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**BALANCING MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN CENTRAL ASIA**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CENTRAL ASIA
AND SOUTH CAUCASUS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

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CONTENTS

	Page
Brownback, Hon. Sam, U.S. Senator from Kansas, statement submitted for the record	51
Courtney, Hon. William H., former U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Georgia, former Senior Advisor to the National Security Council, senior vice president, National Security Programs, Dyncorp, Washington, DC	29
Prepared statement	32
Craner, Hon. Lorne W., Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Bureau, Department of State, Washington, DC	7
Prepared statement	10
Responses to additional questions from Senator Torricelli	52
Responses to additional questions from Senator Gordon Smith	53, 57
Response to an additional question from Senator Brownback	58, 59
Crouch, Hon. J.D. II, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, Washington, DC	15
Prepared statement	18
Kazhegeldin, Akezhan, former Primer Minister of Kazakhstan, letter to Senator Barbara Boxer regarding concerns about civil rights	4
Olcott, Martha Brill, senior associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC	36
Prepared statement	38
Pascoe, B. Lynn, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State, Washington, DC	21
Prepared statement	22
Responses to additional questions from Senator Gordon Smith	54, 57
Response to an additional question from Senator Brownback	58, 59

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THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2002

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CENTRAL ASIA
AND SOUTH CAUCASUS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:50 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert G. Torricelli (chairman of the subcommittee), presiding.

Present: Senators Torricelli, Lugar, and Brownback.

Senator TORRICELLI. The subcommittee will please come to order. I am pleased today to convene this hearing to consider United States policy in one of the most vital regions of the world. Since the Subcommittee on Central Asia and South Caucasus was created last August, the region it covers unexpectedly has taken on a role at the very center of our Nation's foreign policy. Five central Asian nations are now key partners in our diplomatic and military campaign to destroy global terrorist networks. These partnerships offer the prospect of deepening security and economic ties which will benefit all nations involved. At the same time there are potential dangers which must be addressed.

Prior to September 11, United States policy in the region was largely focused on promoting democratic reform, increasing respect for human rights and encouraging economic growth. Many observers of the region now believe that that agenda is in jeopardy, and are concerned that the United States will hold back from promoting democracy and human rights to avoid friction with the central Asian leaders. None of us question the vital importance of the military actions the United States is undertaking in Afghanistan, and the indispensable role that central Asian nations have played in supporting our operations.

I have been a strong supporter of the American military campaign currently underway, indeed I went to Afghanistan in April to assess its progress and to meet with our Armed Forces. But it would be a serious mistake if we were to sacrifice our agenda for the promotion of democracy and human rights in exchange for security cooperation. Rooting out terrorism, promoting democracy and human rights are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, they are probably mutually reinforcing.

Granted, there are regimes that do not allow for full democratic participation or are marginalizing or radicalizing segments of their population. This not only potentially creates new terrorists, but can pose threats to stability of regimes we are relying on as security partners.

As the United States witnessed in 1979 in Iran, and may soon see in some other nations, oppressive regimes that do not have public support can quickly collapse, and they are likely to be replaced by anti-American regimes. I do not suggest that any of the central Asian regimes are on the verge of collapse. I would prefer to see a democratic evolution in those nations.

Yet as these nations continue to find their post-Soviet identity and develop democratic institutions, it is important that people in the region recognize the United States is on their side and does not identify itself only with oppressive governments. As we engage more deeply with central Asian nations, and our security relationship grows, our diplomats will have increasing contacts and opportunities to raise human rights concerns with our partners.

It will be important to convey to the political leaders of those nations that they need not view our human rights and democracy agenda as a threat. Establishing the rule of law, more open independent judicial systems and protections for citizens is essential for creating a favorable climate for foreign investment and tourism.

Our hearing today is intended to explore the success of American policy in simultaneously pursuing both our human rights and our security agenda. The balance is not easy; some will urge us to emphasize one aspect of our policy over another. In the long run, our engagement in central Asia will only serve our national interests if it is carried out in accordance with American values.

Today I am pleased to welcome our distinguished panel from the State Department and Defense Department. From the State Department we will hear Assistant Secretary Lorne Craner, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and from Deputy Assistant Secretary Lynn Pascoe, who is responsible for central Asia, in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Both have been in central Asia very recently and met with leaders throughout the region, and we look forward to hearing their views.

From the Defense Department we will hear from Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy J.D. Crouch. Secretary Crouch has also been to the region and will be able to provide an overview of United States security policy in the region.

We will also have a second panel with the former Ambassador to Kazakhstan, William Courtney, and Martha Brill Olcott, from the Carnegie Endowment. We look forward to hearing your testimony.

Senator Lugar, would you like to make opening comments.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for calling this meeting, for summoning two panels of excellent witnesses.

Today we seek to address one of the most difficult policy questions in American foreign policy, and that is, how does the United States continue to advance its national security interest while preserving its commitment to human rights and the values we hold so dear.

During the cold war, U.S. policy required the maintenance of the balance wherein we worked closely with nations with a different level of commitment to basic human values and freedoms. This challenge required a constant call for improvements in areas such as freedom of speech, assembly, religion, while working closely with governments to stop and reverse the spread of communism.

The current war on terrorism presents a similar challenge. The front lines of today's war require relationships with a number of culturally diverse countries with histories and backgrounds very different than our own. The threats associated with terrorism and weapons of mass destruction necessitate American engagement and security cooperation, and provision of military assistance with countries that would otherwise be subjected to a very different policy approach.

Following the attacks of September 11, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan burst into American living rooms on CNN and nightly news broadcasts, and for most Americans, this was the first they ever heard of these former Soviet states. Many were surprised to learn of the tremendous geostrategic importance these nations held in the war against terrorism. Americans quickly understood the important role these countries play in providing U.S. and coalition members with critical military bases and overflight rights. They saw the successful conclusion of military operations in Afghanistan depended largely upon our allies in that region.

But there was considerable unease, and people began to dig a little deeper into the background of these nations. Concerns were expressed about their commitment to democracy and human rights, and the poor to very poor to extremely poor grades given to the states of central Asia in the State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practice was cause for concern.

This is a challenge of United States policymakers seeking to increase cooperation in the fight against terrorism and to address the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. Striking the right balance between human rights and security cooperation is not a new challenge in central Asia. The United States has been working cooperatively with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in particular for more than a decade in an effort to secure and then dismantle the Soviet nuclear, chemical and biological legacy.

Immediately after the states of the former Soviet Union declared their independence, the United States began an intense diplomatic effort to secure Kazakhstan's residual of nuclear weapons and materials. Many forget that Kazakhstan inherited the fifth largest nuclear arsenal in the world after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Equally disturbing was the existence of Stepnogorsk, the largest anthrax production facility in the world, and Semipalatinsk, the Soviet Union's nuclear testing area. American experts have also been active in the Aral Sea region, off the coast of Uzbekistan, where we discovered a place called Voz Island. It was the Soviet Union's main chemical and biological weapons testing facility which Ken Allenbach described so vividly in his book, "Biohazard."

In the 1990s, the program staff were among our most successful emissaries to these new states and laid the groundwork for the kind of cooperation that came to light with the war in Afghanistan.

The United States continues to cooperate closely with these countries to eliminate the threats these sites pose, not only to international security but to local populations.

The United States and the states of central Asia have enjoyed considerable diplomatic success. Kazakhstan's decision to join the nonproliferation treaty, along with Ukraine and others, as non-nuclear states are one of the great achievements of the last decade. Together we must set out with the same purpose to achieve equally important gains in the areas of human rights and democracy. We can and should build on our successes in addressing weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, but we must understand that to strengthen these binds to a level similar to that which exists with our NATO allies requires more than just security and military cooperation, it also requires like minded approaches to social issues.

My concern is without progress across the full breadth of policy issues, our relationships will hit a glass ceiling in the absence of success in broadening the rights and freedoms of the people of central Asia. United States involvement with and commitment to the states in central Asia has seen tremendous growth since my first visit to the region in 1992.

At that time, newly appointed leaders struggled to come to grips with the responsibilities of a civil democracy while addressing the specters of their Soviet past. The last decade has brought progress. We have a long way to go and I look forward to working with the administration, Senator Shelby, our chairman, and the leadership of these central Asian states to take the next step at deepening the relationship these countries have with the United States.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator TORRICELLI. Thank you, Senator Lugar. Senator Boxer, a member of the subcommittee, could not be here today but wanted to express her concern about the human rights situation in Kazakhstan. At her request I am going to enter into the record, without objection, at this point a letter sent to her by the former Prime Minister of Kazakhstan that details some of those issues.

[The letter referred to follows:]

The Honorable BARBARA BOXER
United States Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOXER:

Let me first thank you and Senators Torricelli and Lugar for your concern about the situation regarding human rights and freedom in Kazakhstan, and for your leadership in holding a hearing on June 27, 2002. I want to express my gratitude on behalf of all Kazakh democratic parties, members of the Democratic Forces Forum and common citizens of my native country.

On several occasions, I have had the privilege to testify before the U.S. Congress' Committees about human rights violations, persecution of the media, and reprisals against the democratic movement carried out by authoritarian and corrupt President Nazarbayev. When in 1997 opposition members mentioned them for the first time, the credibility of their words was met with great skepticism in the West. Today the U.S. and Western European governments, as well as their populations are aware of those abuses. The renowned human rights organizations and most influential newspapers have been highlighting attacks on journalists, politically motivated charges brought against opposition members, and the multi-million dollar foreign accounts blocked in Swiss banks—including those seized on request of the U.S. Justice Department.

U.S. Congressmen and senior officials in the U.S. Administration have also harshly criticized the Nazarbayev policy. There must be dozens of resolutions and state-

ments in this regard. There is no need for me to attract your attention to those facts; although the situation is becoming increasingly grave. The Kazakh people will eventually decide their fate themselves and choose such a government that will respect human rights and the rule of law. I believe that this will happen very soon.

Let me bring to your attention some aspects related to security and stability in central Asia, which, as your hearing indicates, are of deep concern not only to us, but also to U.S. We can see this from media publications and the Congressional statements. The United States has built and led the international coalition against terrorism because today your country is the world's leader. At the same time (or, perhaps, for this reason), the U.S. has become the main target for terrorists. The American political elites—its lawmakers and the Administration—have found themselves shouldering a double responsibility for security: to their own citizens and to the international community.

In spite of its strength, the U.S. needs allies in their fight. Central Asian governments have pledged their support. But can you rely on allies who do not share your fundamental values like freedom, equality, and justice? Saddam Hussein could be one of the counter-terrorism coalition foes. Does he radically differ from Turkmenbashi or Nazarbayev? Here we see the same authoritarian rule, the desire to remain in power indefinitely, family control of the economy, and control of the press. And, simultaneously, we see their people living in poverty, the two-faced government propaganda, and the terror of special services. These presidents-dictators have rewritten their nation's constitutions to bear no responsibility for any of their actions. In Kazakhstan, for instance, President Nazarbayev has pushed through a special law on himself, which he believes to guarantee him immunity from persecution for life.

The allies who need support in the fight against their own citizens are not just unreliable. They are dangerous. Just look at Kyrgyzstan. People have been holding rallies and demonstrations for months there. The authorities shoot at them; several people were killed. At the same time, counter-terrorism coalition troops have been stationed in Kyrgyzstan. President Akayev seeks to use this fact to convince Kyrgyz people that the West supports him and is even ready to defend him. By doing so, he has been fueling the anti-American sentiments and protest movements against the military base at Manas airport. According to media publications, the Kyrgyz government uses foreign economic aid to equip special services, in particular, to pay for 300,000 handcuffs.

With or without the handcuffs, President Akayev's has been rapidly losing his grip on power. He most probably will have to step down in an attempt to escape responsibility for the murders and the corruption. There is a pressing need to urgently support the Kyrgyz opposition in order to ensure that a public confidence government, which will replace President Akayev, will be friendly towards the U.S. and its western allies. Long ago, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright publicly promised to open U.S. printing houses in Almaty and Bishkek, which would print independent media outlets.

Three years have passed. Since then, only in Kazakhstan has the President's puppet courts shut down dozens of newspapers. Editorial offices of the newspapers "XXI Vek" (21st Century) and "Delovoje Obozreniye" (Business Review) were set on fire. The Propaganda Ministry closed down "Vecherny Atyrau", many other papers and several television channels. However, no printing houses have been established thus far and no one is confident that there ever will be. The same goes for the Internet providers promised by the Department of State, because of the Kazakh government's censoring of the Internet.

Thus emerged a false alternative: security or democracy. Your society has awaked to its internal policy risks. However, this choice is equally dangerous in foreign policy. Only democracy can provide security. All the regimes that constitute a terrorist threat are authoritarian and corrupt. The countries, which sponsor international terrorism, resort to terror in their internal policy to crack down on their opponents.

Central Asian presidents do not share democratic values. Moreover, they despise the western political system for what they see as a weakness. Some of them, like Turkmenbashi, do it openly and blatantly. Others prefer lies and hypocrisy. Last December, President Nazarbayev signed a joint declaration with President Bush, in which he pledged allegiance to democracy, swore to protect independence of the media and respect human rights, including the right to political activity. Since that time, the situation in Kazakhstan has deteriorated dramatically. The authorities have adopted a law that bans all opposition parties from participation in the political life. Obviously, they will be dissolved.

