

UZBEKISTAN: 2 YEARS AFTER ANDIJON



May 18, 2007

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

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The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 56 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

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Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held at 10:14 a.m.. in room 1100 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC, Fred L. Turner, Chief of Staff, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, moderating.

Panelists present: Fred L. Turner, Chief of Staff, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Robert Templer, Director, Asia Program, International Crisis Group; Olga Oliker, Senior International Policy Analyst, The Rand Corporation; and Daniel Kimmage, Central Asia Analyst, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Mr. TURNER. Can I suggest to everybody that we move up a little bit? I don't think it makes sense for us to wait for the room to fill. So why don't we just fill in, even in front of the dais right here? Yes, fill it up right here that way we don't have to scream to one another.

Yes, there's room up here. But why don't we go ahead and get started? And thank you for coming to this briefing this morning on Uzbekistan. The Helsinki Commission, of which I'm now the Staff Director, has held a series of hearings and briefings on Uzbekistan over the years. Our event today is particularly timely, in my view, as this week marked the second anniversary of Andijon, which, I'm sure, we're all aware of.

The shooting of hundreds of people in Andijon in May 2005 has had a profound impact on Uzbekistan. Even prior to that tragedy, Uzbekistan had no legal opposition and tightly controlled media. Since then, things have gotten only worse.

Andijon may have had an even greater impact on Uzbek-U.S. relations. Bilateral ties are in such deep a freeze right now that people sometimes forget just how eagerly President Karimov cultivated Washington during the 1990s and the early years of this decade.

Yesterday our military base was closed. Almost all U.S.-based democracy promoting organizations have been expelled. And Uzbek media accused the United States of seeking to orchestrate a regime change through a so-called color revolution. Meanwhile, Russia and China are successfully courting Tashkent on a daily basis.

The new chairman of the Helsinki Commission, Congressman Alcee Hastings, has been to Uzbekistan several times, most recently during his tenure as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. While he was there, he met with President Karimov in a meeting that lasted several hours.

And Chairman Hastings had a very candid visit with President Karimov. They each gave their candid assessment of where the U.S.-Uzbek relationship was and where it might go in the future.

So as I said, I think we're all aware of the situation today in Uzbekistan. And yet we wonder whether there is not a way to reach out to Tashkent.

For 2 years we've talked past each other in a sense when we have spoken at all. And the question becomes can disengagement help improve the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. Are we in a better place today than we were 2 years ago? Are the people in Tashkent and other areas of Uzbekistan better off?

I know we're all curious to hear from our distinguished panel today, to hear their views on whether or not we have leverage with Tashkent, is there a possibility for reproachment with the current Uzbek leadership? And perhaps the answer is no. And then we must deal with the consequences of that reality.

But maybe there is a way to revamp these relations. And if there is, I think we'd all like to find out how we get there. So I hope our panel today will help us find some solutions. And I'm delighted that each of them has decided to join us this morning.

Our first witness is Robert Templer, he's the Director of Asia programs at the International Crisis Group. He heads a team of more than 20 researchers working in eight different offices covering 20 countries in Asia. Formerly a correspondent for Agence France-Presse—I can never pronounce that properly—and has been a visiting scholar at Berkley.

Mr. Templer is the author of *Shadows and Wind: A View of Modern Vietnam* and two forthcoming works. He's testified before the Commission several times in the past and we're delighted he's back with us this morning. We look forward to your comments.

Mr. TEMPLER. Thank you, Mr. Moderator. And thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to the panel today. Uzbekistan is now on a short list of countries probably including Zimbabwe, North Korea, Burma, Belarus, who have essentially refused to live up to their international obligations and have chosen isolation over development and growing connections to the rest of the world.

Realistically, I think there's very little the United States can do to change the behavior of these nations when they're determined to focus on their own path to development and concentrate the wealth of their countries in the hands of a very small group of leaders. The leaders of these countries are concerned predominantly with remaining in power with very little concerns for the broader interests of national development.

Generalized sanctions on these regimes have very little impact. Indeed, they've often hurt the very sections of these governments by limiting economic opportunities even further. Diplomatic pressure alone is often shrugged off. Governments there often don't even care what the world thinks about them.

Very limited European sanctions imposed on Uzbekistan have only had a marginal impact on the government. They have sent a signal, and they have caused some irritation in Tashkent. But they've not achieved the aim that they set out to do, which was to force the government there to hold an open investigation into what happened in Andijon. But as long as Uzbekistan maintains close relations with Russia, China, India, its neighbors, it's unlikely that broader sanctions could have any significant impact.

Islom Karimov has repeatedly shown his disregard for the international standards that he signed up for when Uzbekistan became independent. His views have shaped the

Uzbekistan that we see today where a handful of officials control the economy while hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to leave the country just to survive.

He won't change. And I don't believe there are any real prospects for reform in Uzbekistan as long as he's in power.

Reforms may not come even when he's gone. It may be a long time before we see significant progress in Uzbekistan.

We've come to reject any ideas of Karimov as somehow having been misled by bad officials around him. He's at the epicenter of corruption and violence in Uzbekistan. There's little likelihood he's going to give up power this year. Indeed, even if he formally steps down from the presidency, he's likely to maintain his grip through other means.

Nowadays even his neighbors—none of them are really truly democrats—are quite embarrassed by the coarseness of his rule. I think there are very profound limits on what can be achieved by U.S. policy. But the United States should focus on what can be done as long as Karimov remains in power and plan ahead for when he's gone and for when political change may become possible.

I think this means making it clear that the United States sides with the Uzbek people, not with the Uzbek regime. Doing anything possible to crack open the closed Uzbek economy, keeping Uzbek's intellectual and political life in some form, and improving the resilience of neighboring countries in case unrest in Uzbekistan spills over the borders, which it did after the Andijon massacre.

I think there are a number of ways in which the United States and Congress can help the people of Uzbekistan. A primary consideration should be opening the Uzbek economy, an area where the OSCE can play a limited role, but certainly, there is a role to fill.

I have to say opening up an economy that's been kept closed as the Uzbek economy is extremely difficult. It will involve maintaining a dialogue with Russia and China on economic issues, working with the Europeans to maintain a consistent front and the messages delivered to the Uzbek Government that economic reforms are essential to the welfare of the Uzbek people.

It must be made clear that Uzbekistan will not have a full relationship with the United States as long as it maintains such a punitive economic regime over its people. I think it will be vital to keep the flow of information open to Uzbekistan. This can be done on the Internet, through broadcasting and providing information for millions of Uzbeks living outside the country now.

Congress should maintain its support for radio broadcasts like RFE/RL and Voice of America, which I understand is planning to close its service there. Broadcasting to Uzbekistan should be expanded, not cut back. And support for Internet sites that provide some of the key information on Uzbekistan ought to be a priority.

Millions of Uzbeks are now working in neighboring states and near Russia. Many are victims of abuses in these countries. There is a lot that can be done to support groups that help these migrant workers in terms of media legal groups that provide protection and broad areas of support for migrant labor.

It should be made clear to the Kazakh Government, for example, that their attempts or their desire to chair the OSCE in the future is contingent on them providing specific thought to migrant labor in their country. But as many as 2.5 million Uzbeks may be living outside the country.

The population in Uzbekistan that can be reached by outside information services—broadcasting the Internet—is very limited at this time. It is very hard at the moment for the United States to support operations within Uzbekistan when the government is still opposing the free flow of information. But a lot can be done to support those Uzbeks outside the country. Many of those people will return to Uzbekistan in the future and could provide a basis for a fuller relationship down the line.

Education is another critical issue. Many Uzbeks express a deep anxiety about their children's future in a country where education can suffer from government's heavy hand. Providing opportunities outside the country is essential. It doesn't have to be in the United States. Indeed, it may be more useful and cost-effective to support higher education in Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Russia.

The U.S. Government should waive requirements for recipients of U.S. funding to return to their home country immediately. Those who do go back now may be subjected to persecution. There's a need to support continuing intellectual life in Uzbekistan that is free of the restrictions imposed by the government. Education outside the country is one way to do that.

It will be critical to support the neighboring countries around Uzbekistan to minimize the risks of conflict in this region. Uzbekistan at the moment is peaceful in some ways, but also simmering away. A level of discontent, particularly over economic repression, is considerable. There's real risk of tensions blowing up after any transition or even before that.

