

**Revisiting the Geo-Political Thinking
Of Sir Halford John Mackinder:
United States—Uzbekistan Relations
1991—2005**

A thesis

Presented to the Faculty

of

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

27 November 2006

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Abstract

This dissertation asks a simple question: Does Sir Halford John Mackinder's geo-political thinking provide a suitable basis for examining and explaining the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1991—2005?

This dissertation re-visits Mackinder's geo-political thinking, concluding that it is a living and comprehensive philosophy consisting of two perspectives which were meant to be applied in tandem to each new strategic era. These mutually dependent perspectives include the geo-communal view of man's local interaction with and perception of geography, and the geo-strategic of a state's understanding of, and interaction with, the Heartland (central Eurasia).

Re-visited as such, this dissertation demonstrates the context and origins of Mackinder's geo-political thinking (chapters 1 and 2), before modeling its explanatory suitability through an analytical narrative of the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship (chapters 3 and 4). The dissertation also suggests a general set of hypotheses (chapter 2) that summarize and illustrate Mackinder's comprehensive thinking, as applied through the analytic narrative of the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship (chapter 5).

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to James Joseph Grey.

He and his wife, Anne, lived across the street from me and Alissa. We spent many, many hours with them, loving and appreciating them more with each visit. We were fascinated by their service. Anne was a teacher; she had dedicated her life to the children in the Philadelphia school system. Jim was also a servant. He had fought in the Battle of the Bulge and he and Anne had served in George Kennan's Moscow embassy.

Amidst work and the frenzy of everyday life, I looked forward to my conversations with Jim. We would debate the nature of God and leadership; who the “top three” Secretaries of State were in U.S. history; the elements of the Wehrmacht defeat in Russia; and, always, the exercise of American power. We would often sit back in his study, surrounded by the great books of world affairs. Or we would walk to downtown Narberth for a Friday lunch at “Greeks,” where we would talk geo-politics over a martini, or two. (Jim was old school State Department to the last).

He always had time for me. He always listened. As I wrestled with the dissertation, Jim was indefatigably positive, always encouraging me. It was a powerful example.

I can still see him walking along Anthwyn Road, the perfect gentlemen, greeting neighbors with the proper, and genuine, gesture or words.

He was my friend. I miss him.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to God for this experience and the people I have met along the way.

As I approached the end of my Pentagon tour in 1998, I was thinking about getting out of the Marine Corps. That summer I met Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., who recruited me to come to Fletcher. That fall, I met my wife, Alissa. We were married on 5 June 1999, I left the Marine Corps in July and we moved to Boston on 24 August 1999.

I had planned to write my dissertation on managing the consequences of a WMD terrorist incident in the U.S. (something I had worked on at the Pentagon). In December of 1999, after completing my first semester of coursework as well as my first case study, it occurred to me that I wanted to write on something I knew nothing about...Uzbekistan. And thus I committed the cardinal sin of PhD students: I switched horses in mid-stream. Alissa supported me. Neither one of us, however, could have imagined that that Christmas 1999 decision would result in seven more years of "Ph.D. Candidate" status!

I am thankful for Bob Pfaltzgraff. I am grateful to Mark Semioli for making me aware of the profound implications I faced one seemingly ordinary October night as I debated with him whether or not to leave the party, or ask this woman I had met at the door, Alissa, to dinner. "Your decision to stay or go could quite possibly be the biggest decision of your life."

Without this confluence of events, which I consider divine, this dissertation would not be possible.

Along the way, I have been blessed with incredible friends and support. I am grateful to Sodyq Safaev who opened the door for me in Uzbekistan. Without him, I would not have met and learned from all the friends I have today in that great country. I am also blessed by the

wonderful friends I have made in the U.S.; people like Matt Bryza, who selflessly serves our nation.

I am filled with gratitude for the people who have also encouraged me along the way: my mom and dad (who introduced me to Sodyq Safaev); my sister, Amy, and her husband, D.B., who let me live with them in Providence R.I., for my last semester of coursework as Alissa took a job in New York; my brother, Jesse, who inspired me with his own graduate degree in conflict resolution; and Mike Hillyard, John Hillen and Pauletta Otis, each of whom nagged me about finishing the task.

In similar fashion, I am tremendously thankful for those who made this dissertation so much better by finding and/or providing sources; reading chapter drafts; and helping with formatting. These good and wonderful folks include: Nathan Murray; Drew Fink; Nate Carr; Dennis Hoover; Josh White; Rebecca Yael Miller; Mekael Teshome; Peter Nasuti; Greg Matney; Amy Rowe; Cara Boekeloo; Matt Vinson; Nicole Cordeau; Laura Bowman; Alice Serar; Nick Megoran; Ulugbeg Khassanov; Tom Blau; Martha Brill Olcott; and Jon Chicky.

Of special note is the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) in Philadelphia. Not only did Alan Luxenberg encourage me to publish my analyses of Uzbekistan through FPRI's "enotes," Michael Noonan went out of his way to send me every type of analysis possible—from the latest newspaper article to the most recent scholarship. Michael kept me current when my day job took me away. I am grateful to both of them.

I thank the Board of Directors at the Institute for Global Engagement—and especially IGE's founders, my parents, Robert and Margaret Ann Seiple—for allowing me the time to work on this dissertation.

I am profoundly thankful for Andy Hess. Before I had read Mackinder in depth, he helped me understand history from the East; that is, through the eyes of the Turkic peoples. He has tirelessly stewarded me and this project to completion. Helping him and me is Bernie Kelley-Leccese—she is a saint! I am likewise grateful for William Martel and Sung-Yoon Lee, whose substantive and editorial insights improved this dissertation greatly. Finally, this dissertation crossed the finish line because of Jenifer Burckett-Picker—The Fletcher School is a much better place because of her.

And then there is Alissa. She is my best friend, my biggest fan, and the kick-in-the-pants I need when I'm being stupid. I am deeply in love with her, my wife, my hero.

Finally I am thankful to God for His Son—without whom I am nothing—and for giving us a son, Liam Ambrose, who, like this dissertation, seemed impossible seven years ago.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction:

Context & Terms of Reference

“The sound must seem an echo to the sense.” — Alexander Pope¹

“The function of political geography is to detect and demonstrate the relations subsisting between man in society and so much of his environment as varies locally... Knowledge... is one. Its division into subjects is a concession to human weakness... The alternative is to divide the scientific from the practical.” — Sir Halford John Mackinder²

This dissertation asks a simple question: Does Mackinder’s geo-political thinking provide a suitable basis for examining and explaining the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1991—2005?

Halford Mackinder took an ecosystem approach to his thinking as he sought to practically understand the interrelationship of geography, people and ideas as they interact and combine to become the ultimate totality of the “world organism.”³ This dissertation organizes Mackinder’s own words—which are often difficult to understand—in a manner that is consistent with their intent, and, arguably, more coherent.

¹ Alexander Pope, “Sound and Sense” (accessed September 28, 2005); available from http://www.poetry-online.org/pope_sound_and_sense.htm.

² Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996), 154-5, 166, 173. In 1996, the National Defense University (NDU) republished several of Halford Mackinder’s works as *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. These works include: “The Scope and Methods of Geography,” *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 9, No. 3 (1887): 141-160 [hereafter cited as “Scope and Methods”]; “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *Geographical Journal* 23, No. 4 (1904): 421-444 [hereafter cited as “Pivot”]; *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (London: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1919) [hereafter cited as *Ideals and Reality*]; and “The Round World and Winning the Peace,” *Foreign Affairs* 21, No. 4 (July 1943): 595-605 [hereafter cited as “Round World”]. All page references to these works are found in the NDU re-publishing.

³ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 176.

As a result, this dissertation re-visits Mackinder's geo-political thinking, concluding that it is a living and comprehensive philosophy of two perspectives, meant to be applied to each new strategic era. These mutually dependent perspectives include the geo-communal view of man's local interaction with and perception of geography (i.e., the "going concern" of civil society), and the geo-strategic of a state's understanding of, and interaction with, the Heartland (i.e., the "going concern" of international politics).⁴

While he lived, Sir Halford John Mackinder was foremost an educator. He was the man most responsible for the creation of political geography as an academic discipline in the United Kingdom. Similarly, he played an instrumental role in the establishment of Reading University, the London School of Economics and the School of Geography at Oxford.

It is his Heartland idea, however, that reaches beyond his 1947 death, shaping western strategic from the Cold War to today. Indeed, it is not too much to say that before George Kennan's Containment Strategy there was Halford J. Mackinder's Heartland Philosophy, and that the latter deeply influenced the former. Yet most have never heard of the man; and if they have, their understanding of him is but a caricature of his thinking, making it impossible to apply his geo-political thinking anew.

In 1904, Mackinder first argued that the Heartland was absolutely critical to global balance, and therefore the West. With daring simplicity, he told his London audience that the Heartland was vital to international security by virtue of its geographic position; and that those with access to it will play a critical role on the global stage.

⁴ To be clear, Mackinder did not himself use "geo-communal." "Geo-communal," however, is the most succinct phrase that captures his desire to understand and express how geography influences local society and culture, producing a particular view of the world. Mackinder used "going concern" as a means to describe a broad awareness of, and insight to, preceding events and ideas—e.g., regarding specific issues like economics or regionalism—and how these same events and ideas, if they continued in similar fashion, would practically effect the present and future.

Mackinder thus sought a formula that provided “practical value as setting into perspective some of the competing forces in current international politics;”⁵ irrespective of the particular form that key factors—e.g., technology, population, resources, religion, terrorism, etc.—take anew in each strategic era. As he explained in the question and answer period following his presentation, Mackinder stressed that the state that possessed the Heartland would be able to “fling power from side to side of this area. *My aim is...to make a geographical formula into which you could fit any political balance.*”⁶

Mackinder articulated this living formula on three occasions: 1904, 1919 and 1943. Understood collectively, as chapter two discusses in detail, his Heartland writings argue that global balance, indeed civilization, rests on the twin pillars of Mackinderian geo-politics: the geo-communal view of man’s local interaction with and perception of geography (i.e., the “going concern” of civil society), and the geo-strategic view of a state’s understanding of, and interaction with, the Heartland (i.e., the “going concern” of international politics).

This chapter, however, examines such ubiquitous terms of reference as “geo-politics” and “region,” providing a basis for understanding Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy. The chapter concludes with an outline of the dissertation.

⁵Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996), 176. In 1996, the National Defense University (NDU) republished several of Halford Mackinder’s works as *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. These works include: “The Scope and Methods of Geography,” *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 9, No. 3 (1887): 141-160 [hereafter cited as “Scope and Methods”]; “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *Geographical Journal* 23, No. 4 (1904): 421-444 [hereafter cited as “Pivot”]; *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (London: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1919) [hereafter cited as *Ideals and Reality*]; and “The Round World and Winning the Peace,” *Foreign Affairs* 21, No. 4 (July 1943): 595-605 [hereafter cited as “Round World”]. All page references to these works are found in the NDU republishing.

⁶ Harm J. de Blij, ed., *Systematic Political Geography*, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 285-286.

Context

Today, when visitors walk into the U.S. embassy in Uzbekistan's capital, Tashkent, they find foyer walls covered with photographs that compete for the eye's attention. The wall is a "who's who" of U.S. national leaders with American and Uzbek officials. Seemingly, almost every cabinet secretary, senator or representative has been to Tashkent. Visitors can only conclude that Uzbekistan is, or was, an important country, at least to the world's only superpower.

It was not always so. On 20 September 2001, President George W. Bush addressed the American nation before a Joint Session of Congress. As he laid out his doctrine for combating terrorism on a global scale, the President cited the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) as an example of the enemy that had attacked the United States on September 11th.⁷ For most Americans, it was an obscure reference. For Uzbeks, however, it was an acknowledgement before the world that the threat they had faced for years was real. And for Uzbek foreign policy elites, the reference was a sign that America—starting with the first ever phone call from an American President to the Uzbek President the day before⁸—was finally ready to have a serious and comprehensive foreign policy for that unchanging pivot point of Mackinder's Heartland: Central Asia.⁹

Largely unknown to Americans—except those avid readers of Fitzroy Maclean and Robert Kaplan travel journals—the region nonetheless conjures up some notion of a romantic last frontier, a last chance to live in the 19th Century at the beginning of the 21st. Images of ornate

⁷George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People" 20 September 2001 (accessed 22 September 2001); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

⁸ John Herbst, U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Duggleby (U.S. Army), U.S. Defense Attache to Uzbekistan, 20 September 2001, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

⁹ Uzbek elites had followed the November 2000 American election closely and were pleased that George W. Bush had won, largely because he was perceived to have extremely capable aides and thus a foreign policy that would be realist, i.e., founded on national interests instead of values. (Repeated interviews with various sources). Please see page 39 for a map of Mackinder's Heartland.

mosques, the conquests of Timur the Lame, and a landscape of brutal beauty blur together in the mind's eye as one tries to place history amidst the heart of a sweeping continent. Still, at least for Americans, the region has long been shrouded in the twin tyrannies of geography and ignorance. No more.

At the heart of Central Asia is Uzbekistan. Possessing one-third of the region's population, Uzbekistan is the only country contiguous to the other five: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan). As such it is the nexus point for the security issues that plague the region and the surrounding major powers: terrorism, drug trafficking, poorly integrated economies, ecocide, lack of water, and human rights violations. The potential explosion or implosion of this relatively unstable region—in the shared backyard of nuclear powers Russia, China, Pakistan, India, and soon, Iran—would have a profound effect on Eurasian and global security.

As history has repeatedly revealed, Central Asia, if only because of geography, is a fragile fulcrum and critical to Eurasian and therefore global balance and stability. A significant exception to this historic role was the 20th century, when Central Asia disappeared beneath the ideological and cartographic “monolith” of the Soviet Union.

9/11, however, returned the region to prominence as a vital component of global security. With the defeat of the Taliban in the fall of 2001, U.S. forces were stationed throughout Central Asia and, from 2001-2005, in Uzbekistan at Karshi-Khanabad (K2). This troop deployment played an important role in the initial stabilization of Afghanistan.

As the Heartland re-emerged on the global stage, this new “footprint” of American power was unprecedented in American and global history. Never before had a great, non-Eurasian, power been able to project its military at such length so easily into the Heartland. This capacity,

and resulting presence, has the potential to significantly alter the geo-strategic calculus of the United States and the future of Central Asia (as well as the calculus of Russia and China).¹⁰

As Andrew Bacevich observes, “the establishment of bases by American forces has the effect of creating new facts on the ground, facts that have a way of becoming permanent. When U.S. troops arrive, they tend to stay.”¹¹ This observation has already begun to take root in the American strategic culture. As one Department of Defense official said in 2002: “I believe fifty years from now [these bases] will be as familiar to us as Ramstein Air Force Base [in Germany].”¹² The United States does not seem to be leaving the region in the near future.

Although recent events re-confirm the age-old importance of the region, they also reveal a paucity of strategic thinking by which to organize our ideas about it—at the theoretical and policy levels. What concepts most inform American strategy and its relationship with the region’s literal and figurative center? Is the first and most original western thinker on this region relevant to examining and explaining U.S.—Uzbekistan relations?

In order to revisit the geopolitical thinking of Sir Halford John Mackinder, however, it is first necessary to understand two terms of reference in their historical and scholarly context. Specifically, it is crucial to understand the meaning of “geo-politics” which is so ubiquitous that it has lost its meaning; as well as the concept of “region,” especially those particular regions that

¹⁰ Russia and China established the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to wield influence in Central Asia. The Russians have also established an airbase in Kyrgyzstan (where the U.S. also has access to an airbase at Manas). See footnote #141 in Chapter Four of this dissertation for a more in-depth description of the SCO.

¹¹ Andrew J. Bacevich, “Steppes to Empire,” *The National Interest* 68 No. 3 (Summer 2002): 42. Bacevich echoes George Curzon who wrote: “It may be observed that the uniform tendency is for the weaker to crystallize into the harder shape. Spheres of Interest tend to become Spheres of Influence; temporary Leases to become perpetual; Spheres of Influence to develop into Protectorates; Protectorates to be the forerunners of complete incorporation.” See The Right Honourable Lord Curzon of Kedleston, *Frontiers, The Romanes Lecture*, All Souls College, Chancellor of the University, delivered 2 November 1907 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 47.

¹² Thomas Barnett, Assistant for Strategic Futures in the Office of Force Transportation at the Department of Defense; as quoted by Nathan Hodge, “Pentagon Strategist: Bases are Long-Term,” *Defense Week*, 19 August 2002, 3.

lie among regional and/or global powers. Discussion of both terms provides important perspectives on how we understand Mackinder's thinking and writing, and thus the application of his ideas to the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship.

Geo-Politics

To the ordinary citizen, and even many students of international relations, geo-politics has become synonymous with “power politics,” a zero-sum game of Melian chess that is played with global adversaries and issues. *Realpolitik* best embodies this effort to balance power. This approach often views morality as a luxury, a luxury that only results from a proper balance of power.

Yet, as the prefix itself indicates, geo-politics at some point must have included a concept of earth, connoting an eco-system perspective that accounts for the interrelated nature of things. In other words, an etymology of the term is needed to grasp its proper understanding, and application.

In general, scholars condemn the term because of its association it with the racist “lebensraum” of Nazism. Yet most scholars—whose job it is to be careful with terms of reference—still use the term willy-nilly, often interchangeably with “political geography.” For example, Geoffrey Parker considers the terms identical because they both “seek to identify an area of study which is concerned with the interface of geography and politics and with their mutual interactions.”¹³

Consider one of the leading books on political geography, edited by the former and current U.S. State Department geographers. The title of the book is “Geopolitical Perspectives on the 21st Century.” The first chapter, however, written by the editors themselves, is “Political

¹³ Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 1.

Geography for the Next Millennium.”¹⁴ From an analytical point of view there is no difference, seemingly, between the two phrases.

Demko and Wood, like most, do not define geopolitics, but they do define political geography:

Political geography is the analysis of how political systems and structures—from the local to international levels—influence and are influenced by the spatial distribution of resources, events, and groups, and by interactions among subnational, national, and international political units across the globe...[it] focuses, on the one hand, on how groups interact—particularly the ways they manipulate each other—in the pursuit of controlling resources and, on the other, on how these social, economic, and political activities determines the use of, and thereby modify, the resource base. The resource most often directly implicated in international conflicts is land, whether for intrinsic (it contains minerals or a fresh water source), strategic, (it straddles a key trade route), or nationalistic (it embodies a “homeland”) reasons. The discipline also assesses the political effects of information and resource flows that change spatial distributions and balances of power... Political geography uses an integrative, regional, and spatial framework that pulls together contributions by both physical and social sciences—it is the one traditional discipline that explicitly bridges the two realms of research.¹⁵

In 1887, however, Halford Mackinder had written:

The function of political geography is to detect and demonstrate the relations subsisting between man in society and so much of his environment as it varies locally... One of the greatest of all gaps lies between the natural sciences and the study of humanity. It is the duty of the geographer to build one bridge over an abyss which in the opinion of many is upsetting the equilibrium of our culture.¹⁶

It seems that the definition of political geography has not changed much in the past 119 years. At the least, it has always been holistic in its approach. “Physical geography is thus the first part of knowledge of the world ... Accordingly, it is necessary to acquaint oneself with it as a form of knowledge that may subsequently be completed and corrected by experience.”¹⁷

¹⁴ George J. Demko and William B. Wood, ed., *Reordering the World: Geopolitical Perspectives on the 21st Century*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁶ Mackinder, “Scope and Methods,” 154-5. Demko and Woods do not cite Mackinder in their use of “bridge.”

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, “Physische Geographie,” as translated in J. A. May, *Kant’s Concept of Geography*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 256.

Indeed, “no rational political geography can exist which is not built upon and subsequent to physical geography.”¹⁸ But what is “geo-politics?”

The term itself, most agree, was coined by Rudolf Kjellen (1846-1922). Roger Kasperson and Julie V. Minghi report that Kjellan defined geo-politics as “the theory of the state as a geographic organism or phenomenon as space, i.e., as land, territory, area, or most especially as country.”¹⁹ However, Kjellan, whose work we will return to, based his work on at least three earlier sources.

Chronologically and conceptually, geo-politics begins with the two German grandfathers of geography: Alexander von Humboldt and Karl Ritter. Both men knew each other, lived in the same city for over thirty years, and even died in the same year (1859). In short, they thought that geography was much more than topography. Ritter’s purpose, Richard Hartshorne tells us, “was to find the coherence of forces in a Whole, and thus ultimately to indicate the purpose of the Whole.” Similarly, Humboldt used to quote his brother, Wilhelm, explaining, “We wish to note one idea which is visible in ever increasing validity through the whole of history...the idea of humanity...to treat the whole of humanity, without consideration of religious, nationality, and color, as One great closely related race, as one Whole existing for the attainment of one purpose, the free development of inner powers.” They believed that geography and history “are directed toward integration of ideas and are therefore forced to philosophize.”²⁰

¹⁸ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 153.

¹⁹ Roger E. Kasperson, Julie V. Minghi, ed., *The Structure of Political Geography*. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 8. (They cite Rudolpf Kjellen, *Der Staat als Lebenform*, M Langfeldt trans. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1917). See also Ola Tunander, “Swedish-German Gepolitics for a New Century, Rudolpf Kjellen’s ‘The State as a Living Organism.’” *Review of International Studies* 27, No. 3 (2001): 451-463.

²⁰ Richard Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography: A Critical Survey of Current Thought in Light of the Past*, 7th ed. (Lancaster: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 1939. Reprinted 1961), 62, 64, 66. Also see L. Kellner, *Alexander von Humboldt* (London: Oxford Press, 1963), 232.

Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) took this holistic construct one step further. Ratzel, not unlike Ritter and von Humboldt (and Mackinder), had a diversified education, gaining his doctorate in zoology, geology and comparative anatomy. This natural science background lent itself to his concept of the organic state. The state, Ratzel argued, was a living concept, where the state and the people eventually became one, a community. "It is more than a metaphor when one speaks of a people as taking root. The nation is an organic entity which, in the course of history, becomes increasingly attached to the land."²¹ It is this organic theory of the state that was retrospectively reduced (after World War II) to racist and Darwinistic struggle.²² However, this teleological taint is too simple and evades the tough process of comprehending Ratzel, to include his contributions.²³

²¹ Friedrich Ratzel, "The Laws of the Spatial Growth of States," translated by Ronald Bolin (an abstract in translation did appear in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 12 (1896): 351-361; as reprinted in Roger E. Kasperson, Julie V. Minghi, ed., *The Structure of Political Geography*. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 8, 22).

²² Colin Flint, "Changing Times, Changing Scales: World Politics and Political Geography Since 1890," in George J. Demko and William B. Wood, ed., *Reordering the World: Geopolitical Perspectives on the 21st Century*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 23-24. "The tool adopted for this 'construction' of the globe was an organic theory of society based on a racist social Darwinism and promoted by an antidemocratic elite."

²³ "His thinking here is difficult to follow, but it is apparent that... [it is] not of the strict dog-eat-dog nature so often attributed to him. He was referring to the relationship to which develops between a people and the land which nourishes them, and the reciprocity which develops between them. Here again we must keep in mind what it was that Ratzel meant by the term "law." He referred to tendencies rather than absolutes, as is clear from the following passages: "Thus there arises a political organization of the land through which the state becomes an organism in that a fixed portion of the surface of the earth enters in to such a degree that the properties of the state are a combination of those of the people and of the land. The state is not an organism merely because it forms a connection between a living population and the fixed earth, but rather because this connection is so strengthened by reciprocity that the two become one and can no longer be thought of as separate."Kasperson and Minghi, ed., *The Structure of Political Geography*, 7 (Ratzel, *Politische Geographie*, 4).

Clearly, Ratzel was more about the principle than the rule, imbuing his students with this approach. As his arch-disciple and American interpreter, Ellen Semple, wrote in the introduction to her own book: "The writer, moreover, has purposely avoided definitions, formulas, and the enunciation of hard-and-fast rules; and has refrained from any effort to delimit the field or define the relation of this new science of anthropo-geography to the older sciences. It is unwise to put tight clothes on a growing child." Ellen Churchill Semple, *Influences of Geographic Environment: On the Basis of Ratzel's system of Anthro-Geography*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), vii.

Kjellan, however, took the comprehensive concepts of Humboldt, Ritter, and Ratzel and imbued the state with personality and destiny, arguing that the state was in a constant struggle with other states. It had to expand or die. In the end, the world would have a few big states and fewer small states.²⁴

When Kjellan died, Dr. Karl Haushofer took up the evolutionary concept of geo-politics, basing his own enhancement of the idea on Ratzel, Kjellan and, above all, Mackinder.²⁵

Haushofer particularly appreciated Mackinder, and his famous dictum:

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland:
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island:
Who rules the World-Island commands the World.²⁶

After reading Mackinder's 1919 book on *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, Haushofer is reported to have concluded: "Never have I seen anything greater than these few pages of geo-political masterwork."²⁷

Mackinder's grand simplicity fascinated Haushofer as soldier, scholar, and proud German. (Haushofer had served in Germany's eastern army during World War I, an army that had never been defeated on the battlefield). Like subsequent scholars, however, Haushofer only understood the physical and geo-strategic dimensions to Mackinder's writings, ignoring, as will be discussed, the geo-communal dimensions of civil society as found at the local, national and international levels.

For Haushofer, Mackinder's dictum provided an analytical description of the conditions in which Germany found itself, as well as a policy prescription to address those conditions.

Haushofer agreed with Mackinder that whoever controlled the center of Eurasia would be

²⁴ Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought*, 55; also see de Blij, *Systematic Political Geography*, 267.

²⁵ The influence of Mackinder on Kjellan remains unclear.

²⁶ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 106.

²⁷ Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought*, 58 (as found in: *Weltpolitik von Heute* (Gerlag und Vertriebsgesellschaft, Berlin, 1936)).

impervious to naval attack and would have greater resources—enhanced by the interior lines of the Eurasian railway system—enabling a greater fleet-building capacity than the maritime powers.

Despite grasping only half of Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy, Haushofer kept faith with the field’s comprehensive origins. Hans Weigert, an early American leader in the field of geopolitics, thought his contribution of the first order:

What did Haushofer add to previous exponents of human geography? Universality, practicality, and definite political objectives...No informed European or thoughtful American should fail to recognize that the German *geopolitik* is precisely what its name signifies—the politics of a wholly earthy conception of life and human destiny.²⁸

In this sense, Haushofer—as a scholar, and we must separate the concept from its application by and association with the Nazis—was exactly in step with a holistic approach. The difference was that Haushofer only applied his thinking to political-military matters of state whereas Mackinder, as the next chapter reveals, applied his philosophy to a civilization of communities as well.

According to his understanding of Mackinder—and as a soldier-policymaker with friends like Rudolph Hess (who was close to Hitler before he defected in 1941)—General Haushofer advocated that Germany build a powerful inland bloc with the Soviet Union. Such a bloc would naturally possess impervious interior lines, great resources, a self-sufficient economy and a tremendous defense-in-depth for any attack that might come.²⁹ Combined with a strong military, Germany, as a member of this bloc, would overcome the ignominy of World War I. Importantly,

²⁸ Hans W. Weigert and Vilhalmur Stefansson, ed., *Compass of the World* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), 25-26.

²⁹ In this sense, along with the Nazi sense of autarky, Haushofer was echoing Aristotle through Mackinder’s Heartland: “It is clear that everyone would praise the territory that is the most self-sufficient. That which bears every sort of thing is of necessity, for self-sufficiency is having everything available and being in need of nothing.” Aristotle, *The Politics*, translated by Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 205-206.

Haushofer believed that this Heartland Bloc should be achieved through negotiation, not war, through Rapallo, not Brest-Litovsk.³⁰

With this worldview, Haushofer was a strong proponent of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939 (his son, Albrecht, served on Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop's staff). This pact was the greatest and last triumph of Haushofer's geo-politics. Although he continued to call for a continental bloc that included Germany, Russia, and Japan (where Haushofer had spent much time studying and writing), Hitler soon applied his own thinking. Haushofer's continental bloc pamphlet was published just prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Hitler was seeking Brest-Litovsk, not Rapallo. Haushofer was later sent to Dachau and committed suicide in 1946. His son, Albrecht, was executed in 1944 for his participation in the plot against Hitler.

The American public of the early 1940s, however, was generally not aware of the subtle dimensions to Germany's geo-political thinking. Indicative of this feeling was Robert Strausz-Hupe. He opened his 1942 book with the following comment: "But geo-politics is the master plan that tells what and why to conquer, guiding the military strategist along the easiest path to conquest. Thus the key to Hitler's global mind is German geo-politics."³¹

³⁰ Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought*, 70. The 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was imposed on the Soviet Union by Germany. The Soviet Union was forced to recognize the independence of Ukraine, Georgia and Finland while giving up Poland and the Baltic states to Germany and Austria-Hungary. By contrast, the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo was a cooperative, and secret, agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany. Germany recognized the U.S.S.R. (the first western government to do so) and the U.S.S.R. allowed Germany to develop, test and manufacture weapons forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty also cancelled all debt between them and provided trading privileges to Germany.

³¹ Robert Strausz-Hupe, *Geopolitics: The Struggle for Space and Power* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), vii. Strausz-Hupe overcomes this reductionist approach, presumably meant to grab the reader, later in his book. "Haushofer has never been the master mind behind Hitler...as certain sensationalist reports and fanciful "inside" stories would have it" (77).

This simple association would soon be confirmed in American thought by the influential work of Hans J. Morgenthau. In his 1947 classic, *Politics among the Nations*, Morgenthau reduces geopolitics to its exact opposite.

In the hands of Haushofer and his disciples, geopolitics was transformed into a kind of political metaphysics to be used as an ideological weapon in the service of the international aspirations of Germany. Geopolitics is the attempt to understand the problem of national power *exclusively in terms of geography* and degenerates in the process into a political metaphysics couched in a pseudo-scientific jargon.³²

This deterministic—and decidedly non-comprehensive—perspective would eventually become ingrained among respected western military thinkers. Sir Michael Howard wrote in 1978 that the “pseudo-science of geopolitics is a fragile basis on which to build any theory. It has never been taken very seriously, either by historians or by political scientists.”³³

This dissertation, however, in keeping with the historic and holistic roots of political geography, provides the following definitions as generally consistent with the author’s interpretation of Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy:³⁴

- 1928—The editors of *Zeitschrift fur Geopolitik*: “Thus geopolitics becomes an art, namely the art of guiding practical politics.”³⁵
- 1942—Robert Straus Hupe: “Geopolitik, to its adepts, is first and foremost a way of thinking, and secondly, a set of highly elastic plans... Geopolitik is not a science...it is a

³² Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 118. (my italics)

³³ Sir Michael Howard, “The Influence of Geopolitics on the East-West Struggle,” *Parameters* XVIII 3 (September 1988): 14.

³⁴ The key characteristic of these definitions is the consistently comprehensive and non-deterministic, perspective that they maintain. Accordingly, while they do not explicitly address the “geo-communal” of “civil society”—phrases this dissertation uses to describe Mackinder’s own understanding of the relationship between geography and democracy—these definitions are sufficiently broad to implicitly allow for them.

³⁵ As recorded by Robert Strausz-Hupe, *Geopolitics: The Struggle for Space and Power*, 7.

school of strategy...there is no distinction between war and peace...there is no real distinction between the political strategy of peace and the military strategy of war.”³⁶

- 1943—Ralph Turner: “Geopolitics may be understood as an effort to think about national existence in world terms.”³⁷
- 1975—Robert E. Walters: “The influence of geography, economics, demography, technology and strategic possibilities on shaping foreign policy for a country. Geopolitics, then, is a tool for the determination of a realist policy for a country or coalition. It is the starting point for foreign policy—the first premise.”³⁸
- 1977—Colin S. Gray: “A meta-or master framework that, without predetermining policy choice, suggests long-term factors and trends in the security objectives of particularly territorially-organized security communities... Geopolitical relations open and foreclose upon ranges of policy possibilities—which societies and their governments may pursue or not as circumstance and mood take them.”³⁹
- 2004—Colin S. Gray: “The spatial study and practice of international relations...an equal opportunity tool of analysis.”⁴⁰

“Region” (or, the “Lands In-Between”)

Leaders and scholars alike have always recognized that some regions of the world are more prone to instability than others. This proclivity of certain regions begins with their topographical position on the earth; usually this position is found between/among the competing powers of the

³⁶ Ibid., 82, 101-2.

³⁷ Ralph Turner, “Technology and Geopolitics,” *Military Affairs* 7, no. 1 (Spring, 1943): 15.

³⁸ Robert E. Walters, *Sea Power and the Nuclear Fallacy: A Reevaluation of Global Strategy* (New York: Homes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1975), 26.

³⁹ Colin S. Gray, *The Geopolitics of the Nuclear Era: Heartland, Rimlands, and the Technological Revolution* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1977), 11, 6.

⁴⁰ Colin S. Gray, “In Defence of the Heartland: Sir Halford Mackinder and His Critics a Hundred Years On,” *Comparative Strategy* 23 No. 1 (2004): 9, 18.

era. It is no accident, for example, that in the late 18th century, the Russian, Prussian, and Austro-Hungarian empires partitioned Poland off the map (1772-1795) for fear of a free, and contiguous, state that might inspire their own minorities to rebel.

These types of regions—these “lands in-between” the major powers—are no longer subject to the territorial whims of surrounding powers in a globalized world. While they remain points of contention among the surrounding powers, they also influence and are influenced by global events and players; especially the technological and cultural reach of the world’s only superpower. This process forms and informs perception, internally, as well as among those outside the region. This process takes on greater meaning amidst a transition period between strategic eras. In short, regional definition and individual identity become more fluid, and are essentially left to the individual.

Contemporary geographers agree. “The splitting up of the global totality into convenient and useful sub-units or regions depends less on predetermined circumstances than on the purpose for which such regionalisation is required.”⁴¹ For Demko and Wood a region is inherently a “flexible concept and may encompass any scale and whatever territory is appropriate for a given purpose; depending on the problem at hand.”⁴²

The “problem at hand” for regions “in-between,” however, has always been the ever-present interests of surrounding powers, usually competing for influence within the region. This problem first became the topic of published discussion in the 19th Century, specifically through the observations of an Englishman, George Curzon. The region as a sphere of influence—or as a buffer zone—was something that Curzon had developed in his travels through Russian Central Asia in 1889.

⁴¹Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present, and Future* (London: Pinter, 1998), 80-81.

⁴²George J. Demko and William B. Wood, ed., *Reordering the World*, 8.

For example, he considered Afghanistan to be a buffer zone between the competing influences of Imperial Russia and England in this part of the world. “This new theory of a Buffer Afghanistan, independent, though subsidized, and friendly though strong, was evolved.”⁴³ Writing in 1908, Curzon further suggested, “As the habitable world shrinks, the interests or ambitions of one state come into sharp and irreconcilable collision with those of another.” He advocated ‘buffer zones’ on the ‘outskirts of empire’ to separate the spheres of influence.⁴⁴

Although an imperially imposed security concept, the idea of this kind of ‘buffer zone’ was theoretically and practically recognized among subsequent geographers. For example, Alfred Thayer Mahan, the American naval captain whose ideas on sea power significantly influenced T.R. Roosevelt and Kaiser Wilhelm I, called the lands between southern Asia and Russia, the “debatable and debated ground.”⁴⁵ James Fairgrieve argued in 1915 that a ‘Crush Zone’ existed in Eurasia, which extended west to east from Holland to China, including Central Asia.

These states are largely survivals from an earlier time when political and economic organizations were on a smaller scale, and each has characteristics partly acquired in that earlier time and partly natural. With sufficient individuality to withstand absorptions, but unable or unwilling to unite with others to form any larger whole, they remain in the unsatisfactory position of buffer states, precariously independent politically, and more surely dependent economically.⁴⁶

Later, in 1964, Saul Cohen presented his “shatterbelt” concept to describe these lands in-between. The shatterbelt was a “large strategically located region that is occupied by a number of

⁴³ George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889), 358.

⁴⁴ As quoted in Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present, and Future*, 115. These theories were eventually ‘tested’ as Foreign Secretary Curzon sought to incorporate such zones in the aftermath of World War I. In particular, he gave his name to the border drawn between Poland and Russia because “He firmly believed that such a zone was necessary to separate the German and Russian spheres, and the mosaic of small states between the two was intended to be a buffer of this sort.”

⁴⁵ A. T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia and Its Effect upon International Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1900), 22.

⁴⁶ James Fairgrieve, *Geography and World Power*, 8th ed. (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1941), 329-330. Also see James Fairgrieve, “Geography and World Power,” in *Compass of the World: A Symposium on Political Geography*, ed., Hans W. Weigert and Vilhjalmur Stefansson (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944), 191-192. Organizationally, the U.S. National Security Council has recognized this “crush zone” for the past few years, creating a portfolio that includes the Aegean area, the South Caucasus and Central Asia (minus Afghanistan).

conflicting states and is caught between the conflicting interests of adjoining powers.” Another “locational characteristic” was that the shatterbelt did “not adjoin the core areas of opposing Great Powers,” thereby offering “elbow room for various forms of contention that other areas do not.”⁴⁷ After the Cold War, he refined the “shatterbelt” as: “A politically fragmented area of competition... the distinguishing feature of the Shatterbelt is that it presents a playing field used by two or more competing major powers from different geostrategic realms.”⁴⁸

This discourse, however, reflects the realist school of thought, which is what “geo-politics” was reduced to during the Cold War. Accordingly, buffer regions are places on a map that allow for the amelioration of the surrounding, and competing, influences of major and/or great powers. While true, this geo-strategic understanding is only half of the equation because it does not address the geo-communal dimension of the people who actually live in such a region (a mistake, discussed below, that Mackinder makes as well).

In other words, what prevents these regions from becoming, in their own and the eyes of the world, what Joseph Goebbels called “kleinstaatengerumpe”—a “rubbish of small states”?⁴⁹

The problem with the realist construct of buffer zones, as E.H. Carr would argue, is that it leaves no space, theoretically or practically, for a moral imperative. “Realism breaks down because it fails to provide any ground for purposive or meaningful action...realism can offer nothing but a naked struggle for power which makes any kind of international society impossible.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, (New York: Random House, 1963) 84, 65, 83, 85. The two Cold War “shatterbelts” were the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

⁴⁸ Saul Bernard Cohen, “Geopolitics in the New World Era: A New Perspective on an Old Discipline,” in Demko and Wood, ed., *Reordering the World*, 2nd edition, 42-44.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present, and Future*, 161.

⁵⁰ E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1964), 92-93.

In fact, “Buffer Zones,” “Crush Zones,” and “Shatterbelts,” are inherently two-dimensional, hard power, constructs that see geography as a map, not as a topography that interacts locally with the society that has developed there. There is no room in the realist construct for the possibility that the soft power of a civil society—formed and informed by the literal worldview around them—might contribute to stability, and therefore security.

Might it be possible that a proper geo-political definition of “region” could demonstrate a viable regional identity that makes it less susceptible to internal subversion and external penetration? And might the consideration of a geo-communal perspective contribute to traditional stability among mutually dependent small states that together, as a conceived region, might absorb the competing influences/desires of the surrounding powers even as it inherently cannot threaten those same powers?

In other words, might Central Asia be such a region, a buffering balance point of geo-communal and geo-strategic stability? This dissertation will return to these fundamental questions at its conclusion.

Dissertation Outline

It is against this backdrop that the dissertation’s chapters advance. Chapter two surveys the literature on Mackinder, as well as his life, times, and writings. This chapter makes the case that it is impossible to understand Mackinder without understanding the man himself and his vigorous commitment to relevance through the re-examination and re-application of his idea to each new strategic era. A detailed discussion of Mackinder and his critics reveals that the 20th Century scholarship on Mackinder does not adequately address, and therefore does not understand, the totality of Mackinder’s thinking. This discussion does reveal, however, the geo-communal and geo-strategic perspectives of what might be termed his Heartland philosophy.

This understanding of his geo-political thinking serves as the foundation for the analytic narrative of chapters three and four, which demonstrate the explanatory suitability of Mackinder's geo-political thinking. Chapter two also suggests a general set of hypotheses that summarize and illustrate Mackinder's comprehensive thinking.

Chapter three considers the “going concern” of Central Asia's evolution as a society, detailing how the interaction of society with the local environment has shaped their culture and view of the world. This geo-communal approach examines the geography, history and identity of civil society in Central Asia in order to ascertain their influence upon the creation of Uzbekistan, its experience as a Soviet Republic, and the resulting approach and attitude that Uzbekistan brought to its relationship with the United States. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how Americans view “civil society” and how this perception affected the relationship.

Chapter four examines the “going concern” of the region's historic importance as a catalyst to empire, or as a buffer among empires. This geo-strategic perspective also examines the impact of Mackinder's geo-political thinking on American strategic culture, especially its role in the U.S. Cold War policy of “containment.” The chapter's focus, however, is the latest iteration of this going concern, the evolution of the U.S.—Uzbekistan bilateral relationship through three key phases: 1983-1994; 1995-2000; and 2001-2005.

After modeling the suitability of Mackinder's geo-political thinking as a basis for examining and explaining the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship, the dissertation concludes by returning to chapter two's hypotheses, discussing them in a manner that summarizes and illustrates Mackinder's thinking, as applied through the analytic narrative of the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship (chapter 5).

Finally, it should be noted that most of the personal interviews conducted over the course of researching this dissertation, to include six trips to Uzbekistan, were “off-the-record.” Particularly in the case of Uzbekistan, given the ongoing political context, it is sometimes not appropriate to date or name the interview being cited. That said, this dissertation is a scholarly work and the interview notes have been preserved.

CHAPTER TWO

Halford Mackinder's Philosophy

Just over one hundred years ago, Halford Mackinder presented a grand and simple idea to London's Royal Geographical Society. The "heart-land of Euro-Asia" was vital to international security (i.e., the continued primacy of the British Empire), and those with access to it will play a critical role on the global stage.¹ Understood collectively across three articulations, Mackinder reveals a Heartland Philosophy that seeks geo-strategic and geo-communal balance. This philosophy, in turn, provides a suitable basis for examining and explaining U.S.—Uzbekistan relations, 1991—2005.

Mackinder Summarized

Halford Mackinder was a profound and critical thinker who has been as misinterpreted as his philosophy has been misapplied. Like all of us, he was very much a product of his time, a prisoner of his experiences. As the 20th century dawned, major powers—especially Russia and Germany—were looking for their place in the sun. Mackinder sought to preserve Great Britain's place in the sun amidst the dog-eat-dog context of Darwinian Europe.

Mackinder thus sought a formula that could be applied to any era, providing guidance for the preservation of the British Empire. He determined through his study of history that Asia's heartland (see description below) was the key. The state, or combination of states, that controlled

¹ Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996), 189. In 1996, the National Defense University (NDU) republished several of Halford Mackinder's works as *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. These works include: "The Scope and Methods of Geography," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 9, No. 3 (1887): 141-160 [hereafter cited as "Scope and Methods"]; "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal* 23, No. 4 (1904): 421-444 [hereafter cited as "Pivot"]; *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (London: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1919) [hereafter cited as *Ideals and Reality*]; and "The Round World and Winning the Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 21, No. 4 (July 1943): 595-605 [hereafter cited as "Round World"]. All page references to these works are found in the NDU re-publishing.

the heartland would be safe from the naval attack of those powers that occupied Eurasia's littoral regions surrounding the heartland (something Mackinder called the "marginal crescent").

Whoever controlled the Heartland would have access to its rich resources, to include those needed to build and sustain the fleets capable of defeating the maritime powers of the marginal crescent, whose natural resources were necessarily more scarce; e.g., Great Britain. Furthermore, with the systematic expansion of the railroad, the Heartland's owner would occupy the "natural seat of power,"² capable of utilizing its land power faster, with far greater efficiency and effectiveness, in any direction (known as "interior lines" to military strategists). "The great struggle of the twentieth century, therefore was going to be that fought between the commercial, maritime powers of the West and the authoritarian, land-based regimes that ruled the Heartland."³

This geo-strategic awareness was not something the British could necessarily control, only balance. The empire could control, however, through geo-communal awareness, how it was organized to balance the Heartland. Toward this end, Mackinder sought a democratic civil society of equal states within the empire whose subordinate components—from capital to province, from England to former colony—were self-sustaining and mutually reinforcing, enabling a life of freedom for every citizen. By developing a common worldview among its citizens based in these values, the British Empire would prevent class and regional tensions. The result: a more efficient and therefore more effective imperial organism capable of balancing Eurasian powers. In short, a geo-communal perspective enabled a balanced civil society across the Commonwealth, which, in turn, was critical to Great Britain's ability to geo-strategically balance the tenant of the Heartland.

² Ibid., 190.

³ Paul Kennedy, "Mission Impossible?" *The New York Review of Books*, 10 June 2004, 17.

For Mackinder, there was no contradiction between the geo-communal of civil society and the geo-strategic of empire—they were two sides of the same coin. Together, these perspective were a passionate paradox that would enable his ultimate goal: the melding of “the West and the East, [so that we might] permanently penetrate the Heartland with oceanic freedom.”⁴

Mackinder Critiqued

The available scholarship and analysis does not comprehensively account for the comprehensive nature of Mackinder’s approach. There are four basic camps of criticism relevant to today’s strategic environment; those who: 1) think certain factors—e.g., technology, or the lack thereof (i.e., railroads)—make the Heartland Theory irrelevant; 2) fail to understand, or only consider, the geo-strategic of Mackinder’s writing; 3) refuse to examine the geo-communal of Mackinder’s thinking; and 4) understand Mackinder through his times, not his writing (this camp, critical geopolitics, demands careful consideration by virtue of its contemporary prominence in the literature).⁵ As we consider these camps, the one thing we know for sure, it seems, is that “many of those who have been influenced by Mackinder have not had the patience to read the whole book.”⁶

From the first articulation of Mackinder’s Heartland theory, scholars and commentators have suggested that certain factors in a certain age reduce the relevance of the Heartland theory. For example, many have since argued that technology negates one of the Heartland theory’s characteristics of inaccessibility and impregnability as the world’s foremost natural fortress.

⁴ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 122.

⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the almost 100 criticisms of the Heartland (at least until 1982), please see W.H. Parker’s chapter eight “Criticisms of the Heartland Theory,” in *Mackinder: Geography as an Aid to Statecraft* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 213-247.

⁶ H. McD. Clokie, “Geo-Politics—New Super Science or Old Art?” *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 10, no. 4 (Nov., 1944), 501.

During the Q&A following Mackinder's 1904 presentation at the Royal Geographical Society, for example, Mr. Amery made the following comment:

He has given us the whole of history and the whole of ordinary politics under one big comprehensive idea...Both the sea and the railway are going in the future—it may be near, or it may be somewhat remote—to be supplemented by the air as a means of locomotion...when we come to that, a great deal of this geographical distribution must lose its importance, and the successful powers will be those who have the greatest industrial bases. It will not matter whether they are in the centre of a continent or on an island...⁷

Many scholars, from the 1940s to the present day, have specifically suggested that the technology of air power and nuclear missiles necessarily diminished the power of the heartland.⁸ Still others have suggested that precisely because technology has not taken root in the region—namely, that railroads did not develop quickly in the manner which Mackinder described—the Heartland theory is invalid.⁹

These arguments, then and now, miss the bedrock logic of Mackinder's argument. As with all great ideas that endure, Mackinder's Heartland theory is a simple one: The Heartland is vital by virtue of its geographic position, and those with access to it will play a critical role on the global stage. As such, the Heartland and its tenant(s) cannot help but influence Eurasian and global stability. Mackinder thus sought a formula through which to understand this pivot position from which force could be flung east and west; irrespective of the particular form that key factors—e.g., technology, population, resources, etc.—take anew in each strategic era.

Factor-centric arguments thus fail to understand “why” Mackinder sought a formula for the Heartland. To be discussed below, Mackinder sought a formula through which the future could

⁷ Harm J. de Blij, ed. *Systematic Political Geography*, 2nd ed.(New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1973), 283.

⁸ See for example, Ralph Turner, "Technology and Geopolitics." *Military Affairs* 7, no 1 (Spring 1943); Christopher J. Fettweis, "Sir Halford Mackinder, Geopolitics, and Policymaking in the 21st Century," *Parameters* (Summer 2000); and Arthur R. Hall, "Mackinder and the Course of Events," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 45, no. 2 (June 1955).

⁹ See, for example, H.W. Weigert, et al, *Principals of Political Geography* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957); and Arthur R. Hall, "Mackinder and the Course of Events," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 45, no. 2 (June 1955). Also see W.H. Parker's discussion of this issue on page 228.

be understood, if the prevailing trends, or “going concerns,” held form. In short, arguments about such ever-present factors as technology do not “comprehend that Mackinder was attempting an analysis which would alert people to likely future developments, rather than a recipe for the solution of present difficulties.”¹⁰ In other words, while factors may determine the result of the formula, they do not alter the formula itself.

The second camp of critics includes those who fail to understand the geo-strategic logic of Mackinder’s writings; as well as those who singularly focus on that logic. To those who have heard of him, Mackinder has been reduced to essentially two points. First, he is to landpower what Alfred Thayer Mahan is to seapower.¹¹ Second, Mackinder’s is the famous dictum:

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland:

Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island:

Who rules the World-Island commands the World.¹²

Most students, even military ones, read this for the first time (and many times thereafter) and ask: “What is he talking about?”¹³ They are not alone. The eminent military historian and thinker, Sir Michael Howard, wrote in response to the above axiom: “To this one can only reply that it is self-evident nonsense. There are few areas of less importance to the hegemony of the

¹⁰ W.H. Parker, 236.

¹¹ A contemporary of Mackinder’s, Mahan had written *The influence of Sea Power on History: 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1890). This book did much to shape naval global strategy and directly influenced Teddy Roosevelt and Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany (who required that a copy of the book be kept on each German ship). Both Mackinder and Mahan, however, mutually reinforced each other, reductionist hindsight stereotypes aside (as will soon be discussed). For example, most do not know that Mahan adroitly discusses Eurasia in *The Problem of Asia* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1900) or that Mackinder thought that the control of Eurasian lands eventually lead to the ability to build greater fleets. (See Mackinder, *Ideals and reality*, 25, 40, 45).

¹² Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 106.

¹³ For example, the author first encountered Mackinder in a graduate course on strategy as a young military officer. The conclusion among the class was that Mackinder was irrelevant.

world than East Europe, however defined.”¹⁴ Robert Kaplan writes that beyond explaining ‘The Great Game’ between the Russian and British empires, Mackinder’s theory is “otherwise incomprehensible.”¹⁵

Indeed, many scholars find Mackinder’s geo-strategic logic guilty by association. Because the above 1919 dictum inspired Dr./General Karl Haushofer, the foremost proponent of German *Geopolitik* during the late 1930’s, Mackinder has been discounted, his relevance dismissed.¹⁶ Today, noteworthy scholars blame Nazi geopolitics, and thus Mackinder, for its influence on American Cold War strategy.

This was the Cold War era, influenced by the “old” geopolitics whose theoretical basis was a crude nationalistic spatial determinism... except for its rejection of racist superiority theories, Cold War geopoliticians drew much from the environmental and organic determination of German *Geopolitik*... For these geopoliticians (e.g., Strausz-Hupe, Walsh, Kennan, Kissinger, Brzezinski), geography generally means the distance, size, shape and physical features all viewed as static phenomena. The idea of geography as spatial patterns and relations that reflect dynamic physical and human processes is absent. The “old” geopolitics appealed to its American practitioners because it simplified the world map... American geopolitics helped plunge the global system into nearly half of a century of military buildups, arms transfers, and regional and local conflict.”¹⁷

Of those few scholars who do seek to give Mackinder some geo-strategic credit, most cannot think of him as anything but a one-hit-wonder, a writer and product of a by-gone era. For example, Donald W. Meinig wrote in 1955—presumably referencing the 1904 presentation—that Mackinder was:

primarily focused upon the particular geopolitical context of his time. The inevitable result has been a certain rigidity in the concepts and their full meaning becomes increasingly historical and less applicable in detail to the dynamic patterns of current times. If people continue to employ

¹⁴ Sir Michael Howard, “The Influence of Geopolitics on the East-West Struggle,” *Parameters* XVIII 3 (September 1988): 14.

¹⁵ Robert Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth* (New York: Random House, 1996), 306.

¹⁶ Charles Kruszewski cites *The New Statesman and Nation* (August 26, 1939), which “published an article discussing the way in which Makinder’s concept of the “geographical pivot of history” had been utilized by General Haushofer to help bring about the Nazi-Soviet pact.” See “The Pivot of History,” *Foreign Affairs* 32 (April 1954): 398.

¹⁷ Saul Bernard Cohen, “Geopolitics in the New World Era: A New Perspective on an Old Discipline,” in Demko and Wood, ed., *Reordering the World*, 2nd edition, 41-2.

these terms and mold their thinking upon these concepts there is the ironic danger that they will lead to but another stereotyped view of the world which does not reflect reality.¹⁸

Such conclusions typify the literature, reducing Mackinder to a static, cookie-cutter explanation that only discusses the geo-strategic dimension.

In his book, *Mackinder: Geography as an Aid to Statecraft*, W.H. Parker summarizes the above criticisms while also addressing such other critiques as Mackinder's use of the Mercator projection to present his Heartland map, as well as the vague nature of the Heartland's boundaries. The chapter also addresses suggestions that Mackinder was geographically deterministic in his analysis while other critiques question whether the Heartland is historically or strategically relevant anymore.¹⁹

Published at one of the colder moments of the Cold War (1982)—with the Soviet Union firmly in control of the Heartland for the foreseeable future—the chapter contains criticisms clearly rooted in the bi-polar moment, ironically denying Mackinder's paramount principle that his formula is not static. If Mackinder had read this chapter in 1982, one can almost hear him say: “Be patient, history, as it has done before, will bear me out. This region of the world was, is, and will be vital to Eurasian and global balance and security.”

Today's Heartland proves this point on two counts. First, the Heartland, and Central Asia in particular, is the backyard that everyone shares in a nuclear neighborhood. Russia, China, (India), Pakistan, and soon, Iran, encircle Central Asia. Tension among these regional powers is inevitable, just as it is inevitable that Central Asia will play a role in enhancing or ameliorating those tensions (for example, as nations vie for access to the region's oil and gas reserves).²⁰

¹⁸ Donald W. Meinig, “Heartland and Rimland in Eurasian History,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 9 No. 3 (1956): 555.

¹⁹ W.H. Parker, *Mackinder*, 213-247.

²⁰ This dissertation recognizes the importance of such oil and gas reserves, but does not consider these reserves sufficient in their own right to re-establish the geo-strategic importance of the Heartland's pivot point. See, for example, Martha Brill Olcott's “The Caspian's False Promise.” *Foreign Policy* 111 (Summer 1998): 94-112.

Second, the Heartland is again strategically relevant for no other reason than its ability to sustain militant Islam. While the non-state actor was not a factor in Mackinder's day, he certainly could appreciate that al-Qaeda—literally, “the base”—continues to sustain its global operations from this part of the world. Mackinder would not at all be surprised that this Heartland trespasser was capable of exercising power globally while remaining largely inaccessible to the physical and technological reach of the surrounding powers, as well as the world's only great power, the United States.

According to our current era, and its relevant factors, this type of re-interpretation of Mackinder does not go beyond his theory, but is exactly in keeping with it. As will be discussed below, he meant it to be applied and re-applied in accordance with the strategic context. A static or deterministic view of Mackinder is simply impossible to sustain with any serious reading of his thrice-articulated theory.

In particular, Mackinder's geo-communal understanding of democracy and civil society are rarely, if at all, addressed by the critics.²¹ For example, W.H. Parker's summary of criticisms, barely mentions these issues. According to Parker, Mackinder sought an “enlightened, socially conscious capitalism” in which a “free partnership of democracies [could be] united by common interest—the necessity to belong to a political organization large and strong enough to compete with great continental realms.”²² Mackinder believed that “true freedom of man lay in the preservation of the independence and individuality of regions or provinces from centralized control by distant metropolises.”²³ These comments remain, however, bits and pieces that do not

²¹ To reiterate footnote #4 from the preface, Mackinder did not use the phrases “geo-communal” or “civil society.” They are used by the author to best describe and capture Mackinder's thoughts in contemporary language that enables understanding.

²² W. H. Parker, *Aid to Statecraft*, 89, 68-69.

²³ *Ibid*, 123.

address a larger discussion of Mackinder's understanding of what we would today call "civil society."

In fact, the literature discussing Mackinder's view of civil society is very limited. His book, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, discusses the relationship between democracy and strategy, but the geo-strategists generally choose to ignore this line of thought (although, to be fair, Mackinder's geo-communal perspective is difficult to follow). Instead, these scholars choose to stay within their comfort zone, addressing only the military dimension of the Heartland theory, reducing their analysis to one of power politics only.