I would like to draw your attention to the fate of Mukhtar Ablyazov, a former minister who joined the democratic opposition and was immediately committed for trial for alleged corruption. The authorities have jailed Galymzhan Zhakiyanov. He

was a governor for five years. In Kazakhstan, governors are appointed directly by President Nazarbayev. Nazarbayev is also the person who fires them. The moment Zhakiyanov stopped being loyal to the President, he was arrested too. Now he awaits trial in a prison hospital. Several days ago, the daughter of Lira Baiseitova, a well-known woman-opposition member and editor of the shut down newspaper "Respublika" (Republic) was killed. The police have refused to investigate the case. Lira Baiseitova is convinced the crime was committed by the Nazarbayev secret services as a vengeance for her activity.

Killings, beatings, arsons, political trials. What can the United States set against all this? Unfortunately, to persuade the dictators and make arrangements with them would be most inadequate. The U.S. government and dozens of organizations render assistance to the Kazakh government, pay to bring the MPs from pro-governmental parties to the United States, hold seminars and conferences for the state-sponsored NGOs. What are you trying to convince the authoritarianism advocates of? They clearly see everything themselves. Stop persuading them, it's time to make the central Asian regimes give up their unlimited power. The opposition proposed a national-wide dialog to Nazarbayev, which could suggest a procedure to step down. In 1999, Nazarbayev assured Vice-President Gore in writing that he would commence such a dialog. He lied to the U.S. Administration. Make him meet his OSCE commitments and fulfill his promises, including those made to the previous Administration. The central Asian nations must see that no one can easily deceive the government of the world's most powerful state.

In recent years, I met many senior U.S. officials. I told them of my point of view and never came across strong opposition. Everyone see that the situation is deteriorating. Foreign investment laws are constantly revised; the Nazarbayev family strives to eliminate their rivals with the help of their puppet courts; corruption is rampant at all levels, including the President himself. At the same time, it's widely believed that a favorable investment climate and a stable political system could permit Kazakhstan, together with Russia, to play a key role in ensuring western energy security.

Dear Senators, on behalf of the popular democratic movement in Kazakhstan, on behalf of the opposition movements in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, I urge you to regard our nations, not their dictators, as your allies. The developed and democratic societies, the legitimate and elected governments will help to secure a true stability in the region. They will root out the environment that has become a fertile ground for terrorists and extremists.

Dear Members of the United States Senate, after the September 11 attacks, everybody has realized that borders that separate countries and continents are futile in the face of a terrorist threat. We live in the region where this threat is ever present. Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan are the neighboring states. Each of these countries has seen more or less serious fighting; each of them has lost people.

Kazakhstan remains peaceful. It's not, however, because its regime is better than those in the neighboring countries, it's because the country has got a mature democratic opposition, which unites people not under the military banners, but through peaceful meetings and fair elections. Our intention is to print newspapers, not leaflets. Our aim is a secular and social state. We urge you to assist us in working towards this aim, and the world will get a new nation, a new culture.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

AKEZHAN KAZHEGELDIN.

Senator TORRICELLI. I would also like to recognize several guests who are with us today. We are very honored and pleased to have with us the Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Mr. Khamrakulov; the Ambassador to Turkmenistan, Mr. Orazov; and a guest from Finland, Mr. Ari Vataner, who is a Member of the European Parliament and has been involved in human rights issues in Kazakhstan.

With that, if I could, perhaps we could take in order, Mr. Craner, if you would begin, then Mr. Crouch and Mr. Pascoe. Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. LORNE W. CRANER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR BUREAU, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. CRANER. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, thank you again for your well-timed invitation to testify on the very important question of whether the U.S. Government has the right balance between military assistance and human rights in central Asia.

September 11 dramatically changed the focus of U.S. foreign policy. We are now engaged in a global struggle against terror that requires working in close cooperation with an array of governments, some of which have as you mentioned, by our own accounts, have poor human rights records and with whom we have not had close relations in the past. Some individuals both here and abroad have expressed concern that as a result of the September 11 attacks on America, the administration has or will abandon human rights. This is not the case.

Indeed, human rights and democracy are as essential today, if not more so, than they were before the terrorist attacks on America. As Colin Powell has stated, "freedom fights terrorism, instability and conflict." Time and again experience has shown that countries which demonstrate high degrees of respect for human rights are also the most secure and most successful. In short, we will not win a war on terrorism by diminishing the universal observance of human rights. To do so would merely set the stage for a resurgence of terror in another generation. In fact, in central Asia, in terms of intensity, attention and funding, the region is receiving far more attention to human rights than it was before the 11th.

In my remarks I will focus on our efforts to encourage and support human rights and democracy in the region. I will be very frank about the situation in those countries and I will also make clear what progress we have been able to make to date in promoting democracy and respect for human rights.

The proximity of central Asia to Afghanistan has made nations in the region particularly vulnerable to terrorist activities, and the assistance the central Asian governments have rendered to Operation Enduring Freedom has been invaluable. Our strong message in turn to the governments and their leaders has been that close relations with the United States brings with it a heightened level of scrutiny and that therefore, any deepening and broadening of our cooperation will depend on continual progress in respect to human rights and democracy.

The message has been conveyed on our side by the President, by the Secretary of State, and officials on down the line. It has been conveyed as a principle, but it is also contingent on the defense of individual human rights activists, and in urging better human rights and democracy practices.

I have traveled to the region twice this year as part of this effort, most recently earlier this month, where I met with government authorities and ordinary citizens. In Uzbekistan the human rights record remains very poor. Human rights abuses by law enforcement authorities are widespread, including the use of torture. Due process is not respected. Arbitrary arrests and detentions continue.

We also remain very concerned about the treatment of observant peaceful Muslims.

We have used the enhanced cooperation of the war on terror to push for dialog for me and our Ambassador and others with the government authorities with whom we had little prior contact, such as the Interior Minister and Prosecutor General. This increased contact has been granted since January. Positive steps by Uzbekistan's Government since that time include renewing International Committee of the Red Cross access to prisoners, including those held in pretrial detention centers; the unprecedented punishment with long prison sentences of law enforcement officials who are found guilty of torturing several prisoners to death; the registration for the first time ever of an independent human rights NGO; and this month the issuance by authorities or an invitation to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture.

These are important developments. That said, we still have a very long road ahead in Uzbekistan. We are therefore substantially expanding our support for human rights groups by providing them with the space and resources they so badly need to carry out their work. My bureau is also funding the creation of resource centers for human rights in the area so they can meet freely and gain access to computers, the Internet, and other needs. We are also providing for further training in how to conduct human rights observance and monitoring.

My bureau will also soon establish a human rights clinical program at the Tashkent Law School. Part of this program will train students in basic international human rights standards and will provide legal consultations to the public on human rights matters in cases. This will be the first university human rights program in the region.

In Kyrgyzstan where the government's human rights record is poor, we have seen some major disappointment since September 11, including the tragic events of March when police fired on unarmed demonstrators. During this time the state run printing press in Bishkek also refused to print two independent newspapers and the government had introduced strict controls on ownership, import and operation of printing presses by decree.

We are pleased that Kyrgyz authorities have since taken some steps to restore public confidence, but public protests continue, with citizens calling for greater accountability and transparency in their government.

To aid citizens to act more effectively at the grass roots level, we are supporting a program to provide citizens groups with resources and training. Our project will establish a nationwide network of regional information centers, each of which will provide access to international and local independent news, and information on current events, as well as information on international law regarding human rights and democracy.

After much urging by the international community, led by our Ambassador John O'Keefe, the decrees I mentioned before restricting printing equipment has been repealed. Even before these events, my Bureau had identified a lack of access to free media as a problem in Kyrgyzstan and we decided to address directly the problem of independent media being dependent on state-controlled

infrastructure. We are now in the process of establishing an independent printing press in Bishkek that will serve independent newspapers and publishers to insure that the people of Kyrgyzstan will have access to free and independent information. We also have plans to promote the growth of democratically oriented political parties in Kyrgyzstan.

In Kazakhstan the government's human rights record remains poor. The government actions since September 11 have been at best, mixed. An encouraging development was the formation in November of a major new nongovernmental political movement, the Democratic Choice in Kazakhstan, and their first national meeting in January.

We're deeply concerned, however, that recent incidents suggest an effort to intimidate political opposition leaders and the independent media. Founding members of Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan were fired from their government jobs and Kazak authorities have detained two prominent members of Democratic Choice on long-standing corruption charges. These actions suggest an effort to intimidate political leaders.

Of equal concern has been the negative developments in freedom of media in Kazakhstan. Newspaper offices have been fire bombed, journalists threatened and harassed, and an independent TV station has been off the air since its transmission tower was vandalized in February. We therefore plan to increase U.S. support for political party development work in Kazakhstan and are seeking approval for a project to support an extensive training program for independent journalists in Kazakhstan and elsewhere in the region, to train and support journalists to increase coverage of human rights issues and expose corruption in the region.

In Turkmenistan, the human rights record of the government remains extremely poor. Government repression of political opposition and civil society remains a particular concern, as does abuse by law enforcement officials. Freedom of speech and the media are severely restricted.

There are well-known problems that you have been hearing about in particular from your constituents concerning religious freedom. Under their highly restrictive law on religion, only the Russian Orthodox church and Sunni Muslim groups feel free to worship. Other groups in past years have had their churches torn down and property confiscated.

Since September 11, there has been only the most minor improvements. As elsewhere, promotion of democracy and human rights remains an important right of our engagement, and we regularly push for changes in Turkmenistan's human rights practices. The U.S. Government has expanded its exchange program for Turkmen youth, and my Bureau is providing small grants to human rights and democracy NGOs. We are also in the process of supporting a regional program for all of central Asia, particularly Turkmenistan, to provide direct support for human rights and democracy activists, independent journalists, and NGOs affected by government persecution.

Finally, about 2 weeks ago the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, in part with our funding, brought together for the first time political and NGO leaders from the country in Vi-

enna, and they issued a set of recommendations to the United States and other countries about further policy inside Turkmenistan.

In Tajikistan, the government's human rights record remains poor. However, 5 years after a protracted and brutal civil war, it is taking steps to accommodate the political opposition. There are opportunities for freedom of public expression and dissent, and political debate is allowed. We've also witnessed the establishment of many local NGOs. However, we remain concerned about the need for reform of cumbersome election and party registration laws, and we will continue to engage with the government to bring that into accord with the international standards.

While an independent media in Tajikistan does not yet exist, journalists practice self censorship as a way of avoiding government harassment. We are disappointed that the recently introduced media law does not go far enough in protecting freedom of the media.

Tajikistan will benefit from one of our projects mentioned earlier to support an extensive training program for independent journalists in all of central Asia. We are also planning a human rights program for the entire region that will create a network of advocates to address the issues and demands of citizens who are currently unable to advocate effectively on their own behalf.

In conclusion, let me once again stress this administration's firm belief that our fight against terrorism is also a fight for democracy. Finding a proper balance between military assistance and support for human rights when engaging in a country such as those in central Asia, it need not be a question of balancing competing interests, but can as we're attempting, be an issue of mutually reinforcing goals. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Craner follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. LORNE W. CRANER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR BUREAU

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for your kind and well-timed invitation to testify on the very important question of whether the U.S. Government has the right balance between military assistance and human rights in central Asia. The Committee's interest in this question is certainly understandable as the importance of universal human rights has been brought sharply into focus by global terrorism.

September 11 dramatically changed the focus of United States foreign policy. We are now engaged in a global struggle against terror that requires working in close cooperation with an array of governments, some of which have, by our own accounts, poor human rights records and with whom we have not had close relations in the past. However, despite this increased focus on terrorism in our foreign policy, these new relationships remain anchored by the solid bedrock in our foreign policy, namely, a strong emphasis on promoting democracy and human rights.

Some in the human rights community here and abroad have expressed concern that as a result of the September 11 attacks on America, the Administration has or will abandon human rights. This is not the case. Indeed, human rights and democracy are as essential today, if not more, than they were before the terrorist attacks on America. We cannot win a war on terrorism by diminishing the universal observance of human rights. To do so would be merely to set the stage for a resurgence of terrorism in another generation.

President Bush and Secretary Powell have been unhesitating in their support of human rights and democracy throughout the world. In his State of the Union Address, President Bush made the point that the fight against terrorism is part of a larger struggle for democracy:

America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere. No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. We have no intention of imposing our culture. But America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, private property, free speech, equal justice and religious tolerance.

Secretary Powell has been equally adamant in calling on our new partners to respect human rights and democracy. At the release of our annual Human Rights Report he said:

The United States welcomes the help of any country or party that is genuinely prepared to work with us to eradicate terrorism. At the same time, we will not relax our commitment to advancing the cause of human rights and democracy. For a world in which men and women of every continent, culture and creed, of every race, religion and region, can exercise their fundamental freedoms is a world in which terrorism cannot thrive.

But I think it is fair to say that the U.S. commitment to human rights and democracy has become a bipartisan tradition that reflects not only U.S. values, but also 50 years of international acceptance and support for the universality of human rights. That is why I welcome this opportunity to testify before you today, and I look forward to continuing to work with this Committee to promote human rights and democracy in this region.

Specifically with regard to central Asia, I will focus my remarks on our efforts to encourage and support human rights and democracy in the region. I will be frank about the situation in those countries but will make clear what progress we have made in promoting democracy and respect for human rights. For details on military assistance and bilateral relations, I will defer to my colleagues, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Crouch and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Pascoe.

In the case of the five central Asian republics, the assistance the governments of these countries have rendered to Operation Enduring Freedom has been invaluable. Promoting democracy and human rights is even more important, for these countries are frontline states in the struggle against terrorism. Their proximity to Afghanistan and their own tragic experiences with indigenous terrorism make them particularly vulnerable to future terrorist activities. There is a firm consensus among all U.S. decision-makers that a broadening of cooperation will only be possible if these same governments undergo political reforms that will allow the emergence of democratic institutions, without which there can be no lasting stability in the region.