That conflict is likely to affect the neighboring countries, which the Andijon massacre did. Andijon shows very clearly how vulnerable neighboring countries were. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan all need help building up their ability to withstand any shock that may emerge from Uzbekistan. This involves to a certain degree improving their policing, the ability of their border guards to deal with issues such as refugees.

There's an urgent need to improve public health systems around this region, expand support for migrant labor, provide alternative transport and energy arrangements for these countries so they're not subjected to the Uzbek pressure. Uzbekistan controls a number of critical pipelines and roads in the region. Those arrangements mean that they have quite a grip and they don't hesitate in using that.

I think it's necessary to recognize that it's essentially the criminal nature of the Karimov government. Karimov created a mafia regime that extracts from people and concentrates it in the hands of a tiny number of very wealthy officials. It is hostile to foreign relations, open trade, development of small businesses, anyone down to the sellers of vegetables in bazaars suffers from the predatory behavior of this government.

There is a point of vulnerability for these enormously wealthy elites who have amassed fortunes in their connections to the global economy. The freezing of North Korean assets in the Banco Delta Asia and Macau made financial institutions extremely reluctant to deal with the regime in Pyongyang or any of the banks that have worked with it proved a surprisingly effective pressure point on that regime.

Congress should direct the pressure spots and subject Uzbek companies, particularly those involved with the criminal elite, to similar scrutiny in matters of money laundering and impose measures that provide the U.S. Government with critical pressure points on an elite that is essentially fleecing this country and creating broader risks of instability around the region.

Congress should use the full range of its powers when dealing with Uzbekistan. There is a possibility of prohibiting assistance to the Government of Uzbekistan and barring the provision of credit or licenses for sale of any military or police equipment or weapons to the security forces.

Uzbekistan is in clear breach of the International Freedom of Religion Act, which allows for an array of measures to be taken against the government. It is worth signaling to the Uzbek people that the United States stands for economic, religious, and political freedom.

There's also a greater need to support civil society in the very limited ways it can be supported at the moment within Uzbekistan. Congress should provide broader support to those groups, particularly those involved with protecting human rights. Human rights defenders have come under particularly critical pressure in Uzbekistan. They should be a focus of diplomatic and international support in order to keep alive at least some fragment of civil society in this country. Thank you very much.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you very much, Mr. Templer.

And let me just say that once the three panels have had the opportunity to make their remarks, we're happy to take questions from the audience. At my right, there's a microphone, if you think you need that. We look forward to having a candid discussion.

To my immediate left is Olga Oliker, a senior international policy analyst for the Washington office of Rand.

And as I understand it, your research is focused primarily on security issues relating to Russia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, trans-national threats, organized crime, terrorism, and human trafficking, security reform, and general U.S. foreign and defense policy.

And among her recent publications is "U.S. Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles."

We're thrilled to have you join us this morning and look forward to your remarks. Thank you.

Ms. OLIKER. Thank you very much. It's an honor to be here today.

Two years after Andijon, this is a good time to ask what the lessons of that experience were and what the implications of it are for U.S. policy. And the core question at the root of this is what should the United States do about oppressive regimes in general and Uzbekistan in particular. What options are available? And what policies have the best chance of success?

But what I'd like to do before I address that specifically is take a step back and say that the United States is not terribly good at promoting democratization abroad. And it's not for want of trying.

Human rights and democratization efforts have been a component of U.S. foreign policy for a long time. They were central to our Cold War ideology, which after all was about a fight of communism versus democracy. After the Cold War, we took great pride in a successful spread of democracy. After September 11th, we tried to spread democracy even further.

And at the root of why we do this are two things. One is the very basic notion that more freedom is better than less freedom, from a purely moral and ethical viewpoint. The second is actually security, at home and abroad. Both the Clinton and the Bush administration national security strategies, as well as various other statements made the case

that democratization promotes security, particularly in the face of danger from internal radical, and particularly religious radical, groups. The logic here is as follows:

First, absent legally sanctioned means of political participation, radical movements, religious or otherwise, become far more appealing.

Second, in the absence of available secular political alternatives, houses of worship and religious communities have often become the only means for people to gather and voice complaints, creating a religious aspect to political opposition where there might not otherwise be one.

Third, without legal non-violent opposition, the likelihood that political opposition will be violent increases as does the likelihood of a violent government response, which is, one could very well argue, what you saw happen in Andijon.

Fourth, by making opposition illegal, the likelihood that opposition activists will be further radicalized by arrest and imprisonment (their own or that of others), is increased. So that's the argument.

Democratization is something we've been at for a while, both to do good in and of itself and to make ourselves safer. But while we have seen democracy take root and blossom here and there, it's not a great record globally. And in Central Asia since independence, as my colleagues have said, it's not very good at all.

We've seen increased authoritarianism in every state in the region. Even Kyrgyzstan, which managed to have a color revolution in response, partially, to that rising authoritarianism, has a long way to go before it looks like a democracy or a stable state.

There are three reasons that we have trouble democratizing others. The first is that local leaders think that transition is dangerous. They don't buy the argument that I just laid out, that more political freedoms make countries safer. In part, this is because they know that it won't make them personally any safer—by definition, it means they may lose their jobs.

But aside from their personal concerns, they don't buy the argument because they're looking at another set of arguments. And while perhaps they're not examining them in the academic sense, they're looking at a set of arguments for which there is academic evidence. While there is a school of thought, with a body of analysis behind it, that well-established democracies are less prone to conflict and domestic unrest and terror attacks, there's also a sizeable body of literature that demonstrates pretty conclusively that transition to democracy can be pretty dangerous. It's prone to conflict, unrest, maybe even terrorism—more so than keeping an authoritarian system in place perhaps or even transitioning to a new one. The forces that democratization unleashes, of political and economic discontent, in the absence of the institutions of stable democracy have certainly led to violence in the past.

Thus, even if one accepts that a mature democracy is a stable structure, it seems clear the transition can be volatile and dangerous and, as some Latin American examples show, reversible. So it's reasonable to see why some of the local leaders think that democratization in this country can lead to chaos and maybe even religious radicals coming to power.

Now, I'd argue that these leaders are certainly right to be concerned about their jobs. But they're missing a few things in making the argument that democratization is dangerous.

First, the fact that transitions might be more prone to conflict doesn't mean that they are guaranteed to fail spectacularly. While there have been some impressive failures, there have also been a number of successes, which have made the lives of the population of a country better and the country more secure.

Moreover, some of the same problems that affect nascent democracies also affect states that have no established institutions of succession, which is the case for most of the Central Asian countries. If transition is inevitable, is it not better for the states and the region and the world that it be transition toward a less unstable, less conflict-prone and more equitable system than one that is less on all of these counts? But evidently, these arguments have not convinced authoritarian leaders around the world.

The second reason I think the United States has trouble democratizing other countries is that not everyone in the United States buys the argument that more political freedom is better than less or that working towards better systems in the long-term is the right thing to do now. The appeal of systems that clamp down on radical opposition is clear, both at home and abroad, when there is real reason to be scared of radicalism, both at home and abroad.

Furthermore, in many specific cases, the argument gets made that getting a certain country's cooperation against near-term threats is more important than to secure both them and us against longer-term threats that are a product of their political system. This is the argument that we've heard in the past about Uzbekistan. And it's an argument that has been a major factor in U.S. policy in Pakistan, among other places, as well.

Policies based on this premise remove the pressure for reform. And second, even if we try to keep the pressure on, while also pursuing these policies, our credibility in the country we're working in and elsewhere may come into question, because it may seem we have a double standard.

Moreover, when the United States is itself complicit in abuses even as it continues to support oppressive regimes, it becomes very hard for it to preach very effectively from the bully pulpit.

The third reason the United States has had trouble is that we're not very good at fostering democratic reform in less than hospitable environments. Reform has been most successful when the international community was united with local leadership and where international institutions were able to offer appealing incentives. Brave local government officials who are willing to risk personal failure and perhaps even more for the sake of their country's future have also been very helpful. When these things are absent, these mechanisms are less clear. And often U.S. programs that were developed and worked well under one set of circumstances are then implemented in a very different set of circumstances where they frequently don't work.

An effort to train judges, according to global standards of human rights, works very well when the judges are confident than when they get home they're going back to a system that wants them to try to implement what they learned. It doesn't work all that well when the judges face every disincentive to implement changes, and as a result continue to convict everyone who comes before their court once they get home.

And because programs have not necessarily been developed with more difficult countries in mind, often neither the approaches nor the metrics to evaluate the programs, which are often about how many people have been trained, not about whether the training has changed behavior, are appropriate.