Some early scholars, however, do note Mackinder's discussion of democracy and civil society. H. McD. Clokie, for example, recognizes that Mackinder makes not a geographical but a political and social argument rooted in "ethical terms."²⁴ Arthur R. Hall notes Mackinder's belief that "the individual would be better integrated into the life of the community and his freedom would be better secured" if economic classes could be eliminated through the "integration of all classes at the local and provincial level."²⁵ Some have even described Mackinder as "Wilsonian."²⁶

Mark Polelle, however, provides the best analysis of Mackinder's approach to civil society. Naming it a "geo-domestic vision of British society," Polelle presents a comprehensive and contextual perspective of Mackinder's Victorian perception of an interrelated world. Polelle ably articulates the Mackinderian view that only education could create a common understanding of 20th century geopolitics among the Empire's citizens. This kind of education would also provide the Empire's citizens with the practical skills to efficiently negotiate a complex world, producing

²⁴ Clokie, "Geo-Politics—New Super Science or Old Art?", 501.

²⁵ Arthur R. Hall, "Mackinder and the Course of Events," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 45, no. 2 (June 1955): 117.

²⁶ Arthur Butler Dugan, "Mackinder and His Critics Reconsidered," *The Journal of Politics*, 24, no. 2 (May, 1962): 257.

an efficient empire-organism. Imperial unity in thought and action would be the result; therefore enabling the United Kingdom to compete with and balance the continental powers of Russia and Germany.²⁷

Still, Polelle—along with the above citations—does not link, let alone apply, Mackinder’s discussion of democracy and civil society to the Heartland itself. This “oversight” is no surprise. Mackinder himself did not apply his own geo-communal perspective to the heart of the heartland because his purpose was preservation and protection of the empire, not promoting the peoples of Central Asia. Given the age in which Mackinder lived, it is an understandable, if tragic, flaw given his desire to weld together “the West and the East, [so that we might] permanently penetrate the Heartland with oceanic freedom.”²⁸ Yet, as Donald W. Meinig reminds us: “Sound geopolitical strategy must always rest upon peoples—upon cultural-national groups in their regional-global setting.”²⁹

Ostensibly seeking to understand such “groups” in their own “setting,” critical geopolitics seeks to understand the political views of the geopolitical authors in the context of their times. This ten-year old school-of-thought remains immature, however, for two reasons. First, it does not apply its own methodology to its practitioners, as scholars of the critical geopolitics school leave unexamined their own explicit and implicit assumptions about man, the nature of international relations and present politics. (Even a cursory review of these scholars suggests a leftist, even neo-Marxist worldview).

Second, and more importantly, critical geopolitics does not accept the possibility that ideas exist and influence people irrespective of whether or not the reader is aware of the political views

²⁷ Mark Polelle, *Raising Cartographic Consciousness: The Social and Foreign Policy Vision of Geopolitics in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999), 58-75.

²⁸ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 122.

²⁹ Donald W. Meinig, “Heartland and Rimland in Eurasian History,” 568.

of their author. In similar fashion, critical geopolitics does not allow for the re-interpretation of ideas in a new context. The ironic result is that this school of thought becomes just as static and two-dimensional as the “cardboard figure” that it condemns its grandfather, Mackinder, to be.³⁰

For example, its founder, Geraurd Touthail (hereafter cited as Gerald Toal), urges critical geopolitics to “recover the complexities of global political life and expose the power relationships that characterize knowledge about geopolitics concealed by orthodox geopolitics.” It does this by forcing “strategic thinking to acknowledge the power of ethnocentric cultural constructs in our perception of places and the dramas occurring within them,” thereby enabling our ability to “decolonize our inherited geographical imagination so that other geo-graphings and other worlds might be possible.”³¹ Nick Megoran, a serious and careful scholar of this school, writes that the purpose of critical geopolitics is “to explore and disclose contingent political arguments concealed by apparently objective geopolitical language.”³²

Toal seeks a different way of “envisioning the world,” an alternative mechanism through which he can acknowledge “idealized maps from the center clash with the lived geographies of the margin.” Yet in his rush to deconstruct Mackinder and the geopoliticians of the early 20th century, thereby revealing their imperialist agenda, Toal reveals an untoward bias that clouds his otherwise original analysis.

Convinced that all geopolitics is once and always the ideology of “an expanding, centralizing imperial state,” he concludes, similar to Saul Cohen above, that World War I is the result of

³⁰ Gerald Toal, “Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society,” (accessed 11 February 2003); available from <http://www.majbill.vt.edu/geog/faculty/toal/papers/stratstud.tml>, last modified January 1999.

³¹ Gerald Toal, *Critical Geopolitics, The Politics of Writing Global Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 256.

³² Nick Megoran, “Revisiting the ‘Pivot’: the Influence of Halford Mackinder on Analysis of Uzbekistan’s International Relations,” *The Geographical Journal* 170, no. 4 (December 2004): 347.

thinkers such as Mackinder.³³ Toal goes so far as to blame the geopolitical classes taught to South American military officers as the basis for “national security doctrines that underpinned the murderous activities of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in Latin America over three decades.” Predictably, Toal finds current thinking to be of the same ilk through his comprehensive analysis of Henry Kissinger’s words and actions.³⁴ For Toal, Mackinder is the root of all evil. As Megoran sums up: Toal “insists that Mackinder’s geopolitical vision is inextricable from his commitment to a racist and militarist strain of British imperialism.”³⁵

By pointing out that we are all prisoners of our experience—without noting his own or demonstrating that Mackinder’s “racism” was reflective of his times—Toal provides interesting analysis and insight into the decision-making of some people. Yet, without describing the broader implications, theoretical and practical, he leaves critical geopolitics irrelevant. For example, if we assume that Mackinder was the worst kind of imperialist and racist we can imagine, how does that information truly affect our 21st century understanding and application of

³³ Gerald Toal, *Critical Geopolitics, The Politics of Writing Global Space*, 110, 2, 15.

³⁴ Gerald Toal, “Problematizing Geopolitics: Survey, Statesmanship and Strategy,” (accessed 25 February 2003); available from <http://www.majbill.vt.edu/geog/faculty/toal/papers/TRANSIBG.htm>.

Megoran, in his critique of my own work published thus far, betrays the same flaw of critical geopolitics. He assumes Mackinder to be an “advocate of imperialist violence based on a simplistic understanding of geography.” As a result, an American using Mackinder to write about American engagement worldwide is assumed to be writing about intervention that is, by definition, military, imperialistic and wrong-headed as it dares to dialogue with existing rulers, such as Uzbekistan’s Karimov. He further concludes from my work that democracy can only come about through U.S. intervention. (See Megoran, “The Politics of Using Mackinder’s Geopolitics: The Example of Uzbekistan,” *Central Asia and The Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies* 34, no. 4 (2005): 99-101). While these conclusions are unsustainable—I have consistently argued, according to Mackinder, for engaging Uzbekistan at the intersection of American values and interests (see my “Implications of Terrorism in Uzbekistan,” 12 April 2004, <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20040412.americawar.seiple.terroruzbekistan.html>)—they do reveal the danger of a school of thought incapable of critically assessing itself or the particularity of the region where others seek to practically engage.

³⁵ Nick Megoran, “The Politics of Using Mackinder’s Geopolitics: The Example of Uzbekistan,” 94.

his thrice-articulated philosophy of the Heartland?³⁶ Will we suddenly become Victorian imperialists seeking preeminence?

Critical geopolitics is also problematic, if not irrelevant to, the first-time reader. While it is usually useful to understand the personality and cultural context of the author, it is not a necessary precondition to derive meaning and application. For example, a first-time reader of the New Testament might conclude after reading the epistles of St. Paul that he was an arrogant male chauvinist who condoned slavery. Just because this line of thought may be logical does not discount the validity and power of the words as they were written then, or how they might be interpreted today.

In other words, ideas count. And they will vary in their impact, according to their context, no matter what is understood about their original meaning or intent. This point is particularly salient when considering Mackinder's so-called ethnocentricity. For example: "Among Central Asianists, Mackinder's concepts are frequently discussed in terms of their contemporary relevance. However, Anglo-American academics have seemed largely unaware of these developments."³⁷ Have each of these experts who actually live in Central Asia been brainwashed? Or is it possible that they are reading Mackinder and interpreting him anew, simply because they see logic in his concepts? Consider these words from an Uzbek scholar:

³⁶ As but one example, Gerry Kearns holds that Mackinder had a "racist view of society." (See Gerry Kearns, "The Political Pivot of Geography," *The Geographical Journal* 170, no. 4 (December 2004): 337. In the same volume, Pascal Venier describes Mackinder as possessing a "quiet superiority, racial or otherwise, of the Edwardian British elites." (See Pascal Venier, "The Geographic Pivot of History and Early Twentieth Century Geopolitical Culture," *The Geographical Journal* 170, no. 4 (December 2004): 330.) Yet in the same journal, Mackinder's primary biographer, Brian Blouet, states that Mackinder "thought it wrong to see the empire consisting of the U.K. as the manufacturing centre and the colonies as the providers of foodstuffs and raw materials...the English should stop thinking of Moslems as pagans, and the empire should consist of different nationalities with equality between them." (See Brian Blouet, "The Imperial Vision of Halford Mackinder," *The Geographical Journal* 170, no. 4 (December 2004): 322-329.)

³⁷ Nick Megoran and Sevara Sharapova, "Mackinder's "Heartland": A Help or Hindrance in Understanding Central Asia's International Relations?" *Central Asia and The Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies* 34, no. 4 (2005): 19. None of the papers presented at this conference considered Mackinder's "imperial" context, except for Megoran's, which admittedly used critical geopolitics as the framework of analysis (to include Gerard Toal's personal review).

Central Asia should rid [itself] of any illusions about a new world order, and accept the controversial rules of survival in the modern world. They are located on Halford Mackinder's Heartland, an ongoing site of international struggle, and must act accordingly. In particular, they have to defend and strengthen their sovereignty, political and economic independence, simultaneously taking into account both the process of globalization and interdependence, and their own national interests—factors which do not always coincide.³⁸

The irony of Mackinder is that he did not apply his thinking—geo-strategic or geo-communal—to those who actually lived in the region. That said, it is fair to conclude that he would expect such conclusions as the above precisely because he sought a timeless formula that could be applied in any context, from any perspective.

Finally, there is a triple irony to Toal. He says that he seeks to speak for, or at least interpret, those “lived geographies of the margin.” Yet, he mirrors Mackinder by not applying critical geopolitics to the Heartland even as those who live there echo Mackinder. As Nick Megoran notes: “One is entitled to ask what [critical geopolitics] might mean in the Central Asian example.”³⁹ Could it be that center-periphery thinking is in the eye-of-the-beholder? Or might it be that in a globalized world there is no center-periphery, especially if the alleged “periphery” does not see itself as such? These questions suggest that Toal is closer to becoming an ethnocentric “cardboard figure” than is the orthodox school of geopolitics that he so assiduously attacks.

In sum, this school of thought is defined not by what it is for, but by what it is against. Still, it represents an important first step in mapping the geo-communal and geo-strategic perspectives and their combined impact, positive and/or negative impact, on our own worldview. Critical geopolitics is therefore, strangely enough, an echo of Mackinder's own intellectual approach to geopolitics and thus the first step back toward realizing the future implications of Mackinder. In

³⁸ Ulugbeck Khasanov, “On Modern Geopolitical Pluralism or One-Nation Hegemonism,” *Central Asia and The Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies* 34, no. 4 (2005): 36.

³⁹ Nick Megoran, “The Politics of Using Mackinder's Geopolitics: The Example of Uzbekistan,” 102.

sum, this dissertation's development of the geo-communal and geo-strategic perspectives is not only consistent with Mackinder, it suggests how critical geopolitics might properly develop.

Sir Halford John Mackinder is an important figure in world history. He was the first writer to present a global perspective on the history of the world community and its relationship to geography. What makes him more remarkable is that his argument was based on:

- 1) Asian, not Anglo-Saxon, history;
- 2) Landpower, not seapower (the key to Great Britain's rise to power); and
- 3) A 1904 understanding of the world, at the apex of British imperial power.

In other words, Mackinder disembodied his intellect from his country's preeminent place in the world, its navy as the key to maintaining British ascendancy, and his own country's history, in order to develop the Heartland theory. Mackinder's contribution was a broad awareness of, and insight to, preceding events and ideas, and how they practically related to the present and future. He consciously sought a formula that could be continuously *applied, not petrified*.

As a result, he applied his formula on three different occasions: In 1904 when he anticipated the decline of the British Empire; in 1919 when he anticipated the rise of totalitarianism and the Heartland as the primary battlefield of World War II; and in 1943 when he anticipated the possibility that NATO and Russia might balance China and India. There are few examples of a more strategically transcendent and intellectually practical mind. His is the proper understanding of true geopolitical thought.

But most do not readily know these facts. Those who have heard of him have generally never read him. But most have simply never heard of him.

Who was Halford John Mackinder? What did he really write? What were the themes of his Heartland Philosophy? Is his Heartland Philosophy still relevant—and practical—today? Does his geo-political thinking provides a suitable basis for examining and explaining the U.S—Uzbek relationship, 1991-2005?

Mackinder: His Life

Halford John Mackinder was a complex man, a democratic imperialist, a small-town globalist. He was born on February 15, 1861, in the town of Gainsborough. This little hamlet of roughly eight thousand was thirty miles from the North Sea, and about 130 miles north of London. The Mackinder family lived in the working-class part of town and his father was a doctor. Draper Mackinder was a man who served “private and pauper patients.” He had a keen interest in the connection between environment and the outbreak of disease as well medical geography.⁴⁰

Mackinder was taught to work hard and rely on his own intelligence. In 1880 he won a scholarship to Christ Church at Oxford. While there, he thought about joining the military and even developed a university officer corps educational concept, but it was rejected by the local commanding officer. Mackinder was also an active member of the Oxford Union Society where, among other things, they debated educational reform. He majored in natural science, specializing in animal morphology, but also taking exams in chemistry, physiology, and botany.⁴¹

After graduating in 1883, Mackinder won scholarships to stay at Oxford, eager for more studies but also eager to be a part of the educational reforms that were taking place throughout the country and at Oxford. During this time he studied geology as well as geomorphology. In

⁴⁰ Brian W. Blouet, *Halford Mackinder, A Biography* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1987), 6. As Blouet notes, Mackinder’s use of the term “heart-land” probably echoes the medical geography of his father.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 19-25.

1885, one of Mackinder's friends, Michael Sadler, became secretary to the committee for Oxford University Extension. Mackinder, who had started studying law, agreed to be a geography lecturer in the program. It was during this time that Sadler transformed the program "from a polite expression of interest in improving the education of those not at university to a crusade to bring knowledge to the working man."⁴²

In support of the extension program, Mackinder traveled all over England, delivering more than 600 lectures on the "new geography."⁴³ This exposure produced an invitation from the Royal Geographical Society (RGS)—which was then amidst a campaign to establish geography readerships at Cambridge and Oxford—to join the RGS, as well as present to it. Elected to the RGS in March of 1886, he delivered the sum of his thinking to the group on January 31, 1887. He was twenty-five years old.

He opened his lecture by asking his audience of experienced explorers, government officials and retired officers an audacious question: "What is geography?" He told the RGS that geography's "main function is to trace the interaction of man in society and so much of his environment as varies locally." He told them that political geography's function is to:

detect and demonstrate the relations subsisting between man in society and so much of his environment as it varies locally...One of the greatest of all gaps lies between the natural sciences and the study of humanity. It is the duty of the geographer to build one bridge over an abyss which in the opinion of many is upsetting the equilibrium of our culture.⁴⁴

For Mackinder, there was no other way to think about the topic. After all, he reminded his audience, "Knowledge...is one. Its division into subjects is a concession to human weakness...The alternative is to divide the scientific from the practical."⁴⁵ It was a remarkable commentary from a twenty-five year old. It also revealed the young Mackinder's philosophical

⁴² Ibid., 26-28.

⁴³ Charles Kruszewski, "The Pivot of History," 390.

⁴⁴ Mackinder, "Scope and Methods," 153-155.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 166, 173.

approach to life: only comprehensive analysis brings balance in the day-to-day achievement of the practical.

Mackinder's opportune presentation naturally complemented the RGS momentum to place geography readers in higher education and, later that year, Mackinder was named as Oxford's first-ever Reader in Geography. While there, Mackinder continued to work with Sadler, trying to make the extension program better and more available. In the spring of 1892, Mackinder traveled to the United States, participating in the University of Pennsylvania's extension program, while also visiting the geography programs at Princeton, John Hopkins and Harvard.

Armed with this experience, he rejoined Sadler in June to take part in the establishment of an extension campus in Reading (one half-hour north of Oxford). Mackinder wanted to be a part of it because it would serve "the wants of all classes."⁴⁶ For the next ten years Mackinder served as the school's first "Principal," building it into a first class and sustainable program that would later gain university status.

As an original thinker who needed to continuously create, Mackinder involved himself in other activities as well. He stayed active at Oxford, where he eventually became Director of the School of Geography (1898-1902), itself a direct result of his earlier years as its first reader in geography. Additionally, he was involved with the start-up of the London School of Economics (LSE), where he served as a Lecturer and Reader from 1894-1924, and as its Director from 1903-1908. During his LSE Directorship, Mackinder instituted a program where the War Office paid for Army officers to attend a six month course in "accounting, law, economic theory, geography, statistics, and transportational studies."⁴⁷ He also found time to climb Mount Kenya—the first one to do so—in the summer of 1899.

⁴⁶ Blouet, *Mackinder*, 49, 56 (Blouet cites the *Berkshire Chronicle*, 4 June 1892).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

The key to Mackinder's personality was his bias for action. Despite implementing his unified vision of geography through new concepts, structures, lectures and inspired students, Mackinder still sought the ultimate practical stage: politics. He wanted to name the biggest issue of the day—to his mind, the future of the British Empire and the global balance required to preserve it through Eurasia, first against Russia and later against Germany—and work toward a practical and enduring solution.

Mackinder's solution—vision, really—called for a league of democracies within the empire where each democracy was fully educated (from capital to province) and had respect for the other members.

He started out as a Liberal, running unsuccessfully for Parliament in 1900. He joined the Conservatives in 1903 in support of Joseph Chamberlain's idea of a moderated tariff to protect trade throughout the British dominions. In 1910 he was elected as the member from Camlachie, a post he held for the next twelve years. His time in active politics led to a number of other experiences beyond the academy. For example, he served as the director for three private companies; he was made British High Commissioner to South Russia (1919-1920); he was knighted (1920); made Privy Councillor (1926); and he served as the Chairman of the Imperial Shipping Committee (1920-1943) and the Imperial Economic Committee (1925-1931).

But he did not enjoy the same success in politics that he had in the academy—where good ideas, hard work and circumstances had resulted in revolutionary educational programs that developed a more comprehensive manner of thinking. Politics was a different game, with a different schedule (i.e., short-term only) and a different mindset.

It is one thing to make observations about the long-term trend of events and quite another to persuade institutions to prepare for the changes... Highly capable men who were comfortable

trying to look a few years ahead were made uneasy by his views. Mackinder paid a large price for his efforts to promote a broader understanding of Britain's long-term difficulties.⁴⁸

Long after the political issues of early 20th England have been forgotten, Mackinder's global contributions stand. His understanding of global balance—as a reflection of the geo-strategic and geo-communal “going concerns” of the particular strategic era—has much to teach us today.

For Mackinder, the “going concern” was a notable trend in the present that would influence the future. Mackinder uses this phrase repeatedly in several different contexts. It is a neutral term that describes the dominant theme or habit, good or ill, in a person, society or state. The going concern always reflected the whole around it. The going concern, however, was also chronological, representing not only that which had gone before, but that which might lie ahead. There was momentum to the going concern and, if it were to be changed, it had to be addressed as something that was as much physical as it was psychological, as much preceding as it was portending.⁴⁹

This was Mackinder's calling: to match practical policy with visionary ideal as he sought to understand and influence the going concerns of his time through the geo-strategic and the geo-communal balance that these perspectives offered.

Heartland Philosophy: The Geo-Strategic of International Affairs

“My concept of the Heartland...is more valid and useful today than it was either twenty or forty years ago.”

— Sir Halford John Mackinder, 1943⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., 198-199.

⁴⁹ Although he did not use the phrase until 1918, it is consistent with his earlier thinking. He wrote in 1887 that “The course of history at a given moment, whether in politics, society, or any other sphere of human activity, is the product not only of environment but also of the momentum acquired in the past.” (“Scope & Methods,” 170).

⁵⁰ Mackinder, “The Round World,” 203.

Mackinder's organizing principle in thought and action was how to balance against the power(s) that controlled the Heartland of Eurasia. If that balance could be found, Mackinder believed, it would preserve the global system, democracy and Great Britain's central role on the world stage.

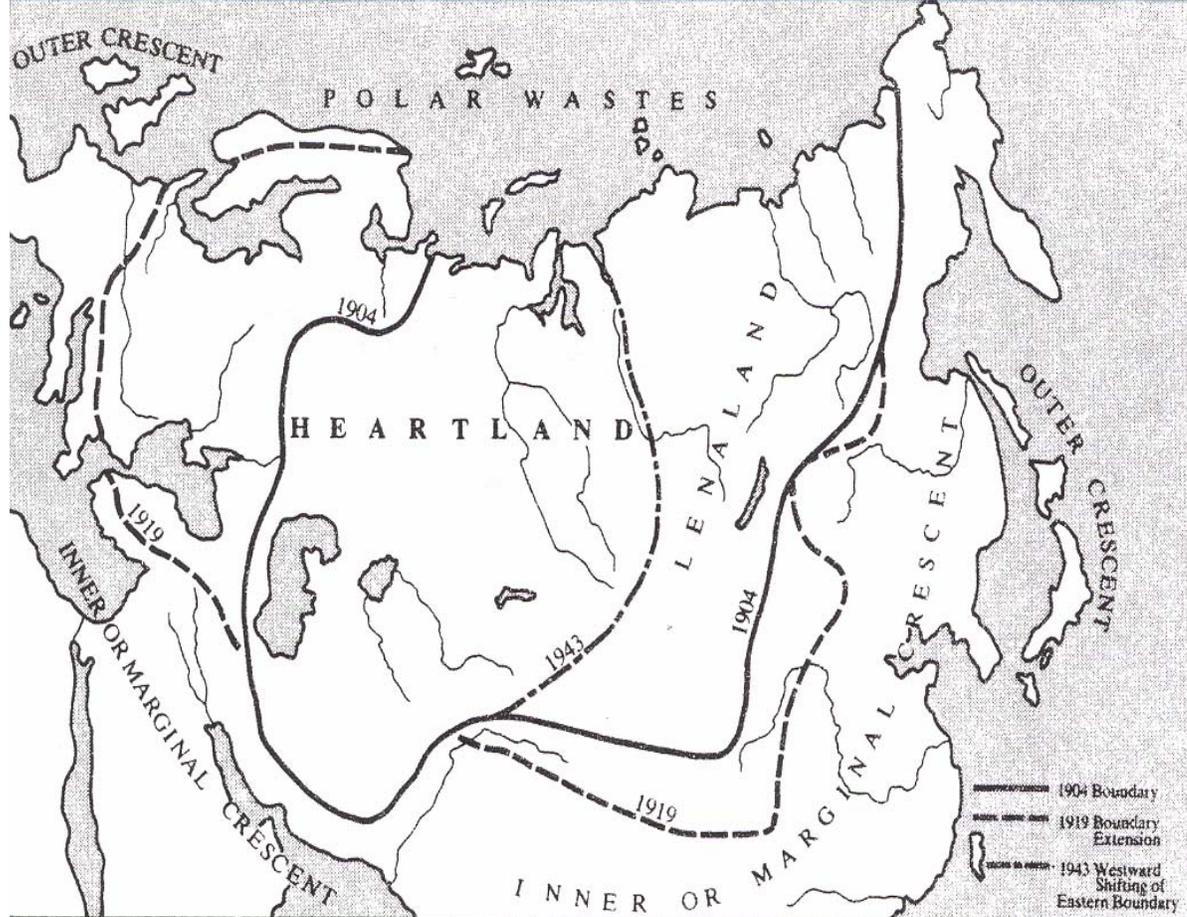
This big idea seems to have come from his association with the "Co-Efficients Dining Club." This group included such leading thinkers and policy-makers as Sir Edward Grey (a future Foreign Secretary), Lord Haldane (a future minister of war), Leo Maxse (Editor of *National Review*), Bertrand Russell; H.G. Wells; and L.S. Amery (an influential Conservative Member of Parliament). Nine months after their April 27, 1903, discussion about England's relationship to the European powers, Mackinder wrote his "Geographical Pivot of History" paper.⁵¹

Before discussing the geo-strategic implications of the Heartland Concept, however, it is important to provide a brief overview of how Mackinder understood the Heartland itself, geographically and as a reflection of his own historical context. As the map below indicates,⁵² Mackinder provided different parameters to the Heartland each time he articulated his theory. As the argument below makes clear, these different boundaries reflected a living formula being applied in a manner intellectually consistent with the strategic context of the day.

The heart of the heartland, however, never changed. It always included: central Russia; western China, the northern parts of Pakistan, and Iran; and the Heartland Hinge itself, Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Central Asia's center, Uzbekistan.

⁵¹ Blouet, *Mackinder*, 116-118.

⁵² Below Map of Mackinder's Heartland: Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, (New York: Random House, 1963), 53.



Also consistent were Mackinder's understanding of the Heartland's geographic characteristics. The Heartland's rivers flowed into inland seas or the mostly unavailable Arctic Ocean, making the region inaccessible to seapower. As such, the area provided potentially tremendous interior lines (internal communications and transport) for any power that possessed it. "The Heartland is the greatest natural fortress on earth."⁵³ The key was the man-power not only to protect it, but to make it produce economically as well.⁵⁴

The Heartland also possessed "potentialities in population, wheat, cotton, fuel, and metals so incalculably great...[it is]... a vast economic world...inaccessible to oceanic commerce."⁵⁵ It was a "great grassland zone...of high mobility."⁵⁶

In order to understand the full scope of Mackinder's geo-strategic approach to this part of the world, we must first understand, individually, each of his three Heartland presentations.

⁵³ Mackinder, "The Round World," 201.

⁵⁴ Ibid., "Pivot," 177-188; Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 55-78.

⁵⁵ Ibid., "Pivot," 191.

⁵⁶ Mackinder, "The Round World," 198.

1904

On a wintry day in 1904 at the Royal Geographical Society (almost exactly seventeen years after his “On the Scope and Methods of Geography” lecture), Mackinder revealed for the first time his thoughts about the “closed heart-land of Euro-Asia.”⁵⁷ He asked the representatives of the greatest empire known to challenge their own ethno- and geo-centricity: the “Geographical Pivot Point of History” was not in Europe.

I ask you, therefore, for a moment to look upon Europe and European history as subordinate to Asia and Asiatic history, for European civilization is, in a very real sense, the outcome of the secular struggle against Asiatic invasion...For a thousand years a series of horse-riding peoples emerged from Asia through the broad interval between the Ural mountains and the Caspian sea, rode through the open spaces of southern Russian, and struck home into Hungary in the very heart of the European peninsula, shaping by the necessity of opposing them the history of each of the great peoples around—the Russians, the Germans, the French, the Italians, and the Byzantine Greeks. That they stimulated healthy and powerful reaction, instead of crushing opposition under a widespread despotism, was due to the fact that the mobility of their power was conditioned by the steppes, and necessarily ceased in the surroundings forests and mountains.⁵⁸

By suggesting to his esteemed audience that it was Asia that had forced their ancestors—through the creation of the modern state to defend themselves—into becoming European, Mackinder dared his audience to consider the once and future importance of Central Asia.⁵⁹ Central Asian horse-mobility was being replaced by the railroad. “Trans-continental railways are now transmuting the conditions of land-power, and nowhere can they have such effect as in the closed

⁵⁷Mackinder, “Pivot,” 189.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 177, 182. Mackinder had an acute appreciation for position on the earth’s surface. For example, in the introduction of his 1902 book, *Britain and the British Seas*, he properly placed his native island on the absolute scale of chronology and geography, noting that before the 17th Century: “The known lands lay almost wholly in the Northern Hemisphere and spread in a single continent from the shores of Spain to those of Cathay. Britain was then at the end of the world—almost out of the world...No philosophy of British history can be entirely true which does not take account of this fact.” Halford Mackinder, *Britain and The British Seas* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1902), 1.

⁵⁹ If nothing else, Mackinder’s suggestion must have brought their own Thomas Hobbes to mind. He wrote in 1651 that men formed states, in order to physically protect themselves and their values and goods. This is the purpose of the state, or “common-wealth,” because “covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man.” Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: E.P. Dutton Inc., 1950), 139.

heart-land of Euro-Asia, in vast areas of which neither timber nor accessible stone was available for road making...The century will not be old before all Asia is covered with railroads.”⁶⁰

The implications, he argued, were enormous. The spread of the railroad, combined with the end of unclaimed territory to colonize, marked the end of the “Columbian Epoch” (1500-1900) when Europe—due to its sea-mobility, and thus military and economic power—had expanded over-seas against “negligible resistances.” The result was a “closed political system” where “every explosion of social forces, instead of being dissipated in a surrounding circuit of unknown space and barbaric chaos, will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political and economic organism of the world will be shattered in consequence.”⁶¹

There were two potential results. First, the coming of the railroad might “reverse the relations” of Europe and Asia. Second, and most importantly, there was now opportunity to:

express human history as part of the life of the world organism [and thus the chance to] perceive something of the real proportion of features and events on the stage of the whole world, and...seek a formula which shall express certain aspects, at any rate, of geographical causation in universal history. *If we are fortunate, that formula should have a practical value as setting into perspective some of the competing forces in current international politics.*⁶²

It is here that we find the crux of Mackinder’s think-do mentality. The Heartland concept was a wonderful academic and cognitive construct... perfect for debate in the smoking room. But Mackinder could not help but seek the practical application of his idea for the purpose of some good end, which, in 1904, meant the preservation and promotion of the British Empire.

⁶⁰ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 189, 191.

⁶¹ Ibid., 175-176. In one sense, Mackinder provided the physical and intellectual follow-up to Frederick Jackson Turner’s 1890 “Frontier Thesis.” Turner’s thesis argued that with the official close of the American frontier in 1890, American identity would suffer because it had been so tied to the rugged individualism of manifest destiny. With the possibility of continental expansion over, the only way to expand was to take land overseas or, as Woodrow Wilson would soon embody, to expand ideas overseas.

⁶² Ibid., 176. (My italics)

Mackinder very much believed in the democratic values of the British Empire. He also knew that times were changing and that the Empire would have to change too if it were to maintain its position in the world. He remembered well the “surprise” of the German victory over the French in 1870. He knew that the British had done poorly in the recently completed Boer War (1902). He knew that the Russians were probing and prodding in Central Asia and that they were about to complete the Trans-Siberian Railroad (the catastrophic defeat of the Russian navy by the Japanese was still a year away).⁶³ Mackinder also knew that British goods had to compete against these rising powers.⁶⁴

The link among these political-military threats was the ability to operate inland and use railroads. In the question and answer period that followed the presentation, Mackinder further described the need for a working formula:

The Germans marched nearly a million men into France; they marched, and used the railways for supplies. Russia, by her tariff system and in other ways, is steadily hastening the accomplishment of what I may call the non-oceanic economic system...What I suggest is that great industrial wealth in Siberia and European Russia and a conquest of some of the marginal regions would give the basis for a fleet necessary to found the world empire...It is true that the camel-men and horse-men are going; but my suggestion is that railways will take their place, and *then you will be able to fling power from side to side of this area. My aim is not to predict a great future for this country, but to make a geographical formula into which you could fit any political balance.*⁶⁵

Philosophically and strategically, then, a formula was needed which could serve as the basis for English Grand Strategy. Without a guiding strategy, there would be no way to plan for the real

⁶³ This sense of an increasingly powerful Russia (as a result of her new railroads) had been stewing in the British psyche for some time. Lord Curzon had written in 1890: “In a word, the construction of the railway means the final Russification of the whole Turkoman Steppes from Khorasan to Khiva, and from the Caspian to the Oxus.” See George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1889), 275.

⁶⁴ M.A. Busted, a Mackinder critic, writes: “[Mackinder] believed that the British Empire should be transformed into a democratic league of equal states with an imperially financed navy and army. To this end, he believed British education should be reorganized to make the Empire’s constituent parts more aware of each other and he argued that British emigration should be guided first and foremost to British colonies. To protect and encourage Imperial commercial links he embraced the idea of ending Free Trade and giving preferential terms to British and Imperial goods throughout the Empire.” M.A. Busted, ed., *Developments in Political Geography* (London: Academic Press, 1983), 15.

⁶⁵ As recorded in J. de Blij, ed., *Systematic Political Geography*, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), (Author’s italics)

consequences of a continental power that could “fling” its weight east or west according to the railway-enabled power of the Heartland. In other words, a new continental power capable of flinging its weight toward India was disconcerting indeed.

“As we consider this rapid review of the broader currents of history, does not a certain persistence of geographical relationships become evident? Is not the pivot region of the world’s politics the vast area of Euro-Asia which is inaccessible to ships...and is today about to be covered with a network of railways? ...Russia replaces the Mongol Empire.”⁶⁶ Tsarist Russia had to be balanced for her potential was too great. If she were to harness the Heartland’s power, Great Britain was inescapably vulnerable.

As Mr. Spencer Wilkinson suggested during the question and answer period that followed:

“I myself can only wish that we had ministers who would give more time to studying their policy from the point of view that you cannot move any one piece without considering all the squares on the board. We are very much too apt to look at our policy as though it were cut up into water-tight compartments, each of which had no connection with the rest of the world, whereas it seems to me the great fact of to-day is that any movement which is made in one part of the world affects the whole of the international relations of the world.”⁶⁷

The subsequent years, 1905-1907, seemingly nullified the concept. With the Japanese maritime victory over the Russians in 1905 and the accompanying unrest in Russia, Russia no longer seemed like a great power. Importantly, the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 seemingly ended the importance of the Heartland theory as Russia accepted the United Kingdom’s sphere of influence in Persia, and the U.K. accepted Russia’s sphere in Central Asia. To many, Mackinder’s theory was now irrelevant, dead at three years of age.⁶⁸

1919

⁶⁶ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 191.

⁶⁷ de Blij, *Systematic Political Geography*, 282.

⁶⁸ See David J.M. Hooson, *The Soviet Union* (London: University of London Press, LTD, 1966), 339; M.A. Busted, ed., *Developments in Political Geography*, 15; and Geoffrey Parker’s understanding of Nicholas Spykman in Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 134.

In 1919, Mackinder provided an update of his 1904 Heartland, expanding the concept into a holistic philosophy of security that simultaneously addressed balance of power and civil society. As the western front fell silent in 1918, Mackinder wrote feverishly, hoping to influence the peace settlement process. Specifically written for the allied leaders administering the Versailles Peace Conference, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* was a philosophical construct about how to practically apply democratic ideals in the aftermath of the war to end all wars.

Mackinder believed that, if future world wars were to be prevented, the circumstances of 1919 called for the creation of a global civil society of economically balanced nations with balanced opportunity for its citizens. Otherwise they were all doomed to repeat the past.

Mackinder wrote the gathered ministers with moral imperative and dire warning:

No mere scraps of paper, even though they be the written constitution of a League of Nations, are, under the conditions of today, a sufficient guarantee that the Heartland will not again become the center of a world war. Now is the time, when the nations are fluid, to consider what guarantees, based on geographical and economic realities, can be made available for the future security of mankind.⁶⁹

Mackinder knew better than most what might have happened if Germany had won the World War. “We have conquered, but had Germany conquered she would have established her sea-power on a wider base than any in history, and in fact on the widest possible base. The joint continent of Europe, Asia, and Africa, is now effectively, and not merely theoretically, an island. Now and again, lest we forget, let us call it the World-Island.”⁷⁰ Germany had almost won; in fact, its Eastern Army, where General Haushofer had served, had never been defeated on the battlefield. Now Germany replaced Russia as the primary threat to global balance. No one power must be allowed to dominate the World Island through the Heartland.

⁶⁹ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 80.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 25, 45. Mackinder found this to be true about England as well: “The real base historically of British sea-power was our English plain—fertile and detached—coal and iron from round the borders of the plain have been added in later times,” 40.

Understood in the context of 1904, the Heartland Concept seemed irrelevant in 1919. Not so for Mackinder who saw the constants as: 1) the Heartland itself; and 2) the Heartland's pivotal role in providing global geo-strategic balance. *According to the circumstances of 1919*, the Heartland formula had to be reinterpreted in an intellectually consistent manner so that it might be a relevant construct through which to conceive and implement a global balance.

According to Mackinder, the essence of the geo-strategic situation in 1919 was to balance the possessor of the Heartland (Russia) with the other great landpower of the world, Germany. At the fulcrum of this balance was Eastern Europe, the lands "in-between" Russia and Germany. Mackinder consequently redrew the Heartland to include the newly independent states of Eastern Europe.

"The key to the whole situation in East Europe—and it is a fact which cannot be too clearly laid to heart at the present moment—is the German claim to dominance over the Slav."⁷¹ A collection of independent and mutually reinforcing states, anchored at its northern tier, Poland (the most developed and at greatest risk to Germany), could buffer the new Russia and balance Germany.⁷²

It is a vital necessity that there should be a tier of independent states between Germany and Russia... We must settle this question between the Germans and the Slavs, and we must see to it that East Europe, like West Europe, is divided into self-contained nations... If you do not now secure the full results of your victory and close this issue between the German and the Slav, you

⁷¹ Ibid., 90. As Curzon had observed in 1890: "Nothing can be more clear than the main and dominating feeling of the Russian mind in relation to foreigners is an abiding and overpowering dislike of Germany" (Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, 275).

⁷² Josef Pilsudski, Poland's leader was having similar ideas about a Polish-led confederation, especially during and after the Polish-Soviet War of 1920. Mackinder met with Pilsudski in Warsaw on 10 January 1920. It is hard not to imagine the two quickly seeing eye-to-eye on the need for some kind of buffer between Germany and the Soviet Union, especially on the eve of the Polish-Soviet War. (Mark Polelle, *Raising Cartographic Consciousness: The Social and Foreign Policy Vision of Geopolitics in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 1999), 78). See also *White Eagle, Red Star* by Norman Davies (London: Pimlico, 1986); Richard M. Watt, *Bitter Glory: Poland and Its Fate, 1919-1939* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 100-102; and Waclaw Jędrzejewicz, *Pilsudski: A Life for Poland* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1982), 93.

will leave ill-feeling which will not be based on the fading memory of a defeat, but on the daily irritation of millions of proud people.⁷³

And thus the dictum: “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland: Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island: Who rules the World-Island commands the World.”⁷⁴ Mackinder even advocated giving the nascent communist state time to develop its resistance capacity, even if that meant despotism. “Autocratic rule of some sort is almost inevitable if [Russia] is to depend on her own strength to cope with the Germans.” Fifteen years earlier he warned against Russia. Now he warned against Germany.

In both cases, the Heartland was the key to his argument. Without its balance, there would be no preservation of British Empire, and thus no protection of democracy. In fact, without a proper balance, the Heartland would serve as the catalyst to a new war. The stakes were now much greater than Great Britain:

Civilisation...and the League of Nations, as the supreme organ of united humanity, must closely watch the Heartland...[because] The end of the present disorder may only be a new ruthless organization, and ruthless organizers do not stop when they have attained the objects which they at first set before them.⁷⁵

1943

The third interpretation of the Heartland Concept came amidst World War II, the unfortunate proof of his 1919 warnings. With the rise of Nazi Germany, its easy erosion of Eastern Europe through Czechoslovakia and Poland and its eventual invasion of the Heartland, people began reading Mackinder again. Eerily entranced by his 1919 predictions—as well as his alleged use by leading German geopoliticians—American audiences wanted to know what Mackinder had to say. At the age of eighty-three, Mackinder answered a request from Isaiah Bowman, editor of

⁷³ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 111.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 115, 110.

Foreign Affairs, and provided his final comment on the Heartland in 1943 (Mackinder died in 1947).

Mackinder told the readers of *Foreign Affairs* that his Heartland theory was more relevant than ever. Still, in keeping with his adaptive formula, he modestly offered an “interim estimate” of the concept.⁷⁶ Mackinder adjusted his Heartland again, taking out Eastern Europe,⁷⁷ while equating the Heartland entirely with the Soviet Union. For “the first time in history, [the Heartland] is manned by a garrison sufficient both in number and in quality... [it is] the citadel of land power.”⁷⁸

Curiously, Mackinder did not see the Soviet Union as a threat, as he initially focused on Germany and then on the future.⁷⁹ Mackinder believed that there first needed to be an alliance between the Heartland (Russia) and the Mid-Atlantic Basin (i.e., France, the U.K. and America). In this capacity, France would act as a “defensible bridgehead,” Britain as a “moated aerodome” and the United States as a “reserve of trained manpower, agriculture and industries.” The purpose of this alliance was to make two firm “embankments”—the Heartland and the Mid-Atlantic Basin—against which the “irrigation” of the Nazi philosophy could take place. With such embankments, however, Mackinder hoped that the “cleansing stream might better be released to flow from some regenerate and regenerating German source... [because] Freedom cannot be taught; it can only be given to those who can use it.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Mackinder, “Round World,” 197.

⁷⁷ Perhaps he sensed the coming conquest of the Russians and that they would need Eastern Europe to balance the Teuton?

⁷⁸ Mackinder, “Round World,” 201.

⁷⁹ It would not be unnatural for Mackinder to be worried about Germany’s ability to rise up for a fourth time after 1870, 1914, and 1939; essentially the period of his entire life.

⁸⁰ Mackinder “Round World,” 204, 201.

Toward the future, Mackinder thought that these three should be “pledged together” with Russia in case “any breach of the peace is threatened.”⁸¹ He foresaw the day when the Heartland and the Mid-Atlantic Basin (i.e., America, France and Britain) would combine to balance (not necessarily against) China and India. The result would be a “balanced globe of human beings. And happy, because balanced and thus free.”⁸² He thus set the stage for the future as he implicitly called back his 1919 logic regarding Eastern Europe, while reminding the reader of his 1904 conclusion about China.⁸³

In other words, the future fulcrum of global balance would be that region between Russia and the West and India and China; i.e., Central Asia. This fulcrum would be decisive—as Eastern Europe was in 1919—to creating and sustaining a balanced and free world. These three visions constitute a comprehensive and geo-strategic understanding of the need for global balance among states, centered on the pivot point of the Heartland itself, modern Central Asia.

This geo-strategic perspective, however, does not reflect Mackinder’s concern for global civil society and its economically balanced development. Without a geo-communal perspective, the geo-strategic alone is dangerous, inviting misunderstanding as well as misapplication. Mackinder’s geo-communal perspective—largely ignored by scholars—is what makes his Heartland formula a philosophy.

⁸¹ Ibid., 204, 202.

⁸² Ibid., 205.

⁸³ “It may be well expressly to point out that the substitution of some new control of the inland area for that of Russia would not tend to reduce the geographical significance of the pivot position. Were the Chinese, for instance...to overthrow the Russian Empire and conquer its territory, they might constitute the yellow peril to the world’s freedom just because they would add an oceanic frontage to the resources of the great continent, an advantage as yet denied to the Russian tenant of the pivot region.” Mackinder, “Pivot,” 193.

Heartland Philosophy: The Geo-communal of Global Civil Society

As one reads Mackinder's main works (and it takes several readings), he believed that a comprehensive and values-based approach was needed to protect democracy and civil society. If this approach were not adopted, democracy would suffer as the potentially dangerous trends of regionalism and *laissez-faire* economics divided people, society and states at the individual, national and international levels. These values informed his Heartland idea even as the proper application of his idea allowed for these values to take root. Together they constitute a philosophy.

Although critics sometimes decry Mackinder's imperial utterances and times, Mackinder was passionate about that which he cherished most: democracy. Its preservation required balance at the individual, national, and international levels of society. This kind of balance produced a civilization worth living in "where service could be rendered one to another."⁸⁴ If there was no balance, then it was more likely that uneven economic development and regionalism could divide a community, a state, or a civilization. Mackinder's most comprehensive statement of these ideas is found in his 1919 book, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*.

Mackinder bluntly admonished those gathered at Versailles about democracy's inherent weakness and its implications. "Democracy refuses to think strategically unless and until compelled to do so for purpose of defense...Democracy implies rule by consent of the average citizen who does not view things from the hilltops, for he must be at work in the fertile plains."⁸⁵ It was the long-view that would preserve the family of democracies that he envisioned.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ MacKinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁶ From his writings we know that Mackinder regarded England's former and soon-to-be-former colonies as the nucleus for the family of democracies. He considered the term "colony" in the "old Greek meaning— independent nations tied to the mother country only by a sense of common ideals." In short, rule-of-law was the common trait.

The long-view on the family of democracies meant the short-term capacity to name and address the major issues of the day, and their relationship to the whole. Otherwise their solutions would not matter. Anticipating the globalized world he had predicted in 1904, he wrote to his 1919 Versailles audience:

Whether we think of the physical, economic, military or political interconnection of things on the surface of the globe, we are now for the first time presented with a closed system. The known does not fade any longer through the half-known in the unknown; there is no longer elasticity of political expansion in the lands beyond the pale. Every shock, every disaster or superfluity, is now felt even to the antipodes, and may indeed return from the antipodes ...Every deed of humanity will henceforth be echoed and reechoed in like manner.⁸⁷

If this were the case, then the issues of the day had to be addressed, with balance created at every level. Two significant trends, or going concerns, especially troubled Mackinder: regionalism and the *laissez-faire* model of economic development. Both, he believed, had the potential to divide national and international civil society,⁸⁸ and thus impact global stability.

Regarding regionalism, Mackinder thought that there should be no divide between the capital and the other provinces of the country. The capital was important, but it was still one node among many as province and capital remained balanced. The capital should not end up “milking the country,” drawing the best and brightest away from the provinces thereby creating an overall imbalance tilted toward the capital.⁸⁹ For example, Mackinder referred to London in 1902, the capital of the world at the time, as merely the United Kingdom’s “city of highest nodality.”⁹⁰ There had to be balance, between capital and region, between society and land—this was civil society.

W.H. Parker summarizes 50 years of Mackinder’s writings this way:

⁸⁷ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 2, 22.

⁸⁸ More than likely, both concerns reflected such center-periphery experiences as his own provincial town roots, achieving success in London and Oxford, and bringing that success back to a working class town with the establishment of a university at Reading. (For scholars of critical geopolitics, and especially Gerard Toal, this perspective is perplexingly ironic).

⁸⁹ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 135.

⁹⁰ Mackinder, *British Seas*, 331.

Physical geography and human geography are complementary, inseparable, and essential parts of one subject. Man in society forms local communities and the natural environment may be marked off into natural regions: natural regions influence the development of the communities inhabiting them; communities modify the regions they inhabit; the regions, so modified influence the communities differently than before; and so the interaction continues.

Regional geography synthesizes the interacting distributions within a region, arranging them in a logical sequence linked by cause and effect. This synthesis requires the accurate mapping of related data, and the ability to visualize and describe such mapped distributions associated together in actual landscapes. Although practicality requires a regional treatment, there is no complete region less than the whole world.⁹¹

In other words, regions and their communities were to be celebrated even as they themselves created the global mosaic of which all were inherently a part. In short, Mackinder viewed regions and the world as a living identity, the “world organism” (as he called it in 1904), a continuous reflection of societies’ respective and corporate interaction with the earth.

The second “going concern”, or issue, that made Mackinder anxious was the potential division that the economic policies of the day might have on regions and/or local communities. Specifically, he was concerned about the unequal economic impact of *laissez-faire* policies in the world. “For a hundred years we have bowed down before [this] Going Concern as though it were an irresistible god. Undoubtedly it is a reality, but it can be bent to your service if you have a policy inspired by an ideal.”⁹² As with regionalism, addressing this danger meant a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of the world.

At the international level, Mackinder believed that “the great wars of history...are the outcome, direct or indirect, of the unequal growth of nations, and that unequal growth ...in large measure is the result of the uneven distribution of fertility and strategical opportunity upon the face of the globe.”⁹³ As always, there had to be balance.

If [World War I] has proved anything, it has proved that these gigantic forces of modern production are capable of control...If you once admit control of the Going Concern to be your

⁹¹ W.H. Parker, *Aid to Statecraft*, 114-115.

⁹² Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 134.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

aim, then the ideal state-unit of your [L]eague [of Nations] must be the nation of balanced economic development... no self-respecting nation henceforth will allow itself to be deprived of its share of the higher industries. But these industries are so interlocked that they cannot be developed except in balance with one another... This is the ideal, I am firmly persuaded, which will make for peace... Civilisation, no doubt, consists of the exchange of services, but it should be an equal exchange... For the contentment of nations we must contrive to secure some equality of opportunity for national development.⁹⁴

Continuing to echo the center-periphery logic of regionalism, Mackinder believed that the “contentment” of international society and the condition of a state’s domestic societies were linked. If the internal society could be balanced, then the international community would be balanced as well. Internal balance, above all else, called for the creation of local opportunity for the individual.

The nation which is to be fraternal towards other nations, must be independent in an economic as in every other sense; it must have a complete and balanced life. But it cannot be independent if it is broken into classes and interests which are for ever seeking to range themselves for fighting purposes with the equivalent classes and interests of other nations. Therefore you must base national organization on provincial communities. But if your province is to have any sufficient power of satisfying local aspirations it must, except for the federal reservations, have its own complete and balanced life. That is precisely what the real freedom of men requires—*scope for a full life in their own locality*.⁹⁵

Mackinder was absolutely convinced that internal balance within a state—economically and regionally—laid the foundation for external balance among states. With passion, he connected the social stability of a state’s people groups and/or provinces to its official center, that is, its capital and representative voice. The geo-political-socio-economic identity of each had to be rooted in the other.

Since nations are local societies, their organization *must*, if they are to last, be based dominantly on local communities within them, and not on nation-wide “interests.” That is the old English idea of the House of Commons. The word *commons*, is, of course, identical with the French word “communes,” signifying communities; the House of Communities—shires and burghs—would be the true modern translation.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., 126-127.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 137. Mackinder had written seventeen years earlier that “rooted provincialism, rather than finished cosmopolitanism, is a source of the varied initiative without which liberty would lose half its significance” (*British Seas*, 15). [italics added]

⁹⁶ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 130.

And the key to community was the concept of the neighbor.

That grand old word neighbor has fallen almost into desuetude. It is for neighborliness that the world to-day calls aloud...Let us recover possession of ourselves, lest we become the mere slaves of the world's geography...Neighborliness or fraternal duty to those who are our fellow-dwellers, is the only sure foundation of a happy citizenship.⁹⁷

This geo-communal approach—working with neighbors, in a local community that is balanced regionally and economically—was the only way to address the fundamental concerns of the individual.

“What does the ordinary man want? ...It is for opportunity to realize what is in him, to live a life of ideas and of action for the realization of those ideas...for a recognition of his human dignity.”⁹⁸ Anticipating today's terrorism, these were the questions Mackinder asked those attending the Versailles Peace Conference to consider.

Nationalist movements are based on the restlessness of intelligent young men who wish for scope to live the life of ideas and to be among those who “can” because they are allowed to do...Are you quite sure that the gist of the demand for Home Rule in Ireland, and in a less degree in Scotland, does not come mainly from young men who are agitating, though they do not fully realize it, for equality of opportunity rather than against the assumed wickedness of England?⁹⁹

If these desires were not addressed, imbalance would occur within the state and therefore within the international community.

1919 was one of those rare times—to be followed by 1945, 1989 and 2001—when the international patterns, or going concerns, of relating to one another might be significantly altered in the name of humanity.

Civilization is based on the organization of society so that we may render service to one another...like every other Going Concern, a national society can be shaped to a desired career while it is young, but when it is old its character is fixed and it is incapable of any great change in its mode of existence. Today all the nations of the world are about to start afresh; it is within the reach of human forethought so to set their courses as that, notwithstanding geographical temptation, they shall not clash in the days of our grandchildren?... And in regard to the internal structure of those democracies, what conditions must be satisfied if we are to succeed in

⁹⁷ Ibid., 145.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 132.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 133-4.

harnessing to the heavy plow of social reconstructionism the ideals which have inspired heroism in this war? There can be no more momentous questions. Shall we succeed in soberly marrying our new idealism to reality?¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, the Versailles conference instead succeeded in marrying revenge to reality and thus sowing the seeds of another World War. Nevertheless, Mackinder boldly stood in stark contrast to his times, refusing to go along with the short-sighted demands of economic reparations. In this sense, he was who he had always been: someone from the provinces who sought to bring better education to them; a member of parliament who sought to understand his nation's place in the world; a global citizen who sought better balance among the nations in the name of civilization. Simply, he embodied the three-tiered civil society that he advocated as the basis for global stability.

A Suitable Basis for Theory?

Is theory just 'word mongering'? ...A valid theory, however minor, is at least three things: a compact description, a clue to explanation, and a tool for better work."

— Stephen B. Jones¹⁰¹

Centered on the Heartland Hinge of Central Asia, Mackinder's Heartland Philosophy can be summarized in the following manner:

- The Heartland possessed rich resources, interior lines (internal communication and transport facilitated by the railroad) and was inaccessible to seapower, making it a natural fortress.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2, 6.

¹⁰¹ Stephen B. Jones. "A Unified Field Theory of Political Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 44, no. 2 (June 1954): 122.

- The “tenant” who controlled the Heartland would eventually have the capacity to dominate Asia by flinging its power from side to side.
- The unchanging heart of the Heartland was that geographic area east and southeast of the Caspian Sea. Formerly known as Turkestan, it includes Western China, Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—and the northern parts of Iran and Pakistan. This area was the geographic pivot upon which the Heartland Concept literally rested. Today, Uzbekistan is at its center.
- The Heartland Philosophy required balance and the long-view to create happiness:
 - A balance between the geo-communal view of man’s local interaction with and perception of geography (i.e., the “going concern” of civil society), and the geo-strategic view of a state’s understanding of, and interaction with, the Heartland (i.e., the “going concern” of international politics).
 - A long-view that reviewed and understood the geo-communal and geo-strategic patterns of the past in order to preview the future if the pattern continued.

Where there was balance, there was a civilization worth living in, a place where citizens render service to one another.

- Mackinder expected this philosophy to be applied to each new strategic era as a practical formula for understanding and examining global balance.

Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy enables an analytic narrative (chapters three and four) that models Mackinder’s thinking—providing, as a result, a suitable basis for examining and

explaining the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship from 1991 to 2005. Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy also provides for general hypotheses which further serve as both summary and illustration of Mackinder’s geo-political work, pointing the way toward future refinement and research. They include:

- If the world is increasingly globalized, then a comprehensive approach is necessary.
- If a new strategic era occurs, then the Heartland must be geographically re-envisioned and defined.
- If a new strategic era occurred, then Mackinder would look for a new fulcrum point of integrated states, or region, adjusting the Heartland Concept accordingly to achieve global balance.
- If the new fulcrum-region were surrounded by competing powers, then Mackinder would focus on the political and geographic center of the in-between region to anchor the balance.
- If the heart of the Heartland were indeed Eurasia’s security fulcrum, then it was in the self-interest of the relevant great powers to ensure that no one dominated the Heartland.
- If a successful policy toward the Heartland were developed, it would depend upon the geo-strategic and geo-communal “going concerns” of the Heartland itself.
- If the geo-strategic component of a policy were developed, then this “going concern” would be rooted in the Heartland’s historic role in international politics, to include the geography and flow of present day threats.
- If the geo-communal component of a policy were developed, then this “going concern” would be rooted in the Heartland’s historic interaction between man and his local environment and that interaction’s impact on present day notions of civil society, regionally and internationally.

- If the geo-strategic and the geo-communal were effectively integrated into a policy, then that policy will require the promotion of three issues—religion, region and economics—that bridge the geo-strategic and the geo-communal:
 - Religion: If the Heartland’s civil society is rooted in a tolerant Muslim culture, then a robust pluralism, consistent with the culture, is required for social stability.
 - Region: If the Heartland’s independent states cannot depend on anyone but themselves, then it is in their self-interest to become more neighborly.
 - Economics: If there is no local economic opportunity—between and among the regions within each of the Heartland’s states, and between and among the Heartland states themselves—then young men will agitate for change.
- If the center state of the Heartland possesses one-third of the population and is the only state touching each of the Heartland’s members, then that state is necessarily the political and economic focus of any policy.
- If democracies do not think strategically, then the U.S. will always have difficulty understanding and engaging the Heartland.

