A Timeline of U.S. Military Aid Cooperation with Uzbekistan

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Acronyms

CENTCOM  (U.S.) Central Command
DOD  (U.S.) Department of Defense
DSCA  Defense Security Cooperation Agency
FMF  Foreign Military Financing (grant program)
FY  fiscal year
IMET  International Military Education and Training (grant program)
IMU  Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
JCET  Joint Combined Exchange Training
K2  Karshi-Kharnabad Airbase
MOD  (Uzbek) Ministry of Defense
MOU  Memorandum of Understanding
NADR  Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (grant)
NATO  North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDN  Northern Distribution Network
PFP  (NATO) Partnership for Peace
PL  public law
SOFA  Status of Forces Agreement
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Uzbekistan has the largest population and the largest military in Central Asia, with 65,000 soldiers. Given Uzbekistan’s size, centrality in the region, and proximity to Afghanistan, the U.S. government prioritized Uzbekistan for military assistance and cooperation in the region early on. Military aid relations developed rapidly in the latter half of the 1990s, but they were constrained by concerns about political repression and severe human rights failures.

Following 9/11 and Uzbekistan’s positive response to a U.S. request for use of the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airbase, bilateral U.S. aid, according to the State Department inspector general, trebled to approximately $162 million in FY 2002, with seven U.S. entities providing assistance to Uzbek police and military that year. (On the next page, a chart from the State Department’s Central Asia Bureau gives a higher number for total U.S. Assistance, which is one example of how difficult it is to account for the money actually being spent.) The State Department tried to pursue a dual policy that promoted the strategic aims of the DOD (access to the theater of conflict and “stability” in Uzbekistan) while emphasizing that the cooperation would only be sustainable if Uzbekistan undertook political and economic reforms. However, as demonstrated in the State Department graph on the next page, funding priorities indicated a significantly greater focus on the counterterrorism agenda than on the democratization/reform agenda. The non–Freedom Support Act funding line shows military assistance.
Beginning in 2002, and every year since, Congress has legislated conditions on the provision of State Department–funded military aid to Uzbekistan. As a result, late in FY 2004 the State Department was required to cut off police and military aid when the secretary of state was unable to certify that Uzbekistan was making adequate progress on human rights commitments it had agreed to in a 2002 bilateral framework with the United States.

The killings in Andijan in May 2005 further led the State Department to pull back from the Uzbek regime. Then Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain traveled to Tashkent days after the incident to demand that the Uzbek government allow an independent investigation of the events or face further reductions in U.S. military cooperation.

In July 2005, the government of Uzbekistan notified the U.S. government that it was abrogating the base agreement and that it wanted the U.S. military to leave K2 within six months (under the terms of the Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA signed in 2001). U.S. forces departed the facility in November 2005.

Subsequently, the DOD (through the Office of Military Cooperation in the U.S. Embassy Tashkent) and CENTCOM sustained as much military cooperation with the Uzbek military as they could, establishing logistics and other agreements and encouraging Uzbek participation in regional exercises and military leadership conferences.
By mid-2007, with the Congressional restrictions on State Department–funded aid to Uzbekistan still in place, the military aid relationship nevertheless resumed. For the first time since 2005, Uzbekistan received $200,000 in NADR funds in FY 2008, and it is slated to receive $200,000 in E-IMET funds in FY 2010 (permissible due to a change in law in December 2009).

With the launch of the Northern Distribution Network into Afghanistan in 2008, the U.S. government renewed its efforts to expand military cooperation with Uzbekistan. In addition to increasing military-to-military contacts and the supply of equipment, the DOD is opening a range of logistics depots and commercial (procurement) opportunities for Uzbekistan.

### U.S.–Uzbek Military Cooperation Milestones


**August 1995**—Uzbekistan signs a Security Agreement with NATO, activating membership in Partnership for Peace.

**October 1995**—U.S. Secretary of Defense and Uzbek Minister of Defense sign an MOU, the first between the DOD and a nonnuclear state of the former Soviet Union. “The MOU will serve as the framework for cooperative defense relations between the two countries. These relations will comprise a variety of defense and military contacts designed to enhance mutual understanding and international security. The contact programs include an enhanced International Military Education and Training program [E-IMET focuses on rule of law and non-lethal courses in military management, etc.] and the multilateral Partnership for Peace program.”

**June 1996**—Secretary of Defense Perry meets with President Karimov and discusses security issues in Central Asia and the strong bilateral relationship that is evolving. In particular, they note the following:

- The signing of the October 1995 MOU.
- Establishment and two recent meetings of a bilateral working group on defense cooperation.
- Establishment of a partnership between the Louisiana National Guard and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- The establishment of a defense conversion committee to promote mutually beneficial economic links.
Implementation of professional training programs through the U.S. Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany, and through the IMET program.