So what does this mean? Well, I think it means we need to have some real debate and get some real understanding within this country on how reform promotes security, and what short-term tradeoffs we are and are not willing to make. Second, if we are to try to come up with some new approaches, we need to get better at it in countries where efforts are still underway.

And the “we” in this case is not just the U.S. Government. It’s also NGOs and IOs that are involved in this, too. We need to take a new look at our political reform agendas and do a better job of designing programs that make sense. We can take some lessons of what to do or what not to do from economic and development reform efforts. A great deal of this is a question of incentives and conditionality.

Conditionality works when conditionality makes sense. Threatening to end programs that you want more than they do is unlikely to be effective. Holding things they really do want hostage can be more effective.

It’s also a question of metrics. What are these programs expected to accomplish? The wrong answer is to train “x” number of police officers, lawyers or whomever else. Increase transparency, rule of law, good governance, and human rights is the right answer. How do you measure progress in those areas?

Well, you can measure progress. You look at conviction rates. You look at cases that come to trial. You look at media reporting and freedom in the media. You look at representation in government and whether the laws that are passed seem to reflect that representation. So these can be useful ways to assess progress.

And then once they’re used to assessing progress, you have to be ready to end programs that don’t work. You don’t support programs that might assist the repression. You evaluate consistently, effectively, and from a distance. You don’t ask the people who are implementing the programs to evaluate them. So Congress actually has a tremendous role here in ensuring that the oversight of government funded programs helps move this along.

And then there’s a question of what to do with countries that are really not interested in change. And you look for leverage points, and you look for ways to communicate with the population of those countries. Mostly, though, you wait.

In the case of Uzbekistan, Karimov turned away from the United States because he’s scared for his regime. He’s scared of transition. Once he leaves, which he’ll most likely do only because of ill health or death, a few things are possible.

One is a succession crisis that leads to unrest, which Russia might try to help manage. And we can see any number of ways that that goes badly.

Another is succession that is reasonably well managed. In which case, the new leader will have a certain confidence and power, and be able to define a new foreign policy. And in this case (or even in the succession crisis case once the crisis has passed and somebody does come to power), the United States may very well be courted again and it might have some leverage. And perhaps the new leader might even have an interest in reform.

In the meantime, while we’re waiting for that to happen, there are a few other things we can try to do. We could try to convince Uzbekistan’s other partners that they should be concerned about the status quo, that the way things are set up more Andijons are possible, and that an unstable transition under current conditions could endanger them. This may not have great prospects of success, given the partners in question, but, you know, Russia will undergo a regime change of its own soon. So never eliminate any possibilities.

Sanctions and visa restrictions are another issue. EU sanctions have put Uzbekistan on notice. I mean, you're not going to get a huge impact out of sanctioning a closed economy. It's unlikely to spur change.

It draws a line in the sand, though. And the Uzbek Government clearly sees that and feels that it has to respond. And it also keeps a dialogue going, in a sense. And it keeps the issue alive.

You know, it's worth considering as long as lines of communication are open asking the Uzbeks if there is anything that they're willing to do to get the sanctions lifted. And perhaps it's not anything that we particularly want to do. In which case, we're all back to waiting.

The other thing the United States and other partners can and should do is keep lines of communication open. One aspect of this is what my colleague just spoke of in terms of helping improve the alternatives—the media alternatives available to the Uzbek population and keeping lines of communication open with the Uzbek people.

The other is talking to the government. It doesn't punish Uzbekistan when the United States doesn't talk to them. It does preclude communication about dissidents, about human rights, and about possible shared security threats.

Pursuing shared interests doesn't necessarily mean helping tyrants. You don't have to train their security forces to find out what they see coming over the border. The United States would be wrong to assume that its security threat perception is shared by Uzbekistan. It's not.

But there are some overlaps. And there is potentially something to gain from them. And by exploring that, there might also be a capacity to gain some leverage here and there.

The most important thing we can be doing is to learn from this experience and not repeat the mistakes we made in Uzbekistan elsewhere. We need to get better about how we implement and how we evaluate our reform efforts.

If we're to promote reform in the interest of security as well as for moral and ethical reasons, we need to square this long-term goal with our short-term goals and find ways to mitigate the short-term problems in the interest of the long-term. And we must in this context be consistent in our actions from country to country and from issue to issue. Or else we'd better have a pretty good explanation for why we're not. There are a lot of benefits to be found in greater transparency for us as well.

Thank you very much.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you very much.

Our final speaker on the panel is Daniel Kimmage. He is the Central Asia analyst at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty where he writes and edits the Central Asian sections of RFE/RL's flagship daily publication, *Newsline*, as well as RFE/RL's weekly roundup on Central Asia.

Mr. Kimmage also writes about the Arab world and Russia with a particular focus on the ideology of Islamic movements. He has testified several times before the Commission and we're thrilled to have him back.

Welcome.

Mr. KIMMAGE. Good morning. I would like to start by thanking the Commission for having me here today. Almost 2 years to the day after I addressed the Commission in

the aftermath of the violence at Andijon. Today I will discuss the deadlock of Uzbekistan's relations with the West and try to answer the question is there any way out of this impasse?

The views I express here are my own and not an official position of my employer, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

It is depressingly simple to summarize the domestic situation in Uzbekistan 2 years after the authorities there crushed unrest in Andijon. The economy is no more open or equitable today than it was a few years ago. The political system is no more democratic. The media are no more free to play a positive role in society. And the rights of citizens are no safer from the arbitrary depredations of unaccountable officials.

In fact, the only element that disturbs the strictly enforced tranquility of Uzbek domestic politics is that President Islam Karimov's term ends this year and he is constitutionally barred from running in the reelection.

Now, the post-Soviet history of Central Asia offers us many examples of dubious referendums and constitutional chicanery that will allow presidents to serve indefinitely. And such a solution to the legal problem may be in the offing in Uzbekistan.

For now, however, official Tashkent is silent, and no moves to anoint a successor are evident. What is important to stress is that there is no evidence that positive change is possible under Karimov. And there is no evidence of any preparations that are underway for a succession that would open the door to the possibility of positive change.

So what can we do? And before I look at the possible solutions for a new U.S. and European policy course, I think we need to acknowledge some partial truths about our relations with Uzbekistan.

The first is that the West has little leverage over Uzbekistan. The second is that the government of Islam Karimov will never agree to an independent international investigation of unrest in Andijon. Third, is that European sanctions against Uzbekistan have not been effective. And the fourth is that prospects for positive change inside Uzbekistan and improved relations with the West are extremely slim as long as Karimov remains in power.

The Uzbek regime under Karimov is an undemocratic serial violator of human rights. It is beholden to the interests of an economically predatory elite. We should not expect this to change in the near future, nor should we expect that the actions of Western policy-makers can bring about such change.

Western policy toward Uzbekistan proceeds from the very simple core belief that democracy, the rule of law, and free market economy are the best guarantees of stability and prosperity. Clearly, then, relations with Uzbekistan pose an enormous challenge.

To make matters worse, current Western policy is premised on the demand for an investigation that Uzbekistan will not accept and on sanctions that have not proved effective. So is there a way out?

I think there are two possible ways out of this dilemma. Neither one is likely to solve all of the problems that bedevil the West's relations with Uzbekistan. Bearing in mind this crucial caveat, I would like to look at these two solutions and tell you which one I think is better.

The first approach is to pursue more active engagement with the Karimov government. The second is to pursue a more consistently tough and principled policy with an eye to a post-Karimov Uzbekistan.

More active engagement with the Karimov government would involve some or all of the following steps: De-emphasizing the demand for an independent investigation of the Andijon events; allowing EU sanctions to expire; moderating official statements on Uzbekistan; actively pursuing ties in areas the Uzbek Government sees as relatively apolitical such as cultural and educational exchanges; and maintaining cooperation and perhaps even expanding it on counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics. Finally, active engagement would involve seeking to encourage incremental change in areas where the Uzbek Government has signaled they're willing to make those changes.

