

Uzbekistan

Country name:	The Republic of Uzbekistan
Capital city	Tashkent (about 2.1 million population)
Area:	447,400 sq km
President:	Islom KARIMOV
Population:	26.9 million (2006 est.)
Female population:	13.6 million (50.3%)
Rural population:	63.3%
Age structure:	33.2% under age 15, 62.1% aged 1-64, 4.7% age 65 and above
Ethnic groups:	Uzbek 80%, Russian 5.5%, Tajik 5%, Kazakh 3%, Karakalpak 2.5%, Tatar 1.5%, Other 2.5% (1996 est.)
Religion	Muslim 88% (mostly Sunnis), Eastern Orthodox 9%, other 3%
Administrative divisions	Republic of Karakalpakstan, Andijan, Bukhara, Djizak, Fergana, Kashkadarya, Khorezm, Namangan, Navoiy, Samarkand, Sirdarya, Surkhandarya, Tashkent, Tashkent city

✓
YES

Source: UN World Population Prospects and World Urbanization Prospects, official data



[back to original](#)



425

UZBEKISTAN: Country Profile

Tuesday, January 2 2007

Rolling Assumptions

Economy: Continuing stagnation

The economy is likely to continue to stagnate due to the absence of reform and the regime's clampdown on private business. Although some restrictions in bilateral trade with Kazakhstan were lifted in late 2004, regional cooperation remains extremely limited. Uzbekistan's WTO accession talks are still in very early stages, and Tashkent has so far made no real effort to undertake reform.

Politics: Dictatorial practices

President Islam Karimov's reorientation towards Russia is his best and probably last chance of prolonging his rule. Karimov's increasingly authoritarian regime has accepted no criticism for human rights violations, including possible extensive use of torture. Political assassinations as a way to eradicate opposition cannot be ruled out.

Economic policy: Enterprise harassment

Uzbekistan owns the world's fourth-largest gold reserves. It also has substantial deposits of copper, lead, silver, tungsten and zinc. As a result of government efforts in the 1990s to attract FDI into these sectors, foreign investors formed joint ventures (JVs) with the government. One of these was Newmont Mining of the United States, which launched a major JV in the Muruntau gold mine. However, in August 2006, the Uzbek government initiated bankruptcy proceedings against Newmont, seizing its assets in the JV and transferring management of the mine to the Uzbek partner. Tashkent has also revoked the licence of UK Oxus Gold to develop a precious metal, zinc and copper deposit and has most recently initiated court proceedings against an Oxus-run JV over a back-tax claim of 225 million dollars in the Amantaytau Goldfields project. Uzbekistan is becoming more difficult for foreign investors, in part due to Tashkent's reorientation away from the West and towards Moscow.

Security: Regime paranoia

The regime is apprehensive of a popular uprising, similar to 'colour revolutions'. Hundreds of people have already been tried and found guilty of attempting to overthrow the government and set up an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. Last year, Russia deported an Uzbek citizen, whom Tashkent had accused of engaging in terrorist activity and being a member of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, an Islamic group banned both in Uzbekistan and Russia. His extradition reflects the more practical aspects of the Russian-Uzbek political alliance, which has strengthened since Tashkent's alienation from the West in the aftermath of the Andijan massacre in May 2005.

International relations: Regional security cooperation

Most of the Ferghana Valley falls within the territory of Uzbekistan, but some parts extend to southern Kyrgyzstan and northern Tajikistan. The area is densely populated, resulting in competition between various ethnic communities and clans for scarce land, water and housing. A sharp rise in sporadic violence, most likely spurred by radical Islamist groups operating from the Ferghana Valley, has increased insecurity in Central Asia. However, it has also provided a stimulus for greater inter-state cooperation between the governments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Russia will seek to play a greater role in regional security management, including through the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

Base Economic Data

Ratings

Fitch Ratings: **BB** measuring Sovereign Risk (long term bond debt)

[Fitch website](#)

Correct at: February 7, 2006

Moody's Sovereign Risk: **N/A** measuring Sovereign Risk (long term bond debt)

[Moody's website](#)

Correct at: February 7, 2006

Standard and Poors: **N/A** measuring Sovereign Risk (long term bond debt)

[Standard and Poors website](#)

Correct at: February 7, 2006

UZBEKISTAN: Country Profile - p. 2 of 3

Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index: Rating: **2.1** Ranking :**151**

Measures perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt)

▣ Transparency International website

Series name	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
GDP, constant prices, growth (%)	4.1	3.1	1.5	7.4	7.0
				Source:IMF World Outlook	
Inflation (%)	47.5	44.3	14.8	8.8	21.0
				Source:IMF World Outlook	
Gross fixed investment (% of GDP)	19.57	22.03	19.52	17.95	N/A
				Source:World Bank World Development Index	
Exports of goods (USD billions, fob)	3.17	2.98	3.73	4.85	N/A
				Source:Asian Development Bank (ADB)	
Imports of goods (USD billions, cif)	3.14	2.71	2.96	3.82	N/A
				Source:ADB	
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-0.1	1.2	8.7	10	10.8
				Source:IMF World Outlook	
Exchange rate (end of year against USD) (som)	682.1	712.3	969.4	969.4	969.4
				Source:Exchangerate.com	
Foreign direct investment (Millions of USD, inflow)	83	65	70	140	250
				Source:UNCTAD; 2005 figure from European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	
Unemployment (%)	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	N/A
				Source:Asian Development Bank	

^e=estimate ^f=forecast ^p=provisional ⁱ=incomplete figure (treat with caution)

Politics and Government

Form

Authoritarian Republic.

Source: CIA World Factbook; Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile

Head of State

Head of State: President Islam Karimov; Head of Government: Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Source: CIA World Factbook; Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile

Government

Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, People's Democratic Party, Democratic National Rebirth Party, Social Democratic Party and others. None enjoys genuine independence.

Source: CIA World Factbook; Foreign Office Country Profile

Opposition

The main opposition groups, Unity and the Liberal Democrat Party, have been banned. There is no effective opposition.

Source: CIA World Factbook; Foreign Office Country Profile

Legislature

UZBEKISTAN: Country Profile - p. 3 of 3

The Uzbek Supreme Assembly is bicameral. The upper house has 100 seats, with 84 members elected by regional governing councils and the rest appointed by the President. The lower house has 120 seats, to which deputies are elected by popular vote. Members of both chambers serve five-year terms.

