkey's designation as a SCO dialogue partner has so far produced more symbolic capital than practical impact on regional cooperation.[379] Turkey is likely to remain an important partner for Central

[377] Muzalevsky, R., 'India seeks to project power in and out of Central Asia', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 17 Oct. 2011. See chapter 2 for more information on Dastan's likely future.

[378] Muzalevsky, R., 'India and Kazakhstan bolster their strategic partnership', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 11 May 2011.

[379] Kucera, J., 'Turkey may be SCO "partner", but not even invited to summit', *Bug Pit*, 25 Sep. 2013.

Asian states, while remaining largely outside of nascent efforts at regional cooperation.

Chinese assistance has been even more limited, because of both its unwillingness to displace Russia as the primary actor in the security sphere in the region and local governments' fear of Chinese domination. Even as it becomes the main external economic actor in the region, China has sought to assuage Russian sensitivities about potentially losing its pre-eminent role in Central Asian security by allowing Russia to take the lead on security and military engagement with Central Asian states. Local rulers are worried about China's rapid entry into the region and do not trust China's long term intentions. This has contributed to Chinese calculations largely to stay out of the Central Asian security sphere for the moment. Furthermore, Russia's willingness to bear the burden of maintaining regional security has allowed China to free ride on Russian investments in Central Asian security.

To the extent that China has been involved in Central Asian security assistance, it has been careful to go through the multilateral forum of the SCO, though this organization is primarily a talking shop for the leaders of its member states rather than a full-fledged international security organization. For now, China appears set to allow Russia to continue to play the dominant role in Central Asian security, while China focuses on developing economic ties and securing needed energy resources. This may change if the security situation in the region begins to deteriorate, especially if Chinese leaders come to feel that Russia is not up to the task of maintaining security. In that case, China would be likely to step up its security assistance programme in order to ensure that its investments in the region's economic and energy spheres are protected.

Finally, Indian penetration of the region remains quite limited. Since efforts to establish a military presence in Tajikistan ended several years ago without result, India has been relatively circumspect in its efforts to increase its influence in the region. While it continues to hope to establish a presence in the region to counter its traditional rivals Pakistan and China, it has avoided taking steps that would antagonize either of those countries or Russia.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

As currently constituted, the military forces of Central Asian states are fairly limited in their capabilities. Local leaders have devoted more effort and resources to developing their internal security forces, since they see these forces as far more necessary for the survival of their regimes. This choice is telling in that despite rhetoric about the potential threat of radical Islamist infiltration from Afghanistan, most Central Asian regimes are far more concerned about the possibility of being overthrown by internal opponents. Despite the outward appearance of strength and stability, Central Asian regimes are riven by infighting, weakened by corruption, and opposed by large swaths of their countries' inhabitants because of high levels of social inequality and, in some countries, repression.[380] The Kyrgyzstan example is particularly worrying to these regimes, as it demonstrates how quickly a local regime can lose power in the face of popular unrest.

Despite years of largely half-hearted reform efforts, Central Asian states' armed forces remain primarily based on equipment and doctrine used by the Soviet Union before these states' independence. Efforts at modernization have progressed to some extent, but have been limited in most states by a lack of financing (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) or a limited understanding of modern military strategy (Turkmenistan). Only Kazakhstan has begun to make some progress in transforming its military into a more modern force, and even there changes have been limited by continued adherence to Soviet legacy ideas.[381]

Most of the states in the region have focused on developing their special forces and internal security capabilities, rather than other aspects of their military forces. Given the nature of the threats they face and limited resources, these choices make sense strategically. However, engagements by these forces in recent years throughout the region show that even when they receive outside assistance and a disproportionate share of domestic security spending, they may not be up to the task of maintaining order against determined adversaries. The weakness of these forces is demonstrated by the failures of Tajikistan's security forces in Khorog and those of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat to deal successfully with armed groups engaged in narcotics trafficking, as well as the inability or unwillingness of Kyrgyzstan's security forces to prevent the overthrow of the Bakiyev regime and to prevent ethnic cleansing in Osh in 2010. While the lack of publicly available data on the capabilities of Central Asian internal security forces makes it difficult to assess their preparedness to deal with potential security threats, their track record in past incidents shows that in responding to future incidents they are likely either to

[380] Radnitz, S. and Laruelle, M., 'Will Afghanistan take Central Asia down with it?', *National Interest*, 1 Aug. 2013, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/will-afghanistan-take-central-asia-down-it-8815>.

[381] McDermott, R., 'Kazakhstan's 2011 Military Doctrine: reassessing regional and international security', Foreign Military Studies Office.

fail to deal with the threat or else to deal with it in a manner that leads to excessive civilian casualties.