Looking at the other side, a tougher policy based on existing approaches toward recalcitrant regimes as Belarus, Burma, Zimbabwe, and North Korea would involve some or all of the following steps: retaining the demand for an investigation of the Andijon events; toughening EU sanctions to cover the leading figures in the regime, including the president and members of his family; actively investigating criminal ties and related financial interests of leading regime figures through such avenues as the U.S. Treasury Department and legislation modeled on current approaches to Iran and Syria designed to put financial pressure on the regime without harming the population; barring all regime figures determined to be complicit in illegal financial activities and rights violations from entry to the EU and the United States; ending all EU and U.S. financial assistance to the Uzbek Government; clearly and publicly linking these punitive measures to specific violations by the Uzbek regime and specifying the concrete steps they need to take to remove these measures such as an independent investigation of the Andijon events; incentivizing movement toward reform by linking it to renewal of assistance programs and the reintegration of Uzbekistan into the international community; and finally, establishing a "Future of Uzbekistan" program to use the knowledge and ability of the many Uzbek journalists and scholars who the regime has forced abroad by working in coordination with organizations such as the Open Society Institute, the National Endowment for Democracy, the future of Uzbekistan program with the support of exiled Uzbeks in an effort to understand better what is happening inside Uzbekistan and look for ways to remedy the disastrous state of affairs there as soon as there is real opportunity for change.

The program would also involve the creation of a Web portal with materials in Uzbek and other languages to provide information on alternative perspectives as well as a forum for Uzbeks abroad to exchange views and maintain a sense of community.

Now, looking back at these two possible avenues, I think, based on the experience of past years, we can formulate general expectations of the outcomes if current policy is maintained or if we pursue more active engagement or a tougher policy. If the current policy which is, I think, as ineffective combination of good cop, bad cop is maintained, we can expect little or no change in Uzbekistan and little or no change in our relations with Uzbekistan.

If a policy of active engagement is adopted, I think we can expect the following: little or no change inside Uzbekistan, a loss of Western credibility among ordinary Uzbeks; a significant loss of Western credibility among observers who will compare Western policy toward Uzbekistan with policies toward nations such as Belarus, Burma, and Zimbabwe; and finally, greater consolidation within the Uzbek elite around the policies of the current regime.

If a more consistently tough and principled policy is adopted, we can expect the following: a short-term deterioration of relations with Uzbekistan, which, given the current

state of affairs, will have a negligible effect on overall relations; the loss of Germany's military facility in Termez; increasing ferment within the Uzbek elite as those segments who are opposed to current policy begin to chafe at the costs to their personal interests abroad, and press for a different approach to domestic policy and relations with the international community.

And, finally, I think a tougher policy would lead to greater credibility with the Uzbek people, the vast majority of whom have no opportunity for economic or personal advancement under the current regime.

In light of the preceding, it is my recommendation that the United States and European Union take a tougher, more principled stance on Uzbekistan in line with existing policies toward such regimes as Belarus, Burma, and Zimbabwe. Thank you for your time.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you very much.

And I thank all the panelists for their very interesting contributions.

I'm happy to open it up right now to our audience. I've been asked, if you could, speak at the podium to my right so that we can have for the transcript that will be taped of this briefing the questions that you pose. For those who have questions, we'd be happy to take them.

I'd be happy to start with one question to any of you that would like to take it.

And as you just indicated, President Karimov's term is said to end at the end of this year. And, of course, we're aware that in Russia President Putin's term is to end early next year. I'm curious to know whether any of you think to the extent that it seems Putin will, in fact, honor his term limit and step down and there will be some sort of transition in Moscow what, if any, impact would that decision have in Tashkent?

Mr. KIMMAGE. My basic sense is that the foundation of Uzbek/Russian relations is largely pragmatic based on Russia's need to obtain imports from Central Asia, much of which passes through Uzbekistan. I think the pragmatic basis of that relationship will remain whether or not President Putin honors his commitment to step down. I think this applies to the Uzbek regime as well.

Unless there are far-reaching political changes in Russia, I think the basic pragmatic basis for cooperation based on mutual economic interest, and what I would call regime solidarity around a mutual rejection of certain democratic values would continue.

Mr. TURNER. And the other part of my question is if President Putin honors his term limit does he set any sort of precedent in the region. And do you think that Karimov as President himself will therefore honor his term limit?

Ms. OLIKER. The Russian Government is one of those governments that does feel that transitions are unstable and dangerous. The Russian Government has put a great premium on stability in Central Asia. Russia comes to this in part because it has had such a rough time with its own transition, which generally in Russia is seen as largely completed, therefore, it's less of a problem for Russia to have a transition of government.

It does in principle have institutions in place. Although it may still be a tumultuous time, it's very unlikely that the Russians will pressure the Uzbeks to do something similar because they see it as a very different case.

Mr. TURNER. OK. One other question. While other folks are still coming up with their questions. The Kazaks are currently making a push to chair the OSCE in 2009. I'm curious if you or any of the other panelists have a view on that.

Clearly, the governments in Astana and Tashkent don't have the most firm of relationships. But I'm curious if you see a role for Kazakhstan to play in anticipation of their bid for the chairmanship of the OSCE, what role they could play currently or—

Mr. KIMMAGE. I think that looking at the general question of Kazakhstan—I think it's an opportunity to take Kazakhstan's leadership at their word—their statements that they would like to assume a leading regional role. And I think the OSCE chairmanship is a good chance to hold them to that and also a good chance to allow them to show some leadership in certain areas.

On the specific issue of what role Kazakhstan can play with Uzbekistan, I think we have to be realistic that it would be limited. There are certain technical areas, I think, in which they could play a positive role, given the large number of Uzbek migrant workers that are in Kazakhstan.

I think that if Kazakhstan were to either be actively pursuing the chairmanship or would receive the chairmanship, I think that this would be a good venue for pursuing issues in Kazakhstan. I think you could actually make a fair amount of progress on technical issues such as migrant workers. On the larger global question of political reform in Uzbekistan, I don't think it's realistic to expect that a Kazak OSCE chairmanship would be able to move Tashkent toward democratization.

That said, we have to bear in mind the limits of political reform in Kazakhstan. So I don't think it's reasonable to expect Kazakhstan to push Uzbekistan toward democracy.

Mr. TURNER. Do the two of you have anything to add on this?

Mr. TEMPLER. I do think it's an opportunity to encourage the Kazak Government to, as Daniel said, take a number of technical steps really living up to their OSCE obligation. I don't think it necessarily means radical change throughout the region.

But it's certainly an opportunity to encourage them on issues such as treatment of migrant workers, critical issues as large numbers of these people have not crossed the border.

I don't think we'll see Karimov be cooperative with us.

But I think certainly this is a definite opportunity with Kazakhstan seeking the OSCE chairmanship. I think they should be encouraged to do so, but they should also be held to certain standards as they do that. I think that's something that the U.S. Government should be engaging in with Astana.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

We have a question over here.

QUESTIONER. Hi. I have actually more of a comment. I have to agree with Mr. Kimmage on engaging the journalists and exiled Uzbeks in building the future of Uzbekistan. I represent the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia. Our headquarters are located in France, but I'm a representative here.

And we also have to say that after the Andijon events the refugees who escaped Andijon—their escape ruined the image of Karimov in the international arena. But as you know, a lot of these refugees are coming back. And, of course, their return to Uzbekistan is improving Karimov's image, in particular, within Uzbekistan and maybe even in an international arena.

So what we have to do—we have to figure out what is going on. Why are the refugees coming back? There is obviously pressure put on their relatives in Uzbekistan. But there

may be other reasons that they do not get support from the countries they are located in.

And it would be very good to engage the civil society of Uzbekistan along with the journalists and help also refugees so that they cannot return and to not improve the image of Karimov. We have to put pressure along with the European Union on the Government of Uzbekistan and Karimov, in particular, personally on him.

So active engagement with civil society of Uzbekistan and journalists. It's very important to help them and actively engage them. So it's more of a comment.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you for that.

QUESTIONER. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. I don't know if anybody wants to comment on her comment. But if anybody has any further questions, we'd be happy to take them.

QUESTIONER. Actually, I have two questions, if it's OK. I'm John Finerty. I'm from the Commission staff. Just to get back to the idea of Karimov and the change of leadership.

And there's a lot of talk now about the elections in Russia and elsewhere. In the minds of some, Putin supposedly is the only maintainer of stability there. And if he leaves, the whole country would be in trouble. And people want him to stay in office because otherwise it'll be unstable.

My first question is what would occur in Uzbekistan if something could happen to Karimov. But is there an Uzbekistan bench, so to speak, alternative leaders whom the people might accept?

Ms. OLIKER. I think in Russia there will be an organized succession. Russia has a growing economy. It has increased institutions. I think the instability argument is made by people who, you know, are afraid that after Putin who knows, and they may try to orchestrate a certain amount of instability to try to keep them around.