Source: CIA World Factbook

Election Cycle

The last legislative elections were held in December 2004, and January 2005. The ext elections are due in late 2009. The last presidential election was held in January 2000, and is due again in December 2007.

Source: CIA World Factbook

Geography

Area (total land and water)

447,400 sq km.

Source: CIA World Factbook

Population growth rate^a

1.67 %

Source: CIA World Factbook

Population density

60.01 people/sq km.

Source: CIA World Factbook

Urban population

9.77 million

Source: UN Population Division Estimates

Literacy rate

99.3 %

Source: CIA World Factbook

Language

Uzbek, Russian

Source: CIA World Factbook

While Oxford Analytica has checked and proofed this information, no responsibility is accepted for any inaccuracy, although corrections will be gratefully received.

Yes

Uzbekistan economy: Business climate overview

839 words

6 December 2006

Economist Intelligence Unit - ViewsWire

ViewsWire

1

English

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COUNTRY BRIEFING

FROM THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT

The presidential **election**, due to be held in December 2007, will dominate the political scene in the coming months. Speculation will mount over whether the incumbent, Islam Karimov, will stand for a third term in office, or whether he will make way for a chosen successor. If, as seems likely, he does decide to contest the **election**, he will not face a serious challenger. His probable victory will pave the way for further political stagnation in 2008 and beyond. We are forecasting real GDP growth at an average annual rate of around 7% in 2007-08.

Economic growth

Rising investment and relatively strong exports will support **Uzbekistan's** economic growth in 2007-08, when we expect GDP to expand by an average annual rate of just over 7%—a slight acceleration compared with an estimated growth rate of 6.8% in 2006. In particular, the hydrocarbons and telecoms sectors will attract investment, as will some manufacturing subsectors. Although imports of capital goods will rise, controls on imports of consumer goods will suppress overall growth in import volumes.

Economic policy

The World Bank has relaxed slightly its stance on new lending to **Uzbekistan**, and, under an interim strategy for 2006-07, is offering modest financial support in sectors such as education as well as continuing technical assistance. The Bank had announced a suspension of lending to the country in March 2006, apparently following concerns at the way in which the loans were being used, but attributed its decision to reconsider to the government's stated commitment to reforms. Once the strategy period is completed, the Bank will reassess the government's reform progress to determine whether to allocate further credit. We remain sceptical that any substantial progress on this front is likely.

Inflation and the exchange rate

Election-related wage and benefit rises and fairly robust inflows of foreign exchange will ensure rapid growth in the money supply in 2007, contributing to an acceleration in year-on-year inflation to almost 10% by year-end. Once the **election** is over, the government is likely to cut back on social spending, slowing money supply growth in 2008. However, if the budget situation begins to deteriorate, the authorities might raise utility tariffs from 2008, which would bring renewed upward pressure on prices. Inflation is therefore unlikely to decelerate notably, remaining at an average annual rate of around 8% in 2008.

The rate of depreciation of the som against the US dollar stabilised in mid-2006, probably owing to robust inflows of export revenue, driven by high global commodity prices. These will continue to support the currency throughout the forecast period, although the authorities will allow a slow pace of nominal depreciation to ensure that **Uzbekistan** retains export competitiveness. By end-2008 we expect the currency to be trading at around Som1,400:US\$1, down from Som1,235:US\$1 in late October 2006.

The external sector

High commodity prices, together with import controls, will keep the trade and current accounts in surplus in 2007-08. Rising global cotton prices in both years of the forecast period will support revenue from sales of cotton fibre. Gold prices are expected to rise strongly in 2007. This will result in an expansion of the current-account surplus to around US\$1.6bn in that year. Rising remittances will ensure a surplus on current transfers. Services credits will rise, owing to increased revenue from the transit of Turkmen gas across Uzbek territory. However, services debits will also escalate. In conjunction with the easing of gold prices, this will result in a

fall in the current-account surplus in 2008 to around US\$1.1bn.

Political outlook

The presidential **election**, which is due in December 2007, will dominate **Uzbekistan's** political scene over the next year. In the run-up to the **election**, speculation will mount over whether Mr Karimov will stand for a third term in office, or whether he will make way for a chosen successor. If, as seems probable, he does decide to contest the **election**, he is unlikely to face a serious challenger, and seems certain to be returned to office—thus paving the way for further political stagnation in 2008 and beyond, with little prospect of greater democratisation and transparency. Even if Mr Karimov does not stand again, the likelihood that an alternative president will open up the political scene or introduce greater accountability into **Uzbekistan's** political structures will be slim.

Key indicators

	2004a	2005b	2006c	2007c
Real GDP growth (%)	7.4	7.0	6.8	6.9
Consumer prices (% change)	1.7	6.9a	7.6	8.4
Budget balance (% of GDP)	-0.4b	0.1	0.2	-0.3
Merchandise exports (US\$ bn)	4,290b	4,740	5,470	6,050
Exchange rate (LVL:US\$1)	1,020	1,115a	1,220	1,255
(a) (b) (c)				

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Risk Service.

wwwmain20061206t1515000001; EIU ViewsWire 06 Dec 2006 (T15:15), Part 1 of 41

Document EIUCP00020061208e2c600014

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Yes

Karimov will be reelected again in violation of constitution "" ICG expert

361 words

11 January 2007

The Times of Central Asia

English

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TASHKENT, January 11 (TCA). Independent media Uznews.net quoted today Michael Hall, International Crisis Group (ICG) Central Asian project director, who predicts that Uzbek President Islam Karimov will seek re-election in December in 2007 and says it will be done in 'Uzbek way'.

As Uznews.net quoted watchdog head, 'I think that there will be no surprise,' Michael Hall said. 'An election will be in the 'Uzbek way', i.e. there will be no genuine election and Karimov will be re-elected again.'

Karimov's participation in the 2007 election will violate **Uzbekistan's** laws, Hall believes. 'We know that Karimov does not care about legitimacy,' he reportedly said.

Hall believes that there will hardly be any opposition to his reelection but said that possibly power elites close to Karimov may plot a coup d'etat.