I. Efforts to manipulate threat perceptions to increase local power

The Central Asian states have for years successfully manipulated the competition among world and regional powers for influence in the region to achieve their own political and strategic goals. The price of access to the region has been that outside powers have had to accept the local rules that govern how regional elites operate.[382] As the withdrawal of the USA and NATO from Afghanistan approached, the Central Asian states stepped up their efforts to reap maximum rewards from the competition for regional influence before one of the key players departed from the scene. The strengthening of local military and security forces has been one of several goals pursued by local leaders in this goal. While important, it has a lower priority than ensuring regime survival or maximizing financial flows to key members of the elite. Nevertheless, local regimes have played up the possibility of regional instability and especially of external threats to the region to obtain new equipment for their military and security forces. They have been helped in this effort by statements by various Russian and US officials highlighting the potential threat posed by the spread of radical Islam into Central Asia. In one recent example, Representative Dana Rohrabacher explicitly connected this threat to the desirability of providing surplus US military equipment such as MRAP armoured vehicles to Uzbekistan.[383] While such statements do not actually represent US policy, they can easily be taken as such by Central Asian officials unfamiliar with the intricacies of the US political system. And even if they understand the difference between the legislative and executive branch, they can use such statements to shape the regional security environment.

Much of the attention paid in recent months to the question of whether Russia and the United states will provide military equipment to the region stems from these efforts by local leaders to maximize potential assistance at a time when they see that their leverage is about to decline precipitously in the aftermath of the US withdrawal from the region. Central Asian leaders are well aware of the weaknesses demonstrated by their security forces in recent years. In this environment, the news that a country has reached an agreement to receive military equipment from a major world or regional power can be used to demonstrate a potential increase in capabilities to various opponents and competitors. The period through the end of 2014 thus presents Central Asian leaders with an opportunity to create perceptions of improvements in

[382] Cooley (note 210).

[383] Rohrabacher, D., 'Letter to Secretary of State John Kerry', 26 June 2013, <http://rohrabacher.house.gov/sites/rohrabacher.house.gov/files/documents/Rep%20Rohrabacher%20to%20Sec%20Kerry%20June%2026%202013.pdf>.

capabilities that may prove helpful in both deterring insurgents and strengthening their position in regional power struggles.

The focus on potential US assistance to Central Asia in particular has also been driven by Russian officials and media, seeking to justify an increase in Russian presence in the region despite the likely US withdrawal. The Russian foreign policy narrative for the region has been strongly connected to maximizing the potential threat posed by radical Islamist infiltration while simultaneously condemning the continued US presence in the region. Highlighting potential US equipment donations serves two concurrent purposes: encouraging the perception that the Islamist threat is real (since the US is ostensibly providing equipment to counter it) while showing that the US continues to seek to influence the region despite its pending withdrawal from Afghanistan and from its Central Asian base at Manas.[384] The increased attention brought to the issue of foreign military assistance for Central Asia by Russian publicity has thus also helped to increase threat perceptions in the region.

II. The impact of foreign assistance on military capabilities

The extent to which these efforts are likely to result in stronger military forces varies by country. The countries that can afford to pay for equipment will over time be able to strengthen their forces. Kazakhstan has been particularly clever at using military imports to modernize its domestic defence industry, potentially creating a base for a long-term system for providing its military forces with new equipment. Turkmenistan, on the other hand, has bought new equipment without first formulating a plan for how such equipment might be used in the future. Many outside observers believe that its military is primarily designed for show, as part of the accoutrements of leadership that the president can show off in military parades. Uzbekistan's military modernization programme is proceeding slowly, as the country's forces are already much stronger than those of most of its neighbours. Instead, Uzbekistan has emphasized internal security and is likely to continue to focus on strengthening those forces in coming years.

Countries that depend primarily on foreign assistance for their military modernization are unlikely to achieve much progress in their efforts, as none of the outside powers are interested or able to provide assistance in the amounts that would be needed to truly strengthen Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan's armed forces. Instead, these two countries' armed forces will continue to subsist on the relatively limited military assistance provided by Russia and, to a lesser extent, by the USA. Even the $1 billion of military assistance being provided by Russia to Kyrgyzstan in exchange for continued basing rights will not be sufficient to do more than replace aging and outdated equipment, without a major improvement in capabilities.

[384] For an interesting take on this phenomenon see Kucera, J., 'US Military leaving Kyrgyzstan? Russians aren't buying it', *Bug Pit*, 30 Oct. 2013.

