

**Foreign Policy of Uzbekistan: From Ad Hoc Use of Principles towards Conceptualizing of  
Security Approach**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in  
International and Comparative Politics at The American University of Central Asia

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May God Bless you all

## **Abstract**

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In summer of 2012, Uzbekistan adopted New Concept of Foreign Policy initiated by President Islam Karimov and approved by upper and lower chambers of Oliy Majlis (Supreme Council). New strategy for Foreign Policy introduced several new aspects for Uzbek foreign and domestic policies like non – participation in politico – military blocks and restriction on placement of foreign military bases and infrastructure. This paper's main is to reveal the purpose of newly introduced document is and why it was adopted in 2012. The answer for that can be obtained through focusing on evolution of Uzbek Foreign Policy through analyzing its two main components: pursuance of independent foreign activity and securitization of Uzbekistan through bilateral and organizational alignments.

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## **Introduction**

Uzbekistan is an important geopolitical actor in Central Asia due to its important geographical and strategic location, demographic attributes and strong regional military. Decisions and actions taken by Uzbek government in political, economic and social spheres have direct and significant influence in regional and global politics. Since the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics and gaining the independence, Uzbekistan played a major role in regional geopolitics and decisions made by it impacted the regional balance of influence between the Russian Federation and the USA in Central Asia. The year of 2012 became an important year for Uzbekistan's domestic and foreign development. In summer of 2012, Uzbekistan withdrew from Russia led Collective Security Treaty Organization and adopted a "New Concept of Foreign Policy" in which it introduced the new principles and strategies for foreign relations and security. However, it has also created many contradicting elements concerning its content due to recent geopolitical conditions in Central Asia.

New Concept adopted by Uzbek government covers wide range strategy for foreign activity covering the vectors of foreign policy towards the regional neighbors in Central Asia, southern unstable Afghanistan and big powers. This document introduced by Islam Karimov as a main spokesman for Uzbek policies and approved by legislature created several questions like, what is the purpose of this document, considering the fact that Uzbekistan didn't have such a concrete written strategy of foreign activity. *That's why; the main research question is "what is the purpose of New Concept on Foreign Policy and why it was adopted in 2012?"* The recent Uzbekistan's withdrawal from CSTO and new policies within the new concept like non – participation in politico – military blocks and restriction on foreign military bases placement on republic's territory contradict the traditional Uzbek approach on securitization,

especially before the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan. The research on nowadays geopolitical and security conditions of the region and analysis on previous experience of Uzbek foreign activity provides an answer for these questions. ***The hypothesis of my Senior Thesis was that the main aim of “New Concept on Foreign Policy” is the response to acquisitions concerning the Uzbekistan’s realignment with the US and distancing itself from Russia.*** This thesis has examined the research question and hypothesis through the analysis of two main components of Uzbek Foreign Policy which are: pursuance of an independent foreign policy and securitization through bilateral and organizational alignments.

The logical path of thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter is a short provision of theoretical base for Uzbekistan’s main vector of foreign policy followed by several failed negotiations of Uzbekistan with Russia bilaterally and within the Commonwealth of Independent States. First part of this chapter provides a theoretical background concerning the conceptual base of Uzbekistan’s foreign policy. The conceptual base originates from previously established priorities of Uzbek foreign policy traced in constitution, governmental and presidential declarations and finally in ideological books written by President of Uzbekistan. Additionally, after providing an overview over main points of Uzbek foreign policy, it is important to note from which international actor’s influence, Uzbekistan willed to emancipate its foreign policy. The final part, includes brief overall explanation of geopolitical location of Uzbekistan on regional map, its main attributes, strategic advantages and disadvantages and provide the statement that Uzbekistan has capabilities to provide a relatively independent foreign policy.

The second chapter consists of analysis of historical background which traces the practical securitization of Uzbekistan since the Independence in 1991. It will include the bilateral security relations of Uzbekistan with Russia and within Russia led Collective Security Treaty. This organizations aim according to some scholars was to allow Russian Federation to sustain its influence on Post – Soviet space. An important emphasis on this chapter is made on the rise of Uzbek – US relations and deep cooperation with NATO after September 11 attacks and their decline after Andijan 2005. And finally, the securitization timeline ends with the recent major events like ISAF’s withdraw from Afghanistan, rehabilitation of the US – Uzbek relations, Uzbekistan’s withdrawal from CSTO and finally the adoption of New Concept on Foreign Policy.

The last third chapter provides the available content of “New Concept” and by combining all information into single analysis (including principles, securitization, situation in the region and finally the content of new concept) the research answers the question on aims behind newly adopted strategy on foreign policy.

## **Literature review**

### **Approach**

The whole research on Uzbekistan's foreign policy was based on qualitative approach. The research of recent developments of Uzbek Foreign Policy was based on observation of its bilateral relation with world's two main geopolitical super powers such as the United States and Russia mostly considering the security aims and geopolitical influence. In order to provide this analysis, there was a need in provision of brief historical background of foreign activity and its evolution since the early days of gaining independence until 2012 events. For the aim in providing the historical background on foreign activity during the early and mid of 1990's, when Uzbekistan didn't have the image of "closed state" and it was relatively open for regional types of integrative engagement, there are variety of sources provided by many western scholars. However, approximately, since the beginning of new millennium, Colorful revolutions and the Andijan events of 2005, Uzbekistan reached its highest extent of closeness. There are many researches and analysis concerning the Uzbekistan, however, from external sources. Despite being external and also interpretative, they will have one of the fundamental places in my research. Besides of historical and practical evidence there is a need for theoretical background of Uzbek foreign policy and for this concern I will include the analysis of primary sources like the document of New Concept of Foreign Policy, Constitution and Books by Islam Karimov.

And finally, I have included the opinion of Uzbekistani scholar and political scientist in my research. I have provided one interview with anonymous PhD expert from Tashkent, who as an expert from inside the Uzbekistan made a huge contribution for my thesis.

## Literature

There is a wide used assumption that researches provided on Uzbekistan are limited due to the lack of data. Uzbekistan by itself is relatively a closed country. By saying “closed” I don’t express a negative attitude towards the government and overall there is no author’s criticism in this whole research. However, by referring Uzbekistan as being closed, I want to highlight that the Uzbek government prefers to keep its domestic affairs within its border and prevent foreign interference in its internal issues. Due to this factor it is important to notice that the main hypothetical shortage for any research topic concerning the Uzbekistan seems to be the lack of literature. However, this shortage doesn’t prevent foreign scholars to provide researches from outside observation on Uzbekistan, with having very limited access to internal domestic sources. Researching the foreign policy of Uzbekistan appears to be an exception, due to the fact that in order to analyze foreign policy of any state (with some exceptions) all what is needed is access to constitution, at least few formal and official declaration, high level statements and finally the observation of state’s activity in international arena. This research concerning the role of New Foreign Concept of Uzbekistan and mild shift in its foreign policy has all this minimal attributes and allows me to hold a research for the scale worthy to be called as a thesis work. So far, I had a full access for the following sources like:

- The basic informative sources deriving from official state and governmental structures like constitution, doctrines and newly adopted Foreign Policy concept
- Description and analysis of foreign actions of Uzbekistan as the basis for the interpretation of new foreign concept and previous theories concerning the foreign policy.

And finally there was no need in quantitative research and shortages in statistical data and controversies between domestic and foreign data’s were avoided.

As it was already mentioned above, one of the main sources for literature is the “New Foreign Concept of Uzbekistan” which was approved by lower and upper chambers of the legislative branch of Uzbekistan in 2012. The new official document initiated by Uzbek President Islam Abduganievich Karimov covers main priorities of foreign activity of Uzbekistan starting from main objectives in regional relations and ending by global diplomatic tendencies concerning the bilateral and multilateral relations with foreign actors. The document of new concept of foreign policy is one of the cores of the theoretical framework and analysis of my thesis and that’s why along with being one of the main literature sources, it is going to be one of the most important subjects to be analyzed. Topics included within the new concept like: Central Asia as main priority of FP; evasion of imposed integrations by external powers and military neutrality – are to be analyzed through foreign and Central Asian literature and observations. The new obstacle concerning the New Concept originated much later after the research for thesis started. It appeared that for the near future the document will not be accessible due to unknown reasons. I was hopeful that the access for this document will be gained at least in the end of the senior year. However, despite of absence, I still have an access to the secondary sources concerning the main points of the concept of foreign policy. I managed to address to the official web – sites of Oliy – Majlis and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan for basic content of this document and data received from these sources are formal, valid and reliable.

Another additional source concerning the official policy bases for foreign activity originate from Constitution of Uzbek Republic. In spite of providing only small amount of information (just like constitutions of many other states) within the chapter concerning the foreign policy, we can consider it as a brief basis for the whole foreign policy. And finally the

online governmental portal [www.gov.uz/](http://www.gov.uz/) represents another official source where there is the clear reflection and aims of Uzbek foreign policy. These three sources are the most important ones for the conceptual theoretical framework of my research.

The new foreign concept one more time highlights the importance of supremacy of national interest in domestic and external affairs and the struggle for independent foreign policy. The concept of superiority of national interest was always present in the politics of Uzbekistan within its internal and external actions towards regional states and global super – powers. This idea, besides of being reflected in constitution and other governmental documents, always had a place in speeches of Uzbek president President Karimov. The best example of such inspiration for superiority of national interest are the books “Uzbekistan: National Sovereignty, Economy, Politics and Ideology” and “Uzbekistan will never depend on anybody” by Islam Karimov. This books are the first and thirteen’s ones in the series attributed to President’s reports, speeches and presentation on meetings of the lower and upper chambers of legislature, international summits, forums ceremonies varying with dates from 1996 - 2005. Additionally, this books contains the statements and answers given by president on domestic and international mass media and representatives of diplomatic corps concerning the Andijan events of 2005.

