FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

THE EVOLUTION OF THE UNITED STATES–CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY POLICY POST-9/11: MILITARY, TERRORISM, AND CYBER-SECURITY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

by

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2021

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

THE EVOLUTION OF THE UNITED STATES–CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY POLICY POST-9/11: MILITARY, TERRORISM, AND CYBER-SECURITY

by

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Rudyard Kipling once described and wrote about the Great Game as a way to outline 19th century great power politics in the struggle for empire in Central Asia. While Kipling's tale of spy-craft and espionage is fiction, the political philosophy behind the story has never lost relevance. The struggle for political dominance in Central Asia continued through the twentieth century in the Cold War as well as into twenty-first century after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Although the great power players may have changed over the past 120 years, the importance of Central Asia has not.

This dissertation focuses on three aspects of United States-Central Asian security policy post-9/11: (1) military, (2) terrorism, and (3) cyber. The research initially describes US policy towards the region before 9/11. This is followed by a historical overview of US policy towards the region in each of the three aspects of security. Each chapter also briefly goes over regional implications for each of the aspects of security,

followed by an analysis of the policy approaches using Mesbahi's tripartite framework and Buzan et al.'s Securitization Theory.

What the research found was that US influence in the region may have started strong, but eventually diminished as regional powers such as Russia and China garnered greater influence. The ultimate demise in US security influence in the region came from the fact that the US's primary focus was to win the War on Terror and create stability in Afghanistan. This pushed the Central Asian states into a secondary role, thereby creating a lack of necessity for the prolonged exposure of US forces. The purpose of this research is to add value to the field of security studies and provide a greater insight into the role Central Asia played in the US's War on Terror.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Rudyard Kipling, in his classic novel *Kim*, describes a tale of espionage in the struggle for Central Asia between the Russian and British empires.[1] Kipling introduces the Great Game as a way to outline the great power politics that ruled the international system in the nineteenth century. While Kipling's tale of spy craft and espionage is fiction, the political philosophy behind the story has never lost relevance. The struggle for political dominance in Central Asia continued through the twentieth century in the Cold War as well as into twenty-first century after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, which led to the War on Terror. Although the great power players may have changed over the past 120 years, the importance of Central Asia has not. As the character Mahbub Ali states in *Kim*, "Here begins the Great Game."[2]

Central Asian states' role in relation to the great powers has changed over the past decades. While Central Asia state-to-state relations were largely overshadowed due to the onslaught of World War I in the beginning of the twentieth century, they soon found themselves under the Soviet umbrella after the Bolshevik Revolution led by Vladimir Lenin. As World War II came and went, and as the Cold War eventually came to a conclusion, Central Asia was largely overshadowed in the international realm for the hegemonic stalemate that developed through the atomic age.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian states entered a new phase in their tumultuous history. An identity crisis took place. Multiple generations had

[1] R. Kipling, *Kim* (United Kingdom: Macmillan & Co., 1901).

[2] Kipling, *Kim*, 116.

known only Soviet rule, and multiple more had known only conflict. Civil wars and political uncertainty rocked the underdeveloped region. While global powers vied for dominance in the region, the importance of these states was not seen again on a global scale until the events of September 11, 2001. A successful attack on the global hegemon by nonstate actors forced the world to see grassroots and nontraditional security as threats to peace and stability. Central Asia became a powerful region in both aiding and hindering the global war on terror set into motion by the United States.[3] From the physical use of military bases within Central Asian states to the support of moderate factions within the security structure in the region, the US increasingly relied on and diverted resources toward the progress and security of Central Asia.[4]

The purpose of this research is threefold. First, it is to outline the historic security policy between the United States and the following Central Asian states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.[5] This relationship will be

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[3] M.B. Olcott, "The War on Terrorism in Central Asia and the Cause of Democratic Reform," testimony, US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (27 June 2002).

[4] E., Rumer, R. Sokolsky, and P. Stronski. (2016); "US Policy Toward Central Asia 3.0"; *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace;* Washington D.C.

[5] Some sources, both government and academic, list Afghanistan as being part of Central Asia, but for this research it was not included due to its geographic, political, and historical allegiance sometimes being attributed to the South Asian region, which also consists of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
S. Gardezi (2017, October 6). Afghanistan as South Asia. *The Nation.* Retrieved from https://nation.com.pk/06-Oct-2017/afghanistan-as-south-asia.
C. Snedden (2016). Shifting Geo-politics in the Greater South Asia Region. *Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies.* Retrieved from https://apcss.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Snedden-SouthAsia-2016-revised-format.pdf.

observed through both a traditional and nontraditional security lens. Second, it is to track the evolution/devolution of security policy starting from President George W. Bush's first term to President Barack Obama's second term. The genealogy of security policy through two presidents, four terms, and sixteen years can provide an insight into how the policy trends moving forward. Finally, along with the direct security relationship between the US and Central Asia, this research will incorporate the role that Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey play as regional powers as a dichotomy to US influence in the region. Each of the countries shares multiple common characteristics with various Central Asian states. Russia and China share a geographic border as well as a long political history. Iran and Turkey share ethnic and cultural identities. The ultimate goal of this project is to analyze how US security policy toward Central Asia changed over the course of the first sixteen years of the twenty-first century.

Country Profiles

Although the term "Central Asia" has often been used to describe a monolithic entity devoid of individual distinctiveness, each state has its own unique history and identity.[6] This section will provide basic historic, economic, political, and geographic information about the region as a whole and each individual state.

[6] Since the advent of the Great Game, a regional Central Asian identity has often overshadowed the identity of each state. Reasons for this include a fluid geography that often differed based on cultural identity and religion. Another reason is their political fragmentation due to their continued dominance by larger empires throughout history. Each individual state does not see a homogenous entity.
T. Bonacker. (2018, June 4). Regional conflicts in Central Asia: issues of identity and EU experience. Interview with *Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting.* Retrieved

Central Asia: The Region

Map 1.0[7]

Geographically, the Central Asian region is bordered by the Caspian Sea in the west; China in the east; Russia in the north; and Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in the south. The region has a rich history stemming all the way back to the Silk Road. At one point or another, many empires, including the Timurids and Safavids, ruled the land prior to British and Russian intervention.

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from https://cabar.asia/en/regional-conflicts-in-central-asia-issues-of-identity-and-eu-experience/.

[7] Map taken from the Central Intelligence Agency through the Library of Congress.

The region is quite culturally diverse. Although most of the population can trace their heritage to nomadic herders, some peoples were more settled.[8] While there is a distinction between the mobility of the populations, there is also a distinction in cultural infleunce. The majority of the population is closer to Turkic origins and languages with the exception of Tajik, which is more closely related to Persian. As the battle for dominance in the nineteenth century between the United Kingdom and Russia played out, their influence on the population also became evident in the following years. Russian became a secondary language to much of the region, while aspects of European culture manifested as well.[9]

[8] Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen people were generally nomadic, while Tajiks were more settled. Uzbeks were originally nomadic but eventually settled.
United States Institute of Peace. (n.d.). US Training Course for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) including Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams (REACT): Module 6: Central Asia. *United States Institute of Peace*. Retrieved from http://react.usip.org/downloads/module6.pdf.

[9] United States Institute of Peace, 6.

Kazakhstan

Map 1.1[10]

Kazakhstan is a presidential republic located south of Russia, bordered by China to the east, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the south, and the Caspian Sea to the southwest. The population is a mix of Turkic and Mongol nomadic tribes with some Persian cultural influences. It is the largest landlocked country in the world and has the largest Central Asian economy. With a population of a little over 19 million, 70 percent of the country is Muslim with 26 percent being Christian. The largest ethnic group in the country is Kazakh at 68 percent, with Russian at 19.3 percent and Uzbek at 3.2 percent.[11]

[10] Map taken from the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency (n.d.). World Factbook: Central Asia. *Central Intelligence Agency*. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/.

[11] Central Intelligence Agency.

The land was slowly conquered by Russia starting from the eighteenth century. It officially became a Soviet Republic in 1925, where it was used for agricultural collectivization to benefit the larger Soviet Union conglomerate. While the 1930s produced massive amounts of death due to starvation and repression, the 1950s brought about the "Virgin Lands"[12] program that led to a drastic influx of migration. By the collapse of the Soviet Union, ethnic Muslim Kazakhs were part of the minority.[13]

[12] "Virgin Lands" was a program implemented by Nikita Khrushchev as a way to alleviate the food shortages the Soviet Union was facing. The program pushed for and provided incentive for migration into arable Soviet-controlled lands outside of the core Russian state to boost agriculture supply.
Taubman, W. (2003). Khrushchev: The Man and His Era. *W. W. Norton & Company.* New York.

[13] Central Intelligence Agency (n.d.). World Factbook.

Kyrgyzstan

Map 1.2[14]

Kyrgyzstan is a parliamentary republic bordered by China to the east, Kazakhstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west, and Tajikistan to the south. Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan all border the Fergana Valley, which has disputed border issues between all bordering states; for many decades, the valley was a hotbed for nonstate Islamist groups.[15] The population is a little under 6 million, with Kyrgyz making up 73.5 percent of the population and Uzbeks making up 14.7 percent, the majority of whom live in rural

[14] Map taken from the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook.

[15] Z. Baizakova. (2017). Border Issues in Central Asia: Current Conflicts, Controversies, and Compromises. *UNISCI Journal.* No. 45. Retrieved from http://www.unisci.es/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/UNISCIDP45-9ZHULDUZ.pdf.

areas. Over 90 percent of the population adheres to Sunni Islam, with 7 percent identifying as Christian.[16]

The territory was originally absorbed into the Russian empire in the nineteenth century. The population eventually rebelled against the Czar in 1916, prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. The Kyrgyz Republic ultimately became part of the Soviet Union in 1936 until its independence in 1991.[17]

Tajikistan

Map 1.3[18]

[16] Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook.

[17] Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook.

[18] Map taken from the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook.

Tajikistan is a presidential republic bordered by China to the east, Kyrgyzstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west, and Afghanistan to the south. The population of under 9 million is comprised of 84 percent ethnic Tajiks, who also include Pamiri and Yagnobi peoples. The next largest ethnic group is the Uzbeks at under 14 percent. More than 98 percent of the country is Muslim, with 95 percent adhering to Sunni Islam and 3 percent to Ismaili Shia Islam. It is considered the poorest of the Central Asian republics.

The Russian Empire came to rule the land starting in the 1860s. Tajik guerillas (the Basmachi) fought the Bolsheviks after they came to power in 1917. While Tajikistan was initially created as an autonomous part of Uzbekistan in 1924, the Soviet Union eventually created a separate Tajik state in 1929. Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the country gained independence and fell into a bloody civil war for the next six years.[19]

[19] Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook.

Turkmenistan

Map 1.4[20]

Turkmenistan is an authoritarian presidential republic bordered by Kazakhstan to the northeast, Uzbekistan to the north and northeast, Afghanistan to the southeast, Iran to the south, and the Caspian Sea to the west. The estimated population is 5.5 million, with 85 percent being ethnic Turkmen, 5 percent Uzbek, and 4 percent Russian. The majority of the population (89 percent) is Muslim, with 9 percent adhering to Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

The territory covered by Turkmenistan has a long history of conflict. Various Persian and Muslim empires, Mongols, Macedonians, and Russians (among others) have

[20] Map taken from the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook.

ruled the territory. Similar to the other Central Asian territories, the Russian Empire controlled it from the late nineteenth century until the Bolshevik Revolution. It eventually became a Soviet Republic in 1924 and gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[21]

Uzbekistan

Map 1.5[22]

Uzbekistan is an authoritarian presidential republic and the only Central Asian state that borders every other Central Asian state. It is the geographic center of the region. With a population of close to 33.5 million, ethnic Uzbeks make up less than 84 percent of the population, followed by Tajiks (4.8 percent), Kazakhs (2.5 percent), and Russians

[21] Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook.

[22] Map taken from the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook.

(2.3 percent). Islam is the major religion (88 percent of the population), followed by Eastern Orthodox at 9 percent.

After joining the Soviet Union in 1924, the country was exploited for its production of cotton and grains, which eventually led to a drying of the water supply. The country continued its agricultural industry after independence in 1991. Although agriculture has been the backbone of the economy, its manufacturing and energy sectors have become viable to the export market.[23]

Current Views on US–Central Asian Security Relations post-9/11

Past work into this research topic has largely been limited to the post-Cold War and pre-9/11 period. Although an ample amount of work has been done about security issues in Central Asia, scholarly work concerning the role of the US in the region is inadequate. Prior work can be separated into three categories: Central Asian identity, regional dynamics, and policy relationship between the US and Central Asia. Sally Cummings sums it up best: "Central Asia refuses to be neatly compartmentalized."[24]

Cummings views identity as an active struggle between what "was" and what "is." What "was" refers to Soviet rule in an antireligious establishment, and what "is" refers to the resurgence of an Islamic identity after 9/11.[25] A post-9/11 world has created a crisis between national identity and Islamic identity. By contrast, Igor Lipovsky says

[23] Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook.

[24] S. Cummings, *Understanding Central Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 31.

[25] Cummings, 31.

Central Asia has been "awakening" in recent times, which has brought about a new secular political identity that mimics the Turkish model.[26] Aside from the focus on Islamic identity, Sebastian Peyrouse analyzes the role of Christian identity in Central Asia and how states have dealt with the struggle of committing to Islam as the state religion in contrast to post-Soviet secular ideals.[27]

Although much of the work that has come out about Central Asia after 9/11 has focused on identity formation and the rise of Islam, work has also been done about the regional dynamic in Central Asia, specifically how other regional powers have influenced state policies. Roy Allison and Martha Brill Olcott have written extensively on the relationship between Central Asian states and their geographic neighbors in China and Russia. A constant conflict exists between the states regarding whether to balance or bandwagon with Russia and China at both an individual and institutional scale.[28]

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[26] The Turkish model specifically refers to the move from a theocratic state to a secular-based political system after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I.
Igor Lipovsky, *Central Asia: In Search of a New Identity* (South Carolina: Create Space, 2012).

[27] While most of the states adhere to secularism, there is often a balance with the religious establishment because it still holds power over the general populace.
Sebastian Peyrouse, "Christians as the main religious minority in Central Asia," in *Everyday Life in Central Asia;* ed. Sahadeo, J. and Zanca, R. (Indiana University Press, 2007).

[28] R. Allison, *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2001).
R. Allison, "Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia," *International Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2004): 463–483.
M.B. Olcott, "The War on Terrorism in Central Asia and the Cause of Democratic Reform," *testimony;* US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (27 June 2002).

On the academic side, much less information has been available on specifically US–Central Asian security policy, but some work has been conducted at a policy level. In January 2016, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace published a document titled "US Policy Toward Central Asia 3.0." The document briefly outlines a shift in US policy after states in the region have started to pivot more toward China for economic and military assistance through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).[29] Rummer, Sokolsky, and Stronski provide recommendations that include engaging with the more stable countries (such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) and keeping the idea of human rights separate from that of security.[30] Other policy analysts, such as Alex Gupta of the American Security Project, tend to view US interests in Central Asia through various lenses such as energy, security, democratization and human rights, and climate change and trade.[31]

Chapter Outline

The dissertation will be broken down into six chapters. The current chapter provides a brief overview of the current state of research into US–Central Asian security policy. It will give a breakdown of the methods and theories used to analyze the research. In addition, this chapter will provide an introduction into the Central Asian states and how the US formulates its security policy.

[29] Rumer, Sokolsky and Stronski, "US Policy Toward Central Asia 3.0"

[30] Rumer, Sokolsky and Stronski, "US Policy Toward Central Asia 3.0"

[31] A. Gupta, *Central Asia: 5 Key Issues* (American Security Project, 2014).

The second chapter will describe US–Central Asian security policy prior to 9/11. While the focus of the research is post-9/11 policy, a proper analysis cannot be conducted without first understanding what happened to the states before the attacks. The chapter will specifically focus on the history of policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The third chapter will analyze traditional security policy through military relations. This chapter will provide historic data on military aid provided to each of the states as well as a geostrategic analysis of the use of military bases in the region.

The fourth chapter will focus on nontraditional security policy regarding terrorism and nonstate actors. The analysis will include both strategic and tactical support provided to each of the states as well as their response to the growing Islamist threat to their secular political status.

The fifth chapter will look into US cyber policy toward Central Asia. Although cybersecurity policy is a fairly recent policy initiative, multiple breakthroughs occurred in the relationship between the states because of the use of cyber technology as a disruptive tool in both domestic and foreign considerations.

The final chapter will provide a conclusion for the project. It will describe the overall evolution of US security policy toward Central Asia and provide insight into what can be expected in the future.

Although the dissertation is organized at a thematic level, each chapter will be organized sequentially. Because part of the analysis is understanding what US policy was toward the region, the initial part of each core chapter will provide a historic outline of security policy during President Bush's first term and second term, followed by President

Obama's first term and second term.[32] Each chapter will conclude with a theoretical analysis of the historic policy record.

Theoretical Framework

I will not use only one specific theory for the analysis in this project; I hope to employ a type of theoretical eclecticism as described by Katzenstein.[33] By engaging in an eclectic discourse of international relations, various theoretical approaches can be used to gain a pluralistic view of policy. The purpose of this research is not to add value to any theoretical model but to give an analytical framework to facilitate an understanding of the subject matter. I want to emphasize substance over theory, and to do so I will need to draw from different perspectives to see how the security narratives in US–Central Asian relations evolved.

Although I am not focusing on one specific theory, I will use two theoretical approaches to achieve the goals of this research. The first theoretical approach I will use is Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde's securitization theory. The securitization approach toward international relations can trace its roots to the Copenhagen School originally

[32] Core chapters of the dissertation are military, terrorism, and nonstate actors; transnational crime and drug trafficking; and cybersecurity.

[33] P. Katzenstein and R. Sil. (2008); "Eclectic Theorizing in the Study and Practice of International Relations"; in Ed. Reus-Smit, C. & Snidal, D., *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*; London: Oxford University Press.

developed by Buzan.[34] The Copenhagen School has its foundation in both classical realism and constructivism.[35]

The theory involves a five-sector analysis that considers the specific type of interaction (military, political, economic, societal, and environmental) within the realm of state-to-state security.[36] This is a compartmentalized approach to security studies that seeks to explain how referent objects other than states become securitized.[37] It asks the question of who has the power/authority to securitize an object and how that power affects state-to-state relations.[38] What makes this theoretical approach applicable in state-to-state relations is the notion that securitizing an object by a state does not necessarily mean the object is an actual threat; rather, it is based on a state's ability to justify the perception that an object is a threat.[39]

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[34] B. Buzan. (1983). *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relation*s. University of North Carolina Press. Raleigh, NC.

[35] M. Williams (2003). Words, Images, Enemies, Securitization and International Politics. *International Studies Quarterly.* Issue 47, No. 512.

[36] B. Buzan, O. Waever, J. de Wilde. (1998); *Security: A New Framework for Analysis;* London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

[37] The process of securitization according to Buzan is when a state actor turns specific matters, or objects, into security issues. Once an object has been identified as a security issue or threat, it is dealt with in a way different from the normal political process.
Buzan.

[38] Buzan. *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*

[39] T. Balzacq. (2005). The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context. *European Journal of International Relations.* Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 171-201.

This framework allows for a greater inclusion of a wide variety of security that is not part of the traditional military security realm. By expanding the securitization apparatus, a larger number of variables can be analyzed to reach a more defined outcome. Using securitization theory will provide a better understanding of the relationship between the US and Central Asia concerning securitized threats for each of the states involved. In addition, it can be used to demonstrate how nonstate actors and the spread of ideology in Central Asia have become the prime security narrative in a variety of sectors for the US in Central Asia.

The second theoretical approach I will use is Mesbahi's tripartite framework. This framework holds three assumptions. First, the international system is a tripartite system with three interconnected-yet-distinct structures that include the geopolitical, geo-cultural, and geo-economic.[40] Second, the agent is both unitary and composite, interacting distinctly with the corresponding structural components of the international system.[41] Third, the value of any state's position within the international system depends on the mutual interaction dynamic among all three structures.[42]

Mesbahi's framework puts forth the notion that the state is a unitary actor within the coercive–military (geopolitical) realm but is composite in the normative–social (geo-

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[40] M. Mesbahi. (2010); "Eurasia between Russia, Turkey and Iran"; In M. Freire & R. Kanet (Eds.), Key *players and regional dynamics in Eurasia: The return of the 'great game'*; London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

[41] Mesbahi, "Eurasia between Russia, Turkey and Iran"

[42] M. Mesbahi. (2011); "Free and confined: Iran and the international system"; *Iranian review of foreign affairs*, 2(5), 9-34.

cultural) and economic–developmental (geo-economic) structures.[43] Geopolitically, other agents accept the unitary actions taken by the state and engage with it accordingly. Geo-culturally and geo-economically, states comprise a multitude of groupings that can influence the decision-making process of the state. Other agents can deal with any number of these subservient groupings in official or unofficial capacities in the ultimate goal of maximizing state-to-state relations.

While both securitization theory and the tripartite framework describe the way in which states act and react, they can describe how states make their foreign policy regimes as well. Although individual states will often securitize referent objects, they may prioritize those securitized objects in their foreign policy goals. For example, after 9/11, the US securitized migration and terrorism, eventually leading to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the USA Patriot Act.[44] The securitization of these issues led to a divergence of foreign policy goals that differed from preceding administrations' foreign policy goals.

Similarly, as states securitize objects and develop their foreign policy goals, they act in a unitary manner with the primacy of their own security. This primacy leads to geopolitical relationships that focus on their own security through bilateral and multilateral strategies to implement their policy goals. While traditional and

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[43] Mesbahi, "Free and confined: Iran and the international system"

[44] J. Tirman. (2004). The Maze of Fear: Security and Migration After 9/11. *The New Press*
T. Faist. (2006). The Migration-Security Nexus: International Migration and Security Before and After 9/11. In: Bodemann Y.M., Yurdakul G. (eds) Migration, Citizenship, Ethnos. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

nontraditional security-related polices are often displayed through direct state-to-state interaction or state-to-regional organization action,[45] security is seen through geo-cultural- and geo-economic-based policy goals as well. These policy goals include interaction not only with the state or regional security regime but also with the religious establishment, NGOs, multinational corporations, banks, and other nonstate actors or actors that navigate from the individual through the systemic level of the international system. Although multiple actors are part of any type of securitized geopolitical, geo-cultural, or geo-economic object, this research specifically focuses on the state-to-state interaction, and to a lesser degree, state-to-regional security regime interaction.

Methodological Framework

For this research, I will use a combination of techniques and methods for the methodological approach. Because the primary goal of this research is to evaluate the progression of US security policy toward the Central Asian states after 9/11, most of the research will be conducted through archives and open-source data accumulation. To accomplish this research's goals, I will employ two primary methods: process tracing and historical institutionalism.

I will employ these methods using data collected and inferred from primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. Process tracing refers to identifying the causal relationship between an independent and dependent variable.[46] In the case of US–Central

[45] Regional organizations such as security regimes like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Asian security relations, process tracing could be used to answer the questions of "what" and "how." What pushed the US toward certain policies in Central Asia, and how have the Central Asian states reciprocated?

By contrast, historical institutionalism uses historical records to determine sequences in the role that institutions have on state behavior over time.[47] The purpose of this is to answer the question of "why." In this sense, the term "institutions" refers to both formal institutions and informal rules and norms. By using process tracing with historical institutionalism, I can provide a context to US security policy in the region as well as its causes and effects over the first sixteen years of the twenty-first century.

The use of the two techniques indicates history and the relationships formed throughout are not a chain of independent events.[48] When conducting historical research, the researcher must remember two concepts: propulsion and periodization.[49] Propulsion

[46] P. Vennesson. (2008); "Case studies and process tracing: Theories and practices"; In D. Della Porta & M. Keating (Eds.); *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences: A pluralist perspective;* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. George, A., & Bennett, A. (2005). Case studies and theory development in the social sciences. *MIT Press.* Cambridge, MA.

[47] S. Steinmo. (2008); "Historical institutionalism"; In D. Della Porta & M. Keating (Eds.), *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences: A pluralist perspective;* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

[48] Steinmo, "Historical institutionalism"

[49] W.A. Green. (1993). *History, historians and the dynamics of change*. Westport: Praeger.
P.J. Buckley. (2016). Historical Research Approaches to the Analysis of Internationalization. *Management International Review* Vol. 56**,** 879–900. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-016-0300-0.

refers to forces that promote change.[50] This can include states, referent objects, securitized objects, or other groups that develop, prioritize, and execute policy. Periodization refers to the organizational structure and chronological framework in which historical research is conducted.[51] This gives context of time and place in structuring the research agenda. The periodization used to structure this research was based on presidential terms. The second chapter concerning a brief overview of US–Central Asian security policy after the Cold War and prior to 9/11 was split into three periods: President George H. W. Bush (1991–1993), President Bill Clinton's first term (1993–1997), and President Clinton's second term (1997–2001). The structure of chapters three, four, five, and six, concerning the various topics within security relations, were split into four periods: President George W. Bush's first term (2001–2005), his second term (2005–2009), President Barack Obama's first term (2009–2013), and his second term (2013–2017). I will use these periods of time as micro-benchmark events where overall policy can change.[52]

The data for this research were collected from a multitude of sources. Aside from the general body of scholarly work about this topic, the primary source of data was from publications, memos, and archives from the US State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian affairs and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and

[50] Green, *History, historians and the dynamics of change*

[51] Green, *History, historians and the dynamics of change*

[52] For the context of this research, macro-benchmark events are major changes to the international system such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001.