Promoting religious freedom in central Asia has also become one of our most difficult tasks given the sensitivities of the issue in the post 9/11 context of a war against terrorism. Many non-Orthodox Christians and especially Muslims find themselves the object of repressive legislation, or of prison sentences. We continue to make it clear in our discussions with each country and its citizens that even though the U.S. was attacked by Islamic extremists, we are not in a war against Islam. We still believe the best approach is to permit all non-violent, unregistered religious groups to exist without government interference. We believe government repression of its observant Muslim believers, as if they were all violent extremists, will bring about that very state which the government seeks to avoid.

As they celebrate their tenth anniversary of independence, the central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union continue to present some of the greatest challenges to U.S. efforts to enhance stability in the region, which can only be achieved through democracy and respect for human rights.

ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT

Our approach to these overwhelming challenges has been to enhance engagement with the governments and societies of central Asia. As Dr. Condoleezza Rice said only a week after the horrific September 11 attacks, "Civil liberties matter to this President very much, and our values matter to us abroad. We are not going to stop talking about the things that matter to us, human rights, [and] religious freedom . . . We're going to continue to press those things; we would not be America if we did not."

Even while we ramp up our military cooperation with governments that have troubling human rights records, we also see this as an opportunity to enhance our engagement and impact on issues of democracy and human rights. Our firm message to the governments and their leaders has been that closer relations with the United States brings with it a heightened level of scrutiny and that, therefore, any

deepening and broadening of our cooperation will depend on continual progress in respecting human rights and democracy. Our policy of enhanced engagement has taken many forms. However, as my colleagues will testify about their activities, the message from all of us has been consistent—democratic states that respect the human rights of their citizens are anchors of stability and motors of prosperity. Therefore, the governments of central Asia must keep moving down the path to greater democratization. At every level, from President Bush on down, we have taken every opportunity to express this message when meeting with senior government officials from central Asia, whether in the capitals of the region or in Washington, D.C.

A good example of our coordinated efforts was the Joint Security Cooperation Consultation in Tashkent in January that resulted in the initialing of the Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework Between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United States. Present at this consultation were not only representatives from the Department of Defense and the State Department's Bureau of European Affairs, but also representatives from my Bureau as well as the Treasury Department. This comprehensive approach to security was concretely reflected in the final document, in which our countries have agreed to cooperate not only in matters of military security but, equally important, in matters of political and economic reform, because security also comes from a free market-based economy and an open, democratic system. Indeed, in this document the government of Uzbekistan reaffirmed its commitment and intentions to further intensify the democratic transformation of its society in the political and economic areas. And the U.S. government has agreed to provide them assistance in doing so.

We also closely coordinate our HRDF-funded projects with the wide range of ongoing U.S. government-funded democracy programs in central Asia, particularly in such areas as support for independent media and non-governmental organizations. USAID is implementing a wide array of democracy programs in these and other areas, including civic advocacy, the rule of law, political party development and local government reform. State Department public diplomacy programs are reaching out to the next generation of central Asian leaders by bringing young, reform-minded people to the United States on academic and professional exchanges. This year, the Department is also providing additional funding to expand the grant-making activities of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in central Asia.

As a sign of our concern I have traveled to the region twice since 9/11, once in January and again two weeks ago, to meet with government authorities to impress upon them the need to meet their commitments to respect human rights. I have also devoted a significant portion of my Bureau's Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) to projects supporting democracy and human rights in central Asia and plan on increasing our programming there substantially. I would like to speak briefly to some of the overriding problems we see and how we have addressed them since September 11.

In Uzbekistan the human rights record remains very poor. Human rights abuses by law enforcement authorities are widespread, including the use of torture. The judiciary is not able to function independently and due process is not respected—arbitrary arrests and detentions remain problematic. We continue to raise concerns about the treatment of observant, peaceful Muslim groups.

As a result of these serious issues, we have developed a multi-pronged approach to tackle these human rights problems. In the context of 9/11, we have used our enhanced cooperation to push for greater dialogue with government authorities with whom we had had little prior contact. As a result, I have been able to meet with officials from those government agencies where the worst abuses occur, including the Ministries of Justice and Interior as well as the Procurator General. With our Ambassador, John Herbst, in the lead, we are making progress. Uzbekistan has publicly expressed its commitment to internationally recognized human rights and since September 11 has taken several steps to act on that commitment. Limited but positive steps include permitting International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to prisoners, including those held in pre-trial detention centers; the punishment with long prison sentences of those law enforcement officials who were found guilty of torturing several prisoners to death; the amnesty releasing nearly 800 political prisoners; and for the first time in the history of independent Uzbekistan, registration of an independent human rights NGO. We understand that the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture has received an invitation to visit Uzbekistan. It is our hope that the long-banned opposition party, Birlik, will be able to re-register soon.

While these are important steps, we still have a long way to go in Uzbekistan. We are under no illusion that the human rights abuses have ended. We know there to be about 7,000 political prisoners and will continue to urge the government to release them. While arrests have declined significantly, we know they continue. Just

four weeks ago Yuldash Rasulov, a human rights activist whose work for the still unregistered Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU) focuses on government repression of practicing Muslims, was arrested. For this reason, we are substantially expanding our support for human rights groups by providing them with the physical space and resources they so badly need to carry out their important work. With our implementing partner, Freedom House, my Bureau will be establishing resource centers for human rights NGOs to use as meeting rooms, to gain access to the Internet, computers and independent newspapers and other media. We are also providing them further training in how to conduct human rights monitoring and reporting. With another of our implementing partners, ABA/CEELL, my Bureau will soon establish a human rights clinical program at the Tashkent law school. As part of this program we will train students in basic international human rights standards and provide legal consultations to the public on human rights matters and cases. This will be the first university human rights program in the region.

In Kyrgyzstan, where the government's human rights record is poor, we have seen some major disappointments since September 11 but are cautiously hopeful that after the tragic events of March 17-18 in Aksy district where police fired on unarmed demonstrators, the government of Kyrgyzstan is once again headed in the direction of greater democratization and respect for human rights. On May 22, Kyrgyzstan's government resigned following the report of a special state commission investigating the deaths of five civilian protestors. The commission ruled that senior government officials were at fault and recommended specific actions be taken to address the situation, including expediting court and legal reforms in the country. We hope that these recommendations will be implemented. While we are pleased that the Kyrgyz authorities have taken some steps to restore public confidence, public protests continue, with the people calling for greater accountability and transparency in their government. We stand ready to assist the Kyrgyz government take even more concrete measures to expand dialogue and address the grievances of civil society.

To aid citizens to act more effectively at the grassroots level, my Bureau is supporting a program to provide citizen groups with resources and training. Our project will establish a nationwide network of regional information centers with corresponding discussion clubs and reading rooms. Each of these establishments will provide access to international and local independent news and information on current events as well as information on international and local laws regarding human rights and democracy. DRL also plans to promote the growth of democratically-oriented political parties in Kyrgyzstan.

Public discontent in Kyrgyzstan arose over the arrest of parliamentarian Azimbek Beknazarov in January on charges stemming from incidents that had occurred 7 years earlier. The U.S. had credible concerns that this arrest may have been linked to his public statements critical of government policy and our Ambassador, John O'Keefe, publicly pushed for his release throughout the spring with final success. One of the issues that exacerbated the situation there was the lack of sufficient access to independent media; during this time the state-run printing press in Bishkek was refusing to print two of the independent newspapers, "Moya Stolitsa" and "Res Publica," and the government had introduced strict controls on the ownership, import and operation of printing presses. Here, too, Ambassador O'Keefe publicly raised the issue of the need to respect freedom of media. I am pleased to report that the decree restricting printing equipment has been repealed.

Even before these events, my Bureau had identified lack of access to free media as a problem hampering democracy in Kyrgyzstan and we decided to address directly the problem of independent media being dependent on state-controlled media infrastructure. DRL is now in the process of establishing an independent printing press in Bishkek that will serve independent newspapers and publishers to help ensure that the people of Kyrgyzstan will always have access to free and independent information.

In Kazakhstan the government's human rights record remains poor and government actions since September 11 have been very mixed. A positive note is that Presidents Bush and Nazabayev stated in a joint declaration in December their "desire to strengthen democratic institutions and processes, such as independent media, local government, pluralism, and free and fair elections" in Kazakhstan.

Yet we are deeply concerned that recent incidents suggest an effort to intimidate political opposition leaders and the independent media and raise serious questions about the safety of the independent media in Kazakhstan. An encouraging development was the formation in November of a major new nongovernmental political movement, the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DVK). While the movement was able to hold public meetings, its founding members were subsequently all fired from their government jobs at the direction of the Prime Minister. In March Ak Zhol, a

new democratic party affiliated with the DVK, was able to register. However, Kazakhstani authorities have detained two prominent members of Democratic Choice, Mukhtar Ablyazov and Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, on long-standing corruption charges. While we cannot comment on the veracity of the charges against them, these actions taken together suggest an effort to intimidate political opposition leaders.

Of equal concern have been the negative developments in freedom of the media in Kazakhstan. On May 21, several unidentified men apparently robbed the editorial office of the independent Kazakhstani newspaper, "Soldat." On May 22, the Almaty office of another independent newspaper, "Delovoye Obrozreniye Respublika," was firebombed and destroyed. Broadcast rights have been suspended since March for the independent television state "TAN," and its primary feeder cable has been vandalized three times since it went off the air. Ambassador Larry Napper has made our concerns clear to Kazakhstani authorities and urged them to conduct an independent and transparent investigation into the firebombing incident as well as the other attacks on independent media. Despite this harassment, we see the emergence of nascent, fledgling democratic forces and DRL therefore plans to increase U.S. support for political party development work in Kazakhstan, and are seeking approval for a project to support an extensive training program for independent journalists in all of central Asia. This program will train and support journalists to increase coverage of human rights issues, allowing them to monitor human rights abuses and expose corruption in the region, providing the information citizens need to judge those in authority.

In Turkmenistan the human rights record of the government remains extremely poor. Government repression of political opposition and civil society remains a particular concern as does abuse by, and impunity of, police and other law enforcement officials. There are severe restrictions on freedom of speech and media. Since September 11 there have been only the most minor improvements. The government announced that exit visas are no longer required; additionally, at year's end 9,000 prisoners were amnestied and released and another 9,000 received reduced sentences. Although possibly motivated by internal reasons, recently there have been massive internal investigations and prosecution of the KNB and other security ministries for human rights and other abuses.

Also in Turkmenistan, there are the well-known problems that you have been hearing about from your constituents concerning religious freedom. Under their highly restrictive law on religion, only the Russian Orthodox and Sunni Muslim groups feel free to worship. Other groups in past years have had their churches torn down or property confiscated. Some Protestant faithful were harassed, detained, and beaten. On a more positive note, the government released Baptist Shageldy Atakov and several Jehovah's Witnesses (imprisoned for conscientious objection). There were no reports of torture this year, and the end to exit visas has been a great benefit to the religious community. President Niyazov also went on record to make new commitments on religious rights in his letter to President Bush.

Promotion of democracy and human rights remains an important part of our multifaceted engagement there, and we regularly raise Turkmenistan's human rights abuses bilaterally. The U.S. government has expanded its exchange program for Turkmen youth and my Bureau is using HRDF to support democracy by providing small grants to human rights and democracy NGOs via our implementing partners. DRL is also in the process of supporting a regional program for central Asia to provide direct support for human rights and democracy activists, independent journalists, and NGOs affected by government persecution related to their work.

In Tajikistan, the government's human rights record remains poor; however, five years after a protracted and brutal civil war, it has taken steps to accommodate the political opposition, conclude and implement a peace accord in a power-sharing agreement, and include the opposition in elections that unfortunately remain flawed. There are opportunities for freedom of public expression of dissent and political debate is allowed. We have also witnessed the establishment of many local NGOs. However, we remained concerned about the need for reform of cumbersome election and party registration laws and we will continue to engage with the government on bringing them into accord with international standards.

In Tajikistan, despite some local incidents with respect to Protestant churches, the government of Tajikistan generally respects the rights of observant Muslim believers. In a delicate balancing act, the government has permitted a religiously oriented party, the Islamic Renaissance Party, to field two members to the lower house of the national parliament since 9/11, and there are several deputies from this party in regional and district parliaments around the country.

While independent media in Tajikistan does exist, journalists practice self-censorship as a way of avoiding government harassment. We were disappointed that the media law recently introduced in parliament does not go far enough in protecting freedom of media. Because of DRL's deep commitment to freedom of the media, my Bureau recently decided to seek approval for a project to support an extensive training program for independent journalists in all of central Asia. This program will train and support journalists to increase coverage of human rights issues, allowing them to monitor human rights abuses and expose corruption in the region, providing the information citizens need to judge those in authority.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion allow me to stress once again this Administration's firm belief that our fight against terrorism is part of a larger fight for democracy. Finding the proper balance between military assistance and support for human rights when engaging with countries only at the threshold of respect for human rights and democracy is not a question of balancing competing interests, but a question of mutually reinforcing goals. In this new world of greater vigilance against wanton terrorist attacks, we are as convinced as ever that democratic freedoms, political and economic stability, and human rights are key to a world free of terrorism. Societies that respect human dignity and the integrity of the person are societies that adhere to the rule of law and provide no opportunity for terrorism to take hold. A stable government that is accountable to its people and respects their rights and that shares power and practices pluralism can deal more effectively with extremist elements in its society. These are the societies we are striving for in central Asia, with both our policies and our assistance programs.

Thank you.

Senator TORRICELLI. Thank you very much, Mr. Craner.
Mr. Crouch.