Uzbekistan, I think, is facing a real threat because it doesn't have institutions. It has an incredibly closed economy. And Russia has a system that's questionable on any number of grounds, but it's not as fully authoritarian, by any means, as Uzbekistan. So there is one person who really is at the core of the problem in Uzbekistan.

In Uzbekistan there is a matter of Kremlinology type speculation that lets you know we looked at Karimov's family and you look at the people around him and we'll try to figure out who's standing close to whom when, which means that you can get speculation. You can get names. But nobody has any answers.

Mr. KIMMAGE. I'd like to differ slightly with my colleague. I think the difference between Russia and Uzbekistan—there is a big difference—is less one of the strength and vibrancy of institutions and more one of the level of elite consolidation.

I think that a larger portion of the Russian elite by which I mean the people who are in positions of power and control major sectors of the Russian economy, which is certainly generating a lot of oil and gas-based revenue right now those people are generally in agreement on where to go—they may not be in concrete agreement on every aspect.

They may not be in agreement on who should succeed Putin. But I think there is a fair amount of consolidation among the elite. I don't see evidence of particularly strong institutions in Russia from parliament to courts to ministries. But I do see evidence of a more consolidated elite.

In Uzbekistan I think that we see both enhancements of institutions and the potential for significant squabbles within the elite in the absence of a president who is a guarantor of stability in the sense that he is the arbiter of disputes within the elite. These disputes cannot be resolved through any sort of formal mechanisms.

He brokered the disputes. He maintained the order through patronage. But it is, I think, a less consolidated and stable elite than the one in Russia.

And as for the back bench, I agree completely it's a matter of Kremlinology and speculation. And I have no more information than anyone else here.

Mr. TEMPLER. I think the vulnerability in Uzbekistan comes in part from the consolidation of the elite, but also their passion for control of economic issues. In a country where—and Russia may have been the critical energy lever here.

But in Uzbekistan, it goes down to feeding to women selling onions at the bazaar, the degree to which the elite consolidate control of the economy is extraordinary.

Uzbekistan is at serious risk of a number of threats. One is a leadership transition somewhere or another combined with economic discontent. Any sort of slump in energy obviously would reduce revenues.

There's such a low consumption base in the domestic economy that you've got very little resiliency. The Russian economy is much larger and growing. Uzbekistan's economy is consolidated very significantly with a critical role for Karimov's family.

Uzbekistan is looking a lot like some of the West African countries. It's looking a lot like West African countries with no institutions with one very critical ruler running a state with very little resilience.

QUESTIONER. I'm Michael Ochs with the Helsinki Commission staff. I'd like to ask our guests a very unfair question and ask them to engage in a bit of counter-factual history and speculation.

Up until Andijon, we had working relations with the Uzbeks. Things were bad domestically, but there was some sort of relationship, and things were fair, at least as far as Tashkent/Washington relations were concerned and Tashkent/EU relations.

Where do you think we would be today if Andijon, this one cataclysmic event—where would we be if it had never happened? I recognize it's a very unfair question.

Mr. TEMPLER. Even before Andijon the relationship was pretty rocky because the Uzbeks were simply not living up to their side of a whole array of agreements the U.S. Government agreed to. And there was an increasing level of frustration.

I think the real drop-off after Andijon came not just out of immense frustration and a sense of so little being achieved. Unfortunately, what happened is that Karimov obviously calculated that Americans' desire for cooperation on terrorism was so great that he didn't actually have to deal with the other things that he signed up for.

So he just did nothing in those years when the U.S. Government was offering assistance to help the economy there. So I think the relationship would have deteriorated. I think Andijon made no real difference.

Ms. OLIKER. I agree, you know, the relationship before Andijon was problematic. Both countries thought they were doing the other a huge favor and that the other was ungrateful. And relationships were deteriorated. What Andijon did was it demonstrated to Karimov that, yes, they really are not on my side. He'd been thinking that for awhile.

And it demonstrated to the United States that, yes, they really are not living up to any of the promises they made.

Mr. KIMMAGE. While I agree that relations with Uzbekistan had reached their apex before Andijon, natural limitations had already been discovered, there was one very important effect that Andijon had, which is that it trapped both sides into certain positions.

I don't think there were any great secrets about the unease with the West or the cooperation with Uzbekistan. But there was much more wiggle room.

Now what you have is Uzbekistan's President is the author of a book that essentially says we are not going to let anyone push us around. He's on the record innumerable times on Uzbek television saying that the West is engaging in an information war.

We are on the record with certain demands. We are on the record with charges against Uzbekistan. This is a different situation when it comes to relations within such countries. So what I think the difference is that there were certainly many problems, but a lot of those problems were discussed still behind closed doors where there was wiggle room.

Now what you have are extremely divergent and very strong stated public positions in the wake of Andijon. We didn't have that before. And I think it leaves us with fewer options.

Mr. TURNER. Another question?

QUESTIONER. Yes. My name is Rachel Welstein. And I'm with the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. And this question is for Olga Oliker.

In particular, in your remarks you said that the U.S. security perception may not necessarily be shared by Uzbekistan. And I was just wondering if you could elaborate on what type of security engagement you think we could have that will advance our policies and not help Karimov.

Ms. OLIKER. I actually think to a large extent it's about keeping the lines of dialogue open. We talk to countries like North Korea and Iran now because there are things that we want to advance.

I am not saying that you help them. I am saying that we talk.

QUESTIONER. Thank you.

Mr. TURNER. I'd like to thank all three of our panelists. I think this will be the start of a renewed focus by the Helsinki Commission on this very, very critical region.

I would remind those of you who are interested that the Commission is holding a full hearing next Thursday morning on the topic of Russia. The title is "Russia: In Transition or Intransigent". You can get more details from our Web site, which is at csce.gov.

We're also co-hosting a briefing, I believe, on Tuesday afternoon with the Albanian Caucus on trafficking in persons. Details on both of those events can be found on our Web site. And you all can look forward to many other upcoming events in the months ahead. Thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:14 a.m., the briefing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT TEMPLER, DIRECTOR, ASIA PROGRAM, INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

Thank you for the opportunity to talk to the Commission this morning. We very much welcome the attention that Congress has given to Uzbekistan and support the leadership of the Commission on these issues.

Uzbekistan has joined a short list of countries—Zimbabwe, North Korea, Burma, Belarus and others—that have refused to live up to their international obligations and have chosen isolation over development and connections to the world. Realistically there is very little the United States can do to change the behavior of nations that are determined to abuse human rights and concentrate the wealth of their lands in the hands of a small group. The leaders of the countries care only of remaining in power and have no concern for progress. General sanctions on these regimes have little impact—indeed they often hurt the very victims of these governments. Diplomatic pressure alone is normally shrugged off. Very limited European sanctions imposed after the killings in Andijon have had only a marginal impact although they did send a signal; broad sanctions are unlikely to have any impact as long as Uzbekistan maintains close relations with Russia, China and India.

Islam Karimov has repeatedly shown a disregard for the international standards that he voluntarily signed up for when Uzbekistan became independent. His views have shaped the Uzbekistan we see today where a handful of officials control the economy while hundreds of thousands of people have to leave the country to survive. He won't change; there are no prospects for reforms in Uzbekistan as long as he is in power and reforms may not come quickly even when he is gone. It is time to reject any idea that Karimov is somehow a "good tsar" misled by bad official around him; he is at the epicenter of corruption and violence in Uzbekistan. There is little likelihood he will give up power this year; even if he formally steps down from the presidency, he is likely to maintain his grip through other means. Nowadays, even his neighbors, none of them democrats, are embarrassed by the coarseness of his rule.

There are limits on what can be achieved but U.S. policy should focus on what can be done as long as Karimov remains in power and plan ahead for when he is gone. This means:

- Making it clear that the United States sides with the Uzbek people, not with the Karimov regime.
- Doing anything possible to crack open the closed Uzbek economy.
- Keeping alive Uzbek intellectual and political life.
- Improving the resilience of neighboring countries in case unrest in Uzbekistan spills over their borders, as it did after the Andijon massacre.

There are many ways that Congress can help the people of Uzbekistan:

- Opening the Uzbek economy: This is an almost impossible task but vital; it will involve maintaining a dialogue with Russia and China on economic issues and working with the Europeans to maintain a consistent front that economic reforms are essential to the welfare of the Uzbek people. It must be made clear to Uzbekistan that it will not have

a full relationship with the United States as long as it maintains such a punitive economic regime.