To some extent thanks to the events in Andijan in May 2005 the Uzbek authorities have managed to terribly frighten people in the country so that, Hall said, people will not protest even against an illegitimate election and against Karimov's third presidential term, if it can be called the third term "" Uznews.net reports.

Hall also said that the international community might in silence or with limited criticism accept another extension of Karimov's presidential powers.

'There are some countries in Europe which are seeking an excuse to declare **Uzbekistan** their ally again,' Hall said. 'Karimov will make a number of little concessions, and these countries will be happy to declare **Uzbekistan** even a democratic country.'

However, Uzbek constitution adopted in 1992 clearly states that one person cannot be elected for presidential post for more than two times without a break. Islam Karimov was re-elected twice as president of **Uzbekistan** "" in 1991 and 2000 and has already served two full presidential terms.

Islam Karimov runs his country for almost two decades, since the early 1989 when he was the Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party. Since that, the country that has rich natural resources but poorest population in the Post Soviet region, neither has faced any meaningful political nor economic reforms.

Document TCASIA0020070112e31b00007

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YES

Uzbekistan Denies Involvement In Activist's Beating

202 words

8 January 2007

Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications

English

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News Stories and Documents

January 8, 2007 (RFE/RL) -- Uzbek authorities have denied a claim by human rights activist Elena Urlaeva that police were behind her beating last week, RFE/RL's Uzbek Service reports.

In a statement, **Uzbekistan's** Interior Ministry maintained Urlaeva was beaten by relatives of convicts to whom she had allegedly promised legal service, which they say she failed to provide.

Urlaeva today reiterated her charge that she was assaulted by a group of women hired by Uzbek police.

Urlaeva has suffered beatings and detentions in the past, and has been sentenced to forced psychiatric treatment three times.

In August 2005, she was arrested for publishing a cartoon of the national emblem of **Uzbekistan** and for being in possession of material that criticized the regime of Uzbek President Islam Karimov. Since neither of these was covered by the Uzbek Criminal Code, Urlaeva was put in a psychiatric hospital.

Human rights organizations have protested her forced admissions into the hospitals.

(with additional material from AP)

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Document RFEUR00020070108e31800005

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**Eurasia Insight:****AN UZBEK AIR BASE: RUSSIA'S NEWEST ACHIEVEMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA**

Stephen Blank: 1/11/07

A EurasiaNet Commentary

Lost in all the international attention given to Turkmen President Sapamurat Niyazov's death in late December was an announcement that Russia and Uzbekistan had agreed on a deal giving Moscow access to the Uzbek airfield at Navoi. This development marks an important step forward in the Russian effort to lock up Uzbekistan as a loyal client state.

Policy analysts had long believed Russia was seeking a base in Uzbekistan, in particular the facility at Karshi-Khanabad, which was vacated in 2005 by US forces after the Uzbek government issued an eviction order. [For background see the Eurasia Insight archive]. A November 2005 treaty between Russia and Uzbekistan contained language enabling Moscow, if it so desired, to come with military means to the aid of Uzbekistan's government, language that only fueled the speculation that Moscow wanted permanent access to Karshi-Khanabad. But Russia, not wanting to be seen as an imperialistic power, denied that there were discussions about any base deal.

It's now clear that Moscow was indeed covetous of a military facility in Uzbekistan. But it's equally clear that there must have been hard bargaining, and the Russians did not get all they wanted. Certainly they did not get the more modern Karshi-Khanabad base, which has greater operational capacity than the facility at Navoi. Neither did they get full and unrestricted access to Navoi.

According to press reports, Russia will only be able to gain access to Navoi in case of emergencies, or what some reports called "force majeure" contingencies. In return Russia will provide Uzbekistan with modern navigation systems and air-defense weapons.

Russia mostly likely sought broader access to the base, given that Uzbekistan will probably emerge as the regional headquarters for a unified air defense command for Russia and several other Central Asian governments. This regional system will become a component of the CIS Unified Air Defense system, based upon pre-existing Soviet facilities and structures. Thus, to some degree, this deal represents what Russian military analyst Vladimir Mukhin called a "reanimation" of the Soviet defense structure. Meanwhile, Uzbek SU-27 and MiG-29s will be posted there as a regular peacetime deployment.

Mukhin also opined that Moscow wanted the Navoi base because one of its primary interests in Uzbekistan is uranium production and enrichment, which is now being done at the Navoi Mining and Smelting plant. Allegedly this new capability will help protect those works from security threats, such as a potential terrorist attack.

Access to an air base in Uzbekistan enhances Russia's ability to respond to a potential crisis in Central Asia, such as the type of civil unrest and clashes that occurred in Ar dijan in 2005, or upheaval triggered by a political succession crisis.

Both Moscow and Beijing showed considerable anxiety over the fact that they could not intervene in Kyrgyzstan in 2005's Tulip Revolution, and, since then, have both made conscious efforts to bolster their respective ability to project power in the region. Gaining access to the Navoi base offers another example of Russia's efforts to encompass all of Central Asia in a single defense organization that is, in essence, counterrevolutionary and/or anti-democratic. The second objective is clearly tied to Russian concerns about American strategic intentions and capabilities in Central and South Asia. It would seem that the Russian military still regards US and NATO forces as its primary enemy. After the Soviet collapse in 1991, much of Russia's air defenses and early warning systems were disrupted to the point where Moscow was actually "blind" to potential attacks. The Kremlin is eager to close existing gaps in its defenses. A "reanimation" of the old Soviet air defense system is crucial to this end, as is exclusion of US forces from Central Asia to the greatest possible degree. Furthermore, Russia apparently is building an integrated land, sea and air force throughout the Caspian Basin. A unified air-defense is critical to the protection of all those forces.

Access to Navoi is a major, though not completely decisive, Russian step towards realizing several diverse objectives simultaneously. It is also indicative of a reversion to more overt forms of Russian imperialism, as well as an expression of apprehension of liberalization in Central Asia.

Perhaps Uzbekistan has begun to fully appreciate Moscow's aims, as Tashkent has made several recent small gestures to improve its ties to the European Union and the West in general. While Russia may have gained limited access to Navoi, it may turn out to have also overreached, stimulating Uzbek President Islam Karimov to reach out again to the West. Whatever the case, the Navoi basing agreement constitutes a significant development in Central Asia's geopolitical contest – one that deserves ongoing scrutiny.