Pacific Security Affairs at the US Department of Defense. Data were collected from organizations such as the United Nations and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Data on public opinion were obtained from development agencies that are active in the region, such as the United Nations and the Aga Khan Development Network. Some translated documents from the represented states were also used to identify security policy goals and outcomes.

Along with archival open-source research, research was conducted on the ground in multiple trips to Central Asia (specifically Tajikistan) as well as via conversations with political representatives of some Central Asian states. While formal interviews were not conducted, speaking to political representatives provided guidance for where to find information and in what capacity to use that accumulated information.

Contribution/Purpose

The purpose of conducting this research, aside from completing the requirements for my doctorate, is to add value to the field of international relations and foreign policy. My hope is that this research will provide information and a clear analysis into how US foreign policy toward the various Central Asian states, and the region as a whole, shifted over a period of time. Looking at the genealogy of historic security relations can allow for a better understanding of how these relations should be understood moving forward. Analysis aside, I ultimately hope to provide the readers of this dissertation with a story of how US–Central Asian security relations evolved from where it once was at the turn of the century to where it is now.

Chapter 2: The Decade in Limbo: Post-Cold War to Pre-9/11 US–Central Asian Policy

The story of the United States' security policy toward the Central Asian states begins where the Soviet Union ends. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 signified the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new era of international relations and foreign policy. With the collapse of the Soviet Union came a deconstruction of the regional and global military and political agenda.[1] Out of the primordial broth that the Soviet Union left behind came newly independent states in their infancy. Many had not seen independence in over a hundred years, and many never had the sovereign borders they eventually gained through the fog of the Cold War.

The State of Affairs in Central Asia after the Cold War

To the outside world, prior to 1991, Central Asia (CA) was viewed as a single entity with single-sided, regional issues that could be addressed and solved through singular, overarching responses.[2] After 1991, the regional identity soon split into the identities of each of the emerging states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The struggle for power and identity dominated local and regional politics. The hole left by the Soviet Union created a void in each state, leading to

[1] B. Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War," *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no. 1 (1997): 5–28.

[2] M. B. Olcott, "Central Asia Play: The First Ten Years of Independence," in *Central Asia's Second Chance*, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p. 30.

various conflicts. Politicians and political groups vied for power while the people tried to understand their own identity, after being under Russian rule for more than a century.

Kazakhstan

Although all the Central Asian states were in crisis, the case of Kazakhstan was unique. The vibrant energy sector created economic growth soon after independence. The promise of energy exports brought in vast amounts of foreign investment. Despite the economic success, political institutions in the country were weak and continued to be throughout the decade as the power in the president increased.[3]

For much of the 20th century, Russia depended heavily on Kazakhstan's economic benefits. At its independence, ethnic Russians outnumbered ethnic Kazakhs in the state.[4] Soon after independence, ethnic Russians started leaving Kazakhstan at an increased pace. The vast migration was coupled with the stalling of industrial output in parts of the country dependent on Russia for energy. Although there weren't any major conflicts in the state, the country faced an economic decline until the late 90s, when the rise in oil prices boosted the energy market and solidified a shift from agriculture to energy as the primary economic sector.

Aside from economic and industrial restructuring, Kazakhstan saw an increase in domestic infrastructure projects. The country's capital of Almaty was moved to the city

[3] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[4] M. B. Olcott, *The Kazakhs,* 2nd edition (Stanford: Hoover University Press, 1995).

of Astana in 1997.[5] The relocation of the capital resulted in billions of dollars' worth of construction and transportation projects, which were needed to connect Astana to the rest of the country.[6]

While the energy sector was being developed through foreign direct investment and billion-dollar infrastructure projects were undertaken, the country's political system was being overrun by corruption. Political corruption combined with an inefficient judiciary made it difficult for the population and foreigners to successfully conduct business in the early years after independence.

However, President Nursultan Nazarbayev climbed through the communist party ranks, starting as the Second Secretary of the Temirtau City Communist Party in 1968 to becoming the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan in 1989, where he served until independence in 1991.[7] Nazarbayev won the first general election post-independence, becoming the first President in Kazakhstan's short history. Constitutional amendments and referendums in 1995 and 1998 extended the longevity of elected presidents and increased the office's power in the political system.[8]

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[5] Astana was originally known as Akmola in 1997, until its name was changed to Astana in 1998. In 2019 the name of the city was once again changed to Nur-Sultan in honor of Kazakhstan's first president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who resigned in 2019.

[6] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[7] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Background on Nursultan Nazarbayev," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* March 26, 2012, https://carnegieendowment.org/2012/03/26/background-on-nursultan-nazarbayev-pub-47648

[8] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Background on Nursultan Nazarbayev."

Nazarbayev's tenure as president at the close of the 20th century was marked with heightened corruption.[9] A prominent court case identified the ways in which he personally benefited from government contracts.[10] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita listed Nazarbayev as one of the few dictators able to successfully remain in power for decades despite the impoverishment of their country and oppression of their own people.[11]

Kyrgyzstan

Unlike Kazakhstan, which had vast energy resources and an established infrastructure to build up from after independence, Kyrgyzstan did not come into the post-Cold War period with an established means of development. Having a lack of physical, economic, and security infrastructure, President Askar Akayev welcomed assistance from Western-based international institutions.

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[9] This case was against J. Bryan Williams, a senior executive at Mobil Oil Corporation. The indictment against Williams involved allegedly taking bribes from Kazakhstan in an oil deal involving the Tengiz oil field. US District Court, Southern District of New York, *United States v. J. Bryan Williams.* Indictment 03-CR-406-HB, April 2, 2003, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/criminal-fraud/legacy/2011/02/16/04-02-03williams-indict.pdf

[10] This case was against James H. Giffen, who was the CEO of Mercator Corporation. The company was a mediatory for energy deals involved in Kazakhstan. Giffen was indicted with bribing Kazakh officials, including President Nazarbayev, on multiple deals.
US District Court, Southern District of New York, *United States v. James H. Giffen.* Indictment S1-03-CR-404, April 12, 2004, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/criminal-fraud/legacy/2011/02/16/12-08-06giffen-opinion.pdf

[11] B. Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of International Politics,* 5th edition (London: CQ Press, 2014), p. 29.

Although foreign direct investment was low, the country received long-term credit and aid for development. Its progressive economic model gave it greater exposure to international markets. In 1993, it was the first Central Asian state to introduce a national currency, and in 2000 it was the first to join the World Trade Organization, where its main focus was to develop its energy sector, similar to other Central Asian states.[12]

Despite its economic reforms, post-independence Kyrgyzstani development stagnated due to a lack of effective neighboring trade markets. The only viable industries in the country were agriculture and textiles. Soviet era development in those industries allowed the country to quickly mobilize its initial economic expectations. Unfortunately, its goals were not shared by its neighbors; Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan refused to fully open their markets to Kyrgyz goods.[13] The lack of regional support stunted Kyrgyzstan's economic growth. Along with the stagnant economy, Kyrgyzstan had to take on more international debt because the country relied heavily on loans to support its impoverished population. By 2000, Kyrgyzstan was in debt $1.686 billion, which was 123.3% of its

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[12] J. Odling-Smee and G. Pastor, "The IMF and the Ruble Area, 1991-1993," *International Monetary Fund,* Working Paper WP/01/101, August 2001, https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2001/wp01101.pdf; United Nations, *National Services Policy Review: Kyrgyzstan* (New York and Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2013).

[13] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

GDP.[14] The slow economic progress and continued poverty of the population brought about significant vocal opposition to President Akayev.

Unlike other Central Asian presidents, Akayev did not rise through the ranks of the communist party prior to independence. He was an academic and part of the Academy of Sciences before he was chosen by the country's supreme court as a compromise candidate in 1990 to lead the country.[15] Unlike his regional counterparts, Akayev subjected himself to three contested elections in 1991, 1995, and 2000. Although he won all three of the elections, the fairness and legitimacy of the latter elections was progressively called into question.

By the 2000 election, there were signs that Akayev was suppressing his political opposition. The most prominent of which was Feliz Kulov. Kulov, who was considered to be Akayev's political equal, pre-independence, was arrested on charges of slandering the president prior to the 2000 election. He held multiple political positions through the 90s but resigned to form the opposition party, Ar-Namis.[16] Although Kulov was eventually released from prison, the affair led to greater opposition to Akayev's regime,

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[14] Country Economy, *Kyrgyzstan National Debt,* https://countryeconomy.com/national-debt/kyrgyzstan

[15] R. Ortiz de Zarate, "Askar Akayev," *Barcelona Centre for International Affairs*, 2005, https://www.cidob.org/biografias_lideres_politicos/asia/kirguizistan/askar_akayev

[16] Ar-Namis means Party of Dignity. F. Kulov, "Conviction of an Opposition Leader after an Unfair Trial, Unlawful Detention," *United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Human Rights Committee, 99th Session,* Communications No. CCPR/C/99/D/1369/2005, July 2010, http://www.worldcourts.com/hrc/eng/decisions/2010.07.26_Kulov_v_Kyrgyzstan.pdf

eventually leading to the Tulip revolution in 2005, when Kulov became the country's prime minister.

Tajikistan

Although the focus of most of the Central Asian states after independence was developing their economies, Tajikistan's primary concern was establishing order and unity out of chaos. For much of the 90s, the country was embroiled in a bloody civil war that killed tens of thousands and displaced millions. Security and identity of the newly created state was the goal for each of the parties involved.

Soon after independence, Tajikistan presented the region with its first major noneconomic security issue: a civil war that engulfed the state and lasted from 1992 to 1997. The conflict initially involved three primary groups that wanted to oust President Kakhar Makhkamov.[17] The first group consisted of a pro-democracy movement based in the capital city of Dushanbe. The second group was led by Rahmon Nabiyev, a former official in the old guard communist party prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nabiyev came from the Khujand area of the country in the North. The third group included Islamic leaders who wanted a country based on Islamic values.[18]

The pressure from the three political factions led to Makhkamov's resignation in 1991. Nabiyev replaced him as president but could not appease the pro-democracy and

[17] Makhkamov was the president and communist party leader at independence.

[18] S. Akiner and C. Barnes, "The Tajik Civil War: Causes and Dynamics," in *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation,* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001).

pro-Islamic factions. The lack of solidarity led to large-scale demonstrations among supporters, which in turn eventually led to skirmishes in areas bordering the various provinces. The fighting forces eventually formed into two factions: the pro-communist faction that included Nabiyev and his allies from Khujand, and Emomali Rahmonov from the Kulob province. Nabiyev and Rahmonov's faction held considerable power because they were backed by allies in former Soviet states. The second faction formed the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). The UTO consisted of pro-democracy forces, pro-Islamic forces, and forces from the remote Gorno-Badakhshan province.[19]

As the fighting continued, foreign intervention, primarily by the Russians, helped turn the war effort in favor of Nabiyev and Rahmonov's faction. Eventually Nabiyev fell out of favor as Rahmonov gained considerable power and influence. Rahmonov was ultimately elected president of Tajikistan in 1994. The elections were not considered fair and open. The opposition eventually set up bases of operation in Afghanistan, with many of the exiled leaders settling in Iran as the civil war raged on.[20]

The United Nations helped put an end to the conflict on June 27, 1997.[21] The aftermath of the civil war saw Rahmonov continue to hold onto power, but it also saw the

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[19] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."; Akiner and Barnes, "The Tajik Civil War."

[20] B. Sobiri, "The Long Echo of Tajikistan's Civil War," *Open Democracy*, June 23, 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/long-echo-of-tajikistan-s-civil-war/; Global Security, "Tajikistan's Civil War," https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/tajikistan.htm

[21] United Nations, "General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan," United Nations General Assembly 52nd Session, A/52/219 S/1997/510, June 27, 1997, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/TJ_970627_GeneralAgreementontheEstablishmentPeaceNationalAccordinTajikistan.pdf

pro-communist stronghold of Khujand lose its power. Gorno-Badakhshan became semi-autonomous, as the Pamir people, who had joined the UTO's battle effort, were keen on ending the conflict.[22]

As conflict ended in the country, neighboring states started to become wary of the prominent role that the Islamists played in the opposition movement during the civil war and the political establishment afterwards. The prominence of Islamists in Tajikistan strained relations with neighboring Uzbekistan. Relations had already grown cold between President Rahmonov and President Karimov of Uzbekistan because Karimov had closer ties to the old-communist-guard elite in Khujand, which had largely been sidelined in the post-conflict government. The relationship was further strained when the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) gained prominence and tried to overthrow Karimov's government. The IMU were a group whose purpose was to create an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. Many of its fighters had supported the Islamists in the UTO.[23]

Although the civil war overtook most of the 90s, other aspects of the country suffered as well. Economically, the country was stunted due to the lasting conflict, which cost the country close to $7 billion in revenue.[24] It was not until 2000 that the country introduced a national currency, the Somoni, and established a private banking sector. Due to the infancy of most industries and the lack of progress in its development during the

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[22] S. Akiner, "Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?" *Central Asian and Caucasian Prospects* (Chatham House, 2001).

[23] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[24] Olcott, "Central Asia Play," p. 45.

civil war, the Tajik government relied heavily on drug trafficking to fuel its economy.[25] Despite the civil war, which nearly destroyed the country and left the economy in shambles, Tajikistan emerged in the 21st century as an important partner in the global War on Terror, not only for the benefit of the United States but also in combatting regional terrorist groups such as the IMU.

Turkmenistan

Similar to Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan had enormous potential in its energy sector. The post-Soviet focus of the country was to create stability through developing the natural gas industry.[26] Its gas reserves were the largest among the post-Soviet states, aside from Russia.[27]

While the prospect that an invigorated economy would stabilize a post-Soviet Turkmenistan was expected, the reality of the situation on the ground was more complicated. Although the natural gas reserves were large, the country did not have the capability or the resources to turn that output into hard currency.[28] Turkmenistan

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[25] Olcott, "Central Asia Play," p. 45.

[26] International Monetary Fund, *Turkmenistan: Recent Economic Development*, IMF Staff Country Report No. 99/140, December 1999, https://www.imf.org/~/media/Websites/IMF/imported-full-text-pdf/external/pubs/ft/scr/1999/_cr99140.ashx

[27] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[28] A. Cooley, "Central Asia: A Political History from the 19th Century to Present," *The Asia Society*, https://asiasociety.org/central-asia-political-history-19th-century-present

registered an estimated reduction of 81.9 billion cubic meter output of natural gas in 1990 to 13.3 billion cubic meter output in 1998—an 83.7 percent decrease in eight years.[29] Part of the problem was Turkmenistan's geographic location. Being landlocked, the only viable natural gas market was with Russia or Iran. Both countries competed to obtain gas rights and pipeline contracts. Although Iran vied for establishing new energy deals, Russia had preexisting infrastructure with the country, allowing for an advantage in the post-Soviet energy market.

Due to the lack of agreement with Russia, Turkmenistan looked for alternative ways of exporting its natural gas. One alternative market that presented itself was South Asia. Turkmenistan proposed building a pipeline through Afghanistan to supply India and Pakistan with natural gas.[30] The project would include California-based Unocal and Saudi-based Delta Oil. The deal eventually did not come to fruition, however, because Afghanistan was in the middle of a civil war, and the United States did not want to deal with the Taliban government.[31]

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[29] M. B. Olcott, "International Gas Trade in Central Asia: Turkmenistan, Iran, Russia, and Afghanistan," Working Paper #28. *Program on Energy and Sustainable Development, Stanford University and James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy Energy Forum, Rice University,* May 2004, https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Turkmenistan_final.pdf

[30] Olcott, "Central Asia Play," p. 38.

[31] M. B. Olcott and N. Udalova, "Drug Trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* Working Paper Number 11, March 2000, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/drugs.pdf; Q. Fatima and S. Zafar, "New Great Game: Players, Interests, Strategies, and Central Asia," *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (2014): 623–652.

The lack of progress in profiting from the vast energy reserves in Turkmenistan could be linked to the reluctance of foreign governments in dealing with President Saparmurat Niyazov. Niyazov became the first secretary of the Turkmen Communist Party and served as its head until independence in 1991. He served as the president of Turkmenistan from 1991 up until his death in December 2006. Niyazov's tenure as president of Turkmenistan was marked by corruption and the misappropriation of country funds.[32]

Niyazov had direct control and access to the country's natural resource wealth and revenue, keeping it off the official country budget.[33] He also approved billions of dollars in projects involving the construction of multiple palaces for himself and his top ministers. The justification for such misappropriations and corruption was based on the cult of personality created by and around Niyazov after independence.[34] He titled himself Turkmenbashi, or father of the Turkmen. Any action that Niyazov took or any action taken against Niyazov was seen as an action against the country. The cult of personality was so strong that Niyazov and Turkmenistan were seen as being the same entity.

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[32] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[33] M. Chene, "U4 Expert Answer: Corruption and the International Financial System," *Transparency International*, Sept. 24, 2009, https://www.u4.no/publications/corruption-and-the-international-financial-system.pdf

[34] K. Gillespie, "Niyazov's Cult of Personality Grips Turkmenistan," *National Public Radio*, August 9, 2007, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12316714

Ultimately, his policies led to the country becoming more isolated in the years after independence, despite the potential it exhibited with its vast natural gas fields.

Uzbekistan

Similar to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan's post-independence history involved conflict as a driving force behind change. The religious establishment played an important role in the country soon after independence. Many political parties and individuals, including Islam Karimov and Muhammad Salih, participated in the 1991 election. Karimov won and became the country's first president, post-independence. Karimov had previously served as first secretary of the Communist Party in Uzbekistan during the collapse of the Soviet Union.[35]

Although there were many communist and pro-democracy parties active in the political system, there was also an Islamic revival as well, led by Mufti Muhammad Yusuf. Soon after becoming president, Karimov consolidated power into his regime by removing rivals from higher level political positions. Karimov used the civil war in Tajikistan as a way of slowing down the pro-democracy movement and sidelining the religious establishment.[36]

The ousting of Muhammad Yusuf in 1992 from his position as Mufti invigorated radical Islamic movements in poorer areas such as the Fergana Valley. By the mid- to

[35] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[36] S. Horsman, "Uzbekistan's Involvement in the Tajik Civil War 1992-97: Domestic Considerations," *Central Asia Survey* 18, no. 1 (1999): 37–48; Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

late-90s, Karimov had positioned the government as a secular reactionary force combating Islamic radicalism. The primary objective of its domestic security actions was the IMU [Spell out the acronym again]. IMU fighters were battle hardened during the Tajik civil war, where many backed the opposition faction.[37] The IMU base of operations was in the Fergana Valley, although they also conducted cross-border operations from Tajikistan.

Although the IMU was the most violent group involved in the conflicts, the largest Islamist group was Hizb-ut-Tahrir. Although the group's goal was to establish an Islamic Caliphate through peaceful means, Karimov's government exiled many of its senior leaders. Exile, coupled with oppressive measures used against many of the members, led to the group going underground and establishing branches in other countries. The 1999 bombings in the capital city of Tashkent further polarized the government against Islamist groups and movements, although it was never fully proved that one of the Islamist groups was behind the attack.[38]

Unlike its regional counterparts, Uzbekistan generally enacted isolationist policies and tried to keep out foreign influences and assistance. Policies were developed to curb immigration and regional travel. Strict visa requirements dissuaded people from coming into the country, making its economy almost solely focused on domestic production.[39]

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[37] Olcott, "Central Asia Play"; Akiner and Barnes, "The Tajik Civil War."

[38] A. Polat and N. Butkevich, "Unraveling the Mystery of the Tashkent Bombings: Theories and Implications," *Demokratizatsiya* 8 no. 4 (2000): 541–553.

[39] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

Even though Karimov settled in as the undisputed autocratic ruler of Uzbekistan, he sought to establish an Uzbek ethno-national identity based on Tamerlane. Tamerlane was of Uzbek, Tajik, and Mongol heritage, as well as a descendent of Genghis Khan. He founded the Timurid dynasty, which controlled parts of Persia and Central Asia at its height. Karimov hoped to unite Uzbekistan under the warrior/conquer identity that Tamerlane embodied.[40]

The Bush Sr. Years (1991–1993)

On June 12, 1987, President Reagan famously stated in his West Berlin speech, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"[41] The infamous statement and speech symbolically foreshadowed the beginning of the end of the Cold War and the eventual demise of the Soviet Union. The Berlin Wall was eventually demolished on November 9, 1989, with the Soviet Union formally disintegrating on December 26, 1991, both events having occurred during the Presidency of George H. W. Bush.

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States had little to no interest in the Soviet Central Asian region because it did not affect the larger Soviet–US

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[40] C. McMahon, "The Rehabilitation of Tamerlane," *Chicago Tribune,* January 17, 1999, https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1999-01-17-9901170256-story.html; S. Kinzer, "A Kinder, Gentler Tamerlane Inspires Uzbekistan," *New York Times,* November 10, 1997, https://www.nytimes.com/1997/11/10/world/a-kinder-gentler-tamerlane-inspires-uzbekistan.html; Associated Press, "Uzbekistan Turns Conqueror into Hero," *Associated Press* via *Deseret News,* January 5, 1998, https://www.deseret.com/1998/1/5/19356191/uzbekistan-turns-conqueror-into-hero

[41] Transcript of speech taken from American Rhetoric Top 100 Speeches: https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/ronaldreaganbrandenburggate.htm

relationship. Between 1989 and 1992, President Bush had 63 official memoranda based on face-to-face or telephone conversations with Soviet or former Soviet officials.[42] None of the memoranda mentioned any of the Soviet Central Asian republics. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were only two official memoranda to the newly formed Central Asian states: one with President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan and the second with President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan.[43]

The two memos identified and summed up the primary concerns for President Bush in regard to the Central Asian states: stability, economy, and security of nuclear technology. In the Kyrgyz memo, both presidents were concerned with freedom and democracy in the country after the recent elections. Akayev hoped to solidify US support for the establishment of a market economy for its agricultural sector. Privatization of other sectors was also a concern. Although the development of a stable economy was a primary issue for both countries, defense and security were concerns as well. Akayev believed that nuclear weapons and associated nuclear technology should be in the hands of Russia. Bush agreed with the assessment, which was a continued topic of interest with Russia throughout his presidency.[44]

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[42] Information taken from the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum archives: https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/memcons-telcons

[43] The White House, "Meeting with Askar Akayev, President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan," *The White House,* Washington, DC: Memorandum of Conversation. Declassified Per E.O. 12958; 2000-0429-F, October 25, 1991; The White House, "Meeting with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan," *The White House,* Washington, DC: Memorandum of Conversation. Declassified Per E.O. 13526; 2010-0542-MR, May 19, 1992.

[44] The White House, "Meeting with Askar Akayev."

The Kazakh memo, although similar to the Kyrgyz one, was a more in-depth look into the relationship between the two countries. Not only state stability but also regional stability were major point of discussions. Nazarbayev believed that the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was not working in the post-Soviet era. The shift from Soviet control to independence occurred too quickly and left the transitioning economies in shambles. There was also a lack of trust in Russia because it was facing its own post-disintegration challenges.[45]

Regional geopolitics added to the fear of instability. Border disputes between the Central Asian states, as well as China, created heightened tension. Kazakhstan was courted by multiple Arab countries and Iran but did not want to succumb to foreign influence. Conflict in Afghanistan and Tajikistan incited fear of the spread of Islamic fundamentalism.[46]

Although the other regional states discussed transferring all their nuclear weapons and technology to Russia, Nazarbayev wanted to temporarily hold on to the missiles located within Kazakhstan's borders. He believed that Kazakhstan needed to defend itself and requested US support in this matter. Although President Bush did not disagree with Nazarbayev's position, he did not approve of it either. The struggle to relinquish nuclear arms was not a public-facing issue. To the public and the general international community, both countries had worked together to create a timeline in which to relinquish all nuclear weapons under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and

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[45] The White House, "Meeting with President Nursultan."

[46] The White House, "Meeting with President Nursultan."

the added Lisbon protocol.[47] Bush did agree on a military-to-military relationship, where the United States could train Kazakh forces.[48]

US security relationships with Central Asia under President Bush consisted of long-term concerns, such as stability and denuclearization. Aside from Kazakhstan, the United States did not formally establish security relations with other Central Asian states. This nuclear diplomacy was the driving force behind security relations through the Clinton era as well because the United States was less concerned with issues that presented as imminent dangers.

The Clinton Years (1993–2001)

Although the United States quickly recognized the former Soviet Republics as independent states by establishing official diplomatic relations with them, the actual support given to the governments was minimal. Between 1992 and 2001, the United States gave foreign assistance worth close to $2.3 billion to all five states combined. Kazakhstan received the most aid during that period, in the amount of $852 million, with Turkmenistan receiving the least, at $196 million (Table 2.1).[49] A 2004 US State Department report compared the amount of military aid the US government provided to

[47] The White House, *Joint Declaration with President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan.* Declaration on US-Kazakhstan Relations. Public Papers, May 19, 1992.

[48] The White House, "Meeting with President Nursultan."

[49] J. Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests," Congressional Research Service, March 21, 2014, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33458.pdf

each Central Asian state, as well as the region as a whole.[50] The report showed the total military aid provided from 1992 to 2003.