- Keeping the flow of information open to Uzbekistan. This can be done on the internet, through broadcasting and by providing information for the millions of Uzbeks living outside the country. The Voice of America is closing its Uzbek service; Congress should urge them strongly to keep it going and should help RFE/RL and others expand their broadcasting. Support for the internet sites that report on Uzbekistan should also be a priority.

- Supporting Uzbeks outside the country. Millions of Uzbeks are now working in neighboring states and Russia. Many are victims of abuses; supporting self-help groups, the media, legal groups that provide protection and other areas of support, education and training to these migrant is vital. Reaching these people would influence large number of Uzbeks even if those in the country are cut off from these sorts of program by their obstructive government.

- Education. Many Uzbeks express deep anxiety about their children's future in a country where education has suffered from the government's heavy hand. Providing opportunities outside the country is essential; it doesn't have to be in the United States, indeed it may be more useful and cost effective to support higher education in Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia. The US government should waive any requirements that recipients of US funding immediately return to their home country; those who do go back now may be subjected to persecution. There is a need to support a continuing study of Uzbek culture and society outside the restrictions imposed by Karimov. U.S. funding for this sort of work would help eventually rebuild intellectual life in Uzbekistan under a new regime.

- Supporting the neighbors: Uzbekistan is at risk of conflict and that conflict is likely to affect its neighbors. The population simmers with anger and nobody knows how Karimov's succession may play out. Andijon showed how vulnerable the neighboring countries were. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan all need help building up their ability to withstand any shocks that may emerge from Uzbekistan. Improving training for border guards and police in issues including refugee law and protection will be essential. There is an urgent need to improve public health systems, support for migrant laborers and provide alternative transport and energy arrangement for these countries so they are not subject to Uzbek pressure.

- Tackling the criminal nature of the regime: Karimov has created a mafia regime that extracts wealth from people and concentrates it in the hands of a tiny number of people. It is hostile to foreign relations, open trade, the development of small business; everyone down to the sellers of vegetables in bazaars suffers from the predatory behaviour of this government. The fruits of this criminal economy are stashed overseas. This is a point of vulnerability for these elites; the freezing of North Korean assets in Banco Delta Asia in Macau made financial institutions reluctant to deal with the regime in Pyongyang or any of the banks that it works with. It proved a surprisingly effective pressure point on the regime. Congress should direct the Treasury Department to subject Uzbek companies, particularly those involved with the criminal elite, to similar scrutiny and measures, unless the government takes steps to reduce corruption and exploitation. Officials involved in state companies connected to the security forces and to companies that act as fronts for elite Uzbek interests should be denied visas.

- Congress should use the full range of its powers: Congress should prohibit any assistance of any kind to the government of Uzbekistan and bar provision of any credit or licenses for the sale of any military or police weapons or equipment to security forces of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is in clear breach of the International Freedom of Religion Act that allows for an array of measures to be taken against the government. It is worth signaling to the Uzbek people that the United States stands for economic, religious and political freedom.

- Support civil society: U.S. officials should speak out when repression occurs and, to the degree possible, the U.S. should support civil society groups in Uzbekistan who are independent of the government, particularly those that are courageous enough to speak out against the abuses committed by the government. Congress also should provide support to those human rights groups investigating Uzbekistan's violation of international prohibitions against the use of torture and other gross violations of internationally respected human rights.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF OLGA OLIKER,¹ SENIOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY ANALYST, THE RAND CORPORATION²

Two years after the events in Andijan province, in Uzbekistan, both the events themselves and their implications continue to be questioned and reassessed. This is appropriate, both because there has yet to be a credible independent investigation into the events themselves, and because the question of Andijan goes to the root of the U.S.-Uzbek relationship, and how it developed and declined over the last decade.

But perhaps more important than the question of Uzbekistan in particular is the question of U.S. policy more broadly: specifically, U.S. policy towards regimes that are oppressive of the rights of their populations, as Uzbekistan has been. What options does a country like the United States have if it wants to promote change in such countries, and what policies stand the best chance of success. In order to answer that question, however, it is worth relooking the question of U.S. reform efforts abroad more broadly.

A look at the historical record demonstrates two things. The first is that the United States is not particularly effective at promoting democratization abroad. The second is that it has been working to promote democratization abroad for a rather long time.

Aside from the efforts to rebuild Germany and Japan on democratic principles, the Cold war as a whole presented a paradigm of communism vs. democracy. The immediate post-Cold war period saw some spread of democracy to some former communist countries, which was very much welcomed by the United States, and the period since September 11, 2001 has seen an effort to spread democracy through even more proactive means.

The reasons the U.S. has sought to promote reform abroad are twofold. One aspect of this is the basic notion that more freedom is better than less freedom, from a purely moral and ethical viewpoint. It makes people in these countries better off politically and economically, and that is a good thing. The second aspect of this is a security argument. Both Clinton and Bush administration national security strategies have made the case that democratization promotes security, particularly in the face of dangers from internal radical, especially religious radicals (a component of this that has gotten more attention more recently).³ Although not always thus laid out, one argument for why this would be the case is the four-pronged approach that follows:

- First, absent legally sanctioned means of political participation radical movements, religious or otherwise, become far more appealing.
- Second, in the absence of secular political alternatives, houses of worship and religious communities have often become the only means for people to gather and voice com-

¹The opinions and conclusions expressed in this testimony are the author's alone and should not be interpreted as representing those of RAND or any of the sponsors of its research. This product is part of the RAND Corporation testimony series. RAND testimonies record testimony presented by RAND associates to federal, state, or local legislative committees; government-appointed commissions and panels; and private review and oversight bodies. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

²This testimony is available for free download at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT282>.

³The Clinton Administration strategies were titled *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. The White House: Washington, DC, The latest of these, published in February 1996 superseded the versions of February 1995 and July 1994. The Bush Administration strategies are *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, The White House: Washington, DC, September 2002 and *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, The White House: Washington, DC, March 2006.

plaints, creating a religious aspect to political opposition where there might otherwise not be one.

- Third, without legal nonviolent opposition, the likelihood that political opposition will be violent increases—as does the likelihood of a violent government response (a model that the events of May 2005 in Andijan can be said to have followed).

- Fourth, by making opposition illegal, the likelihood that opposition activists will be further radicalized by arrest and imprisonment (their own or of those close to them) is increased.

This is a rational and a convincing argument, and one rooted in human nature and political science. But over the years that we have sought to foster reform for these reasons, and others, the record globally has been less than impressive. Although some democracies have emerged, other countries have reversed democratic processes. Moreover, in Central Asia, the record is particularly poor. Over the last few years, we have seen increased authoritarianism in every state in the region. Even Kyrgyzstan, which managed to have a color revolution in response to that rise in authoritarianism, has a long way to go before it looks like a democracy—or a stable state.

Why have U.S. democratization efforts, in Central Asia and elsewhere, had so much difficulty? The specific reasons vary from country to country, but there are three fundamental problems, or families of problems that have created particularly significant challenges.

The first of these is that local leaders often think that transition is dangerous. They do not accept any of the arguments made that transition will make their countries safer. First because they know it will not make them safer—it almost definitionally means that they will lose their jobs. Second, because they think that transition is dangerous for their countries. And in this, they have the backing of a certain amount of analysis, as well. While there is good scholarly research that supports the argument that established democracies are less prone to conflict and domestic unrest (and terror attacks), there is a sizable body of literature that demonstrates, pretty conclusively, that transitions to democracy are a dangerous thing, more prone to conflict, unrest, and perhaps even terrorism than keeping an authoritarian system in place, or even transitioning to one. The forces that democratization unleashes, of political and economic discontent, in the absence of the institutions of a stable democracy, have led to violence in the past. Thus, even if one accepts that mature democracies are stable structures, it can seem, whether one reads the academic literature or simply looks at examples such as the former Yugoslavia, that transitions are volatile and dangerous (and, as Latin American examples show, reversible).⁴ So, some regional leaders believe that democratization in their countries will lead to chaos, and in the case of Central Asia (and not a few other places), possibly religious radicals coming to power.