STATEMENT OF HON. J.D. CROUCH II, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. CROUCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, thank you for the opportunity to address this subcommittee. I regard the work of the subcommittee generally, but to focus on the human rights issue is particularly helpful to the work that the Department is undertaking in central Asia, both prior to 9/11, but certainly since 9/11.

My remarks today will focus on U.S. Department of Defense cooperation with the countries of central Asia. The administration's policy toward central Asia falls generally into three broad categories, internal reform, security promotion and energy development. All three are interrelated and we coordinate our activities to advance U.S. interests, but the Defense Department's primary responsibility falls into the security area.

Although the Department of Defense was actively involved in central Asia prior to September 11, my remarks today will emphasize our Operation Enduring Freedom cooperation with central Asian states. Even after the Taliban are eliminated, we will share important security interests with central Asian states which will merit our continued cooperation.

Our bilateral initiatives with the countries in the region prior to September 11 laid the groundwork both politically and militarily for coalition military operations in central Asia in support of the global war on terrorism. Prior to September 2001, our military to military cooperation was aimed at eliminating the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, strengthening these states' sov-

ereignty and independence and supporting defense reform; namely helping these states reform their militaries to transition from the Soviet era legacy of top heavy bloated militaries to smaller more professional forces capable of supporting legitimate defense needs, encouraging participation in NATO's partnership for peace program, promoting regional peacekeeping capabilities and fostering greater regional cooperation. These goals remain today.

The list of these specific activities and programs is long, and includes activities under the cooperative threat reduction program as well as exchanges and training on issues relevant to reform and modernization. For example, central Asian officers and soldiers attend U.S. military schools and participate in our training programs. These include courses and seminars at the Marshall Center in Germany and courses sponsored by the International Military Education and Training Program, or IMET.

These activities introduce central Asian military personnel to national security functions and military roles and responsibilities in a democratic society. They are instructed in the rule of law, the role of the armed forces within a constitutional framework, and rational decisionmaking models based on accepted human rights norms.

A number of central Asian states have started developing professional noncommissioned officer corps and other programs integral to military personnel reform. Additionally, some central Asian states have played active roles in the NATO partnership for peace program and in regional cooperation exercises.

Today the United States and our coalition allies have forces in central Asia because of Operation Enduring Freedom and the need to position U.S. and coalition troops and equipment close to Afghanistan. However, we were able to gain access quickly because of the relationships that we had formed with military and national leaders in the region prior to September 11.

Another key factor contributing to the willingness of central Asian leaders to cooperate with the United States and others in Operation Enduring Freedom is that our military operations are enhancing their security too. I think this is an important point. All of the central Asian countries have told us that OEF directly addresses their security concerns, namely terrorism and religious extremism, both home grown and imported, narco traffickers and their close opportunistic collaboration with violent groups, and the transnational threat of weapons of mass destruction materials and crossing international borders. And I think that because our actions are in their security interest, this provides us more leverage, frankly, on the human rights side than we would have if we were in a position where they were simply doing us a favor, if you will. They are not doing us a favor by having us involved there. Our interests are I think complementary.

Our military relationships with each nation have matured on a scale not imaginable prior to September 11, and I would like to review those for you.

The Kyrgyz Republic has proven to be a critical regional partner in the war on terrorism. OEF coalition activities are centered on air support operations from facilities at Manas International Airport. Prior to the onset of operations, we needed rapid parliamen-

tary action approving a status of forces agreement, which was granted by the government. Further, the Kyrgyz Republic has approved all U.S. requests to date in relation to OEF issues, to include basing of combat and combat support units at Manas. This basing is not limited to U.S. forces. France, Italy, Turkey, Norway, Canada and South Korea are also basing units at Manas.

Uzbekistan was one of the first supporters of the U.S. global war on terrorism, providing a base for U.S. operations and supporting humanitarian relief operations into Afghanistan at the Friendship Bridge at Termez. German units supporting the international security assistance force in Afghanistan have established a northern base in Termez. Uzbekistan's President Karimov has strongly advocated active U.S. and coalition involvement in central Asia. Uzbekistan's own struggle against an indigenous terrorist group, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan [IMU], contributes to a keen awareness of the threat facing the region and the world.

Kazakhstan has also played a significant role. It has agreed to blanket over-flight clearances for U.S. and coalition aircraft, waiving the normally associated over-flight fees; offered the use of its airfield facilities; expedited rail transshipment of supplies to our bases at Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan and Manas, Kyrgyzstan. The Kazakhstani have stated their desire to increase their cooperation with the United States, specifically in support of their efforts to restructure their Armed Forces and develop the capability to secure their oil pipelines and Caspian energy resources. They too are concerned about terrorist activities and groups originating from the south and are reorganizing their forces to address this threat. Finally, they plan on using U.S. security assistance funds to upgrade facilities in the western part of their country to support naval and military operations designed to enhance Caspian Sea security.

Turkmenistan has worked with the United States in overflight and refueling operations for humanitarian flights in support of OEF. Eventually we expect up to 10 aircraft a day will be refueled in this operation, with blanket overflight and landing clearances. Turkmenistan has also played an important role in facilitating humanitarian aid shipments into Afghanistan.

The Government of Tajikistan has likewise been a supporter of Operation Enduring Freedom. Its primary contribution has been the use of its international airport at Dushanbe for coalition refueling and basing. To date, the United States Air Force has refueled over 400 C-17 sorties at Dushanbe, with British and French air forces also refueling and basing at the airport.

This provides a brief overview of the contributions that central Asian states have made to support the United States in the war on terrorism. The events of September 11 clearly highlighted the fact that the United States and the countries of central Asia have significant mutual security interests. The continued stability and security of this region remain an important U.S. interest. In this regard, the United States must continue cooperative efforts with central Asian states to help them secure their independence and territorial integrity by eliminating terrorism, eliminate the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and en-

couraging reform, both democratic and human rights reform and stability.

For the foreseeable future, the United States defense and security cooperation in central Asia must continue to support actions to deter or defeat terrorist threats. Over the past 4 years the IMU has posed a considerable threat to countries in the region. The IMU, an al-Qaeda affiliate, lost one of its two primary leaders in December in Konduz, Afghanistan, when he was reportedly killed while fighting for the Taliban. The IMU's planned campaigns have been severely disrupted through coalition military activity. Nevertheless, the organization remains a threat not only to Uzbekistan but to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The IMU's stated goal is to overthrow the Government of Uzbekistan and to create a regionally based, religious government, founded on its conception of pure Islamic law, a conception not unlike that of the Taliban.

The cooperative threat reduction programs in Kazakhstan are focused on dismantling the former Soviet biological and chemical agent production facilities located there, upgrading security and biological institutes storing dangerous pathogens, and securing radioactive and fissile material.

In Uzbekistan, we have just completed two projects, demilitarizing the former Soviet chemical research and production institute Nukus, and destroying residual anthrax buried in pits at Voz Island. Already, our scientists are preparing to engage in cooperative research projects with Uzbek bioscientists and we are initiating projects to enhance security of dangerous pathogen collections at biological institutes.

All of the central Asian states face the same challenge, to reform Soviet style institutions while creating effective capabilities to defend against transnational threats. It is our intent to provide them a democratic model, sound military advice and tailored assistance. Extremist violence fueled by narcotics and overlaid on a population struggling with poverty are real obstacles to stability and security.

The broad range and depth of our cooperation with the countries in central Asia was unimaginable before the tragic events of September 11. What is clear today, however, is that the defense and military to military relationships we forged in the years following the independence of the central Asian states have made it possible for us to conduct these vitally important military operations for the war on terrorism with their full cooperation and support. At the same time, U.S. Department of Defense programs, contacts and activities are furthering significant defense reforms and the establishment of effective military forces under the control of civilian authorities. The U.S. Department of Defense will continue both the global fight against terrorism and its efforts in support of genuine and positive change in the military structures of the central Asian states.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Crouch follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. J.D. CROUCH II, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to address this subcommittee. My remarks today will focus on U.S. Department of Defense security cooperation with the countries of central Asia.

The Administration's policy towards central Asia falls into three categories: internal reform, security promotion, and energy development. All three are inter-related and we coordinate our activities to advance U.S. national interests. The Defense Department's primary responsibilities fall in the security area.

Although the Department of Defense was actively involved in central Asia prior to September 11th my remarks today will emphasize our Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) cooperation with central Asian states. Even after the Taliban are eliminated, we will share important security interests with central Asian states, which will merit our continued cooperation.

Our bilateral activities with the countries in the region prior to September 11th laid the groundwork both politically and militarily for coalition operations in central Asia in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Prior to September 2001, our military-to-military cooperation was aimed at:

- Eliminating the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction;
- Strengthening these states' sovereignty and independence;
- Supporting defense reform, namely, helping these states to reform their militaries to transition from the Soviet-era legacy of top-heavy, bloated militaries, to smaller, more professional forces capable of supporting legitimate defense needs;
- Encouraging participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace;
- Promoting regional peacekeeping capabilities; and,
- Fostering greater regional cooperation.

These goals remain today.

The list of these specific activities and programs is long, and includes activities under the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program as well as exchanges and training on issues relevant to reform and modernization. For example, central Asian officers and soldiers attend U.S. military schools and participate in our training programs. These include courses and seminars at the Marshall Center in Germany, and courses sponsored by the International Military Education and Training program, IMET. These activities introduce central Asian military personnel to national security functions and military roles and responsibilities in a democratic society. They are instructed in the rule of law, the role of the armed forces within a constitutional framework, and rational decision-making models based on accepted human rights norms.

A number of central Asian states have started developing professional Non-Commissioned Officer corps, and other programs integral to military personnel reform. Additionally, some central Asian nations have played active roles in the NATO Partnership for Peace (PIP) "CENTRASBATS" (Central Asian Battalions) and Regional Cooperation exercises.

Today we have forces in central Asia because of OEF and the need to position U.S. and coalition troops and equipment close to Afghanistan. However, we were able to gain access quickly because of the prior relationships we had formed with military and national leaders in the region prior to September 11th.

Another key factor contributing to the willingness of central Asian leaders to cooperate with the United States in OEF is that *our* military operations are enhancing their security, too. All of the central Asian countries have told us that OEF directly addresses their security concerns, namely: 1) terrorism and religious extremism, both home-grown and imported; 2) narcotraffickers and their close, opportunistic collaboration with violent groups; and 3) the transnational threat of WMD materials crossing international borders.

Our military relationships with each nation have matured on a scale not imaginable prior to September 11th.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

The Kyrgyz Republic has proven itself to be a critical regional partner in the War on Terrorism. In the Kyrgyz Republic, OEF coalition activities are centered on air support operations from facilities at Manas International Airport. Prior to the onset of operations we needed rapid parliamentary action approving a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which was granted. Further, the Kyrgyz Republic has approved all U.S. requests to date in relation to OEF issues, to include basing of combat and combat support units at Manas. This basing is not limited to U.S. forces: France, Italy, Turkey, Norway, Canada, and South Korea are also basing units at Manas.

UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan was one of the first supporters of the U.S. Global War on Terrorism, providing a base for U.S. operations and supporting humanitarian relief operations into Afghanistan at the Friendship Bridge at Termez. German units supporting the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan have established a northern base in Termez. Uzbekistan's President Karimov has strongly advocated active U.S. and Coalition involvement in central Asia. Uzbekistan's own struggle against an indigenous terrorist group—the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)—contributes to a keen awareness of the threat facing the region and the world.

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan has also played a significant role. It has: 1) agreed to blanket overflight clearances for U.S. and Coalition aircraft, waiving the normally associated over-flight fees; 2) offered the use of its airfield facilities; and 3) expedited rail transshipment of supplies to our bases at Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan, and Manas, Kyrgyzstan. The Kazakhstanis have stated their desire to increase their cooperation with the United States, specifically in support of their efforts to restructure their Armed Forces and develop a capability to secure their oil pipelines and Caspian energy resources. They, too, are concerned about terrorist activities and groups originating from the south, and are reorganizing their forces to address this threat. Lastly, they plan on using U.S. security assistance funds to upgrade facilities in the Western part of the country to support naval and military operations designed to enhance Caspian Sea security.

TURKMENISTAN

Turkmenistan has worked with the United States in overflight and refueling operations for humanitarian flights in support of OEF. Eventually, up to 10 aircraft per day will be refueled in this operation, with blanket overflight and landing clearances. Turkmenistan has also played an important role in facilitating humanitarian aid shipments into Afghanistan.

TAJIKISTAN

The Government of Tajikistan has likewise been a supporter of Operation Enduring Freedom. Its primary contribution has been the use of its international airport in Dushanbe for coalition refueling and basing. To date, the U.S. Air Force has refueled over 400 C-17 sorties in Dushanbe, with British and French air forces also refueling and basing at the airport.

This is an overview of the contributions central Asian states have made to support the U.S. in the war on terrorism. The events of September 11th clearly highlighted that the United States and the countries of central Asia have significant mutual security interests. The continued stability and security of this region will remain an important U.S. interest. In this regard, the U.S. must continue cooperative efforts with central Asian states to help them secure their independence and territorial integrity by: (1) eliminating terrorism; (2) eliminating the threat posed by the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD); and (3) encouraging reform and stability.

ELIMINATING TERRORISM

For the foreseeable future, United States defense and security cooperation in central Asia must continue to support actions to deter or defeat terrorist threats. Over the past four years the IMU has posed a considerable threat to countries in the region. The IMU, an Al Qaeda affiliate, lost one of its two primary leaders in December in Konduz, Afghanistan, when he was reportedly killed while fighting for the Taliban. The IMU's planned campaigns have been severely disrupted through coalition military activity. Nevertheless, the organization remains a threat not only to Uzbekistan but to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan as well. The IMU's stated goal is to overthrow the Government of Uzbekistan and to create a religious-based government founded on its conception of "pure Islamic law"—a conception not unlike that of the Taliban.