Table 2.1[51]

U.S. Assistance to Central Asia, FY1992-FY2001											
	1992	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**Total**
Kazakhstan	$20.33	$51.47	$202.75	$138.85	$79.32	$53.52	$75.85	$72.60	$77.95	$80.01	$852.65
Kyrgyzstan	$13.03	$108.22	$90.36	$44.43	$63.63	$23.85	$50.29	$61.12	$49.73	$43.07	$547.73
Tajikistan	$11.61	$33.72	$45.26	$33.71	$45.36	$14.75	$36.57	$38.16	$38.69	$76.48	$374.31
Turkmenistan	$14.71	$57.28	$22.38	$21.82	$25.33	$6.25	$8.94	$15.94	$10.91	$12.57	$196.13
Uzbekistan	$5.62	$15.00	$34.07	$14.44	$23.34	$30.88	$26.84	$46.88	$39.06	$48.33	$284.46
Regional	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$20.00	$0.60	$7.87	$0.00	$4.50	$7.57	$40.54
Total	***$65.30***	***$265.69***	***$394.82***	***$253.25***	***$256.98***	***$129.85***	***$206.36***	***$234.70***	***$220.84***	***$268.03***	***$2,295.82***

Source: US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Europe and Eurasia
CRS (2014, March 21) Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interest

[50] US Department of State, "Annual Reports on US Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union, FY 2000–2003," 2004, at http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/ rpt/nisasst/

[51] Nichol, "Central Asia."

Chart 2.1

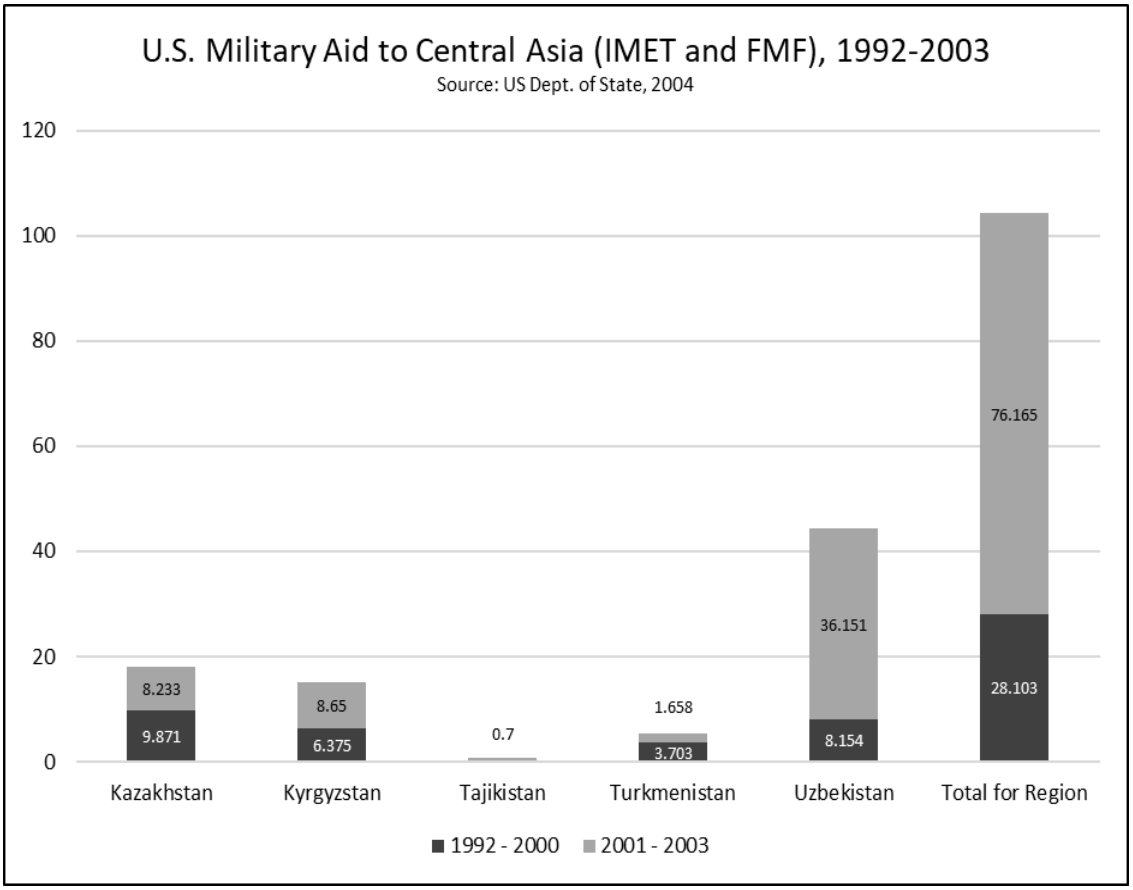

Chart 2.1 indicates the amount of aid provided from 1992 to 2000 and from 2001 to 2003, including international military education and training and foreign military financing. US military aid for each state made up a small percentage of total aid for the given years (Kazakhstan at 1.28%, Kyrgyzstan at 1.26%, Turkmenistan at 2.02%, and Uzbekistan at 3.45%).[52] The drastic increase in aid to Uzbekistan starting 2001 will be discussed further in Chapter 3 because the fight against terrorist groups became a major focus of US security policy after 9/11. There was a disproportionate amount of aid

[52] US Department of State, *Annual Reports on US Government*; O. Oliker and Shlapak, *US Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles* (Location: RAND Corporation, Project Air Force, 2005).

provided, starting in 2001, indicating that the events of 9/11 pushed for greater interest in the region.

Despite the lack of overall security related interests, the primary concern for the Clinton administration was energy. Oil and natural gas reserves in the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan shaped early policy.[53] The government encouraged oil companies to conduct business with the Central Asian republics and open up new pipelines to bypass the preexisting ones, which were largely influenced by Russia. The free rein that the US government unofficially gave energy companies was evident in future lawsuits, such as the prior mentioned case (in footnote #9) against James Giffen and Mercator.[54]

Geopolitical security dynamics eventually took precedent in some energy dialogue as well, such as Unocal abandoning its pipeline project with Turkmenistan due to the flare up of violence in Afghanistan. Although the United States originally decided to stay out of the conflict, the 1998 US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania forced the country to retaliate against al-Qaeda positions in Afghanistan. The 1998 embassy bombings and subsequent retaliation put all Afghan-related projects on hiatus, including the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline.[55]

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[53] M. B. Olcott, "The Geopolitics of Central Asia prior to September 11," in *Central Asia's Second Chance,* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2005).

[54] *United States v. J. Bryan Williams; United States v. James H. Giffen*

[55] S. Levine, "Unocal Quits Afghanistan Pipeline Project," *New York Times,* Dec. 5, 1998, s3.amazonaws.com/911timeline/1990s/nyt120598.html

Another failed ambition in the region was political reform through democracy building. By President Clinton's second term, it was becoming clearer that authoritarian political systems were becoming the norm in every state. Tajikistan was coming out of a civil war; reconciliation efforts placed President Rahmonov as the undisputed leader of the country; Karimov was becoming increasingly distrustful of foreign influences in Uzbekistan; Kyrgyzstan did not have the energy resources the United States wanted to acquire; and Akayev was actively suppressing political opposition. Both the Turkmen and Kazakh governments were also becoming more corrupt, as revenue from their energy resources were profiting the elite. By the end of the 20th century, the United States had virtually stopped all pro-democracy efforts in the region, eventually shifting to a pro-secular approach after 9/11.

While establishing democracy was losing traction, the Clinton administration kept up and eventually concluded negotiations surrounding regional nuclear nonproliferation.[56] This precursor to regional nuclear disarmament was based on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I). Negotiations for the treaty began in 1982, as Reagan addressed the goal of arms reduction and START in his commencement speech to Eureka College on May 9, 1982.[57] Negotiations continued until the treaty was formally signed on July 31, 1991, by President Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev.

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[56] The White House, "Meeting with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev," *The White House,* National Security Council, Washington, DC: Declassified Per E.O. 13526; 2016-0124-M, February 12, 1994.

[57] R. Reagan, "Address at Commencement Exercises," *Eureka College.* Eureka, Illinois, May 9, 1982, https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/128700/eureka.pdf

The purpose of the treaty was to reduce and limit strategic offensive nuclear weapons. The Lisbon Protocol was eventually signed, post-independence, by Russian, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus to affirm each of the states' continued obligations under START I.[58]

The Clinton administration continued the push towards denuclearization through the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances. The memorandum, signed by Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus on December 5, 1994, effectively acknowledged that each of the states would become a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and would transfer all of their nuclear weapons to Russia.[59] Despite earlier hesitation expressed by Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan transferred 1,410 strategic Soviet-era missiles and an unknown number of tactical nuclear weapons to Russia by April 1995.[60]

Following the completion of the terms of the Budapest Memo, the United States covertly assisted Kazakhstan under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program in removing over 600 kg of highly enriched uranium.[61,62] The United States

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[58] Bureau of Nonproliferation, *START I: Lisbon Protocol and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty* (Washington, DC: US State Department Fact Sheet, 2001).

[59] The memorandum was signed at the Organization for Security and Cooperation at the Europe conference in Budapest, Hungary.

[60] J. Cirincione, J. Wolfsthal, and M. Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005); Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Nuclear Disarmament Kazakhstan," January 2, 2019, https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/kazakhstan-nuclear-disarmament/

[61] The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act was cosponsored by Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar. The purpose of the act was to secure and dismantle weapons of mass destruction in states that emerged from the Soviet Union.

compensated the Kazakh government $25 million for the transfer.[63] Removal of Kazakh nuclear infrastructure continued from 1995 to 2001 as the United States helped the Kazakh government seal 181 tunnels and 13 bore holes at its defunct Semipalatinsk nuclear test site.[64] Although the nonproliferation push between the two countries continued long after they relinquished their weapons, the United States rewarded the Kazakh government through monetary aid as well. In 1994, US assistance to Kazakhstan was $202.75 million, up from $51.47 million the year before. This continued in 1995, with aid totaling $138.85 million, but eventually falling off the following year (see Table 2.1). The US–Kazakh nonproliferation relationship was the foundation of US security policy during the Clinton presidency. The conventional military relationship between the countries would continue into the post-9/11 period.

Regional Dynamics

Multiple extra-regional organizations and states, other than the United States, had an interest in the region, including Russia and China. Although other states such as Iran, Turkey, India, and Pakistan also had a vested interest in the region, Russia and China dominated the security culture in the region due to their proximity and shared histories.

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[62] The operation was called Project Sapphire and involved moving the uranium from Kazakhstan to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. United States of America, "Project Sapphire after Action Report," Declassified in EO 12958. George Washington University National Security Archives; D. Sholk, "Project Sapphire: 20 Years Later, and Still Relevant," *The Diplomat,* Nov. 17, 2014, https://thediplomat.com/2014/11/project-sapphire-20-years-later-and-still-relevant/

[63] Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Nuclear Disarmament Kazakhstan."

[64] Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Nuclear Disarmament Kazakhstan."

The collapse of the Soviet Union created an opportunity for extra-regional powers to contest for supremacy. Central Asia became a testing ground for not only post-Soviet bilateral relations but also for the creation of new regional and global institutions that focused on various aspects of Central Asian affairs, ranging from stability to economy to security.

Transnational Security Structures

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Multiple regional institutions and multilateral organizations were created to ensure stability in the post-Soviet states. The CIS started as the most prominent organization in the post-Soviet region.[65] It was created through the Belovezha Accords and the Alma-Ata Agreement as a way to achieve security and economic integration.[66] Although it was created in 1991 as the various republics were claiming independence, the official signing of the charter did not happen until 1993. The purpose of the organization was to improve economic, political, and security relationships among all the newly created states of the former Soviet Union.

Despite its initial scope, the CIS was a lackluster organization. Member states came to the realization that they had different security and policy goals separate from

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[65] All former Soviet states were either a member, party, or observer to the CIS.

[66] The Belovezha Accords, signed on December 8, 1991, were also known as the Minsk Agreement because they established Minsk, Belarus, as the headquarters for the CIS. The accords dissolved the Soviet Union and created the CIS institution. The Alma-Ata agreement, signed on December 21, 1991, established the declarations and principles of the CIS.

Russia, which was the central state in the organization at the time. Russia wanted to have control of infrastructure and economic resources to better provide for the state, whereas other states wanted Russia to finance projects within their own states that they could not afford themselves.[67]

Nevertheless, the institution created a post-Soviet bloc that lobbied for regional affairs on a global scale. The governing bodies within the organization are as follows:[68]

- The Council of Heads of State (CHS) – Oversees the organization' structure
- The Council of Heads of Government (CHG) – Social and economic issues
- The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs – Executive body
- The Council of Permanent Representatives – Technical duties and coordination of military operations
- The Council of Ministries of Defense – Supervises intergovernmental structures and military affairs
- The Council of Border Guard Commanders – Border protection
- The Economic Council – Economic integration
- Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (IPA) – Implements best practices of the CIS

[67] M. B. Olcott, A. Aslund, and S. Garnett, *Getting It Wrong: Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); P. Kubicek, "The Commonwealth of Independent States: An Example of Failed Regionalism?" *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009): 237–256. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20542785

[68] M. Laruelle and S. Peyrouse, "Regional Organizations in Central Asia: Patterns of Interaction, Dilemmas of Efficiency," Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Central Asia. Working Paper No. 10, 2012.

The CHS and CHG are the only councils with the CIS that have the ability to adopt binding decisions for all member states. All other councils were established in an advisory capacity. By 2000, the CIS was largely underwhelming because member states preferred to produce bilateral relationships rather than rely on a singular multilateral organization.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization/Tashkent Collective Security Agreement

Along with the CIS, the Collective Security Treaty was developed as a way to provide a mechanism for collective security for member states. The treaty initially included six states (Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) and was known as the Tashkent Collective Security Agreement until Uzbekistan withdrew.[69] Azerbaijan and Georgia joined in 1994, but later withdrew from the treaty, with Uzbekistan, in 1999. The treaty was eventually formed into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2002. Although the CSTO mandates assistance for member states in regard to external military aggression, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and territorial integrity, it does not include assistance for member states that are having internal security issues (aside from terrorism).[70]

[69] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[70] Laruelle and Peyrouse, "Regional Organizations in Central Asia."

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)/Shanghai Five Group/Shanghai Forum

The SCO was established in 2001 as an emerging organization from the Shanghai Five Group/Shanghai Forum, which was founded in 1996.[71] Although the CIS and the CSTO are Russian created and led transnational organizations, the SCO was established and led by China. The Shanghai Five initially included China, Russia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. When Uzbekistan joined in 2002, it was reformed into the SCO. India and Pakistan joined as members in 2017. Similar to the CIS, the SCO focused on regional issues ranging from economic to trade to security concerns. Security-related issues of the organization focus on terrorism, separatism, and extremism.[72] The organization has faced multiple challenges since its inception, including a lack of funding, a lack of enforcement, and member states being more focused on specific agendas rather than overall regional security.[73] Despite the challenges, the organization represents over one-third of the global population, making it a formidable global security and economic negotiating bloc.

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[71] Albert, E. "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Council on Foreign Relations.* October 14, 2015, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/shanghai-cooperation-organization; Allison, R. "Structures and Frameworks for Security Policy Cooperation in Central Asia," in *Central Asian Security,* ed. R. Allison and L. Jonson (Washington, D.C.: Chatham House, Brookings Institution Press, 2001).

[72] Shanghai Cooperation Organization, "Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism," *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, June 15, 2001, https://www.refworld.org/docid/49f5d9f92.html

[73] Albert, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization"; M. Al-Qahtani, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Law of International Organizations," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 5, no. 1 (2006)

Russia

Russia, being the primary state that emerged as the replacement of the former Soviet Union, saw Central Asia and other post-Soviet states as part of its "near-abroad." The Central Asian states' first challenge after independence was balancing the relationship with Russia and the rest of the world.[74] The states wanted to form their own relationships with the international community rather than have Russia mediate for them. Mediation would prioritize Russia's interests over those of each state. The CIS was the primary tool initially created to serve the purpose of establishing Russia's dominance over the former Soviet states. As for Russia's purpose in the CIS, it failed since the heads of member states were not willing to let the organization have control over issues of sovereignty.

Despite the floundering necessity of the CIS, the Central Asian states continued to engage in the CSTO. Their primary concern for their engagement in the organization was to use Russia's assistance in deterring and fighting against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Central Asian states feared a rise in the Islamic movement could lead to a rise of similar movements within their own borders. For a while Russia was able to send arms and weapons through Central Asia to various Northern Alliance factions in Afghanistan.[75] After a while, Russia was unable to uphold its commitment due to internal challenges, specifically with Chechnya. The rise of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in

[74] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[75] K. O'Flynn, "Russia in Multi-Million Arms Deal with Northern Alliance," *The Guardian*, October 23, 2001, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/23/afghanistan.russia

Chechnya was the final failure of Russia's inability to provide assistance to members of the CSTO.

Although Russia's security reach was evident through its use of the CIS and CSTO, it also had a physical presence through the deployment of its military in various parts of the region. Russian military presence was evident at the Tajik/Afghan border, as well as the fact that the 201st Motorized Division was stationed at a base in Tajikistan.[76] The presence of Russian military abroad created internal challenges for the Central Asian states, as nationalism for Russians abroad often conflicted with each states' ethnic nationalistic goals. Ultimately, Russia's post-Soviet goal of using the Central Asian states to enhance its own economic and security situation faltered due to each state's own ambitions.

China

Although Russia had closer ties to the Central Asian states due to their shared post-Soviet identity, China saw Central Asia as a region of strategic significance. China saw the collapse of the Soviet Union as a leaving a potential power vacuum in the region. As Central Asia initially fell into the Russian sphere of influence, China accepted this as a way to ensure stability in the region.

China was quick to engage with the CA states soon after independence because it saw Western influence in the region as a potential economic threat to the state. Over the course of the first decade after independence, President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister

[76] Olcott and Udalova, "Drug Trafficking on the Great Silk Road."

Li Peng made multiple visits to each of the states between 1994 and 1996.[77] What made independence difficult for China was the issue of greater Uighur autonomy. The Uighur population, which is predominantly a Muslim minority along the Chinese/Central Asian borders, had been fighting for greater autonomy and independence since the 80s. The population received support from nationalists in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Independence in Central Asia resulted in heightened ambitions from Uighur groups to claim and fight for their own independence from China.

As China created bilateral and multilateral agreements with the newly formed states, it persuaded President Nazarbayev and President Akayev to withdraw support for the Uighur separatists. China's push against the Uighur separatists culminated in 1997, when the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) conducted three bombing campaigns in Xinjiang, killing nine people and injuring seventy-four, as a response to the Ramadan arrests of Uighurs in Xinjiang weeks earlier.[78] The bombings allowed Beijing to frame all separatist organizations as terrorists. This created a divide between the CA governments and the separatists because the states did not want armed organizations within their own borders.[79] Having solidified the support of the Central Asian states, China removed any official external support the separatist movements were receiving,

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[77] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

[78] Amnesty International, "Xinjiang: Trials after Recent Ethnic Unrest," *Amnesty International,* ASA 17/18/97, March 21, 1997, https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/wp-content/uploads/21-March-1997-Amnesty-International.pdf; Stratfor, "China: The Evolution of ETIM," *Stratfor,* May 13, 2008, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/china-evolution-etim

[79] Olcott, "Central Asia Play."

thus solidifying its own borders and implementing harsher policies in the border regions to curb all nonconformist movements.

Although China's primary concern in regard to Central Asia during the post-Soviet years was stability and border protection, its relationship with the CA states evolved soon after 9/11. China's newly selected President Hu Jintao laid out a vision of cooperation with Central Asia in 2004. He proposed four methods of developing cooperation and development between the countries:[80]

- To deepen relations and mutual political trust through high-level exchanges and better regional cooperation mechanisms
- To enhance security coordination and maintain regional stability through the SCO and other bilateral agreements
- To follow principles of mutual benefit and trust to accelerate cooperation through expanded investment
- To scale up cultural exchanges and merge traditional friendships by encouraging cultural, media, academic, tourism, and social contacts

Even though the Russian sphere of influence was dominant after the collapse of the Soviet Union, China emerged as a powerful influence in the latter half of the decade and continuing into the post-9/11 era.

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[80] China Daily, "Hu: Closer Links with Central Asia Sought," *China Daily*, June 17, 2004, http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Jun/98554.htm

Conclusion

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States did not have a formal relationship with the Central Asian republics. There was minimal interest in what the states could provide. The only interest the United States had in the region was how the Soviet Union was affected on a larger scale. The change in regional sovereignty in the early 90s came with unexpected violence and turmoil. Where economic and security relationships should have been a focal point of US policy, welcoming the new states into the international system, instead they were replaced by a distant concern that instability marred the post-Soviet geopolitical space. Although there was some interest in the Afghan energy sector and a foreshadowing of things to come with strikes on al-Qaeda in Operation Infinite Reach, there was little importance placed on affairs involving Central Asia. The US saw the region as developmentally deficient, militarily unorganized, and not an existential threat to US interests. It took almost a decade, until 9/11, for the United States to understand the value of the region and come up with a strategy to deal with emerging security concerns.

Chapter 3: The US Military and Central Asia

United States military engagements with Central Asia began in the 90s with the primary objectives of protecting the independence and sovereignty of the states, helping the region integrate with the western military and political institutions, ensuring access to energy resources, promoting the region's adoption of democratization and market-oriented reforms, and helping the region in improving border security.[1] The most significant military and political collaboration between the US and Central Asia happened after the 9/11 attack. The United States, for the first time, established temporary bases in the region with frontline states being Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan under the "Operation Enduring Freedom" banner.[2] Although the focus had been on anti-terrorism, the approaches to US military relationships with central Asia varied significantly based on the regime and influence of local powers.

The security relationship between US military forces and the Central Asian states primarily occurred through US Central Command (CENTCOM). Under the Bush administration CENTCOM was headed first by General Tommy Franks, followed by General John Abizad, Admiral William Fallon, Lieutenant General Martin Dempsey, and General David Petraeus. Under the Obama administration the command continued to be headed by General Petraeus, followed by Lieutenant General John Allen, General Jim

[1] Elizabeth Wishnick, *Growing US Security Interests in Central Asia* (DIANE Publishing, 2002).

[2] CNN Editorial Research, "Operation Enduring Freedom Fast Facts," *CNN*, October 4, 2020, https://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/28/world/operation-enduring-freedom-fast-facts/index.html.

Mattis, General Lloyd Austin, and finally General Joseph Votel who continued his tenure under the Trump administration. General Austin sums up CENTCOM's directives in Central Asia as preventing the establishment of terrorist safe havens, as well overcoming other regional challenges such as trans-national extremism, narco-trafficking, and the export and readmission of foreign fighters to the region.[3] The command serves as the direct point of contact for the majority of defense and security related policy issues in the region.

This chapter will be broken down first by looking at military policy by President Bush and President Obama's administration. This will be followed by a look at regional implications of military relations with great powers. The last section will cover a theoretical analysis of US military policy in Central Asia using Mesbahi's tripartite framework and Buzan et al. Securitization Theory.

The Bush Jr. Years (2001–2009)

Before President George W. Bush was in power, other administrations including those of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton had laid key foundations for the US military policy in the region.[4] For instance, in 1997, the Caspian Sea was a key area of national

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[3] Lloyd Austin, "Statement of General Lloyd J. Austin on the Posture of US CENTCOM". March 5, 2014. HHRG-113-AS00-Wstate-AustinIIIUSAL-20140305.pdf

[4] Jed C. Snyder, *After Empire: The Emerging Geopolitics of Central Asia* (Forest Grove, OR: Pacific University Press, 2002).

interest via declaration under Clinton's administration, "Central Asia" No. 5 (11) 1997.[5] The Bush administration started moving its military into the Central Asian region after the 9/11 attacks. The US considered the region as strategic and necessary in implementing its counter-terrorism strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan.[6]

There are several reasons for increased military cooperation and involvement of the US in Central Asia at the beginning of the Bush presidency. These reasons play a crucial role in defining Bush's military strategy in Central Asia. The creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is the first major reason that contributed to President Bush's military policy and activities in the region. This was after countries in the region (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan) and other regional powers (China and Russia) had changed the "Shanghai process" into being fully-functional on June 15, 2001.[7] In the same year, on June 16, China and Russia also entered into an agreement through the Treaty on Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation.[8] Key statements in the SCO include (1) supporting the values of inviolability of sovereignty, (2) promoting the value of mutual respect where the countries will have the right to decide on their destiny, (3) complying with the requirements for peaceful

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[5] James MacDougall, "A New Stage in US-Caspian Sea Basin Relations," *Central Asia* 5, no. 11 (1997), https://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/st_04_dougall.shtml.

[6] Kimberly Marten, "Small Steps for US Security Interest in Kyrgyzstan," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* No. 264 (2002).

[7] Marten.