⁴ See Edward D. Mansfield and Jack L. Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005). Mansfield and Snyder trace their argument to Samuel Huntington, who argued in *Political Order in Changing Societies* that given weak political institutions, increased political participation (as a component of general social and economic modernization) can lead to unrest. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). See also Quan Li, “Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, April 2005; Alberto Abadie, “Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism,” Working Paper 10859, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, October 2004; and Charles Tilly, “*Inequality, Democratization, and De-Democratization, Sociological Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (March 2003) pp. 37–43.

Autocratic leaders do have a point when they fear for their future in office in the case of a democratic transition. However, their concerns about coming chaos may be somewhat misplaced. First, that transitions are more prone to conflict does not mean that they are guaranteed to fail spectacularly. While there have been some impressive failures, there have also been a number of successes which have made the lives of the local population better, and states more secure. Moreover, some of the same problems that affect nascent democracies also affect autocracies that have no established institutions for succession—the case for most of the Central Asian states. If transition is inevitable, is it not better, for the state, the region and the world that it go towards a more stable, less conflict-prone, more equitable system than one that is less of all of these things? But, clearly, these arguments have not been sufficiently convincing to bring authoritarian leaders around.

The second reason the United States has had difficulty promoting democracy abroad is that not everyone in the United States agrees that more political participation in these foreign countries will be better than less, or that working towards better systems in the long-term is the right thing to do now, particularly given scarce resources. The appeal of systems that clamp down on radical opposition is clear, at home and abroad, when there is real fear of radicalism, at home and abroad. Moreover, in many specific cases, analysts and policymakers will argue that getting a given country's cooperation against near-term threats is more important than it is to secure them and us against long-term threats that are a product of their political systems. This is an argument that we heard in Uzbekistan, and it's an argument that has very much been a factor in U.S. policy in Pakistan, among other places.⁵ Insofar as this is accepted, policies based on this premise weaken reform efforts both because they can take the pressure to reform off in the interest of gaining cooperation on other issues. Even if one seeks to advance both sets of goals simultaneously, the reform effort can be hampered because of the appearance of hypocrisy thus engendered. Moreover, even the "security before reform" approach has implications beyond the country in question, because states in which reform remains the focus perceive a double standard. Finally, evidence that suggests that the United States itself is complicit in abuses and violations of democratic principles in support of security also damages its capacity to effectively preach from the bully pulpit.

The third reason the United States has been less effective than it might wish in fostering democracy abroad is that we've gone from working in more permissive environments to less permissive environments. Reform has been most successful when the international community was united with local leadership, and where international institutions were able to offer appealing incentives. Brave local government officials, who were willing to risk personal political failure (and perhaps more) for the sake of their countries' futures, have also been critical in successful change. When these things are absent, however, the mechanisms are less clear. But often, US programs that were developed, and which were effective, in situations where the cards were stacked in favor of reform are then attempted in places where the circumstances are very different. An effort to train judges according to global standards of human rights can yield fantastic results when the judges are keen on applying them when they get home, and work in a system that welcomes such changes. The same training program is unlikely to be effective in and of itself

⁵This approach is discussed in Seth G. Jones, Olga Oliker, Peter Chalk, C. Christine Fair, Rollie Lal, and James Dobbins, *Securing Tyrants or Fostering Reform: U.S. Security Assistance to Repressive and Transitioning Regimes*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006).

when the judges trained face every disincentive to continue to convict everyone who comes before their courts on their return to work. But because programs have not been developed with difficult countries in mind, neither the approaches nor the metrics (which too often are about how many people have been trained, rather than about whether the training has changed behavior) are appropriate to where we're working.

What are the implications of this assessment? First, I believe that the United States policy community is ripe for some fundamental discussions and debates to help it to reach a better understanding of how reform promotes security and what short-term trade-offs do and do not make sense. Second, if the United States, other governments, NGOs, IOs are to try to promote reform, they should all take a critical look at their programs, particularly their programs in countries where reform has been a challenge. This means relooking the political reform agendas and doing a better job of defining programs that make sense. There are interesting lessons for both what to do and what not to do that can be taken from the historical experience of economic and development reform efforts. A great deal of this is a question of incentives and conditionality. Conditionality can work, when conditionality makes sense. Threatening to end programs that the donor wants more than does the recipient will not be particularly effective. Holding things that the recipient truly wants hostage, however, can be—but the question must still be asked what harm this does to the donor.

The other thing to reexamine is how success is measured. This comes down to what reform programs are expected to accomplish. The answer is not to train any given number of police officers, lawyers, or bureaucrats. The answer is to increase transparency, rule of law, respect for human rights, and good governance. These, too, can be measured, although not as directly. Such things as conviction rates, cases that come to trial, freedom in media, representation in government bodies (and whether laws passed reflect that representation) can all provide useful ways of assessing progress. Once one has a better way of assessing progress, the next step is to be willing to end programs that do not work. Also crucial, in this context, is to avoid supporting programs that can help foster repression. Finally, it is critical that evaluation be consistent, effective, and at a distance from the reform effort itself. The people implementing the program should not be the ones evaluating it. Congress has a significant role in improving oversight over government programs to help improve this process.

None of this, however, responds to the question of what to do in the case of countries that are really not interested in change. One aspect of responding to such countries is looking for leverage points, another is trying to find ways to communicate with the population, but the third is simply to wait. In the case of Uzbekistan, Karimov turned away from the US because he feared for his regime, and because he feared transition. When he leaves, which he most likely will do only because of ill health or death, two things are possible. One is a succession crisis which leads to unrest. Russia may try to help manage it, but one can see any number of ways it goes badly. Eventually, someone may emerge from this to lead the country. Another possibility is a succession that is reasonably well-managed. In which case the new Uzbek leader has a certain confidence in his power, and is able to define a new foreign policy. In which case the US may be courted again, and then it may have some leverage. It is even possible that the new leader may have an interest in reform.

In the meantime, in the effort to seek leverage, the United States could also try to convince Uzbekistan's other partners that they should be concerned about the status quo.

The prospects for an unstable transition, especially, can be played up, as this would affect a variety of interests. This approach may not have great prospects for success, given the partners in question, but beginning a dialogue cannot hurt.

Sanctions and visa restrictions are another issue. What do EU sanctions and their renewal do? Well, they put Uzbekistan on notice, but most analysts agree that sanctioning a closed economy has little real impact. Thus, the EU sanctions, recently renewed, are unlikely to spur change. They do, however draw a line in the sand, which the Uzbek government does respond to, if only with written statements. Moreover, this signaling does two more things: it keeps the dialogue going, and it keeps the issue alive.

Keeping the dialogue going is important, both through signaling and through direct communications. These can include efforts to broaden the media space in a closed society like Uzbekistan's, with things like Voice of America and Radio Liberty. It also includes government-to-government communications. It is not an effective "punishment" of Uzbekistan to refuse communications with it. Rather, the absence of communication precludes some means of protecting dissidents, and it precludes any capacity to cooperate in support of shared interests. The U.S. would be wrong to assume that its security threat perception is shared by Uzbekistan—it is not. But as with a variety of countries with which the bulk of our goals differ, there are also areas of overlap. Without talking to identify those, we not only cannot pursue them, we also cannot build on them to identify new means of leverage. This does not mean we should resume training Uzbek security forces. It does mean that we should talk.

The most important thing for U.S. policy, however, is to learn from the experience with Uzbekistan. If the U.S. truly seeks democratic reform as a component of its own security (as well as for moral and ethical reasons), it needs to improve its implementation and evaluation of reform efforts abroad. Long and short term goals need to be squared, and approaches that mitigate the short-term effects of long-term policies need to be developed. Accusations of inconsistency must be treated seriously and responded to, as well. Transparency is always a good idea, no matter how advanced the democracy.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL KIMMAGE, CENTRAL ASIA ANALYST, RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

I would like to thank you for inviting me to appear before this Commission. I have been a regional analyst at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) focusing on Central Asia since December 2003. Today, almost two years to the day after I addressed this Commission in the immediate aftermath of the violence in Andijon, I will discuss the deadlock of Uzbekistan's relations with the West and try to determine whether there is any way out of the impasse. The views I express here are my own and do not reflect any official position of my employer, RFE/RL.

UZBEKISTAN TWO YEARS AFTER ANDIJON

It is dishearteningly simple to summarize the domestic situation in Uzbekistan two years after the authorities crushed unrest in Andijon. After that event, the European Union and United States, responding to credible allegations that the government of President Islam Karimov employed grossly disproportionate force against a mixed crowd of gunmen and peaceful protesters in Andijon, asked the Uzbek government to allow an independent, international investigation. The Uzbek government has been steadfast in its refusal, and the international community still has no answers to its many questions about what really took place in Andijon on May 12–13, 2005.