Mackinder was not a successful politician. But he remains a successful visionary, standing the test of time. One-hundred years later, he provides us with an able philosophy—that is, a comprehensive manner for considering the interrelated nature of Eurasia’s Heartland and its relationship to the West—that he intended to be applied as a living formula to each new strategic era. As such, Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy provides a suitable basis for examining and explaining the U.S.—Uzbekistan Relationship, 1991—2005.

CHAPTER THREE

The Going Concern:

A Geo-communal Perspective

Each century has had its own geographical perspective...To this day, however, our view of geographical realities is colored for practical purposes by our preconceptions of the past. In other words, human society is still related to the facts of geography not as they are but in no small measure as they have been approached in the course of history.¹

We need new maps to see things as the enemy and other peoples see things... This is the kind of "vision" which we really need if we are to achieve the mobility of imagination which gives us the right compass for action and makes us, as the same time, anticipate and understand the enemy's action.²

Mackinder took a comprehensive and encouraging view of how humankind interrelated with its physical environment and the community in which it lived. From his first writings at the age of twenty-five, Mackinder refused to consider terrain as static. Instead, he thought of geography as "the science whose main function is to trace the interaction of man in society and so much of his environment as varies locally."³ He argued that geography must be understood and taught as a "whole" and "continuous argument." In fact, "no rational political geography can exist which is not built upon and subsequent to physical geography." Understood as this mutual and dependent

¹ Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996), 21-23. In 1996, the National Defense University (NDU) republished several of Halford Mackinder's works as *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. These works include: "The Scope and Methods of Geography," Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 9, No. 3 (1887): 141-160 [hereafter cited as "Scope and Methods"]; "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal* 23, No. 4 (1904): 421-444 [hereafter cited as "Pivot"]; *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (London: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1919) [hereafter cited as *Ideals and Reality*]; and "The Round World and Winning the Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 21, No. 4 (July 1943): 595-605 [hereafter cited as "Round World"]. All page references to these works are found in the NDU re-publishing.

² Richard E. Harrison and Hans W. Weigert, "World View and Strategy," in Hans W. Weigert and Vilhjalmur Stefansson, ed., *Compass of the World* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), 77.

³ Mackinder, "Scope and Methods," 153.

relationship, political geography necessarily asks its fundamental question: “How does [geography] act on man in society, and how does he react on it?”⁴

With this geo-communal approach, Mackinder believed that security resulted from a world of economically balanced nations with balanced opportunity for its citizens. This global civil society depended on individual liberty (freedom) equality (opportunity) and fraternity (discipline). Fraternity was the linchpin for it “implies self-control. Fraternity is the essence of successful democracy, the highest but the most difficult of all modes of government, since it demands most of the average citizen.”⁵

This philosophy began with the individual. “What does the ordinary man want? ...It is for opportunity to realize what is in him, to live a life of ideas and of action for the realization of those ideas...he wishes for the glow of intelligent life, and incidentally for a recognition of his human dignity.”⁶ For Mackinder these individual desires could be met if there were an opportunity “for a full life in [one’s] own locality.”⁷ For this to take place, good neighbors were needed. “It is for neighborliness that the world to-day calls aloud... Neighborliness or fraternal duty to those who are our fellow-dwellers, is the only sure foundation of a happy citizenship.”⁸

If local individuals were knit together in community, and local communities were knit together in provinces, then the nation itself would be in balance, and at peace. “Since nations are local societies,”⁹ and if “local communities [are] essential to the stable and therefore peaceable

⁴ Ibid., 156, 166, 153, 158. This comprehensive approach also finds expression in his history of Britain: “The geography of Britain is in fact the intricate product of a continuous history, geological and human.” Mackinder, *Britain and The British Seas* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1902), 230.

⁵ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 129.

⁶ Ibid., 132-3. Mackinder put his ideas into practice, helping establish Reading University, initially as an extension of Oxford University, for the purpose of providing education to the working classes. (Blouet, 54).

⁷ Ibid., *Ideals and Reality*, 137.

⁸ Ibid., 145.

⁹ Ibid. 130.

life of nations, then those local communities must have as complete balanced a life of their own as is compatible with the life of the nation itself.”¹⁰

If this kind of balance within civil society could not be achieved, there were consequences for national security. Taking two examples from the British experience, Mackinder asked this provocative question: “Are you quite sure that the gist of the demand for Home Rule in Ireland, and in a less degree in Scotland, does not come mainly from young men who are agitating, though they do not fully realize it, for equality of opportunity rather than against the assumed wickedness of England?”¹¹ This potential for instability had implications for the local community, the nation and the international system.

That system—civilization itself, really—was “based on the organization of society so that we may render service to one another.”¹² “Civilisation, no doubt, consists of the exchange of services, but it should be an equal exchange...For the contentment of nations we must contrive to secure some equality of opportunity for national development.”¹³ In short, all politics were local and, if so, international balance and security depended on mutually reinforcing neighborhoods from the local to the global, among individuals and among nations.

As consistent with his definition of geography—“the interaction of man in society and so much of his environment as varies locally”—Mackinder demanded respect for the reality of local culture in the promotion of his democratic ideal:

“But the art of the clay-molder...lies not merely in knowing what he would make, but also in allowing for the properties of the material in which he is working... As the artist endeavors to his dying day to learn ever more about the medium in which he works—and not merely more in a scientific sense, but in a practical ‘tactile’ way—so has it been with the knowledge of humanity at

¹⁰ Ibid., 131. According to the context of his times, this meant a balanced economic opportunity between rural and urban areas such that urban areas did not create a brain drain on the countryside, resulting in richer cities and class warfare.

¹¹ Ibid., 134.

¹² Ibid., 2.

¹³ Ibid., 126-7.

large in regard to the realities of the round world on which we must practice the intricate art of living together.”¹⁴

In other words, practical impact demanded knowledge of the culture. This approach was critical to understanding the “going concern” of any local civil society, and therefore Mackinder’s long-term goal for the Heartland: freedom. “In the Heartland, where physical contrasts are few, it is only with the aid of a conscious ideal, shaping political life in the direction of nationalities, that we shall be able to entrench true freedom.”¹⁵

Ironically, however, Mackinder—whose original purpose was the creation of imperial unity within the British Commonwealth in order to balance the continental power(s) that controlled the Heartland—never applied his own approach to the peoples who lived in the Heartland. This chapter attempts to do so as it details the “going concern” of civil society in Uzbekistan, thus providing the geo-communal basis for understanding Uzbekistan’s geo-strategic concerns, 1991-2005.

This chapter concludes that the U.S. did not have a geo-communal framework for understanding the “going concern” of Uzbek civil society; and was thus unable to grasp the essential elements of Uzbekistan’s pre-existing civil society—namely, religion, the *mahalla*, and the elites. Instead, it insisted, with the best of intentions, on promoting its definition of civil society, while making no attempt to understand and work within those fundamental elements of Uzbek civil society. Put differently, this chapter reveals, through the absence of data, the comprehensive inability of the United States to understand the going concern of Uzbekistan’s geo-communal roots. A proper geo-communal framework does result, as Mackinder would expect, from a comprehensive examination of the land and the resulting history, religion, traditions and culture that make up Uzbek civil society.

¹⁴ Ibid., 19.

¹⁵ Ibid., 144.

The Land of Uzbekistan

At the unchanging pivot point of Mackinder's Heartland is a traditional and sometimes mythical land that includes river-fed oases, sweeping grasslands, difficult deserts and sky-touching mountains. The heart of this region is that land between the northern Syr Darya (Jaxartes) river and the southern Amu Darya (Oxus) river. The Zarafshan River valley between them, it is the home of fabled Samarkand and Bukhara. This region has been called Sogdia, Transoxiana, Turan (the land beyond Iran), Mawarannahr (the land beyond the river), and Turkestan (land of the Turks). Today it is the heart of Central Asia, and its heart is Uzbekistan.

The region represents the historic, and blurred, frontier between the settled south and the nomadic north. It has been the world's meeting place for religions—Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Islam among them—resulting in a tolerant and eclectic combination of beliefs now united in a moderate Islam. It has also been the place where empires—Greek, Persian, Chinese, Arab, Mongol, Russia, British and now American—clash and pass, each leaving something behind. The only constant, besides change, is the “dogged stationariness”¹⁶ of the people and the land they reflect.

There is perhaps no better example of how geography shapes the daily interaction between man and his environment than Central Asia, where geography has been the source of individual identity and corporate civil society. For the settled people of this region, their identity serves as a “link to the land,” rooted in the “name of the location of their birthplace.”¹⁷ That location has

¹⁶ A. T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia and Its Effect upon International Policies*, Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1900), 87.

¹⁷ Daria Fane, “Ethnicity and Regionalism in Uzbekistan Maintaining Stability through Authoritarian Control,” in Leokadia Drobizheva et al. ed., *Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet World* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 278. For example, the leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist group that fought with the Taliban, was Juma Namangani from the city of Namangan in the Ferghana Valley. See Shirin Akiner, “Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks” in *The Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet States*, Graham Smith ed. (London: Longman, 1990), 335; and Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion* (Princeton: Markus and Wiener Publishers, 1996), 20: “Geography,

literally and figuratively shaped the region's civil society, one that is horizontally and vertically organized at both the grassroots and governmental levels.

Uzbekistan's civil society is rooted in the settled people of Central Asia's river fed oases. Separated by steppe and desert, but dependent upon artificial irrigation for life itself, a city-state culture developed over time among these regional oases that was group-based and run by authoritarian leaders. Because of the need to build and maintain irrigation canals for farming, this society has always worked together with a profound sense of community, even as it has submitted to strong leaders.

These leaders, meanwhile, have served in the context of being at the center of their own oasis and/or region while being on the periphery of the empire that has most recently swept through the region and is now ruling from afar. Further, these leaders have traditionally been subject to a horizontal community of different elites atop the vertical structure of their society. Their competing and clashing interests are as much managed as led by the local strongman who must deal with these "domestic politics" to stay in power. This oasis-centered civil society has always transcended the latest conquering empire—eclectically choosing and embodying the various cultures, religions and ideologies brought with—while remaining culturally united by a tolerant form of Islam since the 8th century.

Hydraulic History

Twelve thousand years ago, the ice age receded for the last time, leaving temperatures that have remained seasonally consistent with today. While "prehistory" is hard to discern, as is the early history of this region, we do know enough to suggest certain patterns. Between 6000 and 3500 B.C., a number of settlements began to emerge in the oases of Central Asia. For example,

perhaps more than other factors, determined both the cultural and the political map of Central Asia from ancient times."

the Jeitun culture (Turkmenistan) was dependent upon a rudimentary man-made irrigation system while the Kelminar culture (Khorezm in western Uzbekistan) lived as communities in large circular shelters that were over 400 square meters.¹⁸

In his 1957 book, *Oriental Despotism*, Karl A. Wittfogel provides the basic rationale for how and why a “hydraulic society” evolves. It is the history of civilization in Central Asia and especially Uzbekistan.

If irrigation farming depends on the effective handling of a major supply of water, the distinctive quality of water—its tendency to gather in bulk—become institutionally decisive. A large quantity of water can be channeled and kept within bounds only by the use of a mass labor; and this mass labor must be coordinated, disciplined, and led. Thus a number of farmers eager to conquer arid lowlands and plains are forced to invoke the organizational devices which—on the basis of premachine technology—offer the one chance of success: they must work in cooperation with their fellows and subordinate themselves to a directing authority...[they] share a negative quality: none participates in the affairs of the state apparatus. They also share a positive quality: none are slaves.¹⁹

By 1000 B.C. a sedentary pattern of civil society had taken root in the land now called Uzbekistan. As David Christian describes, a simultaneously horizontal and vertical society existed, mutually dependent upon each other and the water that gave them life.

As irrigation networks expanded, they demanded increasing organization, during the initial clearance and drainage of land, during the construction and maintenance of irrigation ditches, and in the management of water rights and of goods exchanges in regions which lacked many important raw materials, including stone for building. The delicacy of such systems means that having good and strong leaders was vital for the survival of the whole community.... [For example] at least 15,000 labourers worked for two months to dig the kirkkiz canal [in first and second century A.D. Khorezm] while it took 6-7000 laborers each year to remove the silt...most of the labor came from local village communities which benefited directly from the irrigation systems they built and maintained.²⁰

Or, more simply, “local settled peoples submitted to a superior force, in organization or numbers, or both, in order to assure their lands stability and protection.”²¹

¹⁸ David Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia Volume I Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd, 1998), 46, 48, 72.

¹⁹ Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 18, 321.

²⁰ Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 112, 217.

²¹ Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, 80.

This local balance between ruler and ruled, center and periphery, was also mirrored in the region's relationship to the overseeing empire of the moment. The common link was mutual loyalty anchored in self-interest. For example, the Soviet archeologist, B.Y. Stavisky, writes of the 6th century B.C. Persian empire of Cyrus II and Darius I that "this loyalty depended, it seems, not only on the power and authority of [Persian] power, but equally on the interest that members of local nobilities had in belonging to this great and powerful state." Still, the Persian center was not afraid to exercise its vital veto upon them by sometimes closing the irrigation canals to make sure local communities paid taxes.²²

The Uzbek Identity Begins to Form

By the 7th century, as Muslim armies first began to arrive in Mawarannahr (the land beyond the river), they encountered a distinct Central Asian culture of oases-based cities that needed artificial irrigation to live. The culture was tolerant, syncretic and entrepreneurial, organized and taxed by villages, but led by a "local ruler [who] was a *primus inter pares* of the local nobility," and who ensured that the water was organized such that the community could live.²³ Under strong leadership—and with firm faith—this Persian speaking army of Arabs brought settlers, garrisons and taxation. In 751 A.D. they defeated the Chinese at Talas (in Kyrgyzstan), securing a regional influence that continues to this day. Local elites retained their power, however, except that there was now an Arab tax collector by their side.²⁴

The history of the region, and the world, changed with the 1220 arrival of Chingiz Khan whose Mongol hordes, after destroying everything in their path, eventually converted to Islam. He also brought with him a sense of politics that "turned largely on the capacity of potential

²² As quoted in Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 167.

²³ See Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, 181-196.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

leaders to attract...loyal followers,” as he replaced familial clans with “new ties based on symbolic forms of kinship, on fealty and gift-exchange, and sometimes on bureaucratic ties of office and discipline.”²⁵ Upon his death in 1227, each son received an *ulus*, or region of the Mongol empire.

Chingiz’s second son, Chagatay, received the region of Central Asia, which became nothing more than a “loose grouping of semi-independent fiefs ruled by various clans and families, partly Turkish and partly Mongol.”²⁶ From this mixed culture emerges the Chagatay language that Timur the Lame spoke. After consolidating his power around Samarkand in 1370, Timur created an empire from China to India to Turkey. As he conquered, he sent back the best architects and artisans to his beloved capital, Samarkand. Timur’s grandson, Ulug Beg, continued this cultural tradition, establishing Samarkand as the intellectual and theological global standard of the day. During this time, 1407-1449, he built the famous Registan, which featured a seminary whose teachings addressed theology and science; demonstrating that modernity and tradition were not incongruent to this region. His Timurid rule, not surprisingly, was administered by local elites who spoke Persian.²⁷

Chingiz’s grandson, Batu, inherited the *ulus* of Western Siberia. By the end of the 15th century, it had evolved into the Golden Horde, an empire of its own to which the emerging Russian state paid tribute. In the eastern part of this region—the Qipchaq steppe northeast and east of the Caspian Sea—developed the White Horde, among them the Uzbeks, who took their name from the Muslim and proselytizing Tatar chieftain, Ozbek Khan, son of Batu.²⁸ At the

²⁵ Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 390, 395.

²⁶ Edgar Knobloch, *Beyond the Oxus Archaeology, Art & Architecture of Central Asia* (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd, 1972), 40.

²⁷ Beatrice Forbes Manz, “The Development and Meaning of Chaghatay Identity,” in Jo-Ann Gross, ed., *Muslims in Central Asia Expressions of Identity and Change* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 39.

²⁸ Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks From the Fourteenth Century to the Present, A Cultural History* (Stanford: Hoover Press, 1990), 6, 32. See also Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation*

beginning of the 16th century, the Uzbeks' leader was Abul Fath Muhammad Shaybani Khan (1451-1510) who moved his people south and conquered Samarkand and the region in 1500.²⁹

A man of military, intellectual and spiritual prowess, he borrowed the Chagatay word for shepherd, shaban, which had been borrowed from Farsi, to name the dynasty that would rule Central Asia, in one form or another, for over three centuries.³⁰ As Edward Allworth carefully describes, Shaybani embodied and inspired a very different image of the Central Asia ruler than we have today. This ruler had values of justice, equity, generosity, modesty and even forgiveness.³¹

The Shaybanids, through different family branches, ruled in Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent while also establishing the khanates of Khiva (based in ancient Khorezm) and Kokand (all of which, except Kokand, are in present-day Uzbekistan). The civil society over which they ruled consisted of three layers that would eventually become the Uzbek people. The foundation layer was the elite local class of rulers, intellectuals and merchants—Sogdian in origin,³² Persian in language. This class would continue to exert their influence in the region's khanates and in the establishment of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan in 1925.³³ The term “sart,”

of Nations (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 7; and Zeki Velidi Togan, “The Origins of the Kazaks and the Ozbeks,” in *Central Asia Reader The Rediscovery of History*, ed. H. B. Paksoy (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 25-39.

²⁹ This conquest forced Babur to flee from the Ferghana Valley to India, where he established the Moghul empire which would rule until 1857.

³⁰ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 29, 52-55.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 18-21, 66.

³² The Sogdians were a merchant people who emerged from the oasis city-states of the Zerafshan river valley, dating back to the 6th Century B.C. conquests of Cyrus II. “Ethnically the Sogdians belonged to the Iranian family and their language was related to Persian. Their religion, as far as we can tell, was a synthesis of many creeds and currents, incorporating elements of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, and Christianity, together with Greek and Indian mythology.” (Knobloch, *Beyond the Oxus Archaeology*, 53-4).

³³ The Sarts were the ethnic basis for the Jadids, or intellectual, urban Muslims who sought to reform Islam. They lived mostly in Bukhara. Many Jadids saw the establishment of Uzbekistan as a chance to create “Greater Bukhara.” See Donald S. Carlisle, “Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and its Neighbors,” in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro’I (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 74.

describing this group of oasis elites, first comes into existence during this time.³⁴ The second layer consisted of that Chagatay speaking conglomeration of Turkic and Mongol tribes and fiefdoms that the Shaybanids, the third layer, conquered in 1500.

Unfortunately, just as this culture was developing within the Shaybanid led region, Vasco da Gama was “discovering” sea routes around Africa to open up trade between Asia and Europe. With the territory to the east and west of Central Asia not safe for travel along the Silk Road’s multiple routes, Central Asia began to wither into obscurity. From 1600 to the Russian conquest of the region (1865-1881), the region’s khanates became the familiar stereotype of cruel despotism that most now associate with Central Asia. In particular, as Allworth points out, Bukharan Emir Nasrullah-khan (1826-1860) did much to singularly embody this stereotype.³⁵ (He is famous in British history for beheading two British officers in 1842).³⁶

While it is this image of Central Asia that has become emblazoned in the Western psyche—and not the image of Ulug Beg or Shaybani—civil society itself has not deviated from its historic pattern. The local community, dependent on irrigation for life, was left alone under the leadership of indigenous elites who were responsible to the imperial and distant overlord. After the Russian conquests, for instance, the khanates of Khiva and Bukhara were allowed to keep their independence while accepting the lordship of the Tsar). In the territory officially administered by the Russians, known as the Governorate-General of Turkestan, the Russians, as much as possible, left the Central Asian peoples to themselves, administratively and socially.

The [Russian] authorities allowed...local judicial institutions, as well as the political institutions of the villages, to continue...on the political level, Russian authorities supported the traditional

³⁴ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 42; Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 4.

³⁵ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 10.

³⁶ For an account of this episode, see Fitzroy Maclean, *A Person from England and other Travellers to Turkestan* (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1958), 30-40. See also Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha America, Inc., 1990), 230-236, 270-280.

village leaders...the political organization of Central Asia was based on one definite principle: manage the population without interfering in its affairs.³⁷

In the major cities of the region, the Russians built their homes alongside, but separate from, the local people.³⁸ Despite the Russians' distinctive identity, no reciprocating consciousness developed among any of the people groups of Central Asia during the Russian occupation. "The ideas of 'nationality' and 'frontier' had no meaning for the people of Turkestan."³⁹ More importantly, as Olivier Roy notes "these populations were, and still are, widely intermingled, so that intra-ethnic identities (tribal, clan, locality, family, etc) were more important in determining loyalties than strictly ethnic origin."⁴⁰

Understanding the "Clans"

Understanding the "clans" of these oasis-societies is imperative to understanding Uzbekistan's civil society today and how it has developed in the last century, especially the last forty-five years. Unfortunately, most American academics and policy-makers alike have not sought to understand this roof under which Uzbek civil society operates.⁴¹ However, without understanding the "clan" concept—and how it manifests itself within such traditional structures as the *mahalla* and regional elites—one cannot understand Uzbekistan, making any kind of policy toward it almost irrelevant.

³⁷ Edward Allworth, ed., *Central Asia 120 Years of Russian Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 154, 159. See also Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 106.

³⁸ As Seymour Becker writes, the Russians were simply content with having "satellites rather than subjects." See his book, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865-1924* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), xiii.

³⁹ Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Central Asia* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1964), 41.

⁴⁰ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 3, Wheeler, *The Modern History of Central Asia*, 65.

⁴¹ An experienced Uzbek official once told me: "You understand our clans as well as any American. But you know nothing." Given the current context in Uzbekistan, Uzbek officials often spoke with me "off-the-record." As a function of honor, and security, I am not comfortable naming or dating quotes from Uzbek officials that stand any remote chance of negative interpretation by Tashkent. That said, this dissertation is a scholarly work and I have preserved my notes, which are available upon request.

The “clans” of Uzbekistan are actually regional networks of family and friends who trust each other and are obliged to one another in some way. Oliver Roy, based on his study of Uzbeks in northern Afghanistan, calls this a “dynamic model of ethnic identity, subjective and relative, that one must understand in terms of a social context highly influenced by the political moment...the key is to view [these] ‘solidarity groups’ from the perspective of political loyalties that go above and beyond such concepts as “tribe,” “clan,” and “segmentary group.”⁴²

This latter concept best describes the author’s own experiences in Uzbekistan and is in keeping with the definition of the ultimate clan politician, Islam Karimov. “The ultimate goal of a clan is to push its members as far as possible up into the ranks of the state hierarchy. The feature which distinguishes members of a clan is the same birthplace. This is important: it is not shared professional skills, nor a shared world outlook, nor shared spiritual interests, but simply a shared birthplace.”⁴³ In other words, while the clans have always competed for influence, they remain in dialogue with one another, a fluid yet stable patchwork of political and familial obligation, defined by geography, Uzbek patriotism and their desire for influence.⁴⁴

The Uzbek State Begins to Form

Eight years before the fall of the Russian empire, Count K.K. Phalen conducted an analysis of the region for the Tsar’s court. He observed: “I had my first glimpse of that peculiar subtlety with which the Asian regards the European. What I believe to be a genuine contempt is veiled by an appearance of outward submission that somehow suggests inner awareness of a culture and an

⁴² Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1995), 14.

⁴³ Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 60. Alisher Ilkhamov calls them “quasi clans.” See “The Limits of Centralization Regional Challenges in Uzbekistan,” in *The Transformation of Central Asia*, ed. Pauline Jones Luong (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 176.

⁴⁴ Also see Kathleen Collins, “Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (July 2002): 137-152; and by the same author, “The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories,” *World Politics* 56, no. 2 (January 2004): 224-261.

outlook on life vastly older than our own...The oasis peoples, with a legacy of countless centuries of experience in submitting to irresponsible rulers, appear to be more adept at giving ‘an appearance of outward submission’ than the Kazaks and Kirghiz.”⁴⁵ The Uzbeks of the oases would prove within the century how right he was.

In December of 1917, Lenin and Stalin signed a communiqué to “all you whose mosques and prayer houses have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled upon by the Tsars and oppressors of Russia: Your beliefs and usages, your national and cultural institutions are forever free and inviolate. Organize your national life in complete freedom.” Specifically addressed were the “Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan.”⁴⁶ Not addressed were the Uzbeks, who did not yet have a national conscious.

Stalin, because of his status as an ethnic expert—he had written “Marxism and the National Question” in July of 1913 in Vienna—had begun acting as the Commissar for Nationality Affairs before the post had even been created.⁴⁷ With military victory in the civil war complete, and the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin consolidated his power as only a dictatorial paranoid bent on power could, something the diction and demarcation of Central Asia (1925-1936) reveals. Under the slogan of “national in form but socialist in essence,” Stalin sought to seduce the peoples of Central Asia into the Soviet fold by creating previously non-existent national identities whose real purpose was to act as a mainstreaming vehicle that would indoctrinate the peoples of Central Asia into the Soviet (Russian) culture. This diction not only contradicted basic Marxist teaching

⁴⁵ Elizabeth E. Bacon, *Central Asians under Russian Rule A Study in Culture Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 208.

⁴⁶ As quoted in, Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism 1917-1923* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 155.

⁴⁷ Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin As Revolutionary 1879-1929* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), 168, 152-154.

of a global communism that denigrated nationalism or religion, it was ironic, as there was little to no national consciousness among the peoples of Central Asia.

This did not stop Stalin as he drew the map of Central Asia with a preventive eye toward future rebellions. The borders, which persist until today make no sense, unless viewed according to the three results achieved, which must have been catalytic in Stalin's thinking. First, the five Central Asia republics were drawn in such a way as to prevent the future possibility of political loyalty to preexisting structures such as the khanates (of which none kept all of their land within the confines of a newly created state; nor were the major khanates allowed to be in one state).

Second, there was sufficient dispersion and division of nascent ethnic groups such that they would balance each other within state boundaries, preventing them from becoming a unified force. (Even today, 25% of Tajikistan's people are Uzbek while two of the ancient khanates, Samarkand and Bukhara, have majority Tajik speaking populations but are located in Uzbekistan). Accordingly, this made the newly aware ethnic groups dependent on Moscow for power and Russian as the *lingua franca*, thereby encouraging incorporation into the new Soviet culture.⁴⁸

Such were the conditions in 1925 as the Soviets began the process of "Uzbekifying Uzbekistan."⁴⁹ Language, alphabets, history and cultural tradition had to be imposed or invented. Education and health care were made available across the land, especially to women. Timur the Lame, who predated the actual Uzbek people group, had to be made into an Uzbek by Professor Iakubovskii.⁵⁰ State structures—from the secret police to youth leagues—bound the peoples within the Uzbekistan borders together.

⁴⁸ Roy suggests that this divide and conquer approach also bolstered the region as a bulwark against pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic movements. (*The New Central Asia*, 66).

⁴⁹ Allworth, *Modern Uzbeks*, 219.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 243.

Soviet in Structure, Cultural in Content

With these Soviet trappings of nationhood provided, a process was begun whereby the unmasked for vehicle of the state would become a self-realized nation through the pre-existing culture. No matter the origins of this process, this nation-building process was founded on Uzbekistan as a place of shared Muslim values that permeates competing domestic elites at the grassroots and government levels. These cultural structures—community-based and linked through kinship bonds of blood, geography and mutual patronage—simply adapted themselves to the latest empire to show up in the region.

“This rooting of the state model...is an effect of sovietism,⁵¹ made possible not by the void created in civil society, but by the recomposition of civil society around an apparatus—the Communist Party—which it has subverted and turned to its own ends.”⁵² In other words, as Count Phalen would have expected, the Uzbeks, over time, rewrote Stalin’s slogan, creating an Uzbek-Soviet civil society that was simultaneously Soviet in structure, but cultural in content.⁵³

This dual-identity found basic expression in both rural and urban social organization, shaping, especially, the elites’ interactions and exercise of power relative to the Uzbek people and to Moscow. If we are to “trace the interaction of man in society and so much of his environment as varies locally,” as Mackinder would insist, we must begin here.

In rural areas, the arrival of the Soviet empire brought the collectivization of farms and the pooling of manpower to irrigate those farms. It was a very familiar system where a “Soviet-

⁵¹ “Sovietism is a form, an apparatus, a technique of power and an organization of the social which is permanently out of step with the ideology on which it is supposedly based, like a film out of synch with its sound-track. The ideological register, that of speeches, slogans, textbooks, symbols, billboards and newspapers is simultaneously saturated and empty.” Roy, *The New Central Asia*, xv.

⁵² *Ibid.*, xii.

⁵³ See James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan A Soviet Republic’s Road to Sovereignty* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 14, “Uzbek nationality, however artificial its original premises, has been shaped and consolidated by the federal institutions of the soviet system.”

oriented rural aristocracy was imposed on the traditional order...Soviet “water lords,” who controlled the irrigation system, represented a modern version of an ancient profession and practice.”⁵⁴ Despite the vertical nature of this new-old system, the system was run by the local clan and dependent upon the horizontal network to which the clan member/communist party member belonged. In other words, the collective farm (*kolkhoz*) official was “directly engaged with the population of the Kolkhoz [because] his political power depends on [clan-] networks originating within his district.”⁵⁵

If one weren't in a Russian *kolkhoz*, one probably belonged to a *mahalla*. Arabic for “place” or “neighborhood,” the *mahalla* has been around for millennia. Today, it continues to be the operational construct through which local elders, *aqsaqals*, rule the village, subdivision or even Soviet apartment building in the cities. At its best, the *mahalla* is the place where religious and family values are imbued and the group looks out for each other, together parenting their children, connecting their friends and families to jobs, distributing funds to those in need, and submitting to the judgment of the *aqsaqals*. This environment is what most Uzbeks experienced in the Soviet period, before they were old enough to go to school or work—where the Soviet/Russian culture was lived and taught—and what they returned to after school, and work. It was, and is, exactly the neighborliness that Mackinder longed for in 1919.

The *mahalla* has been a place where rich and poor, professional and laborer, Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi can meet together. The *mahalla* is a “remarkable synthesis of an informal social network

⁵⁴ Donald S. Carlisle, “Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan,” in *Soviet Central Asia The Failed Transformation*, ed. Donald S. Carlisle (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 99. See also, Elizabeth E. Bacon, *Central Asians under Russian Rule A Study in Culture Change*, 204; Poliakov, Sergei P. *Everyday Islam, Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia* (Ed., Martha Brill Olcott, trans., Anthony Olcott), Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1992, 16-17.

⁵⁵ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 92, 85. See also Alexander Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 185; and Patricia M. Carley, “The Legacy of the Soviet Political System and the Prospects for Developing Civil Society in Central Asia,” in *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1995), 297.

and a state territorial-administrative unit.”⁵⁶ As such, the *mahalla* represents a native neighborhood, as Mackinder would expect and approve, a civil society built on “collective identities and the reciprocal relationships necessary to get things done. People trust almost exclusively those who are in some way obligated to them and to whom they are obligated through multifaceted and often unquantifiable material and emotional ties.”⁵⁷ This is Uzbek civil society.

With this grassroots background, newly created Uzbek elites began to “serve” the Soviet Union at various governmental levels. As they did, they learned the taste of power and the desire to keep it (as the region’s elites had been doing forever). Keeping and building power meant balancing the desires of Moscow with the desires of their country and clan-networks. It was a delicate but not difficult tightrope to walk for most Muslim elites. They knew who they were—Uzbeks—and they were increasingly proud of it. But they also knew that their positions and prestige depended on their place in the Soviet structure.

The result was an elite bent on preserving power; simultaneously respecting the culture of Moscow and the culture in which they had been raised and to which they daily returned.⁵⁸ Importantly, the powerful pull of the traditional civil society demanded that its children protect and preserve it. Writing in 1955, Richard Pipes observed: “Muslim Party members are regarded rather as friends and protectors, capable of shielding the inhabitants from the full brunt of Soviet

⁵⁶David M. Abramson, “Identity Counts: The Soviet Legacy and the Census in Uzbekistan,” in *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*, ed. David Kertzer and Dominique Arel (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 186–99.

⁵⁷David M. Abramson, “Foreign Aid, Bureaucratization, and Uzbek Social Networks,” unpublished paper presented on March 20, 2000, at Harvard University, 11. See also Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 14; and Lawrence R. Robertson and Roger D. Kangas, “Central Power and Regional and Local Government in Uzbekistan,” in *Unity or Separation Center-Periphery Relations in the Former Soviet Union*, ed. Daniel R. Kempton and Terry D. Clark (Wesport: Praeger, 2002), 301.

⁵⁸See Elizabeth E. Bacon, *Central Asians under Russian Rule A Study in Culture Change*, 211: “They speak Russian, wear European style clothes, and generally conform in public to the behavior expected of them by Russian officials, but they remain a part of their own community.” See also Michael Rywkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Soviet Central Asia Challenge*, Revised Edition (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1990), 90–91.

policies.”⁵⁹ Writing in 2000, Olivier Roy concluded the same thing: “In short, it is indigenous people who live their lives according to a double code, but without schizophrenia, because there really are two social lives. The elites have a double culture, a double code, and pass from one to the other with no problem.”⁶⁰ (If there is any doubt, watch how quickly an Uzbek elite will switch back and forth from Russian to Uzbek according to the situation, or the topic of the conversation).⁶¹

The tie that binds top-down elites and bottom-up *mahallas* is Islam; an Islam not strident but eclectic, not tolerant but respectful, not abrasive but hospitable. Uzbeks know the five pillars of Islam, but generally only practice a couple at a time. They are not afraid to have a shot, or two, of vodka. They circumcise their boys and would make the pilgrimage to Mecca if they could afford it. They also, however, celebrate *Nov Rus*, a spring festival that existed before Islam’s arrival, even as they worry about the “evil eye” and counter it in different ways (e.g., burning a candle after the birth of a child).

Perhaps the greatest symbol of Uzbek society is found on the façade of a seminary that Ulug Beg built in the 15th century to study theology and science. Defying conservative Islam’s ban on iconography, this mural displays two sun-tigers chasing two white deer. The sun-tigers reflect the Zoroastrian fire of a religion that pre-dates Islam. The deer represent a sometimes passive and pessimistic people used to being invaded, dependent upon a flexible faith to comfort them.⁶²

⁵⁹ Richard Pipes, “Muslims of Central Asia, Part II,” *Middle East Journal* X, No. 3 (1955): 306.

⁶⁰ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 82. Some, however, think that such a duality remains rare, especially because of the Soviet influence. See Alisher Ilkhamov, “Impoverishment of the Masses in the Transition Period: Signs of an Emerging ‘New Poor’ Identity in Uzbekistan,” *Central Asian Survey* 20 No. 1 (2001), 33-54.

⁶¹ This has been my repeated experience in various social and professional settings.

⁶² There is an old Soviet joke about the passivity of the Uzbeks. Some Soviet officials tell a group of Uzbeks that the price of bread has gone up from 15 kopecks to 1 rouble. They don’t complain. The Soviets keep raising the price of the bread, from 15 to 50 roubles and the Uzbeks still don’t complain. Finally the Soviet officials, out of frustration, tell the Uzbeks: “Tomorrow we will hang you. Do you have any questions?” The Uzbeks reply, asking “Yes, will you provide the rope or should we bring our own?”

“Even though the majority of...mullahs do not know dogma, the canonically approved rituals, or the prayers, they serve Islam very well on the daily level, because they know very well what *their* people need. They preserve *their* Islam, which consists of everything that satisfies *their* society.”⁶³ To be Uzbek is to be Muslim.⁶⁴ And to be Uzbek is to have a robust and resilient civil society that endures and protects the people of your clan-network, locally, regionally and nationally—which would have been much to Mackinder’s pleasure if he had applied his own philosophy to the Heartland itself.

Regionalism & Rashidov

The above characteristics have been common to the civil society of Transoxiana for millennia. Yet they take particular form, as Mackinder would insist on understanding, in the various regions, and thus clans, of Uzbekistan. Depending on the expert, there are five,⁶⁵ six⁶⁶ or seven regions to Uzbekistan. This dissertation uses seven because it allows greater possibility to “trace the interaction of man in society and so much of his environment as varies locally.” Roy

⁶³ Sergei P. Poliakov, *Everyday Islam, Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia*, 106.

⁶⁴ This saying is common in Uzbekistan today, despite periodic and best efforts of the Soviet to repress Islam (especially in the late 1920s and late ‘50s and early ‘60s). Soviet Moscow eventually followed in Tsarist St. Petersburg’s steps, establishing the Central Asian Spiritual Directorate of Muslims (SADUM) in Tashkent, which helped Moscow tout Central Asia’s Muslims to the 3rd world as an example of what Communism could do for them.

It should be noted, however, that some believe that the success of “Soviet educational, political and economic achievements in weakening, if not totally destroying traditional Islamic cultural forms, has been considerable.” See Nazif Sharhrani, “Central Asia and the Challenge of the Soviet Legacy,” *Central Asian Survey* (1993), 12(2), 131. See also Pauline Jones Luong, ed., *The Transformation of Central Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), where Jones argues that there is “new evidence” that Islam was not a “dominant social force” in Central Asia during the Soviet period (4, 12).

⁶⁵ See Donald S. Carlisle, “Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan,” 96-98. Carlisle lists them as: Tashkent region; Ferghana Valley; Samarkand/Bukhara; Northwest territories (Karakalpakstan); and the southern regions (which includes the districts of Sukhandarya and Kashkadarya). See also Demian Vaisan, “Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan,” in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro’I (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 107-108. Vaisan lists: Ferghana Valley; Khorezm; Samarkand-Bukhara; Tashkent; and the Kashkadarya—Sukhandarya region.

⁶⁶ Daria Fane, “Ethnicity and Regionalism in Uzbekistan Maintaining Stability through Authoritarian Control,” 278-280. Fane includes the following regions: Tashkent, Ferghana Valley, Samarkand/Bukhara, Sukhandarya and Kashkadarya, Khorezm, and Karakalpakstan.

delineates them as follows: Ferghana, Khwarezm, Karakalpakistan, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Sukhandarya—Kashkadarya.⁶⁷

The Soviets used these traditional regions as the administrative boundaries, thus preserving the “preexisting patron-client relations among the Uzbek clans.”⁶⁸ The power of regional clans depended on their respective relationships with Moscow. In the beginning, the Jadids of Bukhara were prominent among the first elites running Uzbekistan but they were murdered in Stalin’s purges of 1937-38. The Tashkent-Ferghana faction subsequently came to power, but lost influence to the Samarkand faction with the reign of Sharaf Rashidov (1959-1983). With Rashidov’s death, Moscow found favor with the Tashkent-Ferghana clan. The Samarkand clan came back to power with the appointment of Islam Karimov as Party Secretary in June of 1989. He has ruled ever since.⁶⁹

Throughout the Soviet period, Moscow’s policy was to place native elites at the top posts in Central Asia, but also to place Russians as their deputies, using an “indirect administration” to run the empire. They also insisted that national elites remain within their Central Asia republics and they were never posted to the western half of the Soviet Union, let alone to another Central Asian republic. (The opposite was true for the Russians).⁷⁰ Consequently, with no opportunity for promotion outside of Uzbekistan, Uzbek elites stayed in Uzbekistan, developing their own clan-networks along with their communist careers. The Soviets were aware of this informal “nepotism”,⁷¹ but did nothing to stop it as long as Uzbekistan provided the cotton quotas

⁶⁷ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 98.

⁶⁸ Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 86.

⁶⁹ See Roy’s chapter 6, “Political Factionalism and National Affirmation during the Soviet Era,” *The New Central Asia*; and Donald S. Carlisle, “Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev,” in *Soviet Central Asia The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

⁷⁰ See Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 104, 107; See also, James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 29.

⁷¹ Bacon, *Central Asians under Russian Rule A Study in Culture Change*, 204.

required by Moscow (Uzbekistan was and remains the fourth largest producer of cotton in the world today). This was especially true during the “stagnation” of the Brezhnev years.

The dual-nature of the Uzbek-Soviet identity among elites was solidified during the long reign of Sharaf Rashidov, who embodied this approach. On the one hand, he worked hard to stay in the good graces of Moscow. He “required his collaborators to have perfect mastery of the Russian language” and that the elites’ children go to Russian schools.⁷² He told Moscow what they wanted to hear, especially when it came to cotton quotas. On the other hand, Rashidov “prided himself on being widely published and read as an Uzbek author.”⁷³

All the while he was building a massive patrimonial network of relationships and contacts. He was able to do so because Rashidov presented himself, in deed and word, as the national *aqsaqal*, or elder, who, in the eyes of his people should be a “subtle psychologist” that is “wise and experienced” and who “understands the power mechanisms in a society that, in the main, lives according to the deeply ingrained laws of a rural community.”⁷⁴ When it became clear that Rashidov had hoodwinked Moscow over the years, keeping cotton profits for himself and his clan-network, he suddenly had a heart attack as Moscow wondered if it actually controlled the empire.⁷⁵

Between 1984 and 1987—coinciding with the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev who was anti-Islamic but pro-reform—90% of the ruling elites in Uzbekistan were replaced, to include 10 of 13 District Party chiefs.⁷⁶ Throughout the Soviet Union, this corruption became known as “The Uzbek Affair.” Moscow denounced this affair as “clientelism,” “localism” and “Rashidovism.”

⁷² Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 109.

⁷³ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 313.

⁷⁴ Demian Vaisan, “Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan,” 109-110.

⁷⁵ For an extended discussion of whether Rashidov was a nationalist or party stooge, see Gregory Gleason, “Sharaf Rashidov and the Dilemmas of National Leadership,” *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. ¾ (1986): 133-160.

⁷⁶ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 125; See also Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 43.

Rashidov was personally denigrated in several newspapers as a “latter-day Uzbek khan with a party card”⁷⁷ (which is, of course, exactly what he was). It had taken the Soviets only fifty-eight years to begin discovering that their “New Soviet Man” vision was incongruous with the culture of Central Asia.

Uzbeks took exception to being designated as corrupt, seeing the crackdown as an “ethnic vendetta emanating from Moscow,” designed to “achieve a fundamental transformation of the traditionally Islamic native societies...[and] break the hold of the networks of local officials.”⁷⁸ Moscow failed for two reasons. First, the very Uzbek reaction itself—as *Uzbeks*—confirmed that the Soviet system had succeeded in creating an ethnic identity separate from the Soviet/Russian conception of identity. Anything Russian Moscow did against Uzbek Tashkent would only further galvanize that identity, strengthening Uzbek defiance.

Second, Uzbeks were also clan members, possessing a different concept of “corruption” than imperial Moscow. “Given the dependence of most people in Uzbekistan on familial and other social ties, as soon as resources become available to one member of a network, it is expected that that person will distribute the wealth among his or her own.”⁷⁹ In other words, one person’s “corruption” is another’s coping mechanism for a state that does not provide for the society. As Uzbekistan expert James Critchlow concludes, without judgment: “Behavior that is reprehensible by the norms of one society may be admissible by those of another.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ As quoted by James Critchlow, “Prelude to ‘Independence:’ How the Uzbek Party Apparatus Broke Moscow’s Grip on Elite Recruitment,” in *Soviet Central Asia The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 135.

⁷⁸ Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 42, 41.

⁷⁹ David Abramson, “Civil Society and the Politics of Foreign Aid in Uzbekistan,” unpublished manuscript, 4. See also Michael Rywkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Soviet Central Asia Challenge*, revised ed. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1990), 150.

⁸⁰ Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 46. See also Roy, *The New Central Asia*, xiii; and Gregory Gleason, “Fealty and Loyalty: Informal Authority Structures in Soviet Asia,” *Soviet Studies* 43, no. 4 (1991): 613-628.

The Rashidov affair more than demonstrates the permanence of civil society patterns that have persisted in Transoxiana since recorded history began. It also set the stage for more of the same in the Post-Soviet Era as Uzbek nationalism began to take different expression, especially among Tashkent intellectuals. The political party, *Birlik*, was formed in 1988, becoming a voice for Uzbek issues vis-à-vis Moscow's policies regarding Russian language requirements, the Russian names of local streets and parks, the environment, its treatment of Islam and the feeling that 'outsider' Russians had the best jobs.⁸¹

Karimov and Nation Solidification

With the Ferghana Valley's ethnic violence of June 1989 (Uzbek-Meskheti Turk), Gorbachev brought a new First Secretary to power, Islam Karimov. Taken from the backwater province of Sukhandarya—Kashkadarya, Karimov was a technocrat, an economist who did not have any visible connections to the "Uzbek Affair" (although he was from Samarkand) and, most importantly, possessed no inherent power base.⁸² The last person to expect political acumen from, he was soon 'cherry-picking' *Birlik's* issues, rehabilitating Rashidov, defining himself against Moscow and—according to the historic model, from Timur the Lam to Rashidov—developing his own network as he consolidated his power. By 1993, Karimov was the unambiguous leader of Uzbekistan.⁸³

⁸¹ See Critchlow's chapter 6, "Objections to the Russian Presence," in *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*.

⁸² His rise is reminiscent of Tito's ascent to power after the 1937-38 purges among the Yugoslav communists. See Donald S. Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and its Neighbors," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'I (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 82-83.

⁸³ For an account of how Karimov institutionalized his centralized power, see Donald S. Carlisle, "Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan: Back to the Future," in *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership*, ed. Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 197-201; William Fierman, "Political Development in Uzbekistan: Democratization?," in *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 374-392; and Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, 120-136.

The peoples of Uzbekistan respected the stability he brought amidst the ethnic riots of 1990, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the beginning of the civil war in Tajikistan in 1992. Uzbeks began to consider their leader as a grandfather figure. As one member of Tashkent's intelligentsia told me: "Traditional Uzbeks have an acceptance of someone who has more power and has the last word ...just like the Uzbek family, where the father fills this role. President Karimov is the head of the Uzbek household." Although the situation was much different by the end of 2005, Karimov was legitimately popular for much of his rule.

Not surprisingly, however, as the West chose to see only the appearance of another Central Asian authoritarian, behind the scenes it was as it always has been—a centralized power that still had to account for, and balance, the regional elites. "The loyalty of regional forces, and therefore stability in general, must be achieved much as it was during the Soviet period—that is, by maintaining a fine balance between concessions and reprisals."⁸⁴ As Karimov is reported to have said: "They [the regional clans] are the first thing I think about when I get up in the morning."⁸⁵ Accordingly, the average regional leader's time in power is 3.1 years;⁸⁶ Karimov did not want grass to grow underneath the feet of any potential competitor.

In sum, we may understand Uzbekistan as a twice (1925 and 1991) unasked-for state that has become a nation at the center of Mackinder's heartland. It is a people group defined by its culture of grassroots and governmental elites who share a common bond in Islam. These are the "properties of the material" in which the United States works as it seeks to "understand the realities of the round world on which we must practice the intricate art of living together."⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Alisher Ilkhamov "The Limits of Centralization Regional Challenges in Uzbekistan," in *The Transformation of Central Asia*, ed. Pauline Jones Luong (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 161.

⁸⁵ As given to the author by a senior Uzbek official. For more on Karimov's view of the regional clans and their potential threat to Uzbekistan, see Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 60, 62.

⁸⁶ Ilkhamov, "The Limits of Centralization Regional Challenges in Uzbekistan," 170.

⁸⁷ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 19.

U.S. Civil Society vs. Uzbek Civil Society

Given this geography, history and culture, seemingly the world's latest superpower would take a geo-communal perspective as the basis for engaging Central Asia, and especially its core, Uzbekistan, in an appropriate manner. This would not be the case as the U.S. lost an opportunity to promote its policies because it did not understand the culture.

Certainly prophets at the time accurately named the dynamics at play. Donald S. Carlisle argued that Uzbekistan's "domestic political geography and internal regional politics provide the best framework for understanding how national and ethnic relations unfold."⁸⁸ Martha Brill Olcott made clear that understanding the clan-networks is "perhaps the single most crucial element" in understanding Central Asia, especially that clan politics "convey privilege" and "responsibility."⁸⁹ And Robert Kaplan concluded from his travels in Uzbekistan that "Islamic identity ... engender[s] community-mindedness. Though Islamization has proved fertile ground for terrorists, it also offers a path toward civil society that former-Soviet Central Asia desperately requires."⁹⁰

Despite these voices, the U.S. did not engage Uzbekistan as it is, in accordance with the pre-existing civil society formed and informed by clan-networks at the grassroots and government levels, united in a Muslim culture. Suffering from an acute case of "cartographic camouflage" (to be discussed in the next chapter), the U.S. failed to recognize the geo-strategic importance of Uzbekistan until 9/11. In the meantime, the U.S. suffered throughout the bilateral relationship from a preconceived and ideological notion of civil society as it failed to grasp the importance

⁸⁸ Donald S. Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and its Neighbors," 72.

⁸⁹ Martha Brill Olcott, "Islam and Fundamentalism in Central Asia," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'I (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 25.

⁹⁰ Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy* (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1996), 278.

of, let alone work within, the literal and figurative terrain of Uzbekistan's pre-existing civil society.

Why? The answer is as simple now as it was for Mackinder in 1919: "*Our view of geographical realities is colored for practical purposes by our preconceptions of the past... human society is still related to the facts of geography not as they are but in no small measure as they have been approached in the course of history.*"

An Absence of a Geo-communal Perspective

With the winning of the Cold War, the United States clearly suffered from the "Victory Disease"—where "victors continue to pursue the strategies that brought them victory in utterly new and inappropriate circumstances that the victory has created."⁹¹ In the case of Uzbekistan, America refused to acknowledge, let alone map, the geo-communal landscape—to understand the peoples and regions of Uzbekistan and how they interact locally with their geography. The U.S. already had its definition of civil society and there was obviously no room in it for Uzbekistan's pre-existing civil society.

Consider the following experts. "The basis for creating civil society does not yet exist in Uzbekistan."⁹² "These states possess a political culture that includes pre-Soviet and Soviet-era influences, both of which repudiate a civil society...a framework conducive to establishing a civil society remains largely nonexistent."⁹³ Apparently, there are "many complex reasons for

⁹¹ James Kurth, "The American Way of Victory: A Twentieth Century Trilogy," *The National Interest*, Summer 2000.

⁹² Abdumannob Polat, "Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?" in *Civil Society in Central Asia*, ed. M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 135.

⁹³ Roger D. Kangas, "State Building and Civil Society in Central Asia," in *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1995), 271. (Curiously, in other writings, Kangas recognizes that "we in the west do not organize our lives around our families as do the Central Asians;" see footnote #17 in Roger D. Kangas, "Central Power and Regional and Local Government in Uzbekistan," 305).

the absence of civil society.”⁹⁴ Among them, seemingly, is that “rather than adopting the model used by much of the developed world for the implementation of welfare through professional social workers, Uzbekistan has chosen a community-based system that depends on character, knowledge and inherent fairness of elders in the community.”⁹⁵ And it was an “absence of...civil society” that hampered the Clinton administration’s policy goals for the region.⁹⁶

This attitude and approach continued to plague the U.S. approach through George W. Bush’s administration, to include the foremost promoter of “civil society” in Central Asia and Uzbekistan, the U.S. Agency for International Development. In 2003, for example, it trumpeted: “civil society is beginning to develop in Uzbekistan.” It proved this development by citing the more than “500 non-governmental organizations” that were working in Uzbekistan.⁹⁷

What is civil society? According to Adam B. Seligman, it is the outgrowth of western political thought, that space where “free, self-determining individuality sets forth its claims for satisfaction of its wants and personal autonomy.”⁹⁸ Another leading expert, Larry Diamond, defines civil society as the “realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.” According to Diamond, civil society is at its best when “it is dense, affording individual opportunities to participate in multiple associations and informal networks at multiple levels of

⁹⁴ Patricia M. Carley, “The Legacy of the Soviet Political System and the Prospects for Developing Civil Society in Central Asia,” in *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1995), 292.

⁹⁵ Marianne Kamp, “Between Women and the State Mahalla Committees and Social Welfare in Uzbekistan,” in *The Transformation of Central Asia*, ed. Pauline Jones Luong (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 56.

⁹⁶ Stephen Sestanovich, Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States, Remarks to the Asia-Pacific Subcommittee, House International Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., 17 March 1999 (accessed 3 April 1999); available from http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1999/990317_sestanovich_hirc.tml.

⁹⁷ “U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with Eurasia—FY2002, Country Assessments—Uzbekistan” (accessed 2 February 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rpt/23630.htm>.

⁹⁸ Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3.

society.” Necessarily it is hard for civil society to function in places like Central Asia where “civil traditions were weakest and predatory rule greatest.”⁹⁹

Taken together, the above comments betray a Western-oriented set of beliefs and values focused on the individual with little understanding of, let alone appreciation for, Uzbekistan’s pre-existing society. David Rieff summarizes the Western approach to civil society by suggesting that where it is “absent, repressive, tyrannical, even genocidal forces are supposed to have a freer hand.” Civil society is thus “everything that is not the state” and exemplifies a “set of inherently democratic values.” As such, Rieff concludes, this approach seems to be “part of the dominant ideology of the post-cold war period: liberal market capitalism.”¹⁰⁰

These definitions do not suggest conceptual, let alone practical, room for engaging religion, existing traditional structures, or elites. Why were American policy-makers and practitioners unable to take a geo-communal perspective, as Mackinder would demand?

To begin with, Americans strategists and civil society experts alike have had an especially tough time in understanding the role of religion in international affairs. “The sweet dream of American political thought—reborn in each generation, it seems—is that cultural factors like religion will shrink into insignificance as blessed pragmatism finally comes into its own.”¹⁰¹ Since the Enlightenment the West has separated church and state with good result. The casualty, however, has been traditional international relations, which has generally not provided a role for religion in its analysis.

“To the extent that religion is included as a factor of analysis, it is often framed as a simplistic ideology...and catalyst to conflict, rather than a complex worldview that forms and

⁹⁹ Larry Diamond, “Rethinking Civil Society Toward Democratic Consolidation,” *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 3 (1994): 5, 14-15.

¹⁰⁰ David Rieff, “The False Dawn of Civil Society,” *The Nation*, 22 February 1999, 12.

¹⁰¹ Jack Miles, “Religion and American Foreign Policy,” *Survival* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 25.

informs culture and action, and therefore deserves more subtle discussion.”¹⁰² If this is the case, and it is certainly was with the U.S. engagement of Uzbekistan, then Americans need to find a way to participate in this discussion, preferably with Uzbeks.¹⁰³

In similar fashion, it is extremely difficult for the American conception of civil society to allow for existing traditional structures—e.g., elite networks and the *mahalla*—that are, worse, tied to religion. It just does not compute for most secular Americans. Inevitably, pre-existing cultural mechanisms are viewed as part of the problem, instead of as a culturally congruent form that might share, even promote, the values that American civil society holds dear.

The result is to push the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that act as single-issue advocacy platforms. Unfortunately, however, while they might fit into a western concept of civil society, these NGOs simply do not do as well in places like Uzbekistan. For example, in 2004, an older Uzbek man received U.S. training on how to deliver a political speech in ten minutes. When he was told to practice it in front of his fellow trainees, he spent the first ten minutes greeting everyone, as Uzbek culture calls on well-mannered people to do. He still had his friends, but he was now a training failure.¹⁰⁴

In his groundbreaking work, Daniel John Stevens considers the role of Western and U.S. donors in promoting civil society in Uzbekistan. He confirms several disturbing, but not surprising, trends. First, among western donors, there doesn't seem to be a ready definition of what civil society actually is. For most it is interchangeable with “democracy-building” and usually results in a “focus on NGOs as proxy for civil society.” He notes that western and US

¹⁰² Chris Seiple and Josh White, “Uzbekistan and the Central Asian Crucible of Religion and Security,” in *Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Affairs*, ed. Dennis Hoover and Robert Seiple (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., 2004) ,45.

¹⁰³ One innovative program on religion and education was presented by the Department of Defense in the Fall of 2002. Unfortunately, as the coming war with Iraq took precedent, this \$10 million dollar project was scratched. Interview with DOD official, 15 June 2004.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Uzbek participant who observed this American NGO-led training exercise.

donors are reluctant to engage traditional structures because they seem to be at odds with the western values the donor is trying to inculcate. He even concludes that the “prefix ‘civil’ in ‘civil society’ parallels the ‘good’ in ‘good governance’—they both refer to a set of assumptions about the way societies are best run. The civil society to be created is far from value free or pluralistic, but an attempt to create a constituency that is able to bolster and advocate for neo-liberal reforms.”¹⁰⁵

Instead, Stevens suggests that a more communitarian approach to civil society is needed, one that would “support ‘pre-modern’...communities, valuing their functions of solidarity and sociability and allowing them to structure participation in both a parochial sense, in projects of community development, and politically, seeking to help their elites represent the community interest at the state level. Such an approach is sceptical of the extent to which modern associational forms can exist except on the foundations of pre-modern affiliations.”¹⁰⁶ Noted Uzbek anthropologist David Abramson concludes that this western civil society ideology “does indeed seem to foster a particular hegemony in which “civility” is symbolically opposed to accommodating an Islamic political culture.”¹⁰⁷

USAID officials confirm these critiques. As one long-time USAID employee, an Uzbek, said: “USAID doesn’t deal directly with the *mahalla* system, except to seek its approval for local and micro-finance loans and its influence with delinquent loanees.” Or, as another USAID employee noted, USAID, before 9/11, was focused on simply having more NGOs. Using a “classic, cookie-cutter” template, USAID taught people how to fund-raise, develop a staff, etc.