[8] Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation (2001). https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t15771.shtml.

coexistence, and (4) the parties' refusal to the use of force as they relate with each other.[9] The policy documents of the SCO provided an important echoing of the four principles. Washington under President Bush feared that China and Russia had entered into a significant agreement in Central Asia, hence, the US responded by increasing political and military relations within the region since the establishment of the SCO created an unconducive environment for its ideological subtext.[10] For instance, the SCO and the "Big Treaty" between China and Russia condemned "humanitarian intervention". This was a banner that President Clinton had used for regime change, thereby being accused of interfering with the country's sovereignty.[11]

The second reason for the US's increased interest in Central Asia under the administration of President Bush was also reactionary. Increasing levels of tensions and confrontations between the United States and China highlighted the need for the US to increase its interests in Central Asia. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush considered China as the United States "strategic adversary".[12] The United States' national security strategy affirmed this conclusion in 2002 and 2006. These publications played a major role in intensifying the US interest in Central Asia. In addition, discussions that

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[9] Jing-Dong Yuan, "China's Role in Establishing and Building the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)," *Journal of Contemporary China* 19, no. 67 (2010): 855-869.

[10] Yuan, 855.

[11] Yuan, 855.

[12] John W. Garver, *Face-off: China, the United States, and Taiwan's Democratization* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2011).

occurred after the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous region protests suggested the presence of weaknesses on China's western border, resulting in military considerations being made.[13] The Bush administration also moved swiftly to consolidate the US position in the region by establishing military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.[14]

The activity of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Central Asia is a third major factor that influenced President Bush's military relations with the region.[15] The US opened military bases in Manas (Kyrgyzstan) and Uzbekistan's Karshi-Khanabad region after the 9/11 attacks. In addition, the US Air Force obtained permission to use Lugovoy airport (Kazakhstan) and Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tyube airport (Tajikistan) for transit purposes. The deployment of the US troops into the region in the period between 2001 and 2002 resulted in many experts terming the US as being a "Eurasian power."

In 2002, enshrining the role of Central Asia into the United States National Security Strategy[16] was a major effort that President Bush took to increase military presence in the region. The implications of including the focus into the National Security Strategy can be acknowledged by looking at the key elements of the policy. For instance, the security strategy entails the objectives of collaborating with other stakeholders in

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[13] Garver.

[14] Kimberly Marten, "US Military Bases in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Economic Lessons from Okinawa," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* No. 311 (2003).

[15] "NATO's Relations with Central Asia," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*, February 22, 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_107957.htm.

[16] The National Security Strategy (2002). https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/.

defusing regional conflicts, defeating global terrorism by strengthening alliances, as well as championing for human dignity aspirations.[17] Under President Bush, the Middle East and "Eurasia'' were thus declared priority areas for the US to realize the objectives stated in its National Security Strategy. It was during this administration that the US relegated Europe to the third position on the list of priority areas. The National Security Strategy[18] declared the Central Asian region as having both opportunities and challenges for the US in the current era. Important challenges mentioned in the document include drug trafficking, radicalization, and transnational terrorism.[19] The possibility of lowering China's influence in the region, as well as the likelihood of large hydrocarbon reserves, were considered key opportunities and reasons for the US to consider Central Asia an important priority area. Thus, the Bush administration championed a US policy on Central Asia on the grounds that (1) the region was important to the US, (2) the establishment of the SCO and the presence of the Tashkent Treaty[20] did not hinder the US in establishing its system, and (3) the presence of the United States' military in the region was crucial for the realization of both military and political objectives.

The Bush administration made several attempts to reduce the influence that Russia and China constructed through the creation of the SCO. Two of the options that President Bush had were (1) the creation of an alternative pact or (2) entering the existing

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[17] The National Security Strategy.

[19] The National Security Strategy.

[20] Tashkent Declaration (1966). https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5993/Tashkent+Declaration.

SCO. Consequently, these proposals, created a significant crisis in existing SCO member states.[21] While China was opposed to the entry of the United States into the SCO, Uzbekistan was in support of the proposal. Russia was also reluctant to welcome the US into the SCO but was committed to preserving the organization. Other options that President Bush pushed for in order to counter the influence of Russia and China on Central Asia included projects such as the renewed Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).

The "Anti-terror pact" project that was proposed to involve Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan would also be undertaken as a part of US military strategy in Central Asia. Initially, the 1955 “Baghdad Pact”[22] was the basis for the creation of CENTO, which involved Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The renewed CENTO, involving Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the United States, was specifically aimed at combating terrorism.[23] Nonetheless, the US under Bush favored the idea of "rapid democratization" of the region. For instance, the McCain-Lieberman Resolution reached by Congress (S. J. RES. 3),[24] was particularly aimed at increasing the rate of democratization in Central Asia. Through this resolution,

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[21] Ilan Berman, " The New Battleground: Central Asia and the Caucasus," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2004): 59-69.

[22] The Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). *US Department of State Archive*. https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/98683.htm.

[23] The Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).

[24] S.J.Res.3 - A joint resolution expressing the sense of Congress with respect to human rights in Central Asia. 108th Congress (2003-2004).

the funding of institutions in the Central Asian states that were devoted to democracy increased significantly.[25]

Under the "rapid democratization" strategy, the US cut ties with states or leaders in Central Asia, who compromised democratic processes. Examples of such cases include the freezing of military assistance to Uzbekistan in 2004 when Congress accused the country of gross violations of human rights.[26] Similarly, President Bush provided immense support to the First Kyrgyz Revolution (popularly known as the Tulip Revolution) that led to the dethroning of President Askar Akayev.[27] The Tulip revolution happened due to alleged authoritarianism and corruption propagated Askar Akayev. As can be seen in the case of Akayev's ouster, the US was committed to rapid democratization, which to some parties, such as regional powers and the provisions of the SCO, was considered an interference of the country's sovereignty. In a similar case, the US also condemned the president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov for using force excessively to quell the Andijan rebellion, which resulted in the country's foreign minister calling for the termination of collaboration with the US military.[28]

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[25] Uri Dadush and Michele Dunne, " American and European Responses to the Arab Spring: What's the Big Idea?" *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (2011): 131-145.

[26] Jim Nichol, *Central Asia's Security: Issues and Implications for US Interests* (Darby, PA: DIANE Publishing, 2010).

[27] Lincoln A. Mitchell, *The Color Revolutions* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[28] Eric McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty: Politics and Islam in Central Asia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

Bush's "rapid democratization" seemingly harmed the levels of collaboration in the region. This trend can be attributed to two reasons:

(1) The termination of collaboration with Central Asian countries that violated human rights or suppressed democratic forces

(2) Support that the US provided to democratic institutions or processes against authoritarian regimes such as the case of the Tulip revolution.

The reduction of military presence in Uzbekistan was particularly disastrous to the influence of the US in the region, with its resources in the area diminishing massively. For instance, by 2005, the US' only access to the region was through the Manas NATO military base, facilitated through the agreement between the President Bakiyev of Kyrgyzstan and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.[29]

Despite the setbacks that "rapid democratization" caused, the US established other avenues to better understand and solidify relations with the region. The US established the Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs with the primary aim of strengthening and supporting foreign policies with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.[30] Several other collateral agreements happened between

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[29] Jim Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests," *Congressional Research Service,* March 21, 2014, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33458.pdf

[30] "Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs," *US Department of State,* August 17, 2020, https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-political-affairs/bureau-of-south-and-central-asian-affairs/.

the US and Central Asian states during the Bush administration, although most were reactive.

While Bush's main policy in Central Asia was rapid democratization, his administration oversaw the establishment of a multitude of military bases in in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.[31] However, the level and types of activities at each base, as well as the reason for their establishment, varied. The US military base in Kyrgyzstan, the Manas Air Base, was particularly important.[32] The base was located in the north of the country near the international airport.[33] The US signed a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with president Akayev, which would allow the presence of the US military in the region. The Manas Airbase could hold approximately 30 military aircraft which included fighters such as the French Mirage 2000, the US F/A-18s, refueling aircraft, and cargo planes.[34] The Manas Airbase had a runway of 13,800 feet and covered in 37 acres.[35] Significant funding was put into the air base. For instance, the US invested close to $16 million in the air base in 2001. Additional funding was allocated in 2003 resulting in the expansion of operations in the airbases for more military personnel, fueling, administrative support, and additional land for housing. Statements from both the

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[31] Susan L. Clark-Sestak, *US Bases in Central Asia. No. IDA-D-2907* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2003), 7.

[32] "US Military Bases in Kyrgyzstan," *Military Bases*, March 6, 2018, https://militarybases.com/overseas/kyrgyzstan/.

[33] "US Military Bases".

[34] Clark-Sestak, *US Bases in Central Asia*, 7.

[35] Clark-Sestak, 7.

US government and the Kyrgyzstan government acknowledged the temporary nature of the Manas Airbase. Events after the Tulip revolution, such as the shooting of a Kyrgyz civilian, Alexander Ivanov, in 2006, resulted in strained relationships that spurred future discussions on the need to close the airbase.[36]

A SOFA agreement also led to the establishment of the airbase and the presence of the US military in Uzbekistan.[37] The US-Uzbek SOFA agreement was reached to allow the United States to use several of the country's airbases. The Karshi-Khanabad airbase received funding from the US, which was used for erecting security fences, building newer facilities, and refurbishing existing facilities.[38] Several differences exited between the agreement about the use of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan airbases. For instance, the US-Uzbek SOFA did not provide clarity regarding the type of stay of the US troops in the region. Secondly, the airfields and airspaces in Uzbekistan were only to be used for specific operations including rescue, search, and humanitarian operations.[39] Both the Manas Airbase and the Karshi-Khanabad Air Base received immense pressure from the SCO in order to force a US withdrawal from the region.[40]

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[36] The Associated Press, "US Troops Quizzed after Kyrgyz Man Shot Dead," *NBC News*, December 7, 2006, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/16072996.

[37] "US Military Bases".

[38] "US Military Bases".

[39] "US Military Bases".

[40] Lionel Beehner, "ASIA: US Military Bases in Central Asia," *Council on Foreign Relations*, July 26, 2005, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/asia-us-military-bases-central-asia.

While the US actively engaged with the Central Asian states, there were multiple constraints towards the security cooperation. State to state relations were strained in some cases where popular revolutions, such as the Tulip revolution in Kyrgyzstan, was not actively opposed by the US and requests for help by Akayev was rebuffed.[41] The US was also willing to sacrifice the relationship with Uzbekistan and the Manas airbase as Karimov was condemned for the Andijan massacre.

The Soviet legacy of mistrust of the West, also impeded greater cooperation. According to Lieutenant Colonel Michael McCarthy, many of the officers in Central Asian military institutions were trained during the Soviet era. This was also the case in the intelligence bureaus which sought to control information and communication between the US and their state partners.[42]

The Obama Years (2009–2017)

Unlike his predecessor, President Obama's military strategy towards Central Asia was more proactive than reactive. The impetus for the US under President Obama's administration to adopt a more proactive policy in the region was the Lisbon Summit held by NATO in 2010.[43] The primary role of the NATO Summit 2010, which culminated in the adoption of a newer strategic approach for the 21st century, included a discussion on the relationship between NATO and Russia, creation of a separate defense force by the

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[41] Michael J. McCarthy, *The Limits of Friendship: US Security Cooperation in Central Asia,* Air University Press. October 2007

[42] McCarthy

[43] Sally McNamara, " NATO Summit 2010: Time to Turn Words into Action," *The Heritage Foundation* 2498 (2010): 2.

European Union, unequal burden-sharing, cyber defense, and missile defense.[44] Important decisions reached in the summit included withdrawing NATO troops deployed in Afghanistan by 2014. During the transition, it was expected that the role of the troops towards the end of their presence in the region would be restricted to training or supporting Afghanistan's forces.[45] The USA had a special role to play in ensuring the smooth withdrawal of troops from the region.

Two options for the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan included (1) exiting via India and Pakistan (the southern option) or (2) through Central Asia (the northern option). The use of the "southern" option became unrealistic due to conflicts that erupted, disrupting the relationship with Pakistan, leaving the Central Asian exit the only viable option available. The Obama administration maintained US attention to the Central Asian region through strengthening its relationships with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, in a move to counter the increasing influence of China and Russia within the region.[46] For instance, China and Russia signed an agreement in 2010 that enabled the two countries to cooperate in fighting extremism, separatism, and terrorism.[47] Additional events of the SCO that provided suggestions for organizational-level consolidation of positions created

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[44] McNamara, 2.

[45] McNamara, 2.

[46] Dmitry Gorenburg, "Central Asian Military and Security Forces: Assessing the Impact of Foreign Assistance," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* No. 297 (2013).

[47] Xing Guang Cheng, "Separatism, Extremism and Terrorism: Challenge to Central Asia's Security," *Central Asian Studies* (2010): 44.

a need for cautious attitudes among the member states, particularly Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The worries expressed by these countries provided ideal opportunities for the United States under President Obama's administration to augment its influence on the region.

Unlike his predecessor, President Obama was more selective in the use of partnerships in its strategy to Central Asia. However, setting up diplomatic partnerships was a major distinctive feature in Obama's administration.[48] The diplomatic partnerships were centered on ensuring the smooth withdrawal of troops from the region while guaranteeing there would be reduced needs for the presence of the US after NATO troops had departed.[49] At the time, Uzbekistan became a key diplomatic partner and player for the US strategy in Central Asia. This implied that those political debates that had stalled under President Bush's administration would be renewed. For instance, in 2011, there were prospects for the development of important collaborations between both economic and political issues during the Tashkent consultations. It was at this point that the sanctions that had been imposed on Uzbekistan in 2004 were repealed by the US Congress.[50] Hillary Clinton, who was the United States secretary of state in this period,

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[48] Mark E. Manyin, Stephen Daggett, Ben Dolven, Susan V. Lawrence, Michael F. Martin, Ronald O'Rourke, and Bruce Vaughn, "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's Rebalancing toward Asia," *Congressional Research Service*, March 28, 2012. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf

[49] "The End of the Great Game." The New Republic. Last modified October 6, 2010. https://newrepublic.com/article/78168/obama-central-asia-great-game.

[50] RIAC, "Obama`s Central Asian Strategy," *Russian International Affairs Council*, August 27, 2012, https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/obama-s-central-asian-strategy/

also visited the country to strengthen the ties between the two countries. A key outcome of the meeting between President Islam Karimov and Secretary Clinton was Uzbekistan suspending its membership in the CSTO.[51] The US took advantage of the membership suspension through diplomatic engagements in order to strengthen its partnership with the Central Asian country in areas of security and military cooperation.[52]

President Obama's administration also applied a similar approach to strategic partnership formation to intensify its diplomatic relations with other countries in Central Asia including Kyrgyzstan. Giving the Manas airbase transit center status in 2011, which would be effective until 2014 was one of the key milestones achieved in Kyrgyzstan under President Obama's administration. Although there were negotiations to keep the Manas transit center operating beyond 2014, the center was ultimately closed in that year.[53] This was the US's last base in Central Asia. Closing the base was voted on by the Kyrgyz parliament and declared as being in the best interest of the country.

During this time, the US was paying $60 million annually in rent for operating the transit center.[54] Table 3.1 below shows the military spending by the US within the Central Asian region.

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[51] RIAC.

[52] Mariya Omelicheva, "US Department of Defense, US Security Assistance to Central Asia: Examining Limits, Exploring, Opportunities," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* No. 487 (2017).

[53] Akhilesh Pillalamarri, "The United States Just Closed Its Last Base in Central Asia," *The Diplomat*, July 18, 2014, https://thediplomat.com/2014/06/the-united-states-just-closed-its-last-base-in-central-asia/

[54] Pillalamarri, n.p.

Table 3.1: Relative Size of US Military Management Costs.[55]

Relative Size of U.S. Military Program Management Costs in Central Asian Countries, 2006–2010

The budgets allocated to various U.S. embassies for management of military programs in-country provide a way of assessing the level of U.S. military assistance and involvement in that country.

The following matrix shows that Kazakhstan had the largest military program during this time. Interestingly, the figures show that even after Uzbekistan was prohibited by law from receiving additional State Department–funded military aid (in 2005), the U.S. military program management office remained relatively robust.

	FY 2006	FY 2008	FY 2010
Kazakhstan	$524,000	$579,000	$670,000
Kyrgyzstan	$206,000	$373,000	$419,000
Tajikistan	$263,000	$330,000	$350,000
Turkmenistan	$171,000	$147,000	$171,000
Uzbekistan	$437,000	$438,000	$472,000

To put these figures in perspective, major regional U.S. allies in Africa (like South Africa and Senegal) have military program management budgets of about $450,000.

Source: State Dept, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations for FY 2008, pp. 695–7 and for FY 2010. Figures for 2010 are requested, not actual.

Table 3.1 also shows the relative size of US military management costs for three financial years, 2006, 2008 and 2010. These figures derived from the Department of State indicate the budgets allocated to various US embassies to facilitate effective management of in-country military programs. The table shows that spending on Kazakhstan was much higher compared to its neighbors, as it was allocated $524,000 in 2006, $579,000 in 2008

[55] Lora Lumpe, "US Military Aid to Central Asia, 1999–2009: Security Priorities Trump Human Rights and Diplomacy." *Occasional Paper Series* No. 1. (2010), 12.

and $670,000 in 2010.[56] These budgetary allocations to Kazakhstan were justified because it hosted a military base of the US Air Force, specifically the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing. The budgetary allocations to the other four countries were lower, compared to the country average of US allies in Africa budgeted at $450,000. Kyrgyzstan had $206,000 in 2006, $373,000 in 2008 and $419,000 in 2010.[57] Tajikistan had $263,000 in 2006, $330,000 in 2008, and $350,000 in 2010. Turkmenistan had $171,000 in 2006, $147,000 in 2008, and $171,000 in 2010, while Uzbekistan had $437,000 in 2006, $438,000 in 2008 and $472,000 in 2010.[58]

Russia played a crucial part in the termination of the strategic partnerships between Obama's administration and the nations of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The closure of the Manas Transit center had a lot of geopolitical significance to Russia, which had been a dominant force in this region.[59] However, economic reasons also influenced Kyrgyzstan's decision to vote to close the transit center. Both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan largely relied on the economy of Russia for guest worker remittances and exports.[60] Therefore, the decision to terminate the agreement with the US was also informed by the

[56] Lumpe, 12.

[57] Lumpe, 12.

[58] Lumpe, 12.

[59] Alexey Malashenko, *The Fight for Influence: Russia in Central Asia* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

[60] Malashenko.

fact that economic gains from the closure would outweigh the $60 million that the country received from the US annually.[61]

The strained relationship between Turkmenistan and the US due to Bush's rapid democratization strategy begun to rekindle at the start of President Obama's leadership. Under the rapid democratization approach, President Bush's administration was not ready to compromise with authoritarian regimes and considered Turkmenistan an undemocratic nation.[62] Therefore, there were no possibilities for military partnership between Turkmenistan and the US under President Bush's administration.

Although changes in relations between the US and Turkmenistan began after being the death of President Saparmurat Niyazov, a more positive outcome became evident in 2010.[63] President G. Berdymukhamedov and R. Blake, the US assistant secretary of state held talks in 2011 about their intentions to collaborate on security and economic issues. These talks were an illustration of the efforts by the US under President Obama's administration to promote bilateral collaboration and increase military funding assistance between the United States and the Central Asia States. Table 3.2 below shows the foreign military financing to Central Asia from 2000 to 2010.

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[61] RIAC, "Obama`s Central Asian Strategy".

[62] RIAC.

[63] RIAC.

[64] Lora Lumpe, "US Military Aid to Central Asia, 1999–2009: Security Priorities Trump Human Rights and Diplomacy." *Occasional Paper Series* No. 1. (2010), 15.

Table 1: Foreign Military Financing to Central Asia, FY 2000–FY 2010 (U.S.$)

	FY 2000	FY 2002	FY 2004	FY 2006	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Kazakhstan	1,500,000	4,750,000	—	3,465,000	1,339,000	4,500,000	3,000,000
Kyrgyzstan	1,000,000	11,000,000	4,075,000	1,881,000	843,000	800,000	3,500,000
Tajikistan	—	3,700,000	1,995,000	495,000	372,000	740,000	1,500,000
Turkmenistan	600,000	—	500,000	297,000	—	150,000	2,000,000
Uzbekistan	1,750,000	36,207,000	2,980,000	—	—	—	—

Sources: U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, "all spigots" tables from various years. With the exception of the data for FY 2010, all data was taken from tables reporting back on preceding years' actual expenditures of State Department–funded foreign aid. FY 2010 data is State Department estimated.

Table 3.2: Foreign Military Financing to Central Asia.[64]

Table 3.2 above shows the foreign military financing budgets allocated to Central Asian countries by the US Military, released by the Department of State for the financial years 2,000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Of the five Central Asia countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had the highest and consistent military budgets over the years. Kazakhstan was allocated $1,500,000 in 2000, $4,750,000 in 2002, $3,465,000 in 2006, $1,339,000 in 2008, $4,500,000 in 2009, and 3,000,000 in 2010.[65] Kyrgyzstan was allocated $1,000,000 in 2000, $11,000,000 in 2002, $4,075,000 in 2004, $1,881,000 in 2008, $843,000 in 2008, $800,000 in 2009 and $3,500,000 in 2010.[66] Tajikistan was allocated $3,700,000 in 2002, $1,995,000 in 2004, $495,000 in 2006, $372,000 in 2008, $740,000 in 2009, and $1,500,000 in 2010. [67]Even though

[65] Lumpe, 15.

[66] Lumpe, 15.

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were also allocated some financial budgets during this period, their allocations were lower and inconsistent compared to the other three countries.[68]

Regional Implications of Military Relations

Military relations under the administrations of Bush and Obama, were greatly influenced by local powers. Russia, China, and India all had particularly important implications for US relations in the region. The strategies that the US planned to undertake seemed to counter the interests of the local powers and thus were destined to receive opposition. One of the most significant events during President Obama's administration was the recommencement of the US-Uzbek talks and Uzbekistan's exit from the CSTO. Convincing Uzbekistan to exit CSTO, which had been established with Russia being the main player, was particularly painful. The exit of Uzbekistan from the CSTO was potentially interpreted to represent a failure in Russia's diplomatic strategies.[69]

All the regional powers in Central Asia had specific interests in the region, with security being one of the priorities. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in Russian troops being withdrawn from the region, except for some parts of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan.[70] These withdrawals implied that Russia's security was at

[67] Lumpe, 15.

[68] Lumpe, 15.

[69] Lumpe, 15.

stake. There were several incidences of drug trafficking, terrorism, and Islamic militancy, spillover from Afghanistan via Central Asia, which had intensified the interest of Russia in the region. Therefore, the aspect of security had been the major factor that united the US, Russia and other regional powers in working together. However, economic reasons can be viewed as a key factor that influenced the desire of regional powers to be the dominant force in Central Asia. Central Asia, Iran, and Russia had gas reserves that constituted half of the world's total.[71] Therefore, being a key player in the extraction and export of Central Asia's gas was another key reason behind Russia's interest in the region.

Since the Soviet Union collapsed, China has strived to create and maintain strong relationships with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.[72] Similar to the US and other regional powers, China's initial interest in Central Asia was diplomatic and political but their desire to ensure security and protect their economic interests was a foundation.[73] A significant proportion of oil and gas pipelines, communication, air flights, railways, and roads connect the region to China.[74] In 2012,

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[70] Fiona Hill, "The United States and Russia in Central Asia: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran," *Brookings*, July 29, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/the-united-states-and-russia-in-central-asia-uzbekistan-tajikistan-afghanistan-pakistan-and-iran/.

[71] Hill.

[72] Bernardo Mariani, "China's Role and Interests in Central Asia," *Saferworld*, October, 2013, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/172938/chinas-role-and-interests-in-central-asia.pdf.

[73] Mariani.

[74] Mariani.

China was the most dominant economic partner in the region conducting transactions amounting to more than USD $46 billion investments.[75] China had also intensified cultural, diplomatic, and political ties with the region. For instance, there were a growing number of Confucius institutions offering cultural programs and language courses in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan.[76] People-to-people exchanges, and educational corporations were also facilitated through such institutions as the SCO Network University.

Consequently, China's regional strength and economic interest pushed it to keep a closer watch on US-Central Asian military relations. China interest in the region's issues included (1) ensuring security and stability to protect its massive investments in the region, as well as (2) mitigating the risks of instability and insecurity spill-overs into its north-western region of Xinjiang.[77]

The fact that Central Asia is a cultural hub of three important civilizations in Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism makes the region particularly important for India.[78] Therefore, monitoring the events in the region was instrumental for India to avoid

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[75] Mariani.

[76] Shabnam Dadparvar and Hamidreza Azizi, "Confucian Influence: The Place of Soft Power in China's Strategy Towards Central Asia," *China Report* 55, no. 4 (2019): 328-344.

[77] Michael E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia: A History* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[78] Emilian Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers: Contextualizing the Security Governance of the European Union, China, and India.* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2012).

instability and spill over into its territories, especially due to Islamic extremism. Central Asia has been associated with a diverse range of opportunities that India could benefit from, including its central and strategic location, as well as a rich supply of hydrocarbons and other minerals.[79] The cooperation of India and Central Asian countries has been important in the area of energy security. India's security was also a direct correlation of the state of peace and stability in Afghanistan and Central Asian states that had their own internal conflicts such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This is why India had been more open to cooperating with other world powers including the United States and China in protecting peace and stability in the region.[80]

Summarily, the regional powers either worked against or facilitated the US in realizing its military relations and Central Asia strategies. The Sino-Russian and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization had massive effects on President Bush's and President Obama's military relations with Central Asia.[81] As Wishnick[82] argues, chances for successful and coordinated anti-US activities in Central Asia were greatly limited due to the existence of divergent interests in both Central Asia states and with the SCO. In

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[79] Kavalski.