Uzbekistan’s recent and future participation in Partnership for Peace exercises.

The recent posting of a defense attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent and plans to establish a reciprocal office at Uzbekistan’s Washington embassy.

“Perry praised Uzbekistan’s active participation in NATO’s Partnership for Peace program and its efforts to form a combined peacekeeping battalion with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as well as the joint hosting of an exercise in the spirit of the Partnership for Peace in Central Asia in 1997.”

July 1996—Uzbekistan signs the NATO–PFP SOFA.

March 1997—Uzbek SOFA under PFP enters into force.

March 1997—President Clinton certifies Uzbekistan is eligible to receive military articles and services from the United States, as authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Export Control Act.

1997—U.S. Army Special Forces (“Green Berets”) land in Central Asia for the first time. They train with elite units in Uzbekistan on field tactics, airborne assault operations, and counterinsurgency.

February 1998—U.S.–Uzbekistan Joint Commission convenes for the first time. The Commission is meant to provide the two governments with a structure for maintaining regular high-level contacts. Chaired by Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the NIS Steven Sestanovich and by Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov, the Commission is divided into four committees: political; military; trade, investment, and energy; and economic reform.


February 1999—CIA paramilitary teams are reportedly present in Uzbekistan, providing covert assistance to President Karimov’s National Security Service to track down and apprehend Osama bin Laden’s supporters within the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).
February 2000—The first sizeable arms transfer to any Central Asian republic takes place. The United States transfers night-vision goggles, radios, and 16 military transport vehicles to the Uzbek military.  

May 2000—CENTCOM Commander General Anthony Zinni makes his first visit to Tashkent. After conferring with U.S. Ambassador Joseph Presel and the CIA station chief, to clarify message, he meets with President Karimov. Zinni wants a closer relationship but is being held back by Washington due to human rights concerns and lack of focus on Central Asia. He finds $20,000 worth of used and surplus military equipment to give Uzbekistan.

March 2001—The DOD announces it will enter a cooperative logistics deal with Uzbekistan. The Pentagon notifies Congress that Uzbekistan is eligible for an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, which permits the DOD to provide undisclosed amounts of logistics support for joint exercises or contingencies.

June 2001—The DOD and FBI train Uzbek Ministry of Interior and National Security Service in countering the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

September 11, 2001—Al Qaeda launches multiple attacks in the United States, killing several thousand people.

October 6, 2001—The United States and Uzbekistan sign SOFA allowing U.S. use of Uzbek airspace and up to 1,500 U.S. troops at the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airbase 90 miles north of the Afghan border. In return, the United States provides unspecified “security guarantees” and pledges to target IMU fighters fighting alongside Al Qaeda and Taliban.

October 7, 2001—United States launches air war against al Qaeda and Taliban hosts in Afghanistan.

March 2002—“Declaration on Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework” is signed by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Uzbek Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov. It includes a nonspecific security guarantee, with the United States affirming that it “would regard with grave concern any external threat” to Uzbekistan’s security. The two sides pledge to cooperate militarily, including on “re-equipping the armed forces” of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan pledges “to further intensify the democratic transformation of society in the political, economic and...
spiritual areas,” and to “ensure the effective exercise and protection of human rights.”

August 2002—Supplemental appropriations for FY 2002 (PL 107–206) enacted. It conditions Foreign Military Financing (FMF) aid to Uzbekistan on a certification by the secretary of state that Uzbekistan is making progress in meeting human rights commitments under the Declaration on Strategic Partnership and Cooperation. Secretary of state later reports that Uzbekistan is making progress in human rights.

February 2003—Consolidated Appropriations for FY 2003 signed into law (PL 108-7). It expands human rights conditionality to all assistance included in the State Department/Foreign Operations division for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan—i.e., Freedom Support Act funds, plus military aid funded in the bill. Kazakhstan is required to make “significant progress” in respecting human rights, while Uzbekistan must demonstrate “substantial progress” in meeting the obligations of the Strategic Partnership accord. A national interest waiver is included for Kazakhstan but not for Uzbekistan.

March 2003—While acknowledging on-going serious human rights and political repression issues in Uzbekistan in that year’s Country Report on Human Rights, the State Department openly justifies military aid in support of counterinsurgency training for the Uzbek military and counterterrorism training for the Uzbek law enforcement “to help maintain security in Uzbekistan and improve Uzbekistan’s capacity to participate fully in the war against terrorism.”

March 2003—United States launches invasion of Iraq. Attention diverts from Afghan war.

March 2003—The DOD and Uzbekistan MOD sign Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement intended “to further the interoperability, readiness and effectiveness of their respective military forces through increased logistics cooperation” for combined exercises, training, deployments, operations or unforeseen exigencies.