The part of thesis on historical evolution of Uzbekistan’s securitization activity and its correlation with domestic concerns was constructed based on scholarly articles, historical timeline projects of US research agencies and etc. Based on these articles, the research revealed the main security concerns and their impact on securitization process. The article of Olga Oliker and David A. Shlapak, “U.S. Interests in Central Asia” contributed on understanding the anatomy of US – Central Asia relations, particularly with Uzbekistan by

calling the shift of US policy towards Central Asia as a “historical accident”. Moreover, besides of description of events, historical part includes specific interests of foreign actors not only in Uzbekistan but the whole Central Asian regions and reasons caused these interests.

One of the main objectives of the research is to answer the question why the strictly established foreign concept was adopted in 2012 and probably the main event which caused the evolvement of this concept is the Uzbekistan’s withdrawal from Collective Security Treaty Organization. Many controversial interpretations for this action by Uzbekistan were proposed by Western and CIS scholars and obviously interpretations were biased. While for Western governments and officials the withdrawal was viewed as the structural weakness of CSTO and Russian as a leading actor, for Russian scholars it seemed to be the shift of Uzbek foreign policy towards the West, especially towards the United States. That’s why it would be necessary to review both Western and Russian interpretations and finally bring them up to the point of newly defined vector of Uzbek foreign policy. As far as I researched, yet, there is no large and deep research from both American and Russian perspectives. However, there are varieties of shorter articles concerning main ideas behind the withdrawal of Central Asian state from Russian led Security organization. Among Western articles, which proclaim (what became) traditional view concerning the departure, there are works of Marlène Laruelle “Factoring the Regional Impact of Uzbekistan’s Withdrawal from the CSTO” This articles is summarized by Marlene as, *“When Uzbekistan announced its withdrawal from the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization, no one was surprised. The country was dissatisfied with the organization due to conflicting values and principles, and it also wanted to free itself from historical Russian domination. The withdrawal opens question of how heavy a blow the Uzbek withdrawal is to Moscow’s strategic leadership in Central Asia. The*

*answer is mixed.”<sup>1</sup>*

In terms of Russian view, the escape of Uzbekistan from CST is explained even in shorter ways. These several opinions, concerning the reasons of why Uzbekistan left CSTO, are from Russian and CIS experts. However, the most interesting one is the interview on “Expert TV” by Ajdar Kurtov who claimed that, “The current move of Tashkent is addressed primarily to Moscow and was committed with the interference of external forces. Obviously, there is United States’ hand in it”

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan Hamm, “Uzbekistan Exit from CSTO Reveals Limits of Russia’s Eurasian Integration Plans,” *E – International Relations*, accessed January 10, 2014, <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/07/17/uzbekistan-exit-from-csto-reveals-limits-of-russias-eurasian-integration-plans/>

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## **Chapter I: Conceptual Basis of Uzbek Foreign Policy**

### **In search for Independent Foreign Policy**

The collapse of Soviet Union and establishment of independent Uzbekistan, along with other former Soviet states introduced the gradual changes in every vector of political practice. Now it was up to the new states and first regimes to adopt and implement the strategy for sovereign development in domestic politics, economics and foreign activity. Uzbekistan as an independent new actor on regional and global map appeared to be distinct in its foreign activity. Whilst, for example, neighboring Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan followed the path for multi – vectored and good image foreign activity by trying to fit international treaty laws, Uzbekistan from the beginning of independence took approaches towards independent and freely maneuvering foreign policy. The call for importance of national sovereignty and ambitions towards independent foreign activity were already reflected in the early stages of independent history of Uzbekistan. The reflection, besides of Uzbek governments made decisions and actions, is seen on official governmental documents like Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, books written by Islam Abduganievich Karimov and his ceremonial and parliamentary speeches.

### **Foreign Policy Principles in Constitution**

Constitution of the Uzbek Republic, as a main official document of the state, highlights the pursuance of an independent foreign policy already in the beginning of the document. In the first chapter named “State Sovereignty” in “Part One: Fundamental Principles” of the Constitution of Uzbek Republic, Article 3 states,

***“The Republic of Uzbekistan shall determine its national-state and administrative-territorial structure, its structure of state authority and administration, and shall pursue independent home and foreign policies. The state frontier and the territory of Uzbekistan shall be inviolable and indivisible”<sup>2</sup>***

The one can be skeptical concerning such mention of principal of foreign policy by Uzbekistan in its constitution, due to the fact that states sometimes don't follow these principles and that such declaration on pursuing independent foreign policy is subscribed in many other constitutions. However, the interesting fact is that among other Central Asian states, there is only “neutral” Turkmenistan, which subscribed such principle concerning the foreign policy in its Constitution. In case of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan there is no mention of principles concerning foreign policy in their constitutions. Constitution of Tajikistan in Part One: Fundamentals of the Constitutional Structure, Article 11 says that: “Tajikistan will implement a peaceful policy, respecting the sovereignty and independence of other states of the world and will determine foreign relations on the basis of international norms”<sup>3</sup>

The second and the last passage concerning the foreign policy of Uzbekistan within the constitution is stated in Chapter 4: Foreign Policy, Article 17,

***“The Republic of Uzbekistan shall have full rights in international relations. Its foreign policy shall be based on the principles of sovereign equality of the states, non-use of force or threat of its use, inviolability of frontiers, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and other universally recognized norms of international law. The Republic may form alliances, join or***

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<sup>2</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, chapter I, article 3

<sup>3</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, part I, article 11

*withdraw from unions and other inter-state organizations proceeding from the ultimate interests of the state and the people, their well-being and security.”<sup>4</sup>*

Concluding main points in Uzbekistan’s pursue of independent foreign policy deriving from Constitution we can highlight several main points:

- Independent home and foreign policy
- Declaration of its full rights in international arena
- View Uzbekistan as an equal to others within the principle of sovereign equality
- Free will to form alliances, to join and withdraw from interstate organizations
- Ultimate supremacy of the interest of state, its people wellbeing and security

### **Reflection of Independent Foreign Policy through President’s Speeches**

Islam Karimov, as a president and first person in Uzbekistan, appears to be the most important figure in whole Uzbek politics. His strong statements in his speeches and reports can be considered as a backbone (along with constitution) of Uzbek foreign policy. This paper brings few brief examples of statements concerning the foreign policy of Uzbekistan narrated by Islam Karimov. The book called “Uzbekistan: National Sovereignty, Economy, Politics and Ideology” published in 1996 is a first book based upon speeches by Islam Karimov. This collection contains speeches of President since 1992 to 1996 and in one of the primary chapters Mr. Karimov dedicated a distinct part for clarifying the main attributes and goals of foreign policy. As it was narrated by Karimov on the headline of establishing and implementing an Uzbek foreign Policy there were six main principles. Although, these principle were similar to ones placed in constitution, there were some extra - comments added by president. As an example, after stating the first principle on Uzbekistan’s will for sovereign equality among states, Islam Karimov highlighted that, “independent Uzbekistan is not willing to enter the

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<sup>4</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, chapter 4, Article 17

sphere of influence of any super power; not for that Uzbekistan became independent, in order to be submitted again”<sup>5</sup> and below the third principle he added the goal on, “getting rid of ‘elder brother syndrome’ once and forever”.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that many quotes about non-independent past and ‘elder brother’ syndrome were indirectly referred to the past under Russian imperialism and USSR. As an evidence for that once Uzbek President made a statement for the correspondent of ‘Independent magazine’ by saying, “We are not the same people whom Deputies of Soviet Supreme Council arrogantly used to call as ‘silent grey majority’ and added that during the empire (referring to Russian empire), our people were considered as a second sort people.”<sup>7</sup> These statements are not directly referred against Russia due to the absence of term ‘Russians’ itself, however, it is obvious under which empire the modern land of Uzbekistan was colonized and who actually were the backbone of Soviet regime in USSR. And if we look back to the Uzbek – Russian bilateral relations and relations within CIS we will see the main reasons for the rise of “anti – Russian Federation” sentiments.