[80] Lumpe, 15.

[81] Charles E. Ziegler, "Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and American Foreign Policy: From Indifference to Engagement," *Asian Survey* 53, no. 3 (2013): 484-505.

[82] Elizabeth Wishnick, "Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition and Cooperation in the Shadow of the Georgian Crisis," *Current Politics and Economics of Russia, Eastern and Central Europe* 26, no. 6 (2011): 763.

addition, although the Sino-Russian partnerships were based on a common goal of establishing stability in the regions, both Russia and China had specific points of differences regarding their economic interests in the region. Nonetheless, the presence of competitive inclinations with the Sino-Russian partnerships and fissures in SCO, the achievement of US Central Asia's goals under Bush and Obama's administration were bound to receive significant resistances from the two powers.[83] The most important reasons why the American strategies in Central Asia were bound to face opposition were, that the goals of supporting the rule of law and democracy, regional security, and energy cooperation tended to conflict with one another.[84]

Turkey was also adversely affected by the presence of the US military in the Central Asian region, given the fact that as an emerging economic and military power in the Middle East, Turkey had been struggling to control geopolitical developments within the region, which included extending its control to neighboring countries, specifically Central Asian countries.[85] The fact that Turkey was allied more with the West than with the East gave it an advantage over Russia and China.[86] This is evident from the successful petition of Turkey to join and become a member state of the European Union. In this

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[83] Wishnick, 763.

[84] Wishnick, 763.

[85] Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Eurasia between Russia, Turkey, and Iran," in *Key Players and Regional Dynamics in Eurasia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 164-192.

[86] Mustafa G. Sahin, "Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism: Domestic Sources, Dynamics and Foreign Policy" (Doctoral dissertation, Florida International University, 2010).

regard, it is notable that the presence of the US military enhanced the tensions between Turkey and Russia in their bid to control and influence the region.[87]

Theoretical Analysis

The tripartite framework by Mohiaddin Mesbahi explains the increased prevalence of the US military within the Central Asian region, particularly with regard to its military bases in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.[88] In this case, the tripartite was applied through the international relationship and foreign affairs of the world's dominant nations, the United States, Russia, and China.[89] The United States, as a global super power, was working towards expanding its influence to the east, targeting Asian countries that were former members of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Russia as a fallen giant after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War, was also working towards extending and expanding its control towards the west, by significantly influencing the geopolitics, geo-culture, and geo-economics of former Soviet Union members.[90] Similarly, China as an emerging giant in the East, was working to beat both Russia and the United States in global influence and domination by

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[87] Sahin.

[88] Bryan Barber, *Japan's Relations with Muslim Asia* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 25.

[89] Barber, 25.

[90] Jyotsna Bakshi, "No Single Power or Power Centre Can Have Exclusive Sway over Central Asia: A Geo-Political Analysis," *Strategic Analysis* 22, no. 1 (1998): 119-141.

expanding its policies, economic tenets and cultural practices towards the East, mainly targeting former Soviet Union members.[91]

The tripartite framework brings into perspective an international system interlocking three distinct structures, involving coercive military, normative social and economic development.[92] These are guided by the three angles of the triangle created by the tripartite framework, evidenced by the symbiosis of geo-politics, geo-economics, and geo-cultural dynamics within the Central Asia region.[93] Geo-politics examines the influences of economic, geographical, and demographic factors on the politics of a country, particularly with regard to the foreign policy of a state. Geo-cultural examines the influences of cultural, at a state and non-state level, and geographical factors on the foreign relations of a country. Geo-economics examines the temporal, spatial, and political aspects of resources and economies, linked to ethnic, culture, religion, and other country variables.[94]

Geo-politically, the Central Asian region was still largely under the influence of the Soviet Union, as most of these countries were former members of the Union before its

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[91] Arash Reisinezhad, *The Shah of Iran, the Iraqi Kurds, and the Lebanese Shia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[92] Mesbahi, "Eurasia between Russia, Turkey, and Iran," 165.

[93] Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Free and Confined: Iran and the International System," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 5 (2011): 9-34.

[94] Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Trust and US-Iran Relations: Between the Prisoners' Dilemma and the Assurance Game," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2013): 7-51.

collapse in the late 1980s.[95] In this regard, the influence of Russia on these countries was quite strong, and with China also pushing to expand its control over the region, it is notable that the US adopted military coercion strategy to extend its influence in the region.[96] By using coercive diplomacy, the US managed to create strong political relations within the Central Asian nations, presenting itself as an ally to these countries that would not only enable them overcome the threat of terrorism within the region, but also boost their stability and political independence, particularly from the strong controls of the Kremlin.[97]. Furthermore, the coercive diplomacy approach also enabled the United States to consolidate its influence in Central Asia by disrupting the attempts by Russia and China to take control of the region, giving it an advantage to expand its influence into the Central Asian region.[98]

Geo-culturally, the Central Asian region observed a mix of various cultures. Russia and China had a noted cultural influence over members of the Central Asian states.[99] In fact, Russia has an undue advantage over the US and China because most of these countries still spoke the Russian language, and observed Russian cultural practices, borrowed from the period when they were still members of the Soviet Union. In this

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[95] Mesbahi, "Eurasia between Russia, Turkey, and Iran," 164-192.

[96] Barber, *Japan's Relations with Muslim Asia*, 1-23.

[97] Barber, 2.

[98] Barber, 2.

[99] Ajay Patnaik, "Migration, Identity and Integration in Eurasia," *Frontiers of Sociology* (2005).

regard, it was difficult for the US to penetrate the Central Asia region, or influence its members in any subtle way, hence adopting the military approach.[100] Washington used the normative social influence strategy to influence the Central Asian countries to adopt and conform to western culture in order to be liked and accepted by them.[101] In this regard, it is notable that the heavy military presence of the US in the region was not only instrumental in protecting its national security by neutralizing the threat of terrorism, but also was used in selling the western cultural ideologies and practices that would help the US advance its geo-cultural influence in the region.[102]

What makes the geo-cultural position unique is its interaction and impact of the security relationship at the non-state level. In terms of US military presence in the region, while the military could be seen as a way for the US exerting its influence to the states, it can also be seen as a way for the US to spread its influence to the people. The problem with this is the relationship of the military with the general populace. Even though the Central Asian states are overtly secular, religion, specifically Islam has a great influence on portions of the sub-state level of society. The emergence of a US military presence can be seen as both a threat based on a non-Islamic, non-regional force encroaching on

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[100] Arash Reisinezhad, "Geopolitical Account of Iran's Ties with Non-State Actors under the Shah: 1958-1979" (Doctoral dissertation, Florida International University, 2017).

[101] Stephen Blank, "Russian Democracy and the West after Chechnya," *Comparative Strategy* 15, no. 1 (1996): 11-29.

[102] Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Iran’s Foreign Policy Toward Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus," in *Iran at the Crossroads* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 149-174.

societal norms, and also a savior as a counter to the growing threat of Islamic nationalism that emerged in many of the states regionally. While the growing perception of the Islamic threat was an important geo-cultural factor at the sub-state level, the perception of the US as a semi-liberating force strained state to state relations but enhanced the relationship with the local populace (i.e. the US refusal to support Akayev in the Tulip revolution and their condemnation of Karimov for the Andijan massacre).

Geo-economically, the Central Asian region was not performing well. Since their break-up from the Soviet Union, most of the countries in this region had been facing a wide range of political challenges, which resulted in conflicts, thereby denying them an opportunity to focus on economic growth and development.[103] Furthermore, these countries were initially very poor, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, struggled to find their economic foothold, which pushed them towards bilateral and multi-lateral agreements to help improve their economies.[104] The US used its military presence for reconnaissance purposes, whereby it studied and reviewed the economic challenges these countries were going through, and offered to help them, in return for establishing military bases in these countries.[105] In fact, the US push for the westernization of these countries through its heavy military presence was considered an effective strategy to counter Chinese and Russian influence and expanding American influence over the region.[106] In

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[103] Wæver, "Politics, Security, Theory," 465.

[104] Hafeez Malik, *The Roles of the United States, Russia and China in the New World Order* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016).

[105] Mustafa G. Sahin, "Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism".

this regard, it is notable that the US used its military presence in the region as a means to advance its foreign affairs policy and influence a region largely dominated by China and Russia.

Barry Buzan helped develop a theoretical framework termed the '*securitization theory*' in which he stated that it was the process in which governments or state actors transformed specific subjects into matters of 'security', in what it perceived as an advanced version of politicization to facilitate the adoption and use of extraordinary means in the name of security.[107] Buzan further noted that an issue that had been successfully 'securitized' by state actors was given first priority in terms of government resources, attention, and concern, for instance the 'securitization of terrorism' as a threat to national security in the US as witnessed during the Bush and Obama administrations, which also informed its heavy military presence in the Central Asian region.[108] For instance, the Bush Jr. administration formed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) specifically to advance the country's war on terrorism at home following the successful securitization of terrorism as major threat to the national security of the United

[106] Pelham, Charlie. 2007. *US and China competition for influence in Central Asia: A Comparative Analysis.* School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College; Wishnick, Elizabeth. *Russia, China, and the United States in Central Asia: Prospects for great power competition and cooperation in the shadow of the Georgian crisis.* Strategic Studies Institute

[107] Rita Taureck, "Securitization Theory and Securitization Studies," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 9, no. 1 (2006): 53-61.

[108] Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka. "'Securitization' Revisited: Theory and Cases," *International Relations* 30, no. 4 (2016): 494-531.

States.[109] From a theoretical perspective, securitization roots for the allocation of disproportionate amounts of resources and attention for securitized issues compared to those that were not securitized, with terrorism being one of the commonly securitized issues.[110]

Mesbahi's tripartite framework provided a foundation to why the US increased its military presence in Central Asia. If the same variable explained the relationship at each point in the framework, it would create the necessary environment to securitize that variable. While terrorism was securitized as part of the large US national security strategy, securitization within Central Asian regional military policy came in the form of power and influence. The tripartite framework showed that geo-politically, geo-economically, and geo-culturally, Russia and China had greater dominance and influence in the region. If the US was to successfully engage in the War on Terror in Afghanistan and the Middle East, it needed reliable partners and allies in surrounding regions. Russia and China's influence in all three aspects of the framework pushed the US to securitize that influence. The primary goal of establishing a military presence in the region, aside from resource mobilization for the current battle theatres, was to exert US influence within the region.

The Copenhagen School of scholars identified prevalence of securitization in five main areas, among them the military, politics, society, economy, and environment, which

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[109] Clara Eroukhmanoff, "Securitisation Theory," in *International Relations Theory*, ed. Stephen McGlinchey, Rosie Walters, and Christian Scheinpflug (E-International Relations Publishing, 2017), 104-110.

[110] Adam Côté, "Agents without Agency: Assessing the Role of the Audience in Securitization Theory," *Security Dialogue* 47, no. 6 (2016): 541-558.

entails states developing perceptions of national security threats on these areas, thereby moving swiftly to secure them by taking advance measures to enhance their security, usually without public debate or a democratic process.[111] During the Bush administration, terrorism became a major area of securitization in the United States, which informed the foreign policies taken by the government, especially in Central Asian countries. President Bush. believed that the best counter-terrorism strategy for the US to adopt in protecting its national security, both at home and in its overseas installations, was through a military counter-offensive.[112] The US consolidated its military presence in Central Asia by setting up military bases in 'friendly Asian nations', including Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, which helped in enhancing its military counter-offensive against Al-Qaeda terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan.[113]

Similarly, the Obama administration also securitized terrorism. Even though Obama pledged to reduce the US military presence in Asia during his presidential campaigns in 2008, he did not manage to fulfil this promise as at the end of his 8-year tenure in office in 2016 because very few American troops had returned home from Iraq and Afghanistan, among other Asian countries.[114] On the contrary, these numbers had

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[111] Rita Floyd, "Can Securitization Theory Be Used in Normative Analysis? Towards a Just Securitization Theory," *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4-5 (2011): 427-439.

[112] Claire Wilkinson, " The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable outside Europe?" *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 1 (2007): 5-25.

[113] Thierry Balzacq, *Understanding Securitisation Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010).

increased phenomenally because of the securitization of terrorism. For instance, the Obama administration advanced the search for Osama bin Laden and killed him on May 2, 2011 at his hideout in Pakistan, on the outskirts of Islamabad.[115] To achieve this, American troops had to operate within the Central Asia region, explaining why the Obama administration maintained a strong military presence within the region.[116] The naval base prison was created during the Bush administration, also informed by the concept of securitization of terrorism, as part of his administration's counter-terrorism strategy.[117]

From this perspective, it is evident that the strong military presence of the US within the Central Asia region during both President Bush Jr.'s and President Obama's administrations was informed by securitization theory, whereby both administrations securitized terrorism on a global scale and great power influence at the regional level, as a key threat to the national security of the country.[118] It is notable that by strengthening its military presence in the region, the US would be in a position to tame the threat of

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[114] Michael C. Williams, "The Continuing Evolution of Securitization Theory," in *Understanding Securitisation Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, ed. Thierry Balzacq (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 212.

[115] Williams, 212

[116] Ole Wæver, "Politics, Security, Theory," *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4-5 (2011): 465-480.

[117] Catherine Charrett, "A Critical Application of Securitization Theory: Overcoming the Normative Dilemma of Writing Security," *International Catalan Institute for Peace, Working Paper* No. 2009/7 (2009).

[118] Charrett.

terrorism before it manifested at its doorstep, probably with a repeat of the 9/11 attack.[119] In fact, the increased presence of NATO in Central Asia during both administrations was an indicator of the significance of securitization of terrorism in the international relations and foreign affairs policies adopted by the US.[120] In fact, the US used NATO to consolidate its presence in the Central Asia region, including reducing the influence of Russia and China over the former Soviet states.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the military relations exhibited by the United States within the Central Asia region under the leadership of President George Bush Jr (2001 to 2009) and President Barrack Obama (2009 to 2017). During this period, it was evident that the US had a heavy military presence in the Central Asian region, with the main reasons being economic and political. Even though the US began its military engagements with Central Asia in the 1990s, its presence was significantly felt after the 9/11 attack, where global securitization of terrorism and regional securitization of regional influence and power, pushed the Bush administration to strengthen its military bases in the region, which strategy the Obama administration followed and adopted.

This research established that the US, through its foreign affairs policies, increased its military engagements in the Central Asian region with the primary objective of protecting the independence and sovereignty of these states, as most of them were

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[119] Kavalski, *Central Asia and the Rise of Normative Powers.*

[120] Sally McNamara, "NATO Summit 2010", 2.

struggling to exert their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this case, the US military not only supported these countries through capacity building and institutional building, but also helped them establish effective systems that would chart a way forward for their independence and international recognition of their independence. During this process, the US integrated western military practices, political institutions, and western cultural practices in a region largely dominated by eastern, and most specifically, Russian cultural practices and political ideals.

However, after the 9/11 attack, Washington significantly increased the military presence of the US within the region, evidenced by its move to establish military bases, particularly in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan under '*Operation Enduring Freedom'*.[121] According to the securitization theoretical framework, the sudden increase of the US military's presence within the region was largely informed by the successful securitization of terrorism and great power influence as a threat to the national security of the country. The US used its military bases in these Central Asian countries with the goal of advancing its counter terrorism offensive in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the same regard, the tripartite framework of Mesbahi outlined that the strong military presence of the US in the Central Asia region, especially during the Obama administration, was not only linked to the securitization of 'terrorism' as a major threat to the national security of the US, but also in a bid to extend its regional control, as was the case after the Cold War. This study established that the US used its military influence to

[121] CNN Editorial Research, "Operation Enduring Freedom Fast Facts," *CNN*, October 4, 2020, https://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/28/world/operation-enduring-freedom-fast-facts/index.html.

control local powers in the region, in an effort to sell westernization to the former Soviet Union countries, in its un-ending war of control with Russia, and most recently China, in controlling the global economy through its military presence.

Chapter 4: US Terrorism Policy in Central Asia

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 changed the geopolitical dynamics in Central Asia. The United States, for a period of time, became a dominant power in the region, resulting in other powers having to adapt to radically changed conditions. The war on terrorism and growing instability in the Middle East required a long-term US presence in Central Asia.

The US engaged in Central Asia for two reasons; (1) to broker social stability and (2) to counter extremism.[1] The region became a focal point of US interests following the 9/11 attacks in order to facilitate the war on terrorism[2]. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on US security policy in Central Asia with a critical review of America's interest in formulating counter-terrorism policies in the region. The chapter will first go over US – Central Asian policies on terrorism in the Bush and Obama administrations, followed by a brief look at regional dynamics with other major powers. The chapter will end with a theoretical analysis using Mesbahi's tripartite framework and Buzan et al.'s Securitization Theory.

[1] Mesbahi, Mohiaddin. "Eurasia between Russia, Turkey, and Iran." In *Key Players and Regional Dynamics in Eurasia*, pp. 164-192. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2010.

[2] Hassan, Saud. "Politics of Continuity and US Foreign Policy Failure in Central Asia." *E-International Relations*. 2020.

The Bush Jr. Years (2001–2009)

The 9/11 attack ushered in the emergence of a worldwide war on terror that identified specific countries as terror hotspots. At first, the Bush administration focused on regaining normalcy within its borders while ignoring the contribution of its allies and the outside world in orchestrating the 9/11 attack. Seemingly, the Central Asian region was disregarded in US security policy. As reality settled in, the administration saw the Central Asian region as a vital component of its global anti-terror strategy due to its geostrategic proximity with Afghanistan.[3] Perhaps, the US had begun understanding the likely sources of conflict that could prompt an attack on its infrastructure, leading to an endless scramble for superiority and control over resources in Central Asia.

Both the US and the Central Asian states faced various challenges in their terrorism- related security relationship. Central Asia needed to overcome the infancy of its state structures, widespread corruption, and authoritarianism, with all the ensuing consequences for the US efforts to promote economic and political modernization. An additional challenge for America was the need to balance between the priorities for achieving a victory in the War on Terror and the long-term vision of political and economic reform.

After 9/11, views such as the "concept of absolute security" increased in the American security policy community. The ideas of "security first" formed the basis of the approach of the Bush administration in its regional security policies. The type of behavior

[3] Rabasa, Angel, Matthew Waxman, Eric V. Larson, and Cheryl Y. Marcum. *The Muslim world after 9/11*. Rand Corporation, 2004.

characteristic of the "Bush Doctrine" had become a unilateral policy based on methods of direct pressure and military force. The events of 9/11 set the guidelines for America's national interest shift into an anti-terrorism policy.

After the terrorist attacks, NATO member states, for the first time in the history of the alliance, agreed to the application of Article 5 of the Washington Collective Defence Treaty of 1949[4] and thus, provided carte blanche for the United States to conduct military action against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda, whose training camps were located in Afghanistan. Ultimately, fears for their own security forced US allies to side with Washington in the anti-terror struggle.

In 2001, Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones, in a testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee outlined three interests for the US in the region; (1) preventing the spread of terrorism, (2) assisting Central Asia's political and economic reform, and (3) ensuring the security development of Caspian energy reserves.[5] President Bush's policies towards Central Asia emphasized security through military power. This

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[4] "Collective Defence – Article 5". North Atlantic Treaty Organization. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm#:~:text=NATO%20invoked%20Article%205%20for%20the%20first%20time,and%20in%20the%20wake%20of%20the%20Russia-Ukraine%20crisis.; Grady, Broderick. "Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty". *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law.* Vol. 31, No. 167. Pp. 169 – 198. 2003. https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.bing.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1253&context=gjicl

[5] Jones, Elizabeth. *Testimony – Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Central Asia and the Caucuses.* 2001, December 13. http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2001/11299.htm
Dunn, Jonathan. *Rethinking American Strategy in Central Asia.* US Air Force, ISS Research Paper. 2007

was done through the establishment of multiple bases throughout the region (as discussed in the prior chapter). The 9/11 attack prompted a quick break away from democratization and economic support.[6] Instead, the policy required rapid reorientation towards military efforts and intervention to combat global terrorism.[7] The location of the region gave it strategic importance. The physical acts of 9/11 did not impact the region's dynamics as much as the Global War on Terror did.[8] The Final report of the 9/11 Commission, and the President's National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, both stated the US should work with Central Asian states to deny support, sponsorship, and sanctuary to terrorists and terrorist organizations.[9]

During President Bush's administration there were several extremist and terrorism related security concerns that were evident in the region. Heavy poverty and isolation in areas such as the Fergana Valley brought about a greater opportunity for militant groups, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), to spread extremist ideologies and to recruit the youth towards their cause.[10] The US presence in the region hindered some

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[6] Ziegler, Charles E. "Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and American Foreign Policy: From Indifference to Engagement." *Asian Survey* 53, no. 3 (2013): 484-505.

[7] Hassan "Politics of Continuity and US Foreign Policy Failure in Central Asia."

[8] Rabasa et al. *The Muslim world after 9/11*

[9] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *Final Report*, July 23, 2004
The White House. *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, February 14, 2003.

[10] Rashid, Ahmad. *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia.* 2002. Yale: Yale University Press.

recruitment efforts, as much of the funding came from countries such as Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.[11]

To deal with and limit the spread of radical ideology, many of the Central Asian states tightened laws concerning religion. Uzbekistan banned religious writings and any unregistered faiths. The country also discouraged its population from displaying religiosity such as the wearing of a hijab or growing a long beard.[12] While Tajikistan, on the other hand, allowed for some types of religiosity, unapproved religious gatherings or open proselytizing were prohibited.[13] Religious freedom was regulated by the Department of Religious Affairs (DRA) in Tajikistan. The tightening of religious laws also occurred in Kyrgyzstan. Due to the lack of religious freedoms in these countries, Secretary Susan Rice labeled them as a 'country of particular concern' starting in 2005.

One of the major groups targeted with this anti-religious campaign was Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT). While HT has been observed to be a non-violent Islamist political party/organization, they were aligned with Marxist ideologies, and had called for the

[11] Baran, Zeyno, S. Frederick Starr, & Svante Cornell. *Islamic Radicalism in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Implications for the EU.* Central Asia Caucuses Institute. 2006

[12] US Department of State. International Religious Freedom Report 2006, September 15, 2006. US Commission on International Religious Freedom. Annual Report, May 2, 2005; Annual Report, May 3, 2006; Annual Report, May 1, 2007; Annual Report, May 1, 2008; Annual Report, May 1, 2009.

[13] US Department of State. *Tajikistan.* International Religious Freedom Report 2007.

establishment of Sharia in the Central Asian states.[14] At times they also stated that terrorist acts towards the West may be permissible in order to establish these goals. Although they have not been directly connected to any terrorist activities in the region, they had urged for the US and Central Asian states to alter their political discourse, such as the withdrawal of troops from the Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan, and not condemning any terrorist threats against the countries.[15]

One of the more pressing terrorism related issues the region faced was the existential threat of the IMU, and IMU linked organizations, such as Jamma'at al-Jihad al-Islami (IJG). Since the turn of the century there had been multiple terrorist attacks within various states. In February of 1999, multiple explosions rocked Tashkent, Uzbekistan, killing dozens and wounding hundreds. The attack was the first major terror incident in Central Asia close to the turn of the century. While firsthand independent reports on the incident were not available, President Karimov arrested and tried a total of 40 individuals, over the course of two years, for an attempted coup. Many of those arrested were either part of opposition political parties, HT, Tajik rebels, or the IMU.[16] Sentences ranged from 8 years in prison to the death penalty. The US criticized the trials for a lack of due process and transparency.

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[14] Baran, Zeyno. *The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir: Deciphering and Combating Radical Islamist Ideology.* The Nixon Center, Conference Report. 2004, September

[15] Nichol, "Central Asia's Security" 2010

[16] Nichol

The Tashkent bombings and subsequent actions taken against the IMU, logistically hindered the organization, although they were able to regroup and even expand their presence outside of the region. Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones, in a 2003 testimony to the House International Relations Committee, stated the IMU had a resurgence in its operational ability and posed a threat to the region, thereby also posing a threat to US interests.[17] She also stated that the IMU and HT were the biggest threats to US interests in the region.