April 2003—U.S.–Uzbekistan joint statement issued at the conclusion of Joint Security Cooperation Consultations in Washington, D.C., reaffirms Uzbekistan’s commitments made in the 2002 Strategic Partnership agreement to expand democracy and space for the development of civil society, and reaffirms U.S. willingness to expand its defense and military cooperation with Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan expressed support for U.S. goal of disarming Iraq, and the United States expresses support for Uzbekistan’s goal of participating in the postwar reconstruction of Afghanistan.
May 2003—Secretary of State Colin Powell reports that Uzbekistan is making progress in democratization and respect for human rights.\(^2\)

December 30, 2003—President Bush states that Uzbekistan has failed to meet human rights requirements included in the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 1993 (Section 1203(d)), but he immediately waives the required restriction on assistance, using a waiver provision that had been inserted into a DOD bill the preceding year.\(^2\)

January 2004—Consolidated Appropriations for FY 2004, including the State Department/Foreign Operations Appropriations, is enacted (PL 108–199). It largely reiterates FY 2003 conditions on aid to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, but it clarifies that assistance to the central government of Uzbekistan may be affected and that conditions include respect for human rights, establishing a genuine multiparty system, and ensuring free and fair elections, freedom of expression, and the independence of the media.

February 2004—Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld visits Tashkent and meets with President Karimov. When asked about the potential future of a U.S. troops base in Uzbekistan, he says: “We have no plans to put permanent bases in this part of the world. We have been discussing with various friends and allies the issue of—I guess you call them ‘operating sites’—that would not be permanent as a base would be permanent but would be a place where the United States and coalition countries could periodically and intermittently have access and support. . . . But I would add that we have benefited greatly in our efforts in the global war on terror and in Afghanistan from the wonderful cooperation we’ve received from the Government of Uzbekistan.”\(^2\)

July 2004—Secretary of State Colin Powell is unable to certify Uzbekistan government’s progress on human rights.\(^2\) The decision to decertify results in a cutoff of IMET and FMF.\(^2\)

July 2004—CENTCOM Commander General Abizaid visits Tashkent.

July 30, 2004—Suicide bomber attacks outside U.S. Embassy, Tashkent.

August 2004—General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visits Uzbekistan and criticizes the cutoff of IMET and FMF programs as “shortsighted” and “not productive,” since it reduces U.S. military influence.\(^2\)
December 2004—Consolidated Appropriations for FY 2005 (PL 108–447) is enacted. Section 578 continues the previous year’s conditions on State Department–funded aid to Uzbekistan.

May 2005—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is unable to certify that the Uzbekistan government is making significant progress in respecting human rights, so the ban on IMET and FMF remains in place.

May 13, 2005—Uzbek National Security Service troops open fire on crowds in Andijan, killing hundreds or thousands of unarmed civilians.

May 24, 2005—NATO is “deeply disturbed” by the violence in Andijan. The alliance announces that it will keep its relationship with Uzbekistan “under close review” and reminds Uzbekistan that it committed to “basic freedoms, human rights and other fundamental values” when it joined NATO’s PFP and Individual Partnership Action Plan.

May 29, 2005—Senators McCain, Sununu, and Graham travel to Tashkent. McCain, then the influential chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, holds a press conference and strongly urges the Uzbek government to allow independent investigation of Andijan events. He threatens to cut off military aid, including, presumably aid funded by the DOD.

July 2005—Uzbekistan demands that the United States leave the K2 airbase within six months.

November 2005—Foreign Operations Appropriations for FY 2006 (PL 109–102) is enacted. Section 586 adds a condition that the Uzbek government must permit an international investigation of events in Andijan.

May 2006—Secretary of state is unable to certify significant progress by Uzbekistan on human rights. As a result, there is no IMET or FMF funding for Uzbekistan in FY 2006.

September 2006—Continuing Resolution for FY 2007 (PL 109–289) maintains preceding year’s conditionalities on State Department–funded foreign aid to Uzbekistan (Section 586).
April 2007—Secretary of state is unable to certify significant progress by Uzbekistan on human rights. As a result, there is no IMET or FMF funding for Uzbekistan in FY 2007. 29

December 2007—State Department/Foreign Operations Appropriations for FY 2008 is enacted (PL 110-161). Congress adds language (Section 698) conditioning U.S. assistance to Kazakhstan on its meeting human rights and civil liberties commitments made at the late 2007 Madrid Meeting of the OSCE. The Senate also adds another condition to Section 685, stating that if the secretary of state had credible evidence that Uzbek officials might be linked to gross violations of human rights, including the deliberate killings of civilians in Andijan, they would be ineligible for admission to the United States. A waiver was included if admission was necessary to attend the UN or to further U.S. law enforcement aims.

January 2008—Admiral James Fallon, commander of CENTCOM, travels to Tashkent and meets with President Karimov.