Starting already from 1993, Yeltsin’s administration sought to place Central Asia under Russian control. The earliest tactic used for this purpose was economic one. In the beginning of 1990s, former USSR members were still under ruble zone and Russia used tactics in manipulation of ruble in an effort to get the new states limited hard currency reserves under Russian domination.<sup>8</sup> Karimov as the main chief spokesman for Uzbek policy initially was the proponent of economic union among CIS members; however, he was skeptical about political

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<sup>5</sup> Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan: Nacional’naya Nezavisimost’, Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya*, (Tashkent: Uzbekiston, 1996), 50

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 50

<sup>7</sup> Islam Karimov, *Uzbekskiy Narod Nikogda Ni ot Kogo ne Budet Zaviset’*, (Tashkent: Uzbekiston, 2005), 46

<sup>8,8</sup> Henry Hale, “Islam State – Building and Uzbekistan Foreign Policy,” in *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borderlands*, ed. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 144.

union.<sup>9</sup> In terms of economic union, Karimov supported a unified currency and economic policy – making, a central CIS bank and free inter – republican trade. However, the events of early 1992 became a significant shift of Uzbek attitudes towards Russia and CIS as whole. Henry Hale stated that after feeling themselves as sole heirs of Soviet Union, Russian top official started to implement economic programs of liberalization and introduced new policies concerning the Rubble Commonwealth currency without considering the views of other republics of CIS. The response of Uzbek part was reflected on the CIS level by Karimov’s statement concerning the Russia’s treatment of other members of CIS as unequal partners and called on leaders of “some republics” to drop their imperialistic attempts.<sup>10</sup> Later on, unilateral economic decisions taken by Russia like announcement of Central Bank, that ruble notes printed before 1993, would no longer be legal tender and demands that Uzbekistan has to transfer 40 tons of gold from its reserves to Moscow, as an exchange for new rubles, finally pushed Uzbek government to introduce its national currency on 15 of November 1993.<sup>11</sup> Besides the economic pressure, Russian government pressured Uzbek counterpart with request to allow ethnic Russians of Uzbekistan to have dual citizenship, who occasionally complained that new government started to ‘ignore’ them.<sup>12</sup> These early events and mild clashes between Uzbek and Russian governments were the first steps towards Uzbekistan’s political furthering away from Russia. It was a desperate choice to do so for such smaller state as Uzbekistan to try to go against big power’s influence. However, Uzbekistan had geopolitical attributes which allowed it to try to obtain political independence from the Russian Federation.

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<sup>10</sup> Henry Hale, “Islam State – Building and Uzbekistan Foreign Policy,” in *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borderlands*, ed. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 146.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 149

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 150

## Geopolitical Capabilities

With its own advantages and disadvantages concerning the geopolitical situation and internal attributes, Uzbekistan represents one of the most important regional actors in Central Asia (if not the most important one). Despite being one of the few double-landlocked states worldwide, Uzbekistan shares common borders with all Central Asian states including Southern border with Afghanistan. Moreover, Uzbekistan has no common borders with regional giants like Russia and China which lessens Russia's and China's instruments and abilities for political and economic pressure. With its 28,929,716 (July 2014 est.) population,<sup>13</sup> Uzbekistan is the largest state in CA in terms of population and noticeable amount of Uzbek minorities are found in every neighboring state. In regional terms, Uzbekistan additionally possesses strong military which is superficial comparatively to weaker Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Although, its natural resource capacity is not as high as in neighboring Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan still possesses large deposits natural gas (62.9 billion cu m).<sup>14</sup>

All these factors place Uzbekistan on influential position concerning the regional and global political processes and as a result they can explain the provision of relatively “independent foreign policy” which is distinctive among foreign activity of other regional states. According to Western scholars such as S. Cornell, Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian state to pursue a proactive and independent foreign policy, as exemplified in its relations with both its neighbors and great powers.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Central Asia: Uzbekistan,” *CIA: The World Factbook*, accessed January 19, 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Nick Megoran, “Revisiting the ‘pivot’: the influence of Halford Mackinder on analysis of Uzbekistan’s international relations,” *The Geographical Journal* 170 (2004): 351, accessed January 11, 2014, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0016-7398.2004.00136.x/abstract>

## **Chapter II: Evolution of Foreign Policy of Uzbekistan**

This chapter will provide the historical Outlook on evolution of Uzbek foreign policy through the prism alignments and misalignments for security purposes

### **Origins of CSTO and Uzbekistan's Membership**

After the collapse of USSR, newly independent states, had own responsibility to formulate their military structures and security and for the most part were willing to upgrade the old system of the Soviet legacy. However, as it is claimed by Saat, due to several sparked conflicts which used to fade or be suppressed during USSR, “most republics came to the conclusion that while their national defense infrastructures were still in the process of formation it would be wise to become part of some sort of collective security and defense structure that could guarantee their security in case this was needed.”<sup>16</sup> CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) as a political – military alliance organization started its genesis less than half a year after the break of the Soviet Union on May 15, 1992 in Tashkent. On that date the six former USSR and now CIS member states Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed “The Collective Security Treaty” under the umbrella of CIS.<sup>17</sup> Besides the states which willed to protect themselves from internal and external threats, there were also states which appeared to be less vulnerable to such threats like Kazakhstan and Belarus. As a result, the Treaty entered into force on April 20, 1994 after ratification by member states, among whom there was Uzbekistan too.

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<sup>16, 14</sup> J. A. Saat, “Collective Security Organization,” Conflict Studies Research Center (2005): 3, accessed January 28, 2014, [http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/05\(09\)-JHS.pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/05(09)-JHS.pdf).

As any other former USSR states, Uzbekistan had serious security challenges both domestically and externally. These challenges played a tremendous role in Uzbekistan's foreign activity maneuvers. Concerning the internal security challenges, Uzbekistan faced the rise of political and militant Islam on its part of Fergana Valley. Threat rose from city of Namangan, when local religious organization named "Islom Lashqarlari" (Warriors of Islam) led by mainly two leaders Tohir Yuldashev and Juma Namangani, started to have significant influence in city and created a Wahhabi community - a place where strict interpretation of religious maxims policed everyday behavior.<sup>18</sup> As a result, due to some socially caused conflicts like the refusal to build a mosque, members of *Islom Lashqarlari* charged an attack to city administration building and demanded from President Karimov to declare Uzbekistan as an Islamic state. As a result of failed negotiations after Karimov's arrival to Namangan, the leaders and members of organization were ordered to be arrested. With little chances to struggle against state authorities, leaders of organization fled from Uzbekistan to neighboring Tajikistan where they took an active part in Tajik Civil War (1992 – 1997) and had unfulfilled ambitions to return.

Despite some controversial conditions concerning the seriousness of these unrests happened in Namangan it can be said that these events were both mild and dangerous at the same time. They were mild because central authorities had quickly seized the activities of Yuldashev and Namangani at early stages. Besides, as one of the earliest Islamic movements in Central Asia, they represented a significant danger. Videos recorded during the events in

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<sup>18</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov, "Uzbek Islamism: Imported Ideology or Grassroots Movement?," Middle East Report 221 (2001): 40-46, accessed December 12, 2013, <http://ldb.auca.kg:2060/stable/1559339>.

Namangan are available on ‘youtube’<sup>19</sup> and any observer can witness from these videos that the population’s support for Yuldashev and Namangana was extremely high. However, the greater security threats were rising across the border to the South and East due to instabilities and strong political and religious movements in neighboring Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Failed attempt of Islamic uprising in Uzbekistan made insurgents to flee to neighboring Tajikistan and they joined the United Tajik Opposition side in military actions.<sup>20</sup> They have supported Tajik Islamic Renaissance Movement and hoped to spread the struggle for Islamic movement abroad from Tajikistan to their home country. Knowing the potential threats rising from Tajikistan, Uzbek government strengthened the border with this state by even using the mining of several locations. After the peace treaty was signed between Tajik government and opposition, Yuldashev and Namangani were disappointed in such decision. They have renamed Islom Lashqarlari in “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan”.<sup>21</sup> In 1999, IMU made an attempt to penetrate to Uzbekistan, through Kyrgyzstan’s Batken Province. These events were remembered as “Batken Incidents”<sup>22</sup>. After the failure to do so, members of IMU fled to Afghanistan and continued their activity from there. Despite the fear that the civil war in Afghanistan may have an effect across its border, Uzbekistan had close relations with an

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<sup>19</sup> “Karimov Namanganda,” *Youtube videos*, posted by “turkistontv”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwVS8CQg2s4>

<sup>20</sup> Svante E. Cornell and Spector Regine A, "Central Asia: More than Islamic extremists," *The Washington Quarterly* 25(2002): 196, accessed December 12, 2013 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/016366002753358410>.

<sup>21</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov, "Uzbek Islamism: Imported Ideology or Grassroots Movement?," *Middle East Report* (2001): 45, accessed December 12, 2013, <http://ldb.auca.kg:2060/stable/1559339>.

<sup>22</sup> "Batken incidents 1999 – 2000 -Postcard from Bishkek." Postcard from Bishkek, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://ianbek.kg/?p=1339>

Uzbek leader of Northern Alliance Abdul – Rashid Dostum and backed him during the civil war.<sup>23</sup>

The rise of Islamic fundamentalists and their declared jihad against Islam Karimov, civil instabilities in Afghanistan and Tajikistan were the main factors for Uzbek government to sign the Collective Security Treaty with other CIS countries to ensure the greater security.

### **Problems of Uzbek – Russian Security Cooperation and withdrawal from CST**

Despite the will of former Soviet republics to sustain collective security against the potential threats, some of the members were disappointed by its failures and controversial activity. The treaty wasn't able to prevent an open military conflict on Nagorno – Karabakh between its members – Azerbaijan and Armenia. Moreover, some argue about Russia's controversial activity in secretly supporting Armenia in Nagorno – Karabakh conflict against Azerbaijan and de – facto state of Abkhazia to separate from Georgia.<sup>24</sup> These were the reasons for Azerbaijan and Georgia to withdraw from prolongation of the treaty. Eduard Shevarnadze, then president of Georgia, stated at the time that “Georgia refuses to participate in the Treaty on Collective Security in the CIS, because it only exists on paper and there are no real practical results whatsoever”.<sup>25</sup> The third state to leave the Collective Security Treaty was Uzbekistan.