HALTING THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The Cooperative Threat Reduction programs in Kazakhstan are focused on dismantling the former Soviet biological and chemical agent production facilities located there; upgrading security at biological institutes storing dangerous pathogens; and, securing radioactive and fissile material.

In Uzbekistan, we have just completed two projects: demilitarizing the former Soviet chemical research and production institute Nukus and destroying residual anthrax buried in pits at Vozrozhdeniye Island. Already, our scientists are preparing to engage in cooperative research projects with Uzbek bio scientists, and we are initiating projects to enhance security of dangerous pathogen collections at biological institutes.

ENCOURAGING REFORM AND STABILITY

All the central Asian states face the same challenge: to reform Soviet-style institutions while creating effective capabilities to defend against transnational threats. It is our intent to provide them a democratic model, sound military advice, and tailored assistance. Extremist violence, fueled by narcotics and overlaid on a population struggling with poverty, are real obstacles to stability and security.

The broad range and depth of our cooperation with the countries in central Asia was unimaginable prior to the tragic events of September 11th. What is clear today, however, is that the defense and military to military relationships we forged in the years following the independence of the central Asian states have made it possible for us to conduct vitally important military operations in the war on terrorism with their full cooperation and support. At the same time, U.S. Department of Defense programs, contacts and activities are furthering significant defense reforms and the establishment of effective military forces under the control of civilian authorities. The United States Department of Defense will continue both the global fight against terrorism and its efforts in support of genuine and positive change in the military structures of the central Asian nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This concludes my remarks.

Senator TORRICELLI. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Mr. Pasco, there is a vote in progress, but I would like to get your testimony in and then we will return for any discussion or questions afterwards, so as not to interrupt you in mid-testimony. We could try to do this in 5 to 7 minutes so we don't have to interrupt you.

STATEMENT OF B. LYNN PASCOE, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. PASCOE. Mr. Chairman, that's very good, because actually, I was going to ask your permission if I could just enter my statement in the record.

Senator TORRICELLI. Without objection, it will be entered in the record.

Mr. PASCOE. First off let me say, I really want to congratulate you and the subcommittee for holding these hearings. Those of us who work on central Asia deeply appreciate what Congress has done, what the Senate has done and this committee has done. One of the ways that the engagement has been very important in the region is travel that the Senators and Congressmen have taken to the region. Sometime with the past, I think for the first decade, the State Department had a reputation of being the one who sort of carried the negative water, and everybody else had nice things to say, and not too many people really went out there in the first place, so they could very selectively pick from what they wanted to hear, and it made the message much more muffled.

Since last September, the large number of Senators and Congressmen who have gone to the region at considerable effort, because it's not too easy to get there sometimes, I think has had an extraordinary positive effect on promoting the kind of human rights and democracy issues that we are talking about today, because when they hear it from you directly, it is very important in its strong support for our efforts.

Let me just say in general that I think in the period for the first decade, we tried to be there very early in central Asia and we saw that the independence of these states were quite important and we tried to do much on the humanitarian side and we certainly worked, and Senator Lugar was deeply involved in all of the efforts on weapons of mass destruction, and we worked to see what we could do in the building of civil society areas.

I think we had some successes. Some of it was impressive. What was clear, I think though after 9/11, that one is, we needed bases, we needed to be able to operate from the region. As Mr. Couch has stated quite clearly, we got very fast, very good cooperation, and it remains so to this day. The other side of it was the question of how do we avoid the kind of problem we had in Afghanistan, and I think that goes to the very heart of the question of whether there is a conflict between the human rights democracy side and our cooperation in Operation Enduring Freedom.

And from our point of view, there is no conflict whatsoever. I listened to both of you gentlemen's opening statements very carefully, and it occurred to me how closely we agree on this question, because our message at all levels, from the top on down, in every meeting that we had and as Lorne said, as J.D. said, as I was saying last week when I was out there, that you have to have the economic and political reform, the modernization if you're going to make it in the real world of the global economy, and that's what we're trying to do for these countries out there, we're trying to give them a chance. They have to have political stability, they have to have democracy, they have to have human rights and they have to have economic development.

We're working at that each day. We want to work very closely with you Senators on this issue, and I thank you very much. Did I make my 7 minutes, sir?

Senator TORRICELLI. You did.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pascoe follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF B. LYNN PASCOE, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is my pleasure to appear before this subcommittee. I have just returned last week from visiting each of the central Asian capitals. My purpose this afternoon is to attempt to bridge the presentations of my two distinguished colleagues, who will be speaking about military assistance and human rights in the region. I will attempt to answer the question, "Why is it so important that we engage these countries at this juncture?"

Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States moved to establish embassies and to engage the strategically placed states of central Asia. Their weaknesses were evident from the beginning, but we believed it important to shore up their independence and provided modest assistance to help them to develop into stable modernizing countries. Key elements in this strategy included multiple pipelines to help the countries of the region benefit from their energy wealth, humanitarian efforts to stave off the collapse of some of the countries' social structure, civil society programs to develop modern political structures, cooperative efforts to obstruct the export of weapons of mass destruction, and some development aid to help economic modernization. As security tensions nurtured by terrorist groups formed in Afghanistan late in the decade, the United States also provided a modicum of security assistance.

The attacks of September 11 made it clear that our policies in the region had not gone far enough. We needed the assistance of the states of the region (through bases, overflight rights, supplies, etc.) to prosecute Operation Enduring Freedom; even more critically, the attacks brought home the danger that fragile countries like Afghanistan and potentially some of the states of central Asia could become the

breeding ground for international terrorist groups aimed at the United States. It was critical to the national interests of the United States that we greatly enhance our relations with the five central Asian countries and help them find ways to take the political and economic reform measures necessary for long-term prosperity and stability.

The Presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were invited to the United States, numerous Congressional delegations and cabinet secretaries have visited the region, and government ministers from these countries now regularly visit Washington. Our assistance budgets for most of the countries have increased significantly. The states of central Asia have been excellent partners in the war against terrorism and they have welcomed our contribution to their security.

Experience proves that individual liberty, free markets, good governance, and international peace are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The challenge before us is how should we engage with these regimes to move them in the right direction toward greater personal freedom, rule of law, and economic openness.

We have a vision for this region—that it become stable, peaceful, and prosperous—and that this is achieved through political and economic reform. These reforms are the only way to bring these states into competitive global economy. Without it, they cannot survive as modern states. When the Soviet Union collapsed, many hoped that the new countries that emerged would quickly embrace pluralistic democracy and market economy. We now know that those expectations of the pace and scale of democratic and economic change in the early 1990s were unrealistic. Not because democracy isn't right for central Asia. Not because the citizens of these countries wouldn't prefer to exercise the everyday political freedoms democracy affords. Indeed, it would be folly to assume that the universal human desire for freedom and dignity that has swept the whole world somehow comes to an abrupt stop at the borders of the central Asian region, skirts them briefly, and rushes on elsewhere. It is not their "Central Asianness" that has held back the growth of democracy in that region, but the leadership and socio-economic structures of these countries which have so far kept them frozen in a Soviet past. We understand that major transitions in the basic nature of these regimes may require generational change and we are invested in political and economic reform in this region for the long term.

Authoritarian governments and largely unreformed economies, we believe, create the conditions of repression and poverty that could well become the breeding grounds for further terrorism. And this is what we tell the central Asian leaders. Al-Qa'ida and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan have only been disrupted, not destroyed. And the radical Hezb ut-Tahrir is increasingly active in central Asia, especially in the Fergana Valley shared by Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Thus, not only do we believe it is strongly in our national interest to engage fully with these governments to urge the political and economic reforms that we judge are essential to alleviate the conditions that breed terrorism, but we also firmly believe it is in *these countries'* own national interests. When citizens, and especially youth, feel that they have a voice in how they are governed, when they believe that they have an economic stake in the future, then they will less likely to be attracted to a radicalized path cloaked in Islam that offers a utopian solution to their discontent.

It is extremely difficult to convince central Asian leaders that long-term economic and democratic reforms are necessary to eliminate the roots of terrorism if we are not willing to help them counter terrorism in the short term and prove that we will be engaged for the long term. Our assistance in the areas of military infrastructure, training, military exchanges, and development of interoperability with U.S. and international forces help to establish their short-term capability to cooperate in the global war on terrorism, instill confidence in our partnership, and give them reason to believe that political and economic reforms will lead to greater cooperation, sustained assistance, and concrete enhancements to their security and sovereignty.

Our enhanced engagement has been in place for only a short time. It is too early to tell if our calculated risk will lead to success—politically and economically reformed governments that will be responsible and prosperous members of the world community. We are, however, confident that this path has led to success in many regions of the world and our ambassadors and their staffs strive daily to nudge these governments in the direction we know can work. So far, this early in the game, the results are promising but mixed.

Press freedoms are suffering in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the two most politically advanced states in central Asia. Across the region, leaders prosecute political opponents for corruption as a way to sideline them from competing for power. While we strongly oppose corruption, we object to the selectivity of some of these prosecutions, and we tell the leaders so. Free and fair elections have not yet occurred, let

alone peaceful transfers of power and some of the leaders have extended their tenures through decrees and referenda.

While we recognize that serious problems continue in central Asia, we believe that our policy of enhanced and long-term engagement has already begun to show some results.

Uzbekistan is the most intriguing test case of our policy of enhanced engagement. As a result of our intense economic dialogue and a renewed calculation of Uzbekistan's interests, the country has reestablished its relations with the International Financial Institutions and is moving slowly toward economic reform that it had previously rejected.

Uzbekistan has also taken steps to improve its human rights record. In March, for the first time ever, Uzbekistan registered an indigenous human rights organization; the government also has stated its willingness to register more of them. Also, for the first time the government successfully prosecuted and convicted four police officers charged with beating to death a man suspected of Islamic extremist activities, and another such trial of three National Security Service officers yielded convictions and sentences of five to 15 years. The government has released about 860 political prisoners, and local human rights activists report that new arrests have dropped to the single digits in most cities. Furthermore, after Assistant Secretary Craner's last visit, the Uzbek government has extended an invitation for the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to come to Uzbekistan. Independent international organizations are working with the Interior Ministry on prison reforms and have visited prisons, including pretrial detention centers. The parliament is moving on a number of fronts to develop a more humane criminal code, to address abuse of power at the local level, to make prosecutors more accountable, and to create a more independent judiciary. The long-banned political opposition party, Birlik, is openly holding congresses around the country and moving toward re-registration.

Taken together, these individual achievements are adding up to an impressive beginning on reform, but they have not been broadly reported in the United States. As our engagement with the Uzbek authorities on human rights and religious freedom issues intensifies, the government of Uzbekistan has taken several notable steps. There is a long way to go, but we are encouraged.

Kyrgyzstan, which has retreated from its early promise, reached a crisis point this year. Some argued that the government may have believed it had carte blanche to restrict human rights because it was permitting the coalition military base at Manas Airport. We have not, of course, backed off. In fact, we increased our engagement on human rights. Kyrgyzstan's well-developed civil society mounted largely peaceful public protests against the government's selective prosecution of popular opposition politicians and limitations on freedom of the press. During these protests, police killed five demonstrators. In an attempt to defuse the ensuing crisis, the government resigned, and President Akayev has appointed several reformist ministers to key positions. He also rescinded a government decree, which had earlier resulted in printing presses refusing access to independent newspapers. The give and take between the government, the opposition, and other elements of Kyrgyz society is a dynamic one, confirming again the strong roots of civil society.

Kazakhstan is currently undergoing worrisome developments. There has been a spate of unsolved attacks and government restrictions against the independent media, and the government continues selective corruption prosecutions against opposition politicians when they appear to be gaining political influence. Furthermore, the Kazakh lower house of Parliament recently passed a law on political party registration requiring that each party have no less than 50,000 members; greatly hindering the formation of opposition parties. However, there have also been success stories. The Constitutional Court struck down restrictive amendments to the Religion Law, and President Nazarbayev upheld this decision. Also, the government has registered an opposition political party, although it is prosecuting two of the leaders of one of the parties. The trend in Kazakhstan in recent months has been generally disappointing. We will continue to press for improvement.

In Tajikistan, an Islamic opposition party plays a responsible role in government, and the International Committee of the Red Cross has for the first time attained access to prisons. Even in isolationist Turkmenistan, non-governmental organizations—the foundation of civil society—are beginning to take hold, and the government appears to recognize that the stranglehold of the Committee for National Security (the KGB's successor) needs to be relaxed, and the abolishment of exit visas has eased the flow of citizens in and out of the country.

I have gone to some length about each of these countries to demonstrate the complexity of the human rights issues in the countries of central Asia. While there continue to be real problems, there have also been successes since September 11. Our enhanced engagement is helping to break the habit of repression and stagnation.

The challenges facing the central Asian countries are indeed daunting. But if the countries of the region are now willing to undertake political and economic reforms that will lead to greater freedom and opportunity for their citizens, then we are prepared to support those efforts. We have increased our assistance to the region, and are working closely with the governments, private sector, and NGO's. If the actions of the governments fail to match their words on reform, then we will reassess the assistance we provide. central Asia's stability also is threatened by fundamental problems of poverty, unemployment, political oppression, and isolation from the rest of the world. These problems can make the region potential breeding grounds for religious extremism and ethnic conflict.