Editor's Note: Stephen Blank is a professor at the US Army War College. The views expressed in this article do not in any way represent the views of the US Army, Defense Department or the US Government.

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Eurasia Insight:

RUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES WRESTLE FOR CONTROL OF THE OSCE AGENDA

Richard Weitz: 1/08/07

A EurasiaNet commentary

With Russia and the United States wrestling for control of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's agenda, 2007 could prove an important year for the 56-member state organization.

In December, Moscow intensified its efforts to steer the OSCE in a different direction, a reaction in part to criticism leveled at the Kremlin's policies by several prominent European Union figures. For example, in a mid-December interview published by the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht, who concurrently served in 2006 as the OSCE's chairman-in-office, lambasted Russia, saying that he had formed a "conclusive impression" that Russia was a "non-modern state."

"[Russia] is not a democratic system in our [Western] sense of the term," de Gucht stated, adding that the Kremlin did not make a clear enough distinction between "the regime and state property – between management and ownership of assets."

De Gucht also suggested that Moscow harbored anachronistic imperial ambitions in the countries that comprised the former Soviet empire. "Russia is suffering from phantom limb syndrome," he said. "It no longer has those territories [CIS states], but it's still feeling pain in them. That explains the Russians' attachment to Georgia and Ukraine."

De Gucht's comments helped draw a clear line within the OSCE -- with the United States, Canada and European Union standing against Russia and its surrogates in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In response to the criticism, Russia went on the offensive, stepping up efforts to change the OSCE's policy direction.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin attacked the OSCE for paying too little attention to political, military, and economic issues. Since 2004, Russian officials have urged the OSCE to apply its "original comprehensive approach" to the "new" transnational security challenges manifested in international terrorism and the illicit manufacture and trafficking of weapons. Moscow also has pushed for the allocation of a greater share of resources to economic development programs in countries located "east of Vienna."

In addition, the governments of Russia, Belarus, and most Central Asian countries have complained about the OSCE's perceived preoccupation with democratization and human rights in member states. Since 2004, Russian officials have sought to reduce the OSCE's election monitoring capacity and other democracy-promotion activities. For several months in 2004, the Russian government even refused to approve the OSCE budget until its members agreed to hold talks on its proposals. Since OSCE decisions are made by consensus, the other members had to pay heed to Moscow's concerns. Although in the end, OSCE members rejected most Russian demands, they did agree to reduce Moscow's share of the organization's budget.

A particular target of Russian ire is the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). In late 2005, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov complained that ODIHR had become too independent, adding that the office required more specific directions to guide its work. In particular, he complained that ODIHR had failed to apply "equal treatment" to its election monitoring missions.

Kamynin, in his comments last December, alleged that some member governments want to leave the OSCE unreformed since the present system provides them with "a convenient environment to exercise unilateral influence on other organization members, and to attempt to reform their societies and policies according to standards imposed from outside."

Lavrov reiterated many of these criticisms at an early December 2006 meeting of the OSCE Council of Foreign Ministers in Brussels. For the first time, he warned that a failure to make the needed reforms -- at least from Russia's viewpoint -- would call into question the rationale for the organization's existence. Lavrov may have sought to make a preemptive strike since the issue of the so-called "frozen conflicts" in the former Soviet bloc, especially the disputed separatist regions in Georgia and Moldova, is now high on the OSCE's agenda. The frozen conflicts were the main topic of discussion during a December 18 meeting in Moscow between Lavrov and the OSCE's chairman-in-office for 2007, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos.

At the OSCE foreign ministers meeting in December, the head of the American delegation, US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns, called for Russian troops to withdraw completely from Georgia and Moldova in accord with the commitments Moscow made at the 1999 OSCE Istanbul summit. Western governments accuse Russian peacekeepers in both countries of siding with separatists -- supporting the breakaway regions of Transdnestr in Moldova and Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. Lavrov replied that the OSCE's involvement in these disputes was only "politicizing" these conflicts and impeding their peaceful resolution. Disputes over the continued presence of Russian military forces in the disputed regions of Georgia and Moldova have hindered NATO's adoption of the amended Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

More generally, there has been a growing divergence in the American and Russian visions for the OSCE. The United States wants to rebalance the OSCE geographically, but not functionally. American officials prefer the OSCE to continue devoting attention to political reform issues (especially elections monitoring), but to allocate greater resources to monitoring the situation in the former Soviet Union. The governments of Russia and its allies want to rebalance the OSCE functionally by having it focus on political and military cooperation. Although they favor new OSCE initiatives to promote economic development in the former Soviet states, they do not want the organization to single them out for increased attention in its so-called human dimension activities.

Editor's Note: Richard Weitz is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC.

[Print this story](#)



Civil Society:

UZBEKISTAN: ANDIJON'S SCATTERED REFUGEES LIVE WITH UNCERTAINTY

12/29/06

A EurasiaNet Partner Post from [RFE/RL](#)

The bloody events in the eastern Uzbek city of Andijon in May 2005 sent shock waves throughout Central Asia and around the world. The violence also created hundreds, possibly thousands, of refugees.

One UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) official in the southern Kyrgyz city of Osh told RFE/RL that some 2,000 Andijon refugees remain in Kyrgyzstan.

Uzbek refugees who fled to Kyrgyzstan have received the most attention. The UNHCR relocated hundreds to Romania and elsewhere, but hundreds remain.

Tashkent accused 15 of those refugees of being escaped prisoners or ringleaders of what it says was an attempt to overthrow the government. Earlier this year, Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Court agreed in four cases, but so far all four refugees still remain in Kyrgyzstan. Asylum was granted to the other 11.

Threat Of Forced Repatriation

Reports suggest other refugees in Kyrgyzstan have been picked up by Uzbek security agents or quietly handed over to Uzbek authorities. Relatives of Isroil Kholdarov, who was the Andijon chairman of the unregistered opposition Erk party, say he disappeared in August and has since been reported as being in Uzbek custody.