After the 1999 Tashkent bombings, there were multiple terror related incidents over the next few years. The following is a timeline of both state, and non-state, terror related incidents in the region (some of the descriptions of the events have only been made by the respective governments and have not been verified by independent observers for their accuracy):[18]

- August to October 2000 – Dozens of IMU and various other insurgents attacked locations in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, taking foreign hostages. Combined effort of the Uzbek and Kyrgyz armed forces pushed the insurgents back.
- July 2001 – Cross border incursions by IMU and others into Kyrgyzstan

[17] Jones, Elizabeth. *Testimony – House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Middle East and Central Asia.* 2003, October 29.; Donovan, Jeffrey. "US: Diplomat Sees Growing Terrorism Challenge in Central Asia." *Radio Free Europe*. 2003, October 30. https://www.rferl.org/a/1104836.html

[18] Nichol, "Central Asia's Security" 2010

- December 2002 – Supposed IMU suicide bombing at the Oberon market in Bishkek
- May 2003 – Supposed IMU suicide bombing at a currency exchange in Osh, Kyrgyzstan
- March 28th to April 1st, 2004 – Series of bombings in Uzbekistan conducted by IJG, an IMU offshoot; said to be trained by al-Qaeda, Taliban, groups in Pakistan, and Uighur extremist.
- July 30, 2004 – A suicide bombing at the US and Israeli embassies in Tashkent. IJG claimed responsibility.
- November 2004 – Suicide bombing targeting police in Bishkek conducted by the IMU
- May 13, 2005 – Uzbek troops fired on civilians protesting a trial Andijan, killing an unknown number.
- November 2006 – IMU/IJU were found to have placed rockets and bombs around government facilities in Pakistan due to the government support of the US
- May 25, 2009 – IMU/IJU attacked a police checkpoint along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border.
- May 26, 2009 – IMU conducted four bombings in Andijan

Despite the frequent terror attacks over the years, the US primary concern in the region was providing anti-terror support in Afghanistan and keeping away Russian and Chinese influence. There were instances where states requested assistance from the US in

providing greater funding for anti-terror operations. A memo dated October 2002 indicates that Kyrgyzstan's move to request financial aid from the US as compensation for its loyalty in terror operations proved averse to the interests of the US in the region.[19] According to another memo dated December 2001 by Secretary of State Collin Powell, the US sought to promote Afghanistan's stability.[20] Furthermore, the US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz reiterated that the US wanted to secure central Asian republics against an invasion by antagonizing Afghanistan groups. Notably, the US's interest was to protect its superiority over Russia and China, which seemed to outdo it in advancing their political and economic desires in Central Asia.

The failure of Bush's military intervention could have led to a change in strategies. The situation most likely caused President Bush to incline his efforts towards the region's democratization. President Bush and various US non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supported a regime change that saw an eruption of protests that marred Kyrgyzstan's president Akayev's mostly liberal administration in Central Asia. Accordingly, Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asia Republics found the move as evidence of the US's unreliability and malice within the region, which supported terrorism/extremism rather than minimizing it.[21]

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[19] Marten. "Small Steps for US Security Interest in Kyrgyzstan."

[20] Crosston, Matthew. *Fostering fundamentalism: Terrorism, democracy and American engagement in Central Asia*. Routledge, 2016.

[21] Mustapha, Jennifer. "Threat construction in the Bush administration's post-9/11 foreign policy:(critical) security implications for Southeast Asia." *The Pacific Review* 24, no. 4 (2011): 487-504.; Saidazimova, Gulnoza. "Five Years After 9/11: Crackdowns

The US equally seemed to promote opposition against the reigning administration, other than targeting terrorism. The US suggested that the May 2005 Andijan crisis involved a battle between armed Uzbek military and massive unarmed crowds opposing the government, despite the group opening fire against the Uzbek army.[22] The US's move to protect the armed protestors who fled to Kyrgyzstan indicated that it was orchestrating conflict in the region.

Regardless of military strategy in combating terrorism or actions to support regime change, the Bush administrations primary accomplishment in terror related security policy towards Central Asia was designating organizations such as the IMU and its affiliates as terrorist organizations. There are two designations: (1) Foreign Terrorist Organization and (2) Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). The label of Foreign Terrorist Organization is described under the Immigration and Nationality Act while the SDGT is mandated under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, signed by President Bush on September 23, 2001.[23]

Both designations, FTO and SDGT, allow for the US government to respond with a vast array of financial and military tools. While the FTO designation also freezes organizational assets, it targets all individuals associated with the named organization. The EO blocks individuals from entering the US, and blocks accounts receivables and

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Loom Behind Central Asia's War on Terror. *Radio Free Europe.* 2006, September 8. https://www.rferl.org/a/1071190.html

[22] Scott, Margaret, and Westenley Alcenat. "Revisiting the Pivot: The influence of heartland theory in great power politics." *Comparative Strategy* 22 (2008): 109-129.

[23] US Department of State. Executive Order (E.O.) 13224.

payables (funding) to the individual. Violation of the EO in dealing with any parties involved can be assessed in civil and criminal penalties. The EO takes this a step further by also having the ability to label even indirect associations of the targeted group.[24]

The IMU was designated an FTO in September 2000 by the State Department. President Bush added to the designation in September 2001in an address to a joint session of Congress where he linked them to al-Qaeda and the Taliban and would be militarily targeted accordingly. Then-CIA Director Porter Goss labeled the IJG as a threat to US interests in a testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2005. The State Department followed up by designating IJG a terrorist organization in the following May.[25]

While the IJG was considered an extension and eventually an offshoot of the IMU, it had a global reach similar to al-Qaeda. In 2007, Germany arrested multiple members of the group on charges of planning bombings of US airbases at Ramstein, Germany, as well as multiple diplomatic offices of Germany, Uzbekistan, and the US inside the country. The individuals were found to have been trained by IMU and al-Qaeda elements in Pakistan.[26]

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[24] US Department of State. *Terrorism Designation FAQ.* 2018, February 27

[25] Nichol, "Central Asia's Security" 2010

[26] Eijkman, Quirine. "The German Sauerland Terror Plot Reconsidered". *Perspectives on Terrorism. 8*(4). 2014, June 8; Der Spiegel. "Teenager schmuggelte Zunder nach Deutschland". 2007, October 6. https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spiegel.de%2Fpanorama%2Fjustiz%2Fvereitelter-terroranschlag-teenager-schmuggelte-zuender-nach-deutschland-a-509851.html

Aside from the IMU and IJG, HT as well as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) were in the foreign terrorist organization debate. Both of these groups differed in regard to US interests. While HT was considered a radical political movement that advocated for action against the US, there was no evidence that it had actually taken part in terrorist activities internationally, and thus was not designated a terrorist organization by the US.[27] On the other hand, the ETIM was a separatist Uighur group based in Central Asia, that wanted the Uighur population to have their own state separate from China. Even though they did not target US interests, they had committed terrorist acts against China, and thus were labeled an FTO by the US.[28]

Terrorism policy towards Central Asia under President Bush was somewhat complicated. While the military was stationed in various bases in the region, they acted as more of a symbolic deterrence to terrorist organizations, since their focus was the war in Afghanistan. US policy primarily focused on cutting off financial support for terrorist organizations in Central Asia. By designating organizations as terrorist, the US was able to cut off much of the foreign financing that was coming into the organizations. Although terrorist organizations in Central Asia weakened, they did not disappear. In fact, then-Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones stated that groups such as the IMU had a resurgence and the ability to operate extra-regionally, such as in Pakistan.[29] The transition

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[27] US Department of State. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*, 2007April

[28] Nichol, "Central Asia's Security" 2010

[29] Jones, Elizabeth. *Testimony – House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Middle East and Central Asia*

from the Bush administration to the Obama administration showed the resilience in Central Asian based terrorist groups and posed a new challenge of Central Asian terror organizations operating globally.

The Obama Years (2009 – 2017)

President Obama's Central Asian terrorism policy started as a continuation of Bush's policy. The primary goal of any policy in Central Asia was to assist in the Afghan war effort. The Obama administration continued to freeze assets of terrorist organizations and individuals connected to them. By the time Obama was in charge, organizations such as the IMU had spread to other regions. For example, the IMU attacked the Pakistani Army headquarters in Rawalpindi on October 11, 2009 and attacked a police station in Bannu, Pakistan in February 2010.[30]

The extra-regional nature of terrorism pushed the Obama administration to move away from the unilateral action that the Bush administration undertook and shifted towards working with regional partners. Making regional partners entailed greater bilateral and multilateral cooperation with each of the Central Asian states and greater cooperation with Russia and China. The purpose of renewed partnerships was to build capacity within the region in order for each of the states to better protect themselves from terror threats. President Obama did not see the war in Afghanistan as something he wanted to prolong. Strengthening the Central Asian countries and regional security

[30] Nichol, "Central Asia's Security" 2010

measures would take pressure off the American security apparatus with the eventual goal of withdrawing troops from Afghanistan. Then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asia Daniel Rosenblum stated that the US had provided many of the countries, especially Uzbekistan, with military weapons under the Excess Defense Articles (EDA)[31] in order to support individual state-led counterterrorism strategies.[32]

Terrorist activity surged slightly in parts of Central Asia. Kazakhstan saw a string of suicide bombings in 2011.[33] President Nazarbayev stated that there were over a hundred terrorism related crimes committed in Kazakhstan from 2011 to 2012.[34] To counter the violence, Nazarbayev passed a law expanding the definition of terrorism including the "ideology of violence."[35] Kyrgyzstan also saw a temporary rise in violence. Between 2010 and 2011 Jama'at Kyrgyzstan Jaish al-Mahdi, also known as the Kyrgyz Army of the Righteous Ruler, conducted bombing campaigns against various targets, in

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[31] The purpose of the EDA program is to transfer excess defense equipment to foreign governments and organizations. It is typically used to modernize partner military forces. Equipment is either sold to governments at a reduced prices or given to them as a grant. https://www.dsca.mil/programs/excess-defense-articles-eda

[32] Rosenblum, Daniel. "US-Central Asia/Uzbekistan: Exclusive interview with Daniel Rosenblum, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asia. Interview by Navbahor Imamova, *Voice of America.* 2015, January 2015. https://www.amerikaovozi.com/a/us-central-asia-dan-rosenblum-interview/2607884.html?withmediaplayer=1

[33] Human Rights Watch, *Striking Oil, Striking Workers: Violations of Labor Rights in Kazakhstan,* 2012 September

[34] US Foreign Broadcast Information Service. *Daily Report: Central Eurasia.* No. CEP-950108. 2012, July 13

[35] US Foreign Broadcast Information Service. *Daily Report: Central Eurasia.* No. CEP-95005. 2012, November 23; Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests." 2014

Kyrgyzstan, including a synagogue, a police station, and a sports facility.[36] The group pledged their loyalty to the Taliban and had planned attacks on the Manas transit center, before being eliminated by the Kyrgyz government.[37] 2010 also saw an increase of terrorist activity in Tajikistan. Dozens of terrorists escaped a prison in Dushanbe and conducted multiple bombings and attacks in Khujand and Rasht Valley starting September 2010, until Tajik security forces killed them in 2011.[38] The major surge of terrorist activity in 2010 and 2011 diminished, although sporadic activity was reported in subsequent years.

The end of Bush's unilateral policy encouraged Russia, China, India and Iran to rise against the US. That paved the way for greater regionalism and a greater resurgence for Islamist groups.[39] The rise of the global al-Qaeda nexus and the extra-regional reach of the IMU increased the US's woes in central Asia.[40] Despite Obama's attempt at pushing for democracy in the region, Russia vehemently opposed the move.[41] Thus, the

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[36] US Department of State. "Chapter 2: Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview."; Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests." 2014

[37] US Department of State. "Chapter 2: Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview." Country Reports on Terrorism 2011. 2012, July 31.; Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests." 2014

[38] Nichol

[39] Collins, Kathleen. "The Limits of Cooperation: Central Asia, Afghanistan, and the New Silk Road." *Asia Policy* 17. 2014: 18-26.

[40] Ryan, Maria. "'War in countries we are not at war with': The 'war on terror' on the periphery from Bush to Obama." *International Politics* 48, no. 2-3 (2011): 364-389.

Afghanistan war was the only incident that was grounds for the presence of the United States in Central Asia. The US seemed to leverage the political instability in adjacent Afghanistan to try and gain superiority as a moderating voice in between regional powers and the Central Asian states.

Unlike Bush, Obama opted for policies based on smart power, built on both soft and hard powers. Diplomacy and cultural ties remained prevalent between the US and Central Asia.[42] The Obama administration pushed for a policy of hearts and minds over physical force in dealing with challenges in Central Asia.[43] However, Russia's intervention and the unilateral legacy left by Bush made it impossible to regain the US's influence in the region.[44] Consequently, Obama shifted his strategy to diplomacy with Asian allies.[45] Then-Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff General Martin Dempsey stated that the US counter-terrorism policy in Central Asia and North Africa would go beyond

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[41] Manyin, Mark E., Stephen Daggett, Ben Dolven, Susan V. Lawrence, Michael F. Martin, Ronald O'Rourke, and Bruce Vaughn. "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama administration's rebalancing toward Asia." Library of Congress Washington Dc Congressional Research Service, 2012.

[42] Bohr, Annette. "Central Asia: responding to the multi-vectoring game." *America and the changed world: A question of leadership* (2010): 109e124.; Nye, Joseph. *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs. 2011

[43] LeVine, Steve. “The End of the Great Game”. *The New Republic.* 2010, October 6. https://newrepublic.com/article/78168/obama-central-asia-great-game

[44] Bader, Jeffrey A. *Obama and China's rise: An insider's account of America's Asia strategy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2012.

[45] Ryan. "‘War in countries we are not at war with’: The ‘war on terror’ on the periphery from Bush to Obama."

Obama's presidency and involve the US training and equipping foreign armies, rather than have American soldiers fight on the frontlines.[46]

Obama's motive was partially based on transforming Eurasia into a geo-economic base via Central Asia, the Middle East, the Caspian Region, and South Asia. The initiative meant cordoning China and Russia. The policy diverted towards supporting NATO troops in Afghanistan and dissuading Chinese and Russian influence in the state[47]. For instance, America's disinterest in Central Asia during the Obama administration remained evident following his move to overlook the 2010 Melon Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, despite being in a position to intervene and promote stability in the country.[48] Furthermore, a growing detachment manifested following the beginning of withdrawal of US troops from war-torn Afghanistan. Thus, Obama significantly failed to advance the war on terrorism in central Asia.

What made Obama's strategy unique was the dichotomy of the willingness to accept foreign influence in regional challenges. In Afghanistan, the US tried to keep out Russian influence, but in Central Asia there were some cases where the US allowed Russia to take the lead without putting forward a combative approach. A response to the 2010 Kyrgyz revolution, which left hundreds dead, was spearheaded by Russia, even

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[46] Landler, Mark. "The Afghan War and the Evolution of Obama". *The New York Times.* 2017, January 1. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/01/world/asia/obama-afghanistan-war.html

[47] Skalamera, Morena. "Russia's lasting influence in Central Asia." *Survival* 59, no. 6. 2017: 123-142.

[48] Cohen, Saul Bernard. *Geopolitics: The geography of international relations*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

though the Kyrgyz government initially requested military assistance from the US.[49] Russia eventually provided some humanitarian aid. This policy was a shift from the Bush era when he airlifted victims of the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan, even relocating some to the US.[50]

As per a Program on New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia (PONARS) memo dated October 2017, the US spent $1.9 billion in Central Asia on military training to foster anti-terror war between 2001 and 2016.[51] Nonetheless, the move did not comprehensively address all the region's problems. The US overlooked issues such as drug trafficking and religious extremism, which potentially promoted terror.[52] Furthermore, another memo dated September 2013 regarding the exit of US troops from Afghanistan revealed that the Central Asian republics could misuse military equipment left in the countries.[53] With the constant supply of weapons to the region by Russia, the countries' security risked further deterioration following weak government

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[49] LeVine, "The End of the Great Game"

[50] LeVine

[51] Omelicheva, Mariya. "US Security Assistance to Central Asia. *PONARS Eurasia.* Policy Memo No. 487. 2017, October. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/Pepm487_Omelicheva_Memo_Oct2017_0.pdf

[52] Hassan, Saud. 2020. "Politics of Continuity and US Foreign Policy Failure in Central Asia." *E-International Relations*. https://www.e-ir.info/2020/08/26/politics-of-continuity-and-us-foreign-policy-failure-in-central-asia/.

[53] Gorenburg, Dmitry. 2013. "Central Asian Military and Security Forces: Assessing the Impact of Foreign Assistance." *PONARS Eurasia*. Policy Memo 297. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/Pepm_297_Gorenburg_Sept2013.pdf

systems and strong military establishments.[54] Thus, the policies could have only proved vital if the US helped central Asian countries to strengthen their government systems and formalize their military establishments.

Most of Obama's time in office saw a continuation of Bush's counter-terrorism policy in Central Asia. He continued targeting the financial backing of Central Asian terrorist organizations and continued to army local governments. While Obama differed in his strategy by including extra-regional influence such as Russia, his primary accomplishment was with the C5+1.

The C5+1 was a program established by the Obama administration which provided a platform for dialogue between the five Central Asian states and the US. Five major projects were initiated under the program.[55]

(1) Counter-terrorism – develop best practices and approaches to combating terrorism and the flow of terrorist to and from the region
(2) Central Asia Business Competitiveness – private sector development of internal markets, specifically in the horticulture sector
(3) Transport Corridor Development – improving the transports and logistics sector of the region

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[54] Gorenburg

[55] US Department of State. "US-Central Asia (C5+1) Joint Projects". Fact Sheet, Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. 2016, August 3. https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/08/260805.htm

(4) Power the Future – supports the transition to, adoption, and scale-up of more efficient energy solutions

(5) Supporting National and Regional Adaptation Planning – supports national plans that identify environment risks and prioritize actions

The first multi-lateral meeting was held in Samarqand, Uzbekistan in November 2015.[56] In his opening remarks, then-Secretary of State John Kerry described the issues that the US would work with the states on, including security and stability in Afghanistan, once again making Afghanistan the primary security policy issue in the region.[57] This sentiment was also echoed by then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Daniel Rosenblum in 2016.[58] Over the following year, the US pledged $15 million towards the various initiatives and projects.[59] The first ministerial meeting to focus specifically on terrorism was held on July 26, 2017 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.[60] The dialogue focused on sharing perspectives on foreign terrorist fighter

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[56] US Department of State. *Travel to Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and U.K., October 28-November 4, 2015.* https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/travel/2015/t24/index.htm

[57] Kerry, John. *Remarks at the Opening of the C5+1 Ministerial Meeting."* US Department of State. 2015, November 1.

[58] Rosenblum, Daniel. *Preview of the C5+1 Ministerial.* The Brussels Hub and the US Department of State

[59] US Department of State. "US-Central Asia (C5+1) Joint Projects."; Orazgaliyeva, Malika. "Washington C5+1 Ministerial Meeting Launches Five Projects Worth $15 Million." *The Astana Times.* 2016, August 5

[60] US Embassy in Uzbekistan. *C5+1 Meeting Held in Dushanbe.* 2017, July 27. https://uz.usembassy.gov/c51-meeting-held-dushanbe/

threats and best practices for dealing with the challenge. Part of the dialogue over the various ministerial meetings was to implement The Hague–Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) Phenomenon.[61]

While most of Obama's counter-terrorism policies in Central Asia were a continuation of Bush's policies, Obama looked more towards a regional approach in dealing with terrorism- related challenges in Central Asia. Russian influence was overtly allowed, and the C5+1 ministerial initiative placed a greater responsibility for security on each Central Asian state with the US providing efforts to build capacity. The Obama administration faced a more unique challenge compared to Bush in the transnational spread of terror groups, seen in the IMU establishment in Northern Pakistan. Ultimately, stability in Afghanistan was the major driving factor in dictating any type of regional terrorism policy.

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[61] The Hague–Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) Phenomenon is an initiative proposed in The Hague on February 19-20, 2014. The purpose of it was to outline a series of 19 'good' practices in dealing with the foreign terrorist fighter threat. The dialogue found that the best way to overcome challenges that foreign terrorist fighters bring is for greater information sharing between states and capacity building.
US Embassy in Tajikistan. *US-Central Asia (C5+1) Joint Projects*. https://tj.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/143/2016/08/c5-1-fact-sheet_english.pdf; Global Counterterrorism Forum. *"Foreign Terrorist Fighters" (FTF) Initiative the Hague – Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response*
to the FTF Phenomenon.
https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/140201/14Sept19_The+Hague-Marrakech+FTF+Memorandum.pdf

Regional Implications of anti-Terror Relations

It would be hard to separate terror-related regional dynamics from general regional security policy for most of the regional powers. Russia and China both dealt with their own terror-related issues prior to the introduction of US forces in the region, but both dealt with the issue primarily through conventional strategies, discussed in prior chapters. Aside from Russia and China, Iran would have the greatest implications for terror-related regional policy.

Iran, a long-time partner of Russia in Central Asia and an ally in the fight against the Taliban, had been on the losing side of the post-9/11 regrouping of forces in the region. A long-time key member of the anti-Taliban coalition and a devoted supporter of the Northern Alliance, Iran had been pushed aside from Tajikistan, with which it has strong cultural, linguistic, and ethnic ties. Tajikistan willingly agreed to the presence of the American military. The opening of the airspace of Turkmenistan for the passage of American aircrafts and the deployment of allied troops in Central Asia should have inspired the Iranian political establishment with the idea that in the event of a confrontation with the United States, Iran would have to deal with the American presence not only in the Persian Gulf but also in the north - in Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as in the east and south - in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Iran, like China, undoubtedly benefited from the military defeat of the Taliban, with whom it had tense relations.[62]

[62] Katzman, Kenneth & Clayton Thomas. Afghanistan: *Post-Taliban governance, security, and US policy*. Congressional Research Service. 2017, December 13. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.pdf

Iran's role in the region evolved drastically from the early days of the War on Terror to the final days of the Obama administration. Much of the post-9/11 role of Iran in the region focused on Afghanistan. While Iran had largely supported the Northern Alliance and the Taliban opposition in Afghanistan, it had also supported many of the religiously Shi'a forces in the region during the war in Afghanistan.[63]

While Bush pushed to have greater control in the Central Asian region, Obama pushed for greater involvement of regional powers. Towards the end of the Obama years, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) became an extra-regional problem. During the rise of ISIS, one of the issues that came up was the recruitment of foreign fighters, especially from Central Asia. Iran saw four regional issues that the country felt needed to be addressed:[64]

(1) The spread of terrorism by Wahabi and Salafi based extremist groups
(2) US competition to increase penetration into the region, thereby causing greater interregional conflict
(3) ISIS willingness to be present in Central Asia
(4) The presence of people from Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in the ISIS ranks in Syria and Iraq

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[63] Katzman & Thomas

[64] Bahman, Shuaib. "Strategies for combating international terrorism in Central Asia". *Tehran Times.* 2019, October 9.

As part of the anti-ISIS strategy, Iran sees itself as a buffer between the spread of extremist ideology and Central Asia. It also sees itself as being part of a broader coalition with Russia to better deal with regional security threats, as opposed to US influence.

Despite the disdain for US influence in the region, the strategy and goals that Iran seeks to achieve are similar to those of the US. Shuaib Bahman, Director of the Institute for Strategic Researchers in the Contemporary World, in Iran, describes four issues that Iran needs to consider in fighting terrorism in Central Asia. First is that coordinated action is needed for all states in the region. Second, fighting terrorism in Central Asia can only be successful if there is stability in Afghanistan. Third, regional and international coalitions are needed to combat terrorism in the region. Fourth, the fight against terrorism requires the history and past experiences of states that have had established relationships and roles in the region, specifically Iran and Russia.[65]

Theoretical Analysis

The tripartite framework provides a more comprehensive view about why the US engaged with Central Asia in issues related to terrorism. According to the tripartite framework, both Obama and Bush wanted to gain control over the region and intervene in terrorism-related issues. However, their interests later tended towards gaining geo-political superiority. Each security aspect considered a threat led to a different policy that countered respective impending threats.

[65] Bahman

Following the tripartite framework, Central Asia provided little overall geo-economic value to the US. However, vast oil and gas resources attracted the US, in that their security forces could access the resources unimpeded. The US's economic influence over Central Asia manifested through constant funding of military training to see central Asian troops equipped with skills to counter terrorism during President Obama's administration.[66] President Bush, on the other hand, sought to obtain resources, in terms of operation bases to facilitate the war on terror.[67] Accordingly, both utilized the economics of Central Asia regarding space and facilitation of the counter-terrorism process to achieve the success of their vast anti-terror operations.

Geo-politically, while Bush wanted to have control over the region and intervene in Afghanistan strategically from Central Asia, Obama directly hinted at diplomacy with regional powers, specifically China and Russia.[68] For instance, Bush's militarization of Central Asia implied gaining greater control over the region, thus minimizing influence from Russia, Iran, and China.[69]. However, his political influence did not entail strengthening the government's security systems, but rather, protecting groups, that were often seen as extremist in their respective countries, such as the perpetrators of the Andijan crisis, who exercised opposition of the then Uzbek government. The Obama

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[66] Hassan, "Politics of Continuity and US Foreign Policy Failure in Central Asia."

[67] Hassan

[68] Eroukhmanoff, Clara. "Securitization theory." E-International Relations Publishing, 2017.

[69] Hassan, "Politics of Continuity and US Foreign Policy Failure in Central Asia."; Mesbahi, "Eurasia between Russia, Turkey, and Iran."

administration regarded institutionalism as the primary determinant of policy influence in central Asia.[70] Thus, he primarily sought to cultivate stability in the region, which could then be used as a fundamental vehicle in combating terror and assisting in the Afghan war effort.

Geo-culturally, the population of Central Asia are more closely related to Turkmen, Persian, or Russian, who primarily practiced Islam. Regarding geo-culture, both Obama and Bush associated terror with radical Islamism.[71] Therefore, terror groups in Central Asia were linked to groups such as the Al Qaeda and the Taliban, who were primarily blamed for the Afghanistan war. Their policies targeted minimizing the radicalization of Islamic groups and promoting democracy and stability of all people to reigning regimes in respective Central Asian republics. The Central Asian region played a major role geographically in spreading influence, especially minimizing radicalism and extremism among the masses, and discouraging terror. By having shared borders and similar cultural and religious adaptations, Central Asia was pivotal in combating extremist ideology. The US, under both Bush and Obama did not want terroristic ideology to spread beyond the Afghan borders and did not want ideology and fighters entering Afghanistan as well. While both Presidents took different approaches to combating ideology and foreign extremist influence, both also saw Central Asia as a necessary piece in creating stability in Afghanistan.