While addressing these problems requires a long-term vision and commitment of resources, we already have increased our effort in several key areas, such as improvements in local infrastructure and social services, job creation through provision of microcredits and small business training and assistance to support accession to WTO and to promote trade, investment, and economic development through fiscal and accounting reform. We have also expanded exchanges to show central Asians, particularly young people, how our society has worked to promote religious and ethnic tolerance, educational reform, and strengthening of NGO's, the independent media, and human rights monitors to urge greater government transparency. We continue to support the independent media, and are helping improve primary health care, with a particular focus on fighting tuberculosis. We also are working with the five central Asian countries to improve regional water resource management, and have supported NGO's in each country to help build and strengthen civil society.

In closing, let me reiterate that the steps we have taken to greatly enhance our ties with the countries of central Asia have been taken because they are in the U.S. national interest. We need to work closely with these countries to prosecute the war against terrorism, but we also need to do what we can to ensure that this becomes a stable, prosperous region, not a threat to international society. To this end, we are seeking to use our influence to promote the political and economic reform necessary for them to prosper. What we want is for these governments to exercise power wisely, responsibly, and humanely so that these nations can attain stability, security, and prosperity. This is our vision for central Asia. We believe we are on the right track.

Senator TORRICELLI. We will recess briefly for the vote, and then return promptly to resume.

[Recess.]

Senator TORRICELLI. The subcommittee will come to order please. Mr. Crouch, I understand that you have to leave shortly and if indeed we don't finish by then, I will certainly understand that, please just excuse yourself.

I would like to begin by asking Senator Lugar to proceed.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to play the devil's advocate for a moment, we have all, as suggested by Secretary Pascoe, been in reasonable agreement about our ideals and objectives in the region. But let's say a diplomat from any of the five states we're talking about today comes to pay a visit on a Congressman behind closed doors. This diplomat says the war on terrorism is serious in our country, so serious as a matter of fact that we could be destabilized, overthrown by terrorists, and so as a result we take a dim view of that and we have tried to round up these terrorists, put them in jail so they are not out there to create some difficulty in our country, your country, or anybody else's country.

So we take your point about human rights and due process and all the rest of it, and we're all learning about these things, we're involved with institutions and we think they're doing a pretty good job given where we started from with our Soviet past. But we are coming to appreciate it.

But as a practical matter, what would you have us do? You know, you write reports and talk about how many people are in our jails and how many didn't have due process, and infer they're being

tortured and otherwise mishandled. But what would you have us do?

This I ask of each of you, because you must have had similar conversations. As veteran diplomats out in the field, without naming any one country one or the other, this conversation may have taken place several times, and what do you say? Are we for incrementalism, gradualism, or do we have a program whether it's through the National Endowment for Democracy or Democratic Public Institutes, or Center Democracy, or outside the State Department or Defense. You know, give us some guidelines as to how this idealism and these objectives might be reached in an intermediate period of time.

Mr. CRANER. Senator, I think we probably all have had variations on that conversation, and I will let Lynn and J.D. talk for themselves. We make a couple points. No. 1 is, they have been living in a bad neighborhood. In some cases there are bad governments in the neighborhood and in some cases there are terrorists in the neighborhood. In many cases, it's both.

We make the case that as J.D. said, this is not a one-way relationship, that they are not the ones doing us favors, we're doing each other favors. And in a real sense, we have eliminated to a large degree the terrorist threat in their neighborhood. They have made the case for some years that it is that terrorist threat that has caused them to have closed political systems, and even they will now say to a large degree that threat has been eliminated.

So what we wish them to do is to open up their political systems to allow human rights activists or innocent people out of jail, to begin to allow openings to reform their judicial processes, and certainly to open up the political system so that political parties can begin to form. We are backing that up, as I noted, with exactly the kind of program that you mentioned, on a wide variety of fronts and with large amounts of money.

These are all things to get to what Senator Torricelli was talking about. These are all fronts that are getting a lot more attention than they did before the 11th. In a sense, I think a lot of people did not want to get involved with central Asia before September 11. I was guilty myself. I had to run the International Republican Institute and I had real problems with central Asia in the late 1990s, because I thought this political space was frozen, and I didn't think it was worth staying there.

I think what the 11th has given us is a new opportunity for us to press the issues that we care about, but it's also a new opportunity for the leaders in the region. Again, they live in bad neighborhoods, and they have a new opportunity to have, if things go well, a longstanding and steadfast ally. But finally, we can make very, very clear to them, if you want that kind of deep relationship, you're going to have to open up your societies, because that's part of the bargain.

Mr. PASCOE. The only thing I would add to that, and it fits in very well with what was said, is that as the situation has been changing, many of the governments in the region really do want to join the global economy, they do want to be part of the modern world. The last 10 years were not exactly a golden age for them ei-

ther as they look at it, and so they do look to us to see what we can do to some degree to help.

One of the surprising things to me is how willing they are and open they are to aid programs that really go into the judiciary and into some of these other programs where they're sometimes asking us, almost pleading with us, will you do something to help with our judges, or would you do something to help with the kind of police training that we need so that we don't have people beaten up when they go into jails. Now, some of that may be just eyewash, but I do think there is a genuine desire to use this new relationship with the United States to get at a different stage than where they were before and that requires quite a few changes in their societies, and I think they recognize it.

Senator LUGAR. Just a quick followup on that, because that's a good point. They say give us some help with police training for example. It occurs to me from the experience our country had in many Central American countries in the 1980s that there were pleas of a similar nature, but they also in a more sophisticated way, pled for some help in building a legislative capacity. As some political scientists have pointed out, every country has an executive, maybe a king, dictator, tsar, and not so well developed often are constituencies and people who represent them in a legislative branch.

In Central America, I can recall that frequently people were elected to a legislative assembly, they had no offices, no books, quite apart from copy machines or pencils or paper, that sort of thing. The things that we could do as a country almost as a standard package, it seems to me, were very profound, they were rudimentary.

But Members of Congress who visited those countries found that many people yearned to find out what the congressional experience was like, what do you do as a legislator, physically how you would handle your day and these sorts of thing. And I'm just wondering with regard to the countries that we are discussing today, if it's not possible to think in terms, if not a standard package, but something approximating this, of assistance to develop a legislative system. This could be supplemented by European friends or people around the globe who also have experience in these areas. It's important, it seems to me, even as we are evaluating on a human rights basis how well you're doing, that we offer an opportunity, and a fairly inexpensive one, to improve their governmental structures.

Mr. CRANER. I think a lot of people who deal with this issue are bringing a lot of experience to bear from the years you talked about, from the 1980s. But also, what kind of political democratic development was undertaken around the world in the 1990s. And that's the kind of experience that, as I outlined, we're offering. And certainly in countries that have a semblance of free elections, working with the legislatures is something that we want to do over time. But you're right, with all the experience we bring to bear, with all the experience the Europeans have brought to bear for the last few decades, and finally, with the experience of the new democracies, these are all things that we would like to see under-

taken in central Asia. And as Lynn said, to a greater degree than one might expect, we are being asked to do that.

It doesn't mean things are going to always progress in one direction. As we've seen in the last couple of months, there will be some stumbling blocks. But it is interesting that we're being asked to do these things and are not discouraged from doing them.

Mr. CROUCH. I would just have one quick point, and I agree with what my colleagues say here, that what we hear time and again in talking to the countries in the region is how improved the security relationship is, but they are also cognizant of the fact that one of these days operations in Afghanistan will wrap up and one of these days we will be reconfiguring ourselves for other challenges, and they're very concerned that the United States will sort of leave them holding the bag, if you will.

We have reassured them it is in our interests not to do that and there's a long-term security commitment there, that we're interested in the region, we're interested in developing military to military cooperation and the like. But that also provides us, I think, a lot of leverage in this area, and we've made it very clear, even in our defense discussions, that if they're going to be successful, if they're going to integrate with the global economy, they have to attract investment and they have to have sustained interest, if you will, from the outside world, and the only way they can do that is to move in the democratic direction. And so, I think that message slowly is sinking in.

Senator TORRICELLI. Secretary Craner, access of American officials to opposition leaders in many of these countries, is access generally available?

Mr. CRANER. Yes, I think it's fair to say across the board, and even in Turkmenistan. I certainly had no problems in Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan.

Senator TORRICELLI. No problems with access to human rights organizations, to opposition political leaders or even political prisoners? Were human rights organizations generally allowed in each of the nations we've discussed to have access?

Mr. CRANER. I think that's probably a little tougher. Human Rights Watch was based in Uzbekistan some years ago as part of the deal with the OSCE. I don't think they gain regular unfettered access around the country.

Senator TORRICELLI. They do not?

Mr. CRANER. No.

Senator TORRICELLI. And Secretary Crouch, you listed an element of military cooperation. Is there anything in a public setting that you can recite that the United States has sought militarily that has not been provided for access in any of these countries?

Mr. CROUCH. No. I mean, I think there have been opportunities that we've had to pass up, would probably be a better way to characterize it.

Senator TORRICELLI. But generally there's no public complaint about any request from any nation?

Mr. CROUCH. No. And our approach has been to kind of let these countries kind of characterize the ways in which they are cooperating, and at various times they have been willing to be more pub-

lic about this than not, depending on the stage of the war in Afghanistan, but other than that, no.

Senator TORRICELLI. And Secretary Craner, to return to you, in any of these countries, are there numbers of people who would actually classify as political prisoners, people being held not with any other criminal charge?

Mr. CRANER. Definitely.

Senator TORRICELLI. In each country?

Mr. CRANER. Certainly in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. I would say some in Kyrgyzstan. So, in each country I would say yes, but much larger numbers toward the back of the pack.

Senator TORRICELLI. Toward the back of the pack?

Mr. CRANER. Those with much less democratic practices.

Senator TORRICELLI. I thank you each for joining us today. Your testimony was very helpful. Thank you.

At this point the committee would like to hear from the former Ambassador to Kazakhstan, William Courtney, and from Martha Brill Olcott, Carnegie Endowment. Thank you, gentlemen.

Welcome. Thank you very much for joining us today, and Mr. Courtney, if you might begin please?

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM H. COURTNEY, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO KAZAKHSTAN AND GEORGIA, FORMER SENIOR ADVISOR TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAMS, DYNACORP, WASHINGTON, DC

Senator LUGAR. Mr. Chairman, I would ask that Mr. Courtney's family might be recognized. I see that they have accompanied the Ambassador here today.

Senator TORRICELLI. Fine. If you would like to do the honors of the recognition.

Ambassador COURTNEY. My wife Clarissa, my son Will and my daughter Allison.

Senator TORRICELLI. Thank you very much for being with us today, and I hope you're pleased with your front row seats.

Ambassador COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's an honor to be here before this committee again. I will offer a perspective on U.S. security interests in central Asia and the south Caucasus and their relationship to U.S. human rights and democracy interests. For convenience, I will call the whole region southern Eurasia.

I will focus on two main questions: Now that the war in Afghanistan is winding down, how should America insure its long-term security interests in southern Eurasia? How should the United States do this while advancing other U.S. interests, such as human rights and democracy?

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait a decade ago and the terrorist attacks of September 11 remind us that U.S. interests can be challenged by surprises, or by events thought to be improbable. The United States could face a wide range of potential threats in southern Eurasia. They include nuclear weapons smuggling, large-scale terrorism, and attempts to choke off Caspian oil exports through the south Caucasus. The range of these potential threats shows the value of pursuing long-term U.S. security interests through means that are potent, flexible and geographically dispersed. The meta-

phor for U.S. defense transformation—changing from a threat-based to a capabilities-based strategy—is apt for how America should protect its security interests in southern Eurasia. I will suggest 7 principles for U.S. policies to secure these interests.

One, continue the U.S. policy of active engagement pursued by three administrations with bipartisan congressional support. A decade ago America installed embassies in southern Eurasia and launched generous aid programs. Today, U.S. engagement remains vital. The United States should not write off any state as hopeless or failed. A decade ago, some experts asked why America had an embassy in Tajikistan; it was remote and irrelevant. Today, no one would say this.

Two, bolster U.S. security assistance. U.S. security assistance programs, including Nunn-Lugar threat reduction programs, are a tremendous success. They have helped eliminate major threats to U.S. security interests. To cite one example, in 1994, the United States removed 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan. Were it not for U.S. threat reduction programs, the uranium might still be there in unsafe storage—where an Iran or a North Korea might seek to acquire it.

U.S. programs have fostered a better understanding in the region of U.S. security goals. One example is the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's program to train and equip border security and law enforcement personnel to detect and interdict smuggling of nuclear weapons and other sensitive items.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, militaries in southern Eurasia had little experience with how a Ministry of Defense was supposed to function, or deal with Presidents, parliaments, and publics. The Soviet military had assigned many soldiers in central Asia to construction units, partly because of limited Russian language skills. The first Defense Minister in Kazakhstan had been a specialist in military motor pool operations. As Assistant Secretary Crouch pointed out, U.S. programs help new ministries of defense and security to develop the leadership skills necessary to run their respective ministries.

For a decade prior to September 11, U.S. programs helped condition audiences in southern Eurasia to understand U.S. and Western security priorities. Goodwill for these programs paved the way for military and security officials in southern Eurasia to accept U.S. requests for access and other help in prosecuting the war in Afghanistan. But some in the region worried that the United States might not be committed to winning in Afghanistan or that the Taliban or al-Qaeda might later take revenge on those who had aided the United States. Once B-52s started flying over Afghanistan, concerns diminished. Continued U.S. engagement in Afghanistan will build further confidence in southern Eurasia of American power and will.