In case of Uzbekistan, there were several reasons for denial the prolongation of CST membership. Uzbekistan has not experienced any open internal and external security

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<sup>23</sup> Dilip Hiro, "Politics - Uzbekistan: Karimov Keeps His Gun Ready For Islamists," accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.ipsnews.net/1998/05/politics-uzbekistan-karimov-keeps-his-gun-ready-for-islamists/>.

<sup>24, 21</sup> J. A. Saat, "Collective Security Organization," Conflict Studies Research Center (2005): 3, accessed January 28, 2014, [http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/05\(09\)-JHS.pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/05(09)-JHS.pdf).

challenges since instability in Namangan and unlike with Azerbaijan and Georgia, there were no back up support from Russia against Uzbekistan's enemies. Although, the Russian Federation was already interested to influence on former Soviet states during the early 1990's, the domestic concerns about internal affairs like poverty, social instability, religious and separatist movements in Northern Caucasus were not allowing Russia to exercise more influence on Central Asia. However, with the end of decade, Russia reached more stability and turned back its interest toward the regions of traditional influence.<sup>26</sup>

In terms of bilateral relations of Russia and other CIS republics, there was interstate democratic equality only on papers. However, in practice Russia was still remaining as superpower and in bilateral relations it appeared to be dictating its rules on weaker CIS republics. When the regime of Abdu Rashid Dustum in its de-facto state "Dustumistan" failed and an Uzbek leader of Northern Afghanistan escaped to Turkey, the "buffer zone" between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan fell. The army of Taliban was right at the Uzbek – Afghan border. Uzbekistan was concerned and referred to Russia for military-technical assistance within the framework of Collective Security Treaty and the bilateral Agreement on Partnership. Marina Pikulina stated that Russia promised a combat technics and missiles, but no help came to Uzbekistan.<sup>27</sup> Instead, Russia only proclaimed its own intentions, requiring that its military contingent be placed along Uzbek-Afghan borders, which certainly would make the difficult situation on the border even more so.<sup>28</sup> As the aftermath of such events and ambitions of Russia to directly intervene in region, Islam Karimov in one of his interviews to Russian

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<sup>26</sup> Anonymous interviewee from Tashkent (PhD in Politics and MA in International Relations), January 18, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Marina Pikulina, Uzbekistan in the Mirror of Military Security: A Historical Preface to Current Events," Conflict Studies Research Center (1999): 10, accessed January 17, 2014, <http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/K27>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 9

newspaper “Kommersant” stated, *“I would ask you to tell Russia, we don’t need to be protected. So somebody would come and die on the frontiers of Uzbekistan? You don’t have to shed blood for us. Uzbeks can respond on strike by strike by themselves.”*<sup>29</sup> This period of time was ultimately the transition or shift in Uzbekistan’s security strategy due to furthering from Russia and getting closer to more financially beneficial ally – as we can call it generally West, NATO or European Union and the United states of America. Moreover, close ties with West, particularly with USA appeared to be a potential mechanism for eliminating Russian leverage in economic and political terms.<sup>30</sup>

## **Uzbek – US Relations from 1991 – 2001**

### **Limited US Interest in Central Asia during 1990s**

United States’ interest in Uzbekistan, as well as in whole Central Asia wasn’t as crucial as it was starting from 9/11 attacks of 2001 and launch of War on Terrorism. Although, the contacts involved economic and military assistance in Central Asia and (in the case of Kazakhstan) increasing trade interests, the overall engagement effort of the early 1990s can best be described as limited.<sup>31</sup> The US’ narrow engagement in the region is described by scholars as being less attractive for several reasons. Among the most important reasons we can list such ones as: geopolitical location of Central Asia as being far from United States’ mainland. Moreover, the region is landlocked and surrounded with influential international actors as Russia, China and Iran. Unlike post - Soviet Easter Europe, Central Asia was more favoring the Soviet Union and population seemed to stay pro – Russian. The instabilities and

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<sup>29</sup> “Islam Karimov: My budem vovvat po novomu,” Gazeta Kommrsant, accessed January 17, 2014, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/148935>.

<sup>30</sup> Olga Oliker and David Shlapak, “U.S. Interests in Central Asia Policy Priorities and Military Roles” RAND: Project Air Force (2005): 9, accessed February 23, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG338.html>

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

civil war in Afghanistan didn't pose threat for the USA that time, because for the most part the civil war of 1990s was between pro – Soviet government of Nadjibullah and Mujaheeds, who once used to be supported by the United State. The region also wasn't as much attractive in terms of natural resources. Although Caspian oil is sold on the global market, it is very unlikely that there will be enough of it to significantly affect prices.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the regional gas and oil pipelines were not developed as much to be exported towards West the US had an access to greater energy resources of Persian Gulf. Overall, while the United States wasn't interested much in economic dimension, it wasn't concerned about security in CA region at all.

At the same time the United States sought to perform their global responsibility concerning the bringing of democratic change.<sup>33</sup> However, it was especially observed in Uzbekistan, when instead of performing its objectives by working more with government offices, US was convinced that the best means of promoting democratic changes was to work through NGOs.<sup>34</sup> These NGOs provided region wide initiatives concerning the overall and basic regional improvements, however, avoiding the identification and specific needs individually. US interest was far away from establishing close ties with Uzbekistan despite its regional importance. Deputy Secretary of State Talbott in his 1997 report on defining the U.S. policy towards Central Asia did not even mention Uzbekistan. As a result of limited interest of US during the early and mid-1990s, Central Asia and particularly Uzbekistan wasn't as strategically important for US. However, there were some cooperation and partnership between

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>33</sup> Olga Oliker and David Shlapak, "U.S. Interests in Central Asia Policy Priorities and Military Roles" RAND: Project Air Force (2005): 8, accessed February 24, 2014, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG338.html>

<sup>34</sup> John Daly, Kurt Meppen, Vladimir Socor and S. Frederick Starr, "Anatomy of a Crisis: U.S.-Uzbekistan Relations, 2001-2005," Silk Road Paper (2006): 7, accessed February 24, 2014, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/0602Uzbek.pdf>

Uzbek government, US and NATO in small scale and mostly charged within the scope of interest of Uzbekistan.

### **Uzbek – NATO Cooperation (1990s)**

On the other hand, while there was limited effort from US side to cooperate with Uzbekistan in terms of security, the interest for cooperation was pushed from Uzbek part. The greater interest from Uzbek side was seen in partnership with NATO and such attempts were observed due to active engagement of Uzbekistan in NATO programs and trainings. In 1992 the President of Uzbekistan stated, that he espouses the armed forces scheme accepted in NATO and in 1994 as many other former Soviet republics, Uzbekistan became the member of the “Partnership for Peace Program of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization”. This partnership provided the basis for some joint military exercises with NATO troops.<sup>35</sup> Besides joint military exercises, the partnership with NATO allowed Uzbekistan to have its personnel trained in NATO’s military institutions and by this ceasing the Russia to be the only foreign country to train personnel for Uzbekistan.<sup>36</sup> By the end of the decade with its growing will to have more active partnership with NATO, Uzbekistan was pursuing the goal to attract more mutual interest from US side. One of the tools for this goal was the alarming US and NATO with the situation in Afghanistan. After witnessing the failure in having Russia as a main guarantor for security, Uzbek government managed to obtain the US support for its security. However, the lack of US interest was the main obstacle for Uzbek ambition until the terrorist attacks on World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

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<sup>35,31</sup> Marina Pikulina, *Uzbekistan in the Mirror of Military Security: A Historical Preface to Current Events*,” Conflict Studies Research Center (1999): 11, accessed January 17, 2014, <http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/ca/K27>.

### **9/11 effect on US – Uzbek Relations**

Although, by the ends of the 1990s the relations between Uzbekistan and the USA were getting warmer while relations with Russia were getting worse, the events of September 11 attacks on World Trade Center in New York City and Pentagon in Washington D.C. introduced extreme changes for Uzbek – US relations. Terrorist attacks pushed the government of the United States to introduce and implement gradual changes in United States’ internal and external security affairs. The boom in relations with Uzbekistan was concerned with external affairs and strongly correlated with Afghanistan and War on Terror. Within the frame of newly adopted doctrines and concepts like Bush Doctrine and Preventive War, Afghanistan under the Taliban regime became the central target within the War on Terror, as the regime which hosted international terrorist organization Al – Qaeda - blamed for September 11 attacks. USA faced several challenges under newly created circumstances in dealing with terrorism. For the access to Afghanistan the US needed bases around it to provide its operations. And now Central Asian states neighboring with Afghanistan became crucial for the US and NATO. On the other hand, Russia seemed to be an obstacle in this situation due to its interests in the region and its categorization of Central Asia as the area of traditional influence. However, surprisingly Russia under relatively new President for that time acted generously towards USA. Besides of allowing the USA to switch to the highest level of combat alert and promise to reduce its alert level and cancel all military exercises in order to avoid anxiety spiral, Russia agreed to allow the West to have an access to Central Asia in terms of military presence.<sup>37</sup> Although, Russians knew that the widening of the presence of the United States and West in Central Asia would provoke (as former Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov called it) “mentor training for

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<sup>37</sup> “Putin, Rossiya, Zapad film 1,” Youtube video, 24:01, posted by “remrekons remrekons,” March 10, 2012, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1F\\_ENTkdZ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1F_ENTkdZ8)

democracy”, it was on the other hand beneficial for Russian security too. Afghanistan hosted terrorists hostile not only to the United States, but also was the training ground for some Caucasian religious extremists hostile to Russia.<sup>38</sup>