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[70] Hassan

[71] Eroukhmanoff, Clara. "Securitization theory." E-International Relations Publishing, 2017.

At the sub-state level, the geo-cultural relationship proves to be complex. A non-Muslim force in the region, actively countering Islamic extremist groups, can be seen as both a counter to anti-secular forces, and also as an attack on Islam itself. Even though the primary focus of the US was to secure the war effort in Afghanistan, the promotion of the War on Terror and the focus of fighting Muslim terrorist groups created an image that the US was, in essence, fighting Islam. This narrative would antagonize the religious corners of society within thus Central Asian states, thus assisting extremist groups in their recruitment efforts. An increase in recruitment efforts was seen in the increase of foreign fighters, not only in Afghanistan, but also in various conflicts in the Middle East, even though inter-regional terrorist activity eventually started to decline.

Taking the important issues from the tripartite framework, the primary matter of concern was the extra-regional issue of Afghanistan. The US' primary focus under both Bush and Obama was not Central Asia specifically, but rather how Central Asia could influence Afghanistan. On a grander scale, the US securitized terrorism as its main security concern. While on a regional level, terrorism was also securitized, it was more focused on the ideology behind 'Islamist' terrorism.

Bush and Obama both financially attacked terrorist groups and helped Central Asian states better prepare their own security forces to combat terrorism. Militarization of the region created a buffer between Afghanistan and Central Asia, using the US as a physical intermediary between the war in Afghanistan and the resource, logistical, and supply chain center that Central Asia became. The US also pushed the Central Asian states to fight religious extremism as the US saw it as a common variable between the

Taliban, al-Qaeda, and foreign fighters coming into Afghanistan from groups such as the IMU.

While the securitization of Central Asian terror groups and their ideology, helped improve regional security forces and eventually helped prevent an over-abundance of foreign fighters in Afghanistan, it also had the adverse effect of making many of the regional terror groups go beyond their initial scope. The IMU and IJG eventually established operational centers in Northern Pakistan, with many IMU fighters eventually pledging loyalty to ISIS.[72]

Conclusions

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the fight against terrorism on a global scale was immediately declared the main task of US foreign policy. Afghanistan became the first target of the anti-terrorist campaign, and the Central Asian states became the front line. The US' primary goal in the Afghan war on terror was to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaeda while bringing stability to the country. While stability has yet to be achieved, and the Taliban is still a major player, Afghanistan has become more stable compared to the post-invasion environment in 2001. Both President Bush and President Obama saw Central Asia as an important region in helping to try and create stability in

[72] Cahall, Bailey & Neeli Shah. "IMU Members Pledge Support to ISIS; Pakistani Delegation Heads to Saudi Arabia; Gujarat Passes Contentious Anti-Terror Bill". *Foreign Policy, The South Asia Channel.* 2015, March 31. https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/31/imu-members-pledge-support-to-isis-pakistani-delegation-heads-to-saudi-arabia-gujarat-passes-contentious-anti-terror-bill/

Afghanistan.[73] Preventing foreign fighters or extremist ideologies from entering Afghanistan was a key component of the overarching US strategy.

Although, through a US perspective, Afghanistan stabilized, the US lacked a comprehensive Central Asian focused anti-terror policy in the region. This allowed for the spread of Central Asian terror groups to other regions and made the global War on Terror more challenging. The primary question that lingers is, was it worth it? Was it worth basing a Central Asian strategy on how stable it could make Afghanistan? Ultimately, the US did not consider Central Asia a focal point in its strategy, instead the region was left to be a support mechanism for the war effort in Afghanistan, and eventually the war effort against ISIS.

[73] While stability is based on perception, the US invasion of Afghanistan created greater instability in the country as tribal and ethnic infighting increased once rival factions saw a power vacuum as the Taliban started losing land and power.

Chapter 5: A Next Generation Threat: The United States, Global Cybersecurity, and Central Asia

The Technical Application Center of the United States Air Force is known for its monitoring of global nuclear activity. Aside from its given scope, it is also known for its motto; "In God we trust, all others we monitor." Originally the motto belonged to signal intercept operators during the Cold War.[1] It is telling for one reason, aside from the intangible association of God, information gathered through monitoring is supreme. This quote exemplifies the very nature of the importance of information, and subsequently the realm of cybersecurity. Those that have information have power, and those that do not, lack power.

This dissertation first focused on traditional military security, followed by non-traditional security in the form of terrorism. In the evolution of security, cybersecurity has emerged as the newest realm of focus. Despite the challenges that came from terrorist threats/actions prior to 9/11, conventional military issues reigned supreme for most of the 20th century. The events of 9/11 served as the first benchmark in the shifting focus of security from conventional to unconventional views directly involving terrorism. Although the issue of cybersecurity has been around since the widespread use of the internet and electronic information gathering methods, the benchmark that solidified cybersecurity as a major focus of US security policy occurred in 2007 when Estonia was hit with the largest cyber-attack to date, crippling the country for days, and disrupting its

[1] Bamford, James. 2001. Body of Secrets: Anatomy of the Ultra-Secret National Security Agency. Doubleday Press: New York.

e-infrastructure for months. The Estonia attack elevated cybersecurity issues to the same level as issues of military security and terrorism. This benchmark event ignited a global flurry of cybersecurity laws and protocols. The US was one of many countries that initiated procedures on how to deal with and respond to cyber threats. This eventually became an important part of the national security strategy and allowed for the creation of a unique relationships with various countries and regions, including Central Asia. This chapter will provide an overview of regional dynamics and the current state of cybersecurity in Central Asia, followed by an analysis and discussion of US cyber policy involving Central Asia after 9/11.

US Cyber Strategy and Regional Dynamics

The greatest fear the US had, and continues to have, is the possibility of a digital Pearl Harbor. The term "digital Pearl Harbor" was coined by D. James Bidzos in 1991 and became popularized by Richard Clarke, the former National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism under President Clinton.[2] The term refers to an attack on the country's critical infrastructure through digital means. Critical infrastructure could refer to tangible infrastructure such as equipment and computer systems, or intangible ones such as financial safeguards protecting the country's economy.[3] Experts have been predicting the United States will suffer a digital

[2] Berinato, S. 2003, December 30. "The Future of Security". Computer World. https://www.computerworld.com/article/2574238/security0/the-future-of-security.html

Pearl Harbor for the past two decades, although the prediction has yet to come to fruition. While many policies are reactively based on past benchmarks, they are also proactively based on the possibility of a future mega-threat. Former Deputy Defense Secretary William J. Lynn III stated in 2010 that cyberspace is the new domain of warfare.[4]

United States external cyber policy is based on three issues: (1) security from major global/regional cyber actors, specifically Russia and China; (2) secure information sharing and access; and (3) taking action against and defending American interests from state-sponsored cyber threat groups and criminals. The following will provide an overview of issue 1 and 3.

Security from Global/Regional Cyber Actors

While there are multiple states with the capability of launching offensive cyber-operations and supporting non-state actors in cyber-attacks, Russia and China are the two major players in the advancement of offensive cyber weaponry. While this chapter has so far focused more on a general overview of cybersecurity, the reason why Central Asia is a part of US cyber strategy (which will be discussed later) is because of the existential threat that Russia and China pose. Central Asia is both a geo-political and geo-cultural neighbor of both states, making a secure policy, leading to a mutually beneficial

[3] Weinberger, S. 2013, August 20. Cyber Pearl Harbor: Why hasn't a mega attack happened? BBC News. http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20130820-cyber-pearl-harbor-a-real-fear

[4] Pellerin, Cheryl. "Lynn: Cyberspace is new domain of warfare". *US Central Command.* 2010, October 19. https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/News-Article-View/Article/884164/lynn-cyberspace-is-new-domain-of-warfare/

relationship, with the states in the region a necessity for a proper cyber defense. Both Russia and China have a unique view of cyber power, which shapes the way they operate regionally and globally.

Russian Cyber Operations

To understand Russia's view of cyber power it is first necessary to explain how that country sees it in the context of its security apparatus. The term 'cyber' is not used in Russia unless it is being referred to about foreign states.[5] Officially, Russia uses the term 'information' when referring to cyber operations, thus making information warfare indistinguishable from cyber warfare. Information operations include network operations and electronic warfare, as well as information and psychological operations.

Russia views cyber warfare as part of the larger domain of hybrid warfare which incorporates aspects of information, conventional, and guerilla attacks during any type of military campaign.[6] What is unique about Russia's vision of hybrid warfare is that any component of it can be the primary method of attack with possible supporting roles for the other components. Guerilla aspects of war are not only limited to physical fighting forces by non-state actors, but also third-party groups that undertake hacking operations on behalf of or for the interest of the Russian government. Examples of hybrid operations can be seen in the 2007 Estonian cyber-attack where external groups linked to

[5] Connell, M. & Vogler, S. 2017, March. Russia's Approach to Cyber Warfare. CNA Analysis and Solutions. https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/DOP-2016-U-014231-1Rev.pdf

[6] Kofman, M. & Rojansky, M. 2015, April. A Closer look at Russia's Hybrid War. Kennan Cable. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/7-KENNAN%20CABLE-ROJANSKY%20KOFMAN.pdf

Russia were perpetrators of the attack, and the 2008 war with Georgia where cyber operations assisted the conventional attack which was underway.

The most comprehensive understanding of Russia's strategy in warfare can be understood through what is informally called the Gerasimov Doctrine.[7] The doctrine was developed by General Valery Gerasimov in 2013. According to Gerasimov, the purpose of using information in warfare is to reduce the fighting potential of the enemy. It can be used to disorganize governance, organize anti-government protests (social media is a testament to this), influence public opinion, and reduce an adversary's will to resist or counteract.[8] Since it is often difficult to ascertain the origin of cyber-attacks, using cyber information operations allows Russia to maintain deniability in any covert attacks that may have been exposed. Aside from the strategic role of information and cyber operations in achieving long term political goals, advanced cyber operations also provide a tactical battlefield advantage. Gerasimov mentions how cyber operations through information warfare is necessary to "lay the groundwork" for victory at any level of combat.[9]

The best example of Russia's convergence of conventional and cyber operations was during the conflict with Ukraine over Crimea which started in 2014. What made Russia's cyber campaign in Ukraine unique was not the massive attacks that it or third

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[7] Gerasimov, V. 2013, February 27. The Value of Science is in the Foresight. Military-Industrial Kurier. Taken from Military Review, 2016.

[8] Connell & Vogler, "Russia's Approach to Cyber Warfare"

[9] Gerasimov, "The Value of Science is in the Foresight"

part organizations made (which they didn't on a large scale), it was the regional cyber infrastructure it had in place. Ukraine being heavily interconnected with the region was home to many Russian telecommunication companies and e-mail servers that Russian intelligence would already be privy too.[10] It would not find it necessary to hack into secure Ukrainian servers because it already had control over many of them. In this case cyber operations assisted general information warfare operations. False new stories would be spread in Ukraine about NATO forces to sway public opinion of the conflict. The most successful part of the operation came at its onset where Russian special operation forces cut off Crimea from external news sources by taking over the Simferopol internet exchange point and dictating what internet and airwave traffic went in and out of the region.[11] While the issue in Ukraine is ongoing, Russia can claim a cyber victory in gaining control of the information in the region. Similar telecommunication networks are present in all former Soviet States including those in Central Asia.

Aside from the official state-level cyber activity, Russia is also assumed to have an extensive network of hacktivists and criminal organizations that perform regional and global cyber operations without having it traced back to the Russian government. Using a third party is cost effective compared to mobilizing entire departments in the military or

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[10] Giles, K. (2016). Russia's New Tools for Confronting the West: Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power. Chattam House. https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/2016-03-russia-new-tools-giles.pdf

[11] Giles

security services. It also gives the state legitimate deniability of cyber operations. If counter-hackers can trace back to the root network where an attack originated from it won't trace back to a government or state-owned computer, giving the government deniability over the attack.

China Cyber Operations

Similar to Russia, China does not frequent the use of the word 'cyber'. Rather, cyber operations are a subset of larger information operations, this making cyber space a small part of information space.[12] China's cyber strategy was developed in the 90s with the use of information warfare as part of their larger military ambitions. Although China had not been actively engaged in military campaigns, strategists analyzed US doctrines and application of information warfare in the first Gulf War and subsequent global conflicts.[13]

In 1999, two Chinese Colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, wrote a book that outlined a strategy of 'unrestricted warfare' which discussed non-military means to fight a country that had a superior military, such as the United States.[14] The book outlined

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[12] Raud, M. 2016. China and Cyber: Attitudes, Strategies, Organization. NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. https://ccdcoe.org/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdf/CS_organisation_CHINA_092016_FINAL.pdf

[13] Wortzel, L. (2014). The Chinese People's Liberation Army and Information Warfare. Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press. Retrieved from http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/pub1191.pdf

[14] Liang, Q. & Xiangsui, W. (1999). Unrestricted Warfare. PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House. Beijing.

the use of network warfare (among other tactics) to attack transportation, communication, and economic infrastructures of the United States. Using the internet to conduct cross border attacks would overcome traditional military deficiencies that China had compared to the US.[15] While the book was not the official strategy of Chinese cyber operations, it was approved and published by the People Liberation Army publishing house, giving it credentials as a talking point among the senior leadership of the Chinese military.

China, since the beginning of the 21st century, has used its capabilities to push its cyber espionage activity. One of China's major goals in their push towards cyber superiority is for the purpose of establishing control of an enemy's information flow and dominating the battle theatre.[16] Along with using cyber operations to gain the upper hand in war, cyber espionage is used as a tool to also assist their technological drives and economy. Examples of suspected state sanctioned espionage operations include Titan Rain, Ghostnet, Byzantine Hades, and Night Dragon, among others.[17] The strategy of espionage, instead of more disastrous uses of cyber tools, is deliberate. Strategists in China are aware that cyber espionage and network reconnaissance are tools that can be

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[15] Liang & Xiangsui

[16] Krekel, B. (2009). Capability of the People's Republic of China to Conduct Cyber Warfare and Computer Network Exploitation. The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission & Northrup Grumman. https://web.archive.org/web/20110203052113/http://www.uscc.gov/researchpapers/2009/NorthropGrumman_PRC_Cyber_Paper_FINAL_Approved%20Report_16Oct2009.pdf

[17] For a reference and description of these malware operations refer to the following article:
Denning, Dorothy. 2017, October 7. "How the Chinese Cyber Threat has Evolved". *Scientific American.* https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-the-chinese-cyberthreat-has-evolved/

used during peacetime to gain tactical superiority against other countries without incurring any physical response.[18] One of the main purposes of strengthening espionage capabilities is the fact that China knows its own systems have been breached and will continue to be breached.[19] While breaches cannot be prevented, and reactionary trends will continue to secure networks up to a certain point, building and enforcing China's offensive cyber technologies is necessary to keep a proactive response to future threats to its own system.[20] In a sense, the most effective defense is a strong offense.

Defending US interest from State-sponsored Cyber Threat Groups and Criminals

The 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) was the first major policy document that mentioned cyber operations in reference to national security. It stated that state and non-state actors pose a disruptive challenge by using cyber technology as a way to counter US military advantage.[21] Aside from the 2006 NSS there were multiple policy directives under President Bush that discussed the cyber realm. National Security Presidential Directive 16 called for the development of guidelines for offensive cyber-warfare capabilities.[22] This was followed by NSPD 38 and NSPD 54 which further

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[18] McReynolds, J. 2015. "China's Evolving Perspectives on Network Warfare." China Brief, *The Jamestown Foundation*. Vol. 15, No. 8. https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-evolving-perspectives-on-network-warfare-lessons-from-the-science-of-military-strategy/

[19] McReynolds

[20] McReynolds

[21] The White House. *The National Security Strategy of the USA.* Washington, D.C.: 2006, March

outlined a strategy/policy to secure cyberspace. The most comprehensive document on cybersecurity released by the Bush administration was The National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace in 2003. While the document outlined a broad strategy of dealing with issues that come up in cyberspace as well as the roles and responsibilities that each department plays, a major focus of it was on cybercrime.[23] The US called for working with foreign states to investigate and prosecute cybercrimes. The purpose of this is to secure critical infrastructure globally that could have an adverse impact on US national security. The strategy mentions the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime as the guiding institution that states should follow to ensure their cybercrime laws and procedures are comprehensive. The strategy also calls for developing better data about victims of cybercrime in order to "understand the scope of the problem and be able to track changes over time."[24]

President Obama took the Bush Administration policies and expanded on them. Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 20 and 41.[25] PPD 20 was a previously a top-secret directive that provided a basic outline of offensive and defensive cyber capabilities and the steps that responsible parties should take in order to deal with foreign cyber threats

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[22] Federation of American Scientists. "To Develop Guidelines for Offensive Cyber-Warfare". *National Security Presidential Directive 16.* https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/index.html

[23] The White House. *The National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace.* 2003, February.

[24] The White House

[25] The White House. *US Cyber Operations Policy.* PPD 20. 2012, October 16 The White House. *US Cyber Incident Coordination.* PPD 41. 2016, July 26

and criminals.[26] While the PPDs provided some guidance on cyber policies, the Obama administration outlined two major policy documents on cybersecurity. The first major cyber policy document under the Obama administration was the International Strategy for Cyberspace (ISC) developed in 2011. The strategy outlined the US response to global cyberthreats. The policy states that US agencies should work with their international counterparts to address issues of cybercrime. The policy also pushed for a greater harmony among global cybercrime laws which should use the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime as the primary model for state level policies.[27] While most cyber policy documents had not mentioned specific countermeasures to intrusions, the ISC called for the use of a deterrence strategy where the risks associated with exploiting US networks would far outweigh any benefits that may come. Repercussions for intrusions by state or non-state cyber criminals could be met with counter cyber operations, diplomatic intervention, military force, or economic force.[28] The last major policy document that the Obama administration developed was the Cybersecurity National Action Plan. This plan focused more on cybersecurity awareness and provides guidelines for individuals to better protect themselves in cyberspace.[29]

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[26] The White House. PPD 20

[27] The White House. *International Strategy for Cyberspace.* 2011, May

[28] The White House

[29] The White House. "Factsheet: Cybersecurity National Action Plan". 22016, February 9. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/09/fact-sheet-cybersecurity-national-action-plan

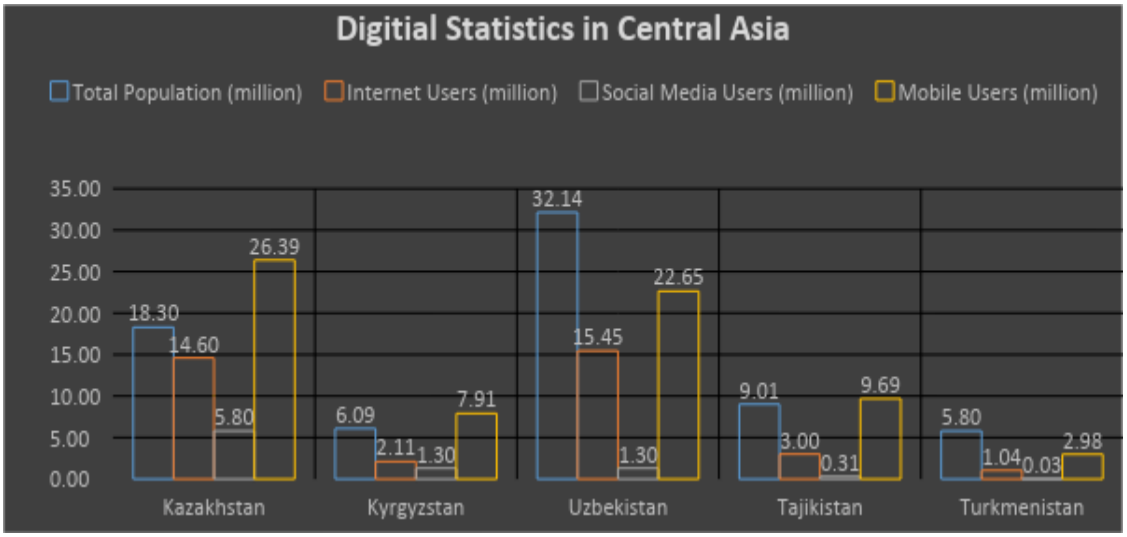
US and Central Asian Cybersecurity Policy

While the US cyber posture developed rapidly over the past 15 years, region specific policies were largely reactive based on incidents. Despite this incident-based policy, the US still maintained a strategy focused on protecting itself from global cyber actors, securing information sharing networks, and fighting cyber criminals. Previous chapters in this dissertation described Central Asian focused security policies based on Presidential administrations. This chapter will instead describe cyber policy towards Central Asia as a fluid output since the realm of cyber security is a fairly new phenomenon within the scope of security.

Cybersecurity in Central Asia (and the globe) is based on the spread, usage, and speed of the internet. Figure 5.1 shows the number of internet and other online services users per country as of 2018.

[30] Kelly-Clark, Victoria. 2019, April 29. "Central Asia: The Land of Cybercrime?" *Global Risk Insights.* https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/04/central-asia-cybercrime-land/

Figure 5.1[30]



In 2014, Ookla, an internet speed testing company, ranked Kazakhstan 58 thout of 188 countries, ranked 66 thfor Tajikistan, 81 stfor Kyrgyzstan, and 171 stfor Uzbekistan for internet speeds. Slower speeds can be a double-edged sword. On one hand it would make it more difficult for state and non-state actors to use the internet within the countries for cyber- criminal activity. On the other hand, it would be more difficult to trace cyber criminals in the region and would make it more difficult to inoculate systems against malware due to slower speeds. Slower speeds are primarily a challenge for the general populace; government systems generally use much quicker broadband connections.

The lack of proper cyber inoculation methods made Central Asia a growing hotspot of criminal activity. In 2010, Kazakhstan had one of the highest rates globally of infected computers and spam with 85% of the computers in the state having some type of infection. Kazakhstan followed by Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan had 8%, 4%, 2%, and 1% respectively. [31]The lack of security in computer systems,

[31] Kutnaeva, Nuria. 2015, August 20. "Central Asian Cyber Security". *UNIPATH.* https://unipath-magazine.com/central-asian-cyber-security/

especially in Kazakhstan, made them more vulnerable to malware such as worms which are used to make computers into zombies. These zombie computers were unwittingly used as part of larger global cyber-attack campaigns that used them as part of multiple DDoS attacks.

Cybercrime in the region can be split into three distinct categories: (1) hacktivism, (2) hooliganism, and (3) cyber fraud.[32] The main motivation for hacktivists in Central Asia has been to bring attention to government policies they feel is bad. There have also been times when hacktivist groups have targeted other Central Asian countries for their disagreement on foreign policy. In 2013, a group of hackers from Uzbekistan, called 'Clone Security' attacked multiple government agencies in Kyrgyzstan including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Supreme Court, and anti-Terrorist Center.

Hooliganism differs from hacktivism because it is often done by individuals that want to create chaos by proving to themselves or others that they are able to disrupt a network/system. While cyber hooliganism from Central Asia into other states has been limited, the region has been used as a type of practice field where foreign hackers disrupt local networks. This is often done due to the underdeveloped regional cybersecurity apparatus. In 2010, a 14-year-old Russian boy hacked into the National Space Agency of Kazakhstan website by creating fake login credentials. He then posted the vulnerability on the space agency's web page. The reason behind the attack was unknown. Other major incidents include multiple websites of the government of Kyrgyzstan compromised by

[32] Kutnaeva

hackers from Estonia and Turkey in 2012 and 2013, as well as a group of Southeast Asian hackers successfully hacking into multiple Kazakh judicial sites. While hacking and defacing websites may not seem to be a major disaster, the potential for damage is great. Websites are often gateways into larger, more secure networks, because oftentimes internal government or company networks are linked to websites that provide gateway for employees to access the networks abroad.

The last major category of cyber-related issues in the region is cyber fraud. Cyber fraud is primarily linked to financial crimes. Extortion and vulnerability exploitation are some of the bigger ways cyber-criminals commit fraud in the region. In 2012, an entertainment website was hit with multiple DDoS attacks. The hacker held the sites hostage and demanded the owner pay a ransom to release the attack. In 2012, three cyber criminals used phishing software to infect Tajik cellular phone networks. They converted international calls into local calls on the system with the goal of pocketing the difference in cost. Tajik courts arrested and convicted the criminals in 2013.

In response to the growing threat of cybercrime, many Central Asian governments created cyber response agencies to counter cyber threats. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan created the K Department in 2003 to combat computer and internet technology related crimes including information that promotes extremism and terrorism. Kazakhstan also created the National Contact Point to share IT related information with the CIS. In 2009, the Kyrgyz government created a cyber threat group in the Ninth Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to combat the internet and social media

presence of extremist organizations such as Hizb ut-Tahir. Tajikistan also developed a similar agency with the same goal.