¹⁰⁵ Daniel John Stevens, *Conceptual Travels Along the Silk Road: On Civil Society Aid in Uzbekistan*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2004, 100-111. See pp. 245-46, Appendix 2 for a concise and very useful chart on how the various western donor agencies define civil society.

¹⁰⁶ Stevens, 52.

¹⁰⁷ David Abramson, “A Critical Look at NGOs and Civil Society as Means to an End in Uzbekistan,” unpublished paper, 20.

There was never a focus on what the NGO actually did (although this has begun to change since 9/11).¹⁰⁸

Stevens goes so far as to conclude that not unlike Lenin and his development of the Vanguard of the Proletariat (as discussed in his 1902 treatise, “What is to be Done?”), the aim of western donors has been to “foster a professional elite of civil society activists, workshop trained and clearly versed in ‘what is to be done’, to assume the leading role in the transition” to western civil society.¹⁰⁹

In sum, because of these prevailing attitudes, one is hard pressed from 1991 to 2005 to find any U.S. program that regularly engaged Islam, the *mahalla*, or the elites in a sustained manner; that is, traditional Uzbek society. The absence of a geo-communal perspective resulted in less understanding, which, in turn, could not help but impact American policy.

As one senior US embassy official described at the end of a three year tour in June of 2002: “It’s amazing how little we know about the internal politics.”¹¹⁰ Or, as one of the most experienced U.S. interagency officials in Central Asia said in February of 2005: “It’s really impossible to figure out what’s actually going on in Uzbek politics.”¹¹¹

Conclusion

Mackinder’s “revolutionary idea was that the study of geography should be approached from the human standpoint.”¹¹² Such an idea requires a geo-communal engagement strategy that is congruent with the culture, remembering that “the transformation of a traditionalist society can

¹⁰⁸ USAID interviews, April 2004, and October 2005, Tashkent.

¹⁰⁹ Stevens, 121. See 248-249 for a ready-reference chart for programs conducted by Western donors in Uzbekistan.

¹¹⁰ USG official, June 2002, Tashkent.

¹¹¹ USG official, February 2005, Washington, D.C.

¹¹² Charles Kruszewski, “The Pivot of History,” *Foreign Affairs* (April 1954): 390.

proceed only by traditional methods.”¹¹³ Crucial to understanding Uzbekistan is the role Islam plays. Indeed, it is “unlikely that anything akin to civil society will develop and prosper in Uzbekistan without the cultural and moral framework provided by resurgent Islam.”¹¹⁴ Still, there is a need for caution because “nations cannot be born, or reborn, in a day; nor can the raw material of individual men, personally excellent, be manufactured into a living national organism by mere external pressure. Growth processes are from within.”¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Sergei P. Poliakov, *Everyday Islam, Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia*, 4-5.

¹¹⁴ Reuel Hanks, “Civil Society and Identity in Uzbekistan,” in *Civil Society in Central Asia*, ed. M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 174.

¹¹⁵ A. T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia*, 173.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Going Concern:

A Geo-Strategic Perspective

As we consider this rapid review of the broader currents of history, does not a certain persistence of geographical relationships become evident? Is not the pivot region of the world's politics the vast area of Euro-Asia which is inaccessible to ships...Russia replaces the Mongol Empire¹...It is true that the camel-men and horse-men are going; but my suggestion is that railways will take their place [in the heartland], and then you will be able to fling power from side to side of this area.²

— Halford J. Mackinder, January 1904

We must understand that the importance of Central Asia...to the United States lies... [in its] geographic proximity to key theaters in Europe, the Middle East, and across Asia. Military power can be projected back and forth from any one of these theaters...the Transcaspian area is pivotal to any such exercise.³

— Stephen J. Blank, July 2005

Just over one hundred years ago, Sir Halford John Mackinder presented a majestically bold and simple idea that has since become the intellectual heartland of geopolitics and, unbeknownst to most Americans, the forgotten foundation of Cold War foreign policy as well as 21st century security. While there remains a range of interpretations about Mackinder and the threefold

¹ Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996), 191. In 1996, the National Defense University (NDU) republished several of Halford Mackinder's works as *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. These works include: "The Scope and Methods of Geography," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 9, No. 3 (1887): 141-160 [hereafter cited as "Scope and Methods"]; "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal* 23, No. 4 (1904): 421-444 [hereafter cited as "Pivot"]; *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (London: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1919) [hereafter cited as *Ideals and Reality*]; and "The Round World and Winning the Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 21, No. 4 (July 1943): 595-605 [hereafter cited as "Round World"]. All page references to these works are found in the NDU re-publishing.

² As recorded in Harm J. de Blij, ed., *Systematic Political Geography*, second edition, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1973).285-286. [author's italics]

³ Stephen J. Blank, "After Two Wars: Reflections on the American Strategic Revolution in Central Asia," a monograph of the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, July 2005, v. It is unclear whether Blank's use of the word "pivotal" is intentional; probably not because there is no mention of Mackinder in the monograph, except in passing on page 3 (in reference to another article).

application of his theory, there is one undeniable and underlying constant to his thinking: understanding the geo-communal and geo-strategic of the Heartland was vital to balancing Eurasian and therefore global security.

Mackinder sought one thing: a “formula [that] should have a practical value as setting into perspective some of the competing forces in current international politics...My aim [is to]...express human history as part of the life of the world organism.”⁴ As the Englishman told his 1904 audience during the Q & A, “My aim is...to make a geographical formula into which you [can] fit any political balance.”⁵ In order to do so, one had to possess a keen awareness of history and geography, especially their relationship in understanding the geo-strategic impact of the Heartland on the development of Europe and the Middle East.

This chapter considers the geo-strategic history, or “going concern,” of this pivotal region and its impact on Western civilization (calling attention to our ethnocentric approach as a result). Before examining the three phases of the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship in detail, the chapter pays particular attention to the influence of the Heartland concept on American geo-strategic thinking during the Cold War, noting the double irony of the U.S. departure from southern Central Asia (Afghanistan)⁶ as the Cold War ended:

- 1) The U.S. forgot the intellectual underpinning of its Cold War victory, i.e., Mackinder’s instrumental role in the shaping of containment policy; and,
- 2) The U.S. forgot Mackinder’s insistence that his Heartland concept be re-applied to each new era.

⁴ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 176.

⁵ As recorded in de Blij, *Systematic Political Geography*, 286.

⁶ As mentioned above, this dissertation, in keeping with Central Asians’ own views, defines Central Asia as Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Because there was seemingly no awareness of Mackinder's Heartland philosophy among American policy-makers, there was also no strategic imperative to remain engaged in Central Asia, as America left an Islamic extremist movement behind that the U.S. had helped create and sustain.

As a result, the U.S. haphazardly engaged Uzbekistan from 1991-2000, emphasizing human rights and civil society without a geo-communal understanding of Uzbek culture and civil society. With September 11th, however, the United States emphasized the geo-strategic out of military necessity as it waged a global war against terrorists, starting in Afghanistan. Even then, however, there still was little, if any, appreciation for Mackinder's geo-political thinking.

Heartland History: Empire-Builder & Empire Buffer

David Christian reminds us that the southern borderlands of 'Inner Asia'—the Heartland's Pivot Point, modern day Central Asia—is one of the most dynamic points in Eurasia. It was here that the nomadic north met the settled south, where the hunters and grazers of the steppes met city and farm. As these two worlds mingled and merged in Central Asia, the only common denominator was permanent instability. But Christian also notes that as far back as the second millennium B.C., the cities of Central Asia acted as the world's "hub", linking "China, India and Mesopotamia, and they also linked the pastoralist and the woodland cultures of Inner Eurasia to the agrarian cultures of Outer Eurasia."⁷ (The same dynamic took place along the Great Wall of China, as nomadic groups forever changed the course of Chinese history).

At the center of Central Asia is that area between the Syr-Darya, or Jaxartes River (in southern Kazakhstan today) and the Amu-Darya, or Oxus River to its south (the present day border between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan). Known as Transoxiana through much of its

⁷ David Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia, Volume I: Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd, 1998), 17-18, 105, 115.

history, this place—now the home of modern day Uzbekistan—has served two purposes throughout history. It has been a place to build one’s empire by invading west; or it has been a buffer zone through which the expanding energy of the surrounding empires could be absorbed without catastrophic conflict. In both cases, its Eurasian, and thus global, impact is undeniable; something we forget to our detriment.

Heartland Catalyst: Creation of Empire

The Scythians were the first Central Asians to impact the “known” world (that is, the recorded history of Europe). In 750 B.C., they left the Fergana Valley, the easternmost part of present day Uzbekistan, and migrated east. Eventually they controlled southern Russia, to the north of the Caucasus. Herodotus tells us that the Persian king Darius had to attack the Scythians in the Caucasus in order to protect his northern flank. (514-512 B.C.).⁸

Nearly a millennium later, another group, the Huns, started to migrate west from the Altai Mountains. Presumed descendents of the Hsiung-nu people of northern China/Mongolia, this group became a distinct ethnic identity on the steppes of Kazakhstan in the first centuries of the common era. They also migrated east, settling in southern Russia, pushing the Indo-European people into Europe. It was this group that gave birth to Attila the Hun, who would terrorize the Roman Empire in Germany, Italy and the Balkans from 441 to 453 A.D.⁹

No matter who emerged from the nomadic reservoirs of greater Mongolia and moved westward into Central Asia, they brought the Darwinian nature of their land with them. As Rene Grousset observes:

⁸ Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia* 133; Rene Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 9.

⁹Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 75-76; Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 226-231; Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion*, 170-171.

[The art of the] Assyrians and Achaemenids, like the China of the Han, show prowling beasts, pursuing or defying each other within a simple, airy setting. Steppe artists, whether Scythians or Huns, show scuffles—often as entangled as a thicket of lianas—between animals locked in a death struggle. Theirs is a dramatic art of the crushed limbs, of horses or deer seized by leopards, bears, birds of prey, or griffins, the bodies of the victims being often wrenched completely round. No swiftness here, no flight; instead a patient and methodical tearing of throats in which...the victim appears to drag the slayer to his death.¹⁰

This zero-sum conception of life still permeates Central Asian thinking today. Paradoxically, however, there is also a syncretic dimension in the Central Asian form of power politics. These characteristics defined such homegrown empires as the Seljuks (1040-1141 A.D.), whose empire first demonstrated why Mackinder aptly named Central Asia as the pivot point of history.¹¹

As the Samanid Empire—Sunni Persians who were the first indigenous rulers to oversee Transoxiana and Iran from Bukhara—approached its demise in 999 A.D., it gave its successor states three transcendent characteristics. Foremost was an established Persian language equivalent to Arabic in both statecraft and poetry. Second, it left an administrative organization second to none. Third, it bequeathed a proselytizing spirit, which laid the foundation for the rise of the Seljuk Empire.

In 893 A.D., for example, we know that the Samanids crossed their northern frontier border, the Syr-Darya River, and seized Talas (where the Arab armies had defeated the Chinese in 751), replacing the Nestorian church there with a mosque. Such forays inevitably bumped into the Turkic nomads migrating west. One such group was the Oghuz, or Guzz (later Turkmen). An offshoot of this group, led by Seljuk Timuryaligh, established itself at the lower end of the Syr-Darya River around 985 (near present day Kyzyl-Orda, Kazakhstan, on the northeast side of the

¹⁰ Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 13-14.

¹¹ This discussion based on the following sources: Richard C. Martin, ed. *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 665-666; John L. Esposito, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 30-31; M. Th. Houston, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, and R. Hartmann, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. IV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1934): 208-214; Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 72-76, 93-101; J.J. Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 37-39; Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 143-161; and Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 373-377.

Aral Sea), converting to Islam. He and his descendants served as mercenaries to the Samanids, who rewarded the Seljuks with Khorezm (western Uzbekistan).

Seljuk's grandsons, Toghril Beg and Chagrhi Beg, became involved in the geo-politics of the day serving two overlords as mercenaries. The Seljuks served the Ghaznavids—another Turkic group from Afghanistan—who had defeated the Samanids in Iran and claimed Khorezm; and they also served the Karakhanids, yet another Turkic group that had expanded west from Kashgar and defeated the Samanids in Transoxiana (at Samarkand in 999 A.D.). Soon, however, the Seljuks wanted part of Khurasan (northeastern Iran) to the south of Khorezm and the Amu-Darya River. When the Ghaznavids refused, Toghril Beg and Chagrhi Beg worked with the Karakhanids to defeat the Ghaznavids near Merv (Turkmenistan) in 1040.

While this kind of power politics has always defined Central Asia, this particular revolt reverberated throughout the world, marking the start of five centuries during which Turkish and Mongol nomads entered the Middle East in significant numbers, changing the course of history as a result.

The Saljuks (Toghril Beg) quickly expanded west, capturing Baghdad in just fifteen years (1055). The Caliph welcomed established Toghril as the “King of East and West” under the Caliph's tutelage, thus establishing a nominal form of “church”-state relations. Toghril's Baghdad arrival also assured Sunni ascendancy over the revolutionary Shi'a ideas of the Buyids in Iraq and Iran, as well as the Fatamids in Egypt. With the “restoration” of orthodox Islam and the stability of Persian *iqta* administrative system, came the establishment of the *madrassa* system of theological colleges (begun in 1067) and the empowerment of great theologians and thinkers such as Abu Hamid Muhammad al Ghazali (d. 1111 A.D.).

These events alone—with their self-evident implications for the 21st Century—demand that we respect these Saljuks from western Uzbekistan as pivotal in the history of the world. Securing their place among the most influential empires of all time, however, is their invasion of Anatolia (modern day Turkey) under the leadership of Toghril’s nephew, Alp Arslan (son of Chagrhi Beg). In 1071, Alp Arslan defeated and captured the Byzantine emperor Romanus Diogenes IV at Manzikert in modern day Armenia. The historic impact was threefold. Anatolia was effectively no longer a part of the Byzantine Empire. The Turks soon began to settle Asia Minor (a migration that would prove irreversible). And, perhaps most importantly, the defeat of a Christian Emperor at the hands of Muslims created such a tremor in Europe that Rome issued its first call for a Crusade (Pope Gregory VI in 1074). By the end of the century, Sulieman, a Seljuk descendant, had conquered Asia Minor, laying the foundation for the Turko-Persian empires of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These empires would repeatedly threaten Europe until the end of the 17th century, forcing it to organize and defend itself (that is, to become modern-day states). There is no more pivotal influence on Eurasian history than the Seljuk brothers from Khorezm.

The Seljuk Empire came to an end, however, when the Karakitai Mongols from western China appeared, defeating and killing the last great Seljuk Sultan, Sanjar, in 1141 near Samarkand. The Karakitai were, in turn, defeated in 1210, by Ala ad-Din Muhammad, the leader of the emerging Khorezmshah Empire. By 1217, Muhammad’s empire—ruled from Urgench in western Uzbekistan—encompassed all of contemporary Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Armenia. While this empire’s scope is fascinating in its own right, it is Muhammad’s action in 1218 that would forever change the region, and the world.¹²

¹² Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 373-378; Rene Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 144-170; Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 93-197; Erik Hildinger, *Warriors of the Steppe: A*

In that year, the frontier town of Otral—located just north of modern day Uzbekistan at the midpoint of the Syr-Darya River—received a delegation from the east (where Chingiz Khan had established the basis for a new steppe empire in 1206). Ostensibly a trade commission, the delegation’s leader improperly addressed Muhammad’s representative in Otral, Inal, insulting him. Inal, already suspecting spies to be among the merchants in the caravan, massacred the entire delegation. A second delegation was sent demanding an apology, and the punishment of Inal. Muhammad refused and executed this group as well.

Although there is evidence that Chingiz Khan did not seek war in the west, and that he even sought peace with the Khorezmshah Empire,¹³ we do know that he had no choice but to avenge the massacre of his two delegations. By 1222 the Mongols had destroyed modern day Uzbekistan, sacking and massacring any who resisted, particularly in Samarkand, Bukhara and Urgench (which they also submerged by breaking the dams of the Amu-Darya river). During this time they also conquered Afghanistan as they also laid waste to Iran and Iraq chasing Muhammad unto his death in the Caucasus. Once aware of the easy-pickings to the west, the sons of Chingiz Khan would return across both the steppes and the Middle East, respectively laying waste to Europe (1238-42) and sacking Baghdad (1258).

In just over 200 years—from the establishment of the Seljuk Empire to the careless diplomacy and flight of the Khorezmshah, Mohammad—the antecedent of modern day Uzbekistan had been the unintended catalyst that changed world history. Remarkably, however, this land in-between the Sar-Darya and the Amu-Darya would raise up one more great empire.

In 1336, Timur (iron) Lenk (lame)—known in the West as Timur the Lame, or Tamerlane—was born just south of Samarkand. A Turk, he rose to power through the manipulation of friends

Military History of Central Asia (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1997), 91-96; and J.J. Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 39-42.

¹³ Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 401.

and clans, being sure to always pay lip service to the descendant of Chingiz Khan who ruled on the local throne. Timur did, however, marry a woman of Chingiz Khan's descent, giving him some claim to the immense credibility that the name of Chingiz Khan still commanded some 150 years later.¹⁴

Timur redefines paradox. He was a Turk who felt the need for Mongol credibility. He was a "devout" Muslim who massacred his co-religionists, building towers of human skulls in the aftermath of his conquests. He was a military genius with battlefield victories from Delhi to Damascus, yet he left no organization behind to administer the most recently conquered city.¹⁵ He destroyed everything in a city except the artisans, whom he shipped back to his beloved capital, Samarkand.

Moreover, Timur twice provided strategic support, albeit indirectly, to Christian Europe: first, by defeating the Golden Horde on the Russian Steppe (alleviating the pressure the Horde was putting on an emergent Muscovy); and then by defeating Ottoman Sultan, Bayazet, who already ruled much of the Balkans and was besieging Constantinople when Timur arrived on the scene. His victory over the Ottomans in 1402 potentially saved Europe and ensured that Constantinople would not fall to the Turks until 1453.¹⁶

Timur died in 1405 on his way to conquer China and convert it to Islam. Curiously, he died in Otral, the Mongol gateway to Central Asia and the world in 1218.¹⁷

¹⁴ For a fascinating account of Timur Lenk's rise to power, see Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 409-419. It is no wonder that President Karimov, himself from Samarkand, identifies with Timur and his uncanny instinct to manipulate the local politics of the moment and remain in power.

¹⁵ For example, after he defeated the Mamelukes at Damascus, they simply reoccupied the city after he left. Even in his own backyard, he had to twice re-conquer Khorezm.

¹⁶ In terms of Europe's "Christian" evolution in culture, rule of law, and nation-state, Timur's 1402 defeat of the Ottomans ranks in the same category as the Moor defeat at Tours in 732, or the Ottoman defeat in Vienna in 1683.

¹⁷ Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, 123-143; Hildinger, *Warriors of the Steppe*, 169-175; Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 409-465.

Ninety-five years later, as described in the previous chapter, the Uzbek people group conquered Transoxiana. In so doing, they forced out the last Timurid descendant of note. Babur, a prince of the Fergana Valley who ruled from Andijan, was consistently thwarted in his desire to rule Transoxiana. Finally, the Uzbeks forced him south. In time, he conquered Afghanistan and India, establishing the Mogul Empire in 1526, which would last, in one form or another, until 1857.

While scholars can debate about the sweep of the Scythians and Saljuks, the might of the Mongols, or the terror of Timur, one thing remains undeniable: we Westerners tend to misunderstand, or forget, the geo-strategic impact this region has had on world history. Mackinder was indeed right when he asked his 1904 audience to “look upon Europe and European history as subordinate to Asia and Asiatic history.”¹⁸ He was also right to call geo-strategic attention to the Heartland’s role—especially the Heart of the Heartland, modern day Uzbekistan—as a staging ground for the creation and maintenance of empire, the fulcrum from which military power has consistently been flung from side to side.

Heartland Buffer Zone: Competition for Empire

The Heartland has also served as a buffer zone among competing powers. The first recorded instance of this role came when the Persian King Cyrus preemptively attacked the Scythians at Khiva (western Uzbekistan) in 529 B.C. in order to protect the northern flank of his empire.

¹⁸ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 177, 182. Mackinder had an acute appreciation for position on the earth’s surface. For example, in 1902, he properly placed his native island on the absolute scale of chronology and geography, noting that before the 17th Century: “The known lands lay almost wholly in the Northern Hemisphere and spread in a single continent from the shores of Spain to those of Cathay. Britain was then at the end of the world—almost out of the world...No philosophy of British history can be entirely true which does not take account of this fact.” Halford Mackinder, *Britain and the British Seas* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1902), 1.

In similar manner, in the 4th Century B.C., Alexander the Great also recognized the strategic importance of Transoxiana. In order to protect his northern flank as he moved toward his eastern goal of India, he attacked and established control of Transoxiana in order to buffer the Scythians to the north. Using Samarkand as his capital, Alexander built more fortresses in Central Asia, along the Syr-Darya, than anywhere else in his campaigns. Because of its central location, Alexander ended up spending more time, and losing more troops, in Central Asia than any other place.¹⁹ It is one of the few places where he was wounded and the only place he took a native bride (Roxane), in order to ensure stability and continue his line.²⁰

Likewise, Rene Grousset notes that when the Persians controlled Transoxiana, both the Sassanids (250-550 A.D.) and the Samanids (875-999), who made their capital in Bukhara, regarded the Syr-Darya as the northern border between the civilized and barbarian peoples.²¹ The same can be said of the Arabs, who arrived in the 7th century but did not consolidate power there until the 8th century. In particular, the Muslim victory over the Chinese at Talas in 751 A.D. (in Kyrgyzstan), ensured that the boundary between Muslim and Pagan would be Central Asia. It also ensured that the Chinese influence would not return until the end of the 20th century.

Perhaps the best-known example of the region's use as a buffer zone is the so-called "Great Game," creating the backdrop for today's global stage. With Ivan the Terrible's 16th century victories over the Golden Horde, the Russian state not only got stronger, but it began to expand. In less than 300 years, the Russian Empire was extended to the South Caucasus, Siberia, Central Asia and the Far East. This consistent characteristic gave pause to the other great empire of the

¹⁹ Frank Holt, (author of *Into the Land of Bones, Alexander the Great in Afghanistan*), as quoted in Kristen M. Romey, "The Forgotten Realm of Alexander," *Archeology* 57, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2004): 18-25.

²⁰ Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan, a Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban* (Oxford: Da Capo Press, 2002), 17-51.

²¹ Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, 142; Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, 218-19.

day. One of the primary foreign policy goals of 19th century British Empire was the containment of Russia along its southern periphery—from Constantinople to the Caucasus to Central Asia (which the Russians occupied from 1865-1881).

Two different philosophies competed in the British effort to contain Russia. The first was “masterly inactivity.” This approach depended on geography to separate the two empires and to prevent Russia’s capacity to threaten British interests, especially India. For example, 2000 miles separated British India from Russia in 1800. By 1876, however, it was only 1000 miles. And by 1895, there were points in the Pamir Mountains (near Tibet) where only 20 miles distance between them. As the Russian Empire expanded, however, it brought with it the railroad.

The “Forward School,” saw intentional design in this expansion, with a mind to threaten the British Raj.²² This approach, like that of Mackinder, understood the geo-strategic implications of the railroad, as the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 demonstrated. Soon, it seemed, the railroad would enable an attacking state to mass troops quickly as it brought overwhelming force to bear at decisive points (especially while the British did not possess a comparable railroad system in northern India).²³ There was no choice but to contain Russia.

Although there was never a real threat of the two going to war (except for a dispute over the Turkmenistan oasis of Pandjeh, which the Russians illegally occupied in 1885), the concept of a buffer zone did crystallize. George Curzon, in particular, encouraged this idea in 1899 after publishing a book on his travels through Central Asia (Curzon would later become the Viceroy

²² The Forward School was egged on by such Russian leaders as Foreign Minister Gorchakov, who remarked in 1864 that Russia should occupy Central Asia in order to pacify the “half savage, nomad peoples of Central Asia in the interests of its frontier and its commercial relations.” In less than twenty years it would be so. As quoted in Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999), 207. Russia was also encouraged by Otto von Bismarck, who believed that a Russia preoccupied in Asia was a Russia less able to exert influence in Europe. Hence, he strongly supported their ‘great civilizing mission.’ See Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game, The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994), 301.

²³ Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, 439.

of India, 1899-1905). “This new theory of a Buffer Afghanistan, independent, though subsidized, and friendly though strong, was evolved.”²⁴

In 1907, the Anglo-Russian Convention was signed, effectively ending the Great Game,²⁵ but it did not end the need for buffer zones, or spheres of influence, in a globalizing world. As Curzon wrote in 1908: “As the habitable world shrinks, the interests or ambitions of one state come into sharp and irreconcilable collision with those of another.” As a result, like most imperial minded men of Victorian England, he advocated ‘buffer zones’ on the ‘outskirts of empire’ to separate the spheres of influence.²⁶

It is the Forward School’s thinking that informs our last example of Central Asia’s use as a buffer zone—the American use of Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Fearful that the Moscow-friendly regime in Kabul was not up to keeping Afghanistan in the Soviet sphere of influence, Leonid Brezhnev ordered the Soviet army to invade. On Christmas Day 1979, the 357th and 201st Motorized Rifle Division crossed pontoon bridges across the Amu-Darya River, near Termez, Uzbekistan. Ten years later, on Valentine’s Day, 1989, the Soviet Army would return to Uzbekistan across the Friendship Bridge at Termez, defeated for the first time since 1920 at the gates of Warsaw.

Critical to the defeat of the Soviet Army was a policy laid out by Zbigniew Brzezinski, a man with personal and professional experience with bufferzones, having been born in Poland and written extensively about geopolitics (see below discussion). By New Year’s Day, 1980,

²⁴ George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889), 358.

²⁵ Still, old ideas die hard. Five years later the British developed a plan that called for the possible occupation of Ottoman Mesopotamia so that England could build a railroad from Basra to Mosul in order to counterattack Russia, should it attack India. (See Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1994), 338.)

²⁶ As quoted in Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present, and Future* (London: Pinter, 1998), 115. Curzon would personally test his theories as Foreign Secretary Curzon in the aftermath of WWI. In particular, he gave his name to the border drawn between Poland and Russia because “He firmly believed that such a zone was necessary to separate the German and Russian spheres, and the mosaic of small states between the two was intended to be a buffer of this sort.”

President Carter had signed off on his national security advisor's plan.²⁷ With no other expectations than to make the Soviets bleed by aiding the Afghans, Brzezinski still expected this new policy to be conducted in the context of a review of regional policy, especially the relationship with Pakistan and the U.S. fixation on non-proliferation.²⁸ While the regional policy never did receive significant review, the military support to the Afghans echoed advice that was already 100 years old:

I am right when I say that the less the Afghans see of us, the less they will dislike us. Should Russia, in future years, attempt to conquer Afghanistan...we should have a better chance of attaching the Afghans to our interests if we avoid all interference with them in the meantime.²⁹

The problem with such an approach, however, was that strategy, by definition, not only includes the military as but one component of the solution, it also includes consideration of those who live through the war, into the following peace.

In fact, the U.S. never had a strategy for Afghanistan. American policy-makers were content to sub-contract everything to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which coordinated directly with the *mujahadin*. As long as Soviets were dying and the Soviets were looking bad on the international front, it didn't matter where the money went. Howard Hart, CIA station chief in Islamabad from 1981-1984 summarized it this way: "Here's your bag of money, go raise hell."³⁰

By the end of the 1980s, the CIA began to become aware of the twin, and independent monsters it had, along with Saudi Arabia, funded and created. The ISI and the Islamic fundamentalists were de facto an alliance, with well-established command and control functions, to include financing mechanisms. When the ISI decided to support a radical fundamentalist to rule Afghanistan as the Soviets departed—Gubuddin Hematyar, someone bent on eradicating his

²⁷ Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's War* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 118.

²⁸ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 51.

²⁹ General Frederick Roberts, writing from Kabul, 1880; as quoted in Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows*, 199.

³⁰ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 55.

rivals before unifying the country—there was not much the CIA could do.³¹ Civil war was inevitable.

The famed British strategist, B. H. Liddell Hart once wrote: “It is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire.”³² Unfortunately, in achieving an unprecedented covert, military, victory through the *mujahadin*, the U.S. treated Afghanistan as a classic buffer zone, without a geo-communal regard for the people or culture, let alone, ironically enough, the geo-strategic implications of its departure. As the Cold War ended the U.S. simply discarded Central Asia.

There was no American policy on Afghan politics at the time [December 1987] on the de facto promotion of Pakistani goals as carried out by Pakistani intelligence. The CIA forecasted repeatedly during this period that postwar Afghanistan was going to be an awful mess; nobody could prevent that. Let the Pakistanis sort out the regional politics. This was their neighborhood.³³

The unintended consequences were enormous. Prior to its involvement in Afghanistan, there had been less than one thousand *madrasas* in all of Pakistan. As it wound down its operation, the CIA left almost 8000 official *madrasas*, and some 25,000 unofficial ones, most of them along the Afghan-Pakistani border (funded by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states).³⁴ The rise of a second, triumphant, generation of *mujahadin* was inevitable.

To them the miracle victory over the Soviets was all the work of Allah—not the billions of dollars that America and Saudi Arabia poured into the battle, not the ten-year commitment of the CIA that turned an army of primitive tribesmen into techno-holy warriors. The consequence for America of having waged a secret war... was that we set in motion the spirit of *jihad* and the belief in our surrogate soldiers that, having brought down one superpower, they could just as easily take on another.³⁵

This attitude would permeate extremist thought and incite terrorist action throughout Central Asia as the Heartland re-asserted its geo-strategic importance.

³¹ Ibid., 181, 211; Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 187.

³² B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 353.

³³ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 169. Also see Neamat Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 196-198.

³⁴ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 180.

³⁵ George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003), 522.

The Heartland and American Strategic Culture

Mackinder had written in 1904 that it did not behoove any nation to have the Heartland dominated by one power or coalition of powers. With access to almost limitless resources, and the sea, Eurasia under singular authority would not only have the ability to fling power from side to side, it would also possess the long term means to build and sustain a navy, and thus outlast and defeat the maritime powers of the marginal crescent surrounding the Heartland. That changed with the Soviet Union's eastern front victory in World War II. Mackinder had written in his 1943 article in *Foreign Affairs* that the Soviet Union:

must rank as the greatest land Power on the globe. Moreover, she will be the Power in the strategically strongest defensive position. The Heartland is the greatest natural fortress on earth. For the first time in history it is manned by a garrison sufficient both in number and quality... [the U.S.S.R. is] the citadel of land power.³⁶

Sir Halford John Mackinder died on March 6, 1947. Within the week, President Truman would address Congress, asking them to help contain the perceived expansion of the Heartland's tenant into Greece. In June, Secretary of State Marshall put forth his plan for Europe. And in July—at the urging of the Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal—George Kennan published his February 1946 “long telegram” as “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” in *Foreign Affairs*.³⁷

Kennan believed that the issue was not the Soviet Union, but Russia. Echoing Mackinder, Kennan argued that Russia had a fundamental sense of insecurity, something ingrained through “centuries of obscure battles between nomadic forces over the stretches of a vast unfortified plain.” As a result, it was Russian nature to expand into Europe and Asia. Although it was

³⁶ Mackinder, “Round World,” 201.

³⁷ Jeffrey M. Dorwat, *Eberstadt and Forrestal* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1991), 151-152. See also Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 63. Forrestal, who was about to become the first Secretary of Defense in accordance with the new National Security Act (signed 26 July 1947), was also about to militarize Kennan's containment. It was Forrestal who distributed the 22 February 1946 “Long Telegram” to Truman's cabinet, immortalizing Kennan. See James Chace, *Acheson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 150.

impossible to change the nature of Russia, it might be possible to contain the expansion. He argued:

The Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.³⁸

The approach had to be holistic, however, addressing the military and psychological dimensions of intent, as well as the threat.³⁹ This article served as the basis for the “containment” of the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War, establishing the philosophical foundation for bleeding the Soviets by supporting the *mujahadin* at the edge of Soviet expansion into southern Central Asia.

Was Kennan, however, really the father of containment?

By late 1947 “there soon developed a line of reasoning reminiscent of Sir Halford Mackinder’s geopolitics, with its assumption that none of the world’s ‘rimlands’ could be secure if the Eurasian ‘heartland’ was under the domination of a single hostile power.”⁴⁰ Indeed, Kennan wrote in 1951 that it was “essential to us, as it was to Britain, that no single continental

³⁸ George Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” 1947 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.historyguide.org/europe/kennan.html>.

³⁹ For example, see George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy* Expanded Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 145, 172-178. Unfortunately, however, containment was soon militarized with the publication of NSC-68 in April of 1950, and its confirmation on 25 June 1950 (when North Korea invaded South Korea). Also see Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men* (New York: Touchstone, 1986), 353, 385.

⁴⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 57. Ironically, Gaddis mistakenly refers to Mackinder’s Marginal Crescent as ‘Rimlands,’ a term invented by Nicholas John Spykman (Spykman taught at Yale, as does Gaddis). Spykman reinterpreted the Heartland thesis in 1944, arguing that the Heartland was not the key to controlling Eurasia. Instead Eurasia could be controlled by the Rimlands, or the Marginal Crescent surrounding Eurasia. See Nicholas John Spykman, *The Geography of Peace* (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1944). See also Michael P. Gerace, “Between Mackinder and Spykman: Geopolitics, Containment, and After,” *Comparative Strategy* 10, (1991): 347-364. Gerace argues that the logic of Mackinder’s heartland, and not Spykman’s rimlands, is “consistent with key aspects of containment.”

land power should come to dominate the entire Eurasian land mass.”⁴¹ Yet Kennan denied any influence of the Heartland on his containment theory;⁴² which seems highly unlikely given how well-read he was and the American fascination with Mackinder during World War II.

Francis P. Sempa resolves the potential conflict this way: “If Kennan was the intellectual “father” of containment, the doctrine’s intellectual “grandfather” was the British geographer, Sir Halford Mackinder.”⁴³

Irrespective of the intellectual origins of containment, the simple point is that Mackinder’s Heartland became the basis of America’s Cold War containment strategy.⁴⁴ This conclusion is born out in both the policy world and the scholarly literature. In March of 1946, for example, H. Freeman Matthews, drafted a State Department memo, noting that America dominated the sea, the U.S.S.R. the land. Given the U.S. “military ineffectiveness within the land mass of Eurasia,” the use of force in support of containment would have to be limited.⁴⁵ In March of 1948, in one of its first policy papers, the newly created NSC argued that “there are areas of great potential which if added to the existing strength of the Soviet world would enable the latter to become so

⁴¹ As quoted by Robert E. Waters, *Sea Power and the Nuclear Fallacy: A Reevaluation of Global Strategy* (New York: Homes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1975), 178. Walters also notes that Kennan admitted, in his 1925-1950 memoirs, that he had been influenced by the edition, *Makers of Modern Strategy* (a book whose authors were heavily influenced by Mackinder).

⁴² See footnote #24 in Stephen P. Jones, “Global Strategic Views,” *Geographical Review* (July 1955), 497. Jones, based on his “personal communication” with Kennan, concludes that Kennan “conceived independently” the doctrine of containment.

⁴³ Francis P. Sempa, “U.S. National Security Doctrines Historically Viewed: A Commentary,” (accessed 2 September 2005); available from http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ad/ad_v9sef01.html.

⁴⁴ Clearly the word “containment” is the invention of Kennan. See “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” in Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 119.

⁴⁵ As quoted in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 449. The Matthews memo was sent out as an interagency memo on 1 April 1946, thereby influencing others. Kissinger notes that Truman’s advisor, Clark Clifford, actually issued a study on 24 September 1946, calling for a strategic concept that stood for and protected “all democratic countries which are in any way menaced or endangered by the U.S.S.R.” (Please see Henry Kissinger, “Reflections on Containment,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 1994): 115). Clifford’s assertion, which President Kennedy would take up in his inaugural, echoes Mackinder’s own desire to create a family of democracies to balance the Heartland tenant.

superior in manpower, resources and territory that the prospect for the survival for the United States as a free nation would be slight.”⁴⁶

Scholars have written that Mackinder reached his “zenith” by the late 1950s.⁴⁷ Yet, Mackinder was clearly still relevant in March of 1964 when the State Department’s Geographer wrote: “Whether we view Mackinder’s theory as fact or fancy, the entire American concept of containment is inextricably bound up with his presentation of the Heartland theory.”⁴⁸ Robert Walters observed in 1975 that Kennan’s containment policy “could only have been put forward in relation to a Heartland theory.”⁴⁹

And if there was any doubt that the Heartland was intrinsically interlinked with containment and the strategic culture of the United States, consider this 1988 statement by Ronald Reagan from his “National Security Strategy for the United States”:

The first historical dimension of our strategy is relatively simple, clearcut, and immensely sensible. It is the conviction that the United States, most basic national security interests would be endangered if a hostile state or group of states were to dominate the Eurasian landmass—that area of the globe often referred to as the world’s heartland. We fought two world wars to prevent this from occurring. And, since 1945, we have sought to prevent the Soviet Union from capitalizing on its geostrategic advantage to dominate its neighbors in Western Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, and thereby fundamentally alter the global balance of power to our disadvantage. The national strategy to achieve this objective has been containment.⁵⁰

Simply, it cannot be “ignored that the heartland concept substantially influenced the postwar U.S. policy of containing Moscow’s expansionist appetite.”⁵¹ Or as Saul Cohen states frankly:

⁴⁶ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 57.

⁴⁷ David Hooson, “The Heartland—Then and Now,” in *Global Geostrategy: Mackinder and the Defence of the West*, ed. Brian Blouet (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 167.

⁴⁸ G.T. Percy, “Geopolitics and Foreign Relations,” *Department of State Bulletin*, March 3, 1964, 321; as quoted in G.R. Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy, 1890-1987* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), 155.

⁴⁹ Robert E. Walters, *Sea Power and the Nuclear Fallacy*, 178.

⁵⁰ Ronald Reagan, “The National Security Strategy of the United States,” *Department of State Bulletin* (April 1988), (accessed September 23, 2005); available from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1079/is_n2133_v88/ai_6761415#continue.

⁵¹ Milan Hauner, *What is Asia to Us?: Russia’s Asian Heartland Yesterday and Today* (Winchester, Mass.: Unwin Hyman, Inc.), 237.

“Cold War U.S. containment policy was based on [Mackinder’s] Heartland.”⁵² Writing in the mid-1990s, Colin Gray found the above discussion so obvious that he was more worried about the future of geopolitics.

From Harry S. Truman to George Bush [41], the overarching vision of U.S. national security was explicitly geopolitical and directly traceable to the heartland theory of Mackinder. Mackinder’s relevance to the containment of a heartland-occupying Soviet Union was so apparent as to approach the status of a cliché; much more challenging is the problem of geopolitical interpretation in this post—cold war world.⁵³

Answering this problem, while implicitly endorsing the continued relevance of Mackinder, Henry Kissinger writes that: “The domination by a single power of either of Eurasia’s principle spheres—Europe or Asia—remains a good definition of strategic danger for America, Cold War or no Cold War.”⁵⁴

This discussion makes two basic points about the Heartland concept and its relationship to American strategic culture. First, Mackinder’s concept has seeped deep into the American strategic psyche—shaping U.S. analysis, and action—whether we realize it or not.

Second, if there is not a proper understanding of Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy (as argued in chapter two), it stands to reason that Mackinder’s ideas will be inappropriately applied. Put differently, if Mackinder specifically designed his concept to be re-conceived and applied anew according to the strategic era at hand, then the best that traditional strategists can do is apply a petrified theory to the living organism of the new era.

The tragic-irony of our present age is that as the Cold War ended—the result of a trans-generational strategic concept rooted in the Heartland idea—there was no attempt to reinterpret

⁵² Saul Cohen, *Geopolitics of the World System* (New York: Rowman Littlefield Publishers, Inc.), 16.

⁵³ Colin S. Gray, “The Continued Primacy of Geography,” *Orbis* (Spring 1996): 258. Gray would later defend Mackinder’s association with containment by echoing Kennan’s desire not to see containment reduced to just a military equation. “Nothing in his writing advised...containment militarily in any particular location.” Please see Colin S. Gray, “In Defence of the Heartland: Sir Halford Mackinder and His Critics a Hundred Years On,” *Comparative Strategy* 23, no. 1 (2004): 21.

⁵⁴ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 813.

Mackinder, let alone anticipate the impact of his ideas on an unstable Heartland. Because American strategists did not fully understand the strategic concept behind winning the Cold War, they reduced the Heartland theory to a two-dimensional cardboard cutout with their geo-strategic focus of preventing one state, the Soviet Union, from dominating Eurasia. And because they forgot, or refused to consider, the geo-communal dimension of Mackinder's writing, they were prevented from re-applying the concept to the new strategic era.

Consequently, Central Asia was irrelevant because Mackinder's geo-political thinking could not be remembered, let conceived of, as a suitable basis for grand strategy, let alone a regional strategy regarding the "pivot point" of history.

It is in this comprehensive context—grounded in the previous chapter's geo-communal understanding of Uzbekistan—that we now consider the geo-strategic dimension of the relationship between the United States and Uzbekistan.

There are three stages to the relationship, although it can just as easily be understood as before 9/11 and after 9/11. The period before 9/11 is divided into two parts. The first period is from 1983 (the beginning of Uzbek nationalism with the "cotton affair") to 1994. The second period is from 1995 (the visit of Secretary of Defense, William Perry) to 2000. The post 9/11 period is simply 2001-2005. In keeping with the Mackinderian deductions made thus far—that we must literally and figuratively understand the local worldview as well as our own—this chapter presents the three phases of the relationship from both an Uzbek and an American perspective.

1983-1994, an Uzbek Perspective

While U.S.—Uzbekistan relations did not begin until early 1992, this period essentially begins in 1983 for the Uzbeks. As described in the previous chapter, the "Uzbek Affair" was the

beginning of a defined Uzbek consciousness.⁵⁵ Where Moscow saw a corruption scandal, purging all Uzbek leaders associated with the false reporting of cotton quotas, Uzbeks saw imperialistic measures that insulted an increasingly defined, and public, national pride. This purge ended in 1989 with Mikhail Gorbachev's appointment of Islam Karimov as the leader of the Communist Party. Karimov was an economist-technocrat with no perceived connections to the scandal, or the Rashidov regime.

Moscow's measures were consistent with their historic approach to leadership in Central Asia. Fitzroy Maclean, the British diplomat and traveler, visited there in 1938, describing this imperial mindset and management style:

As the basis for a policy of imperialism, this system has much to recommend it. Power is vested in the hands of a group of reliable natives, who are responsible for seeing that the wishes of central authority are carried out. If they prove unreliable, they can be replaced by others, while, if the worst comes to the worst, an emissary of the central authority can be sent to put things right. By this means, no risks are taken and an appearance of autonomy is preserved.⁵⁶

In this regard, Karimov's ascension to power was very much like that of Tito's in Yugoslavia. After surviving the purges of the communist party in Yugoslavia, Tito was appointed a caretaker because Moscow deemed him to be "safe;" that is, until history intervened (the 6 April 1941 invasion of Yugoslavia by Nazi Germany). Like Tito, Karimov was an apparently able technocrat loyal to Moscow with no discernable domestic power base. When the August 1991 *putsch* in Moscow failed, Karimov only reluctantly declared independence on 1 September 1991.

No longer an accidental *apparatchik*, Karimov did not yield the moment. Ambassador James F. Collins spent a considerable amount of time with Karimov during these early years. He describes Karimov as a man of "national identity and purpose; and he was in charge of a place that had identity." In Collins' opinion, only Boris Yeltsin also saw himself as the father of his

⁵⁵ See James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991); see also Ahmed Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism?* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 92-93.

⁵⁶ Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* (London: Penguin Books, 1949), 35.

country. As such, it was Karimov's job to "restore greatness." In the case of Uzbekistan, Collins understood Karimov's view to be as simple as it was compelling: "We had a bad run for 150 years with the Russians, but we're back." From the beginning, Collins notes, Karimov saw the West and especially the United States as the "vehicle to reassert this status" within Central Asia, and vis-à-vis Russia.⁵⁷

Karimov set out immediately and unabashedly to build the Uzbek nation (identity), as well as the Uzbek state (institutions). The Uzbek language was Latinized (and learned by Uzbek leaders, including Karimov); Timur the Lame was made a national hero; education was invested in; President Karimov went on the *hadj* to Mecca and was sworn into office with his hand on the holy Quran.

Underlying this process was one—and only one—guiding principle: stability. Without internal and external stability, nothing was possible, especially the ongoing state and nation building efforts. It is not surprising that he, and his domestic allies, relied on the infrastructure, institutions and power-keeping-mindset that had been their cultural condition, as well as their communist context.

There were several obstacles to the establishment of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the consolidation of Islam Karimov's power. Not significant among those obstacles, ironically enough, was the economy. Certainly, the Soviet Union had not prepared Uzbekistan for transition to a market economy. It had been developed as a mercantile colony, designed to serve Moscow with its raw materials. Accordingly dependent on the center for investment subsidies, there was little available capital. (These factors had almost killed the entrepreneurial spirit of

⁵⁷ Interview with author, James F. Collins, 1 December 2005, Washington, D.C. Collins, a career foreign service officer, was the Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States from 1994-1997. He served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation from 1997-2001. These views confirmed by several interviews, especially U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Joe Presel (1997-2000), 4 September 2000, Tashkent.

Uzbeks, famed since Silk Road days for conducting business). Meanwhile, state-owned industries, to include agriculture, provided social services. Finally, the population was divided between urban, educated Russians and rural, less-skilled Uzbeks.⁵⁸

Blessed with gas, gold and “white gold” (cotton, of which it is the world’s 4th largest producer), Uzbekistan’s raw materials prevented economic chaos. These natural resources gave Karimov access to hard currency as he did his best to limit outside influence through a policy of import substitution.⁵⁹ As a result, Uzbekistan’s GDP “only” dropped by 15% from 1990-1993.⁶⁰ Jeromin Zettelmeyer concludes that the “exceptional mildness of Uzbekistan’s transitional recession” was due to Uzbekistan’s “low degree of industrialization, its cotton production, and its self-sufficiency in energy.” In other words, Uzbekistan suffered less “in spite of” Karimov’s economic policies.⁶¹

Internal Tensions

With his economic flank essentially covered, Karimov focused on three tensions affecting internal stability. The first issue was the management of ethnic tension. On 4 June 1989, riots had erupted between Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks in Fergana.⁶² In May and June of 1990, ethnic riots respectively rocked the Ferghana Valley in Andijan (Uzbek-Jew/Armenian) and Osh

⁵⁸ Resul Yalcin, *The Rebirth of Uzbekistan* (Reading (UK): Garnett Publishing Limited, 2002), 188.

⁵⁹ In this regard, Karimov mirrored, in varying degrees, Haushofer, Mackinder and Aristotle. “As far as its being of a certain quality is concerned, it is clear that everyone would praise the territory that is the most self-sufficient. That which bears every sort of thing is of necessity, for self-sufficiency is having everything available and being in need of nothing...” Aristotle. *The Politics*, translated by Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 205-206.

⁶⁰ Yalcin, *The Rebirth of Uzbekistan*, 182.

⁶¹ Jeromin Zettelmeyer, “The Uzbek Growth Puzzle,” Working Paper of the International Monetary Fund, September 1998 (WP/98/133), 31.

⁶² The Meskhetian Sunni Muslims, are the so-called ‘Georgia Turks,’ dating back to 1944 when Stalin deported 70,000 people from the mountainous Akhaltsikhe district of Georgia. Giampaolo R. Capisani, *The Handbook of Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, Publishers, 2000), 80.

(Uzbek-Kyrgyz). Soviet police soon quelled the riots, setting a precedent that has since kept a lid on ethnic tensions.⁶³

Second, Karimov had to establish himself among the leading elites and the regional clans, which served as an “alternative to formal market institutions and official bureaucracies.”⁶⁴ As such the consolidation of power was not the institutionalization of official state mechanisms. Rather, the consolidation of power witnessed the creation (historic re-affirmation, really) of an unofficial system of checks and balances among the clans. Karimov was careful to preserve his utility, and therefore his power, through the proportional use of carrots and sticks to maintain the clan balance—something that served the interests of all the clans as none was strong enough to dominate. As discussed in the previous chapter, Karimov consolidated his power by 1993 as the unambiguous leader of Uzbekistan. Still “we often forget that he came into power with no power base.”⁶⁵

A prisoner of his 1989-1993 circumstances—and the resulting power patchwork of clans that he created and maintains—this process was, and continues to be, a double irony. First, from the perspective of the clans, the idea of nationalism, while superficially appealing, is but a substitute for communism—a convenient cloak that enables them to pursue their own interests; that is, to “compete for state resources.”⁶⁶ It is a chance to be “Uzbek in structure, but clan in content.”

Second, because of the zero-sum nature of the clans’ competition, there is no way for the Uzbek nation to truly unite—politically, economically, socially. In other words, the clans need Karimov to validate their “nationalism” while Karimov needs the clans to legitimize his

⁶³ These tensions are never far from the surface, however, and could easily come back; especially during a Karimov transition.

⁶⁴ Kathleen Collins, “Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (July 2002): 142.

⁶⁵ Martha Brill Olcott, presentation at the “Religion & Security Conference,” Beijing, 10 December 2005.

⁶⁶ Collins, “Clans, Pacts and Politics in Central Asia,” 143.

“leadership.” The status quo result is a national leadership that cannot liberalize its economy because the vested interests of the clans would lose out (as discussed below in the repeated attempts to make the Uzbek currency convertible).

Uzbekistan’s number one national security threat is its neo-Soviet, clan-based elites who are generally incapable of reform. They are not anti-NGO, anti-religious freedom, or anti-economic reforms; they are simply against anything that threatens their control. Everything from the government’s protectionist trade policy to its persecution of pious Muslims finds root in this fundamental understanding. Although these clans balance each other and Karimov, together they preserve a status quo that, ironically, seals their doom as they prevent the necessary change that the country will inevitably demand.⁶⁷

In fact, as suggested in the below narrative, if the Uzbek economy cannot attract foreign investment and therefore grow beyond its current zero-sum nature, the Karimov regime will end through implosion (elite revolt), or through explosion (people revolt). We will return to these ideas at the dissertation’s conclusion.

While solidifying his standing among the elites between 1991 and 1993, Karimov also had to deal with the third tension: political and religious opposition. Although homegrown political parties, such as Birlik and Erk, never gained much sway among ordinary Uzbeks, Karimov nevertheless made them illegal by 1992, not taking any chances.⁶⁸

Religious opposition, however, was completely different. As Gorbachev loosened the state’s control of Islam in the late 1980s, the pace of puritan Muslim missionaries and money into Central Asia quickened (although it was already supported by the U.S. government through the *mujahadin*). With the dissolution of the Soviet empire, an ideological and spiritual vacuum opened up, quickening the pace again. Within a year of Uzbekistan’s independence, for example, there were several thousand mosques established in Uzbekistan (there had only been two

⁶⁷ Chris Seiple, “Implications of Instability for U.S. Interests,” unpublished paper presented at DFI “Uzbekistan Futures” conference, 26 May 2004.

⁶⁸ For a detailed discussion of this early political opposition, see William Fierman, “Political Development in Uzbekistan: Democratization?”, in *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 360-408.

mosques in 1991). As one Uzbek official said to me: “When you have been in a desert for 70 years, you will drink any water, even if it’s muddy.”⁶⁹

In this context, Saudi money made its way to the religiously conservative Fergana Valley. In the town of Namangan, two twenty-somethings, Tahrir Yuldoshov and Juma Namangani created an Uzbek equivalent of a “Neighborhood Watch” network for their community. “Adolat” (justice) soon became a recognized, albeit not specifically political, force calling for an Islamic republic. Karimov, amidst his first presidential election in December 1991, felt he should address the organization. After promising to speak with them on a visit to Namangan, Karimov did not and returned to Tashkent.

The uproar was so great that Karimov promptly returned the next day to talk to a crowd of five to ten thousand (accounts vary). Yuldoshov, on the stage with Karimov, did not express personal or professional deference to his elder, even as he presented a number of demands, among them the declaration of Uzbekistan as an Islamic Republic.⁷⁰

Karimov was taken aback. For someone used to Uzbek and Communist deference to his person, if not his rank, this insubordination was troubling and the lesson was clear. Three months later, the popularly elected president clamped down across the country, and especially in Namangan. With no political voice, let alone outlet, for their concerns, Namangani and

⁶⁹ Zhuherin Husdinitov; at the time of the interview, he was the Special Advisor to the President of Uzbekistan for Religion, and Rector of Islamic State University, Tashkent. Interview with author, 15 April 2004, Tashkent.

⁷⁰ See Annette Bohr, *Uzbekistan Politics and Foreign Policy* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998), 26-27; Abdujabbar A. Abduvakbitov, “The Jadid Movement and Its Impact on Contemporary Central Asia,” in *Central Asia*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 74; and Abdummanob Polat, “The Islamic Revival in Uzbekistan; A Threat to Stability?” in *Islam and Central Asia: An Enduring Legacy or an Evolving Threat?*, ed. Roald Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Political Studies, 2000), 45. Also Abdummanob Polat personal e-mail to author, 30 September 2000. A videotape exists of this encounter, especially the discussion after the auditorium presentation. On tape is Karimov dutifully taking notes as Yoldashov dictates his demands. Karimov is quite uncomfortable, most likely concerned for his life. (Interview with U.S. intelligence officer, 7 June 2005).

Yuldoshov fled Uzbekistan into neighboring Tajikistan. There they encountered the same issues: former communists trying to dominate Islamic forces. While Yuldoshov would move on travel among the elites of the “Green International,” Namangani became a field commander for the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), fighting against the former Communist government for the duration of the Tajik civil war (1992-1997). Later they would together found the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).

External Tensions

With Namangan fresh in his memory, Karimov soon confronted his worst domestic nightmare next door in Tajikistan. In Tajikistan the fundamentalist Islamic forces had united to form a front against the former communist elites. It was more than obvious to Karimov and his ruling elites that the same might happen in Uzbekistan. At all costs the threat of militant Islam—what it was and what it could be—had to be contained. This logic would not only drive Uzbekistan’s foreign policy in Tajikistan throughout its civil war, but define Karimov’s time as President.

As the civil war in Tajikistan began, Karimov had no choice but to get cozy with Russia. Not possessing a fully developed military, Karimov announced that Russia was the primary provider of Uzbekistan’s security.⁷¹ That same year, the Commonwealth of Independent States defense pact was signed in Tashkent (December 1992). By 1993, Karimov was working actively with the Russians in support of the former communists against the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Uzbekistan even intervened militarily against the UTO, fearing a spill-over effect into Uzbekistan (where there are a million Tajiks).

⁷¹ As quoted in Bess Brown, “National Security and Military Issues in Central Asia,” in *State-Building and Military Power in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 246. (See footnote #38 where Brown quotes *Liberation*, 8 September 1992.)

Yet Karimov was not afraid to meet with UTO leaders when it served his purpose. When it became clear that negotiations would be the best way to ensure Uzbek minority rights in northern Tajikistan, Karimov met a UTO deputy in 1995 (there are 1.2 million Uzbeks there, or 25% of the Tajik population).⁷² Two years later a peace plan emerged that, for the time being, stabilized Uzbekistan's border with Tajikistan.

Karimov's second external and paradoxical concern was Russia. On the one hand Uzbekistan needed Russia to fight their common enemy: militant Islam. On the other hand, Russia was the last partner Uzbekistan wanted as it tried to adopt an independent foreign policy that was in keeping with its nascent national identity. As Martha Brill Olcott observed in 1995:

All of these states recognize that their transition to independent statehood will be shaped—and perhaps even changed beyond recognition—by a Russian state intent on playing the role of regional hegemon. But each hopes to limit its involvement with Russia, in order to minimize the impact of that entanglement upon its sovereignty and so reduce as much as possible Russia's long-term ability to dominate the new state's economic and political life.⁷³

Resisting Russia, however, was as old, and unlikely, as Russia overcoming the paranoia that had resulted since Kennan's "obscure nomadic tribes" had trespassed Russian geography. With good reason, Alfred Thayer Mahan named the Heartland's mobility-enabling geography the "debatable ground of Asia:"

The division of Asia is east and west; movement is north and south. It is the character of that movement, and its probable future, as indicated by the relative forces, and by the lines which in physics are called those of least resistance, that we are called to study; for in the greatness of the stake, and in the relative settledness of conditions elsewhere, there is assurance that there will continue to be motion until an adjustment is reached, either in the satisfaction of everybody, or by the definite supremacy of some one of the contestants. Practically, if not logically, equilibrium may consist in decisive overweight as well as in an even balance—another paradoxical truth.⁷⁴

⁷² See Bohr, *Uzbekistan Politics and Foreign Policy*, 52.