In Central Asian region Uzbekistan appeared to be the best partner for the United States in war against religious terrorism. For that few years, Uzbekistan had already experienced the rising power and confidence of international terrorism. On February 16 terrorist bomb blasts in Tashkent killed more than a dozen people and wounded 100s and Karimov blamed "fanatics" from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, led by Tahir Yuldashev for the carnage.<sup>39</sup> Blames were subsequently accepted by IMU members due to the broadcast declaration of Jihad against Karimov and his administration through radio channel in Iranian city of Meshed.<sup>40</sup> The declaration was followed by invasion of IMU militants on August, Batken province<sup>41</sup> in attempt to penetrate to Uzbekistan through Fergana Valley. Although, the invasion failed and IMU militants were pulled out from Kyrgyz territory, Central Asian leader became more concerned about the desperation of IMU to invade a sovereign state.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 26:32

<sup>39</sup> John Daly, Kurt Meppen, Vladimir Socor and S. Frederick Starr, "Anatomy of a Crisis: U.S.-Uzbekistan Relations, 2001-2005," Silk Road Paper (2006): 69, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/0602Uzbek.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> John Daly, Kurt Meppen, Vladimir Socor and S. Frederick Starr, "Anatomy of a Crisis: U.S.-Uzbekistan Relations, 2001-2005," Silk Road Paper (2006): 69, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/0602Uzbek.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Leila Kazemi, "Domestic Sources of Uzbekistan's Foreign Policy, 1991 to the Present," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (2003):31, accessed February 28, 2014, <http://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-101942380/domestic-sources-of-uzbekistan-s-foreign-policy-1991>

### **Access to K2 and Strategic Partnership**

Uzbekistan appeared to be the first among the neighbors of Afghanistan to reply for the Washington's call for assistance. Immediately, six days after the terrorist attacks of September 11, Uzbekistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Komilov told the Washington Post that Uzbekistan was willing to discuss U.S. use of Uzbek airspace and military bases for possible operations against the Taliban and Al Qaeda.<sup>42</sup> Finally, after several high level visits from both sides, on October 5, 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visited Uzbekistan and signed an agreement with Uzbek officials allowing approximately 1,500 American military personnel to operate out of the Karshi Khanabad airbase.<sup>43</sup> In exchange for provision of infrastructure for military bases, Uzbekistan was guaranteed by US side that along with combatting Taliban and Al – Qaeda, US army would also eliminate the main threat for Uzbek security – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Later on in March 2002, the strategic partnership was signed between US and Uzbekistan in which they agreed that Uzbekistan will allow United States to remain in Uzbekistan as long as needed to complete the antiterrorist operations.<sup>44</sup>

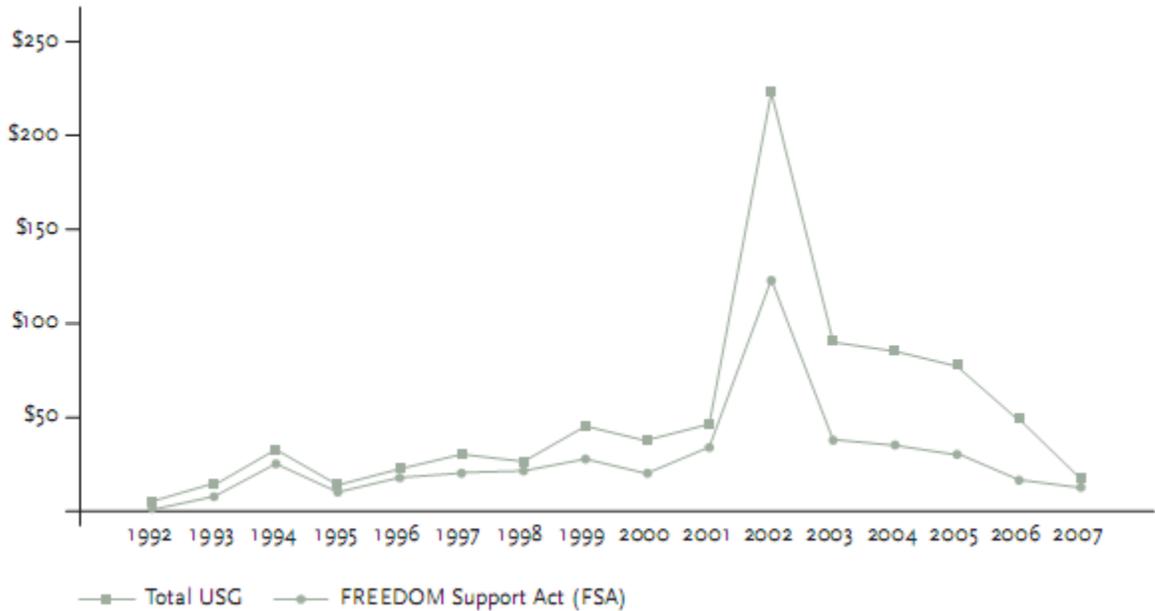
Since then, the exchange of information, trainings and experience between military structures and intelligence services of these countries has gradually increased. Particularly the US Foreign Military Aid for this Central Asian state had significantly increased. From this chart below, it can be seen that the peak of US military assistance was in 2002 increased

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<sup>42,43</sup> John Daly, Kurt Meppen, Vladimir Socor and S. Frederick Starr, "Anatomy of a Crisis: U.S.-Uzbekistan Relations, 2001-2005," Silk Road Paper (2006): 72, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/0602Uzbek.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Wishnick, Strategic Consequences of the Iraq War, (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute), 2, <http://www.questia.com/library/106770020/strategic-consequences-of-the-iraq-war-u-s-security>

gradually in terms of total USG and Freedom Support Act. And from the same chart we can see the decline of US aid immediately in next 2003.



<sup>45</sup> Chart 1

Despite the importance of Uzbekistan as a key state in Central Asia in War against Terrorism, the Washington was confronting a serious dilemma concerning its foreign policy and assistance towards Uzbekistan. The dilemma was regarding the criticism of human rights conditions in Uzbekistan by international organizations, movements and politicians among Western states (USA and European Union). Within the frame of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, it was Uzbekistan itself who proposed the improvements of human rights. And as an aftermath, the Congress has legislated the condition on provision of State Department – funded military aid to Uzbekistan.<sup>46</sup> The criticism started to come out

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<sup>39,44</sup> Lora Lumpe, "A Timeline of U.S. Military Aid Cooperation with Uzbekistan," Open Society Foundation: Occasional Paper Series No. 2 (2010): 5, accessed March 2, 2014, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/timeline-us-military-aid-cooperation-uzbekistan>

already in the end of 2003, when President Bush stated that Uzbekistan has failed to meet human rights requirements assigned in previous agreements. However, this criticism was accepted more like a notification than a warning, for Uzbekistan provided support for US actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Uzbekistan was the only State in Central Asia which supported the US decision on invasion to Iraq and was equally critical concerning the regime of Saddam Hussein and potential possession of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>47</sup> However, in July 2004 when the Secretary of Department Colin Powell didn't certify improvements in human rights and the decision to cut off IMET and FMF was taken by US side. And similarly next year, on the same month of Andijan events in 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice didn't certify the improvements and ban on IMET and FMF remains the same.<sup>48</sup> This observation of slow worsening of relations between US and Uzbekistan abolishes the misconception that with Andijan events of 2005 US – Uzbek relations “died” at once. Starting already from 2003 open criticism addressing towards human rights in Uzbekistan shows that the “fall” of bilateral relation between super power and Central Asian state was slowly evolving during these few years and in fact Andijan events was the last straw in the souring of bilateral relations.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Elizabeth Wishnick, *Strategic Consequences of the Iraq War*, (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute), 16, <http://www.questia.com/library/106770020/strategic-consequences-of-the-iraq-war-u-s-security>

<sup>48</sup> Lora Lumpe, “A Timeline of U.S. Military Aid Cooperation with Uzbekistan,” Open Society Foundation: Occasional Paper Series No. 2 (2010): 11, accessed March 2, 2014, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/timeline-us-military-aid-cooperation-uzbekistan>

<sup>49</sup> Matteo Fumagalli, “Alignments and realignments in Central Asia: The Rationale and Implications of Uzbekistan's Rapprochement with Russia,” *International Political Science Review* Vol. 28 no. 3 (2007):257, <http://ips.sagepub.com/content/28/3/253.full.pdf>

### **Andijan events of 2005: Effect on US - Uzbek and Uzbek - Russian Reconciliation**

As it was acknowledged before, I will not go into the deep analysis of Andijan event itself. There are three main versions concerning this event and to choose one would be subjective. However, without going into a deep analysis, thesis provides two main versions for this event; and highlights its main impact on critical decline of Uzbek – US, Uzbek – EU relation and finally posts – 2005 reconciliation with Russia.

According to Uzbek version, events which happened in Andijan at night from 12 to 13 and on 13 of May was an accurate plan by religious extremists to destabilize the situation in Andijan, Fergana Valley and Uzbekistan. As it was told by Islam Karimov on that night, a group of armed people - supporters of 23 jailed local businessmen who were suspected to be the members and financers of IMU, attacked the battalion of inspection service to get more arms and carried on by the assault on prison and the house of province administration.<sup>50</sup> As their number increased from joining of prisoners, they forced some people to join them and attracted their relatives to their mob. As a result, in order to avoid the widening and further escalation of mass disturbance the armed forces of Uzbekistan were ordered to eliminate the extremists.