One relative, who asked that her name not be used, said Kholdarov now faces serious charges in his homeland. "His lawyer has reviewed the criminal case against him, and it seems he is accused of violating Article 57 of the Uzbek Criminal Code -- terrorism," she said. "Under the law, if he is found guilty, he could have his property confiscated, he could be put in prison for 15 to 25 years, or he could get the death penalty."

Kyrgyzstan is not the only country to have repatriated Andijon refugees.

Ukrainian authorities detained 11 Uzbek refugees in the Crimea and returned them to Uzbekistan. A Foreign Ministry spokesman countered fierce international criticism of Kyiv by saying the 11 had been engaged in illegal activities while in Ukraine.

In Russia, a decision to extradite Rustam Muminov was overturned by a Moscow city court in early November, but that verdict came after Russian authorities had already handed him over.

Returning Voluntarily?

Some refugees voluntarily returned to Uzbekistan in 2006. Roughly one-third of the 150 or so Andijon refugees who had resettled in the United States returned in midyear, taking up an offer of amnesty from the Uzbek government.

Tashkent has tried to use those returnees to demonstrate that life in Uzbekistan has returned to normal. They've appeared on television, and the government is currently making a film about them.

But one returnee offered a glimpse into his new life: "Since we returned, we have to go once a week to the police [station] and explain the situation [and] how our family is doing."

Some observers suggest the return of those refugees had less to do with homesickness or patriotism and more to do with pressure being placed on relatives who remained behind in Uzbekistan.

The majority of the 400 Andijon refugees the UNHCR helped resettle remain in Europe and North America.

One man, who fears retaliation against his relatives in Uzbekistan, told RFE/RL that life in Germany is good. He said his children and son-in-law are adjusting to life in their new home, have found work, and are learning German. But he added that he misses his home and would consider going back if conditions changed.

Uncertainty In Kyrgyzstan

Back in Central Asia, the lives of some Andijon refugees in Kyrgyzstan were shuffled once again over the summer, when refugee disappearances led the UNHCR and Kyrgyz agencies to relocate them farther from the Uzbek border. The move to areas around the capital, Bishkek, however, means they are less likely to find family or fellow Uzbeks, who are more populous in the southern Osh and Jalal-Abad regions.

Reduced fear of being spirited away to Uzbekistan does not translate into jobs, however, or long-term housing.

The UNHCR representative in Bishkek, Carlos Zaccagnini, said many Andijon refugees remain in Kyrgyzstan without any legal status.

"There are Uzbek nationals that are in the Kyrgyz Republic without registering as asylum seekers or refugees. And since [the] May events of last year, it would be very hard to determine how many did come across that haven't registered, how many stayed, [or] how many may have left but returned," Zaccagnini said.

"You should recall that the borders between these two countries are open in the south, and there is a regular influx of Uzbek citizens into the Kyrgyz Republic," he added. "So on that account, it is literally impossible to determine how many would have come into Kyrgyzstan seeking asylum but actually not registering with either ourselves or the [Kyrgyz] state [authorities]."

Zaccagnini said it is impossible to say how many Uzbek nationals are living in Kyrgyzstan illegally. He noted that media estimates "have gone into the thousands, others into the hundreds. So it is very hard to determine. But I would say that they are definitely above 100."

Though they may have escaped Uzbek repression, those refugees still face one of their most difficult challenges -- finding any means possible, including begging, to earn a living in an area where unemployment is high, and growing, among legal residents.

Editor's Note: Uktambek Karimov and Shukrat Bobojonov of RFE/RL's Uzbek Service contributed to this report.

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**Eurasia Insight:****RUSSIA/UZBEKISTAN: BRINGING POLITICAL SYSTEMS 'CLOSER TOGETHER'**

Daniel Kimmage: 11/26/06

A EurasiaNet Partner Post from [RFE/RL](#)

Under Josef Stalin, the Soviet Union had "engineers of human souls," writers whose task it was to instill a staunch belief in the building of a glorious communist future.

What was once the Soviet Union is today a more pragmatic place, where moneyed elites have no truck with the glorious future but a deep-seated interest in the perpetuation of the status quo. The new engineers are "political technologists" -- and their task is to keep the cogs and gears of authoritarian "managed democracy" whirring from predictable election to predictable election behind a presentable public-relations facade.

Kremlin Connections

It was somehow fitting that a visit to Uzbekistan by a group of Russia's most prominent specialists in political public relations should coincide with the first anniversary of a treaty that established a new alliance between the two countries.

The Russian delegation that visited Tashkent and Samarqand on November 13-16 included Gleb Pavlovsky, director of the Effective Politics Foundation; Modest Kolerov, head of a Kremlin department in charge of relations with the CIS; Yevgeny Kozhokin, director of the Strategic Studies Institute; Andranik Migranyan, chairman of the Commission on Issues of Globalization and National Development Strategy in the Public Chamber; Sergei Markov, director of the Institute for Political Studies; and other notables.

Most of the Russian visitors warranted a Kremlin-tinged description, from "Kremlin insider" (Pavlovsky) to "Kremlin official" (Kolerov) to "pro-Kremlin" (Kozhokin, Migranyan, Markov).

'The Russian/Uzbek Experience'

The substantive portion of the visit, which was organized by Pavlovsky's Effective Politics Foundation and Uzbekistan's Regional Policy Foundation, consisted of roundtable discussions in Tashkent and Samarqand.

A website run by Pavlovsky's Foundation, [kreml.org](#), enumerated the topics as 1) Deepening the process of democratic, socioeconomic, and social and political reforms: the experience of Uzbekistan and Russia; 2) Current condition and prospects for development of democratic institutions and processes: the experience of Uzbekistan and Russia; and 3) Challenges and threats to the development of civil-society institutions and how to overcome them.

The visit and roundtables received extensive coverage in official and semi-official Uzbek media. In particular, one pro-government website, [press-uz.info](#), provided numerous quotes from the discussions between the Russian experts and their Uzbek

colleagues.

Western discourse on such topics frequently stresses civil society's watchdog role as a counterweight to the dangers of excessive state power. But the tone in Tashkent and Samarqand was somewhat different.

Importance Of The State

For example, quoted comments about civil society placed an odd emphasis on the importance of the state. One of the Russian visitors, Strategic Studies Institute head Kozhokin, noted that "the state and civil society are parts of a single whole." Kozhokin then went on to say that "it is precisely strong state power that can create the conditions for constructing a market economy and the transition to a developed democratic system."