Despite the extensive publicity generated by the deals for Russian military assistance in exchange for basing rights in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and the possibility that the USA may be willing to donate excess military equipment as it departs from Afghanistan, the reality is that this assistance is going to at most have a modest impact on these states' military capabilities. Both Russia and the USA are likely to provide primarily non-lethal equipment. Given the limitations of Russian defence industry, Russian assistance will consist primarily of older armaments and equipment that are being retired from the Russian armed forces. The USA will also donate used equipment that may have a limited lifespan. Furthermore, local military personnel are by and large unfamiliar with Western military equipment, limiting its usefulness unless the receiving countries contract for training in its use. The bulk of the assistance is likely to consist of trucks, small arms, and other relatively low-technology armaments, as these states simply do not have the experience and training to make use of advanced equipment.

Finally, the assistance that might be provided is unlikely to be sustained for the long term. Western assistance is largely connected to the departure from Afghanistan and is highly unlikely to be renewed once that process is complete. The USA has already begun to reduce the amount of security assistance being provided to Central Asian states. Given ongoing budget cuts, this process will likely accelerate after the withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan is complete. Given the lack of competition from China in the security assistance realm, Russian assistance will most likely be reduced once Russian leaders are satisfied that their position is no longer being challenged by the USA.

The situation is a bit different when it comes to armaments being purchased from abroad, rather than being provided with assistance. Both Western and Russian partners are aware that some Central Asian states are perfectly capable of being able to afford to buy new weapons and equipment. For Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (and, to a lesser extent, Uzbekistan), future improvements in military capabilities will be fed by purchases of foreign arms. Here, European defence industry is in a particularly strong position, as it is seen in the region as a politically safer choice when compared to purchasing armaments from the USA. While Russian arms are significantly cheaper, they are limited by the capacity and reliability problems that plague Russian defence industry. As a result, Kazakhstan has in recent years increasingly pursued a strategy of diversifying its arms imports and especially of developing joint ventures with European and Turkish companies for production of weapons and equipment in Kazakhstan under license. This strategy is likely to continue in the future as Kazakhstan gradually shifts away from primary dependence on Russian imports in certain categories of armaments.

III. The impact of foreign assistance on the capabilities of security services

External military assistance is thus unlikely to have much of an impact on regional security and stability, simply because none of the states in the region are receiving or are planning to receive in the future enough external support to shift regional power dynamics appreciably. The greater danger is in small arms and basic military equipment being provided to internal security agencies, either directly by donor states or through transfers from the relevant military forces. As seen in past events in Andijan, Osh, and Zhanaozen, relatively basic equipment can be used with great effect against domestic opponents, who are at most lightly armed and almost always completely unarmed. The use of foreign equipment against unarmed domestic opponents has the potential to be highly embarrassing for the donor states, as shown by the extensive attention paid to the provenance of tear gas canisters used against protesters in Egypt during the Arab Spring.[385]

Officials at the US Department of Defence have highlighted that they do not provide lethal military equipment to internal security forces and have furthermore noted that any transfers to internal security services of equipment provided by the USA to local armed forces would be a violation of various agreements that could lead to a suspension of future assistance.[386] The extent to which such safeguards would prove effective in a situation where local leaders feel that regime survival is at stake remains unclear.

US officials also argue that US training has had a positive impact on the behaviour of units in internal conflict situations; units that had received such training are less likely to use violent means to disperse unarmed protesters. While it is impossible to independently confirm the extent to which such training has had a positive impact on the behaviour of special forces, Central Asian armed forces do receive training in non-violent crowd control and are taught international human rights standards by US military trainers. On the other hand, there is clear and convincing evidence that US-trained forces have previously engaged in repressive activities in the region, most notably during the massacre in Andijan, Uzbekistan and in fighting in Khorog, Tajikistan in 2012.[387]

At the same time, there is little doubt that local authorities would be able to find units from the military or security forces that would be willing to use violence against regime opponents should the future of the regime be at stake. The success of the two uprisings in Kyrgyzstan had more to do with the unwillingness of key officials in the regime to order the use of force on a large scale than with the refusal of units to follow such orders. Furthermore, Russia

[385] Wali, S. and Sami, D., 'Egyptian police using US-made tear gas against demonstrators', ABC News, 28 Jan. 2011, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/egypt-protest-police-us-made-tear-gas-demonstrators/story?id=12785598>.

[386] US Department of Defense officials, Interviews with author, June 2013.

[387] Herman, B., 'US-trained Uzbek forces were present during Andijan crackdown', Associated Press, 30 May 2005; and Kucera (note 241).

is unlikely to have problems with transferring equipment to security services or to put conditions on the transfer of such equipment to security services from the armed forces.