⁷³ Martha Brill Olcott, "Sovereignty and the 'Near Abroad,'" *Orbis* (Summer 1995): 356.

⁷⁴ A. T. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1900), 43, 23. Rajan Menon calls this "decisive overweight" the "Russian Preponderance"—a question of what type of dependence Central Asian nations should take, not whether they have the option. Please see Rajan Menon, "In the Shadow of the Bear: Security in Post-Soviet Central Asia," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 174.

Striking an “even balance” that allows for “decisive overweight” is the *sine qua non* to stability in Eurasia, and especially its fulcrum, Central Asia. Since its 1865-1881 conquest of Central Asia, Russia has been Mahan’s “definite supremacy,” responsible for the region’s “decisive overweight.” This responsibility is hard to maintain given Russia’s strategic weakness: she is vulnerable from everywhere. “Russia replaces the Mongol Empire. Her pressure on Finland, on Scandinavia, on Poland, on Turkey, on Persia, on India, and on China replaces the centrifugal raids of the steppe-men. In the world at large, she occupies the central strategic position held by Germany in Europe. She can strike on all sides and be struck from all sides.”⁷⁵

During the 19th and 20th Centuries, Russia’s strategic vulnerability was the western and eastern flanks, while the southern underbelly was strong.⁷⁶ With the fall of the Soviet empire, however, the southern flank became the point of vulnerability. With no bufferzone in the Southern Caucasus or Central Asia, Russia was now dependent upon these newly independent countries to protect her largely unprotectable border.

The Russia of the 1990s—still smarting from the loss of its empire and increasingly dominated by criminal interests—struggled to define its policies as well as its very identity. Consequently, the Yeltsin administration proclaimed a Russian “Monroe Doctrine,” whereby only Russia had the right to intervene, politically or militarily, in its former Soviet republics to the south.

Owen Lattimore agrees, describing “Western Inner Asia” (i.e., Central Asia) in 1957 as a different kind of buffer zone. “The new stabilization is active; it is in moving balance. The buffers have been transformed into zones of transition, of access, of economic interchange.” A paper presented before the American Historical Association, December 30, 1957; as published in Owen Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History Collected Papers, 1928-1958* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 502.

⁷⁵ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 191.

⁷⁶ As Mahan argued in 1900: “To this element of power—central position—is to be added the wedge-shaped outline of her territorial projection into central Asia, strongly supported as this is, on the one flank, by the mountains of the Caucasus and the inland Caspian Sea—wholly under her control—and on the other by the ranges which extend from Afghanistan, northeasterly, along the western frontier of China.” Mahan, *The Problem of Asia*, 55, 25.

Put differently, this doctrine sought to exclude “global domination” in its own backyard (read: America influence). As the Russian Defense Minister said at the end of the Yeltsin era: “Western policy constitutes a challenge to Russia, a challenge aimed at weakening its international positions and edging it out of the strategically important regions of the world, primarily from the Caspian region, the Transcaucasia, and Central Asia.”⁷⁷

Unfortunately Russia was not in a position to accept this “challenge” in the 1990s. As Stephen Blank noted in 1995: “For the first time in modern history Russia [had] nothing to offer its neighbors, neither a legitimizing culture nor an ideological principle to justify its imposition of “order” and co-optation of local elites.”⁷⁸ And, its economy was a wreck. Despite this dearth of offerings, Yeltsin’s Russia exercised a crude coercion to maintain its influence in the Caspian Region—using violence in the Southern Caucasus and intimidation in Central Asia. Throughout the 1990s, Russia would maintain troops in seven of the eight countries (Uzbekistan being the exception).

During the 1990s, then, Russia acted as a wounded bear, viewing its soft underbelly as a zero-sum contest where security could only be provided by military means. The only exception, of course, was Uzbekistan; with which it did not have a contiguous border (Stalin had finally been outfoxed). In other words, Russia had no choice but to work with Uzbekistan, and Uzbekistan with Russia, especially when it was in their common interest. This would certainly be the case with militant Islam—in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and into the 21st century after 9/11, and after Andijan.

Given these two concerns, Uzbekistan, from the beginning, sought the United States as its guarantor of security. The U.S. was the perfect partner: Distant but global, the U.S. had the

⁷⁷ Igor Sergeev, as quoted in David Hoffman, “Russia Defiant after Rap on Policy,” *The Boston Globe*, 13 November 1999, A11.

⁷⁸ Stephen Blank, “Russia’s Real Drive to the South,” *Orbis* (Summer 1995): 384.

military power to balance Russia (and eventually China) and fight militant Islam while possessing the economic power to help Uzbekistan transition to a market economy.

Of course, this viewpoint expected the U.S. to see Uzbekistan as it saw itself: the inheritor of a great civilization and the region's natural hegemon, standing at the nexus point of the world's great powers and therefore competitions. Uzbekistan was the fulcrum, the literal place where the balance of power—between and among Russia, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran—took place.

Uzbekistan never received the attention it thought it deserved from the U.S. In fact, Uzbek foreign policy elites struggled to understand the American approach toward Uzbekistan and Central Asia. While Uzbeks saw themselves as ground zero in the new Great Game, America seemed to be much more comfortable engaging Uzbekistan through four different, and overlapping, paradigms, none of which allowed for the actualities of the region, let alone the terrorist threat.⁷⁹ By trying to understand the physical and psychological worldview of Uzbek foreign policy elites, we begin to understand how their worldview shaped events and initiatives as much as the events and initiatives shaped their perceptions.

To the Uzbek mind, the first monolith that the United States used to engage Central Asia was a “Russia First” mentality (discussed below).⁸⁰ After seventy years of the Soviet Union, this mentality was natural enough, especially as America focused on the possibility of “loose nukes.” Yet there never seemed to be room for particularity. That Uzbekistan might require its own nuanced approach did not seem to register with the Americans.

⁷⁹ These impressions represent the distillation of scores of interviews with foreign policy officials from 1999-2005.

⁸⁰ This perception was strongly held throughout the South Caucasus as well (where I conducted hundreds of interviews in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia in May of 2000. At the time, I was going to write the dissertation on GUUAM).

The second paradigm was an East-West mindset. With independence, the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU) were literally grouped by U.S. agencies, especially the State Department, as the FSU. Later, this grouping would morph into the more “nuanced” “Newly Independent States.” While Uzbeks appreciated being considered in this context (they knew that Europe was America’s focus), they could not understand why the Americans didn’t recognize their north-south strategic threat: the terrorism and narcotics coming out of Afghanistan. They were a front-line state and no one seemed to appreciate it.

The third convenient and overlapping mindset that most Americans used—and continue to use—is the authoritarian monolith. This paradigm suggested that Karimov did not have his own “domestic politics” to consider and balance (as discussed in the previous chapter), nor did this viewpoint allow for the possibility that there might be positive elements among the competing clans. This attitude was and is particularly irritating to those Uzbek leaders who want their country to become a responsible member of the international community.

The fourth monolith portrays Uzbekistan as the egregious violator of human rights. Because Uzbekistan’s geo-strategic position was not appreciated—while no one seemed to understand the geo-communal framework of Uzbekistan’s pre-existing civil society—it was easy to reduce Uzbekistan to a stereotype against which all could unite in the name of human rights. This pattern was firmly established by the end of 1993.

Together, these monoliths were especially irksome to those Uzbek leaders who, because they did not have any other option, had to work in the only political system they had. It was in this context that the Uzbek government established its embassy in Washington, D.C., on 28 February 1993.⁸¹

⁸¹ The embassy was established by two Uzbek diplomats at the Embassy Row Hotel. Later it moved to 800 4th Street, NW, and then again to 1511 K Street, NW, the 7th floor. Today the embassy occupies one of the

1983-1994: An American Perspective

Although an American embassy was not established until early 1992, the U.S. began to engage Uzbekistan in a manner detrimental to its long-term interests in early 1985. At the urging of CIA Director, William Casey, the CIA translated and printed five thousand Qurans into Uzbek. The first shipments of these Qurans, facilitated by the ISI, were transported across the Amu-Darya at the beginning of 1985 by the *mujahadin*. Once across the river, these Muslim fundamentalists distributed them, even as they launched mortar attacks on Soviet military positions.⁸² President Karimov's later fixation on the south-of-the-border threat of militant Islam was not imaginary. The U.S. had helped create it.

As the Cold War began to wind down, the Heartland concept was simply forgotten. America wanted to enjoy the blissful ignorance of its "peace dividend." For example, when the former CIA station chief in Islamabad happened to be discussing Afghanistan with President George H.W. Bush, in 1991, the president responded: "Is that thing still going on?"⁸³

Obviously, President Bush had much bigger things on his mind during this period. In the spring of 1989 he had given five speeches that began to lay the framework for change. They asked the Soviets to move "beyond containment" and notified them that the U.S. would not accept spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. With the coming new century there were new

prime locations in Washington at 1746 Massachusetts Avenue. Interview with Ulegbek Ishankhovdjaev 26 July 2002. Mr. Ishankhovdjaev was one of the two diplomats to found the embassy in 1993.

⁸² Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 90, 104, 161. See also Ahmed Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia*, 245; and Ahmed Rashid, "Islam in Central Asia: Afghanistan and Pakistan," in *Islam and Central Asia*, ed. Roald Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower (Washington, D.C.: Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000), 214.

⁸³ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 228.

opportunities for the reality of a united Europe as the idea of communism bowed to the advance of the democratic ideal.⁸⁴

Still, the events of 1989—1991 and the fall of communism were a surprise. As President Bush reacted to these events, he had three priorities. First, he had to gently manage the soft suicide of an empire. Second, he had to secure the Soviet Union’s nuclear weapons. Third, he worked hard for the unification of Germany. (And he did this while leading an unprecedented global coalition to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait in the first Gulf War). In order to achieve each of these tasks, President Bush absolutely needed Moscow. Everything else was subordinate to these major initiatives.

Looking back, we should not underestimate the leadership involved to achieve these goals. Nor should we be surprised that Central Asia, to include Afghanistan, was not at the top of the president’s priority list. Focused on the former Soviet Union’s nuclear arsenal (then located in the newly independent states of Kazakhstan, the Ukraine and Belarus) while working to prevent the widespread death and chaos that usually accompanies the death of an ideology and empire, the Bush administration will undoubtedly go down in history for its deft management of these monumental issues. With all that could have happened with the death of the Soviet Union, we are all very fortunate to have the outcome that we did.

By focusing on the big picture, however, the Bush administration clearly preferred the map known—and the stability it offered—to the unknown map of national aspirations and instability it suggested. For example, upon returning from Yugoslavia in June of 1991, Secretary of State Baker reported to the Freedom Forum that there was a “distinct air of unreality, an inability on

⁸⁴ See George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1998); and Robert L Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: an Insider’s Account of US Policy in Europe, 1989-1992* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1997). The five speeches included: 1) Hamtramck, Michigan (17 April); Texas A&M (12 May); Boston University (21 May); The U.S. Coast Guard Academy (24 May); and Mainz, Germany (31 May).

the part of several of the republic leaders to understand...the dangerous consequences” of seeking independence.⁸⁵ Soon thereafter, President Bush told a Ukrainian audience starving for official American recognition that the U.S. preferred to work through President Gorbachev.⁸⁶ Within a month of this speech, Uzbekistan had declared independence after the failed *putsch* in Moscow against Gorbachev; and the Soviet Union was dead by the end of the year.⁸⁷

The Bush administration moved quickly to recognize Kazakhstan in the fall of 1991. The only Central Asia country mentioned in the Bush-Scowcroft memoir, *A World Transformed*, Kazakhstan was recognized immediately in September 1991 because it had nuclear weapons. While the context was certainly understandable, the signal sent was that Uzbekistan was not important.

At the beginning of 1992, President Bush sent his Secretary of State, James Baker, to Tashkent. The purpose of the visit was to meet President Karimov and determine whether Uzbekistan would work toward democracy. This trip was a harbinger of the characteristics that would define the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship through 2005.

To begin with, President Karimov said all the right things, espousing democratic reform and free markets. He even pulled out a copy of Secretary Baker’s ten guiding principles for the

⁸⁵ James Baker III, Address to the Gannett Foundation Freedom Forum, 26 June 1991, Rosslyn, Virginia, *Federal News Service*, Federal Information Systems Corporation. Also see Reuter, “U.S. Won’t Accept Slovenian Secession,” *The Toronto Star*, 22 June 1991, A12. Less than a year later, the United States would recognize the independence of the former Yugoslav states (after the Europeans had first recognized them). See Patrick Rahir, “Washington Makes Tough Decision on Yugoslavia after Policy Struggle,” *Agence France Presse*, 8 April 1992.

⁸⁶ See Terence Hunt, “Bush Warns Republics against ‘Hopeless Course of Isolation,’” *Associated Press*, 1 August 1991; also see Bogdan Turek, “Bush Endorses Ties with Ukraine but not at Gorbachev’s Expense,” *United Press International*, 1 August 1991. Brent Scowcroft offers a different, if unconvincing, interpretation in *A World Transformed* (see page 516).

⁸⁷ A number of Uzbek academics have commented to me that it was obvious to them that President Bush (41) really didn’t know what to do with Uzbekistan during this time. (Not that Uzbekistan knew what it wanted at this time as it too tried to avoid chaos).

former Soviet Union states (given in a 16 December 1991 speech at Princeton University),⁸⁸ and recited them to him. This image—of mouthing democratic clichés just before he cracked down on secular and Muslim political groups in March 1992—would itself become cliché as U.S. government officials gradually lost confidence in Karimov’s commitment to reform.

Second, Baker established a critical marker for U.S. policy, given the potential proclivity for cheap talk among dictators. “When we are in a position to talk and reason with the leaders of the newly emerging democracies, we can be a force for more freedom...we use those relations to push for greater economic and political reform.” It was better to have a seat at the table and engage, than to not be there at all.⁸⁹

Third, reformers living in Uzbekistan encouraged diplomatic recognition and engagement by the U.S., which they saw as positive for them and Uzbekistan. The founder of the Birlik Party, Abdul Pulatov, noted “the sooner diplomatic relations are established, the better it will be for those forces that do not have democratic freedoms.” Throughout the course of the relationship, many westerners have recommended that the U.S. disengage. It is usually the Uzbeks themselves, however, no matter their profession, who make the case for U.S. engagement. (Pulatov, for example, was against sanctions after the Andijan events in May 2005).⁹⁰

Fourth, it was soon very obvious to Baker’s delegation that they were in an opaque culture that was difficult to understand. Indeed, they recognized just how little they knew. Officials on

⁸⁸ See James Baker 12 December 1991, Princeton address: “America and the Collapse of the Soviet Empire: What has to be Done” (*U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 2, no. 50 (1991)). See also Baker’s 6 February 1991 testimony—“Opportunities to Build a New World Order”—before the House Foreign Affairs Committee for another take the large contours of American policy at that time (*U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 2, no. 6 (1991)).

⁸⁹ David Hoffman, “Baker Discusses Democratic Reforms with Uzbek Leaders,” *Washington Post*, 17 February 1992, A30.

⁹⁰ Another example: when the Uzbek government asked me to participate as a monitor for the 27 January 2002 presidential “election,” the State Department, the Helsinki Commission and others recommended that I not go as it would lend credence to the government. Every contact who lived in Uzbekistan, however, Uzbek or American, recommended that I participate. Everyone knew the election was a joke, but it provided the opportunity to engage for the future.

the trip acknowledged that, “the internal politics that will shape these republics remains a mystery.”⁹¹ Ambassador Collins confirms: “Frankly, no one knew anything about these places.”⁹² As discussed at the end of the previous chapter, this mystery would not change. As one senior embassy official reported at the end of a three-year tour: “It’s amazing how little we know about how this country works.”⁹³ Or, as one of the most experienced U.S. interagency officials in Central Asia described in February of 2005: “It’s really impossible to figure out what’s actually going on in Uzbek politics.”⁹⁴

The U.S. established diplomatic relations on 9 February 1992, opening its embassy the next month. By the summer of 1992, Peace Corps volunteers and other NGOs were arriving. That fall, President Bush signed the Freedom Support Act, enabling \$388.13 million dollars to be spent from 1992-2004 in support of the following sectors: democracy (\$98.6); economic and social reform (\$200.52); humanitarian (\$19.9); security & law enforcement (\$51.16); and cross-cutting initiatives (\$17.95).⁹⁵

The formal recognition and funding of the newly independent states such as Uzbekistan served one overarching purpose: “the non-restoration of the U.S.S.R.” Amidst discussions with Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan about the peaceful surrender of their nuclear weapons, the normalization of borders and the Russian troop withdrawals from the Baltics (not to mention the troop build-up in the Gulf to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait), it was all the U.S. government could do to “treat [the former Soviet Republics] as adults,” establish full embassies, and

⁹¹ Thomas L. Friedman, “Uzbeks Say Yes to Democracy, Of Course,” *New York Times*, 17 February 1992, 7.

⁹² Collins, 1 December 2005, Washington, D.C.

⁹³ USG official, June 2002, Tashkent.

⁹⁴ USG official, February 2005, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁵ Statistics emailed by the USAID Mission Director, Joann Hale, 31 August 2004. This total represents nearly 2/3 of the cumulative USG funds spent during this time in these sectors (\$643.6 million dollars). Freedom Support Act spending in Uzbekistan was \$33.5 million dollars for FY05 (http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/car).

recognize them as, and encourage them to be, full, responsible members of the international community.⁹⁶

Perhaps it should be no surprise then that the U.S. did not fund such homegrown democratic movements as Birlik or Erk (although it does indicate a key difference between the administrations of George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush). As the co-founder of Birlik wrote to me: “I can understand why the US govt did not give any aid to Uzb. Dem/movement in 1987-92—we were almost unknown for the US. Still, the US lost an opportunity.”⁹⁷

1992, however, was an American election year that was about the “economy, stupid.” Bill Clinton’s 4200-word acceptance speech for the Democratic Party’s nomination used 141 words to address foreign affairs.⁹⁸ Once president, he continued to focus on domestic affairs, leaving issues regarding Russia and the former Soviet Union to Strobe Talbott, the president’s longtime friend and a Russophile. (Talbott served as Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State on the New Independent States from 1993-1994, before becoming the Deputy Secretary of State from 1994-2001). As a result, Talbott de facto shaped U.S.-Uzbekistan relations through his overemphasis on Russia, leaving little to no time to participate in the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship. His general lack of interest in Central Asia would characterize U.S. engagement during the Clinton administration (except for the Department of Defense).

On 3 May 1994, Talbott laid out his “vision” for the region at the U.S.-Central Asia Business Conference in Washington, D.C. In his remarks, Talbott clearly put Russia first as he promoted abstract ideals of free-markets and human rights with no contextual sense for how they might be realistically applied. “The theory here is simple: If reform succeeds in Russia, it is more likely to

⁹⁶ Collins interview, 1 December 2005, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁷ Abdumannob Polat, brother to Abdul, personal email to author, 24 August 2004. “Between 1987-1992...as far as I know, [the national democratic movement of Uzbekistan] received \$0 from the US or any other govt...”

⁹⁸ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 240.

succeed among Russia's neighbors." (In this same speech, Talbott naively likened the president of Kyrgyzstan to both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson).⁹⁹ In other words, U.S. policy was to create Russia anew in an American image so Russia could, in turn, do the same thing with their former Central Asian republics; who, presumably, would be anxious to do so (especially since at least one of them was already a Jeffersonian democrat).

In working toward the inclusion of Russia into the West, Talbott unknowingly echoed Mackinder's 1943 prediction for Russia, Europe and North America to work together. That said, the arrogance and ignorance of the speech is astounding.

Good advice, however, was available during this time. In May of 1993, one year before Talbott's speech, the former Director of Radio Liberty offered some sound and preemptive advice. The Clinton administration should separate:

the new non-Russian states from the concept of 'Russia.' The administration should direct aid selectively to some of the new non-Russian states...regardless of what happens to Russia...Uzbekistan is the key to Central Asian stability. Yet it has received little except opprobrium from Western democrats for its slowness in shedding its Soviet ways...[Karimov] told me [in the spring of 1992] that the United States will wish it had paid less attention to Russia and more to Uzbekistan when other influences burst into the open...[such as the] Islamic militancy affecting neighboring Tajikistan...Aid and support should flow naturally in accordance with the new strategic realities.¹⁰⁰

Paul Wolfowitz was particularly concerned that the Clinton administration was, in general, too "comfortable" with a "minimal effort" to protect American interests. Specifically, he thought the administration was:

not only unwilling to challenge Russian actions in its so-called 'near-abroad' [the South Caucasus and Central Asia], but also seem[ed] unresponsive to the security concerns of the East Europeans and unenthusiastic in its support of Ukrainian independence. A policy of "Russia first," pursued with balance, makes sense as long as Russia is proceeding on a moderate and democratic course, but the administration is slipping into a dangerous and misguided policy of "Russia only."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Strobe Talbott, "Promoting Democracy and Prosperity in Central Asia," *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 5, no. 19 (1994): 280.

¹⁰⁰ S. Enders Wimbush, "In Aid Game, U.S. Must Look Beyond Russia," *Insight on the News* 9, no. 21 (1993): 22.

¹⁰¹ Paul D. Wolfowitz, "Clinton's First Year," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 1 (January/February 1994): 29, 41.

Although sound, both critiques were from administration outsiders, especially Wolfowitz, a well-known Republican. Yet there was one more voice with immense credibility, a Democrat and a former National Security Advisor who understood the importance of the Heartland. Writing in 1994, Brzezinski concluded that Russia as the “primary focus of U.S. policy” was wrong-headed, “flawed in its assumptions” and “dangerous in its likely geopolitical consequences.”¹⁰² He noted that democratic progress takes time, as the examples of Taiwan and Korea demonstrate.

As Ambassador Collins points out, however, an “intellectual and budgetary” framework already existed. It was only natural that American officials engaged Central Asia accordingly; i.e., through an East-West context, centered on Moscow. “There was no other way to consider it.”

According to this argument, this de facto mindset among American policy-makers was a good thing. The (West) European desk at the State Department was the most important regional desk. Engagement from a traditional East-West perspective gave the former Soviet republics an importance that they would not garner as part of any other regional desk. The European perspective would also directly encourage the development of democracy.

That said, “Central Asia was not seen as important, and therefore there was no reason to put resources and talent [personnel] into it.” In fact, as the Ambassador-at-Large for the New Independent States, Collins had no one providing guidance to him (given Talbott’s Russia-centric approach). The good, and bad, news was that “DC didn’t pay any attention; I was left alone to do whatever I wanted.” There was much to do.

¹⁰² Zbigniew Brzezinski: “The Premature Partnership,” *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (March/April 1994): 67-83.

By all accounts, the U.S. presence in Uzbekistan that first year did not accomplish much. The first U.S. ambassador did not seem to understand the entire context, focusing entirely on President Karimov's crackdown of political and Islamic opponents. Collins: "We had "lectured them about human rights and how to be Jefferson democrats in 1993...it didn't go down very well. In fact, there was no relationship with Uzbeks until 1994." Collins offered the Central Asians a different package. Instead of bowing to the historical hegemony of their Russian, Chinese or Iranian neighbors, the U.S. offered a fourth option: real independence.¹⁰³

And thus began the only consistent theme to the U.S. engagement of Central Asia and Uzbekistan—the prevention of a regional hegemon from monopolizing the heart of the Heartland—as Mackinder, unbeknownst to most American policy-makers, quietly reasserted himself.

To be certain, as will be discussed below, there were plenty of things U.S. policy was "for" during this time period; e.g., democracy, prosperity, stability, etc. It was only the negative theme of anti-monopoly, however, that practically transcended American administrations as well as the phases of the relationship. Not surprisingly then, the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship really begins with the Department of Defense.

Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, tells the story of flying to Uzbekistan, accompanied by two majors, to meet the Uzbek Army Chief of staff. When the Uzbek general walked into the room, he saw one woman and two officers of field rank. He then did what any good Soviet general would do, and left.

¹⁰³ Collins, 1 December 2005; also Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, 26 October 2005, New York City.

“Everything we did, right from the beginning, was an object lesson in democracy.” Sherwood-Randall quickly moved past the slight and found someone with whom she could work, General Rostam Achmedov, the Uzbek Minister of Defense. Together, they began to build a military-to-military relationship between the two countries. In January 1994, Uzbekistan joined NATO’s Partnership-for-Peace program, whereby former Warsaw Pact officers participated in cultural and educational exchanges with NATO, as well as field exercises.

“Put yourself in the moment: it was a new security framework, and we did not know if the death of the Soviet empire was irreversible. We offered them an alternative to Russian dominance.”¹⁰⁴ And the Uzbeks appreciated it. Present from the very beginning of the relationship, Uzbek diplomat Ulegbek Ishankhovdjaev reflected on the importance of the military relationship. “Liz was the pioneer of mil-to-mil relations...she effected the change of minds in the Uzbek leadership.”¹⁰⁵

1995-2000: An Uzbek Perspective

Secretary of Defense Perry’s visit to Uzbekistan in 1995, marked the beginning of a second phase in the bilateral relationship. The Perry visit signaled that these two countries could talk to each other over common interests; namely, security. This military-to-military relationship would also put in place the interagency process that would enabled the U.S. to quickly respond to 9/11 with Uzbekistan’s support. Perry’s visit was a turning point for Uzbek foreign policy elites as well. They could now entertain a previously unimagined foreign policy objective: a truly independent foreign policy enabled by an ongoing U.S. interest that balanced Russia.

¹⁰⁴ Sherwood-Randall, 26 October 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Ulegbek Ishankhovdjaev, 26 July 2002, Washington, D.C.

The Perry Visit

On April 8, 1995, the Secretary of Defense for the United States of America visited Tashkent and Samarkand. Dr. William Perry was a man who “invested in personal relations,” believing that “eye-to-eye engagement” could begin to adjust the Uzbek worldview from the “paranoid to the possible.” Just four years after the demise of the Soviet Union, an American Secretary of Defense was visiting Uzbekistan, unequivocally signaling to Uzbek (and Russian) elites that Uzbekistan mattered.

Karimov warned Perry about Afghanistan, and they talked about the reform of Uzbekistan’s military, which was still a Soviet leftover in organization, doctrine and mentality.¹⁰⁶ It was a “moment,” a time that clearly demarcated a break from the past characteristics of the bilateral relationship and the chance for a fresh start. It was a soft approach that allowed for the fair assumption that Central Asians had “very little knowledge about how the outside world works, whilst their leaders have only borrowed ideas as to how to bring about change.”¹⁰⁷

Among Uzbekistan’s foreign policy elites, however, there was a very clear understanding of issues. This small band of analysts was looking for a “new model of regional security” in the mid-90s that included the surrounding powers, as well as the United States. This model would balance Russia’s doctrine of “strategic negation;” that is, the ‘Monroe Doctrine’ of denying any country the ability to influence its backyard. For these geo-strategically minded elites, the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship did not truly start until the Perry visit. The subsequent military-to-military initiatives were the “founding of the relationship” as the Pentagon was the “only [USG] structure that had a strategic approach to Uzbekistan and the region.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Sherwood-Randall, 26 October 2005.

¹⁰⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia*, 245.

¹⁰⁸ Uzbek official.

The Perry visit led to Uzbek officers, enlisted personnel and units traveling to the United States for professional exchanges, education and exercises.¹⁰⁹ The visit also contributed to the transformation of the Uzbek army from a Soviet style force to a modern mobile force capable of striking quickly. Writing in 1995, Maxim Shashenkov anticipated the force needed to counter the likes of the Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), four year later: “How capable [will] the Uzbekistan army be in ... conducting low-intensity warfare in Tajikistan or on the frontier with Afghanistan?”¹¹⁰

An interagency working group of twelve people was established in 1995 to examine Uzbekistan’s military doctrine. Headed up by Professor Rachmankulov of the National Security Council, this group produced a new military doctrine, rooted in maneuver warfare that was implemented in February of 2000 (preceded by the October 1999 installation of the first civilian Minister of Defense).¹¹¹

It was also in 1995 that a new War Academy was established to enable a “strong, compact, mobile Army. A good officer corps is critical. We need open-minded officers.” Challenges included developing a new curriculum—“The old Soviet doctrine is not applicable to our region and our situation”—and introducing the Uzbek language to the officer corps, most of whom spoke Russian. They also had a need for information technology experts; a simulation capacity; an NCO academy so decision-making could be decentralized to the lowest level possible (in keeping with the nature of 21st century warfare); and a center for serious officers to study the operational art of military campaigns. The need also included sending as many junior officers to

¹⁰⁹ Most of which was made possible by General Jack Sheehan, USMC, then the NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic. “SACLANT goodies, and Sheehan’s personality, made these interactions, especially in 1996 and 1997, possible.” Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, 26 October 2005.

¹¹⁰ Maxim Shashenkov, “Central Asia: Emerging Military-Strategic Issues,” in *After Empire: The Emerging Geopolitics of Central Asia*, ed. Jed C. Snyder (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995), 105.

¹¹¹ Kadyr Gulamov, Minister of Defense for Uzbekistan, 11 September 2001, Tashkent.

the West as possible. One 30 year-old Captain simply said upon returning from NATO's Marshall Center in Germany: "My eyes were opened."¹¹²

The Economy

In a similar vein, Karimov seemed ready to open his eyes to the need to reform the economy in 1995; despite criticism for maintaining his import substitution policy while subsidizing energy and food stuffs in the name of social stability. Karimov began to "liberalize" his import/export and convertibility policies, while fostering greater trade. The 1996 combination of a balance of payments crisis, a poor cotton harvest (the primary source of hard currency), dropping world cotton prices and increased wheat prices (imported, and key to providing bread to ordinary Uzbeks), however, proved too much for this control-oriented president in charge of a centralized economy. Karimov soon restricted access to hard currency.¹¹³

In other words, fearful of outsiders influencing his economy, Karimov set up a series of exchange rate mechanisms through his banks to remove hard currency from the system. "If you control the exchange rate, you control everything. We want to control it and not depend on foreign exchange, where people can gang up on you and force you to do things."¹¹⁴

Despite the IMF suspending its December 1995 Standby Arrangements (SBA) in 1996, Karimov's "wisdom" was soon "confirmed" by the Asian financial crisis of 1997 and the Russian financial crisis of 1998; both of which, to his mind, demonstrated the danger of outside forces in Uzbekistan's economy.

¹¹² Kadyr Gulamov, then the Commandant of the Uzbek War College, 28 August 2000, Tashkent.

¹¹³ As general overviews of this period, see, for example, Robert M. Cutler, "Uzbekistan's Trade Liberalization: Key to Central Asian Economic Integration," *The Analyst*, February 16, 2000 (accessed 2 February 2000); available from http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=192; and Richard Pomfret, "Recent Economic Reforms in Uzbekistan," *The Analyst*, September 26, 2004 (accessed 12 December 2001); available from http://www.cornellcaspian.com/analyst/010926_H1.htm. Also see Martha Brill Olcott, *Central Asia's New States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1996), 131-136; Olcott's *Central Asia's Second Chance* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 117; and Resul Yalcin, *The Rebirth of Uzbekistan*, 184-233.

¹¹⁴ An Uzbek official familiar with the economy.

By 2000, Karimov's economy did not have much to show for its non-participation in a globalized economy: it had the "lowest per capita level of all transition countries" in "attracting foreign equity investment" while its foreign trade declined by 40% from 1996-2000."¹¹⁵ Because of Uzbekistan's unwillingness to reform—symbolized through the never-ending promises to make the Uzbek currency, the *som*, fully convertible—the IMF closed its office in Tashkent in early 2001.

These self-inflicted wounds are difficult to understand unless two reminders constantly inform analysis. First, Uzbek officials fear only that which they cannot control. Second, a mentality shift was beginning to take place among Uzbek elites, especially the younger generation. As one Uzbek official stated in 2000:

There is a conflict in both government and business today between old thinkers and new thinkers. Old thinkers can't transfer their minds and skills automatically. They speak very nicely using the new terminology but you can't be sure they what they're talking about. We need to re-tune the system. Still, think of Uzbekistan like an "oriental" nation—you always have to keep the hierarchy in mind.¹¹⁶

Militant Islam Gathering: The External Threat

Re-tuning takes time, however, and it is especially hard to do when such real world threats as militant Islam appear on the horizon. As is well known now, a global and militant Islam matured between 1995 and 2000 in Central Asia with Afghanistan especially serving as the incubator. While the American mind distinguishes between the former Soviet Central Asia—that is, the five republics—and Afghanistan, the Central Asian mind does not. Afghanistan, and Pakistan, are

¹¹⁵ Christoph B. Rosenberg, unpublished paper, "14 Arguments about Current Account Convertibility Frequently Heard in Uzbekistan," February 2001, Tashkent. Rosenberg headed the IMF's office in Tashkent.

¹¹⁶ Uzbek official.

intricately interwoven into the Central Asian's security complex. "You have to think of Afghanistan and Pakistan when you think of Uzbekistan."¹¹⁷

A number of key events took place during this time, framing President Karimov's understanding of Uzbekistan as a front-line state in the war against militant Islam (which took place against the ongoing war in Tajikistan).

Of incalculable and indelible impact, however, was the rise of the Taliban. Afghanistan was geo-strategically important for two reasons. First, it bordered Uzbekistan at Termez, and therefore represented an invasion route. (After all, it was over the Friendship Bridge in Termez that Soviet troops had invaded, and then retreated from, Afghanistan). Second, there were two million ethnic Uzbeks living in northern Afghanistan to whom Uzbekistan felt an allegiance (as it did to the Uzbeks living in northern Tajikistan). With the fall of Kabul on 27 September 2006, the Taliban soon represented a direct threat to Uzbekistan, even as they created a safe harbor for global militant Islam in landlocked Central Asia.

Not fully confident in his military, which had just started to transform away from the Soviet model, Karimov's reaction to the Taliban reveals his paramount concern for the spread of extremist and militant Islam. Karimov's reaction also reveals his overarching principle of maintaining maximum independence for Uzbekistan and therefore himself.

When the Taliban briefly captured the northern Afghan town of Mazar-i-Sharif in May of 1997 (reaching the Uzbek border in the process), Karimov called for the establishment of an international contact group in October to address the issue. This multilateral effort (the "6+2" group) provided the framework through which Afghanistan was discussed by the international

¹¹⁷ Martha Brill Olcott, interview, 25 October 2000, Washington, D.C. During a June 2002 International Institute for Strategic Studies conference in Tashkent on Afghanistan's reconstruction—attended by the entire region and surrounding powers (including China and Iran)—almost every participant explicitly or implicitly assumed Afghanistan to be a part of Central Asia, from a geo-strategic and geo-communal perspective. (I was the only American attending, 14-16 June 2002).

community. It also sent a strong signal to Russia that while Central Asia was its backyard, it was not its sphere of influence.

When the Taliban again overran Mazar-i-Sharif in August of 1998, Karimov was frightened to the extent that he convened a Central Asia summit of defense ministers, and he permitted a joint Russian-Uzbek statement to be made from Tashkent about the need to preserve the borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States.¹¹⁸ The following year, with the Taliban still threatening, Karimov met with Prime Minister Putin on 11 December 1999 in Tashkent. They signed a military cooperation pact that established a “new level of relations in security matters” with Uzbekistan, according to Putin, as “Russia’s strategic partner for many, many years.”¹¹⁹ In May of 2000, Karimov stated unequivocally that “Uzbekistan finds...protection in the form of Russia.”¹²⁰

When the Taliban conquered 95% of Afghanistan in the fall of 2000, Karimov sent official Uzbek envoys in October to meet Taliban representatives in Islamabad (and then Khandahar).¹²¹ The Uzbeks were very aware that if Massoud and the Northern Alliance were defeated, the Taliban had already “declared Samarkand and Bukhara holy cities” that needed to be united under their rule.¹²²

In November 2000, rumors swirled that Russia and the U.S. were going to launch an attack against the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden’s al Qaeda from Uzbekistan. It was no surprise, however, when the Uzbek foreign minister officially announced that Uzbekistan would provide

¹¹⁸ Neil J. Melvin, *Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road* (Amsterdam: The Gordon and Breach Publishing Group, 2000), 99-100.

¹¹⁹ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, “Russian PM Calls Uzbekistan ‘Strategic Partner,’” 13 December, 1999 (accessed 4 March 2000); available from <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1999/12/2-tca/tca-131299.asp>.

¹²⁰ Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 197 (see footnote #7, which quotes AFP, “Uzbekistan Asks Russia for Protection against Terrorism,” 19 May 2000).

¹²¹ Rashid, *Jihad*, 197; Uzbek officials.

¹²² Gulamov, 28 August 2000.

no such base.¹²³ Air attacks from countries not contiguous to Afghanistan were simply not good enough, as it placed Uzbekistan at direct risk. Shortly after 9/11, an American missionary put the reality of the threat into perspective: “What would you think if the Taliban controlled Canada?”¹²⁴

Steve Coll records that as early as 1996, Pakistan’s prime minister, Benazir Bhutto “feared that a Taliban government would press its Islamic militancy on toward Central Asia.” He also notes that Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of the northern alliance, believed that al Qaeda wanted to destroy him in order to “link up with Islamist militants in remote areas of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, to press forward into Central Asia, burnishing bin Laden’s mystique as a conqueror of lost Islamic lands.”¹²⁵ In other words, Karimov’s actions from 1997-2000 did not reflect the mind of a dictator—as he was unquestionably regarded at the end of 2005. Instead, his actions reflect the mind of a leader facing a very real threat, alone; a threat that was both conventional and unconventional.

Taliban and al Qaeda were much more than a hostile regime capable of conventionally defeating Uzbekistan’s nascent military. It was the incubator for a global militant Islam.

Thousands of foreign radicals now fighting alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan are determined to someday overthrow their own regimes and carry out Taliban-style Islamist revolutions. For example, the Chechnya-based militants who took over parts of Dagestan in July [1999] included in their ranks Arabs, Afghans, and Pakistanis, most of whom had fought in Afghanistan. So had the 800 Uzbek and Tajik gunmen who took over parts of southern Kyrgyzstan in August [1999]. The state breakdown in Afghanistan offers militants from Pakistan, Iran, the Central Asian republics, and China’s predominantly Muslim Xinjiang province a tempting package deal: sanctuary and financial support through [drug] smuggling.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Marina Kolzova, “Uzbekistan Says No to Bin Laden Attacks,” *United Press International*, November 29, 2000. Accessed 3 December 2000. Available from LexisNexis.

¹²⁴ Interview, Tashkent.

¹²⁵ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 331, 561.

¹²⁶ Ahmed Rashid, “The Taliban: Exporting Extremism,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, No. 6 (November/December 1999), 23.

The Taliban was an increasingly loud echo of what was already taking place in Uzbekistan itself—and that could not be allowed. Karimov got his first hint of what that might look like in December 1997 (just months after Mazar-i-Sharif had been overrun the first time).

Extremist Islam Gathering: The Internal Threat

On 2 December 1997 in Namangan—the same town where Karimov had been introduced to militant Islam in December 1991—terrorists decapitated a Ministry of Internal Affairs officer.¹²⁷ The resulting crackdown was the most comprehensive to date. In their well-documented report, “Crackdown in the Farghona Valley: Arbitrary Arrests and Religious Discrimination,” Human Rights Watch describes how over a thousand men in Namangan and surrounding cities were indiscriminately rounded up under the most primitive of pretenses; often after the “planting” of narcotics and weapons.

“Planting such evidence was reportedly so widespread during the crackdown that, according to local residents, men in that area tried to wear clothing without pockets to help deter such commonly used set-ups.” Once detained, suspects were “routinely beat or tortured” and subjected to psychological pressure that threatened harm to family members if confessions were not made. Human Rights Watch could only conclude that “legitimate concern for state security has been corrupted by politically motivated repression and police abuse ... [the crackdown was] merely a dramatic escalation of a sporadic six-year government campaign against free expression of religion, specifically nongovernmental Islam.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Rashid says it was an Army Captain, *Jihad*, 146.

¹²⁸ Human Rights Watch, “Republic of Uzbekistan, Crackdown in the Farghona Valley: Arbitrary Arrests and Religious Discrimination,” 10, no. 4 (D) (accessed 2 November 1999); available from

The crackdown did not end there. It was legalized on 1 May 1998, when the Uzbek parliament passed “The Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations.” This law, among other things, made it illegal to proselytize, prohibited the private teaching of religious principles, prevented the wearing of headdresses, and required all religious organizations to have at least 100 members in order to register. The law also stiffened the penalties associated with such “crimes.”¹²⁹ In his Parliamentary speech that day, President Karimov denounced the “Islamic extremists, stating that “Such people must be shot in the head. If necessary, I’ll shoot them myself.”¹³⁰

Eight months later, and just six months after the Taliban’s August 1998 recapture of Mazar-i-Sharif, several bomb blasts rocked Tashkent on 16 February 1999. In what was an apparent assassination attempt on the life of Islam Karimov, five coordinated blasts occurred simultaneously around the Cabinet of Ministers’ Building. Karimov narrowly avoided the blast, having been delayed momentarily. No one claimed credit for it. That did not stop the government, however, from blaming the IMU leaders, Takhir Yuldoshov and Dzhuma Khodzhiyev (Juma Namangani), who were tried and found guilty in absentia.¹³¹

<http://www.hrw.org/reports98/uzbekistan/>. See also Acacia Shields, Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights. Hearing on the State Department Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 2000, 7 September 2000.

¹²⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “Uzbekistan Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998,” released February 26, 1999 (accessed 2 November 1999); available from http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1998_hrp_report/uzbekist.html.

¹³⁰ Widely reported; see, for example, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 1998 timeline for Uzbekistan: <http://www.rferl.org/specials/uzbelections/timeline1998.asp>.

¹³¹ Unfortunately, even if the official Uzbek report is largely accurate, any Uzbek trial and/or evidence is suspect because of previous crackdowns and show trials.

Several theories have been offered besides the IMU conviction. It was the Russians punishing Karimov for his waywardness according to their Yeltsin doctrine of destabilization in the near abroad; it was the Tajiks punishing Karimov for providing tacit support to an ethnic Uzbek colonel in the Tajik army who revolted; it was banned democratic parties like Erk and Birlik; it was disgruntled former high-ranking Uzbek officials who had been previously dismissed by Karimov; and finally, it was Karimov himself, seeking to demonstrate why he Uzbekistan needs him as a stabilizing force. For a fascinating discussion of most of these theories, see Abdumannob Polat and Nickolai Butkevich, “Unraveling the Mystery of the Tashkent

The goal of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is to overthrow the Uzbek government and establish a Caliphate. It seems that their primary means of accomplishing this task was to infiltrate Uzbekistan—from Afghanistan through Kyrgyzstan—in small guerrilla groups (a la Che Guevara in Bolivia). These incursions occurred twice, in the summer of 1999 and in the summer of 2000 with the support of al Qaeda.

The IMU fought as committed shock troops in the Taliban's war against Massoud's forces in northern Afghanistan. They were also a vanguard of bin Laden's grandiose plans to sponsor a thrust by Islamist forces into central Asia to overthrow the region's secular leaders and establish new caliphates. Bin Laden provided the Uzbek radicals with funding, weapons, and access to training camps. The Taliban provided them with bases and housing in Kabul and farther north.¹³²

The IMU also helped move narcotics north, further supporting their cause. "The militants are in close contact with Mafia drug structures. They pray by day and ship drugs by night."¹³³ Trained in Afghanistan according to US manuals developed for the *mujahadin* in the 1980s,¹³⁴ and living off of previously cached food and weapons in the Surkhandarya (Uzbekistan) and Batken (Kyrgyzstan) regions, these forces apparently sought to demonstrate the instability and/or ineptness of the Karimov regime merely by their presence. In the summer of 2000, for example, they managed to reach the south and east of Tashkent itself just as Uzbekistan celebrated its ninth birthday on the first of September (preventing government officials from taking holiday in

Bombings: Theories and Implications," *Demokratizatsiya* 8, no. 4 (2000). See also "Acacia Shields Comments on the Tashkent Terrorism Trial and Uzbekistan's Ongoing Crackdown on Muslims" *EurasiaNet*, 20 November 2000 (accessed 25 November 2000); available from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/qanda/articles/eav112000.shtml>.

Repeated US sources, however, confirmed that they have evidence linking the IMU to the Tashkent bombing (although that evidence has not been released). Laura K. Cooper, State Department Office of Counterterrorism, 26 October 2000, Washington, D.C.

¹³² Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 458, 500; Interview with U.S. official, 11 June 2002, Tashkent.

¹³³ Kyrgyz Security Council Chairman Bolot Dzhaznuzakov, as quoted in "Kyrgyz Official Warns About Islamic Militants," *Interfax News Agency*, April 27, 2000.

¹³⁴ Gulamov, 28 August 2000.

the mountains and creating occasional gridlock with the multiple checkpoints in and around Tashkent).¹³⁵

In military terms, it is hard to judge the incursions as anything but a failure. In fact, it was never quite clear what this dispersed small unit force of perhaps a 1000 men would do once they got to Tashkent. Karimov, in classic form, proudly told the press: “Uzbekistan is able to protect itself. We have never invited and are not preparing to invite armed forces from outside Uzbekistan, no matter what country they are from.”¹³⁶ Clearly Karimov had no stomach for Lord Curzon’s long-ago prophecy: “The Russian eagle may at first have alighted upon the eastern shores of the Caspian with murderous beak and sharpened talons, but, her appetite once satisfied, she has shown that she also came with healing in her wings.”¹³⁷

The IMU, however, did do themselves irreparable harm by taking four American mountain climbers hostage during their “invasion.”¹³⁸ The hostage-taking episode contributed to the designation of the IMU as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State in September 2000.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Author’s personal experience late August and early September of 2000 and interviews with Uzbek government officials. At the height of the infiltrations, rumors again circulated that Uzbekistan sought outside aid from Russia. Both Uzbekistan and Russia denied such a request. But interviews suggest that Uzbekistan did make such a request that was granted. Uzbekistan balked, however, when they were told they had to pay for it.

See “Foreign Minister Denies Uzbekistan has Requested Outside Help,” Radio Free Europe 1 September 2000 (accessed 1 September 2000) available from <http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl/2000/00-09-01.rferl.html>.

¹³⁶ Rashid, *Jihad*, 197. (See footnote #7: AFP, “Uzbek President Hits Out at Russia,” 22 September 2000).

¹³⁷ Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia*, 385.

¹³⁸ Pete Takeda, “Escape from Kyrgyzstan,” *Climbing*, December 15, 2000, 86-92.

¹³⁹ For a detailed discussion of the IMU, see Chris Seiple, “Questions and More Questions: The IMU, Uzbek National Security and U.S. Policy,” unpublished paper, December 11, 2000 (where I concluded that the incursions were diversions to enable narcotic runs through different routes); Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad*, especially 137-188; and Chris Seiple and Joshua T. White, “Uzbekistan and the Central Asian Crucible of Religion and Security,” in *Religion & Security: The New Nexus in International Relations*, ed. Robert A. Seiple and Dennis R. Hoover (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 37-57; and Jeffrey A. Smith, *Counterinsurgency in Uzbekistan: An adapted FID Strategy for Policy Consideration* (Naval Postgraduate School Thesis: June 2002).

Like Che Guevara, the IMU was unsustainable because it did not have an ideology supported by a clear, comprehensive and consistent argument. Fortunately for them, however, such an ideology was available.

Neither Bin Laden, nor former Taliban leader Mullah Omar nor Yuldoshov have come up with an ideological and theological framework that justifies their actions. Instead, they often rely on the comprehensive teachings provided by Hizb ut-Tahrir, currently the most popular radical movement in Uzbekistan.¹⁴⁰

The real threat to Karimov was, and is, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), which published its first Tashkent leaflets in April 1999,¹⁴¹ just two months after Karimov's assassination attempt. HT seeks the same Caliphate as the IMU, but claims to do so in a non-violent manner.

As extremists, HT provides answers to the many questions of a psychologically and spiritually dislocated youth. With a profound knack for contextualizing their message through individual discipleship—according to the transcendent theme of justice, but tailored to the culture and political issues of the day—HT recruits people from around the world.

HT does not hesitate to use the West's free speech to declare their hatred of Jews, Sufi's, Shi'a, and the West. HT does hesitate, however, to explain how they will achieve their global caliphate without using violence. This non-violent extremism creates a ready pool of ideologically indoctrinated people who can easily cross into terrorism. (For example, one of the 7 July 2005 London bombers was a former HT disciple).

In his telling interview with an HT leader in November of 2000, Ahmed Rashid helps us understand the gap between non-violence and Caliphate. The HT leader's words:

We want to make a Caliphate that will reunite all the Central Asian states. Hizbe-e Tahrir wants a peaceful jihad that will be spread by explanation and conversion not by war. But ultimately there will be war because the repression of the Central Asian states is so strong.... We have no special

¹⁴⁰ Zeyno Baran, *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Islam's Political Insurgency* (Washington, D.C.: The Nixon Center, December 2004), 77.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

relationship with Osama bin Laden, but he supports all Islamic movements in Central Asia and he is very famous here for doing so. Karimov has no future here. There is too much corruption and bad policies. There are no jobs, the economy is very bad, rich men don't help the poor as in Islam and the government gives nothing to the poor so there is a lot of anger among people. However, there are many people in Karimov's government who are good people so it's a good time to break the government from the inside as some are certain to join us. But who knows the plans of Allah?"¹⁴²

In other words, violence will come if need be; but maybe not, as HT seeks to convert people from the inside. This approach is the most dangerous kind of threat to any government, and especially a dictator, because it creates true believers throughout society, even within the government itself (see below discussion about the 12-13 May 2005 events at Andijan).

In sum, from 1997 to 2000, Karimov experienced the following extremist and/or terrorist threats:

- 1) His own officers are decapitated inside Uzbekistan;
- 2) His border is conventionally threatened three times by the Taliban;
- 3) His country is infiltrated twice by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan;
- 4) He survives an assassination attempt; and
- 5) HT begins to operate in his country.

The Uzbek view of this time period, therefore, was one of looming crisis and no clear answers, except one: do whatever it takes to get to tomorrow—whether that means working with the U.N., striking deals with the Russians, talking to the Taliban directly, or cracking down on your own people.

¹⁴² See Ahmed Rashid, "Interview with Leader of Hizbe-E Tahrir," *Analyst*, November 22, 2000 (accessed 22 November 2000) available from http://caciaanalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=114&SMSESSION=NO. For a detailed discussion of HT, see Zeyno Baran, "The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir: *Deciphering and Combating Radical Islamic Ideology*, Conference Report (Washington, D.C.: The Nixon Center, September 2004); Baran *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Islam's Political Insurgency*; Rashid's *Jihad*, 115-136; Seiple and White, "Uzbekistan and the Central Asian Crucible of Religion and Security," 37-57; Martha Brill Olcott and Alexei Malanshenko, *Islam in the Post-Soviet Newly Independent States* (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 2001); and <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org>.

International Relations

In this security context, to the Uzbek mind, how could human rights be a legitimate issue for serious international relations? Indeed, Karimov was simply embodying Lord Palmerton's guidance for himself. Uzbekistan has no eternal friends, only eternal interests. And the overriding interest from 1995-2000—lived out day-to-day, no matter the apparent inconsistencies—was a Karimov-led-independent-Uzbekistan that was not destabilized by terrorism from the south; too much Russian influence from the north; instability from the east (Tajikistan); and extremism from within.

Uzbekistan's multilateral relations also reflected this national interest-driven approach. For example, Karimov's relationship with GUUAM¹⁴³ and the "Shanghai Five"¹⁴⁴ provided sufficient and simultaneous relations with both the West (GUUAM) and East (the Shanghai Cooperation Organization). As such these organizations gave Karimov the flexibility he needed to act according to the political context of the moment.

¹⁴³ Georgia-Ukraine-Uzbekistan-Azerbaijan-Moldova; Karimov joined GUUAM in 1999, when Russia was at a weak point; namely, during the 50th anniversary of NATO as Russia's fellow Slavs were bombed in Serbia (April 1999). The icing on the cake: Karimov signed it at the Uzbek embassy in Washington, D.C., where the NATO anniversary was being held. Karimov withdrew that same month from the CIS Collective Security Treaty as it had become, according to him, an agent for Russian hegemony. Also see Shahram Akbarzadeh, "U.S.-Uzbek Partnership and Democratic Reforms, *Nationalities Papers* 32, no. 2 (June 2004): 276.

GUUAM was formed in 1997 as GUAM. Although officially not against any third party, the four original members all had a common trait: Russian intervention. From Transnistria to the Black Sea Fleet to Abkhazia to Nagorno-Karabakh, the Russians had made it a point during the 1990s to interfere with their individual sovereignty.

Of course, later—with Putin in power, the IMU and Taliban threatening and the demise of his economy—Karimov would find a way to warm back up to Russia. See "Economic Decline Forcing GUUAM Nations to Return to Russia" 30 November 2000 (accessed 30 November 2000) available from http://www.stratfor.com/products/premium/read_article.php?id=102463&selected=Country%20Profiles&howCountry=1&countryId=80&showMore=1.

¹⁴⁴ The "Shanghai Five" was established in 1996 to examine border disputes among its members (Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan). It became the Shanghai Forum when Uzbekistan joined the group as an "observer" in the summer of 2000. It became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization during its 14-15 July 2001 meeting when Uzbekistan officially joined as a "charter" member. The name changes reflect Uzbekistan's self-importance, as well as the other members' desire to include them. As a matter of pride, Uzbekistan did not join things, but it did start them; hence the double name change.

This “dualism” in policy resulted from Uzbekistan’s “geostrategic position” and concomitant “geopolitical point of view and national interest.” GUUAM, to the Uzbek mind, lent the possibility of “transportation and communications; a Euro-Atlantic orientation; and an instrument through which to integrate into European/Western structures.” The SCO, on the other hand, represented the chance to coordinate with potential allies on “international terrorism, narcotics and extremism.” It went without saying that the latter organization would not criticize Uzbekistan’s internal policies.

In the Uzbek mind, therefore, it was perfectly logical that Karimov could be the first one to propose a GUUAM Secretariat in Baku, Azerbaijan, while seeking a U.N. terrorism center in Tashkent that was associated with the SCO and allowed the U.S. to participate as an observer.¹⁴⁵ (It is worth noting that, with all this activity with the great powers and surrounding countries, Karimov was still creating and playing every card he could, as he sought to engage places like Israel, India, and Georgia).¹⁴⁶

The most important relationship during this period, however, was also the most maddening to the Uzbeks. After such a poor start with the Americans in 1993, because of their total focus on human rights, there was genuine euphoria with the April 1995 Perry visit. One well-placed observer noted that with the visit, the Uzbeks felt like they had been “discovered.” Perry’s visit, no matter what was actually said, granted the Uzbeks “equal status with the Russians.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Uzbek official.

¹⁴⁶ Karimov, as a Muslim, openly visited Israel seeking a defense partnership, calling attention to Uzbekistan’s 30,000 (Bukara) Jews and their long history of living in a religiously tolerant environment (Steve Rodan, “Uzbekistan Sees Israel as Defense Partner,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 18 September 1998, 5). Karimov visited India, seeking an increased dialogue and a trade corridor through Iran (“Delhi, Tashkent Seek to Regularize Dialogue,” *The Hindu*, 21 May 1999. Karimov also signed a cooperation pact with his colleague in fighting Russian influence, President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia (“Uzbekistan, Georgia Sign Cooperation Pact,” *Journal of Commerce*, 30 May 1996, 4).

¹⁴⁷ John Reppert, Brigadier General, USA (retired). Reppert was serving as Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall’s executive assistant at the time. Personal email to author, 30 November 2005.

On five counts, however, the Uzbeks simply could not understand—sometimes genuinely—why the U.S. was so interested in human rights. First it was not a part of their historic or Soviet experience. In fact, both experiences confirmed the Uzbek approach to security. Accordingly, it was very difficult to understand human rights as an integral part of security. While “the question of human rights and economic development are important,” one official conceded, “national security is more important.” To their mind, despite the best efforts of Bill Perry, Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, and Jeffrey Starr (her replacement), the Pentagon’s strategic approach was constantly curtailed by President Clinton’s human rights agenda, making the 1995-2000 period a “difficult time.”¹⁴⁸

Third, the Uzbeks viewed themselves as in the same fight as the U.S.; and doing a relatively good job at it. (After all, they weren’t Pakistan). Fourth, and inexplicably, the Americans did not seem to know they were in the same fight, and apparently did not want to listen to warnings of Islamic extremism. Finally, the United States did not seem to have any kind of consistent or coherent overall policy (besides pipelines, which was itself confused).