Despite, the efforts of Uzbek side to convince its Western allies that it was a terrorist attempts to provoke the destabilization in the region, US and EU remained critical concerning the events. They blamed Uzbek armed forces and officials for unintelligible use of power and were upset with the Uzbek denial for provision of international investigation in Andijan. However, at first there were no counter critical blames against each other between Uzbek

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<sup>50</sup> Islam Karimov, *Uzbekskiy Narod Nikogda Ni ot Kogo ne Budet Zaviset'*, (Tashkent: Uzbekiston, 2005), 160 - 165

government and US, besides of blames of unintelligible use of power from US side, and incompatibleness of demanding investigation which contradicted the concept of sovereignty according to the claims of Uzbek side.<sup>51</sup> Later on, critiques from both sides' media increased crucially as Western media started to claim that Uzbek army shot peaceful demonstrators on May 13 and from Uzbek media raised its anti – western tone by referring that these unrests were backed up by US which wanted to replace the government with the help of civil society groups.<sup>52</sup> Although, there are main unanswered questions concerning the Andijan 2005 events and we don't know if they will appear later, these social unrests in this Fergana Valley's city was one of the most important switch points in Uzbek foreign policy.

As an aftermath of Andijan events, several important decisions were taken by Uzbekistan and other important actors of international arena. United States and European Union harshly criticized the government actions and human rights conditions, threatened and later cuts off military aid.<sup>53</sup> In response, Uzbekistan on July 2005 demanded the United States to leave the Karshi - Khanabad airbase within six months and took steps towards warming relations with mutually interested in it Russia and China. These two regional powers and most of Uzbekistan's regional neighbors within Shanghai Cooperation organization, have discounted the West's and activists' accounts as biased, and relied instead on the government's testimony

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<sup>51,44</sup> Matteo Fumagalli, "Alignments and realignments in Central Asia: The Rationale and Implications of Uzbekistan's Rapprochement with Russia," *International Political Science Review* Vol. 28 no. 3 (2007):257, <http://ips.sagepub.com/content/28/3/253.full.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> Lora Lumpe, "A Timeline of U.S. Military Aid Cooperation with Uzbekistan," *Open Society Foundation: Occasional Paper Series No. 2* (2010): 11, accessed March 8, 2014, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/timeline-us-military-aid-cooperation-uzbekistan>

on May events in Andijan.<sup>54</sup> As a result of such support from old “Northern and Eastern friends” the rapid rapprochement between them and Uzbekistan has started. Symbolically or ironically, on the same day (November 15) when the last US personnel left K2 bases, Uzbekistan and Russia signed a Treaty of Allied Relations (*soyuznicheskie otnosheniya*).<sup>55</sup> Beside of this aligning with Russia, Uzbekistan rejoined the Collective Security Treaty Organization in December 2006 (CSTO; members have included Russia, Belarus, Armenia, and the Central Asian states except Turkmenistan). By these steps taken by Uzbek government in foreign activity practice Uzbekistan entered into the new phase of its foreign relations for almost the same duration as it was from 9/11 events until Andijan 2005.

### **From 2006 until 2012**

So far, since the gaining of independence by Uzbekistan, there were two main events which had a gradual and instant impact on Uzbekistan’s foreign policy. Throughout these 14 – 15 years, main internal and external threats for its security were eliminated. Such events like civil wars in Afghanistan and Tajikistan ended, Islamic fundamentalists like IMU and Taliban government in Afghanistan were defeated and one of the most prominent religious rivals to Karimov – Tohir Yuldashev was killed during US air attack in 2009. Color revolutions happened in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan by passed Uzbekistan. The United States’ influence was limited and economic sanctions in terms of military and financial aids were there. And as a result of support from “old friends” Uzbekistan’s relations with Russia, China and CA states improved. From 2006 there was relative silence in terms of foreign relations and

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<sup>54</sup> Shirin Akiner, “Violence in Andijan, 13 May: An Independent Assessment,” *Silk Road Paper* (2005): 6, accessed March 10, 2014, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/0507Akiner.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> Matteo Fumagalli, “Alignments and realignments in Central Asia: The Rationale and Implications of Uzbekistan's Rapprochement with Russia,” *International Political Science Review* Vol. 28 no. 3 (2007):253, <http://ips.sagepub.com/content/28/3/253.full.pdf>

security threats and in terms of participation in Russian led military political organizations SCO and CSTO was passive.

In 2009, first steps towards restoring relations between Uzbekistan and the United States were launched by US side. In November of that year, Assistant Secretary Blake visited Uzbekistan and stated that his meetings there were “a reflection of the determination of President Obama and Secretary Clinton to strengthen ties between the United States and Uzbekistan.”<sup>56</sup> Blake proposed to re – launch annual high level meetings between representatives of two states concerning the partnership in different dimensions. And in December 2009 Uzbek delegation led by former Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov visited US for the first annual high level consultation. The two sides drew up a plan for cooperation for 2010 that involved diplomatic visits, increased military-to-military contacts, and investment and trade overtures.<sup>57</sup> In November of 2010, on his report to Congress, Assistant Secretary Blake testified that Uzbekistan has become a key regional partner for US. He put an emphasis on Uzbekistan’s assistance in restoring Afghanistan, and on surface mentioned the encouragement from Obama Administration towards Uzbek authorities concerning the human rights. Besides Blake, President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton throughout 2010 and 2011 highlighted and thanked Uzbekistan’s assistance in Northern Distribution Network. As the date of 2014 was coming, the geopolitical location of Uzbekistan was becoming more and more important for ISAF contingent’s withdrawal from Central Asia.

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<sup>56,49</sup> Jim Nichole, “Uzbekistan: Recent developments and U.S. Interest,” *Congress Research Service* (2013): 18, accessed April 22, 2014, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21238.pdf>



<sup>58</sup>Map 1

On the other hand, despite of slow warming relations with West, the relations with Russia were remaining to be friendly and allied. Although, Uzbekistan's participation in Russian led organizations was passive, there was no worrying from Russian side, because it was in Uzbekistan's manner to be a member of organization and avoid active participation. As an example, within CSTO, as it was mentioned before, Uzbekistan didn't ratify many significant documents in the frame of CSTO and it also ignored. Additionally, Uzbekistan denied the participation in Rapid Reaction Forces within CSTO.

As the final point of Uzbekistan's evolution of foreign policy since 1991 and before adopting a new concept on foreign policy, we conclude with Uzbekistan's withdrawal from Collective Security Treaty Organization. After the Uzbek government sending the note about its suspension of membership and media of CIS states received and spread this news, governments, politicians and political experts reacted on it in different manners. However, the most common assumption was that Uzbekistan withdrew from CSTO in order to retain its

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<sup>58</sup> Tommaso Zaccaro, "La complessa strategia regionale dell'Uzbekistan," *Chronache Internazionali*, accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.cronacheinternazionali.com/la-complessa-strategia-regionale-dell-uzbekistan-537>

close alliance with US and most likely to place NATO bases back on its territory. All this assumption contained strong evidences, until they were not abolished by the content of newly adopted concept.

Overall, securitization - one of the two main components of Uzbek foreign policy was provided in this chapter. As for any new independent state, it was a necessary for Uzbekistan to pursue greater security against the threats posed internally and externally. Despite having relatively strong army within the Central Asia and an ambitions for provision of independent foreign policy, Uzbekistan's concerns about security against Islamic extremism and the spread of instabilities from Tajikistan and Afghanistan made it to address for wider security cooperation within the Collective Security Treaty led by Russia. But when the CA caught the attention of the United States after the 9/11 events, Uzbekistan found the opportunity to gain the advantage of greater cooperation with US for its security purposes and at the same time to use new ally in balancing against Russian growing influence. And after few years of partnership, the Uzbek – US relations rapidly failed after Andijan events of 2005, which pushed Uzbek government for the reconciliation with Russia. As an aftermath of Andijan events, Uzbekistan was under the sanctions of US and EU for three years until 2008. Since 2008 until 2012 Uzbekistan's foreign activity showed reset of its relations with US and EU, without rapid furthering from Russia.

### **Withdrawal from the CSTO 2012**

Uzbekistan's foreign activity caught the wide international attention and provoked my interest in providing this thesis research after taking another desperate step in its foreign policy practice in 2012. On June 28, 2012 Uzbekistan sent a note to the headquarters of CSTO concerning the suspension of its membership activity within this organization. Such step taken

by Uzbekistan was both sudden and predictable at the same time. It was sudden due to the events which happened nearly three weeks prior to the announcement of suspension from security block. On 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 2012, the President of Russian Federation had an official visit to Uzbekistan's capital – Tashkent to meet his colleague Islam Karimov and hold the meeting concerning the bilateral agreements between Uzbekistan and Russia. In traditional way, both sides talked about historical bonds between two nations and about the mutual importance in every aspects of international relations and signed the “Declaration on Deepening of Strategic Partnership”<sup>59</sup>

In terms of unexpectedness of Uzbekistan's stoppage of its membership was the passive participation of Uzbekistan in the affairs of Collective Security Treaty Organization; the absence of its military representatives in Collective trainings and finally Uzbekistan was critical concerning some policies within the organization. An important notification concerning the passiveness of Uzbekistan in CSTO was done by the president of Belorussia Alexander Lukashenko on October 2011, when he proposed to the heads of CIS' to make the identification on this Central Asia state's further participation in Security Treaty Organization. According to the statement of Lukashenko, “Tashkent hasn't ratified any significant document in frame of this military – political organization.”