While many of the Central Asian governments created agencies to fight cybercrime and other internet-based threats, many of the governments also created groups that specialize in communication technologies. Examples of this are the Computer Emergency Response Team developed in 2005 and the Information Security Center established in 2013 created by Uzbekistan. Tajikistan similarly created the Government Communications Services (GCS) as well.[33] While these communication agencies' primary mandate is to monitor e-communications of extremist and terrorist groups, they have been often used to counter opposition forces within each country. In July 2014, the Tajik government, specifically the GCS, cut off the country's internet, including access to various social media services such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, for multiple days while the military conducted operations in the semi-autonomous Gorno-Badakhshan region. The military incursion was part of a campaign to arrest an opposition leader in Khorog, the region's capital. While the incursion was unsuccessful, it was the first major anti-communication operation conducted on a non-terror/extremist group within the country's borders. Prior to this the Tajik government had often limited and monitored e-communications of extremist groups, not specific opposition parties. Despite the

[33] Putz, K. 2015. "Fears or Terrorism Prompt New Telecommunication Laws in Tajikistan". The Diplomat. https://thediplomat.com/tag/tajikistan-internet-censorship/

statewide censorship of the internet, people were still able to access social media and external sites through the use of virtual private networks (VPNs).[34]

To combat cybersecurity related issues, the Central Asian states have made it a priority to use multilateral and bilateral relationships to help secure their own critical infrastructure. At the 2006 SCO summit, member states signed the Declaration on International Information Security. In the 2009 summit, member states put into effect the Yekaterinburg Declaration which highlights the need to have a coordinated response to cyber threats. In 2013, the SCO had its first meeting of experts on cyber terrorism in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Similarly, the CSTO has made strides in incorporating cybersecurity in its mandate. In 2010, the CSTO adopted the Cooperation in the Field of Information Security regulation. The purpose of this regulation is to collectively find and disable websites spreading or recruiting terrorist related propaganda. An operation in 2013, the CSTO shut down dozens of sites in Kyrgyzstan that were accused of recruiting terrorists.

The Central Asian states were not limited to only Russian- and Chinese-led partnerships when making cyber agreements. The United States engaged in varying degrees of relationships as well. These relationships focused on each of the three major policy issues that the US saw as important (discussed earlier in the chapter).

[34] VPNs are private networks that connect computers to public networks such as the internet. VPNs located in countries where the internet has not been censored can give internet access to those that are by connecting them to the cross-border servers. In a way, it is like accessing the internet through another country.

In September 2011, China, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan submitted a resolution to the United Nations General Assembly to establish an international code of conduct for information security.[35] The resolution outlined three principles. First, it declared that threats with unknown origins, such as non-state actors needed to be addressed. This specifically referred to secession, terrorism, and extremism as the primary focus of the non-state actors that were addressed. Second, it declared that every state had the right to monitor and control internet technologies within its own borders. Finally, it declared that cooperation between the state and private sector was necessary to combat cyber threats.

Although the resolution was only in its proposed draft form, the language of the resolution was not agreed upon by the United States. To counter the proposal, in July 2012, the US co-sponsored a resolution in the U.N. Human Rights Council on internet free speech. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the council.[36] It was a counter to the China, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan proposal because it promoted the use of

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[35] Farnsworth, Timothy. 2011, November. *China and Russia Submit Cyber Proposal*. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2011-11/china-russia-submit-cyber-proposal
Maurer "Cyber Norm Emergence at the United Nations"
United Nations. General Assembly. Letter dated 12 September 2011 from the Permanent Representatives
of China, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. A/66/359. New York: United Nations, 14 September 2011.

[36] Zeldin, Wendy. 2012, July. *U.N. Human Rights Council: First Resolution on Internet Free Speech*. A/HRC/20/L. Human Rights Council, United Nations

free speech on the internet, while the former resolution proposed specifically that a state has the right to control the internet within its borders.

While the UN provided a major platform for cybersecurity discourse, key disagreements, such as free speech and internet freedoms, existed between the US and the Central Asian states. Multiple states utilized measures to censor the internet during times of conflict or other political unrest. As discussed earlier, Tajikistan blocked internet access in 2014 due to political unrest in the semi-autonomous region. Uzbekistan is also known to have blocked internet access multiple times, including during the Arab Spring events in 2011, during the national university exam in 2014, and blocking sites of organizations critical to the government in 2015.[37] Despite the disagreement over internet censorship, the US proposed developing its bilateral and multilateral information sharing relationship with various states.

In 2013, General James Mattis, the Commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), made a statement outlining the necessity to expand US cyber operations into the MENA and Central Asian regions. This expansion was primarily due to the increased threat that Iran posed on the cyber front. Aside from the threat of Iran, a secondary threat was terrorist recruitment.[38] CENTCOM developed multiple strategic

[37] Freedom House. *Freedom of the Net 2012. http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2012/uzbekistan*
Radio Free Europe. "Uzbekistan Blocks Mobile Internet, SMS During Exam". *AFP*. 2014, August 1. https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-sms-internet-university-exam-police-cheating/25477815.html
Sikorskaya, Inga, "Cyber-Censorship in Uzbekistan". *Institute for War & Peace Reporting.* 2015, March 11. https://iwpr.net/global-voices/cyber-censorship-uzbekistan

communications and information operations programs in order to disrupt terrorist propaganda in the region through internet and multi-media campaigns to counter extremist ideology.[39] To counter the challenges that the region poses, General Mattis highlighted the necessity of information sharing to inhibit the spread of radical organizations and to protect US interests.

In 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry gave a speech at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan. While discussing Central Asian states as important partners for the US in the 21st century, Secretary Kerry outlined various ways in which the US was helping Central Asia combat Daesh (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria: ISIS). One of the ways was through information sharing to strengthen border security.[40]

While the US worked on establishing cyber norms in the UN that would prevent greater influence of Russia and China, and increasing its information sharing efforts with the Central Asian states, their primary concern was countering state and non-state sponsored cyber-attacks and cybercrime. Many of the cyber-attacks launched against Central Asian states originated in Russia for the purpose of influencing local policy in favor of Russia and, many times, against US interests. In January 2009, Russia launched a DDoS attack against Kyrgyzstan, effectively shutting down two of its internet service providers, in order to compel the country to evict the US military from the Manas base.

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[38] Mattis, James. "The Posture of US Central Command". *Senate Armed Services Committee.* 2013, March

[39] Mattis

[40] Kerry, John. "The United States and Central Asia: Partners for the 21st Century". Speech at *Nazarbayev University.* Astana: Kazakhstan. 2015, November 2

The effort produced positive results as the Kyrgyz government voted to evict the US and was also provided USD $2 billion from Russia.[41] In April 2009, another Russian DDoS attack shut down a news outlet in Kazakhstan for publishing a statement by the Kazakh president criticizing Russia.[42]

While extra-regional threats have been a major concern for the Central Asian states, criminal organizations have setup bases of operations in the region, specifically in Kazakhstan, due to their weak cybersecurity posture. One of the world's most dangerous hacker groups, Cobalt, established itself in Kazakhstan in 2013. The group commits financial crimes by hacking into banks worldwide using malware to access ATMs and pulling out cash. According to Europol, as of 2017, it was estimated that they caused losses of over USD $1.1 billion to banks in 40 countries.[43]

To better secure themselves from internal and external threats, the Central Asian states partnered with the US in preparing their own cyber professionals to handle and counter threats. In 2009, the Department of Homeland Security, in conjunction with the National Security Agency and Lockheed Martin, hosted a Cyber Defense Exercise (CDX) with the Central Asian states.[44] The CDX is an annual inter-agency/inter-branch "cyber

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[41] Windrem, Robert. "Timeline: Ten Years of Russian Cyber Attacks on Other Nations". *NBC News.* 2016, December 18. https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/hacking-in-america/timeline-ten-years-russian-cyber-attacks-other-nations-n697111

Espiner, Tom. "Kyrgyzstan Under Attack". *ZDNet*. 2009, January 29. https://www.zdnet.com/article/kyrgyzstan-under-cyberattack/

[42] Windrem

[43] Kelly-Clark, "Central Asia: The Land of CyberCrime?"

war game" held to test the readiness of US cyberwarriors.[45] It often includes cyber professionals from partner countries to train and assist them in preparing for future threats. The war games involve various scenarios that each team must find a solution to. Scenarios can involve hacking, DDoS attacks, cyber espionage, insider threats, social engineering, etc. Inviting Central Asia to partake in these war games indicates the level of commitment the US has towards strengthening the region's cyber posture as a whole.

Theoretical Analysis

Due to the unique nature of cybersecurity, the tripartite framework provides a look at how issues within the cyber realm are interconnected and often create ambiguity on how issues should be addressed. Geopolitically, the lines of sovereignty have often been blurred. Both, Central Asian states and foreign powers such as Russia have conducted cyber operations within Central Asian state borders and from the outside. International law and the Tallinn Manual mention that any operation conducted from outside the state that affects state infrastructure is a violation of its sovereignty. Over the course of the two administrations, various Central Asian states were victims of external cyber-attacks, primarily by Russia, such as the 2009 DDoS attack against Kyrgyzstan.

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[44] Laruelle, Marlene. *Cybersecurity in Central Asia: Real Issues, False Excuses?* Central Asia Policy Brief No. 2. Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University. 2012, June.; Lockheed Martin. "Lockheed Martin Supports 2009 NSA Cyber Defense Exercise". *Lockheed Martin.* 2009, April 27. https://news.lockheedmartin.com/2009-04-27-Lockheed-Martin-Supports-2009-National-Security-Agency-Cyber-Defense-Exercise

[45] National Security Agency. "Cyber Defense Exercise (CDX)". 2016, February 4. https://apps.nsa.gov/iaarchive/programs/cyber-defense-exercise/index.cfm

This particular attack altered the geo-political relationship between the US and Kyrgyzstan by coercing the Kyrgyz government to end the military base agreement it had with the US. To counter Russian interference, the US engaged in institutional and symbiotic[46] diplomacy in the region. Institutionally the US pushed for the UN to pass resolutions to more clearly address issues of internet freedom and sovereignty.[47] These resolutions would strengthen the laws, norms, and jurisdiction through which cyber-attacks are handled.

In conjunction with institutional diplomacy, by trying to alter cyber laws and norms, the US proceeded to also take part in symbiotic diplomacy with each of the states. This can be seen in the CDX war games that the Central Asian states took part in with the US. While the goal of the CDX was to train the next generation of cyber professionals, it also had the indirect effect of helping each of the states better react and counter cyber-attacks against its critical infrastructure, thereby limiting the coercion that other states, such as Russia, can apply in interfering with US geo-political strategy in the region.

Geo-economically, the lines are blurred. Since the Central Asian states are economically not well off, they are not able to properly develop their defensive cyber operations, including shutting down hacker groups, preventing external attacks on critical infrastructure and arresting/prosecuting cyber criminals. The lack of a proper defensive cyber posture has made the region, especially Kazakhstan, a safe haven for cyber

[46] Symbiotic diplomacy can be described as a relationship between two states in one sector can knowingly have a positive influence on the outcome in another sector.

[47] Maurer, "Cyber norm emergence at the United Nations"

criminals. Even though Kazakhstan is the wealthiest of the Central Asian states, it has the highest rate of infection and malware, and lowest rate of inoculation, compared to the other states. This has allowed groups, such as Cobalt, to commit financial crimes in the banking sector globally, including against US interests. Although there is no direct relationship between the US and Central Asia geo-economically, the impact and losses accumulated through cyber-related financial crimes have an indirect affect against US economic interests. Once again, joint cyber exercises, such as the CDX, would assist Central Asian governments in better training their cyber warriors to track down and prosecute cyber criminals that commit financial cybercrimes.

Geo-culturally, while the region falls under the umbrella of Russian dominance, it's difficult to understand the role of culture in cybersecurity due to the lack of traditional cultural influence in relation to the 'faceless' identity of the internet. The private domain of the internet can be seen as the sub-state level of geo-culture within the framework. While there is some cultural influence in the form of recruitment and propaganda by terrorist and extremist organizations, the internet has created a type of cyber culture in the form of social media. While the definition of cyberculture is fluid, preeminent digital philosopher Pierre Levy combines the anthropological view of 'culture' with the digital revolution. He describes it as a concept for understanding the internet's impact on society.[48] Using this understanding of cyberculture, the greatest impact on society in the 20th century has been the evolution of social media. The

[48] Levy, Pierre. *Cyberculture.* University of Minnesota Press. 2001
Ardevol, Elisenda. "Cyberculture: Anthropological perspectives of the Internet". Workshop. *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.* 2005, December 9. https://eardevol.files.wordpress.com/2008/10/cyberculture.pdf

propagation and use of social media form a type of cyberculture as it has impacted the way society functions in the modern world. Despite the lack of traditional geo-cultural similarities between the US and Central Asia, cyber-geo-culture has become a source of camaraderie and kinship between the US and the people of Central Asia. Even though the geographical distance is evident, the internet has made the younger Central Asian generation more closely aligned with basic values the US advocates, such as freedom of speech and freedom of information. For example, a study was conducted in 2018 that noted millennial and post-millennial youth in Kazakhstan, over the past few years, have flocked to social media applications such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube in order to create a safe-space with less censorship and governmental control.[49] Many times, these social media platforms are used as a form of activism to spread political messages and information that the government tries to censor. Other countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan where the government has greater control over the internet often see their younger population access social media platforms and the internet through VPNs. The tighter the governments try to control the internet and the free flow of information, the more ways the population finds to go around the censorship, indicating an urgency to consume information that is not available in the country.

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[49] Kosnazarov, Daniyar. *#Hashtag Activism: Youth, Social Media, and Politics in Kazakhstan.* Central Asia Program. CAP Paper 217. 2019, February https://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Kosnozarov-CAP-Paper-217-February-2019.pdf
Wood, Colleen. "In Central Asia, Politics by Way of Social Media". *The Diplomat.* 2019, February 22. https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/in-central-asia-politics-by-way-of-social-media/

Looking at the tripartite framework, the US sees multiple interests in each point of the framework. Geo-politically, the US sees the necessity of a Central Asia that is free from Russian, and to a lesser extent, Chinese influence. Geo-economically, the US sees the necessity to strengthen the capacity of each of the states in order for them to fight cybercrime. Geo-culturally, the US sees a population that strives to achieve US values such as the freedom of speech and expression. Taking these three, region specific, cyber goals together, the US securitized cybercrime. Since cyber laws are inconsistent and often hard to enforce in the international system, the US relationship towards Central Asia has revolved around preventing cybercrime. Cybercrime, in the form of both state and non-state sponsored activity, disrupts US strategic and economic interests globally. A strong defense for the US is to make sure other countries have a strong defense for themselves. Helping train Central Asian states to better defend themselves from cyber-attacks such as DDoS attacks on their critical networks can help the US strengthen its political and military ties with each of the countries. It can also help protect US interests from attacks by hackers since each country would have its own capability to track and prosecute cyber criminals. One common theme in this dissertation is the spread of democracy and US influence. Part of the process of securitizing cybercrime was the need to define criminal activities in a manner that benefits the US. The process was initiated in the UN by the introduction of resolutions (as discussed before) that call for freedom of the internet. These values align with US interest and would make government censorship of the internet a criminal act globally, leading to the reason why the US has often supported the social media culture that share American values of free expression. While cybercrime

itself is a broad concept, its securitization allows for the US to maintain policies that align itself with both the Central Asian governments and the people that live in those states.

Conclusion

As countries continue to weaponize cyberspace-based technology, cyberspace itself becomes a new geopolitical battleground. Laws of sovereignty and war are obscure when it comes to cyberspace. The Tallinn Manual is the closest set of guideless set out to apply established international laws and norms to cyberspace. While conflicts involving states or state- sponsored actors become more prominent in cyberspace, countries try to set guidelines on how those conflicts should be fought. It seems like every time technology takes a leap forward, the laws governing their use in war and the security posture needed to be ready for them, must do so as well.

While the US' relationship with the Central Asian states in cybersecurity is often muddled, with some aspects of it in favor of US policy and some against, the primary concern for the US is to better secure its critical infrastructure from the multitude of ways cyber-attacks and crimes can take place. The US has used institutional reforms through the UN to protect US values, such as the freedom of expression, on a global scale. It has also formed bilateral partnerships (i.e., CDX war games) with the Central Asian states in order to limit Russian influence. Despite the limited digital relationship the US had with the region in the early days of the internet revolution, the passing years have evolved that relationship into one that sees the necessity of stronger governments, stronger laws, and a

more open cyberculture within the population. While these interests often compete with each other, they each play a specific role in the security of the US.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Recap

This research covered a multitude of US security policy and strategy decisions in regard to Central Asia. The breakdown of the research by President, allowed for a view into the evolution of security policy since 9/11. While the overarching theme of most post-9/11 security policy was rooted in the War on Terror, policies of individual domains differed based on specific issues, and necessities that US grand strategy incorporated.

Although the Central Asian region consists of five individual states, most policy looked at regional dynamics supported by issues in each individual state, rather than individual state policy dictated by larger issues in the region. While the topic of research was a focus on post-9/11 policy, Chapter 2 of the dissertation focused exclusively on post-Cold War and pre-9/11 security policy, this was necessary to provide a basis for US-Central Asian policy.

US-Central Asian policy prior to 9/11 was non-existent. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent end of the Cold War, the US did not engage with the Central Asian states other than acknowledgement of their independence. The primary concern was regional stability. States such as Tajikistan went through a brutal civil war, while others were forced into a situations of economic and political collapse. Eventually each of the states established a pseudo-democracy where elections were held but only one candidate was given any chance of winning. These early authoritarian roots were coupled with strong Russian and Chinese influence in the region. The US did not find the region

lucrative enough to get involved with the messy regional dynamics that had emerged over the decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

After 9/11, there was a drastic shift in security policy towards the Central Asian states. While there were multiple areas of security that the US engaged with Central Asia, the three themes in this research are overarching areas where security policy revolved around. Post-9/11 security policy saw the establishment of multiple military bases in Central Asia. US strategy in the War on Terror revolved around the conflict in Afghanistan against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Military bases were established in Central Asia as a supporting instrument for the military resource supply chain, outside of the conflict zone. Although multiple bases were established, regional dynamics and influence by other great powers destined those bases to failure as many of the states felt a long-term presence by US forces were an overreach of authority. Russia also saw the US presence in the region as a threat and eventually persuaded the states to end their base leases.

While US military policy towards the region revolved around the establishment of military bases for the war effort in Afghanistan, anti-terror policy also revolved around the Afghan theater in the War on Terror. The primary aim of US strategy was the prevention of foreign fighters into Afghanistan. This strategy was conducted in order to strengthen each of the Central Asian states for them to better handle local anti-terror operations. The primary concern for the US was the IMU, its affiliates, and HT. The US saw both as a threat, but for different reasons.

While many of the Central Asian governments labeled HT as a terrorist organization, the US refrained from doing so as they had not committed any physical acts of terror. But the US did find their ideology, and their lack of condemnation against violence, troubling.

On the other hand, the IMU posed an existential threat to US operations in the region, as they had conducted numerous raids and bombing campaigns to push their political and religious message. Ultimately, the lack of a concrete US response to the IMU and other terrorist groups in the region, pushed their activities to other regions such as South Asia. Despite the eventual decline of the IMU, the US's primary purpose of preventing foreign fighters from entering Afghanistan was unsuccessful. IMU fighters supported Taliban operations for much of the war, even to the present day. Even though the IMU had lost much of its operational capability in Central Asia, it had a steady presence in Afghanistan. It was not until November 2020 when the group's leader, Aziz Yuldash, was killed in Northern Afghanistan by Afghan security forces, further diminishing their slow decline.[1]

While military and anti-terror policy has been at the forefront of US security strategy after 9/11, cybersecurity has moved into the limelight as multiple domestic and global incidents raised the existential level of threat it posed. Since 2001, benchmarks in cybersecurity issues included the DDoS attack on Estonia, and the unleashed Stuxnet virus. While these incidents did not involve a direct threat to US security, the US faced its

[1] South Asia Monitor. 2020, November 12. "Terror group IMU's leader killed in Afghan forces operation". *South Asia Monitor, Society for Policy Studies.* Terror group IMU's leader killed in Afghan forces' operation | South Asia Monitor

own cybersecurity challenges in the form of insider threats. Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden's data dump of classified information pushed the US towards a greater global cyber-strategy. Instead of developing reactive strategies, the US started developing proactive policies in various regions.

Central Asia, being one of the poorest regions in the world, did not have a digitally connected society, until recently. Despite this, some of the Central Asian states, such as Kazakhstan, had one of the highest rates of cyber-crime in the world.[2] As part of a proactive strategy, the US partnered with the Central Asian states in training cyber-warriors to combat cyber-crime in each country. CDX war games were used as a way to promote each of the Central Asian states to taking cyber-security in their own hands. Another reason for a policy of training cyber-warriors was to counter the influence of Russia and China. Both countries are considered to have vibrant offensive cyber-capabilities and partnerships.[3] By providing cybersecurity training support to Central Asian governments, the US diminished the dependency of the states on regional powers for their cybersecurity needs.

While the US had specific goals for each security domain, President Bush and President Obama implemented those goals using different strategies. President Bush pushed for unilateral action in regard to regional security policy. On the other hand,

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[2] Kelly-Clark, Victoria. 2019. "Central Asia: The Land of Cybercrime?"

[3] Wei, Yuxi. 2016, June 21. "China-Russia cybersecurity cooperation: Working towards cyber-sovereignty". *The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington*. https://jsis.washington.edu/news/china-russia-cybersecurity-cooperation-working-towards-cyber-sovereignty/

President Obama pushed for a multi-lateral approach, often times, taking a deliberate backseat to Russia in dealing with regional issues, specifically in regard to anti-terror strategy. Despite the variation in how to accomplish their policy goals, both presidents viewed Central Asia as secondary to the primary war effort in Afghanistan.

Current Trends

For 16 years the Bush and Obama administration had similar policy goals in using the proximity of Central Asia to assist the war in Afghanistan. President Trump's strategy did not shift too far from this goal. While Afghanistan was the primary reason for US policy in the region, a secondary policy for the Trump administration was reducing foreign influence. Under President Bush and Obama, Russia was considered the primary adversary in competing for interest in Central Asia, followed by China. Under the Trump administration China replaced Russia as the primary adversarial state for regional influence. While on an official visit to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in February of 2020, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo emphasized the threat a growing Chinese influence on the region.[4] Despite the Trump administration's insistence, the Central Asian states continued to engage vibrantly with China.[5]

[4] Imamova, Navbahor. 2020, October 28. "Has Trump remade America's priorities in Central Asia?". *Voice of America*. https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/has-trump-remade-americas-priorities-central-asia

[5] Imamova

The shift in seeing China as the primary adversary instead of Russia has been indicative of the larger security policy initiative of the US under President Trump, where China became the securitized agent. Aside from the competition for influence, the Trump administration continued the Obama era dialogue under the C5+1 initiative. The Trump administration published the official strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025 in February of 2020. The strategy outlined the following six principles that dictates US policy towards the region:[6]

- Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian states and the region.
- Reduce terrorist threats in Central Asia.
- Expand and maintain support for stability in Afghanistan.
- Encourage connectivity between Central Asia and Afghanistan
- Promote rule of law reform and respect for human rights.
- Promote US investment in and development of Central Asia

As part of the strategy, the US developed joint military initiatives in order to build trust and interoperability between the US military and regional security forces.

One of these programs, the Steppe Eagle exercise helps train soldiers in Central Asia on various threat scenarios, in order to train them for local security as well as global

[6] Department of State. 2020, February. *United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025: Advancing Sovereignty and Economic Prosperity.* https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL-CEN-Strategy-Glossy-2-10-2020-508.pdf

peacekeeping operations.[7] Through this initiative, Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian state to deploy soldiers to a peacekeeping operation (in Lebanon).[8] The Trump administration has also invested over $90 million in border security projects, including border guard training, equipment, and building guard posts, to protect the states from drug trafficking and cross-border terrorist activity.[9]

Even though the Trump administration kept up many of the basic principles that previous administrations had implemented, there was a shift in the way the US viewed the region. Although Afghanistan and regional power influence dictated much of the current policy, the Trump administration saw Central Asia as a region with the capability to participate actively in global affairs. Military and peacekeeping training initiatives, as well as greater support for development and infrastructure, has put US-Central Asian security relations on a normalized path where the relationship can progress, even as the US pushes for a greater withdrawal of military operations in Afghanistan.

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[7] Lawrence, J.P. 2019, June 27. " US-led Steppe Eagle helps build Kazakhstan into stable partner in Central Asia". *Stars and Stripes.* https://www.stripes.com/news/us-led-steppe-eagle-helps-build-kazakhstan-into-stable-partner-in-central-asia-1.587858

[8] Lawrence

[9] Department of State. 2020, February. *United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025: Advancing Sovereignty and Economic Prosperity.*

Future Research

There are multiple avenues where research on US-Central Asian security relations can continue. This dissertation covered only three aspects of security; military, terrorism, and cyber. As the digital age progresses, and the lines of warfare become more blurred, the various aspects of security will continue to evolve. Future research can look at how all three aspects of security discussed are coordinated in not only defending US security, but also creating a better security apparatus for the Central Asian region. Other areas of research can involve security policy involve transnational crime and environmental security. Further research can also incorporate a greater analysis of the Trump administration's policy towards the region and areas where the incoming Biden administration will focus on. Finally, research has been conducted on US policy towards Central Asia, but there is not much research on how the Central Asian states reacted to or viewed such policies, which should be a research area of greater interest since it would provide an understanding of how US policies have a short or long-term impact on regional dynamics.

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