The state was also a looming presence in the discussion of democratic institutions. One participant in the roundtable on the "development of democratic institutions and processes" suggested that those processes "should first and foremost ensure the flourishing of the state, the creation of a reliable system for defending national interests, and the country's security."

Meddling Foreigners

National sovereignty and the menace of malign foreign influence were another leitmotif. Press-uz.info noted that "particular stress was placed on the need not only to build civil society, but also to ensure an unshakable foundation of state independence." The Russia-based Regnum news agency reported that participants at one point stressed that "democracy cannot be brought in from the outside." Press-uz.info explained that democracy is more local than universal.

Roundtable participants were said to have noted that "democracy assuredly has requirements and principles that are common to all." But they went on to add that, "nevertheless, democratic transformations in each country should take into account a people's mentality, history, traditions, and other specific elements that are inherent only to that society."

Participants suggested that pernicious foreign influence seemingly manifests itself not only in attempts to install democracy from without. Foreign media are a source of distortions. That was a conclusion implied by a discussion of "the necessity of objective coverage by foreign media of socioeconomic and social and political transformations in Uzbekistan, and the implementation of the latest foreign-policy initiatives of the country's leadership."

Praising The State

The message that emerged from the discussion as reported by press-uz.info was clear: The state must remain in firm control; democracy is whatever political system is described as democratic by an individual state in line with its officially recognized national traditions; outside involvement in internal affairs is unwelcome; and, finally, foreign media coverage that deviates from these postulates is not objective.

That message fits in perfectly with recent Uzbek government policy. Officials in Tashkent have touted state control, rejected Western models of democratic reform,

evicted the majority of Western-funded NGOs, and used the government-controlled press to pillory foreign media coverage of Uzbekistan that calls attention to these phenomena.

Sending this message was not the only purpose of the Russian delegation's visit. Praise for Uzbekistan's leadership and the affirmation of Russian-Uzbek friendship were also present in abundance. As [press-uz.info](#) reported, the Russian experts described the success of Uzbekistan's reforms as a result of what they called "the optimal choice of strategy and tactics of democratic transformations."

The visiting chairman of the Commission on Issues of Globalization and National Development Strategy in Russia's Public Chamber (Andranik Migranyan) was more succinct. He stated bluntly that Uzbekistan is "on the right path," [ferghana.ru](#) reported.

Meanwhile, Gleb Pavlovsky positively gushed that what he called Uzbekistan's "ongoing construction of stable social institutions forms a unique experience that can be applied not only in other states in the region, but on other continents."

On friendship, Kolerov, the head of the Kremlin's CIS department, stressed that Russia "will always stand beside Uzbekistan as it carries out its important political and state tasks," according to [uzmetronom.com](#), a website run by independent Uzbek journalist Sergei Yezhkov.

All of these messages received approval at the highest level in Uzbekistan. On November 16, President Islam Karimov received Pavlovsky and the other members of the Russian delegation, the official news agency Uza reported. And it was Pavlovsky who delivered what may have been the most potent characterization of Uzbek-Russian partnership at the current juncture, [uzmetronom.com](#) reported. A key Kremlin adviser, Pavlovsky remarked that recent reforms in Uzbekistan "are bringing our political systems closer together."

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yes

New Uzbek ambassador to Brussels appointed

311 words

2 December 2006

The Times of Central Asia

English

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TASHKENT, September 2 (TCA). **Uzbekistan's** Senate, or upper chamber of Oliy Majlis (parliament), elected Justice Minister Boritosh Mustafoev as a High Court Chairman, and First Deputy Foreign Minister Isan Mustafoev as a Brussels envoy.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) reported today with reference to **Uzbekistan's** UZA official news agency that the country's Senate elected Justice Minister Boritosh Mustafoev as the Supreme Court's new chairman. As the media reports, the 57-year-old Mustafoev is a former prosecutor-general, former Constitutional Court chairman, and former Central **Election** Commission chairman.

He had been in charge of the Justice Ministry since early 2005. Who will replace him is still unclear, says RFE/RL. Reportedly, Mustfaev was among officials to whom EU imposed visa ban after the bloodiest military crackdown in the eastern Uzbek city of Andijon last year.

Also today, as the media reported from the country's capital, the Uzbek Senate appointed First Deputy Foreign Minister Isan Mustafoev **Uzbekistan's** new ambassador to Brussels, where Council of the European Union resides. RFE/RL also reported on the UzMetronom.net independent news website, who described Isan Mustafoev as a career intelligence officer. Finally, says the media, the Senate approved a draft ratification bill on the resumption of **Uzbekistan's** membership into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

State-controlled media says the decision marks Tashkent's formal re-entry into the Russian-led regional grouping that also comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan - RFE/RL reported. **Uzbekistan** decided to rejoin the CSTO at an informal CIS summit in Sochi in August. The Protocol obliges the signatory states to assume all rights and obligations deriving from membership of the CSTO, and to join all of this organization's international agreements and resolutions. It had stopped its membership into the organization in 1998.

Document TCASIA0020061206e2c20000d

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Guten Tag, Uzbekistan!

Marina Kozlova

1419 words

8 November 2006

Transitions Online

English

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TASHKENT, Uzbekistan | German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited Uzbekistan at the beginning of November, just two weeks before the European Union is set to discuss the sanctions it imposed on the country a year ago.

In a nod to human rights concerns, Steinmeier first met a prominent rights campaigner in Tashkent before his talks with President Islam Karimov. Still, many observers said his visit confirmed that Germany, which operates a military base in this Central Asian country, would take Uzbekistan's side on the issue.

"There is no reason to stick to the sanctions or to stick to them in the present form," Steinmeier told journalists in the ancient city of Bukhara.

Once a strategic ally of the United States and other Western governments, Uzbekistan gambled these relationships away with its brutal suppression of an uprising in the town of Andijan in May 2005. Hundreds were killed when troops opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators. When the government ignored numerous calls by inter-governmental bodies and international human rights organizations for an independent, international investigation, the **EU** imposed an embargo on arms sales and military transfers to Uzbekistan and a visa ban on 12 senior government ministers and officials.