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<sup>59</sup> “Jun 4, 2012 Uzbekistan Putin meets Uzbek President Islam Karimov in Tashkent,” Youtube videos, posted by “**Felonious Vendetta**.” December 27, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRX9Jc68KFA>

## **Chapter III: New Concept and Analysis**

### **New Concept of Foreign Policy and Its Content**

New Concept of Foreign Policy was developed by the initiative and leadership of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Abduganievich Karimov. On July, 2012, the legislative Chamber deputies on the regularly held meeting reviewed the draft law “On approval of the Concept of foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan”. New Concept was approved and adopted by both chambers of legislature and became an official theoretical basis for the further foreign activity and security policies of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that it has already passed two years since the new concept was adopted, the hard or electronic version of this primary source is not available for public. However, we are informed concerning the main points of this new concept from secondary sources. In order to have more reliable and valid information concerning the main points of concept, as a secondary source for this research I took information from the web – site of Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan (<http://www.parliament.gov.uz/>). And according to the web site of legislative chamber, main provisions of new foreign policy concept are:

- The Republic of Uzbekistan reserves the right to make alliances, to enter the community and other inter-state formations, as well as withdraw from them, guided by the best interests of the state, nation, its prosperity and security, priority directions of modernization of the country, applicable national legislation and accepted international obligations;

- Uzbekistan holds a peaceful policy and not involved in military-political blocs, reserves the right to withdraw from any of interstate formation in case of its transformation into a military-political bloc;
- The Republic of Uzbekistan takes political, economic and other measures to prevent its involvement in armed conflicts and tensions in neighboring states, and does not allow on its territory the placement of foreign military bases and facilities;
- The main priority of foreign policy of Uzbekistan is a Central Asian region, which is associated with its vital interests;
- Challenges in Central Asia should be settled by the states of the region without the intervention of external forces. Integration should not be imposed from the outside, it is unacceptable if it infringes the freedom, independence and territorial integrity of the country or dictated by ideological commitments;<sup>60</sup>

## **Findings**

When Uzbekistan escaped CSTO in 2012, many CIS observers claimed that the rationale behind it was the rapid realignment with the United States after the crucial fall of Uzbek – US relations in 2005. According to deputy director of institute of CIS States – Vladimir Zharihin’s interview, Uzbekistan wasn’t happy with the decision of CSTO concerning the unanimous agreement of all CSTO members before the placement of foreign military bases on its territory, due to the willingness for placing NATO bases back on its territory. There were also claims that Tashkent had a counter interest in Russia’s ambitions in placing more bases on the territories of “rival upper stream” countries for it would give them

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<sup>60</sup> “Deputies approved the Concept of foreign policy of the country,” *The Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, accessed April 11, 2014, <http://www.parliament.gov.uz/en/events/chamber/7280>

advantage in border, water and geopolitical tensions. Although, we cannot say that all assumptions of experts appeared to be as “bold”, we can be sure that adoption of New Concept abolished the key elements of their claims. The statement within concept regarding the restriction on placement of foreign bases on Uzbek territory destroyed the claims of CIS experts that Uzbekistan had plans in reestablishing good alliance with West through giving the space for hosting their bases after the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014. However, with hypothetically responding to false assumptions by showing that if Uzbekistan is not with CSTO, than it doesn't mean that it is against the CSTO, the concept and recent events of that time created new questions and dilemmas such as: why it left CSTO if no NATO bases are going to be placed?; how it can secure itself from potential threats rising from Afghanistan?; and why after witnessing such phenomena as “Arab Spring” it is not aligning with strong supporters as Russia?

The main purpose behind establishing new concept simply remains the ambitions of Uzbekistan towards “independent foreign policy”,<sup>61</sup> however what makes it special is that it is relatively right ‘time’ for such a this step. Before, Uzbekistan as a small state in global level (despite being influential on regional scale) was forced to balance between big powers in order to avoid dominant influence of either one.<sup>62</sup> During the early years of independence it was Russia, under whose influence Uzbekistan didn't want to return. Although, Russia redirected its interest towards Central Asia by calling it as an “area of traditional influence”<sup>63</sup> already in 1995, under Yeltsin it wasn't as powerful as it became later. That's why despite the fact that in 1990s USA had limited interest in Central Asia, which limited the ability of Uzbekistan to

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<sup>61,61</sup> Anonymous interviewee from Tashkent (PhD in Politics and MA in International Relations), January 18, 2014.

maneuver from “ex big brother” Russia wasn’t able to have greater influence on Uzbekistan while dealing with its domestic affairs like heavy economic, social conditions and separatist movements in Caucasus. The resignation of Boris Yeltsin from office and Vladimir Putin’s rise to power brought gradual change and transformed Russia into more powerful regional and global actor. If the United States would continue its apathy towards CA, the more powerful Russia under Putin could limit the hopes of Uzbekistan for independent foreign activity. However, US’ interest and policy towards Central Asia changed right after the Putin came to power, with 9/11 events. And as Olga Oliker and David Shlapak called it the such shift in US policy in CA was a “historical accident”<sup>64</sup> . While having an ally and ability to limit Russia’s aim for traditional influence, Uzbekistan, however, at the same time with US faced another dilemma. If US’ dilemma in cooperation with Uzbekistan was being stuck between security concerns and its critics with human rights conditions within CA state, Uzbekistan’s dilemma was that while Russian influence aimed to limit and dictate the foreign activity of Uzbek government, the US on the other hand dictated its terms concerning the domestic politics and the main term was the human rights. However, the closer ties with USA had more benefits than closer ties with Russia. Firstly, hosting NATO bases in K2 had huge economic contribution and secondly, for that time period, evidence shows that USA was more concerned about security rather than human rights condition. Things changed with Andijan events of 2005 when Uzbekistan realigned with Russia. This time Russia became the balancer against the potential threats from USA, for there were claims that colorful revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan were secretly initiated by West and the desperate step taken by Uzbekistan in requesting NATO forces to leave from K2 were too dangerous for Karimov’s administration.

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<sup>64</sup> Olga Oliker and David Shlapak, “U.S. Interests in Central Asia Policy Priorities and Military Roles” RAND: Project Air Force (2005): 8, accessed April 11, 2014, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG338.html>

Since then until 2012 things changed. On the one hand USA understood that it was too harsh with critics and sanctions towards Uzbekistan and that with loosing Uzbekistan it lost much of its influence in Central Asia. On the other hand Russia, with its aim in placing more influence in CA, wished to impose more control on Uzbekistan too through CSTO, SCO and other organizations. And finally Uzbekistan itself, was observing and understanding all things listed above and was aware that former threats like religious terrorism and color revolutions were not as dangerous as they were before. Upcoming withdrawal of ISAF from Afghanistan in 2014, however, highlights the importance of Uzbekistan for both USA and Russia.

For the United States, Uzbekistan became extremely important due to the important place in Northern Distribution Network (NDN). As Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake stated “Uzbekistan has a central role in the NDN, with the majority of supplies transiting through the Uzbek-Afghan border.”<sup>65</sup> As 2014 has already come and ISAF troops and equipment have to be pulled out of Afghanistan. Approximately up to 120,000 containers of military goods will need to be moved out and for ISAF there are two routes for withdrawal: Northern Distribution Network and route via Pakistan. Although, both routes have their major disadvantages, Pakistan one seems to be more risky according to some experts like Karimjan Akhmedov and Evgeniya Usmanova.<sup>66</sup> Despite being as twice cheaper to transit equipments through Pakistani route rather than through NDN, there are risks that Islamabad may close the route as they did in fall of 2011, after the American drone strikes. On the other hand NDN lies

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<sup>65</sup> Jim Nichole, “Uzbekistan: Recent developments and U.S. Interest,” *Congress Research Service* (2013): 17, accessed April 17, 2014. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21238.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> Karimjan Akhmedov and Evgeniya Usmanova, “Afghanistan Withdrawal: The Pros and Cons of Using The Northern Distribution Network,” *EurasiaNe*, accessed April 17, 2014, <http://www.eurasiareview.com/13092012-afghanistan-withdrawal-the-pros-and-cons-of-using-the-northern-distribution-network-analysis/>

through Central Asian, whose leaders tend to be friendly in provision of transit via their territory for financial and equipment benefits. And in this case, Uzbekistan becomes one of the central states in this network and appears to be an important actor for the West. Besides the ISAF departure in 2014, Western states view Uzbekistan as an important actor in stabilizing Afghanistan through economic investments, trans border trade and exporting the energy. Uzbekistan has developed ties with post-Taliban Afghanistan. In August 2011, a 50-mile railroad linking its border town of Hairatan with the city of Mazar-e-Sharif was completed and since 2002 Uzbekistan exports some energy to the Northern Afghanistan.<sup>67</sup> Despite the fact that USA still remains skeptical concerning the human rights conditions, the testimonies of Robert Blake show that US government put more emphasis on Uzbekistan's importance in stabilizing Afghanistan and assistance in withdrawal of ISAF. Of course we can't make clear predictions what will happen to with US – Uzbek relations after 2014, but we can witness the restoration of relations now and USA's awareness regarding the decisive and partly desperate choice taken by Uzbek government after US critiques about Andijan events.