Three, maintain a near constant but flexible security presence in southern Eurasia, but without establishing large U.S. bases. America has filled a security vacuum in southern Eurasia and Afghanistan. This has met with regional support. An American pullout from southern Eurasia when events in Afghanistan allow it, would recreate a destabilizing vacuum. Care must be taken, however, to

structure a U.S. presence that is strong, fluid, and not too dependent on any one country.

In southern Eurasia, the United States should seek broad access to host country military bases. With such access, the United States will be more agile in addressing unpredictable or dispersed contingencies. For example, the United States will be better able in a crisis to deploy mobile defenses in the region to counter missile threats from Iraq or Iran, conduct nuclear emergency search operations, or help protect Caspian oil pipelines. U.S. forces should make appropriate investments at host country bases to which they have access, and sustain them through low-profile contractor support.

Four, work to change the underlying conditions that give rise to extremism. Promoting democracy and respect for human rights in southern Eurasia is the most effective way to solve separatist disputes and lessen support for Islamic extremism.

One risk in southern Eurasia is that disenfranchised groups will revert to force to overturn governments, but another risk is that governments facing crises of legitimacy will seek to stay in power too long. The two risks feed each other.

In southern Eurasia where Soviet-era leaders remain in power, transitions are looming. America can do much to encourage movement toward more democratic systems of government. For example, in some cases where elections were rigged or governments are losing legitimacy, it may make sense to urge early or more frequent elections combined with vigorous monitoring.

Five, pursue specific human rights and democracy goals as an integral part of U.S. security assistance and cooperation programs. U.S. efforts in recent years have shown that this can be done. In one case a regional country gave new prison access to the International Committee of the Red Cross. In southern Eurasia U.S. security cooperation boosts governmental legitimacy, which offers a source of leverage for promoting democracy and human rights.

Six, multilateralize security cooperation. Working with European allies and friends, the United States has gained increased cooperation in southern Eurasia on common security goals, such as non-proliferation, counterterrorism and counternarcotics. European and American cooperation to help Kazakhstan to safely dispose of large quantities of former Soviet military equipment would be helpful.

Successive U.S. administrations have stressed to Russia that it has an interest in prosperous neighbors and stable borders in southern Eurasia. Except in Abkhazi in 1992-1993, Russia has generally respected borders in southern Eurasia. A decade ago, many experts did not expect such restraint. President Putin seems to have decided that Russia has a large stake in its relationship with the West, and that intimidating poorer neighbors in southern Eurasia is an unhelpful draw on Russian energies and prestige. Russian military and security elements have different views, however, and the pendulum could swing back.

Seven, increase programs to promote long-term change. A decade ago, the United States had undue expectations for early reform in the former Soviet Union. Aid programs over-invested in trying to reform the statist and corrupt ways of Soviet-era mandarins. For example, with rare exception, U.S. defense conversion programs

were unsuccessful. U.S. aid programs under-invested in programs with a long-term payoff such as education for young people. They are a receptive audience and the best hope for dramatic change in the future. They want more freedoms. Young people in their 30s were largely trained in Soviet-type environments and their attitudes toward change and risk taking differ from the attitudes of those who are younger. U.S. programs should focus on student-age youth.

In conclusion, I believe that U.S. engagement in southern Eurasia has been a remarkable success. The task now is to take engagement to a higher level and sustain it. The war against terrorism has brought home the importance of this distant region. In a world of global terrorism, drug trafficking, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, distant and remote places can be as strategic as neighboring and familiar ones.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Courtney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM H. COURTNEY, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO KAZAKHSTAN AND GEORGIA, FORMER SENIOR ADVISOR TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, NATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAMS, DYNCORP

It is an honor to appear before you today. I will discuss long-term U.S. security interests in central Asia and the South Caucasus and their relationship to U.S. human rights and democracy interests. For convenience I will call the whole region "Southern Eurasia." My perspectives have been influenced by my tenure as Ambassador to Kazakhstan (1992-95) and Georgia (1995-97), and more generally, by a 27-year Foreign Service career devoted mostly to politico-military, Soviet, and Eurasian affairs. I am now Senior Vice President for National Security Programs at DynCorp. The views I am expressing today are personal.

I will focus on two main questions:

- Now that the war in Afghanistan is winding down, how should America ensure its long-term security interests in Southern Eurasia?
- How should the United States do this while advancing other U.S. interests, such as human rights and democracy?

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait a decade ago and the terrorist attacks of September 11 remind us that U.S. interests can be challenged by surprises, or by events thought to be improbable. The United States could face a wide range of threats in Southern Eurasia. They include nuclear weapons smuggling, large-scale terrorism, armed separatism, and attempts to choke off Caspian oil exports through the South Caucasus. The wide range of these potential threats shows the value of pursuing long-term U.S. security interests through means that are potent, flexible, and geographically dispersed. The metaphor for U.S. defense transformation—changing from a threat-based to a capabilities-based strategy—is apt for how America should protect its security interests in Southern Eurasia. I will suggest seven principles for U.S. policies to secure these interests.

One, continue the U.S. policy of active engagement pursued by three administrations with bipartisan Congressional support. A decade ago America installed embassies in Southern Eurasia and launched generous aid programs. It supported IMF and World Bank aid for countries that help themselves by reforming. Early U.S. humanitarian shipments of medicine and food saved lives and won friends. Today, U.S. engagement remains vital. The United States should not write off any state as hopeless or failed. A decade ago some experts asked why America had an embassy in Tajikistan; it was remote and irrelevant. Today no one would say this.

Governments in the region seek better ties with the United States as a source of domestic legitimacy and economic improvement. Inadequate reforms, however, have weakened states and diminished opportunities for stronger U.S. ties. For example, the absence of free and fair elections hobbles governments and saps investor confidence. Energy-rich Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have attracted large-scale foreign investment, but otherwise most foreign investors have been wary of the region. In Georgia the lack of consensus for reform and conflict resolution, compromised elections, and misplaced hopes that energy pipelines are a panacea have led to stagnation. In the mid-1990s Georgia was the fastest-growing economy in the former So-

viet Union and reforms had momentum. Then leaders lost confidence and failed to build a multi-ethnic consensus to move the country ahead. In these and other countries, internal reforms are vital and they will not come without American and European engagement and strong support.

Two, bolster U.S. security assistance. U.S. security assistance programs, including Nunn-Lugar threat reduction programs, are a tremendous success. They have helped eliminate major threats to U.S. security interests, such as large biological weapons facilities in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and SS-18 ICBM fields in Kazakhstan. In 1994 the United States removed 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan. The uranium was weapons-grade material that had been left behind and forgotten by Moscow when the USSR collapsed. Were it not for U.S. threat reduction programs, the uranium might still be there in unsafe storage—where an Iran or a North Korea might have sought to acquire it.

U.S. programs have fostered a better understanding in the region of U.S. security goals. One example is the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's program to train and equip border security and law enforcement personnel to detect and interdict smuggling of nuclear and other sensitive items. U.S. programs help regional soldiers learn defense skills suitable to democratic circumstances. They learn the value of civilian leadership, and how to distinguish combatants from civilians and improve treatment of prisoners. U.S. training can help regional forces conduct more focused anti-terrorism campaigns.

Military and security establishments in the region face Herculean reform tasks, and progress is hindered by undemocratic environments and regional conflicts. The CENTRASBAT initiative—to form a regional peacekeeping force that could perform U.N. peacekeeping chores around the world—fell victim to rivalries. Robust U.S. military-to-military relationships in the region can lessen these obstacles.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, militaries in Southern Eurasia had little experience with how a ministry of defense was supposed to function, or deal with presidents, parliaments, and publics. The Soviet military had assigned many soldiers from central Asia to construction units, partly because of limited Russian language skills. Military officers from the region were often pigeonholed in assignments that prevented them from gaining a broad understanding of defense policy-making and management. The first defense minister in Kazakhstan had been a specialist in military motor pool operations. U.S. programs help new ministries of defense and security to develop the leadership skills necessary to run their respective ministries. The International Military Education and Training program and the Marshall Center in Germany have provided valuable leadership, management, and democratic law training to mid- and senior-level officers and civilians.

For nearly a decade prior to September 11, U.S. programs helped condition audiences in Southern Eurasia to understand U.S. and Western security priorities. Goodwill from these programs paved the way for military and security officials in Southern Eurasia to accept U.S. requests for access and other help in prosecuting the war in Afghanistan. Many regional military leaders had served in Afghanistan during the USSR's ill-fated war, however, and wondered whether the United States would fare better. Some in the region worried that the United States might not be committed to winning in Afghanistan, or that the Taliban or al Qaeda might later take revenge on those who had aided the United States. Once B-52s started flying over Afghanistan, concerns diminished. Continued U.S. engagement in Afghanistan will build further confidence in American power and will.

Some threats in Southern Eurasia will challenge U.S. interests but not occasion a U.S. military response. Counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, nonproliferation, and threat reduction programs often are the best instruments. They can help regional countries tighten borders, fend off rebels engaged in terrorism and narcotics, and deny terrorists opportunities to acquire sensitive materials for weapons of mass destruction. Nonproliferation cooperation with Kazakhstan prevented the shipment of advanced air defense missiles to a Persian Gulf state. In some cases preemptive acquisition by the United States can prevent dangerous proliferation. Tailored security cooperation can sensitize regional services to U.S. priorities and provide them with the resources to cooperate with us.

Three, maintain a near-constant but flexible security presence in Southern Eurasia, but without establishing large U.S. bases. America has filled a security vacuum in Southern Eurasia and Afghanistan. This has met with regional support. An American pullout from Southern Eurasia after the new government in Kabul consolidates control of Afghanistan would recreate a destabilizing vacuum. Care must be taken, however, to structure a U.S. presence that is strong, fluid, and not too dependent on any one country. Unstable governments in the region are the norm. A U.S. base could become a lightning rod for protests if the U.S. presence were seen as propping up a dictatorship or if large numbers of American troops were based at a facil-

ity. Finally, a U.S. base in one place may not be useful for meeting threats elsewhere. Establishing a U.S. base in Southern Eurasia modeled after, say, Incirlik Air Force Base in Turkey would be ill advised. At the same time, U.S. bases close to the region, such as Incirlik, are truly indispensable in supporting U.S. interests in Southern Eurasia.

In Southern Eurasia the United States should seek broad access to host country military bases, and use this access for joint training, exercises, and planning. Access must benefit both U.S. and host country forces. With wide base access, the United States will be more agile in addressing unpredictable or dispersed contingencies. For example, the United States will be better able to deploy mobile defenses in the region to counter missile threats from Iraq or Iran, conduct nuclear emergency search operations, or help protect Caspian oil pipelines. U.S. forces should make appropriate improvements at host country bases to which they have access, and sustain them through low-profile contractor support. Base access in Southern Eurasia will benefit U.S. troops by enabling them to gain a broad range of experience and develop personal relationships with host country personnel.

Four, work to change the underlying conditions that give rise to extremism. This principle is equal in importance to any of the other six I will discuss today. Promoting democracy and respect for human rights in Southern Eurasia is the most effective way to solve separatist disputes and lessen support for Islamic extremism.

One risk in Southern Eurasia is that disenfranchised groups will resort to force to overturn governments, but another risk is that governments facing crises of legitimacy will seek to stay in power too long. The two risks feed each other. Instabilities are mounting in such countries as Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Both were once reform leaders but have lost their way. They share problems of massive corruption, rigged elections, unpopular rule, pressure against the media, and economic stagnation. In Georgia, only democratic and economic reforms can unify a country with so many ethnic minorities that Andrey Sakharov once called it a "little empire."

In Southern Eurasia where Soviet-era leaders remain in power, transitions are looming. America can do much to encourage movements toward more democratic systems of governance. For example, in some cases where elections were rigged or governments are losing legitimacy, it may make sense to urge early or more frequent elections combined with vigorous monitoring. Elections held according to the original constitutions of the regional states—which generally provide for presidential elections every five years—would be a major improvement.

In the South Caucasus America is working to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the more intractable Abkhazia conflict. But undemocratic governments have lacked the confidence to make compromises needed to reach negotiated agreements. Abkhazia has few incentives to come under Tbilisi's authority if Georgia remains an economic basket case. Support by Russian military and security elements for the Abkhaz separatists undermines prospects for a negotiated accord. By encouraging internal reform in the states involved, the United States improves prospects for dispute settlements.

More democracy in China may lessen the risks of Uygur separatism and terrorism that could enmesh Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan. In Uzbekistan opening the political process to wider participation will lessen the appeal of separatist or terrorist groups. Although the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, or IMU, has suffered great losses in the Afghanistan war, it or similar groups may still attract youth looking for alternative means of political expression. The problem of openness is even more serious in Turkmenistan.

Water disputes are a major source of potential future conflict in the region, and Aral Sea desiccation is a monumental environmental tragedy. Experience suggests that weak and authoritarian governments may not have the legitimacy required to negotiate compromise solutions with neighbors while maintaining internal peace. Water sharing agreements are signed but not implemented. America may not have much influence on the resolution of water rights issues, but it can contribute by working for open political systems in the region.

In northern Kazakhstan, Slavs tend to emigrate rather than protest their unequal access to the political process and its benefits. The construction of the new capital in the northern city of Astana could be an effort to make it harder for northern oblasts to secede to Russia should they seek to do so. A better way to ensure Kazakhstan's integrity is to give Slavs equal access to an open political process.

Five, pursue specific human rights and democracy goals as an integral part of U.S. security assistance and cooperation programs. U.S. efforts in recent years have shown this can be done. In one case a regional country gave new prison access to the International Committee of the Red Cross. In Southern Eurasia U.S. security cooperation boosts governmental legitimacy, which offers a source of leverage for promoting democracy and human rights. Cooperative Threat Reduction programs

have explicit human rights criteria. Whatever the legal restrictions, applying human rights criteria in specific—not just generic—ways serves long-term U.S. interests. This is not to deny, however, that in some short-term circumstances security and human rights goals may conflict.