External military assistance to Central Asian states is thus unlikely to have a serious negative impact on regional stability and security. With the end of the ISAF operation in Afghanistan, the region's decade-long position of prominence on the international arena is likely to fade. Instead the states of the region will increasingly be left to their own devices, with internal instability the most serious threat. External military assistance will be limited and will do little to strengthen local armed forces.

IV. Recommendations

Although the extent of external military assistance to Central Asia is likely to decline in the near future, it will not disappear. In this context, it is important to ensure that the assistance that is provided is not wasted and helps to improve the security situation in the region. The recommendations contained in this section are targeted at changing the nature of security assistance in order to focus on improving human security in Central Asia.

The need to emphasize training

Training needs to be emphasized over the provision of military equipment. The track record for the USA in providing military equipment to Central Asian states is relatively poor. Many previous donations of equipment were wasted because of inadequate maintenance or a lack of training in their use. This is a lesson that the US Government has already learned to some extent, as it has in recent years shifted away from equipment donations and toward providing training in areas ranging from language instruction to combat operations. Shifting toward training will also help to avoid situations where equipment provided through foreign assistance is used against unarmed civilians, resulting in embarrassment or worse for the country providing the assistance.

Shifting to training will not entirely solve the issue of complicity in repressive activities. Forces trained through foreign assistance programmes have already been implicated in human rights violations in Central Asia. The best way to ameliorate this problem is by changing the type of units being trained. In recent years, as part of an effort to increase counter-terrorism preparedness, the USA has sought to improve the capabilities of Central Asia's special forces units. Unfortunately, these units are often involved in attacks on peaceful protesters. Human security in the region could be improved by shifting the focus of security training programmes to policing work, and especially teaching internal security forces how to handle large groups of protesters without resorting to excessive violence.

As part of an effort to reduce smuggling of people, narcotics and weapons, both US and European security assistance programmes have emphasized border security initiatives in their Central Asian assistance programmes. While these efforts are laudable, they have often focused on technical assistance, such as the donation of scanners and other detection equipment. Such equipment may not be useful when the bulk of cross-border smuggling in the region is sanctioned by local notables with government ties or by government officials themselves. Training may help to ameliorate this problem to some extent, but it will not be solved without breaking the link between smuggling and high-level corruption. Assistance providers must recognize that given local incentive structures, corruption-reduction initiatives will not eliminate corruption. However, given the nature of local smuggling networks, providing technical assistance for border security is a waste of money.

The need for multilateral initiatives

To improve human security in Central Asia, coordination among assistance-providing states is necessary. The effectiveness of security assistance to Central Asia is undermined by the perception among outside powers that this assistance is being provided as part of an effort to increase their influence in the region. The zero-sum nature of this competition is encouraged by local leaders, who play off outside powers in an effort to preserve their own freedom to manoeuvre. While coordination will be difficult to achieve because of long-standing suspicions among assistance providers about each other's intent, it is not an impossible goal. The key is to start with areas of mutual interest.

Such cooperation has the greatest chance of success in counter-narcotics. All of the regional governments are worried by the rapid increase in drug addiction in their countries. They also face relatively similar issues in their efforts to reduce drug smuggling and the corruption that it breeds. Existing regional information-sharing institutions provide a starting point for cooperation on the issue. As interaction leads to greater trust, more involved regional cooperation, such as multi-national training events with US and Russian participation, may become acceptable to governments that now studiously avoid multilateral engagement. Eventually, these states may become willing to organize multi-national counter-narcotics exercises and operations.

If cooperation on counter-narcotics process successful, planners can work to encourage Central Asian states to cooperate on critical energy infrastructure protection. Given existing sensitivities about sharing information with neighbours about potential security weaknesses, this effort should begin slowly. A good start would involve regional seminars on best practices in countries that have extensive experience with offshore energy production in potentially vulnerable environments such as the USA, the UK or Norway. If this type of interaction leads to greater trust, regional collaboration could expand to include information-sharing about best practices and eventually

joint projects to protect shared infrastructure such as pipelines, tankers transiting the Caspian Sea, and offshore platforms located near borders. However, given the existing political relationships in the region, such efforts should be seen as a long-range target at best.

These recommendations are deliberately limited in their scope. Security assistance efforts by outside powers are unlikely to lead to significant improvements in regional security, given perceptions in and outside the region that these powers are engaged in a geopolitical competition for influence rather than a sincere effort to improve local conditions. Furthermore, the likely decline in attention paid to the region by outside powers after the ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan is complete will reduce the extent to which outside powers remain interested in the region. Other priorities will inevitably make it more difficult to change assistance policies toward the region. Recognizing these limitations, this report proposes several relatively small steps that would help to improve the impact of outside military assistance on human security in the region.