Still the Uzbek did what they could to stand with America. To their mind, they made some human rights concessions before President Karimov’s June 1996 visit to New York City and Washington, D.C. (where he met President Clinton unofficially, the last Central Asian leader to do so). They consistently voted with the U.S. in the U.N. And President Karimov came out in support of NATO expansion.¹⁴⁹

With the IMU’s 1999 incursion, the Americans seemed to become more receptive, albeit according to their split personality. For example, both sides were irked by President Clinton’s

¹⁴⁸ Uzbek official.

¹⁴⁹ See Svante E. Cornell, “Uzbekistan: A Regional Player in Eurasian Geopolitics?” *European Security* 9, no. 2 (Summer 2000) (accessed 26 June 2001); available from <http://www.cornellcaspien.com/pub/0010uzbekistan.htm>.

refusal to send President Karimov a congratulatory note for winning a rigged election that he would have won legitimately anyway if he had allowed a free and fair election.¹⁵⁰ In a similarly awkward fashion, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Tashkent in April of 2000. Albright promised \$10 million dollars in anti-terrorism aid to be split among three of the five former Soviet republics (not much). Meanwhile, she spoke forthrightly about the connection between human rights and security, which fell mostly on deaf ears.¹⁵¹

Two other factors loomed as the bilateral relationship entered the 21st century. First, Uzbekistan had as its ambassador to the U.S., Sodyq Safaev. Having previously served as the ambassador to Germany, Safaev assumed the ambassadorship in Washington on 6 September 1996. Throughout his time in Washington (he returned to Uzbekistan in 2002 where he would serve as Foreign Minister until 2005), Safaev found a way to bridge the cultural and communication gaps between Uzbekistan and the United States. As a brief example, consider his articulation of the concept of security:

The new world order demands from us admission of the principle of indivisibility of security. The regional security of Central Asia and the South Caucasus is an important element of global security. Only through cooperation on both regional and global levels will we achieve our common goals in building a stable and secure world environment.¹⁵²

This was a man whose holistic thinking provided vision, as well as enough strategic ambiguity for both parties to feel comfortable enough in the relationship—no small task.

Second, 2000 was an election year, and the Uzbeks were unabashedly for George W. Bush. They had read Condoleezza Rice's Fall 2000 piece in *Foreign Affairs*, as well as other Bush campaign documents on foreign policy (although none of these pieces, the Uzbeks pointed out,

¹⁵⁰ Conversations with Uzbek embassy and NSC officials, March 2000.

¹⁵¹ Albright's speech is available from <http://www.friends-partners.org/CCSI/resource/albright.htm>.

¹⁵² Unpublished remarks at the Stanford University conference on "The Geopolitics of Energy Development in the Caspian Region: Regional Cooperation or Conflict?" December, 1999 (provided by Sodyq Safaev).

mentioned Central Asia). They came to one conclusion: in a Bush administration, foreign policy would be conducted from “national interest, not principle” because, simply, it was “not a good idea to push the [human rights]. It can create an opposite effect.”¹⁵³

September 11th was coming in the next year, however, and the Uzbeks, to a person, would say the same thing: we told you so.

1995-2000: An American Perspective

During this period (1991-1995)...Uzbekistan [was] ...considered beyond the pale by the U.S. State Department. Moreover, with the Russo-centric Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott in the driving seat of U.S. policy toward the FSU, Washington was not keen to antagonize Moscow and challenge its abiding interests in Central Asia. Talbott’s agenda was to enlist Russia in NATO and not create problems in U.S.-Russia relations by encroaching on Russia’s backyard.

However, as Russia slipped into chaos, Talbott’s pro-Russian policy came under bitter attack from within the U.S. foreign policy establishment, the Jewish and Israeli lobbies in Washington and U.S. oil companies, *who all wanted the U.S. to embrace a more multi-dimensional foreign policy toward the FSU*...The USA could not develop strategic clout in Central Asia without Uzbekistan, the largest and most powerful state and the only one capable of standing up to Russia.¹⁵⁴

As the conclusion to this section reveals in detail, the U.S. was never able to adopt a “more multi-dimensional,” let alone coordinated, foreign policy toward Central Asia and Uzbekistan during this period. On the one hand, a profound discussion of Central Asia, and Uzbekistan, took place from 1995-2000, almost all of it rooted in Mackinder (although few, if they even knew, acknowledged it). On the other hand, that discussion never transferred to an actionable, comprehensive foreign policy.

Such as it was, the leadership of President Clinton, Strobe Talbott, and the U.S. interagency process itself—still trapped in its Cold War mentality—combined to provide an American foreign policy that interacted with Uzbekistan and the region in piecemeal fashion. Not

¹⁵³ Various Uzbek officials, September 2000, June 2002.

¹⁵⁴ Rashid, *Taliban*, 161-162. Italics added.

surprisingly, different issues dominated U.S. policy toward the region at different moments. These issues included pipelines; security (military and counterterrorism); and human rights, especially, religious freedom.

Strategy?

By 1995, many in the national security establishment were beginning to understand that “historically, whoever controls the lands between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya also dominates Central Asia.”¹⁵⁵ It was an important consideration as it became increasingly clear that an Afghanistan-generated extremist Islam was not a “figment” of the “imagination” but already “looming on the horizon.”¹⁵⁶

Looking back from 2000, however, one U.S. official was at a loss to explain just what U.S. policy was toward Uzbekistan and the region. “It’s an important region. Our goals: 1) Promote stability/security; 2) Address terrorism; 3) Promote economic and political reform. But things get determined by ...terrorism and energy ...There is no strategic planning for policy in the region.”¹⁵⁷

He was not alone. When asked what he thought U.S. policy was in the region, the J5 officer for Central Asia just smiled. “Officially, we want to prevent a hegemonic influence [in Eurasia] by supporting [the] sovereignty and territorial integrity [of the Central Asian states]; we want to prevent the proliferation of WMD; and we seek to enhance democracy, human rights and economic reform.” Then he added: “But we haven’t had a policy decision in years; we’re band-

¹⁵⁵ Martha Brill Olcott, “The Myth of ‘Tsentral’naia Aziia’,” *Orbis* (Fall 1994): 563.

¹⁵⁶ Boris Z. Rumer, “Gathering Storm in Central Asia,” *Orbis* (Winter 1993): 101.

¹⁵⁷ Amit Pandya, 16 February 2000, The U.S. State Department. At the time, Pandya was serving on the U.S. Department of State’s Policy and Planning staff (an internal think tank created by George Kennan in 1951 to serve the Secretary of State).

aiding along because we can't sit down and make a decision."¹⁵⁸ A long-serving official at the embassy in Tashkent reflected on his 1998 arrival in-country: "There was no policy except watch the Iranians, and promote democracy."¹⁵⁹ Another U.S. embassy official who served a long tour in Tashkent said that his in-brief was his decision to read the Uzbekistan section in the *Lonely Planet* travel guide.¹⁶⁰

These opinions were not held only by critical action officers working at the intersection of policy-creation and implementation, but also by leaders at the highest level. As the commanding general of Central Command from August 1997 to September 2000, General Anthony Zinni, USMC, was responsible for Central Asia (the region was added to Central Command's area of operations in late 1998, to be discussed below). Zinni felt that Uzbekistan had the potential to be a bulwark against an expanding extremism. The problem, however, was twofold.

On the one hand, Karimov was adopting a "Chechnya model" because he didn't have the "experience to handle the IMU." As a result, he was going to "breed generational terrorism."

On the other hand, "you can only give our policy to a perfectly healthy patient...we need to get a policy."¹⁶¹ "Karimov used to lecture me for three to four hours at a time about how strategically important Uzbekistan was; but we had no plan or policy...I was left to scrape it together. We never had a viable policy."¹⁶² The U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan during this time,

¹⁵⁸ Thom Burke, 25 October 2000, The Pentagon. At the time, Burke was the Central Asia action officer for the J5; that is, the Central Asia desk officer in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's (CJCS) think tank. It was this shop that commissioned the U.S.-Atlantic Council's "Strategic Assessment of Eurasia," January 2001 (see below).

¹⁵⁹ U.S. official, 11 June 2002, Tashkent.

¹⁶⁰ U.S. embassy official, June 2002.

¹⁶¹ Anthony Zinni, telephone interview, 7 March 2000; and presentation at The Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, 3 May 2000.

¹⁶² Anthony Zinni, telephone interview, 16 September 2005.

Joe Presel, sums up the problem: “We invented ‘flavor-of-the-month’ to sell ice cream. We conduct our policy the same way. We have no concept of the long term.”¹⁶³

Certainly there was some good thinking being done between Secretary Perry’s visit and 2001. For example, S. Frederick Starr argued as early as January of 1996 that a “sovereign Uzbekistan, politically and economically reformed, is the best hope to anchor a potentially unstable region and foster Russia’s development as a “normal” country free from regional insecurities and imperial longings.” Borrowing Secretary Perry’s April 1995 phrase, Starr encouraged the U.S. to treat Uzbekistan as an “island of stability” in Central Asia, instead of “relegating [it] to the periphery of U.S. policy.”¹⁶⁴

Zbigniew Brzezinski, however, as the Democrats’ last living former national security advisor was presumably more persuasive to a Democratic administration. Writing in 1997—and continuing the themes of his 1994 *Foreign Affairs* article— Brzezinski argued in a decidedly Mackinderian fashion. His views had matured into the call for a “Trans-Eurasian Security System” (echoing Dr./General Karl Haushofer), and the need to recognize Uzbekistan as a pivotal state in that security system.¹⁶⁵

The point of departure for the needed policy had to be hard-nosed recognition of the three unprecedented conditions that currently define the geopolitical state of world affairs. For the first

¹⁶³ Joe Presel, 4 September 2000, Tashkent.

¹⁶⁴ S. Frederick Starr, “Making Eurasia Stable,” *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (January/February 1996): 92, 81. Starr later argued that the U.S. had no policy for Central Asia but a “mélange of corollaries of policies whose real focus is elsewhere” (that is, focused on Russia). See S. Frederick Starr, “Power Failure: American Policy in the Caspian,” *The National Interest* (Spring 1997).

¹⁶⁵ This discussion based on the following articles and book by Zbigniew Brzezinski: “The Premature Partnership,” *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (March/April 1994); “A Geostrategy for Eurasia,” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (September/October 1997) [also published in David L. Boren and Edward J. Perkins, ed., *Preparing America’s Foreign Policy for the 21st Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 309-318]; and *The Grand Chessboard* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997), 197, 208, 198, 130-131.

Remarkably, in each of these writings, Brzezinski does not once cite Sir Halford John Mackinder; except in his book, *The Grand Chessboard* where, unbelievably, he refers to him as “Harold” Mackinder (p. 38). (Using phrases like “democratic bridgehead,” Brzezinski echoes Mackinder’s 1943 “Round World” article in *Foreign Affairs*, where he calls France a “defensible bridgehead”).

time in history, (1) a single state is truly a global power; (2) a non-Eurasian state is globally the preeminent state, and (3) the globe's central arena, Eurasia, is dominated by a non-Eurasian power.

Eurasia contained 75% of the world's population; 60% of its GNP; and 75% of its energy. Consequently, the "immediate task is to ensure that no state or combination of states gains the ability to expel the United States or even diminish its decisive role." Accordingly, "strategically pivotal" states such as Uzbekistan would be critical to preventing the domination of Eurasia.

Uzbekistan is, in fact, the prime candidate for regional leadership in Central Asia...More than in any of the other Central Asian states, Uzbekistan's political elite and increasingly also its people, already partake of the subjective makings of a modern nation-state and are determined—domestic difficulties notwithstanding—never to revert to colonial status.

While, ironically enough, today's Central Asian scholars and students of geopolitics agree with Brzezinski's logic, if not his ideas,¹⁶⁶ no one in America, let alone his own political party, had time for such quaint ideas on the verge of the 21st century.

If it was clear to scholars and practitioners at the time that the U.S. needed a comprehensive regional policy centered on Uzbekistan, why was there no concerted effort to do so?

Less than a month after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, and just three months after the 25 June Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia, James F. Collins spoke at the opening of S. Frederick Starr's Central Asia Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). U.S. policy goals now included:

- Independent and sovereign states in Central Asia
- The establishment of free-market and democratic governments
- Integration of these states with the international political and financial institutions

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, repeated references to Brzezinski's writings by Central Asians in *Central Asia and The Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies*, 4 (34) 2005. These views are also confirmed through my own interaction with scholars and students at various Uzbek universities.

- Prevention of WMD trafficking
- Enhancement of US business interests and energy diversification

Collins mentioned that the U.S. was prepared to work with the Central Asian governments on “other transnational threats of terrorism, narcotics and environmental degradation.” Collins also made reference to Starr’s article, but nothing about its specific recommendations regarding Uzbekistan.¹⁶⁷

On 21 July 1997, Strobe Talbott presented his thoughts on American policy in Central Asia to the Johns Hopkins University (with Paul Wolfowitz and Fred Starr present). He juxtaposed the Great Game between the British and Russian empires with the 1990s. Whereas the former was a zero-sum game, the 1990s represented an opportunity for “all responsible players in the Caucasus and Central Asia to be winners.” While displaying more nuance than his 1994 speech on the matter, he closed his speech by casting U.S. relations with the former Soviet south in the context of the proper “integration” of Russia into the international community.

Talbott stressed specific U.S. policy goals—“the promotion of democracy, the creation of free market economies, the sponsorship of peace and cooperation within and among the countries of the region, and their integration with the larger community”— in the context of the simple message the Clinton administration had been giving to the region for four-and-a-half years: “as long as [the region] move[s] in the direction of political and economic freedom, of national and international reconciliation, we will be with them.”

Talbott did mention, however, two other possible factors for the first time. If reform were not successful, the “region could become a breeding ground of terrorism, a hotbed of religious and

¹⁶⁷ James Collins, Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary for the New Independent States, “U.S. Policy toward the Central Asian States,” 21 October 1996 (accessed 16 May 2002); available from <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nis/collins.html>.

political extremism, and a battleground for outright war.” Clearly no one wanted this potential outcome as the region “sits on as much as 200 billion barrels of oil. That was yet another reason why conflict-resolution must be Job One for U.S. policy in the region: It is both the prerequisite for and an accompaniment to energy development.”¹⁶⁸ (We will return to this topic below).

Talbot’s warnings were prescient, and so were his ideas about future U.S. strategy. The only problem was that Washington failed to follow up on them. Had the United States been serious about its strategic vision for Central Asia, policymakers should not only have talked about conflict resolution; they should have insisted that it be the number one priority.¹⁶⁹

Pipelines as Policy

The day after Talbot’s speech, 22 July 1997, America’s foremost observer of Central Asia testified before the U.S. Senate. Martha Brill Olcott told the senators:

It is Central Asia’s wealth of course, which has sparked the American interest in the region. While U.S. policy-makers certainly do not want to see a hegemonic Russia for general geopolitical reasons [a la Mackinder], the potential costs of such hegemony become far greater if Russia is able to dictate the terms and limit western access to the world’s last known vast oil and gas reserves.¹⁷⁰

The region’s reserves were substantial. (The region is defined here as the Caspian Basin, i.e., the Caspian’s five littoral states plus western Uzbekistan). The Caspian Basin’s *potential* and proven oil reserves totaled 186 billion barrels, equating to 75% of Saudi Arabia’s *proven* oil reserves, and 25% of the entire Persian Gulf *proven* reserves. The gas reserves were equally impressive, amounting to 560 trillion cubic feet of potential and proven gas. This amount

¹⁶⁸ Strobe Talbot, “A Farewell to Flashman: American Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia,” the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 21 July 1997. Talbot later made the speech into an op-ed for the *Financial Times*: “The Great Game is Over,” 1 September 1997, 18.

¹⁶⁹ Rashid, *Jihad*, 190.

¹⁷⁰ Martha Brill Olcott, “The Central Asian States: An Overview of Five Years of Independence,” Testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 22 July 1997.

represents 25% of the Gulf's proven gas reserves.¹⁷¹ In other words, "while western policy-makers may talk about the Caspian region as one of new and real strategic importance... [this area is] little more than a back-up for the potentially much vaster reserves in the more strategically located Persian Gulf region."¹⁷²

Even as back-up—assuming the potential reserves were as good as the proven—the other issue, of course, was getting the oil and gas out of the region. The U.S. option of choice was to send the oil and gas from Kazakhstan across the Caspian Sea to Baku, Azerbaijan, and then through Georgia to Ceyhan, a Turkish port on the Mediterranean Sea. Such a pipeline would increase the standard-of-living of the peoples in these countries while enhancing their independence from Russia. Summing up the purpose of the pipeline and America's approach to Central Asia, one official commented at the time: "Our policy is anti-monopoly."¹⁷³ (The 1,000 mile "Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan" pipeline concept eventually became reality, opening 25 May 2005).

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The northern (Russia) and western (China) pipeline possibilities were decidedly not U.S. policy options, as they might increase hegemonic inroads, so to speak, to Central Asia. (Kazakhstan and China, however, agreed to build a 600 mile pipeline in 2004, with full

¹⁷¹ See Jacquelyn K. Davis and Michael J. Sweeney, *Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning: Where do we go from here?* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, February 2004), 7. Footnotes #'s 6 and 7, cite and compile several scholarly and government sources.

¹⁷² Martha Brill Olcott, "Caspian Sea Oil Exports," Testimony before the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 8 July 1998. Also see Olcott's, "The Caspian's False Promise," *Foreign Policy* 111 (Summer 1998); and Amy Myers Jaffe and Robert Manning, "The Myth of the Caspian 'Great Game': The Real Geopolitics of Energy," *Survival* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1998-99).

¹⁷³ Matthew J. Bryza, Senior Advisor, Office of the Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State on Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy, The State Department, 23 March 2000.

¹⁷⁴ See BBC News, "Giant Caspian Oil Pipeline Opens," 25 May 2005 (accessed 18 July 2005); available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4577497.stm>.

operations expected by 2006).¹⁷⁵ This left the southern route through Iran (under U.S. sanctions throughout the U.S.-Uzbek relationship), or Afghanistan. But Afghanistan was in the middle of a civil war, until the Taliban brought stability.

This stability, so the argument went, would enable the planned energy pipelines from Central Asia to Indian Ocean ports via Afghanistan, particularly the Unocal project to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan. [Unocal was competing with an Argentinean company, Bridas, for pipeline rights]. Some even recommended that the U.S. should therefore find a way to do business with the Taliban.¹⁷⁶

Just after the fall of Kabul on 27 September 1996, the U.S. quickly recognized the Taliban, and then retracted its recognition. The confusion “only further convinced Iran, Russia, the [Central Asian Republics], the anti-Taliban alliance and most Pakistanis and Afghans that the US-Unocal partnership was backing the Taliban and wanted an all-out Taliban victory.”¹⁷⁷

Adding to the confusion, Zalamay Khalilzad soon argued that the Taliban was the good kind of fundamentalism, like Sunni Saudi Arabia, not the bad kind of fundamentalism, like Shi’a Iran (Khalilzad was soon invited to join the Unocal board). Meanwhile, President Clinton’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, was denouncing the Taliban while President Clinton’s Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia (1993-1997) was arguing before the U.N.’s Security Council that the Taliban should not be isolated (something Unocal appreciated very much).¹⁷⁸

It was a tawdry season in American diplomacy...In the absence of alternatives, the State Department had taken up Unocal’s agenda as its own. Whatever the merits of the project, the sheer prominence it received by 1996 distorted the message and meaning of American power.

¹⁷⁵ Ian MacWilliam, “Kazakh-China Pipeline Opens,” BBC, 15 December 2005 (accessed 20 December 2005); available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4530426.stm>.

¹⁷⁶ Rajan Menon, “The New Great Game in Central Asia,” *Survival* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 187-188.

¹⁷⁷ Rashid, *Taliban*, 166.

¹⁷⁸ See Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 338-339. Coll quotes Khalilzad’s op-ed in the 7 October 1996 Washington Post. See also Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, 198-202.

American tolerance of the Taliban was publicly and inextricably linked to the financial goals of an oil corporation.¹⁷⁹

“The struggle for control over the ancient Silk Route had been replaced by the race to secure energy pipelines.”¹⁸⁰ Martha Brill Olcott called U.S. strategy “arrogant, muddled, naïve and dangerous.”¹⁸¹ Or as the American ambassador to Pakistan at the time later reflected: “There basically was no policy.”¹⁸² With no overarching context, to include the hard work, and pre-condition, of the conflict-resolution necessary to implement the pipelines, U.S. policy drifted along.

Uzbekistan could only watch askance. At the logistical and military heart of the pipelines issue—given its geography and dire concerns about the Taliban—it was difficult for this geo-strategically-minded government not to place the pipeline/energy issue in some larger context. What ends was it serving? What did America want from Uzbekistan besides movement toward democratic and economic reform? Did America recognize the Taliban for the threat that it was? As discussed above, there wasn’t much of a policy upon which to base the bilateral relationship, let alone a regional strategy. As one experienced Uzbek diplomat described it: “There is no U.S. policy toward the region, just spontaneous ideas being pushed by individuals.”¹⁸³

Once Washington began to acknowledge the threat of the Taliban and al Qaeda—that is, after the June 1996 bombings of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, the August 1998 bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the 16 February 1999 assassination attempt on Karimov, and the 1999 and 2000 IMU incursions—Uzbekistan did begin to find a consistent partner in the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency.

¹⁷⁹ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 330.

¹⁸⁰ Ahmed Rashid, “Power Play,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 10, 1997, 23.

¹⁸¹ Rashid, *Taliban*, 175.

¹⁸² Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 309 (Coll interviewed Tom Simons on 19 August 2002).

¹⁸³ Alexander Achmedov, Political Officer, America Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 August 2000, Tashkent.

Security: the Steady Steps of Military and Counterterrorism Engagement

The inclusion of Central Asia in Central Command's AOR (area of responsibility) was the most important development for the bilateral relationship between Uzbekistan and the United States during this period. The only U.S. agency to challenge the east-west engagement paradigm during this time, Central Command (CENTCOM) argued that Central Asia belonged in its north-south axis of operations—which extended from the Horn of Africa through the Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Instead of placing Central Asia in European Command (EUCOM), General Anthony Zinni made the case that it made much more sense to include Central Asia in CENTCOM because the region shared some common issues that ran north-south: namely the radiating effect of Afghanistan's militant Islam through the Taliban, al Qaeda, IMU and other radical groups, as well as serving as the point-of-origin for 90% of the world's heroin at the time.¹⁸⁴

Preoccupied with the rapidly developing situation in Kosovo, however, EUCOM accepted this logic. (The State Department also wanted to keep Central Asia within EUCOM, as consistent with its own regional grouping of "Europe and Eurasia"). Besides, EUCOM was already responsible for some ninety countries (including much of Africa), while CENTCOM, at the time, had only sixteen.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Telephone interview with author, 7 March 2000. At the same time, President Karimov was writing: "Among some Western analysts and Islamic scholars it has become increasingly popular to treat fundamentalism as something not harmful to the world community, as something primarily directed against the fundamentalists' own states...Do these people fully comprehend the real situation in the Muslim East?" (Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 27.

¹⁸⁵ Cliff Bond, Director of the State Department's office of the Caucasus and Central Asia suggests that this geographic categorization might be adopted by all US agencies over the next few years. Interview with author, 26 October 2000, The U.S. State Department. (Condoleezza Rice announced in the fall of 2005 that Central Asia would be grouped with South Asia).

Everyone loved Zinni. In a region used to being treated as second class citizens according to the Russia-first policy of Strobe Talbott, Zinni gave quality time to its leaders.¹⁸⁶ Under Zinni, CENTCOM's engagement plan stressed as many military-to-military contacts as possible. Building these relationships was a full-time job. As the U.S. Defense Attaché said at the time: "I'm engaged with about as much as I can handle (as a one-man shop). There are forty-five 'mil-to-mil's' here...By comparison, there are fourteen per year in Moscow."¹⁸⁷

In the absence of a comprehensive policy, these interactions took on a different and much more significant impact. Whereas funding from the State Department is usually tied to reform—and outside-in approach that often limits the scope of funding—the Defense Department is able to “demonstrate the behavior of a professional military and the functioning of democratic principles...[this inside-out] inspires change instead of demanding change.”¹⁸⁸

While there can be obvious drawbacks to an inside-out approach only—namely the de facto blessing of human rights abuses by the host-nation government, even if U.S. forces are not working directly with the perpetrators—inspiring change through friendship and respect must be the basis of any relationship.

¹⁸⁶ Many Uzbek officials remember meeting with U.S. officials of lesser rank during the 1990s. Granted, the global issues facing the U.S. officials were “bigger,” but treating someone as an equal goes a long, long way. The Uzbeks still talk about Perry and Zinni

¹⁸⁷ Matt Brand, Lieutenant Colonel, (U.S. Army), Defense Attache to the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan, 31 August 2000, Tashkent. Mil-to-mil contact also took place in a multilateral context through such institutions as “Centrazbat,” a peacekeeping battalion made up of several Central Asian militaries, and various exercises (e.g., “Cooperative Nugget,” held in August 1995 and June-July 1997 at Ft. Polk, Louisiana, and “Cooperative Osprey,” held in August 1996 at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina). See Kenley Butler, “U.S. Military Cooperation with the Central Asian States,” 17 September 2001 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.cns.miis.edu>. See also, C.J. Chivers, “Long Before War, Green Berets Built Military Ties to Uzbekistan,” *New York Times*, 25 October 2001.

¹⁸⁸ Jeffrey A. Smith, *Counterinsurgency in Uzbekistan: An Adapted FID Strategy for Policy Consideration* (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School Thesis, June 2002), 47-48. Smith served in Uzbekistan as a member of a Special Forces team that worked directly with the Uzbek military.

There was a strong relationship between U.S. Special Forces and the Uzbek military before 9/11.¹⁸⁹ It was one rooted in common cause and enemy, as well as respect, and humility. As one former military officer who was working counterterrorism in Uzbekistan put it: “I feel dumber each time I go back—this place wasn’t in any of my history classes.”

The same person warned about another problem in the relationship—there just weren’t enough Uzbeks who spoke English and/or had been exposed to the (alleged) interagency processes of great powers. “We send too many folks—the entire interagency, the ‘army of progress’—who are throwing too many things at them...it’s not all that coordinated (on our part).¹⁹⁰

It was something the Uzbeks could live with, however, if it meant that the U.S. was finally beginning to understand the true nature of the threat. And if this was the case, there was the hope that the U.S. would recognize Uzbekistan as its regional partner; as Mackinder would have suggested.

While that bridge was one too far, serious American policy-makers were beginning to understand the threat for what it was. In the fall of 1999, Cofer Black, the Director of the Counterterrorism Center at the CIA, reached out to President Karimov. Black proposed a CIA-funded but Uzbek-commanded strike force capable of snatching al Qaeda leaders from within Afghanistan. (Bin Laden had traveled to the Uzbek border once before, wanting to see for himself his future caliphate conquests).¹⁹¹

Karimov approved the plan, allowing intercept stations (signals intelligence) to be built while making air bases available for small aircraft and helicopters, as well as “predator” reconnaissance missions. (The “predator” is an unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV). The CIA felt

¹⁸⁹ Repeated interviews with, and observation of, U.S. and Uzbek military personnel.

¹⁹⁰ U.S. counterterrorism official.

¹⁹¹ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 500.

they had a relatively leak-proof partner (unlike the intelligence services of Pakistan or Saudi Arabia), and Karimov finally had a second U.S. agency that appreciated his cross-border threat for what it was.¹⁹²

As the security relationship steadily warmed, to include working in northern Afghanistan together,¹⁹³ the Uzbeks felt that they had found a friend in the security agencies of the United States. Pragmatic and task-oriented, and with no strings attached, they could work with the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency.

But if there was one thing they were clear about it was this: “They do not like any [assistance] being tied to human rights.”¹⁹⁴

Human Rights & Religious Freedom

From the beginning of the relationship, human rights were a constant concern for the United States, and a transcendent thorn for Uzbekistan. During this time, the Americans were giving lip service to national security while the Uzbeks gave lip service to human rights.

Yet there could be no mistake: Uzbekistan was, and is, an authoritarian system of the worst kind. “This is definitely a police state. If you haven’t been harassed yet it’s because there isn’t enough time in the day to harass everyone.”¹⁹⁵ With no other history or experience to draw on, the Uzbek secret police cracked down on any one who might even look like a terrorist in a crude and uneven fashion (e.g., see above report on the December 1997 crackdown in Namangan).

¹⁹² Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 458-460, 531, 547-551.

¹⁹³ Ehsan Ahrari, a National Defense University professor, reports that Karimov had given permission for the U.S. to conduct clandestine operations as “early as 1998.” (See Ehsan Ahrari, “The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington,” *Journal of International Affairs*, 56, no. 2 (Spring 2003), 264). See Thomas E. Ricks and Susan B. Glasser, “U.S. Operated Secret Alliance with Uzbekistan,” *Washington Post*, 14 October 2001, A1, where Ricks and Glasser report that, Karimov’s spokesman, Rustam Jamaev, told them that U.S.-Uzbek operations began “two or three years” ago. Also, various interviews with U.S. and Uzbek special operations forces in Tashkent.

¹⁹⁴ Brand, 31 August 2000, Tashkent.

¹⁹⁵ U.S. embassy official, 25 August 2000, Tashkent.

Criteria for being thrown in jail included the following: wearing a beard; praying too many times a day; attending the mosque; being related to someone in jail, and being put on the “black list” by someone with a connection to the Ministry of Interior. Torture was and is widespread, characterized by such unconscionable behavior as beatings, drowning, boiling and the use of electric nodes.¹⁹⁶

Pick almost any human rights report from 1995-2005 and there will be a round number of somewhere between 8,500 (1995-2000) and 4,500 (2001-2005) political prisoners of conscience in Uzbek jails, most of them for being a pious Muslim. (This downward trend in numbers is itself an indicator that someone somewhere in the Uzbek government was trying to make a difference—or, human rights organizations were doing better reporting).

Because of well-documented pattern of repression, Karimov was the last Central Asia president to meet President Clinton in June of 1996; and not until after some tangible progress had been demonstrated. Before coming to the United States, Karimov released several political prisoners. While in America, Karimov met with Uzbekistan’s leading dissident, Abdumannob Polatov (a man he had thrown in jail in 1992) and invited him back home. Upon returning to Uzbekistan, President Karimov announced that he would protect human rights.¹⁹⁷

To the American mind, especially the single-issue human rights advocate, Uzbekistan was a black-and-white case. This perception was accentuated by the absence of a security perspective during this time, not to mention a clearly identified policy. That said, it is too easy to say that if the U.S. had engaged differently—that is, without the finger-wagging, and with a comprehensive policy that explained the connection between security and human rights conceptually and

¹⁹⁶ See reports of the U.N. Rapporteur on Torture, <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/torture/rapporteur/>. Also see any Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, or U.S. State Department report between 1995 and 2005; also, various interviews in Tashkent, 2000-2005.

¹⁹⁷ “Uzbekistan: Getting There,” *The Economist*, 21 September 1996 (accessed 15 September 1999); Available from LexisNexis.

programmatically—then Karimov would have responded differently. It is also too easy to say that if the U.S. had engaged differently, Karimov would not have responded anyway. And thus it is important to fully examine the human rights issue from the American perspective of religious freedom, which was the human rights focal point from 1995-2000.

Certainly people suffer in Uzbekistan because of their faith, mostly pious Muslims. The conceptual question, however, is this: does one determine religious freedom violations by the persecuted product or by the persecuting motivation?

The government of Uzbekistan represses people not because it is anti-economic reform, anti-NGO, anti-religious, or anti-political parties. It represses people because it is anti-anything that threatens its control. This “threat” can take the form of foreigners controlling Uzbekistan’s debt; NGOs with outside funding; or people of faith who practice differently than the government prescribed form. People of faith are repressed in Uzbekistan not because they are people of faith but because they represent, to Karimov’s mind, a terrorist threat to the state.

In other words, while viewing Karimov’s repression as violations of “religious freedom” is easy to do—resulting in the typical condemnation that comes through op-eds—the creation of such stereotypes is almost always of limited usefulness. Characterizing the issue as “religious freedom” negates the complex context in which there is opportunity to build relationships across, and shrewdly link, interrelated issues, while explaining why it is in the government’s self-interest to think more seriously about why it represses people.

With this backdrop, it was also during this time that the United States passed the International Religious Freedom Law on October 9, 1998. The act created an Ambassador-at-Large, requiring him or her to produce an annual report on every country in the world, except the United States. “No country ... embraces the basic principle of religion in democracy as it exists

in the United States ... [in many countries] they see democracy as majoritarianism. The sense of the rights of a minority is very hard to build up.”¹⁹⁸

America was different, however. As Senator Joe Lieberman declared when the act became law:

We have the right to put our values at the center of our foreign policy. Countries can do what they will, but we have no obligation to deal with countries on a normal basis, to give them aid and comfort if they are violating a central animating principle of American life, which is freedom of religion. Who else, if not a nation whose forbears and citizens, beginning with the Puritans and continuing to this day, suffered persecution in foreign lands before coming to this country? Who else will speak for those around the world who are likewise persecuted?¹⁹⁹

In an interview shortly after being sworn-in, the first Ambassador-at-Large, Robert A. Seiple, was asked: “How do you get off being the morality cop on issues that are internal, domestic issues?” He saw the post as not a finger-wagging position, but as one that embodied a universal right recognized by the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which there was “mutual accountability” among the signatories. Because nations are engaged in “major ways on many levels, from disaster assistance to foreign aid, investment, trade, and military security; it would be a profound point of absentia not to engage on human rights.” Seiple believed he had three objectives as ambassador: promote religious freedom; promote reconciliation; and make sure that the first two tasks are “woven into the fabric of our foreign policy.”²⁰⁰

As a part of the annual U.S./Uzbek Joint Commission, begun in 1998, Seiple began to engage Uzbekistan on religious freedom in his 1999 trip there.²⁰¹ The unofficial U.S. embassy comment

¹⁹⁸ Jane Lampman, “Europe Spars over Faith,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 25 March 1999, 13.

¹⁹⁹ Senator Joseph Lieberman, floor speech given just prior to the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act, 9 October 1998.

²⁰⁰ Jane Lampman, “In the Diplomatic Hotseat—Religion,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 April 1999, 17.

²⁰¹ This discussion is based on the following sources:

- 1) An unofficial Memorandum for the Record by Robert A. Seiple, 7 June 1999;
- 2) An informal e-mail summary of the meeting, internal to the Office of International Religious Freedom, 18 August 1999, 7:54 PM;
- 3) Robert A. Seiple, Washington, D.C., 3 November 1999;
- 4) Sodyq Safaev, Washington, D.C., 4 November 1999;

for this first series of religious freedom meetings concluded: “We see a real desire on the part of the Uzbeks to keep the U.S. satisfied on these issues. Unfortunately, so far, this desire expresses itself by defensiveness and denial, rather than by real cooperation.” Seiple later noted in a memo to the file that “pragmatism is something this government understands ... We need to test the resolve of the Uzbekistan government. There are numerous specific cases that can be easily solved immediately, if the government (the President) wishes to do so.”

Seiple tested the Uzbeks in August, 1999, calling the Uzbek ambassador, Sodyq Safaev, to his office. He asked for a Muslim human rights activist and a number of Christians (recently arrested in Nukus) to be released from jail. Otherwise, the United States would have to sanction Uzbekistan as a “country of particular concern.” With the Taliban ever-threatening and bilateral covert relations increasing, the government of Uzbekistan did not want to lose the U.S. as a potential security partner. Thus, it is worth presenting the different and common perspectives that they embodied as representatives of their own societies, while negotiating a realpolitik issue in the context of 1999.

Safaev explained that Uzbekistan was just eight years old, a nascent nation that had emerged from a rigid and totalitarian state, with no experience in democracy. It was important to understand that Uzbekistan was free from the religious extremism found in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Chechnya, and Dagestan. Also, compared with Soviet times, there was a freedom to worship in the mosques that did not previously exist. Uzbekistan offered a freedom from the disintegration of society. Without such freedoms, there was no road to secular democracy.

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- 5) The testimony of Uzbekistan’s Ambassador before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington, D.C., 18 October 1999;
 - 6) Tashkent 3418, unclassified Department of State cable from the American Embassy in Tashkent to Washington, D.C., 201318Z AUG 99, and Tashkent 2185, unclassified Department of State cable from the American Embassy in Tashkent to Washington, D.C., 281145Z MAY 99;
 - 7) Official letter from the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, 22 August 1999.

Seiple was acutely aware of the violations of religious freedom and human rights in Uzbekistan; but he also understood that democracy is not a drive-through experience. Nor was it, in his mind, something that evolves in a teleological format. “The process of democracy is not linear, it is not a neat process. [In Uzbekistan] there is the constant baggage of the past; and the past is a failed economic and dictatorial system in the extreme. It is hard to pull away from the past with a clear vision of the future when your country is less than ten years old and your leaders, by definition, are former Soviet *apparatchiki*.”

Safaev appreciated the role human rights had to play in the world. “Human rights are not completely an internal affair in an age of globalization. Likewise, the Aral Sea is not an Uzbek or even regional problem. It is a global problem whose impact is everywhere felt by everyone. The more democracy the more trust and transparency there will be.”

Seiple understood that Uzbekistan was concerned with national security threats that were “as real as a bombing” in a “neighborhood that foments terrorism.” Safaev expected and respected the American position. “The U.S. position is very understandable. Any ideology has a propensity to spread its fundamentals—it is the nature of an ideology. The United States cannot be a civilization and a superpower if it does not try to spread its ideas, the freedoms of its ideology.”

They both knew the stakes as well: an emerging American-Uzbek relationship that might continue to grow into a strategic partnership. Safaev, reflecting the 1999 security context back home, stated unequivocally: “Our relationship with the U.S. is one of our highest priorities. No one would dare do something that would harm that relationship. Uzbekistan thinks that it is best for Uzbekistan and the United States for the U.S. to be in Central Asia.”

Seiple was aware of the danger of reducing religious freedom to a litmus test. “Once you label someone, there is a lot of good policy that is now no longer possible, no matter the

relationship ... it never is the same again.” Still, Seiple remained concerned about the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. “I am concerned about the possibility of “mixed signals” coming from Washington, which allows the Uzbekistan government to compartmentalize the issues, and potentially marginalize the “soft” issue of human rights.”²⁰²

Three days after their official meeting, the Christians were set free. The Muslim human rights activist, Makhbuba Kassimova, was not freed. She was accused of aiding and abetting extremists groups. And that was one line in the sand that no Uzbek official could cross. “Uzbekistan will never accept the Islamicization of the state ... keep in mind, a Shari’a state, by definition, will never be a state that allows human rights.”²⁰³ Within six weeks, however, Uzbek officials raided an unregistered Evangelical Baptist church in Karshi, “detaining, beating, and imprisoning many of the participants.”²⁰⁴

This example suggests some clear lessons about working with the Uzbeks. First, there are first-rate professionals, and not unreasonable, among the official Uzbek ranks (something that is easy to forget when stereotypes dominate). Second, there is always the opportunity for poor communication between and among different elements of national power (e.g., between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior), as well as between Tashkent and local authorities. Third, while the preceding point is true, the bottom line was that Karimov reacted to the American threat of sanctions within three days.

Meanwhile, in America, no one was happy with the result. Religious freedom advocates were very disappointed.

²⁰² Robert A. Seiple, “MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES,” unpublished, 7 June 1999.

²⁰³ Sherzod M. Abdullaev, Deputy Chief of Mission, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 4 November 1999.

²⁰⁴ Felix Corley, “Uzbek Baptist Church Raided: A Return to Religious Repression?”, Keston News Service, 15 October 1999 (accessed 15 October 1999); available from <http://www.keston.org>.

The more closely I study the Tashkent government's recent concessions to some minority religious leaders, the less impressed I am. The release of religious prisoners who never should have been arrested to begin with is of course welcome news for those believers and their families—but it is a lot less welcome than it would be if Tashkent were really to remove the sword of Damocles that continues to hang over them. These believers have simply been pardoned or have had their sentences suspended; the government has not admitted either formally or informally that the arrests were wrong to begin with, it has not compensated the arrestees for the damage it unjustly inflicted on them, it has not even returned all of the property that it confiscated from them, it has not punished, reassigned or even reprimanded the officials responsible for persecuting them. Nor has the government repealed any of the provisions of the harsh 1998 law.”²⁰⁵

Or as another respected human rights monitor suggested, “Concessions granted cheaply, however, are ultimately counter-productive, and only give Uzbekistan the opportunity to continue repression with assurances of impunity.”²⁰⁶

Yet, a more nuanced reality emerges the further one is from the black-and-white perspectives of Washington and human rights advocates. For starters, Americans thought they were engaging on behalf of religious freedom, but they were perceived as caring about Christians only. One embassy official told me a year after the threat of sanctions: “It’s an embarrassment to human rights and U.S. policy that our focus on Christians leads our policy...leading with persecuted Christians is an endorsement of methodologies used to put and keep Muslims behind bars.”²⁰⁷

For example, there is a little known, but true, story of an American senator visiting with Karimov during this time. The senator gave Karimov a delicately and intricately decorated bible. The senator also asked Karimov to release a number of religious prisoners. Karimov visibly stiffened, asking what he meant. The senator explained that the reference was to Christians. Karimov exhaled as his smile returned. “No problem.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Lawrence Uzzell, then Director of the Keston Institute, Testimony before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 18 October 1999.

²⁰⁶ Cassandra Cavanaugh, Human Rights Watch, Europe and Central Asia Division, Testimony before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 18 October 1999.

²⁰⁷ Embassy official, 29 August 2000, Tashkent.

²⁰⁸ USG official, 2000, Washington, D.C.

This perception, and reality, is something for all Americans to think through (especially those of the Christian faith). As a long-time and balanced observer of Uzbekistan, despite his negative experiences with the government in the early 1990s, Abdummanob Polat felt in 2000 that there was too much attention on Christian activities. “You send the signal that the U.S. only cares about Christians. You need to soften your words and have more realistic models of behavior for countries in transition, keeping in mind your vision.”²⁰⁹ Acacia Shields, the Human Rights Watch advocate, also felt that a “disproportionate attention” was given to Christians by the U.S. government.²¹⁰

Christian leaders in Uzbekistan were also aware of this issue. One local leader reflects that “we are harassed, not persecuted.”²¹¹ Another Christian, a Canadian with long experience in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, reflected that “the Muslims have as many problems as the Christians, maybe more. They [the government] pick on the Christians to ‘balance the books’ in the eyes of the Muslims.”²¹²

And then you peel back the onion a bit more and ask what Uzbeks really think about this issue. One friend articulated a common theme: “Look, there is no advertising [proselytizing] but you are free to choose. My personal opinion: it is not acceptable to turn somebody from their religion/identity.” (This man was born to a Muslim mother and Orthodox father).

Another government official, with a Ph.D. from France, took a different approach. Shoazim Minovarov, the long-time Director of Religious Freedom Affairs for the Cabinet of Ministers, described to me why they arrested the Christian leader in Nukus (who became the subject of the

²⁰⁹ Abdummanob Polat, co-founder of “Birlik,” an Uzbek democratic party, 25 October 2000, Washington, D.C.

²¹⁰ Acacia Shields, presentation at the Open Society Institute, 21 September 2000.

²¹¹ Christian leader, Tashkent.

²¹² Richard Penner, Country Director for World Concern (a relief and development organization) 2 September 2000. Richard died in 2002 in an Uzbek Airlines crash outside of Tashkent. He, with his wife, Ann, were the bravest of people, serving the people groups of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan for over twenty years.

August 1999 meeting between Ambassadors Seiple and Safaev): “The arrested man needs a medical examination for psychological reasons. He made people go into a dirty river to get healing [a baptism]. If the man is healthy, he does not do this [especially in Nukus which is an ecological disaster zone near the Aral Sea]...it’s not important if they are Christian or Muslim, only if they are a threat.”²¹³ Later Minovarov explained his quite scientific and atheistic approach to me: “The national interest is about culture, economics and security. Religion is a small part of culture.”²¹⁴

In sum, religious freedom is a complex issue in a place like Uzbekistan where the culture is quite different from the American experience. By no means does that statement condone the violations of human rights; it does, however, suggest that every American should think carefully about how to engage Uzbekistan, if they want to have any impact at all.

As 2000 ended, Fred Starr finished the J5 commissioned “Strategic Assessment of Central Eurasia” (which would be published just as George W. Bush was sworn in).

While there was no discussion of terrorism in the strategic goals, Mackinder’s voice noted that U.S. vital interests would be affected if there is “submission of the region to the rule of a single hegemon.” Importantly, the report called for a comprehensive strategy, with NSC coordinated oversight, that focused on a “cooperative model that seeks to improve the capacity of all the regional states to deal with the most pressing internal threats....it should also make clear that the United States and its allies do not intend to introduce troops or bases of their own or create

²¹³ Shoazim Minovarov, Director, Religious Affairs, Cabinet of Ministers, government of Uzbekistan, 28 August 2000, Tashkent.

²¹⁴ Shoazim Minovarov, 4 September 2000, Tashkent.

military surrogates.”²¹⁵ Selective engagement or balance of power was not good enough any longer.

As Joe Presel closed out his tenure as Ambassador, he summed up the lessons learned, providing a practical perspective about how to understand Uzbekistan, and the United States.

They know who the hell they are. They have a sense of self. But the United States wants to be the ‘City on the Hill’ (religious freedom stuff) and have national interests (intel stuff), all at the same time. Then we want them to abjure 75 years of Marxism and its economic system, and, we want to introduce a western system with a market economy—criticizing them the whole time—while we’re a long way away [geographically]. Then they hope they catch us on the one day the USG is thinking about Uzbekistan.

Look, we have a shot with Uzbekistan. It won’t be Norway, but it won’t be Pakistan. But we’ve got to give them more attention, listen and spend time with them. And when they do something right, tell them. And when they do something half-right, stop bitchin’.²¹⁶

As Mahan reminded us long ago, “Neither in politics nor in seamanship can the course at any moment set disregard the port desired, nor in either profession does neglect of charted data conduce to success.”²¹⁷ Presel’s chartered, and priceless, data were what the strategic port required. But there was no focal point, no sense of urgency, no captain of the ship.

September 11th would bring both as the sense of urgency to focus on the bad guys left the other elements of strategy and power struggling to keep up.

January—20 September 2001

By 2001, Central Asia has reasserted its historic significance, providing the “the greatest natural fortress on earth”²¹⁸ to militant Islam. Due to its incubation time—that is, its time to have training camps and build relationships and alliances, such as the IMU with al Qaeda—radical Islam became capable of flinging its power from side to side. From Bali to Baghdad, from the

²¹⁵ The Atlantic Council of the US, January 2001, Central Eurasia Strategic Assessment, Prepared for the Middle East Division, J-5, Joint Chiefs of Staff (Contract DASW01-01-99-M-1248), 97, 104.

²¹⁶ Ambassador Joe Presel, U.S. ambassador to Uzbekistan, 4 September 2000, Tashkent.

²¹⁷ Mahan, *The Problem of Asia*, 130.

²¹⁸ Mackinder, “Round World,” 201.

U.S.S. Cole to Casablanca, militant Islam has used, and continues to use, the Central Asian heartland to create fear around the world, proving again this Mackinderian insight: “The Heartland yields its power to the [non] state which commands it, and it can be commanded from outside or within.”²¹⁹

The United States, unfortunately, was not able to incorporate this basic awareness into its policies, or grand strategy, after the Cold War. In fact, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that no such policy or grand strategy existed. Certainly this was the case regarding Central Asia, proving again another truism from Mackinder: “Human society is still related to the facts of geography not as they are but in no small measure as they have been approached in the course of history.”²²⁰ Despite the fact that Mackinder’s Heartland concept was the cornerstone of containment, American policy-makers did not grasp the pivotal role Central Asia must play in the grand strategy of the world’s only global power.

The tragedy of September 11th offered American policy-makers one last chance to come to grips with this reality. Unfortunately, they were not able to seize it; in part because Uzbek policy-makers, who already knew the importance of their geography, were not able to meet the Americans half-way.

This final period of the U.S-Uzbekistan relationship begins with the Bush administration coming to power in January of 2001 and ends with the clear move by the Karimov regime to ally itself with Russia at the end of 2005. This period has three distinct components: January—10 September 2001; September 11—December 2003; and 2004—2005. Each component is presented from an Uzbek and an American perspective.

²¹⁹ W.H. Parker, *Mackinder Geography as an Aid to Statecraft* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 218.

²²⁰ Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, 23.

January-10 September 2001: An Uzbek Perspective

The Uzbeks were very pleased with the Bush victory in the 2000 presidential election. While there was still a Russo-centric approach by the U.S., the security relationship with Uzbekistan continued to strengthen. President Bush had sent a telegram to President Karimov, expressing his “confidence that relations between the two countries will continue to develop,”²²¹ and that had been followed up with counterterrorism and counternarcotic talks in April.²²²

Yet they were keeping their options open. In mid-July, they officially created, by joining, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Aware that they lived in the land in-between Russia and China, the SCO represented an opportunity to exercise the old admonition to keep your friends close and your enemies closer. To the Uzbeks the SCO was “just a zero...a means to get arms from the Russians.”²²³ (Uzbekistan’s army, which had only adopted its new transformation doctrine in early 2000, was still very much dependent on the Russians for parts and equipment). While the SCO was clearly about economics for the Chinese, the SCO “shows the weakness of Russia because they have no other way to influence” the region.²²⁴

Meanwhile, as the fall 2000 threat from the Taliban diminished, the relationship with the Russians, not surprisingly, got colder. In late August of 2001, Karimov stated publicly that Uzbekistan would not join any “military-political blocs,” to include the rapid reaction forces of the CIS’ Collective Security Treaty. However, Karimov “stressed that terrorism in Central Asia is a major threat to the security of Uzbekistan and the region.”²²⁵

²²¹ “US President Confident Country’s Relationship with Uzbekistan Will Develop,” *Interfax*, 15 February 2001

²²² Anthony Davis, “US Special Forces Train Kyrgyz Units,” *Janes Defence Weekly*, 29 August 2001.

²²³ Uzbek official.

²²⁴ Uzbek officials.

²²⁵ “Uzbekistan will Not Join Military-Political Blocs,” *Washington Times*, 27 August 2001, 15.

Still, the relationship with the Americans was not cozy. While acknowledging that “without UBL [Osama bin Laden] and the Taliban, the IMU wouldn’t exist”—as the Taliban/IMU “pushed drugs through Kyrgyzstan to China”—there was an increasing “lack of transparency” in the bilateral relationship as the end of summer approached. This polite distance was, in part, due to the Uzbek army chief, General Kasimov. “Gulamov may be policy and admin [as Minister of Defense], but it’s Kasimov’s army and he hates Americans.”²²⁶

To the Uzbeks, there just didn’t seem to be a comprehensive approach; there was no “clear strategy” from the Americans toward Central Asia.²²⁷ As Joe Presel had said, they were waiting for their chance to be the “flavor-of-the-month.”

January-10 September 2001: An American Perspective

As the new administration settled in, its foreign policy agenda was centered on a great powers approach. Not unlike his father’s administration, George W. Bush was focused on getting the big geo-political issues right (e.g., Russia, China, India), which left less time for places like Central Asia. As a result, developing India as a counterweight to China and Russia was a priority; as was National Missile Defense (India was the only country to come out in public support of NMD); China; and military transformation.²²⁸

As the new administration went through the systematic review of all U.S. policies, it was only natural that the de facto policy remained; i.e., no policy on Afghanistan with no support for the northern alliance against the Taliban. Accordingly, comprehensive ideas about taking on the

²²⁶ U.S. embassy officials, 10 September 2001, Tashkent.

²²⁷ Uzbek official, June 2002.

²²⁸ See Condoleezza Rice, “Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 79, No. 1 (January/February), 2000. During the presidential campaign, Governor Bush explained that the U.S. would not be involved in “nation-building,” a dirty-word associated with the post-humanitarian response in Somalia, and symbolic of the Clinton administration’s non-judicious use of the military.

Taliban, through such partners as Uzbekistan, were going to fall on deaf ears. For example, Dick Clarke's 25 January 2001 memo suggesting a multi-pronged strategy against al Qaeda and the Taliban—to include more covert aid for Uzbekistan, and more predator reconnaissance flights into Afghanistan—“went nowhere.” Clarke, a civil servant who had been the White House Counterterrorism Director from 1998-2001, soon lost his cabinet status, and later resigned. In short, the Bush administration had no “clear direction” regarding the terrorists hiding in the Heartland.²²⁹

Still, President Bush recognized he had a problem in the American response to terrorism. Sometime in the early spring of 2001, the president said: “I'm tired of swatting flies...I want to play offense.” By 30 April 2001, the senior interagency leaders met, deciding that the “destruction of al Qaeda” was America's number one policy objective in “South Asia.”²³⁰ Uzbekistan was now positioned to come into the steady gaze of U.S. policy-makers according to the number one issue in its hierarchy of values: security.

While this discussion was taking place at the highest levels, the U.S. policy toward Central Asia demonstrated its same vague listlessness. In his testimony before the House of Representatives, Cliff Bond, the acting Director of the South Caucasus and Central Asia office, repeated the usual clichés: the U.S. had “three core strategic interests... regional security; political/economic reform; and energy development.” Congressman Joe Pitts (PA-R) responded, commenting that “US foreign policy toward the region has been one that emphasizes a stand back and watch approach.” Representative Dana Rohrabacher (CA-R) was more direct: “There has been very little done in Central Asia by the United States Government.”²³¹

²²⁹ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 547-551.

²³⁰ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 564.

²³¹ “U.S. Policy in Central Asia,” Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 107th Congress, 6 June 2001. The

Indeed, even the human rights community was begging for the U.S. to take a holistic approach to its policy-making in Central Asia. “We hope that Congress will urge the administration to develop a coordinated interagency strategy on security assistance in the region, to insure that all the actors involved, including Departments of Defense and Justice, the FBI and the CIA, deliver the same, consistent message.”²³²

11 September 2001—December 2003

That day seared into our memories forced the United States to finally focus its gaze on Central Asia. Uzbekistan was now the “flavor-of-the-month” and would be for some time. While in hindsight it appears obvious that the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship would move into a new and more defined phase, it was not immediately obvious at the time. It was ten days before the presidents spoke to each other and almost a full month before a more firm agreement was reached between the two countries.

For the Uzbeks, as Mackinder would recognize, it was a chance to realize their geo-political goals—the potential for an alliance with a distant power who not only agreed with them on security issues, but who might also balance Russia and China. For the Americans, it was not so obvious. The need for a good relationship with Uzbekistan was driven by the exigencies of the war at hand—officially known as the Global War on Terror (GWOT). With this common and paramount need—security—the relationship between the two countries began anew after

juxtaposition between the title of the issue and the title of the sub-committee says it all. Ten years since the fall of the Soviet Union and the U.S. still did not know quite where to “put” Central Asia in our geo-communal maps.

²³² Dr. Cassandra Cavanaugh, Congressional Testimony, “Silencing Central Asia: The Voice of the Dissidents,” 31 July 2001 (accessed 31 July 2001); available from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/eav072701f.shtml>.

September 11th. Given their long-term, common, interests, it was a moment that Mackinder would have predicted, and seized.

11 September 2001—December 2003: An Uzbek Perspective

On September 11, 2001, Uzbekistan’s Minister of Defense reflecting on what he would like U.S. policy to be toward Uzbekistan: “There is an old Soviet joke: ‘To be prosperous, you must lose a war to the United States’” (implying that Uzbekistan would never get the kind of support it needed from the U.S.). Aware of the increasing mutual aloofness in the relationship, Kadyr Gulamov further observed: “Everything is interrelated and you have to know the limits...you cannot just jump into paradise; you have to go through certain steps.” He was doing his part, however, trying to create a “real profession” among junior enlisted leaders by developing them at the new NCO schools throughout the country.

One hour before the World Trade Center was hit, Gulamov concluded: “We need more counterterrorism cooperation between the U.S. and Uzbekistan.”²³³

Uzbekistan’s foreign policy elites immediately recognized the opportunity before them. For the first time since the Seljuks and Timur the Lame, Central Asia would be the “subject, not the object” of global politics.²³⁴ This point cannot be overstated. The psychological impact of the world’s attention was enormous.

As Mackinder had pointed out, Central Asia and Uzbekistan was vital. No more was it just a region of colonies or a “buffer zone” on the periphery of great powers to use how they pleased; it was a legitimate player in world affairs. “Classifying regions as either central or peripheral, as

²³³ Gulamov, 11 September 2001, Tashkent.