Rumors have been swirling for some time that Karimov, who has been running this nation of 26 million since Soviet days, and some of his Western counterparts were trying to engineer a rapprochement. It now appears that Western governments are indeed seeking access to geopolitical and economic benefits despite the dictatorial character of Karimov's regime, and their own professed concern for human rights and democracy. Germany is now testing the viability of such an approach.

SANCTIONS: A BLUNT INSTRUMENT

Opportunism and greed are not the only drivers behind the West's U-turn that is gradually coming into focus, however.

The sanctions were intended to send a signal that despotism would not be tolerated, and to encourage Karimov to loosen his grip. "With the help of the sanctions, the European Union demonstrated its attitude towards the events in Andijan," says Dosym Satpayev, director of the Assessment Risks Group, a non-commercial research organization based in Almaty, Kazakhstan. "It was also an attempt to bring Islam Karimov and his circle back to reality, because they have been using Uzbekistan's active participation in the anti-terror coalition as a cover for open violations of human rights."

But if the sanctions managed to send a signal, they failed to prompt change inside Uzbekistan.

In part, this is due to the Asian giants that happily stepped into the void left behind by Western governments. If many Western companies are finding it harder to do business in Uzbekistan, the country has become more attractive to investors from China and Russia. The relationship extends beyond the purely commercial: this year, Uzbekistan joined the Eurasian Economic Community, whose other members are Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and **Tajikistan**, and rejoined the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a grouping of the same member states plus Armenia, from which it had withdrawn in 1999.

Perhaps of more import for regional geopolitics, Uzbekistan is also a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for regional security issues, which includes China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and **Tajikistan**. The group has been accused by Western observers of being little more than a support network for authoritarian regimes.

The support of Russia and China has given Karimov's government some breathing space, which it promptly used for more repression.

Hundreds of people suspected of involvement in the Andijan events were detained, and many were allegedly ill-treated or tortured, Amnesty International reported on the first anniversary of the incident. Many of those detained were convicted of "terrorist" offences and sentenced to between 12 and 22 years' imprisonment. Some human-rights defenders were convicted on serious criminal charges and also sentenced to long prison terms.

"I don't see that the sanctions are any use," says a resident of Tashkent who asked that his name not be used. "The regime has become tougher on dissidents. All the seeds of free thought have been lost. The opposition is bowing to the regime."

He adds, "I am sure that the **EU** will lift the sanctions for its own sake despite some discord [within the **EU**] regarding this issue."

That analysis is shared by many Uzbekistan-watchers.

"The **EU** will likely weaken pressure on Uzbekistan and attempt to bring about a rapprochement with the country because the losses made through the conflict with it have exceeded the benefits realized," says Satjayev, whose organization tracks political, economic, and social risks across Central Asia. "If the sanctions are lifted, the **EU's** image will suffer." He believes the **EU** may use informal channels to persuade Karimov to relax the repression in exchange for a lifting of sanctions.

Any such deal would face opposition from within the **EU**, however. Some countries, above all the United Kingdom, are warning against any indulgence of Karimov. They are seconded by the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think tank. "With this regime's record, there is no reason why the international community should return to anything like the status quo ante," the Crisis Group's director for Asia, Robert Templer, said in a press release. "Normalization of relations should come on the **EU's** terms, not Karimov's."

But other members, chiefly Germany, are urging Brussels to be more flexible, and Steinmeier hinted at some of the reasons behind that stance during his visit. Uzbekistan's national news agency quoted Steinmeier as saying that both states shared the aim of peace and stability in the region and should make common cause to achieve it. This applies most immediately to the situation in Afghanistan, which was also on the agenda: the German and other NATO troops deployed there receive key logistical support from an air base in Termez, an Uzbek city on the Afghan border, operated by the Germans. Around 300 German soldiers are stationed there.

A COMMON LANGUAGE

If the Afghanistan mission provides the geo-strategic rationale behind Germany's stance on the sanctions, commercial interests also factor in the equation.

Germany is Uzbekistan's fourth most important supplier of goods, after Russia, China, and South Korea, according to the German embassy in Tashkent. Between January and August, Uzbekistan imported goods from Germany worth 165 million euros, a nearly 12-percent increase over the same period last year.

Some 55 German companies operate in Uzbekistan, including the industrial giant Siemens and three German banks, which finance both the trade in cotton and German export transactions with Uzbekistan.

Germany is also seeking secure energy supplies. Some of the large amount of natural gas it buys from Russia originates in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; if Uzbekistan raises the price or does not supply the necessary volume, Germany could suffer.

The German interest in Uzbekistan, and the reaction it has prompted there, is also visible in less obvious areas.

After Tashkent's moves to squeeze out the U.S. airbase in the country, the U.S. mining giant

Newmont Mining, and many English-language non-governmental groups and media, English is growing less and less popular in the country. Instead, many Uzbeks are now learning German. According to the German Foreign Ministry, Uzbekistan now ranks fifth in absolute numbers of German learners worldwide.

Tatyana Nekrasova, principal of Tashkent School No. 60, tells TOL that her school is popular because it offers courses leading to a language diploma recognized in Germany. "An especially massive influx began several years ago," she says, "and now about 2,200 children study here despite the fact that the school was planned for 1,000 children."

Similar schools are located in Margilan and Samarkand. The German state-supported Goethe Institute for

German culture and language operates reading rooms in Tashkent and Samarkand as well as an information office in Ferghana.

Yulia Uvarkina, 17, is a student in the 11th, final grade at Tashkent School No. 60. She has relatives in Germany and spent a month in Berlin three years ago. "I love Berlin very much, it is the city of my dreams," she says. "I want to live in Germany."

Earlier this year, rumors made the rounds that grandchildren of President Karimov were attending Tashkent School No. 60. When asked about the gossip, Nekrasova preferred not to answer. But since the beginning of this school year, its grounds have been enclosed with a high concrete fence and policemen watch the school day and night.

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Uzbekistan succeeds in democratisation of state governance

09.01.2007 19:45

Political and legal reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan under the direction of President Karimov are evoking great interest of foreign political and public figures, experts, and media, Information Agency Jahon wrote.