February 2008—Deputy secretary of state unable to certify and report to Congress significant progress by Uzbekistan on human rights. Aid restrictions on IMET and FMF remain in place.

June 2008—Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher visits Uzbekistan and meets with President Karimov, the minister of foreign affairs, and the secretary of the National Security Council, as well as human rights activists and religious figures. His most recent visit was August 2006. He discussed border security and counter-narcotics cooperation and reconstruction in Afghanistan, among other topics. 30

November 2008—Negotiations begin in support of development of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), a land-based supply route through Central Asia to Afghanistan. 31

March 2009—State Department/Foreign Operations Appropriations for FY 2009 (Div H of PL 111–8) is enacted. Section 7076 on “Uzbekistan” continues to condition aid appropriated by this act on certification by the secretary of state that the Uzbek government is making “substantial and continuing progress” in meeting commitments under the 2002 Strategic Cooperation Framework and is “investigating and prosecuting the individuals responsible for the deliberate killings
of civilians in Andijan in May 2005.” It includes the ban on travel to the United States of persons found by the secretary of state to have been involved in the 2005 killings (added in the previous year’s legislation) and includes a waiver for this particular provision; there is no waiver for the rest of the requirements.

June 2009—In a further demonstration of normalization of relations, Congressman Eni Faleomavaega, chairman of the Asia Pacific Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, visits Tashkent. He is the first member of Congress from either chamber to do so since the killings in Andijan in 2005.

July 2009—Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns leads an interagency delegation to Tashkent to seek renewed cooperation on a range of issues.

July 2009—The DOD waives a “Buy American” procurement law that prevents it or the General Services Administration of the United States from purchasing products, construction materials, and services from Uzbekistan and the other Central Asian and South Caucasus countries.\(^3\)

August 2009—Minister of Defense Kabul Berdiev and CENTCOM Commander, General David Petraeus sign an agreement outlining a program of military to military contact involving educational exchanges and training for the coming year.\(^3\)

August 2009—The Ministry of Defense of Tajikistan hosts Regional Conference (RC) 2009—the latest in an annual series of command post exercises organized by CENTCOM and the U.S. Joint Forces Command. Some 240 military personnel from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and the United States participate, and for the first time in many years, Uzbekistan sends observers, as does Turkmenistan.

October 2009—National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2010 (HR 2647) is enacted. Section 801 grants the DOD temporary authority (for three years) to acquire products and services from Central Asian countries in order to reduce transportation costs and encourage participation in the NDN. A report is due by April 1, 2010, on uses of this provision.

Fall 2009—“Maintenance, Repair and Operations Uzbekistan Virtual Storefront Warehouse and Website” officially opens for business, allowing the U.S. military to shop online and in the region for construction materials.\(^4\)
November 2009—The State Department reports in its annual Freedom Support Act report for FY 2009 that, “Despite challenges presented by the evolving political and socio-economic climate in Uzbekistan, in FY 2009, the United States reengaged with the government on military-to-military support.”

December 2009—The first high-level annual bilateral consultation takes place with Uzbek foreign minister heading a delegation to Washington, D.C. Similar bilaterals will follow with the other Central Asian countries, an outgrowth of Undersecretary Burns’ trip to the region in July 2009.

December 2009—State Department/Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for FY 2010 (Div F of PL 111–117) becomes law. It maintains the prohibition on State Department–funded aid to Uzbekistan, as in the preceding year’s bill (sections 7075 and 7076), unless the secretary of state certifies necessary progress in human rights, but it exempts “Expanded IMET” (military training courses focusing on civil-military relations, laws of war, etc.) from the prohibition.

January 2010—The DOD issues a proposed rule change to permanently alter the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations to allow the purchase of goods and services (other than weapons and ammo) from Uzbekistan and the other 8 Central Asian and South Caucasus countries. Affected or potentially affected U.S. manufacturers and industries have two months to comment on the change before the rule will be made final.
Notes


4. According to a State Department Background Note, “Since mid-2007, the United States and Uzbekistan have begun to rebuild cooperation on issues of mutual concern, including security and economic relations, as well as political and civil society issues.” www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2924.htm.

5. See testimony of David Sedney (DOD) and George Krol (State Department) before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 15, 2009.


26. Defense and Foreign Affairs Daily, August 16, 2004


28. “Well the Congress has great deal to say about funding for many things and also concerning our military [emphasis added]. We along with the executive branch will continue to evaluate our relationship with Uzbekistan in light of recent events. There is lot we can do. I hope that the government will initiate immediately the investigation conducted by the OSCE.” U.S. embassy, Tashkent, “Senators McCain, Sununu and Graham Visit Uzbekistan,” May 29, 2005, uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/pr-052905.html.


30. uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/pr060308.html.


33. uzbekistan.usembassy.gov/pr081809.html.


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