²³⁴ Aziz Tatibaev, Chairman of the History Department, National University of Uzbekistan, 5 June 2002, Tashkent.

important or not, is irrelevant today.”²³⁵ It was a time to for Central Asia to truly have independent relations with the world absent the conscious and subconscious influence of, and deference to, Russia.

First, however, there needed to be a “deep analysis of the driving forces” of globalization” in order to “create the geo-political and geo-economic structures necessary for interdependence and inter-operability.” The geopolitical context had three characteristics:

- 1) The recent emergence of Central Asian countries from political non-existence into independence, into a type of European statehood, becoming a vital piece of the Asian geo-political space;
- 2) Central and South Asia were now a part of the globalization process; and
- 3) 9/11 accelerates the process of bringing globalization to Central and South Asia.

There were four practical implications to 9/11 that demanded the world’s attention:

- 1) Central Asia is now the focus of genuine world attention and commitment; the future of the region and the world are at stake;
- 2) The world is immediately dependent on Central Asia for global security—terrorism will take years to combat and a zero-sum mentality is not practical; regional cooperation is the key to a future where everybody wins;
- 3) There are new opportunities for Central Asian development and modernization through Afghanistan (previously the threat, now the opportunity);
- 4) Now is the time for Central Asia to address its major problem: being landlocked—which will help solve economic and political issues.²³⁶

Continuing to echo Mackinder’s geo-strategic perspective, Uzbek officials felt that America now needed Uzbekistan for several reasons.

Here is the fundamental remark: 9/11 brought things into focus. It was a very important psychological factor, building on the geo-political factors that were forming well before 9/11. The new U.S. policy has three characteristics:

- 1) Great power balancing—today the U.S. is in a region that allows them to control all of Eurasia by being next to the most closed regions of Russia and China (to include their military-industrial complexes)...all of this is very important as Asia is the primary region for U.S. military involvement;

²³⁵ Abdulaziz Kamilov, “Uzbekistan and the Reconstruction of Afghanistan,” International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) conference report on “Central Asia and the Post-Conflict Stabilization of Afghanistan, 14-15 June 2002,” 10.

²³⁶ Sodyq Safaev, presentation at same IISS conference, 14 June 2002. These comments are based on my notes and the presentation itself. The official paper, “Regional Development and Afghanistan’s Post Conflict Recovery,” can be found in the IISS conference report on page 20.

- 2) Problems of energy resources; and,
- 3) Afghanistan involvement means that the U.S. is regaining influence in a region where it has not been effective since 1979 and the fall of the Shah.

This is not a regional security issue but a global one. Central and South Asia are the most important regions in the world, informing the U.S. security strategy in the 21st century as a result. This region is critical to developing a new world order. The U.S. is the only global power capable of responding to global security issues. Such a perspective understands that this region is very volatile. Regional stability here is the key to global security.²³⁷

On 20 September 2001, President George W. Bush addressed the American nation before a Joint Session of Congress. As he laid out his doctrine for combating terrorism on a global scale, the President cited the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan as an example of the enemy that had attacked the United States on September 11th.²³⁸ For most Americans, it was an obscure reference. For Uzbeks, however, it was acknowledgement before the world that the threat they had faced for years was real. And for Uzbek foreign policy elites, the reference was a sign that America—starting with the first ever phone call from an American President to the Uzbek President the day before²³⁹—was finally ready to have a serious and comprehensive foreign policy for Central Asia.²⁴⁰

Still, they were a small country living in a dangerous neighborhood, and had to consider the consequences of a partnership with the U.S. The positives were compellingly obvious: a big brother who balanced Russia and China, worrying too much about human rights (although this was something they thought they could live with). The negative possibilities were significant. If the U.S. did not keep its word, Uzbekistan, with an implicit loss of face, would be forced into the

²³⁷ Uzbek official.

²³⁸ George W. Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” 20 September 2001 (accessed 22 September 2001); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

²³⁹ John Herbst, U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, and Robert Duggleby, Lieutenant Colonel (U.S. Army) and Defense Attache to the U.S. embassy in Uzbekistan, 20 September 2001, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

²⁴⁰ As noted above, Uzbek elites had followed the November 2000 American election closely and were pleased that George Bush had won, largely because he was perceived to have extremely capable aides and thus a foreign policy that would be realist, i.e., founded on national interests instead of values. (Repeated interviews with various sources).

arms of Russia and/or China out of necessity. In other words, the Uzbeks had to be quite sure that the U.S. would be there for them.

As the Bush team reached out to Uzbekistan—at the least, they needed an airbase in Uzbekistan to support the upcoming war with the Taliban—they soon encountered Uzbekistan’s fundamental question: “What do we do if your action puts us at risk?”²⁴¹ Sodyq Safaev, now serving as the First Deputy Foreign Minister in Tashkent, made the stakes quite clear to the U.S. embassy in Uzbekistan: “We don’t want to be stuck with a living snake.”²⁴²

The Uzbeks wanted immediate membership in NATO for starters—something the U.S. could not grant and a sensitive issue with the Russians to say the least. As Powell put it, the Uzbeks wanted a bilateral treaty of mutual defense, love, cooperation and economic support. They wanted some proof that the love would be permanent, a kind of “Will You Be There Tomorrow?” declaration.²⁴³

The White House marched out quickly through a series of steps that culminated in a strategic partnership with Uzbekistan in March 2002. On 19 September 2001, President Bush met in the White House with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov.²⁴⁴ Ivanov said that Russia would not impede Americans efforts to work directly with the Central Asian republics. That same day, President Bush also called President Karimov (it is not clear whether the phone call took place before or after the Ivanov meeting).²⁴⁵ The next day, President George W. Bush addressed the American nation before a Joint Session of Congress.

By 5 October 2001 the Uzbeks had a visit from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, which resulted in a joint U.S.-Uzbek statement on 7 October 2001. The statement established “a

²⁴¹ See Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 159.

²⁴² Christopher Sibilla, U.S. State Department, 19 December 2001.

²⁴³ Woodward, *Bush at War*, 172.

²⁴⁴ Susan L. Clark-Sestak, “U.S. Bases in Central Asia,” (Institute for Defense Analyses, September 2003), 5. (See footnote #6: Clark-Sestak references Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Beth Jones, Briefing to the Press, 11 February 2002 (accessed 23 February 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2002/7946pf.htm>).

²⁴⁵ Interview with U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, John Herbst, and the U.S. Defense Attache, Lieutenant Robert Duggleby (USA), 20 September 2001, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

qualitatively new relationship based on a long-term commitment to advance security and regional stability” as both countries partnered to “eliminate international terrorism and its infrastructure.” As a result, U.S. forces would have access to the airbase at Karshi-Khanabad (K2), just north of the Uzbek-Afghan border.

While no quid pro quos were officially established, major international financial institutions announced nearly at the same time that they would be looking to increase credits and investments. The Uzbeks, however, ever mindful of their neighborhood and the Americans’ short attention span, were quick to point out that the K2 would not be used for combat operations. American forces there (soon to total 1,000) were only for search and rescue and other humanitarian missions.²⁴⁶

The military-to-military relations of the past five years had made the deal possible. “This is a region where personal contact is extremely important. If we had just shown up last month, wanting to use Uzbekistan’s bases, it would not have been possible for things to go so smoothly.”²⁴⁷

The Uzbeks moved quickly to seize the expanding opportunity. In November they sent a delegation of English-speaking officials that made a positive impression upon the foreign policy establishment in Washington, D.C. (most of whom had never met an Uzbek before). Through cabinet level meeting and briefings at the National Press Club and major think tanks, the Uzbek delegation implicitly countered the stereotype that most American policy elites had previously held of Uzbekistan.

²⁴⁶ “Joint U.S.-Uzbek Statement Announces ‘Qualitatively New Relationship,’” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Central Asia Report, Vol. 1, No. 13, 18 October 2001.

²⁴⁷ P. Terrence Hopmann, as quoted in C.J. Chivers, “Long Before the War, Green Berets Built Military Ties to Uzbekistan,” *New York Times*, 25 October 2001. Also confirmed in repeated interviews with U.S. and Uzbek officials, military and civilian.

Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov spoke knowledgably about the mechanisms of the various international financial institutions. Minister of Defense Gulamov revealed the history of mil-to-mil relations that had previously existed, and of his desire for a language training center at the Uzbek armed forces academy. And Deputy Foreign Minister Safaev acknowledged that “without further democratization of the country, improvement in human rights, creating a civil society, and running by laws of the state, there will be no economic prosperity, no lasting stability for Uzbekistan. We realize that it is in our self-interest.”

The first time an Uzbek-delegation had been empowered to make decisions without checking with Tashkent (Karimov) first, they were a huge success.²⁴⁸ In the next week Secretary of State Colin Powell was in Tashkent for the opening of the bridge at Termez (into Afghanistan) for the delivery of humanitarian aid. At the press conference with President Karimov, Powell stated that the U.S. was looking for a “relationship that will endure long after the crisis is over.”²⁴⁹

In January 2002, the U.S. Government sent to Uzbekistan its largest interagency delegation ever. Headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Eurasia Mira Ricardel and Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, Beth Jones, the delegation met with their Uzbek counterparts to determine how to increase cooperation while finalizing a strategic framework for signature. Amidst the usual security issues of counterterrorism and joint military operations, Pat

²⁴⁸ “Central Asia and the War on Terrorism,” transcript of a panel discussion at the Atlantic Council of the United States, moderated by Joseph A. Presel, 30 November 2001; interview with Uzbek official.

²⁴⁹ Secretary Colin L. Powell, Joint Press Conference with President Karimov, 8 December 2001, Tashkent (accessed 31 August 2004) available from <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2001/dec/6749.htm>.

As a side note (and of useful reference for the 2004-2005 discussion below), it is worth recording one Uzbek official’s reaction to the international humanitarian NGOs that descended upon Termez. “My authorities were confused with the overflow of NGOs. There is no common denominator for these institutions. We wanted to treat them like a sub-contractor to the UNHCR but could not. They irritated mid-level bureaucrats who want a clear instinct about with whom they have to work.”

Davis (from the State Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor), made the case for the inclusion of human rights in the agreement.²⁵⁰

On 12 March 2002, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Komilov signed a comprehensive "Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework" between their two countries. The eighteen page framework pledged "practical goals" in "establishing stability and security in Central Asia" and promised to work toward increased cooperation in five key areas:

- political relations (with a "commitment to further intensify the democratic transformation of [Uzbek] society");
- security cooperation (where the U.S. would "regard with grave concern any external threat" to Uzbekistan);
- economic relations (with priority to "economic and structural reform" in Uzbekistan);
- humanitarian cooperation (with the intention to work together in "education, public health and environmental protection"); and
- legal cooperation (with a promise to "develop a law-based government system" and "culture").²⁵¹

The security partnership was a point of deep pride for the Uzbeks—"we are the only CIS country with such an agreement with the United States."²⁵² President Karimov said that the U.S. "can stay on the territory of Uzbekistan as long as it needs."²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Various interviews with U.S. and Uzbek officials in Tashkent and Washington, D.C. I was in Tashkent at the time, monitoring Karimov's rigged election the day before the U.S.-Uzbek interagency summit. As it turned out, I flew back to D.C. with the interagency delegation on 29 January 2002, gaining more insight in the VIP lounge than through a dozen official interviews.

²⁵¹ The Declaration of the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of Uzbekistan (full text, provided by Titi Baccam, then the Uzbekistan desk officer at the State Department.) Available from <http://www.fas.org/terrorism/at/docs/2002/US-UzbekPartnership.htm>; see also the U.S. State Department Fact Sheet, 12 March 2002 (accessed 19 January 2004), available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/8736.htm>.

It is important to note, however, that the human rights component came from the Uzbeks themselves. According to several accounts, the original declaration was six pages. The Uzbeks added twelve pages of changes, including the human rights component. All agree that the Uzbeks added the changes of their own volition; most think that the changes came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (others suggest that it came from Karimov).

Human Rights

With the security arrangement achieved, the Uzbeks began several human rights initiatives over the next two years, some of which would have been impossible just the year before:

- (Released 460 political prisoners in December 2001)
- Provided access to the U.N. Rapporteur on Torture — the only Central Asian country to do so — whose report concluded that torture was “systemic” in Uzbek jails
- Released 930 political prisoners in December 2002
- Released 705 political prisoners in December 2003
- Placed secret police on trial for human rights violations (the first time in Uzbekistan’s history)
- Allowed Birlik to meet as an opposition party
- Abolished the government’s monopoly over the internet
- Registered the Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan
- Removed censorship from papers
- Developed a four month survey of HT extremists in twenty-one prisons (April-August 2003) to better understand why people became extremist

²⁵² Uzbek official.

²⁵³ See Shireen Hunter, *Islam and Russia*, 341. (Hunter quotes the *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* 8, no. 55, 19 March 2002).

- Established a new English-speaking only school for highly qualified young people
- Brought back the former head Mufti, Mohammed Yusef (an independent voice who has criticized the regime) back to help with Islamic education
- Participated in a conference on religion and the state in Washington, D.C. (October 2004)
- Sustained a downward trend in arrests (e.g., lowered by 50% from 2001 to 2002)
- Lowered the number of political prisoners, by all accounts, from approximately 8,500 to 4,500-5,500
- Did not conduct the usual “sweep” after the 2004 and 2005 terrorist bombings rounding up random innocent people (as they did in Namangan in December 1997 when a police official was assassinated)²⁵⁴

Of course there is a counterargument to many of these statistics. For example: if the government allowed a group to register, how much freedom was the group really given? The government allowed the Rapporteur for Torture to visit the country—and his final report said that torture was “systematic”—but why was the Rapporteur not allowed in the worst prisons? Why is his plan not being implemented? Were the convicted secret police truly punished? These, and others, are very fair questions. And they are properly raised by Human Rights Watch and others.²⁵⁵

Among the various initiatives, however, two questions loom. First, were these Uzbek actions merely lip-service in order to stay in the good graces of the U.S.? Or were they genuine efforts to begin reform, representing a significant break with the past?

²⁵⁴ Interviews with Uzbek and U.S. officials, April 2004; U.S. State Department Fact Sheet, “U.S. Engagement in Central Asia: Successes,” 27 November 2002 (accessed 19 January 2004) available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/15561.htm>.

²⁵⁵ For example, see “Uzbekistan: Progress on Paper Only, An Analysis of the U.S. State Department’s Certification of Uzbekistan,” 3 June 2003; Available from <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/uzbek060303-bck.htm>. [Without certification, the U.S. government is limited, by law, in what money it can give.]

Put differently, were these efforts as fast as Uzbekistan could move, given the “domestic politics” described in the last chapter?

Second, what if these actions were not taken? Would the domestic situation in Uzbekistan be better or worse? Would it be closer to becoming a failed state?

Counterfactual questions are not of much practical use. But they do provide perspective. For example, consider the ending of editorial censure by the Uzbek government. Officially, censure was over. Some saw it as a political gesture to please the Americans, however, and were quick to point out that many editors self-censored to keep their jobs. On the other hand, others saw such a change as the first small step in habitualizing the rule of law.

Perhaps most fascinating among these initiatives was Karimov’s educational efforts. While his first prong of attack against extremist Islam was repression, his second prong of attack was always education. To his credit, Karimov recognized from the beginning that he was in a ‘war of ideas:’ “This is idea against idea, spirituality against darkness.”²⁵⁶ This war could only be won through secular and theological education. Unfortunately, as the government overhauled the spiritual and secular education, the means tainted the ends.

Regarding theological matters, Karimov took advantage of Central Asia’s historical context. Since 1789, the region has had some kind of religious board, providing advice to the state and oversight of religion.²⁵⁷ Karimov simply re-established this religious board after he became president, thereby controlling the placement of imams while exercising an indirect censure of

²⁵⁶ Zhuherrin Husdinitov, Special Advisor to the President for Religion, and Rector of Islamic State University 15 April 2004, Tashkent.

²⁵⁷ Catherine the Great first created a Muslim institution under state control in 1789 in the Ufa district. This institution was renamed the Orenburg Muhammedan Spiritual Assembly in 1796. “In creating the Spiritual Assembly, Catherine also created an official Muslim clerical establishment that would be responsible to the government and would not act in an independent manner.” In other words, Karimov’s state control of Islam is a perfectly natural function to the Central Asian experience. See Shireen Hunter, *Islam in Russia, The Politics of Identity and Security* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 8.

Friday sermons. President Karimov also established the Islamic State University in Tashkent. This school teaches English, Arabic, theology and other disciplines.

Bridging the gap between spiritual and secular education, the government completely redesigned its public education of Islam, ending in 2003. It developed a five-year plan to comparatively review programs and textbooks from the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and from around the world. They then developed and implemented a curriculum for the elementary, secondary, university and graduate levels to teach Islam in public schools; including a training program for specialists who would teach this curriculum.

Importantly, this review was initiated by the Uzbek government as the West ignored both the threat of radical Islam, and the idea that civil society programs might include religion.

Still, these secular education efforts were not as credible as they could be, because it was so obvious that the government controlled the clergy and the message of public Islam. In other words, because the government seemingly believes that one cannot be fundamentally devout and a good citizen who disavows terrorism, the efforts to re-educate Uzbeks about Islam are often seen as one more component of a regime that seeks to control everything.

The Uzbek position—maddening to the United States—was very simple: “There is no way to press from the outside.”²⁵⁸ Uzbekistan does not change simply because an outsider wants it to.

²⁵⁸ Uzbek official.

Economy

With the U.S. security guarantee, and the destruction of its primary conventional (the Taliban) and unconventional (the IMU) threats, there was no reason not engage in economic reform. Uzbekistan soon reestablished its relationship with the IMF and agreed to a Staff Monitored Program (January 2002), which it signed on 30 June 2002. The agreement touched on the most important part of Uzbekistan's "domestic politics": foreign exchange rate mechanisms. The Program stated that there would be no more than a 20% differential between the official exchange rate and the black market rate. By 15 October 2003, the government had proclaimed full convertibility of the *Som*.

Despite having "all the ingredients needed to become a regional economic powerhouse" —to include a "dynamic, literate and entrepreneurial population" and energy self-sufficiency²⁵⁹— "there is a pervasive attitude among officials in Uzbekistan that the government must control the economy from above."²⁶⁰ As always, politics and economics were intricately intertwined, with the former forever trumping the latter.

For instance, just three months after signing their agreement with the IMF, the government was manipulating border tariffs to be within the 20% maximum differential between official rates and black market rates. The government allowed the official exchange rate to increase while imposing exorbitant border tariffs that kept the black market rate lower.

For example, shuttle traders would go outside Uzbekistan to buy their goods, returning to sell it at a higher rate in Uzbekistan. The border tariff, however, had to be paid in hard currency, a

²⁵⁹ "Country Commercial Guide, Uzbekistan, FY03" U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service and U.S. Department of State, Executive Summary, 2002.

²⁶⁰ Pauline Jones Luong, "Political Obstacles to Economic Reform in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan: Strategies to Move Ahead," a World Bank paper prepared for the Lucerne Conference of the CIS-7 Initiative, 20-22 January 2003, 19. See also "Strategy for Uzbekistan," Document of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 4 March 2003.

cost that the trader would pass onto the customer. The tariffs, in other words, kept hard currency in Uzbekistan and Uzbeks buying Uzbek produced goods; even as the IMF, or so the government thought, felt that the 20% mark being kept.²⁶¹

The control of the economy, and especially the exchange rates, was not only a function of the control mentality of the Uzbek leadership, but a necessity of controlling the Uzbek elites through the interrelated patronage system that President Karimov has developed (remember that he had no power base upon becoming president).

Larry Memmott, U.S. economic officer in Tashkent from 1999-2003, observes: “every part of the system will be undermined by economic reform” as one’s loss is another’s gain. In the past, Memmott points out, Karimov has only been able to crush one part of the system at a time (e.g., putting the sons of the chief of the Samarkand clan in jail). To take on the whole system at once, however, meant that all of the vested powers would lose simultaneously; which, in turn, meant that Karimov would lose power.²⁶²

This vicious cycle of political patronage through economic perks sustains the system temporarily while paradoxically ensuring its eventual self-destruction.

These policies have served both to reinforce pre-existing and to create new vested interests in the status quo, including: 1) government officials, such as central ministers, regional and local *hokims*, and farm chairman, who benefit politically as well as personally from their privileged access to economic resources and excessive administrative responsibilities, 2) state designated importers, who are the “net winners” of the multiple exchange rate system that has been in existence since late 1996 because they can purchase foreign currency at an appreciated exchange rate, and 3) those industries included in the government’s public investment program, as well as

²⁶¹ Uzbek official; also see Martha Brill Olcott, *Central Asia’s Second Chance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 118. In this particular case, the Uzbek government reduced the tariffs and allowed the border crossing tariff to be paid in *som*. Still, it is these kinds of things that nickel and dime a country to its economic death. Another tried and true Uzbek policy is to make it very difficult for an ordinary Uzbek citizen to withdraw cash from the Uzbek banks.

²⁶² Larry Memmott, Economics officer, U.S. embassy in Uzbekistan, 4 June 2002, Tashkent.

large joint ventures with foreign investment, which receive special tax breaks and access to subsidized credit and production inputs.²⁶³

The byproduct is a business environment that is opaque, complex and discouraging to investors, foreign or domestic (Most Uzbek businessmen use off-shore accounts, waiting for a day when they can trust their own banking system).²⁶⁴ Summing up the economic situation, one Uzbek very familiar with how the system works said:

The real threat is that we are in a position to change but the mid-level people [e.g. local *hokims* beholdng to regional bosses beholdng to Karimov²⁶⁵] don't want to implement the change. These people operate without any punishment. They are more dangerous than HT...The new mechanisms must allow for us to really have money in a legal way; then we can stop holding the sparrow and start chasing the eagle.²⁶⁶

The sparrow and eagle references pertain to a Central Asian proverb: "I'll take the sparrow home instead of trying to catch the eagle." In more ways than one, it is the perfect description of the Uzbek-U.S. relationship. The Uzbeks could not help but hold onto the old ways; there was nothing in their history or recent experience that taught them not to be conspiratorial and control-oriented. "Hold the sparrow now, and make it to tomorrow." This is the paradoxical mindset of many Uzbek patriots who, like Karimov, want a better future for their country. As a result, however, there is no way to catch the (U.S.) eagle of a better tomorrow. While events would determine the characteristics of the demise of the Uzbek-U.S. relationship, this reality of the sparrow-in-hand mindset essentially pre-ordained it...leaving no hope until a new generation comes to power.

²⁶³ Pauline Jones Luong, "Political Obstacles to Economic Reform in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan: Strategies to Move Ahead," a World Bank paper prepared for the Lucerne Conference of the CIS-7 Initiative, 20-22 January 2003, 10.

²⁶⁴ For a depressing summary of the business environment in Uzbekistan, see Martha O. Blaxall, "Economic Implications of Instability," paper for DFI conference the future of Uzbekistan, 26 May 2004.

²⁶⁵ See Martha Brill Olcott, Testimony before the House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific on Democracy in the Central Asian Republics, 12 April 2000, for more discussion of the link between political patronage and (non) economic opportunity in Uzbekistan. (Accessed 9 September 2000); available from http://iicas.org/english/Krsten_19_04_00.htm.

²⁶⁶ Uzbek official.

The Relationship Sours

After the joint consultations in Washington, D.C. (April 2003), the Uzbeks knew that the “bloom had come off” the relationship. Despite the initial “euphoria and great expectations,” as well as the common regional and international security concerns of terrorism, narcotics and non-proliferation, there were “fundamental differences” regarding human rights. These were not “geopolitical differences” but they were [geo-communal] “differences deeply rooted in the sources culture and civilization.” Still, this controversy was about “timing and algorithms.” The U.S. wants changes “strong and quick. We do not think this approach is necessary. We must take a moderate and evolutionary approach.”²⁶⁷ It was an understandable argument. As Zhuherrin Husdinitov argued: “We’ve made progress in the last 13 years, especially compared to what took place in the U.S. over 200 years.”²⁶⁸

The end of the beginning, however, as well as the beginning of the end, came with Georgia’s “Rose Revolution” in November-December of 2003. The real and perceived role of international NGOs in the pursuit of democracy was not something that could be tolerated in any form in Uzbekistan.

11 September 2001—December 2003: An American Perspective

Whether we think of the physical, economic, military or political interconnection of things on the surface of the globe, we are now for the first time presented with a closed system. The known does not fade any longer through the half-known in the unknown; there is no longer elasticity of political expansion in the lands beyond the pale. Every shock, every disaster or superfluity, is now felt even to the antipodes, and may indeed return from the antipodes ... Every deed of humanity will henceforth be echoed and reechoed in like manner.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ Uzbek official.

²⁶⁸ Husdinitov, 15 April 2004, Tashkent.

²⁶⁹ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 2, 22.

9/11 forced a rediscovery of geography, and recent history, for most Americans and especially policy-makers. Upon his first visit to Uzbekistan in January 2002, Senator Joe Lieberman issued an American *mea culpa*:

During the Cold War...we yielded this area...totally to Soviet interests, and Soviet control. When the Soviet Union collapsed and these countries...declared their independence, the United States began to have relations with the countries, but they were, as we look back, all too halting and limited. It is tragic but true that the horrific attacks against the United States on September 11th, opened our eyes to the reality that what happens here in Central Asia, though it may be far from our shores, can nonetheless have the most immediate and direct effect on us...this is a critical part of the world, strategically, economically and politically, and I would say that our interest in this region post-September 11th is going to be permanent, and I believe constructive both to economic development and to the spread of democracy and freedom.²⁷⁰

The visit itself signaled a new period. In the two years prior to September 11th, for example, Uzbekistan had received just two congressmen.²⁷¹ By April of 2004, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had been there three times and Secretary of State Powell twice. Meanwhile, sixty-three congressmen and eighteen senators had found time to visit the country.²⁷²

Americans who understood Uzbekistan, however, recognized what the opportunity meant to the Uzbeks. Despite the tragedy, it was a moment to be seized unlike any other.

9/11 change[d] everything—it is a gift from God to Uzbekistan. It destroyed their #1 threat, the Taliban and IMU; the U.S. is too far away to force them to do things; and the U.S. balances Russia and China. It's the best moment they've had since independence and the best they'll have in the next ten years...and they know it.²⁷³

And Americans whose job it was to understand and implement policy also recognized the moment for what it was, to include its historical context. During the late 1980s, Beth Jones had been the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) in Pakistan. During that time, as any good DCM would, she sided with her ambassador in support of sub-contracting American foreign policy to

²⁷⁰ Senator Joseph Lieberman, U.S. Senatorial Delegation Press Conference in Uzbekistan, 6 January 2002 (accessed 8 January 2002); available from <http://www.usembassy.uz/home/index.aspx?&=&mid=218&overview=482>.

²⁷¹ Memmott, 4 June 2002, Tashkent.

²⁷² Husdinitov, 15 April 2004, Tashkent.

²⁷³ Memmott, 4 June 2002, Tashkent.

Pakistan's intelligence community (no matter the consequences and despite alternatives at the time that suggested the policy was a mistake).²⁷⁴

With 9/11, however, Jones was now the administration's point person for Central Asia as the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia. At an April 2003 conference, she spoke knowingly of lessons learned. "Our disengagement from Afghanistan in the 1980s taught us a harsh lesson, one that we do not want to repeat in other countries. We learned that we must engage the region's governments and people to promote long-term stability and prevent a security vacuum that provides opportunities for extremism and external intervention."²⁷⁵

In her first Congressional testimony on the issue—testifying before the new sub-committee on Central Asia and the Caucasus, whose new creation testified to the previous non-interest of Congress in the region while its name insisted that Central Asia and the Caucasus were actually one region—Jones stated that "we are engaged—seriously and for the long-term—with Central Asia." She called for a policy that was "a commitment to deeper, more sustained, and better-coordinated engagement on the full range of issues upon which we agree and disagree."

America's national interests included: "preventing the spread of terrorism; providing tools for political and economic reform and institution of the rule of law, and transparent development of

²⁷⁴ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 184, 199, 235. See page 169 for context: "There was no American policy on Afghan politics at the time, on the de facto promotion of Pakistan goals as carried out by Pakistani intelligence. The CIA forecasted repeatedly during this period that postwar Afghanistan was going to be an awful mess; nobody could prevent that. Let the Pakistanis sort out the regional politics. This was their neighborhood."

²⁷⁵ Elizabeth Jones, "Oil, Democracy, and Militant Islam in Central Asia," Remarks at Title VI Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language conference on "Central Asia: Its Geopolitical Significance and Future Impact," University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, 10 April 2003. Tellingly, Jones goes on to separate Afghanistan from Central Asia, geographically, while suggesting that the U.S. had indeed engaged Central Asia in a meaningful manner after the fall of the Soviet Union. (Jones is also the former ambassador to Kazakhstan). In other words, U.S. policy in Central Asia had been successful and Afghanistan was not a part of, or related to, Central Asia. Oddly enough, however, she had told the press a year earlier that all Central Asians were "very close to Afghanistan physically but they all have had relationships with Afghanistan going way back." See Beth Jones, Briefing to the Press, 11 February 2002 (accessed 23 February 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2002/7946pf.htm>.

Caspian energy reserves.” And because “Central Asia is not a zero-sum game,” the “objective is therefore anti-monopoly but not anti-Russian.”²⁷⁶

Jones also stressed during this time that the United States did not want “bases in Central Asia. We don’t want a U.S. base anywhere. But what we do want is access to the bases to which we have access now for as long as we need them.”²⁷⁷ A year later she would stress again: “There are no bases in Central Asia...The United States does not intend to have permanent bases in Central Asia, but we are grateful to have access to these bases.”²⁷⁸

The question kept coming up during this period for two reasons. First, the Bush administration was repeatedly criticized by the press for trading “universal values and human rights for the military base in (Karshi) Khanabad.”²⁷⁹ This criticism is unfair because the Bush team was repeatedly speaking with the Uzbeks about human rights, from Pat Davis’ intervention on 28 January 2002 as they laid the foundation for the Strategic Framework in Tashkent, to the issue being brought up at the mid-April 2003 joint consultations in Washington, D.C.²⁸⁰ (that is, when the “bloom came off the relationship” for the Uzbeks because they realized that the Americans were not going to back off the human rights). Indeed, just eight days before the Strategic Framework was signed, the State Department’s first sentence of its Uzbekistan country report was quite clear: “Uzbekistan is an authoritarian state with limited civil rights.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ Elizabeth Jones, Testimony before the Sub-Committee on Central Asia and the Caucasus, 13 December 2001 (accessed 19 January 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2001/11299.htm>.

²⁷⁷ Beth Jones, Briefing to the Press, Washington, D.C., 11 February 2002 (accessed 23 February 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2002/7946pf.htm>.

²⁷⁸ Beth Jones, Press Conference, Tashkent, 24 January 2003 (accessed 23 February 2004); available from <http://www.usembassy.uz/home/index.aspx?&mid=219&lid=1&overview=362>.

²⁷⁹ For example, see the BBC question to Lorne Craner, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 14 June 2002 (accessed 23 February 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/rm/11112pf.htm>.

²⁸⁰ See “United States-Uzbekistan Joint Security Cooperation Consultations,” Press Statement, 15 April 2003 (accessed 31 August 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/19665.htm>.

²⁸¹ “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Uzbekistan,” U.S. Department of State, Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 4 March 2002 (accessed 23 February 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8366.htm>.

Beth Jones summarizes the delicate but firm process of U.S. engagement with Uzbekistan on human rights:

So the trick is to understand what we mean and they mean by engagement, because of course what we mean is engagement in every sector that I've mentioned, particularly especially economic reform, democratic reform and human rights. And you know, we are very up front about saying it means all of these things; you're not going to have this enhanced mil-mil relationship...without working with us on these issues as well. We are in their office, in their face, all the time.²⁸²

Were the Uzbeks listening? "It is extremely difficult to convince Central Asian leaders that long-term economic and democratic reforms are necessary to eliminate the roots of terrorism."²⁸³

Or, as one Uzbek official described the non-communication of the American-Uzbek relationship: "It is like the blind [U.S.] talking to the deaf [Uzbekistan]."²⁸⁴

The second reason the base question kept coming up was the Uzbeks' obvious focus on traditional security (discussed above), and the Department of Defense's intentional expansion of expeditionary bases around the world.²⁸⁵

²⁸² Beth Jones, Briefing to the Press, Washington, D.C., 11 February 2002 (accessed 23 February 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2002/7946pf.htm>.

²⁸³ B. Lynn Pascoe, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, "The U.S. Role in Central Asia," Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Central Asia and the South Caucasus, 27 June 2002, Washington, D.C. (accessed 19 January 2004); available from <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2002/11535.htm>.

²⁸⁴ Uzbek official, 2002.

²⁸⁵ See Chris Seiple, "Religion and the New Global Counterinsurgency," 2 September 2003 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.globalengagement.org/issues/2003/09/religion.htm>. [The military victories in Afghanistan and Iraq] signal the arrival of a new expeditionary age. The distance over which U.S. forces can now conduct these maneuvers, and the speed and precision with which they can perform them, is unprecedented. What was once the comparative advantage of the United States Marine Corps is now the modus operandi of all the services—indeed, the Department of Defense as a whole (and soon, if we are to win, the entire national security establishment). Witness the redesign of American bases overseas from huge depots and creature comforts to skeletal springboards for quick response and/or preemptive action. These bases are conceptually reminiscent of Mahan's desire for coaling stations around the world. They smack of both necessity and empire.

The victories in Afghanistan and Iraq, impressive as they were, involved the application of conventional military forces against an enemy who could largely be identified in the course of battle. After each of the "conventional" victories, however—after the adversary had quit the battlefield, melted away, and begun to confront our forces with different tactics—American forces found it far more difficult to bring operations to strategic closure. It turned out that operations in these conflicts were merely battlefield victories, not strategic ones.

The Bush team brought a different approach to international relations than the preceding administration. “There are two kinds of engagement strategies: proselytizing democracy or promoting national security.” The Bush administration’s approach was to work in the context of “common security interests, which, in turn, enable you to expand the dialogue, creating a space for democracy.” Still: “Our priority is the GWOT [the global war on terrorism]”.²⁸⁶ And GWOT was taking place amidst Secretary Rumsfeld’s previous intent to transform the U.S. military.

At the intersection of GWOT and transformation was the need for expeditionary bases that quickly enabled preemption or reaction, according to the situation.

Pentagon chiefs envisage a global network of "lily pads" or "warm bases", forward depots which would hold enough weaponry, vehicles and supplies to equip large rapid reaction forces, which would fly in at short notice through a handful of large air hubs, such as Ramstein in Germany. Other equipment would be kept in floating warehouses at sea.

Strike forces would head for "virtual bases", airfields in any of a wide range of countries to have granted the United States emergency access rights. So, far from entangling the United States in imperial alliances, the new doctrine is instead born of distrust, and America's fears of being let down by even its oldest allies, argues Celeste Johnson Ward, a fellow of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

In the long term, the Pentagon's dreams are more radical still. Its research arm recently solicited bids for a new breed of space-based unmanned hypersonic bombers, capable of taking off from American soil and striking targets on the far side of the globe within two hours, without waiting for permission to use bases, or for overflight rights.

The "new" American way of war, then, focused on destruction of conventional armies, may already be obsolete. To keep from making the same mistake that we committed in Vietnam, we must accept that America, for the first time, is fighting a global counterinsurgency in which conventional military capabilities must be subordinate to, and supportive of, the synergistic combination of all the elements of power in support of our wartime policy. This is the new American way of war.

See also, Chris Seiple, “Implications of Terrorism in Uzbekistan,” 12 April 2004 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20040412.americawar.seiple.terroruzbekistan.html>. It is an expeditionary age. Not unlike the coaling stations that Mackinder’s contemporaries, Alfred Thayer Mahan and Theodore Roosevelt, sought for American sea power, the Department of Defense is looking for “operating sites” (as Don Rumsfeld told a Tashkent news conference here in February) or “cooperative security locations” that makes its power ubiquitous. At the center of everyone’s backyard, especially the surrounding nuclear powers of Russia, China, India, Pakistan and soon, perhaps, Iran, Uzbekistan is geo-strategically located for such future opportunities.”

²⁸⁶ Mira Ricardel, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Eurasia, 26 July 2002, The Pentagon.

The ultimate aim is to leave America's enemies in fear of a strike from a clear blue sky at any second or, in the Pentagon's words, "to hold adversary vital interests at risk at all times".²⁸⁷

This “footprint” of American power is unprecedented in American and global history. In other words—despite U.S. ignorance of Central Asia’s history and the influence of the Heartland theory on American strategic culture—technology has enabled unparalleled physical reach, and sustained presence, based merely on the current needs of the moment (not intentional strategy or historical awareness). This capacity has the potential to significantly alter the geo-strategic calculus of the United States and the future of Central Asia (as well as the calculus of Russia and China). As Andy Bacevich has observed, however, “the establishment of bases by American forces has the effect of creating new facts on the ground, facts that have a way of becoming permanent. When U.S. troops arrive, they tend to stay.”²⁸⁸ This observation has already begun to take root, finding merit in the August 2002 comments of one Department of Defense official: “I believe fifty years from now [these bases in Central Asia] will be as familiar to us as Ramstein Air Force Base [in Germany].”²⁸⁹

In other words, because Central Asia is surrounded by great powers, most with nuclear capacity, the capacity to project power quickly from the region becomes much more important (especially if Afghanistan, Iraq or Pakistan were unstable or unwilling to support U.S. military

²⁸⁷ David Rennie, “America's Growing Network of Bases,” *The Telegraph*, 9 November 2003 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/09/11/wwtc211.xml>. See also Stephen Blank, “Central Asia’s Great Base Race,” *Asia Times*, 19 December 2003 (accessed 19 December 2003); available from http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/EL19Ag01.html.

²⁸⁸ Andrew J. Bacevich, “Steppes to Empire,” *The National Interest* Number 68 (Summer 2002): 42. Bacevich echoes Lord Curzon who wrote: “It may be observed that the uniform tendency is for the weaker to crystallize into the harder shape. Spheres of Interest tend to become Spheres of Influence; temporary Leases to become perpetual; Spheres of Influence to develop into Protectorates; Protectorates to be the forerunners of complete incorporation.” See The Right Honourable Lord Curzon of Kedleston, *Frontiers, The Romanes Lecture, 1907*, All Souls College, Chancellor of the University, Delivered 2 November 1907 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 47.

²⁸⁹ Thomas Barnett, Assistant for Strategic Futures in the Office of Force Transportation at the Department of Defense; as quoted by Nathan Hodge, “Pentagon Strategist: Bases are Long-Term,” *Defense Week*, 19 August 2002, 3.

action). This point is not lost on the Uzbeks, who have thought this way from the beginning. When combined, however, the above factors—a U.S. military focus on fighting terrorism, with media generally unaware of the State Department’s behind-the-scenes efforts for human rights, and the Uzbeks significant (for them) but less than sufficient efforts on reforming their human rights and economic policies—created the perception that the U.S. was still adrift in its engagement of the Heartland through Uzbekistan.

Just ten days after the U.S. and Uzbekistan signed the Strategic Framework, Ahmed Rashid commented that the U.S. had yet to establish “a coherent aid strategy or economic plan for Central Asia. As a result, the authoritarian regimes will have no reason to open their societies to genuine economic reform and to foster the establishment of a stable middle class.”²⁹⁰ This quick but genuine criticism from a noted observer was soon followed up by a noted reporter with little experience in the region. Writing in August 2002, Robert Kaiser warned that after “five weeks of reporting the region and extensive interviews with policymakers in Washington make clear that the commitments, though real enough and potentially costly, remain vague.”²⁹¹

These views were echoed by Uzbeks as well. One thoughtful observer cautioned the U.S. to “take an integrative approach based on geography”²⁹² Another experienced official stated bluntly that for the United States, “There is still no strategic concept of Uzbekistan.”²⁹³

In short, more attention did not necessarily mean more vision and/or strategy. As one Washington think tank concluded in 2004 about America’s regional policy since 9/11: “U.S.

²⁹⁰ Nikola Krastev, “‘Taliban’ Author Says Russia To Regain influence in Unstable Region,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 22 March 2002 (accessed 22 March 2002) available from <http://www.rferl.org/features/2002/03/22032002111939.asp>. See also Rashid, *Jihad*, xxii: “As the war against terrorism unfolds, it is clear that the Western nations—and the United States in particular—lack a strategic vision for the region.”

²⁹¹ Robert G. Kaiser, “U.S. Plants Footprint in Shaky Central Asia,” *Washington Post*, 27 August 2002, 1.

²⁹² Aziz Tatibaev, Chairman of the History Department, National University of Uzbekistan, 5 June 2002, Tashkent.

²⁹³ Rafik Sayfullin, former Deputy Director of the National Security Council, 7 June 2002, Tashkent.

policy towards this potentially volatile region of the world has been more ad hoc than well-reasoned in terms of future implications for U.S. strategic interests. This must change if the United States is to avoid getting itself enmeshed in another “Iran-like” situation.”²⁹⁴

2004—2005: The Dying Relationship

While both sides would officially affirm the strength of the relationship during this time, it was a relationship in trouble. The Uzbeks were security-focused for two reasons. The popularity of Hizb ut-Tahir was on the rise, as was the seemingly nefarious intent of foreign NGOs in their attempt to bring about democracy in the former Soviet space (a feeling only strengthened by President Bush’s second inaugural). For their part, the Americans were increasingly perplexed. They wanted to deepen the security relationship but could not convince the Uzbeks that human rights were an integral part of enduring stability.

And then Andijan. By the end of 2005, the American embassy in Tashkent was considering if it would have to shut down and the Uzbeks were working again with the Russians (much to the chagrin of some of their own elites).

2004-2005: An Uzbek Perspective

There were three key factors to the U.S.-Uzbek relationship: First, Uzbekistan must stay strong in the region. Second, the strategic partnership must enable Uzbekistan to stay strong in the balance among Iran, India, Pakistan, Russia and China. Finally, the U.S. should make its policy through Uzbekistan.²⁹⁵ By 2004, these goals seemed less likely, although regional perceptions assumed them to be true. (An anonymous Kyrgyz diplomat told the Institute for War

²⁹⁴ Jacquelyn K. Davis and Michael J. Sweeney, *Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning*, i.

²⁹⁵ Uzbek official, 2002, Tashkent.

& Peace Reporting: “Washington has appointed Tashkent as number-one wife in the Central Asian harem.”)²⁹⁶

Not only were the Uzbeks irritated by the U.S. insistence on human rights, the money was not as forthcoming as a result. In the aftermath of September 11th, the U.S. had essentially tripled its aid to Uzbekistan from \$55.9 million in 2001 to \$161.8 million in 2003. By 2005, annual aid to Uzbekistan had returned to 2001 levels.²⁹⁷

Worse, the Uzbeks felt like they had left money on the table in their basing agreement with the U.S. They did not receive any compensation for the use of the base except for costs associated with services in support of the U.S. presence. By comparison, the Americans were paying \$5-7000 dollars per flight to use the airport in Manas, Kyrgyzstan. The fundamental difference, however, was the designation of the airfield. The base in Manas was a commercial field. The base at Karshi-Khanabad was a government-owned airfield. The long-standing U.S. policy is not to pay for access to state-owned airfields. As the Uzbeks watched the Kyrgyz get rich, this deal “without rent or as part of a broader defense agreement”²⁹⁸ was beginning to lose its luster.

When the Americans cut \$18 million dollars in aid in July 2004 because of the non-improving situation in human rights, the Uzbeks were again irritated.²⁹⁹ It was not the loss of

²⁹⁶ Institute for War & Peace Reporting, “Will U.S. Policy Backfire in Central Asia?” (RCA No. 274), 30 March 2004 (accessed 30 March 2004); available from http://iwpr.gn.apc.org/?s=f&o=176932&apc_state=henirca2004.

²⁹⁷ Martha Brill Olcott, *Central Asia's Second Chance*, Appendix 5: U.S. Government Assistance Before and After 9/11, 254. (Olcott's source is the Congressional Research Service).

²⁹⁸ B. Lynn Pascoe, Statement by Deputy Assistant Secretary B. Lynn Pascoe before United States Helsinki Commission 24 June 2004 (accessed 19 September 2004) available from <http://www.usembassy.uz/home/index.aspx?&=&mid=384&lid=1>.

²⁹⁹ Anne Penketh, “U.S. Moves to cut Off Aid to Uzbekistan,” *The Independent*, 14 July 2004.

money so much as the international stigma that accompanied the U.S. decision in the world press.³⁰⁰

The real problems, however, were destabilizing issues at home that threatened the Karimov regime. (Needless to say, dealing with these issues had a direct impact on Karimov's international action and strategy). Foremost among these problems was a centralized economy not capable of creating enough jobs. The result was an unemployment rate of around thirty percent in a country of twenty-six million where 60% of the population was less than twenty-five. Adding to the demographic and economic crunch, Uzbekistan's population was growing at 2.9% per year (or 400,000 births per year), and expected to double in the next fifty years. Meanwhile 60% of the people were engaged in agriculture despite the fact that only 15% of the land is arable.³⁰¹ Many were living on bread and tea.

Exacerbating the situation was Karimov's continued crackdown on extremists. The threat was certainly real as Hizb ut-Tahrir's popularity increased, even as there was evidence that some HT adherents were dissatisfied with HT's non-violent approach.³⁰² As one Uzbek official poignantly admonishes: "I served in the Middle East and watched the early stages of Hezbollah and Hamas. Do you want us to wait until HT moves to violence?"³⁰³

Yet the government's wrongful imprisonment of thousands of alleged terrorists created something the real terrorists could never do for themselves: sympathy among the general populace. This sympathy was real for two reasons. Most knew someone who has been thrown

³⁰⁰ Various interviews with Uzbeks officials.

³⁰¹ Various interviews with Uzbeks; Also see: http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/car.

³⁰² See, for example: Alisher Khamidov, "Hizb-Ut-Tahrir Faces Internal Split in Central Asia," 21 October 2003 (accessed 23 October 2003) available from <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav202103.shtml>; and Ariel Cohen, "Have American Officials Identified a New Threat in Central Asia?" 24 June 2003 (accessed 24 June 2003) available from http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav062403_pr.shtml. Cohen reports in this article that HT had declared the U.S. a "global threat that only a caliphate could stop."

³⁰³ Uzbek official, 2004.

illegally in jail. Second, in the absence of any other mechanism for grievance about their economic condition, Uzbeks increasingly viewed the terrorists as opposition groups taking a stand against a corrupt government that did not provide for them. As a result, the Uzbek people were increasingly positioned to do something they had not done in their history: have a voice in the organization of their society. It is in this context that a number of significant events took place between February of 2004 and March of 2005. In February of 2004—reacting to the role of international NGOs in fomenting the recent “Rose Revolution” in Georgia—Karimov signed Decree No. 56 in order to crack down on “money laundering.” In reality, it forced NGOs to transfer funds from international donors to an Uzbek bank where a government committee would decide on whether those funds could be used for certain activities.

On 11 March 2004, the world was rocked by al Qaeda’s bombings in Madrid. Later that month, Uzbekistan experienced a female suicide bomber for the first time in its history. The target was government representatives (policemen) at the Chorsu Bazaar in Tashkent (when the bazaar was closed). Accounts vary, but the attack seemed to be homegrown, and the government was not sure what to do.

The government is scared by the soft power of democracy, which brought down the authoritarian Georgian government (e.g., the “Rose Revolution”); and it is scared of the hard power of terrorism, which brought down a democratic government in Spain. In this context, it is almost guaranteed that the government will not take any meaningful action. Why change when both roads lead to a loss of control? The devil known is always more comfortable than the devil unknown.³⁰⁴

On 30 July 2004, Tashkent was again rocked by terrorists. This time, three suicide attacks took place outside the American and Israeli embassies. A relatively unknown group, The Jihad Islamic Group, took credit for the attack. Then in late November and December—confirming

³⁰⁴ Chris Seiple, “Implications of Terrorism in Uzbekistan,” 12 April 2004 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20040412.americawar.seiple.terroruzbekistan.html>

Karimov's worst fears about western NGO action in the former Soviet space—the Orange revolution took place in the Ukraine. In his second inaugural address, President Bush told the repressed people of the world that the United States of America would no longer “excuse your oppressors.”³⁰⁵

In February, President Karimov transferred his Foreign Minister, Sodyq Safaev, to the Uzbek Senate. This decision was an unmistakable signal to the U.S. as Safaev had been widely regarded as the architect of the American partnership. Later that month, however, the “Tulip” Revolution began in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, resulting in the removal of President Akaev from power.

There was certainly plenty of circumstantial evidence that Karimov might be next. Rumors circulated in early 2005 that Karimov would soon sack his nearest rivals in order to consolidate power. He did not move, however, because he was too weak, or because of the impact of the March 2005 events in Kyrgyzstan next door.

“It is a much different time now, a very vulnerable time” for all those in power. The result was a bilateral relationship in “strategic limbo.” The relationship had to be improved, otherwise “Russia will press hard on us.” In order to make the relationship better, three things were necessary. First, there had to be the “political will” from the U.S. to see the relationship through. Second, the U.S. had to “compromise,” to include paying for the K2 base, “like Manas.” And finally, there needed to be a new “geo-cultural engagement,” establishing the U.S.-Uzbekistan friendship as an example of U.S.-Islamic relations.³⁰⁶

However well-intentioned, it was too little, too late from too few. And then the events of 12-13 May 2005 in Andijan.

³⁰⁵ President George W. Bush, *Second Inaugural Speech*, 20 January 2005 (accessed 20 January 2005) available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html>.

³⁰⁶ Uzbek officials.

In the summer of 2004, the Uzbek government jailed 23 businessmen from Andijan for “Islamic extremism.” Although they were members of Akramiya, a splinter group that broke with HT in the late 1990s, to date there has been no conclusive evidence linking them to terrorism. Many in Andijan viewed these 23 as pious businessmen of faith—men who treated their employees with justice, paying them well and taking care of their families. Many thought that the new mayor of Andijan had tried to muscle in on the successful businesses, demanding a cut; when rebuffed (or not given enough), he threw them in jail. In any event, peaceful protests were taking place regularly before 13 May.

On the night of 12 May, an undetermined number of coordinated assailants attacked Andijan’s police station and army garrison, seizing weapons, killing unarmed men and taking hostages. (Simultaneous attacks on the local offices of the National Security Service and the Ministry of Interior failed). The assailants then stormed the town’s high security prison (that is, someone on the inside helped them in), releasing hundreds of prisoners, the 23 among them.

As they took control of downtown Andijan on the morning of 13 May, they called friends and relatives. By morning word had spread and Babur Square was filled with thousands of mostly curious people who were not active sympathizers. A public address system was set up and the insurgents made speeches calling for jobs and justice, and an Islamic Republic.

President Karimov rushed to Andijan. He remembered Namangan in ’91 and ’97; he had watched a listless President Akaev refuse to proactively engage the events that had led to his downfall in Kyrgyzstan just two months before; and he probably was not sure exactly who he could trust in his own chain-of-command. After several hours of negotiations—along with Minister of the Interior Almatov—government troops moved in with armored personnel vehicles (BTR-80s). The assailants positioned themselves behind the crowd and their remaining hostages.

We do not know who fired first, but soon the BTR-80's 7.62 mm coaxial machine guns were firing indiscriminately into the crowd. No one seems to know how many were killed, but estimates range from 200 to 800 people.

The international community immediately called for an independent investigation. The Karimov regime balked, even refusing to meet with Senator John McCain who visited Tashkent soon thereafter. On 29 July 2005, Uzbekistan—quitting before it was fired—officially notified the U.S. that it would be evicted from the airbase at Karshi-Khanabad. (Karimov also ended the bilateral cooperation on counterterrorism).³⁰⁷ By the fall of 2005, the government was blaming the United States government for inciting the revolt, naming U.S. diplomats at the Uzbek government's show trial of the perpetrators.³⁰⁸

The trial, however, was very important as, strangely, one woman spoke the truth. Mabuba Zokirova spoke of citizens waving white flags before being killed by government troops. Absolutely unexplainable, some felt that her testimony revealed the increased fissures among Uzbekistan's ruling elites about Karimov's continued leadership; i.e., someone allowed her to testify.³⁰⁹ As one Uzbek summed up: "Everyone knew that Andijan needed surgery, it was just a question of what instrument was used...and Karimov used the wrong instrument."³¹⁰

In other words, the government had the right and responsibility to respond to the terrorist insurgents. The way in which it was done, however, was unforgivable. Adding insult to injury,

³⁰⁷ Robin Wright, "Rice, on Way to Central Asia, Reprimands Uzbekistan," *Washington Post*, 11 October 2005, A13.

³⁰⁸ Various interviews throughout 2005 in Washington, D.C. and Tashkent. One unconfirmed report suggested that Ministry of Defense troops refused to fire on the crowd, forcing Karimov and/or Almatov to call in Uzbekistan's "delta" force.

³⁰⁹ For a discussion of Zokirova's testimony, go the best Central Asia blog site, <http://www.Registan.net>.

³¹⁰ Uzbek official familiar with the situation.

Karimov's response to the international community's outrage forced Uzbekistan back into Russia's arms; which most believe is not in Uzbekistan's long-term interest.³¹¹

In keeping with time-tested tactics, Karimov was soon doing what it took to get to tomorrow. On 25 May 2005, he flew to Beijing to sign a "Treaty of Friendly Cooperation Partnership between China and Uzbekistan" signing a \$600 million dollar oil deal as well.³¹² On 5 July 2005, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization met in Astana, Kazakhstan. They displayed enthusiastic support for Karimov by calling for the establishment of a timetable by which the U.S.-led coalition would withdraw from the region. Karimov told a press conference that the presence of the SCO in global affairs would soon be felt.³¹³

On 14 November 2005, Karimov signed a new security pact with Russia, stating that "Russia is our most reliable partner and ally."³¹⁴ The agreement provides for mutual defense against third-party attack, and the mutual use of the other's military bases.³¹⁵

2004-2005: An American Perspective

U.S. policy objectives remained largely the same during this period: security; energy; internal reform.³¹⁶ Unfortunately, however, the U.S. had reached a point where the Uzbek government

³¹¹ Reading the "tea leaves" of Uzbekistan's elites, and clans, is virtually impossible and certainly not documentable. As one embassy official said to me: "The clan issue is there in Uzbek internal politics but it's not the Hatfields and McCoys. It's still about power politics. However, it's possible to discount because it's so impenetrable." U.S. embassy official, 24 August 2000.

³¹² Foreign Ministry Spokesman Kong Quan's Press Conference, Beijing, 26 May 2005, (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t197470.htm>.

³¹³ Sergei Blagov, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit Suggests New Russia-China links," 6 July 2005 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?volume_id=407&issue_id=3391&article_id=2369975.

³¹⁴ Sarah Shenker, "Struggle for Influence in Central Asia," *BBC News*, 28 November 2005 (accessed 28 November 2005); available from <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/44677>.

³¹⁵ Erich Marquardt and Yevgeny Bendersky for PINR, "Uzbekistan's new Foreign Policy Strategy," 24 November 2005 (accessed 28 November 2005); available from <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=13618>.

listened more to the Department of Defense (it has more money, it is philosophically more consistent with the Uzbeks' geopolitical perspective on the world and they fight a common enemy every day) than it did to the State Department.

On the one hand, senior U.S. State Department officials were working hard for human rights. "They made a big 'mistake' [on 12 March 2002]: they thought they could sign something and it would be a CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] agreement; when the U.S. signs something it means it."³¹⁷

On the other hand, the Pentagon was seemingly working at cross purposes. For example, when Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Meyers, visited Tashkent on 10 August 2004—just one month after the State Department did not release \$18 million dollars because of Uzbekistan's continued human rights violations—Meyers announced that the Department of Defense would give an additional \$21 million dollars in non-proliferation assistance, as well as fourteen river patrol boats (worth \$2.9 million).³¹⁸ (This money had been approved before the State Department de-certification of Uzbekistan; additionally, this money was directly related to the U.S. national interest of preventing the proliferation of WMD).

It was a widely held opinion among Uzbek officials that the Pentagon understood them, and had the money to support their common security objectives. It was also the collective opinion of most Uzbek officials that the State Department did not understand Uzbekistan and sought to embarrass Uzbekistan through its constant attention to human rights (not to mention that the State Department had little money to begin with).

³¹⁶ U.S. official, 26 May 2004, 6 October 2004.

³¹⁷ U.S. embassy official, 15 April 2004.

³¹⁸ "Top U.S. General Tours Central Asian Capitals, Dispenses Aid to Uzbekistan," *Eurasia Insight*, 13 August 2004 (accessed 28 September 2004); available from <http://www.eurasianet.org/insight/articles/eav081304a.shtml>.