The Uzbek government's stubborn refusal to allow any meaningful independent inquiry into the tragic bloodshed in Andijon is broadly symbolic of its policies in other areas, which remain in equal measure inflexible and impervious to internal and external criticism. The economy is no more open or equitable today than it was two years ago, the political system no more democratic, the media no freer to play a positive role in society, and the rights of citizens no safer from the arbitrary depredations of unaccountable officials.

I stress that there has been no meaningful progress on any of the issues on which Western governments have repeatedly expressed concern—political and economic reform, human rights, and an independent investigation of the Andijon tragedy. Meanwhile, the Uzbek government has continued to close off the country from independent sources of information, hampered the ability of Western correspondents and news agencies to cover events in Uzbekistan, and applied heavy pressure to domestic rights activists. Despite these obstacles, international organizations and media, including RFE/RL, have amply documented the lamentable state of affairs within Uzbekistan. In sum, on this front, the dominant element has been stasis.

Only one element roils the strictly enforced tranquility of Uzbek domestic politics. President Islam Karimov's term ends this year, and he is constitutionally barred from running for reelection in the presidential election slated to take place in December 2007. The post-Soviet history of Central Asia offers numerous examples of dubious referenda and constitutional casuistry allowing presidents to serve indefinitely; such a solution to the legal problem may be in the offing in Uzbekistan. For now, official Tashkent is silent, and no moves to anoint a successor are evident.

The problem will, however, require a formal solution by the end of this year, with a constitutionally jerry-rigged continuation of the status quo or a stage-managed transfer of power to a hastily anointed successor the two most likely outcomes. Unfortunately, we

lack sufficient information about the true state of affairs within the Uzbek ruling elite to make even a preliminary guess about a potential successor. What is important to stress is that there is absolutely no evidence that positive change is possible under Karimov, and no evidence that any preparations are underway for a succession that would open the door to the possibility of positive change.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Before moving to the question of what US and European policymakers can do to chart a new course for relations with Uzbekistan, we must acknowledge a number of harsh truths:

- The West has little leverage over Uzbekistan;
- The government of Islam Karimov will never agree to an independent, international investigation of unrest in Andijon;
- European sanctions against Uzbekistan have been ineffective;
- Prospects for positive change within Uzbekistan and improved relations with the West are slim as long as Karimov remains in power.

The limits of Western leverage in relations with Uzbekistan are by now painfully obvious. President Islam Karimov relished the prestige he gained from closer ties with the West amid heightened security cooperation after September 11, 2001, but this proved insufficient inducement to usher in any substantive changes to domestic policy. In the absence of economic ties to match Uzbekistan's links to countries like Russia and China, which are entirely satisfied with the current state of affairs within Uzbekistan, the West must acknowledge that its leverage in Uzbekistan is extremely limited.

President Islam Karimov has staked a domestic and international claim to a version of events in Andijon that he cannot and will not forsake. The official Uzbek story is that Andijon represented a "carefully planned act of terror" by religious extremists with international ties and that Uzbekistan's security services used necessary force in response. What's more, Uzbekistan's refusal to submit to an outside inquiry has been enshrined as the cornerstone of official policy in the form of a book by the president entitled *The Uzbek People Will Never Be Dependent on Anyone*. In sum, the demand for an international investigation of the Andijon events, however justified morally, will never be satisfied as long as Karimov remains in power.

European sanctions against Uzbekistan, which have been in place since 2005 in the form of a travel ban against 12 high-ranking officials and a prohibition on arms sales, have not brought about any change in Uzbekistan's domestic or foreign policy. The sanctions were largely symbolic, as Uzbekistan imports weapons from elsewhere, most of the 12 officials on the original list are no longer serving, and ailing then Interior Minister Zokir Almatov was able to travel to Germany despite the visa ban. The EU's recent decision to strike four officials from the travel-ban list only underscores the symbolic nature of the endeavor. The past two years of Uzbek policy confirm its ineffectiveness.

The Uzbek regime under Karimov is an undemocratic, serial violator of human rights beholden to the interests of an economically predatory elite. We should not expect this to change in the near future, nor should we expect that the actions of Western policymakers can bring about such change.

Western policy toward Uzbekistan proceeds from a core belief that democracy, the rule of law, and a free-market economy provide the best guarantees of stability and prosperity. Clearly, then, relations with Uzbekistan pose an enormous challenge. To make matters worse, Western policy is premised on the demand for an investigation that Uzbekistan will not accept and on sanctions that have not proved effective. Is there a way out?

There are two possible approaches to this dilemma, both of which might offer a way out of the impasse. Neither, however, is likely to solve the majority of the problems that bedevil the West's relations with Uzbekistan. Bearing in mind this crucial caveat, I would like to put two solutions on the table.

The first approach is to pursue more active engagement with the Karimov government. The second is to pursue a more consistently tough and principled policy with an eye to a post-Karimov Uzbekistan.

More active engagement with the Karimov government would involve some or all of the following steps:

- Deemphasize, but do not entirely drop, the demand for an independent investigation of the Andijon events;
- Allow EU sanctions to expire;
- Moderate official statements on Uzbekistan;
- Actively pursue ties in areas that the Uzbek government views as relatively apolitical, such as cultural and educational exchanges;
- Maintain, and perhaps even expand, cooperation on counterterrorism and counter-narcotics issues, but with oversight to ensure that programs do not add to the capacity of Uzbekistan's security services to suppress internal dissent;
- Seek to encourage incremental changes in areas where the Uzbek government has signaled a willingness to make changes, such as broadening the role of political parties.

A tougher, more principled policy, based on existing approaches toward such recalcitrant regimes as Belarus, Burma, Zimbabwe, and North Korea, would involve some or all of the following steps:

- Retain the demand for an independent investigation of the Andijon events;
- Toughen EU sanctions to cover current leading figures in the Karimov regime, including the president and members of his family;
- Actively investigate the criminal ties and related financial interests of leading regime figures through such avenues as the US Treasury Department and legislation modeled on current approaches to Iran and Syria designed to put financial pressure on the regime without harming the population;
- Bar all regime figures determined to be complicit in illegal financial activities and/or human rights violations in Uzbekistan from entry to the EU and United States;
- End all EU and US financial assistance to the Uzbek government;
- Clearly and publicly link all punitive measures to specific rights violations by the Uzbek regime and specify the concrete steps needed to remove these measures, such as an independent investigation of the Andijon events;
- Incentivize movement toward genuine reform by linking it to a renewal of assistance programs and reintegration into the international community;
- Establish a Future of Uzbekistan program to make use of the knowledge and abilities of the many Uzbek journalists and scholars whom the regime has forced abroad.

Working in coordination with such organizations as the Open Society Institute and National Endowment for Democracy, this program would support exiled Uzbeks in an effort to understand better the processes taking place within Uzbekistan and ways to remedy the disastrous state of affairs there as soon as real opportunities for positive change arise. The program would also involve the creation of a web portal with materials in Uzbek and other languages to provide information and alternative perspectives, as well as a forum for Uzbeks abroad to exchange views and maintain a sense of community.

Based on the experience of past years, we can formulate general expectations of the outcomes if current policy is maintained or either of these new policies is adopted. If current policy is maintained, we can expect little or no change in Uzbekistan. If a policy of active engagement is adopted, we can expect:

- Little or no change in Uzbekistan;
- A significant loss of Western credibility among ordinary Uzbeks;
- A significant loss of Western credibility among observers who might compare Western policy toward Uzbekistan with policy toward such nations as Belarus, Burma, and Zimbabwe;
- Greater consolidation within the Uzbek elite around the policies of the current regime.

If a more consistently tough and principled policy is adopted, we can expect:

- A short-term deterioration of relations with Uzbekistan, which, given the current state of relations, will have a negligible effect on overall relations;
- The loss of Germany's military facility in Termez;
- Increasing ferment within the Uzbek elite, as those segments opposed to current policies begin to chafe at the costs to their personal interests abroad, and press for a different approach to domestic policy and relations with the international community;
- Greater credibility with the Uzbek people, the vast majority of whom have no opportunity for economic or personal advancement under the current regime.

In light of the preceding, it is my recommendation that the United States and European Union take a tougher, more principled stance on Uzbekistan in line with existing policies toward such regimes as Belarus, Burma, and Zimbabwe. Thank you for your time.



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