Although, the restart of the relations with West is developing progressively, it can't be said that Uzbek – Russian relations worsened in traditional way. As it was already mentioned several times observation of Uzbekistan's overall passive role in Russia led organizations, rejection on decision concerning the Rapid Reaction Forces within CSTO and the placement of second Russian base in Osh and objections about Putin's initiative concerning the Euroasian economic zone and finally the suspension of its membership from CSTO in 2012 placed great concern among political scientists. All suggestions were based around main topics as future

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<sup>67</sup> Jim Nichole, "Uzbekistan: Recent developments and U.S. Interest," *Congress Research Service* (2013): 13, accessed April, 2014. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21238.pdf>

hosting of NATO bases and receiving military equipment left – overs. While the policy on restriction of foreign military bases abolished one of the assumption regarding the realignment with West, the deeper research on the content of military aid reveals that it is another wrong assumption that US will provide significant amount of military aid for Uzbekistan. In his interview given to “*Amerika Ovizi*” (*The Voice of America*) concerning his research on American military aid to Central Asia, Joshua Kucera stated that, “it is not heavy weapons; none of these countries are getting tanks, helicopters, airplanes; but light weapons, some light vehicles, body armor and etc.” That’s why the meaning of military aid from US is exaggerated. This aid is not going to change the balance of military power in the region and change the geopolitical priorities of Uzbekistan towards the US. Regarding this issue an anonymous expert from Tashkent stated “it is just a business” for Uzbekistan to get an economic advantage.<sup>68</sup>

The conflict of interest struggle between Uzbek and Russian governments were always visible. While Russia wants to exercise wider range of influence within CA region including Uzbekistan, the second one on the contrary pursues independence in making decision regarding the foreign activity. However, despite of the presence of the conflict between these two states both of them try not to overshoot with their aims. Russia as one of the biggest interest actors in CA tries to limit the presence of other geopolitical actors like the United States, China and Turkey. The event, which increased USA’s activity in Central Asia, invasion to Afghanistan, was basically supported by Russia due to its own interest. And now, when ISAF has done its job of overthrowing Taliban and eliminating other extremist groups, Russia’s primary aim is to eliminate the US presence in Central Asia. As Western forces are leaving Afghanistan and Manas Airbase in Kyrgyzstan, they are giving up military strategic locations in Central Asia.

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<sup>68</sup> Anonymous interviewee from Tashkent (PhD in Politics and MA in International Relations), January 18, 2014.

The fact that Uzbekistan in its new foreign concept restricted the placement of foreign military bases inspired Russian side to relax from commotion because it would be the great loss of influence for Russia if Uzbekistan would switch back to West due to several reasons. With its geopolitical advantages Uzbekistan would become a strong bases for America's exercise of influence in the region.

Uzbekistan on its part, despite geopolitical advantages and capabilities for independent foreign policy, also stays careful in its relations with Russia. Russia remains to be the main economic partner of Uzbekistan according to the official statement of Islam Karimov during the signing of strategic partnership with Putin. Now days total amount of commodity turnover between two countries is about 7 billion US Dollars. There is a large amount of Uzbek migrant workers in Russia. According to the web – site of Uzbek Congress of Russian Federation, the total number of Uzbek citizens in Russia exceeds the two million.<sup>69</sup> All these workers make their own contribution for Uzbek economy by sending money for their relatives. The worsening relations with Russia may have not only geopolitical struggle consequences, but also pressure can applied from Russian side by tightening the control or even deporting Uzbek immigrants back to Uzbekistan which may cause a greater demographic in the country which already has nearly 30 million population on its relative small territory. But still, there is an interesting part in the new concept which states that the problems of Central Asia must be solved only by Central Asian states and that no alignment must be imposed from abroad. Although, this statement does not directly point to Russia, the rationale shows that only Russia intervenes into Central Asia's problems. For example Russia intervened into the trans-border water issues, when it declared that Russia will assist upper stream countries of Kyrgyzstan and

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<sup>69</sup> Anonymous interviewee from Tashkent (PhD in Politics and MA in International Relations), January 18, 2014.

Tajikistan to fulfill their hydroelectric projects. And another example is the talks about Russia imposing Customs Union on regional states by this harming their economies more than bringing benefits.

### **Security Assurance**

At this point Uzbekistan finds an opportunity on one hand to finally balance its relations with both USA and Russia by avoiding the placement of emphasis mostly on one side and on another hand it aims to gain the relative foreign and domestic activity emancipation from both. However, even with its pursuing the independent foreign policy since the independence, Uzbekistan had to provide higher level of security through participating in Russian led military block (CSTO) or by hosting NATO military bases. Despite of having comparatively strongest army in the region, it had to militarily ally itself with one or another side.<sup>70</sup> But what can be concluded from the content of the concept of FP is that Uzbek government from 2012 is not going to be the part of political – military blocks and is not going to host foreign military bases. This points state that Uzbekistan puts the most part of responsibility on security issues on itself. The reason for that is again the confidence that Islamic radical threat like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan does not pose a serious threat on Uzbek security. IMU is not same what it was during 1990s for several reasons like: having their leaders Juman Namangani and Tohir Yuldashev killed during US operations, renaming their organization in Islamic Movement of Turkestan (IMT) focusing their jihad not only against Uzbekistan but towards whole Turkestan states, and finally having defeated allies like Taliban and Al - Qaeda who carried huge casualties during the US operation in Afghanistan. Besides having less concerns about the Taliban and Al – Qaeda “being back” in Afghanistan,

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<sup>70</sup> Anonymous interviewee from Tashkent (PhD in Politics and MA in International Relations), January 18, 2014.

there is some level of guarantee that international community will not just observe their rise to power like they did in 1990s.

## **Conclusion**

From the beginning of independence the foreign policy of Uzbekistan was based around two main principles – pursuance of an independent foreign policy and securitization through bilateral and multilateral relations with the US and Russia. While trying to achieve independent foreign policy by eliminating the influence of “elder brother”, Uzbekistan faced obstacles from the regional security threats. Although, the Uzbekistan possessed strong military, the rise of Islamic radicalism and political instabilities in neighboring Tajikistan and Afghanistan posed a strong challenge for new secular Uzbek government. These conditions forced Uzbekistan to partially sacrifice its independent foreign policy ambitions and provide security assurance through bilateral and multilateral agreements with Russia and the United States. The security alignment with Russia used to limit the space of foreign activity of Uzbekistan on the basis of elder brother dictating its terms and requesting smaller states to stay on “Russian orbit”.<sup>71</sup> The partnership with the US provided Uzbekistan with two main benefits – large amounts of military and financial aid and the US serving as a balancing superpower against the Russian Federation. However, unlike Russia, the US was really concerned about the democratic developments within Uzbekistan, particularly with Human rights. These conditions made Uzbekistan to maneuver between superpowers in order to obtain the security assurance, and relational balance between the US’ democratic requirements and Russia’s “elder brother” ambitions.

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<sup>71</sup> Anonymous interviewee from Tashkent (PhD in Politics and MA in International Relations), January 18, 2014.

Finally, the recent years indicated a stable development in Uzbekistan's foreign relations and relative security in Central Asia as whole. Uzbekistan is sustaining good relations with Russia, despite some suspicions after Uzbekistan's withdrawal from the CSTO. The relations with the United States have significantly improved since the aftermath of Andijan events of 2005. Moreover, both superpowers are aware of Uzbekistan's importance in the regional geopolitics. For the US the Uzbekistan plays a significant role in providing the transition through the Northern Distribution Network and according to Blake, this Central Asian state has potential in stabilizing the Afghanistan. Russian on the other side, after the short term of suspicions, seems to value the decision of Uzbek government not to host NATO military bases and its enforcement through legal concept on foreign policy.

The decision on non – participation in politico – military blocks and restriction on foreign base placement on the territory of Uzbekistan indicate the decline of Uzbekistan's traditional approach on securitization along with the decline of regional threats. Neighboring Afghanistan and Tajikistan are stabilized after civil wars and Islamic radical governments. The Islamic movement of Uzbekistan lost its major leaders and its allies suffered huge losses during the Operation of Enduring Freedom. And after being renamed into Islamic Movement of Turkestan, IMU is not concentrating its activity mainly against Uzbekistan, but on Central Asia at all.

The purpose of “New Concept of Foreign Policy” as the conceptualization of main diplomatic and security priorities can be understood only by considering all previous ad hoc uses of principles, geopolitical relations of past and the present and regional security threats. The new concept is legal governmental reflection of Uzbekistan's position for an independent foreign and domestic policy after finally achieving the condition when security threats and

foreign influence are not limiting Uzbekistan's political goals. However, the validity, importance and actuality of the new concept will be known only after regional events post 2014.

## **Appendix: Interview Questions.**

1. What are the main priorities of Uzbekistan's Foreign Policy since 1991?
2. Why Uzbekistan left the CSTO? Because of West, disappointment in CSTO or some kind of another interest?
3. Do Russia and Uzbekistan are having conflicts of interests in Central Asia?
4. Are arms left by NATO important for Uzbekistan? Did they have the role in Uzbekistan's withdrawal from CSTO?
5. What about security approach? If no – foreign bases and no participation in military blocks, can we say that Uzbekistan is confident about its security?
6. What are the main interests of the United States in Central Asia?
7. Is there a competition between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan
8. Is Uzbekistan confident in future Afghanistan's security?
9. What is the purpose of Hairaton Mazari – Sharif railroad? Economic interest in Afghanistan or the path to Persia Gulf and Indian Ocean?
10. Why the New Concept of Foreign Policy was adopted in 2012?
11. Can Uzbekistan effort "Turkmen Neutrality"?

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