A member of Japanese Parliament Koki Chuma noted that the draft of the Constitutional Law "On strengthening the role of political parties in the renewal and further democratization of state governance and modernization of the country" submitted by President Karimov to parliament for consideration was a real evidence of the intensification of democratic reforms in the country.

"It is natural for every society to have differing opinions regarding socio-political events, and the role of political parties is to ensure civilized discussion of the existing problems taking into account the diversity of opinion groups. In this regard, it is hard to overestimate the importance of the legislative framework supported in the country's constitution providing specific conditions for the development of political parties," Mr. Chuma said.

A member of Turkish Parliament T. Karakaya said the following:

"New draft laws will raise the international reputation of Uzbekistan and strengthen its role in the world community. I think that the adoption of the Constitutional Law aimed at strengthening the role of political parties is the evidence of substantial progress Uzbekistan has achieved in implementing political reforms under the administration of President Islam Karimov.

The expansion and strengthening of the role of political parties in the development of the electoral system has been central to the process of democratization in all countries. This, in turn, corresponds to the conditions of a democratic political system and satisfies the demands of the society. I am convinced that the regulatory acts being adopted are part of Uzbek administration's balanced policy that takes into account national customs and the interests of the population."

Egyptian Abulhaul ad-Davliya [transliterated] newspaper published a commentary entitled "The Truth of Life", which speaks of Uzbekistan's achievements that followed the independence. Particular attention is given to the legislative initiatives of President Karimov.

"The suggestions of the head of Uzbek state illustrate the fact that he is a strong politician and is a true leader of his country, who gives priority importance to the protection of human rights and strengthening of the society's tolerance. This in turn is the evidence of Uzbekistan high achievements in the renewal and democratization of state governance and modernization of the country," the article said.

Tehran Times has published an article titled as "The evolutionary road of Uzbek democracy". The authors of the article draw the readers' attention to the legislative initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan implemented in stages as a part of the evolutionary socio-political reform and development of the state legal and political system, moving closer with every step to becoming a strong civil society.

In this context, the article says, the events taking place in the socio-political life of Uzbekistan clearly demonstrate the fact that the initiatives put forward by President Karimov lead the country along the way of civilized reforms, rather than through a revolutionary conflict observed today in several countries of the world and the region.

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**Brief Statement
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov
on the press-conference on the results of 7-th Meeting
of "Uzbekistan - EU" Cooperation Council
(Brussels, 8 November, 2006)**

425

Mr. Secretary of State,
Representatives of Mass Media,

In the beginning of my address I would like to thank the EU delegation headed by the Secretary of State of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland Mr.P.Torstilla for an open and constructive approach to discuss the Cooperation Council meeting's agenda.

In the framework of the Cooperation Council meeting we discussed a wide range of bilateral relations in political and economic fields as well as international issues of mutual interest.

We believe that the main achievement of today's meeting is the important step we made in the process of renewal of the traditional dynamics of our dialogue. We are convinced that the discussions we have had allowed the sides to get to know and understand each other better which is undoubtedly a positive fact for further cooperation.

In this regard I would like to confirm principal position that Uzbekistan is interested in developing and enhancing relations with the EU on all levels of interaction on the basis equality, mutual respect and non-interference into internal affairs. Besides we believe that any cooperation must develop on the principle of "two-way oncoming traffic", i.e., meet interests of both sides.

We consider that establishing of long term and sustainable bilateral cooperation based on partnership and credibility undoubtedly meets interests of Uzbekistan as well as European Union. For that purpose we have all necessary legal and institutional tools as Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and established in its framework joint bodies.

Uzbekistan is interested in strengthening cooperation with the European Union in developing and enhancing democracy, forming civil society, human rights and freedoms, consolidating democratic values in people's mind.

For this we have a good institutional ground as joint bodies "Uzbekistan-EU" – Cooperation Council, Parliamentary Cooperation Committee as well as Cooperation Committee and Subcommittee on Justice, Home Affairs and other related issues in the framework of each there had been a dialogue on human rights and democratization.

Uzbek side considers possible to conduct a dialogue on human rights in the framework of above mentioned Subcommittee established in conformity with PCA.

We believe that the dialogue on human rights aiming at mutual solution of problems must be conducted between equal subjects. Besides that dialogue should not be linked to the Andijan events which had a solely terrorist nature.

Uzbekistan expresses its readiness to organize experts meeting of Uzbekistan and the EU in the framework of report on the results of investigation into Andijan events that was forwarded to the Foreign Ministries of Belgium, Finland and Germany.

By this, we see large perspectives for interaction in the format Central Asia-EU. Uzbek side welcomes an increase in Europe's interests to the region. We supported the establishment of the position of EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Mr.Pierre Morel recently paid visit to our country during which there was a useful and comprehensive exchange of views. Uzbekistan participates in region political dialogue "EU-Central Asia" as well as in all other EU initiatives and programs implemented in the region including TACIS, BOMCA/CADAP, INOGATE, "Baku initiative", Working group on environment and etc.

Moreover it is obvious that the EU has not used its all potential in the Central Asia, which was particularly confirmed by the results of public opinion survey made by World Bank in 2004 and published in the UNDP report on human dimension in Central Asia. Only 4% of questioned ones thought that Europe is an important partner.

Therefore the Uzbek side supports the initiative of Germany to elaborate a new EU concept on cooperation with the CA and ready to take part in all stages of its preparation, so it would bring specific practical results for both sides.

Taking into account past experience as well as contemporary realities we believe that in elaborating the concept it is necessary to build it up on with respect of the interests of EU countries as well as Central Asian states. In that case the cooperation will be effective and significant for both sides.

It is rather important to examine real situation in our region more, as well as national values, mentality, traditions and historical experience of Central Asian people in a more profound and comprehensive way.

Contemporary realities confirm the necessity of a deeper realization of indivisibility of threats to the security of Europe and Central Asia and commonness of interests in combating religious extremism, terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime.

A large potential lies in trade-economic, transport-communication, energy and cultural-humanitarian fields as well as environmental issues.

In this context, I would like to underline that continuation of positive dynamics that presents in our relations lately, would serve to the full-scale and effective interaction on aforementioned issues. From our side, we are ready to take any efforts required.

Thank you for your attention.