Simply, the Uzbek government will not budge on economic and political reform unless it receives a strong and unambiguous message from all the elements of national power, especially DOD. That message must be a simple one: Unless there is tangible economic and political reform in Uzbekistan, then the United States will take its expeditionary base at Karshi-Khanabad elsewhere. Immediate economic reforms include, but are not limited to: the limitation of border tariffs so that regional trade is encouraged, and the creation of a transparent and consistent contract law environment which attracts investors. Immediate political reforms include, but are not limited to: allowing for a modicum of free press; implementation of the UN's plan to stop torture and the revision of the May 1998 "religious freedom" law.

We either act at the intersection of our values and interests in shrewd manner, or we can whistle happily past the graveyard as we repeat the mistakes of the Cold War, especially of Vietnam and Iran.

If we can be a catalyst to reform, then we will have a stable and friendly ally for the 21st century. Importantly, it will be an ally who, in an Uzbek way, develops a rule-of-law society consistent with its own values of tolerance and religious freedom, which is the cornerstone of civil society.³¹⁹

Throughout 2004 and 2005, well-informed Uzbeks repeatedly warned about the risk America was running by being associated with the Karimov regime. One said bluntly: "The Americans are losing credibility. They come talking about democracy but I don't believe them."³²⁰ After all, ordinary Uzbek people could not help but associate a corrupt and unjust government with the United States. Every American visit since September 11th was portrayed on TV as supportive of President Karimov and the Uzbek government.

In discussing one of the tragic events of 2004-2005, one Uzbek official simply said: [his government's] response was a "complete disaster."³²¹

The solution of divergent values and interests came on 20 January 2005. In his second inaugural, President George W. Bush made the American vision quite clear:

The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world. *America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one...* All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors...The leaders of

³¹⁹ Chris Seiple, "Implications of Terrorism in Uzbekistan," 12 April 2004 (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20040412.americawar.seiple.terroruzbekistan.html>

³²⁰ An Uzbek familiar with the situation.

³²¹ Uzbek official.

governments with long habits of control need to know: To serve your people you must learn to trust them. Start on this journey of progress and justice, and America will walk at your side.³²²

The question, of course, was how to make this vision into practical strategy. After Andijan and the concomitant U.S. pullout from K2, however, it did seem, at least on the surface, that “Uzbekistan presents a rare and welcome convergence of the U.S. national interest and its ideals.”³²³

But had the U.S. lost its seat at the table? Or was it an irrelevant question as there was no one to speak with anyway?

The State Department did try to keep the dialogue open as the relationship got colder. The new Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, Dan Fried, traveled to Tashkent in late September to meet with President Karimov, but got nowhere.³²⁴ Secretary of State Rice visited the region the next month, making a point not to go to Uzbekistan. Speaking from Kazakhstan (the Uzbeks’ arch-rival), Secretary Rice stated:

The United States continues to hope that the Government of Uzbekistan will turn back from its current course and make a strategic choice in favor of reform. But we will not wait idly by for that day to come. We will move forward with our partners in central Asia who seek stability through freedom, regardless of whether Uzbekistan’s leaders choose to isolate themselves and their country.³²⁵

³²² President George W. Bush, *Second Inaugural Speech*, 20 January 2005 (accessed 20 January 2005); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html>.

³²³ *The Los Angeles Times*, editorial, “A Happy Convergence,” 8 August 2005 (13 August 2005) available from <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/access/878763041.html?dids=878763041:878763041&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&type=current&date=Aug+8%2C+2005&author=&pub=Los+Angeles+Times&edition=&startpage=B.10&desc=EDITORIALS>.

³²⁴ “I would describe the conversation with President Karimov as intense, substantive, open, respectful, and we concluded that we should continue...that the two governments should continue the dialogue on all of these issues. I think it is fair to say that we did not agree on all issues.” See Press Conference of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried, 27 September 2005 (accessed 16 October 2005); available from <http://www.usembassy.uz/home/index.aspx?&=&mid=429&overview=1346>.

³²⁵ Dr. Condoleezza Rice, “Remarks at Eurasian National University,” 13 October 2005 (accessed 16 October 2005); available from <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/54913.htm>.

The secretary also secured a commitment from the new Kyrgyz President for continued access to the Manas airfield to support operations in Afghanistan.³²⁶

Shortly after Secretary Rice's visit to the region, President Vladimir Putin praised the SCO during his meeting with Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao. "It's an organization that is gathering momentum and acquiring increasing international weight."³²⁷ It was a predictable comment from, for the time being, predictable partners. As Wang Jianping observed in July 2003: "The difference between the U.S. and China's engagement of Uzbekistan is that the U.S. offers advice on transition, China doesn't."³²⁸

As the third phase of U.S.-Uzbekistan relations ended, the website of the U.S. embassy in Tashkent said it all: "The tumultuous events in Andijan in 2005 and the subsequent U.S. condemnation of President Karimov's actions render the future relationship between the nations uncertain."³²⁹

Or, as one frustrated U.S. embassy official summed up in October 2005: "We haven't hit rock bottom yet...but the U.S. is now viewed as a greater threat than the IMU."³³⁰

³²⁶ Robin Wright, "Kyrgyzstan Agrees to Continuing U.S. Military Presence at Key Air Base," *Washington Post*, 12 October 2005, A10.

³²⁷ Vladimir Isachenkov, "Putin Praises Clout of Security Group," The Associated Press, as printed in *The Moscow Times*, 27 October 2005, p.3 (accessed 3 November 2005); available from <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2005/10/27/013.html>.

³²⁸ Interview with author, 28 July 2003, Beijing. Wang is the Deputy Director of Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia Institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. See Roger McDermott, "Putin Pledges to Back Up Karimov in a Crisis," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 16 November 2005 (accessed 18 January 2006); available from http://eurasiadaily.org/article.php?article_id=2370477.

³²⁹ U.S. State Department, "Background Note: Uzbekistan" (accessed 19 September 2005); available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2924.htm#relations>.

³³⁰ U.S. embassy official, 14 October 2005, Tashkent.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary & Conclusions:

My aim is not to predict a great future for this country, but to make a geographical formula into which you could fit any political balance¹...If we are fortunate, that formula should have a practical value as setting into perspective some of the competing forces in current international politics.²

— Halford Mackinder, 1904

Democracy refuses to think strategically unless and until compelled to do so for purpose of defense...Democracy implies rule by consent of the average citizen who does not view things from the hilltops, for he must be at work in the fertile plains.³

— Halford Mackinder, 1919

The Heartland provides a sufficient physical basis for strategical thinking...My concept of the Heartland...is more valid and useful today than it was either twenty or forty years ago.⁴

— Halford Mackinder, 1943

Does Sir Halford John Mackinder's geo-political thinking provide a suitable basis for examining and explaining the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1991—2005? Mackinder's Heartland Philosophy may be summarized as follows:

¹ As recorded in Harm J. de Blij, ed., *Systematic Political Geography*, Second edition, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1973).285-286. [From the Q & A after Mackinder's 1904 presentation at the Royal Geographical Society.]

² Halford John Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996), 176. In 1996, the National Defense University (NDU) republished several of Halford Mackinder's works as *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. These works include: "The Scope and Methods of Geography," Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 9, No. 3 (1887): 141-160 [hereafter cited as "Scope and Methods"]; "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal* 23, No. 4 (1904): 421-444 [hereafter cited as "Pivot"]; *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (London: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1919) [hereafter cited as *Ideals and Reality*]; and "The Round World and Winning the Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 21, No. 4 (July 1943): 595-605 [hereafter cited as "Round World"]. All page references to these works are found in the NDU re-publishing.

³ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 17.

⁴ Mackinder, "Round World," 198, 203.

- The Heartland possessed rich resources, interior lines (internal communication and transport facilitated by the railroad) and was inaccessible to seapower, making it a natural fortress.
- The “tenant” who controlled the Heartland would eventually have the capacity to dominate Asia by flinging its power from side to side.
- The unchanging heart of the Heartland was that geographic area east and southeast of the Caspian Sea. Formerly known as Turkestan, it includes Western China, Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—and the northern parts of Iran and Pakistan. This area was the geographic pivot upon which the Heartland Concept literally rested. Today, Uzbekistan is at its center.
- The Heartland Philosophy required balance and the long-view to create happiness:
 - A balance between the geo-communal view of man’s local interaction with and perception of geography (i.e., the “going concern” of civil society), and the geo-strategic view of a state’s understanding of, and interaction with, the Heartland (i.e., the “going concern” of international politics).
 - A long-view that re-viewed and understood the geo-communal and geo-strategic patterns of the past in order to pre-view the future if the pattern continued.

Where there was balance, there was a civilization worth living in, a place where citizens could render service to one another.
- Mackinder expected this philosophy to be applied to each new strategic era as a practical formula for understanding and examining global balance.

In re-visiting Mackinder’s thinking, this dissertation concludes that it is a living and comprehensive philosophy consisting of two mutually dependent perspectives. These perspectives—the geo-communal view of man’s local interaction with and perception of

geography (i.e., the “going concern” of civil society), and the geo-strategic view of a state’s understanding of, and interaction with, the Heartland (i.e., the “going concern” of international politics)—were meant to be applied in tandem at the beginning of a new strategic era. The analytic narrative that results from these perspectives, as discussed in the previous two chapters, demonstrates the suitability of Mackinder’s thinking as a basis for examining and explaining the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship from 1991 to 2005.

Described and understood as such, Mackinder’s Heartland Philosophy also generates several general hypotheses which further serve as both summary and illustration of Mackinder’s geo-political work as applied through the U.S.—Uzbekistan relationship; even as they point the way toward future refinement and research. Those hypotheses—including their discussion and resulting conclusions—follow below.

1. If the world is increasingly globalized, then a holistic approach and analysis is necessary.

Mackinder anticipated the globalized world in his 1904 presentation to the Royal Geographic Society. He told his audience that they lived in a “closed political system, and none the less that it will be one of world-wide scope. Every explosion of social forces, instead of being dissipated in a surrounding circuit of unknown space and barbaric chaos, will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political and economic organism of the world will be shattered in consequence.”⁵

While the twin tyrannies of geography and ignorance will always exist, they do not prevent events that happen “over there” from impacting us “here.” Senator Joe Lieberman acknowledged as much upon his January 2002 visit to Tashkent. September 11th, he said: “opened our eyes to the reality that what happens here in Central Asia, though it may be far from our shores, can

⁵ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 176.

nonetheless have the most immediate and direct effect on us...this is a critical part of the world, strategically, economically and politically.”⁶ If this is the case, then policy-makers should actively seek to understand and integrate the dual perspectives that Mackinder expects, abroad, and at home. As Mr. Spencer Wilkinson suggested during the question and answer period following Mackinder’s 1904 remarks:

“I myself can only wish that we had ministers who would give more time to studying their policy from the point of view that you cannot move any one piece without considering all the squares on the board. We are very much too apt to look at our policy as though it were cut up into water-tight compartments, each of which had no connection with the rest of the world, whereas it seems to me the great fact of today is that any movement which is made in one part of the world affects the whole of the international relations of the world.”⁷

In other words, Mackinder’s comprehensive approach and analysis is also a suitable basis for defining “geo-politics.” Geopolitics, this dissertation suggests, is the capacity to think globally about the interrelated nature of various going concerns—from a geo-communal and geo-strategic perspective—and then apply that thinking practically pursuant the grand strategy of a state, or non-state, actor.

2. If a new strategic era occurs, then the Heartland must be geographically re-envisioned and defined.

Geography is not static and changes with each new era, impacting strategy as a result.

Since Geography, in its broadest sense, is constantly changing, and since movement mirrors these changes, we dare not rely upon concepts of the past, but must be continuously on the alert to examine the changing geographical scene, and to interpret the impact of these changes in the formation of strategy. This is the approach through which we can genuinely understand geography’s influence upon strategy—an influence that we may try to ignore, but that will not ignore us.⁸

— Saul Bernard Cohen, 1963

⁶ Senator Joseph Lieberman, U.S. Senatorial Delegation Press Conference in Uzbekistan, 6 January 2002 (accessed 8 January 2002); available from

<http://www.usembassy.uz/home/index.aspx?&=&mid=218&overview=482>.

⁷ Blij, *Systematic Political Geography*, 282.

⁸ Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided* (New York: Random House, 1963), 87.

Mackinder sought principles that transcended particular periods of time precisely because of their practical relevance in each. Only then could a living formula exist “into which you could fit any political balance,”⁹ thus providing a “practical value” and “perspective” for understanding the “competing forces in current international politics.”¹⁰

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the Heartland’s primary tenant from 1865-1991, Russia, witnessed Central Asia become a “region” of five independent states. Obviously, we cannot know what Mackinder would have thought about this situation. We do know, however, that he would recognize the transition of strategic eras for what it was and would, consequently, try to understand the new geography and its impact on global balance.

We also know that the Uzbeks quickly grasped their 1991 reality, as they found any means they could to balance domestic, regional, and international politics pursuant the survival of their new state. They twisted and turned, talking with anyone relevant today to ensure their sovereignty tomorrow—from the United Tajik Organization to the Taliban, from the Russians to the Americans. They would find a way to balance the forces of the moment.

The Americans, under no such threat, made no such effort. They did not have to. They had won the Cold War. It was the unipolar moment and soon, era. There was seemingly no need to re-conceptualize geography and grand strategy, as a result (beyond focusing on Russia and its nuclear weapons). Accordingly, the existing foreign policy bureaucracy remained the same, organized as it always had been. As the “Post Cold War” era began, and continued, the U.S. engaged the Former Soviet Union space as just that, an East-West place of the past era that was very hard to “put” anywhere else in the pre-existing bureaucracy.

⁹ As recorded in de Blij, ed., *Systematic Political Geography*, Second edition, 285-286.

¹⁰ Mackinder, “Pivot,” 176.

As a result, a “Russia-First” policy de facto dominated. In fact, the U.S. interagency grouped the South Caucasus with Soviet Central Asia—leaving Afghanistan disconnected from Central Asia and any policy whatsoever—for no other reason than their common Soviet roots. By 1996, however, the Heartland Hinge was serving again as the “greatest natural fortress” for militant Islam, as its adherents spread heroin and terrorism to the world.

Afghanistan, of course, had been used by the U.S. according to a containment policy rooted in a two-dimensional understanding of Mackinder. If there had been any attempt to re-think the Heartland according to the political geography of the new era—understanding the important role Uzbekistan had to play—perhaps this evolution of events could have been avoided. Because democracies do not think strategically, however, this turn-of-events was probably inevitable.

3. If a new strategic era occurred, then Mackinder would look for a new fulcrum point of integrated states, or region, adjusting the Heartland Concept accordingly to achieve global balance.

Although this hypothesis, along with the next one, is impossible to prove, it is nonetheless quite reasonable. Mackinder’s 1919 expression of the Heartland—where he sought to balance German and Slav through an integrated zone of Eastern European states—provides the conceptual logic. Moreover, Mackinder’s 1943 expression of the Heartland states explicitly that Russia would combine with Europe and North America to balance China and India. There is only one place for that balance to take place: Central Asia. Given the fragile and fragmented status of Central Asia between 1991 and 2005 (not unlike Eastern Europe, 1919—1939), Mackinder would seek the same for Central Asia in 1991 as he did for Eastern Europe in 1919, and as he predicted in 1943.

4. If the new fulcrum-region were surrounded by competing powers, then Mackinder would focus on the political and geographic center of the in-between region to anchor the balance.

If Russia no longer dominated the entire Heartland, as was the case when the new strategic era began in 1991, then it was Mackinder's instinct to focus on the political and geographic center of the in-between region to anchor the balance. In 1919, that country was Poland.

It is a vital necessity that there should be a tier of independent states between Germany and Russia...The most important point of strategical significance in regard to these middle states of East Europe is that the most civilized of them, Poland and Bohemia, lie in the north, in the position most exposed to Prussian aggression. Securely independent the Polish and Bohemian nations cannot be, unless as the apex of a broad wedge of independence extending from the Adriatic and Black Seas to the Baltic; but seven independent, with a total of more than sixty million people, traversed by railways linking them securely with one another, and having access through the Adriatic, Black, and Baltic Seas with the ocean will together effectively balance the Germans of Prussia and Austria, and nothing less will suffice for that purpose.¹¹

In 1991, that country was Uzbekistan by sheer virtue of its geography—the only state contiguous to all the countries of Central Asia—and because of its population, natural resources and abiding identity.

5. If the heart of the Heartland were indeed Eurasia's security fulcrum, then it was in the self-interest of the relevant great powers to ensure that no one dominated the Heartland.

This logic is the foundation of Mackinder's Heartland Concept, as well as the Cold War policy of containment as seen in the actions of Russia and the United States from 1991-2005. During this period, Russia consistently welcomed back Uzbekistan, no matter what was said or done by Karimov in the meantime. A function of Russia's weakness and Uzbekistan's non-contiguity to Russia, both countries used each other during this time in the name of their contradictory goals—for Russia, to gain Central Asian influence through Uzbekistan, preventing other penetrations of the region, especially American; and for Uzbekistan, to maintain its *primus inter pares* status in Central Asia in the absence of other partners.

¹¹ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 111, 116-117.

The Americans, lacking any real interest in the region except for the potential energy reserves, had but one policy: “anti-monopoly.” Working only to preserve the “non-restoration” of the U.S.S.R., Central Asia’s importance was defined accordingly. While echoing Mackinder’s desire to prevent domination of the heartland, “anti-monopoly” was not a strategic concept designed to shape the future. It was, however, a good enough goal for the moment, occupying the day-to-day while ignoring tomorrow. Implicitly, and understandably (to some degree), the policy stated that there were other more pressing priorities besides Central Asia.

6. If a successful policy toward the Heartland were developed, it would depend upon the geo-strategic and geo-communal “going concerns” of the Heartland itself.

This is the one hypothesis that does not directly flow from Mackinder’s own work; it does, however, flow from his conceptual approach. In other words, chapters two, three and four examine and organize Mackinder’s own words in such a way that is simultaneously consistent with their intent and, arguably, more coherent. As a result, this dissertation divides Mackinder’s geo-political logic into the geo-communal view of man’s local interaction with and perception of geography (i.e., the “going concern” of civil society), and the geo-strategic of a state’s understanding of, and interaction with, the Heartland (i.e., the “going concern” of international politics).

By applying these mutually dependent perspectives to the Heartland itself—something that neither Mackinder, his critics, or U.S. policy-makers have ever done—this dissertation reveals different approaches that, by definition, are not used by Mackinder’s critics, or by U.S. policy-makers. Understood as such—with particular emphasis on the inclusion of the voices and worldview of the Uzbeks—this dissertation suggests that Mackinder’s geo-political thinking is

also a suitable basis for developing a regional policy that addresses individual states, as well as the surrounding powers.

7. If the geo-strategic component of a policy were developed, then this “going concern” would be rooted in the Heartland’s historic role in international politics, to include the geography and flow of present day threats.

To ignore the vital role that the heartland has played in international affairs is to beg history to repeat itself—something the U.S. has successfully encouraged, much to its own detriment. It is abundantly clear that because the U.S. failed to understand the intellectual roots of containment, it also failed to re-imagine Central Asia according to the new strategic era.

For example, one intelligence officer familiar with the region stated comfortably in 2005: “in three years, Uzbekistan will be the next Afghanistan.”¹² As chapters three and four detail, the U.S. is right on track to repeat the mistake of 1989 in Uzbekistan because democracies do not think strategically. To think strategically, the U.S. should provide linear extrapolations of Central Asia’s (and especially Uzbekistan’s) current going concerns and develop scenarios that reflect potential future combinations of those going concerns. This process should be the beginning of policy-making in the region.

8. If the geo-communal component of a policy were developed, then this “going concern” would be rooted in the Heartland’s historic interaction between man and his local environment and that interaction’s impact on present day notions of civil society, regionally and internationally.

What does the ordinary man want? ...It is for opportunity to realize what is in him, to live a life of ideas and of action for the realization of those ideas...he wishes for the glow of intelligent life, and incidentally for a recognition of his human dignity... That is precisely what the real freedom of men requires—*scope for a full life in their own locality.*¹³

¹² USG official, 2005.

¹³ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 132-3, 137. Mackinder had written seventeen years earlier that “rooted provincialism, rather than finished cosmopolitanism, is a source of the varied initiative without which liberty would lose half its significance” (*British Seas*, 15). [italics added]

This timeless desire takes place in every culture and country around the world. Yet, without an understanding of the local culture, U.S. policy often denies the very principles it purports to promote. For example, U.S. public diplomacy often speaks of “freedom” to the Muslim world. In the absence of a geo-communal perspective, however, this public diplomacy campaign has no effect on Muslim minds who do not understand “freedom” as the West does; instead they think in terms of such Quranic concepts as “justice” (as we do not).

In similar fashion, American development aid in Uzbekistan—also lacking the perspective of a geo-communal view—was hopelessly incapable of understanding, let alone respecting, the local culture. Focused on its own cultural concept of “civil society,” the U.S. could not come to grips with the basic realities of Uzbek culture: namely, religion and traditional social structures, from the role of the mahalla to the role of the elites. While looking past the pre-existing Uzbek culture, U.S.A.I.D. officials were doing “things for the [western] donor while having no impact on the [Uzbek] people... Washington would always say: ‘What have you done? Do something. Do something.’”¹⁴ Or as one Uzbek observed: “You [Americans] spend billions on ‘civil society,’ but nothing on economic development. ‘Democrat’ is now a slanderous word...but if you say you’re a ‘democrat,’ you’ll get money.”¹⁵

The U.S. inability to understand Uzbek culture, however, does more than damage its local reputation by spending money in an irrelevant manner. The absence of a geo-communal perspective of Uzbekistan among U.S. policy-makers clearly endangers their own geo-strategic understanding of Karimov’s regime—especially it’s potential to implode, or explode.

On the one hand, the U.S. still does not have any comprehensive understanding of, or systematic means of measuring, the traditional structures of authority found in the elite clans. As

¹⁴ U.S.A.I.D. official, Tashkent.

¹⁵ Abdummanob Polat, 16 May 2001, Washington, D.C.

a result, U.S. policy-makers are largely unaware of the “lose-lose” situation that Karimov and the clans have created for themselves. Under the guise of nationalism, the clans have preserved their capacity to divide and feed on the resources of the state. Karimov is not strong enough to take on the clans simultaneously to implement the economic reform necessary to provide for Uzbekistan’s future. Uzbekistan’s internal situation, in other words, will only continue to worsen, forcing, at some point, regime change.

If the geo-strategic of regime change takes place in Uzbekistan, it will more than likely come from within the structure of the clans because they feel that Karimov no longer serves their purposes. (For example, some elites felt that Uzbekistan’s long-term interests were not well-served by the international isolation and strategic partnership with Russia after Karimov’s crackdown at Andijan). As a result, for the first time, there is talk of a post-Karimov era from among the elites themselves. This implosion of Karimov’s power would probably shed the least blood, but not provide any immediate and substantive change.¹⁶

On the other hand, the absence of a geo-communal view also prevents U.S. policy-makers from understanding the potential for explosion; that is, a galvanized people who feel the principles of their culture have been violated. Mackinder thought that the desire for “human dignity” could be met if there was an opportunity “for a full life in [one’s] own locality.”¹⁷ For this to take place, good neighbors were needed. “It is for neighborliness that the world to-day calls aloud... Neighborliness or fraternal duty to those who are our fellow-dwellers, is the only

¹⁶ Various interviews. This movement within the clans might also push Karimov to accelerate the development of his own clan. As one Uzbek familiar with the clan structure wrote in 2004: “It is time for Karimov to think of creating his own clan made of trusted younger officials who will push away old elite to secure safety for his daughters. Karimov may think that his strategy to divide and rule by managing 2 big clans is dangerous for amateur successor and it is much safer to have just one strong team.” (Personal email to author).

¹⁷ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 137.

sure foundation of a happy citizenship.”¹⁸ A western articulation, to be sure, it is also an accurate description of what an ordinary Uzbek expects from the mahalla and the state.

At this point, a minimalist definition of “neighborliness” is a daily subsistence on tea and bread. If this most basic threshold is threatened, the traditionally very passive Uzbek people will take to the streets (as they often have when bread prices are increased). In short, if the government (Karimov) reaches a point where it cannot provide tea and bread for its citizens, then the absence of the other components of a “full life”—economic and educational opportunity without the threat of going to jail for taking one’s faith seriously—accelerate a terrible situation to a point beyond predictions.

9. If the geo-strategic and the geo-communal were effectively integrated into a policy, then that policy will require the promotion of three issues—religion, region and economics—that bridge the geo-strategic and the geo-communal.

Religion, region and economics are each an issue of identity whose success depends upon being rooted in one another. Tolerant Islam gains respect by respecting people of other faiths; the region’s countries are able to provide water, energy and food for their people by working together; and an integrated regional economy creates the jobs necessary for the individual human dignity that Islam demands. In other words, these geo-communal issues of self-perception, self-worth and dignity carry geo-strategic implications. Understood correctly, these issues increase mutual identity and therefore enhance mutual stability. On the other hand, these same issues can just as easily act as vectors of instability (as witnessed in the rise of Hizb ut-Tahrir).

9a. Religion: If the Heartland’s civil society is rooted in a tolerant Muslim culture, then a robust pluralism, consistent with the culture, is required for social stability.

Most America policy-makers simply do not grasp this reality.

¹⁸ Ibid., 145.

The sweet dream of American political thought—reborn in each generation, it seems—is that cultural factors like religion will shrink into insignificance as blessed pragmatism finally comes into its own...It is an oft-repeated truism that democratic capitalist states do not make war on other democratic capitalist states in the pursuit of political or economic power. This can be expanded to include religion: societies in which there is freedom of religion do not make religious war on other religiously free societies. It must be stressed, though, that the unit of comparison here is not the state but the society. But how does a state engage a society about the society's religion? State-to-state diplomacy, even as it touches upon religion, is well enough understood. Informal society-to-society diplomacy or "public diplomacy" is equally well understood; religious delegations undertaking people-to-people missions are increasingly familiar. But asymmetrical, state-to-society diplomacy with religious reform as its target is virtually without precedent in the modern West.¹⁹

Taught not to speak of religion and politics in polite company, American foreign policy elites are now forced to understand a part of the world where religion is politics (especially among the people). This process has not been easy or fun. And it certainly has not been successful.

In Uzbekistan, "to be Uzbek is to be Muslim." Islam permeates the culture, generally according to the rich and historic roots of tolerance and respect that one experiences in every Uzbek home. American engagement of this country cannot help but begin with this simple fact, but U.S. policy has consistently ignored the fundamental tenets of Uzbekistan's pre-existing civil society.

It is in the American self-interest to better understand Muslim culture and Islamic beliefs, given our post September 11th world. In Uzbekistan, as one Uzbek official put it, there is the chance for "geo-cultural engagement," establishing a model of U.S.—Muslim relations to share with the world.²⁰ Islam is a natural ally, especially in Uzbekistan, the cradle of tolerance and respect. But our "cultural traditions" prevent us from recognizing those of others.²¹ But what programs have been established to engage in such comprehensive manner? There are none.

¹⁹ Jack Miles, "Religion and American Foreign Policy," *Survival* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 25, 32-3.

²⁰ Uzbek official.

²¹ Zeyno Baran, DFI Conference, 26 May 2004, Washington, D.C.

The United States is “always on transmit. We’re not very good at listening...this battle is theological and ideological, but we’re not outfitted to fight that kind of war, conceptually or organizationally.”²²

Islam is necessarily the foundation for Heartland and Uzbek stability. Yet the American response is to ignore this reality while the Uzbek answer is to crack-down on its extremist form.

9b. Region: If the Heartland’s independent states cannot depend on anyone but themselves, then it is in their self-interest to become more neighborly.

There have been two major problems in developing the region of Central Asia. First among them is the U.S. inability to determine what the region is. From the U.S. Congress to the U.S. State Department, Central Asia has been grouped with the South Caucasus as a part of the East-West context, while leaving Afghanistan out of that construct (Afghanistan is traditionally grouped with Pakistan and South Asia). As a result, there have been too few projects that insist on regional cooperation among the *six* countries of Central Asia. The sole exception to this has been CENTCOM, which, by definition, takes a regional approach in its interactions. (The Department of State did, however, group “Central Asia”—the five former Soviet republics—with South Asia, which includes Afghanistan, at the end of 2005).

The second problem has been the Central Asians, especially Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has consistently done what it wants to do with its foreign and economic policy, making little to no effort to coordinate with its neighbors, even as it has promoted protectionist trade policies that hurt itself and the region. Nonetheless, it is in everyone’s interest in and around the region to have a cohesive group of integrated states that is geo-strategically strong enough to absorb the competing influences of the surrounding powers, yet geo-communally strong enough to deny internal subversion through a robust and respectful Islam.

²² U.S. official, 6 October 2004.

A regional approach of integrated bilateral strategies is needed to produce such balance. Unfortunately, this kind of thinking has not yet taken hold in Washington. “Lacking a regional vision and coordinating structures based on such a vision, Washington has allocated its resources mechanically and often inadequately...the geographical delineations used by the U.S. government...[impede] the development of a coherent Central Asia policy.”²³ “The West [needs] a strategy that [considers] the region as a whole rather than as a series of local problems.”²⁴ “More precisely, the United States should consider two strategies: promoting a larger vision of regionalism and exploring possible ways to reconcile democracy and Islam.”²⁵

9c. Economics: If there is no local economic opportunity—between and among the regions within each of the Heartland’s states, and between and among the Heartland states themselves—then young men will agitate for change.

Uzbekistan, despite its natural riches, cannot provide for its people. This unfortunate situation, as discussed in chapter four, is the direct result of a Karimov-controlled patronage system rooted in balancing the various and competing elites. It is these forces that feed from Karimov’s hand while the country starves. These clans are the real security threat, more so than HT. While other authoritarian countries in the region grow their GNP at 9% per year, Uzbekistan drives itself into the ground. As Mackinder reminds us:

Nationalist movements are based on the restlessness of intelligent young men who wish for scope to live the life of ideas and to be among those who “can” because they are allowed to do...Are you quite sure that the gist of the demand for Home Rule in Ireland, and in a less degree in Scotland, does not come mainly from young men who are agitating, thought they do not fully realize it, for equality of opportunity rather than against the assumed wickedness of England?²⁶

And as the *Economist* confirms:

²³ S. Frederick Starr, “A Partnership for Central Asia,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 (July/August 2005), 167.

²⁴ Rashid, *Jihad*, 232.

²⁵ Charles William Maynes, “America Discovers Central Asia,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2003), 131.

²⁶ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 133-4.

Thousands of young men in this volatile region may be ready to join a rebellion that holds out the promise of a government less oppressive and incompetent than the present one—although few of Central Asia’s traditionally moderate Muslims share the [Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan’s] passion to build an Islamic state.²⁷

Ordinary Uzbeks do not seek human rights and ballot-box democracy. They seek tea and bread; they want jobs and justice. And if they do not receive it, they will turn to any organization capable of providing those two essential elements. While the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) is completely alien to Uzbek culture, its message is not. HT’s popularity continues to rise because of its capacity to speak to local issues in the language of Islam; that is, the language of social justice.

10. If the center state of the Heartland possesses one-third of the population and is the only state touching each of the Heartland’s members, then that state is necessarily the political and economic focus of any policy.

Central Asia’s geography is quite clear: If you literally want to move from one destination to another—as a pipeline, a terrorist, or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization—you need Uzbekistan. It is impossible to avoid Uzbekistan as *primus inter pares* in Central Asia. Although, in Mackinder’s words, it merely possesses the “highest nodality,”²⁸ the success or failure of a regional strategy begins and ends with Uzbekistan. It is the heart of the heartland.

11. If democracies do not think strategically, then the U.S. will always have difficulty understanding and engaging the Heartland.

There is no US policy toward Central Asia.²⁹

— Henry Kissinger, 1993

²⁷ “Central Asia: A New Holy War,” *Economist*, 4 September 1999 (accessed 15 October 1999); available from LexisNexis.

²⁸ Mackinder, *British Seas*, 331.

²⁹ Henry Kissinger, presentation at University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, 1993 (according to one eyewitness).

[In 2002] U.S. leaders and those from other Western governments talked a great deal about the importance of increased engagement with the Central Asian states...In the end, however, this proved to be little more than talk.³⁰

— Martha Brill Olcott, 2005

Chapters three and four demonstrate the lack of both a geo-communal and geo-strategic perspective, resulting in an essentially ineffective policy toward the region, and Uzbekistan in particular. Worse, America still sees no need to re-conceptualize, let alone consistently address, the heartland along these lines. Not until Uzbekistan becomes the Afghanistan of the 1990s, will American policy-makers come up with a comprehensive—and, by definition, reactive—policy toward Central Asia, necessarily centered on Uzbekistan. In this regard, the U.S. and Uzbekistan are consistent. The former does not think strategically, the latter does, as both act according to deep patterns of predictability.

Conclusion

Why should the United States ... be concerned with an area that [is] of so little importance to us...an area in which we have relatively minor economic relations, whether of trade or of competition, an area that has never produced a political or military power that could seriously endanger us?

Theoretically there was one basis on which security might have been established in this region of small states—namely the maintenance ... by the great powers bordering it of a large buffer zone against one another ... In contrast ...the United States [was] geographically and psychologically so remote that [it] gradually lost interest ... That the new politico-geographic system ... would inevitably face great difficulties was certainly not unknown to the statesmen who took part in its establishment. Just because it was almost completely new, they recognized that for a long time it would suffer the insecurity of immaturity. But they were dealing with a part of the world that had never known political security, that had never developed mature, well established states loyally accepted by the peoples included in them.

Stability...cannot be achieved by absorption from the outside, whether from west or from east, nor by the reestablishment of free but hopelessly small units, but only by integration into a free association of free peoples, capable of providing a major element of its own self-defense. Such an

³⁰ Martha Brill Olcott, *Central Asia's Second Chance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 173.

organization within this area is not in conflict with plans for a larger-scale organization of the states of Europe, or of the world, but on the contrary would be supplementary to it.³¹

As Mackinder had written twenty-five years before him, Richard Hartshorne had a 1944 vision for Eastern Europe and the role the United State could play in securing that future. It was not to be, however, just as it was not to be for U.S.—Uzbek relations from 1991 to 2005.

Strategic eras come and go. There will be, undoubtedly, another opportunity for the United States to engage Uzbekistan and Central Asia with such promise, and for Uzbekistan and Central Asia to engage the United States. After all: “If it took 70 years of criminal behavior to get in, it stands to reason that it will take 70 years to get out.”³² Indeed, it is fair to suggest that, irrespective of U.S. policy, geography determines foreign policy in Central Asia. “All the precedents of history indicate that in the long run one of two things must happen to them: they will be forcibly subjected to either Russia or China, or they will voluntarily gravitate toward either Russia or China.”³³ There is no reason to think—and certainly no U.S. policy to suggest—otherwise.

Still, Mackinder had a vision for the heartland. He sought to weld together “the West and the East, [so that we might] permanently penetrate the Heartland with oceanic freedom.”³⁴ It is a vision consistent with the American idea of democracy. “The U.S. position is very understandable. Any ideology has a propensity to spread its fundamentals—it is the nature of an ideology. The United States cannot be a civilization and a superpower if it does not try to spread

³¹ Richard Hartshorne, “The United States and the “Shatter Zone” of Europe,” in *Compass of the World: A Symposium on Political Geography*, ed. Hans W. Weigert and Vilhjalmur Stefansson (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944), 203-214.

³² Richard Armitage, Former Ambassador to the NIS for Technical and Humanitarian Assistance, Rosslyn, VA, 17 February 2000.

³³ Owen Lattimore, “The Inland Crossroads of Asia,” in *Compass of the World: A Symposium on Political Geography*, ed. Hans W. Weigert and Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Vilhjalmur (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944), 387.

³⁴ Mackinder, *Ideals and Reality*, 122.

its ideas, the freedoms of its ideology.”³⁵ Yet the application of that ideology without a geo-strategic and geo-communal understanding of the heartland and its most significant state almost prohibits that ideology’s progress.

The horse-men came for a thousand years out of China through Central Asia penetrating both the Iranian plateau to the Middle East as well as the lowland gap between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea to Europe. In the process they forced the “West,” such as it was, to defend itself; that is, to become the West and the home of the worst political system except for all the rest: democracy. Today, the West proceeds east across the Eurasian frontier to establish the empire of an idea—namely, that people can choose a system of government for themselves that is consistent with their culture and the rule of law.

If this is the goal of the West—that is, the continued geo-political vision of Mackinder—then there will have to be a vision of geo-communal values and geo-strategic balance that Mackinder describes in his Heartland Philosophy. Eventually, Uzbekistan must be the “reliable forepost”³⁶ of this vision.

The people of Uzbekistan and Central Asia will inevitably make the choice that their ancient proverb asks—to hold onto the sparrow of today’s misery, or chase the eagle of tomorrow’s promise. So too must the West make a choice in its understanding of Mackinder. It can hold onto the petrified geo-strategic construct of yester-century, or, as originally intended, it can re-apply his geo-political thinking—with its geo-communal and geo-strategic perspectives—according to the new strategic era. In other words, the West should acknowledge, deepen, and expand Mackinder’s geo-political thinking as a suitable basis for examining and explaining its interaction with Uzbekistan, Central Asia, and Eurasia in the 21st century.

³⁵ Sodyq Safaev, Uzbek Ambassador to the U.S., 4 November 1999, Washington, D.C.

³⁶ George Dobson, *Russia’s Railway Advance into Central Asia: Notes of a Journey from St. Petersburg to Samarkand* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1890), 425.

Kant once wrote “We understand a map best when we are able to draw it out for ourselves.”³⁷
By re-visiting the geopolitical thinking of Sir Halford John Mackinder this dissertation enables us to better understand, and plan for, the balance that the heartland demands.

³⁷ As quoted in J. A. May, *Kant's Concept of Geography*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 133.

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Voll, John. Professor of Islamic History, Georgetown University. 15 January

Zinni, Anthony. Commanding General, Central Command. 7 March

Taylor, William. Ambassador for the Coordination of U.S. Government Assistance to the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union. 10 March

Thompson, Mark. Department of State/Counterterrorism Office 2 October

Herbst, John. US Ambassador to Uzbekistan. 20 October

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Taft, Dorothy. Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Congress Helsinki Commission. 7 January

Oaks, Michael. Senior Analyst, U.S. Congress Helsinki Commission. 11 January

2004

Starr, Jeffrey. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Eurasia. 15 June

2005

Meppen, Kurt. Former Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary Of Defense for Eurasia. 2 September

Zinni, Anthony. Retired General, USMC. 15 September

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Washington, D.C.

Safaev, Sodyq. Uzbek Ambassador to the U.S., Washington, D.C. 4 November

Abdullaev, Sherzod M. Deputy Chief of Mission, Uzbekistan Embassy. 4 November

Abdumannob, Polat. Chairman Human Rights Council of Uzbekistan, 4 November
Washington, D.C.

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Pandya, Amit. Policy & Planning Staff, Department of State, 16 February
Washington, D.C.

Birsner, Edward P. Country Officer, Uzbekistan, Department of State, 16 February
Washington, D.C. 26 October

Talwar, Puneer. Policy & Planning Staff, Department of State, 16 February
Washington, D.C.

Safaev, Sodyq. Uzbek Ambassador to the U.S., Washington, D.C. 17 February, 10 July
26 October

Azamatov, Alisher. First Secretary for Economics, Uzbekistan Embassy 17 February
Washington, D.C.

Armitage, Richard. Former Ambassador to the NIS for Technical and 17 February
Humanitarian Assistance, Washington, D.C.

Elkind, Jonathan. Director for Russian, Ukrainian, and Eurasian Affairs, 17 February
The National Security Council, Washington, D.C. 23 March

Brzezinski, Mark F. Director Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia, 17 February
The National Security Council, Washington, D.C.

Soumbadze, David. Deputy Chief of Mission, Georgian Embassy, Washington, D.C.	17 February 22 March
Gold, Richard. Deputy Director, Central Asia & the Caucasus, U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, D.C.	18 February
Dirks, Delphia. Country Officer, Uzbekistan, U.S.A.I.D. Washington, D.C.	18 February
Levin, Joel. Director, NGO Support Programs, Central Asia Counterpart International, Washington, D.C.	18 February
Bishop, Edward. Pentagon Liaison for Central Command, the Pentagon.	22 March
Lynch, Michael, Pentagon Liaison for European Command the Pentagon.	22 March
Kirakossian, Arman. Armenian Ambassador to the U.S., Washington, D.C.	22 March
Kiesling, Brady. Deputy Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	23 March
Bryza, Matthew J. Senior Advisor, Office of the Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State on Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	23 March
Squire, Margo. Director, Democratic Initiatives, Office of Coordinator of NIS Assistance, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	23 March
Kiem, Ted. Director, Civil Society, Office of Coordinator of NIS Assistance, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	23 March
Hefright, Brook. Country Officer, Georgia, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	23 March
Watters, Kate. Director of Programs, Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia, Washington, D.C.	23 March
Rocca, Christina B. Professional Staff Member, Office of Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), Washington, D.C.	24 March 10 July
Pashayev, Hafiz M. Azeri Ambassador to the U.S., Washington, D.C.	24 March
Taghi-Zadeh, Tahir T. First Secretary (Political), Embassy of	24 March

Azerbaijan, Washington, D.C.

*Note: My May 2000 interviews in the South Caucasus (see below) resulted from an earlier form of the dissertation when I was considering the role of GUUAM—Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. These interviews have proven extremely useful for me in my present work. I include them here because they provided a better understanding of the former Soviet South as a “space;” of the South’s two sub-regions, Caucasus and Central Asia, in relationship to one another; their inter-related security issues; and their relationship to the U.S. in a pre-9-11 context.

Oakley, Nikolos. Deputy Director, Horizonti, Tbilisi, Georgia. (repeated interviews)	12 May
Tsereteli, Maka. Deputy Head of Policy Department, Ministry of the Environment, Tbilisi, Georgia.	12 May
Nino Chkhobadze, Minister of the Environment, Tbilisi, Georgia	12, 13, 30 May
Todua, Lia. Division Head, International Programs, Ministry of the Environment, Tbilisi, Georgia.	12 May
Lomaia, Alexander. Country Director, Georgia, The Eurasia Foundation, Tbilisi Georgia.	12 May
Kirvalidze, Nato. Executive Director, Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus, Tbilisi, Georgia.	12 May
Rondeli, Alexander. Director, Foreign Policy and Analysis Center, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tbilisi, Georgia.	13, 29 May
Vashakmadze, Giorgi. Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee On the Eurasian Corridor (Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline), Tbilisi, Georgia.	13 May
Bashirov, Elchin. U.S./Canada Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baku, Azerbaijan.	15, 17 May
Amirbekov, Elchin O. Director, International and Regional Security Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baku, Azerbaijan.	15 May
Khasyev, Kamil. Director, Political-Military Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baku, Azerbaijan.	15 May
Norberg, Derek. Country Director, Azerbaijan, The Eurasia Foundation, Baku, Azerbaijan.	16 May
Safar-zadeh, Enver. Environmental Specialist/Trainer, Initiative for	16, 18 May

Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia (ISAR), Baku, Azerbaijan.	
Rundquist, Vicki L. Second Political Secretary, U.S. Embassy, Baku, Azerbaijan.	17 May
Szadek, Stephen A. Supervisory General Development Officer, U.S.A.I.D., U.S. Embassy, Baku, Azerbaijan.	17 May
McKinny, William D. Country Coordinator, U.S.A.I.D., U.S. Embassy, Baku, Azerbaijan.	17 May
Biondich, Mitchell S. Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy, Baku, Azerbaijan.	17 May
Sulthansoy, Chinghiz. Executive Director of the Azerbaijan Press Club, Baku, Azerbaijan.	18 May
Perlow, Kim. Country Director, Azerbaijan, ISAR, Baku, Azerbaijan.	18 May
Turner, Tim. Programme Coordinator, Caspian Environment Programme United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Baku, Azerbaijan.	18 May
Zhugarov, Tevfik. Former Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Baku, Azerbaijan.	18 May
Akhundov, Bakhtiyar. Administrative Manager, UNOCAL Baku, Azerbaijan.	19 May
Huseynov, Rauf. Deputy Chief, Foreign Relations Department, & Presidential Translator, Office of the President, Baku, Azerbaijan.	19 May
Muradov, Bakhtiyar. Regional Coordinating Officer, UNDP, Caspian Environment Programme, Baku, Azerbaijan.	19 May
Sigler, J. Michael. Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy, Yerevan, Armenia.	22, 23 May
Grigorian, Alexander. Senior Analyst, Center for International and National Studies, Yerevan, Armenia.	22, 25 May
Zardaryan, Ukrtich H. Senior Analyst, Center for International and National Studies, Yerevan, Armenia.	22, 25 May
Barseghyan, Mihran. Publisher, Macmillan, Yerevan, Armenia. (repeated interviews, 22-26 May) Yerevan, Armenia	23 May
Wickberg, Paul. Political Officer, U.S. Embassy, Yerevan, Armenia.	23 May

Tauber, Mark. Political/Economic Counselor, U.S. Embassy, Yerevan, Armenia.	23 May
Boyle, Erik. Catholic Relief Services, Yerevan, Armenia.	24 May
Bayandour, Anahit. Co-Chair of the Armenian Committee of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Yerevan, Armenia.	24 May
Tsitsos, Dianne C. Mission Director, U.S.A.I.D., U.S. Embassy, Yerevan, Armenia.	24 May
Berns, Deborah. Democracy Officer, U.S. Embassy, Yerevan, Armenia.	24 May
Shahinian, Gulnara. Programme Officer, International Organization Of Migration, Yerevan, Armenia.	24 May
Sarkissian, Gegham. National Democratic Institute, Program Director, Yerevan, Armenia.	25 May
Aivazian, Armen M. Senior Researcher, Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia.	25 May
Ararktsian, Babken. Former Speaker of Armenian Parliament, Yerevan, Armenia.	25 May
Papian, Simon. Armenian Deputy Minister for Nature Protection, Yerevan, Armenia.	26 May
Darbinyan, Nune. Director, International Cooperation Department, Armenian Ministry for Nature Protection, Yerevan, Armenia.	26 May
Shugarian, Rouben. Deputy Foreign Minister, Yerevan, Armenia.	26 May
Shahnazarian, David. Former Armenian Minister for National Security, Chairman of the Democratic National Party, Yerevan, Armenia.	26 May
Mnashakanian, Zorab. Director, Foreign Affairs, Office of the President, Yerevan, Armenia.	26 May
Tevzadze, David. Minister of Defense, Tbilisi, Georgia.	28 May
Naneishvili, Michael. Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, Tbilisi, Georgia.	29 May
Nodia, Ghia. Chairman, The Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy	30 May

And Development, Tbilisi, Georgia.	
Bakradze, David. Director, Disarmament and Arms Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tbilisi, Georgia.	30 May
Maisuradze, Alexander. Second Secretary, Disarmament and Arms Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tbilisi, Georgia.	30 May
Melikadze, Nikoloz. Director, The Strategic Research Center, Tbilisi, Georgia.	30 May
Kartozia, Alexander. Minister of Education, Tbilisi, Georgia.	30 May
Newcomb, Tom. Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy, Tbilisi, Georgia.	31 May
Remler, Philip. Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy, Tbilisi, Georgia.	31 May
Clark, Sandra. Political-Economic Chief, U.S. Embassy, Tbilisi, Georgia.	31 May
Cheever, Francis. Political-Economic Officer, U.S. Embassy, Tbilisi, Georgia.	31 May
Chkonia, Irakli. Senior Assistant to the Speaker of the Parliament for International Relations, Tbilisi, Georgia.	31 May
Schutte, John Paul. Second Secretary, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan (repeated, daily interviews).	24 August – 4 September
Karimov, Furkat. Director, Medical Diagnostic Services Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	23 August.
Ahmedov, Alexandr. America Desk, Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	25, 29 August
Abdullaev, Sherzod M. Senior Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	25, 29 August
Minovarov, Shoazim. First Deputy of Chairman, Cabinet of Ministers' Committee on Religious Affairs, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	28 August 4 September
Gulamov, Kadyr. Commandant of the Uzbek War College, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	28 August
Karimova, Alla. Head of UN & International Political Organizations Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	29 August

Brand, Matthew. Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	31 August
Akhmedov, Durbek K. Tashkent State Economic University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	31 August
Presel, Joseph. U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	3 September
Aripov, Eldor. Analyst, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	4 September
Nurullaeva, Shafoat. Analyst, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	4 September
Azamat, Seitov. Analyst, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	4 September
Badalgaev, Alisher. Analyst, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	4 September
Muzafarov, Damir. Analyst, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	4 September
Childers, Al. CENTCOM liaison to the Pentagon, the Pentagon.	25 October
Burke, Thom W. Central Asia Desk Officer, Joint Staff, the Pentagon.	25 October
Bibbins, Nicole. Special Assistant to the US Ambassador-at-Large For Counterterrorism, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	25 October
Cooper, Laura K. Policy Planning Officer, Office of Counterterrorism, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	25 October
Olcott, Martha Brill. Senior Carnegie Fellow, Washington, D.C.	25 October
Hastings, Tom. Office of Counterterrorism, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	25 October
Polat, Abdumannob. Chairman Human Rights Council of Uzbekistan, Washington, D.C.	25 October
Bond, Clifford G. Director, Office of Caucasus and Central Asian Affairs, Department of State, Washington, D.C.	26 October

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Tom Greenwood, USMC Colonel, The National Security Council	1 February
Sodyq Safaev, Uzbek Ambassador the US	2 February
Polat, Abdummanob. Human Rights Council of Uzbekistan, Washington, D.C.	16 May
Ahmedov, Alexandr. Consular Officer, Embassy of Uzbekistan	16 May 20 December
Ishankhovdjaev, Ulegbek. Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Uzbekistan, Washington, D.C.	16 May 20 December
Presel, Joseph. Former U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Newport, Rhode Island.	25 July
Safaev, Sodyq. Deputy Foreign Minister, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	6,8 September
Penner, Richard. Country Director, World Concern, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	7, 19 September
Duggleby, Robert. Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	10, 20 September
Burkehalter, Ted. Political Officer, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	10 September
Davis, Catherine. BBC Reporter, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	11 September
Gulamov, Kadyr. Minister of Defense, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	11 September
Farrell, Jannice. Director of BBC Monitoring Unit, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 September
Abdullaev, Sherzod. Senior Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 September
Alimov, Ravshan M. Director, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 September
Aripov, Eldor. Analyst, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 September
Timcke, Michael. Honorary South African Consul, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	14 September

Berdze, Colonel. Commander Uzbek Special Forces, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	14 September
Sayfullin, Rafik. School of Advanced Strategy and Analysis, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	18 September
Kayumov, Akmal. Deputy Minister of Defense for International Affairs, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	20 September
Herbst, John. U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	20 September
Weldon, Curt. U.S. Congressman, St. Davids, Pennsylvania.	3 December
Bibbins, Nicole. Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Global Affairs, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.	19 December
Kramer, David. Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Global Affairs, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.	19 December
Baccam, Titi. Uzbekistan Desk Officer, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.	19 December
Sibilla, Christopher. Deputy Director, Bilateral Affairs, Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.	19 December
Davis, Patricia. Central Asia Desk Officer, Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.	19 December
Farkas, Evelyn. Professional Staff Member, Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C.	19 December
DeBobes, Rick. Professional Staff Member, Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C.	19 December

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Bukharbayeva, Galima. Reporter, Institute for War & Peace Reporting, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	24 January 5 June
Burkehalter, Ted. Human Rights Officer, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	24, 29 January 30 May
Memmot, Larry. Economics Officer, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent,	24, 29 January

Uzbekistan.	4 June
Davis, Catherine. BBC Reporter, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	25 January
Safaev, Sodyq. Deputy Foreign Minister, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	26 January 10 June
Miruamilov, Dilmorod. First Secretary, America Desk, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	29 January
Abramson, David. Special Fellow, Office of International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.	20 March
Ahmedov, Alexandr. Consular Officer, Uzbekistan Embassy, Washington, D.C.	22 March 19 December
Ishankhovdjaev, Ulegbek Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Uzbekistan, Washington, D.C.	22 March 15 October 19 December
Abduvakhitov, Abdujabar .Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, Washington, D.C.	22 March
Hill, Kent. Assistant Administrator, U.S. A.I.D., Europe & Eurasia, Washington, D.C.	25 April
Steele, Gloria. Director, Central Asia, U.S. A.I.D., Washington, D.C.	25 April
Patterson, David S. Lieutenant Colonel, J-5 Action Officer for Central Asia, The Pentagon.	26 April
Brady, Thomas. Professional staff member, office of Senator Sam Brownback, Washington, D.C.	26 April 26 June 15 October
Wolff, Jay. U.S. Army National Security Fellow, Office of Senator Sam Brownback, Washington, D.C.	26 April 26 June 15 October
Thiliveris, Thomas. U.S. Army Major, Security Officer, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	27 May
Achmedov, Durbeck. Economics Professor, Tashkent State University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	28 May 11 June
Abduvakhitov, Abdujabar. President, Westminster International	29 May

University in Tashkent, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	5 June
Goggin, Jim. U.S. A.I.D. Country Director, Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	2 June 11 June
Farrell, Bill. Program Officer, U.S. A.I.D., Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	2 June 11 June
Brink, Jennifer. Program Officer, U.S. A.I.D., Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	2 June
Smith, Adam. Program Officer, EastWest Institute, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	3 June
Farrell, Janice. Director, BBC Regional Monitoring Unit, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	4 June
Penner, Richard. Country Director, World Concern, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	4 June
Gulamov, Hundamir. Vice Rector for International Relations, National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	5 June
Aziz, Tatibaev. Chairman, History Department, National University Of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	5 June
Kholliev, Aziz. History Professor, National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	5 June
Djamshed, Fayazov. Ph.D. Candidate, National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	5 June
Timcke, Michael. Honorary Consul, South Africa, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	6 June
Anderson, Michael. Danish news reporter, Tashkent, Uzbekistan	6 June
Anderson, Wendy. British lecturer at the University of World Economy And Diplomacy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	6 June
Minovarov, Shoazim. Chief of Staff, Cabinet Religious Affairs Committee, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	7 June
Sayfullin, Rafik. School of Advanced Strategy and Analysis, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	7 June
Rotar, Igor. Keston News Reporter, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	10 June

O’Neil, Molly. Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	10 June
Murat Zakhidov, President, Human Rights Organization, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	11 June
Liverman, Jeff. President, Central Asia Free Exchange, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	11 June
Hall, Jim. Chairman of the Board, Central Asia Free Exchange, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	11 June
Davis, Catherine. BBC Reporter, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 June
Kadirov, Rahmjon. Vice Rector, Institute for Strategic & Regional Studies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 June
Tschenkel, Sheila. U.S. Treasury Department Advisor to the Uzbek Ministry of Finance, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	13 June
Abdullaev, Sherzod. Senior Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	13 June
Bergne, Paul. Former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	15 June
Bingham, Christopher. British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	15 June
Jianping, Wang. Deputy Director of Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia Institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China.	July
Pascoe, Lynn. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asia, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.	25 July
Ricardel, Mira. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Eurasia, the Pentagon.	26 July
Brand, Matt. Former Defense Attache to the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan, Washington, D.C.	14 October
Starr, Jeffrey. Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Eurasia Office of the Secretary of Defense/Special Operations/LIC	19 December
Baccam, Titi. Uzbekistan Desk Officer, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.	19 December

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Abdulaziz Komilov, Uzbek Ambassador to the United States, Washington, D.C.	19 February
Timcke, Michael. Honorary Consul, South Africa, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	5 April
McKane, John. Political officer, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	6 April
Gulamov, Kadyr. Minister of Defense, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	7 April
Abdullaev, Sherzod. Special Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	8 April
Bukharbayeva, Bagila. Associated Press, Regional Representative, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	10 April
Joann Hale, U.S.A.I.D. Mission Director, Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 April
Stoddard, Rick. U.S.A.I.D. Program Officer, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	12 April
Recht, Linda. Economics Officer, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan	12 April
Bukharbayeva, Galima. Director, Institute for War & Peace Reporting, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	14 April
Achmedov, Durbeck. Tashkent State University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	14 April
Zhuherrin Husdinitov, 2004 Special Advisor to the President for Religion, And, Rector of Islamic State University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	15 April
Khassanoff, Ulugbeck. Professor, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	15 April
Purnell, John. U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.	15 April
Polat, Abdumannob. Human Rights Council of Uzbekistan, Washington, D.C.	24 August
USAID Mission Director, Joann Hale	31 August

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Sherzod Abdullaev, political officer, Uzbek Embassy, Washington, D.C.	4 March
Sylvia R. Curran, U.S. Embassy, Tashkent	13 October
Rick Stoddard, U.S. Agency for International Development, Tashkent.	15 October
David Hunsicker, U.S. Agency for International Development, Tashkent.	15 October
Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, first Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, New York City.	26 October
James F. Collins, Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States from 1994-1997, U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation from 1997-2001, Washington, D.C.	1 December