Six, multilateralize security cooperation. For a decade the United States has strongly backed active involvement by the countries of Southern Eurasia in the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe and its predecessor. The OSCE provides a broad framework for advancing U.S. security and human rights interests in the region. In the mid-1990s all but one country of Southern Eurasia joined NATO's successful Partnership for Peace Program; Tajikistan joined last year. Working with European Allies and friends, the United States has gained increased cooperation in Southern Eurasia on common security goals, such as nonproliferation, counter-terrorism, and counter-narcotics. Regional states have intercepted sensitive technologies bound for Iran, and arms on their way to North Korea. European and America cooperation to help Kazakhstan safely dispose of large quantities of former Soviet military equipment would be helpful.

Successive U.S. administrations have stressed to Russia that it has an interest in prosperous neighbors and stable borders in Southern Eurasia. Excepting the rebellion it fomented in Abkhazia in 1992-93, Russia has generally respected borders in Southern Eurasia. A decade ago many experts did not expect such restraint. President Putin seems to have decided that Russia has a large stake in its relationship with the West, and that intimidating poorer neighbors in Southern Eurasia is an unhelpful thaw on Russian energies and prestige. American and Western presence in the region helps Putin stabilize Russia's southern flank and enables Russia to focus attention on economic development and ties with more prosperous countries. Russian military and security elements have different views, however, and the pendulum could swing back.

Seven, increase programs to promote long-term change. A decade ago the United States had undue expectations for early reform in the former Soviet Union. Aid programs over-invested in trying to reform the statist and corrupt ways of Soviet-era mandarins. For example, with rare exception U.S. defense conversion programs were unsuccessful. U.S. aid programs under-invested in programs with a long-term payoff, such as education for young people. They are a receptive audience and the best hope for dramatic change in the future. They want more freedoms. Young people in their 30s were largely trained in Soviet-type environments, and their attitudes toward change and risk-taking differ from the attitudes of those who are younger. U.S. programs should focus on student-age youth.

- The United States should bring far more students here for education and training. Graduates of these programs offer the best hope for building market democracies. A decade ago such an investment seemed too expensive. Today, the alternative seems more expensive.
- Since most young people in Southern Eurasia will never get to the West for education, America should enhance programs to reach these students. Especially in rural areas, inadequate resources have created an educational vacuum, including about moderate Islamic traditions. Extremists may seek to fill vacuums, as they did in Pakistan and Afghanistan. U.S. programs should bring greater resources to rural educators.
- Americans need to be educated more about Southern Eurasia and its diverse peoples, cultures, geographies, and rivalries. Few Americans—among them Martha Olcott, and Fred Starr and Fiona Hill who testified in December—know much about these matters. America's knowledge base is simply inadequate to sustain its engagement in the region. This year the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which for the first time explores a region outside the United States, celebrates the Silk Road and the countries and cultures along the ancient trading route. I encourage you to visit the exhibitions over the coming days and talk with people whom America is helping.

In conclusion, I believe that U.S. engagement in Southern Eurasia has been a remarkable success. The task now is to take engagement to a higher level and sustain it. The war against terrorism has brought home the importance of this distant region. In a world of global terrorism, drug trafficking, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, distant and remote places can be as strategic as neighboring and familiar ones.

Senator TORRICELLI. Thank you, Ambassador.
Ms. Olcott.

**STATEMENT OF MARTHA BRILL OLCOTT, SENIOR ASSOCIATE,
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE,
WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. OLCOTT. Thank you. I'm going to start by saying I agree with virtually everything that has been said before me in testimony today but because of my orneriness, I am going to be much more pessimistic than those who have preceded me. I want to thank you in the beginning of my remarks for inviting me to testify today, it's truly an honor.

I would argue—and I'm going to be very brief because of the interest of time and submit fuller remarks to the record—that at the very time when U.S. interests tied it most closely to the states of the central Asia region, some of these states are becoming more internally driven, in most cases precisely because human rights and basic political freedoms have been trodden on over the past 10 years. Unfortunately, there's no easy fix for many of these problems, no easy fix available for either U.S. policymakers or for the leaders themselves. If changes don't occur soon, peace and security in the region could be at risk.

Some have expressed hope that long-term cooperation with the United States will give these leaders more respect for human rights and for democratic political institutions. I agree with Ambassador Courtney that long-term policies can have real payoff in the next generation. But at the same time, I'm very pessimistic that the current situation gives us a long-term perspective without major dislocation in these states. Certainly in the short term and medium term, there is unlikely to be any major political redefinition in the region. Moreover, unless the United States finds a more effective means of leveraging these states, there could be some highly undesirable and even violent and at least unscheduled regime changes throughout the region.

It would be far more preferable obviously, as Ambassador Courtney says, for us to successfully encourage some of these states to move toward early election, but I see little evidence of this in recent activities of the leaders of the regimes in this region to broaden political participation or to support democratic political institutions. If Presidents flee for their lives, or worse yet, lose them in an effort to prevent regime change, unpredictable forces could be unleashed in any of the countries of this region.

This said, few leaders of the region seem interested in broadening the basis of participation in their society, and all but one, I would argue, seems unaware of the potential political risk that he is under.

Let me turn very briefly to a tour of the region. I would argue that the situation throughout central Asia with regards to human rights has not improved significantly since September 11, and in most places it has even deteriorated, as the point was made by the Deputy Assistant Secretary and Assistant Secretary earlier.

In Uzbekistan there has been at least the beginning of a willingness of the regime to say some of the right things, talking about free and fair elections, promising some elimination or modifications, but Uzbekistan has such a long way to travel. The human rights situation there was truly abysmal prior to September 11. In Uzbekistan, I think the real test will be whether the regime will

engage in meaningful economic reform, because these tentative steps toward modernization will be much too little much too late.

Other states have also been willing to give renewed lip service to democratic goals. The process of democratization in Kazakhstan has slowed since September 11 and it was in deep retreat before that time. We've already heard about major political opposition figures who have been arrested in recent months, the attack on Kazakh media has been a really savage one in several cases.

Unfortunately today, there are very few political leaders that the United States can exercise to effect these kinds of outcomes in the short run. The only potentially decisive levers would be to limit U.S. access to the Kazakh energy reserves and this is something we clearly don't want to do.

One leader who has had virtually no interest in trying to please the United States or even a rhetorical level with regard to democratic reform is Turkmenistan's Niyazov. In the past decade Turkmenistan has experienced the strongest erosion of intellectual freedom and political freedom anywhere in the region. Quite literally, President Niyazov has succeeded in isolating virtually every member of the elite willing to show any creativity or independence of thought, and the situation has only grown worse in the past 6 months. The brain drain from this country is becoming irreversible, putting the ability of the Turkmens to effectively govern themselves in the post-Niyazov world at real risk.

And I would say that's true regardless of the degree of engagement by the United States which I certainly support bringing over young people to be educated, et cetera. It will be very difficult to get many of those people to return to Turkmenistan or if they do return, to be given positions of any sort of responsibility.

I'm going to skip Tajikistan in the interest of time, because I too agree that the status quo there is relatively unchanged, and just highlight the fact that the increased drug trade through that country creates greater stress on that country's very fragile and early stage political institutions.

I will make my closing remarks about Kyrgyzstan. The political fragility of Kyrgyzstan, where we have our largest military presence in the region, has become much more apparent in recent months. Demonstrations that are occurring in southern Kyrgyzstan have mounted steadily for the past several weeks, though they seem to be on hold at this point in time, but the Kyrgyz opposition could easily get another wave of energy before this summer is over.

It is really unclear how the regime of President Akayev will be able to reestablish political trust. There is a new government, but it is not a coalition government. The United States has succeeded in pressuring President Akayev, and our ambassador there has succeeded in pressuring President Akayev on many small changes that were highlighted today that are very important, media, there was a new ruling today on freedom of assembly, possibly creating an ombudsman, but it's very unlikely whether these political changes will keep up with the sharply deteriorating political environment, and they don't speak to the major issues that have been posed by the Kyrgyz opposition, things that have in one case nothing to do with human rights, it's a treaty with China, the release of former Vice President Kulov, greater discipline of corrupt official,

escorting the official family from economic life or removing or minimizing the influence of President Akayev's family on the economy.

These are all things that the opposition talks about and all things that are not very likely to change in the near future and as long as these remain, pressure on the Kyrgyz Government will remain very very strong, and this I would argue makes it imperative that the United States do whatever possible to help President Akayev make good on his promise to hold free and fair Presidential elections in 2005 and to work with him quite aggressively right now to show signs of facilitating an orderly transfer of power in the hopes that this may well work to quell the opposition.

A disorderly transition in Kyrgyzstan would really be very bad news for the whole region. It would certainly be an embarrassing situation for the United States to be forced to watch this regime be ousted if the regime itself does not become a supporter of pre-term elections. And certainly it would be unsettling to the United States to become a physical guarantor of an undemocratic regime in central Asia.

This takes me to my concluding point, that U.S. human rights policy and democracy building strategy more generally in central Asia is unlikely to lead to any major change in the nature of our partner regimes in central Asia. Undemocratic regimes are deeply rooted throughout the region and always face difficult political succession. This does not mean that the United States should abandon its human rights policy. On the contrary, I would argue that we should spend more money on it and that we are moving in the right direction, but we should be cognizant if we do of the kinds of challenges and risks that await us in this part of the world.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Olcott follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARTHA BRILL OLCOTT, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, CARNEGIE
ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Since the attacks of September 11, and the emergence of a U.S. security partnership with several of the states of the central Asian region, there has been lots of speculation about what this means for the prospects of democratic reform in all five of these countries.

Now that there are US bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the possibility of facilities in at least two more countries, there is concern that the US and other Western nations may be more reluctant to hold the states of the region to democratic norms and that, given the political uncertainty it could occasion, holding them to these norms may not be in our best interest. After all, as it is sometimes crudely put, better to deal with the "devil" you know than the unknown one which might be lurking out there.

Personally, I believe that this argument is very dangerous. In some cases, closer cooperation with the US is making these "devils" more willing to at least experiment with limited democratic reform, but in other parts of the region, the devils we know are becoming more rather than less recalcitrant political figures. This in turn seems likely to fuel and exacerbate the security risks that these states could pose to their neighbors in the future.

The power-void and collapse of civil society that made Afghanistan an attractive environment for the al-Qaeda network took years to develop and helped fuel instability in neighboring states. Cleaning out the remains of the tenor network in Afghanistan gives the central Asian states a brighter future, but this action in itself does not eliminate or even substantially minimize the dangers that they confront from their own largely internally generated security risks.

It is my deeply-rooted hope that we will continue to hold these states to these norms. This is the best way to advance U.S. national security interests, especially over the medium and long-term, and it is the best way for these states to secure their long-term survival.

This author vehemently rejects the often argued position that the people of central Asia are somehow unfit to live in a democratic society, that they are unable to sustain democratic institutions because of their history or that it is too soon in their history of statehood to expect them to develop democratic norms. Ten years may be a short time in the life of a nation, but the rulers and the ruled seem to tell time in different ways. Most people need the hope that things will improve either in their lifetime or that of their children. Those born in the Soviet Union were raised on a diet of "deferred gratification," and all independence seems to have brought is a new version of the old dietary staple. Those born later are likely to have even less patience.

While independence may indefinitely benefit the ruling classes, over time, the masses are likely to see independence as something of a trick. For them, the only real difference in their lives is a change in psychological status, and the ephemeral benefits that it provides. But this perception of psychological empowerment is diminishing with time. Those who live in a country should feel some sort of stake in its future, or failing that, feel some hope for their own future or that of their children.

Decolonization in central Asia is becoming increasingly more reminiscent of what occurred in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where a number of states have spent the past forty years stepping backwards from the levels of development that characterized their country and its population at the time of independence or in the first decade after independence was achieved.

It is fashionable for central Asian leaders to argue that it took over two hundred years for the US to develop its democratic form of government, that we must be more patient with them. It is true that every nation has to evolve democratic or participatory political institutions that are suited to their cultural and historical background, and that this is a slow and oft times messy process. However, these political systems must be based in large part on the prevailing democratic norms, and on a basic respect and observance of human rights.

Now, more than ever before, we live in a global information era, and people throughout central Asia are able to tie into the political values of that global culture. Of course, people can be frightened into submission and if this generation of human rights activists in central Asia are decimated, either literally or figuratively, it will be that much harder to create stable secular societies in this part of the world, not to mention democratic ones.

It is easy to find non-democratic or authoritarian episodes in the history of any people, and of course the histories of those living in central Asia are no exception. But it smacks of racism to argue that one people is more or less fit for democracy than another, and such an argument is usually a convenient one for those who do not wish to share power. The central Asian states could have had a pattern of political institutional development that was more like that of Russia and the other post-Soviet states (excepting the three in the Baltic region). After years of repression, even now, throughout central Asia a committed minority remains in place, eager to see democratic development move forward. Nowhere is this more true than in Kyrgyzstan, where the informal political organization movement is much more firmly entrenched and widely dispersed than anywhere else in the region. But developments in Turkmenistan over the past eight months make clear that no country should be written off. This is a lesson that we should have drawn from the relative success of power-sharing relationships in Tajikistan, which is now experiencing a degree of political and economic recovery after several years of civil war.

The specter of the Tajik civil war continues to haunt central Asian leaders. The current level, or illusion, of political stability will prove to be short-lived if the rulers of the region do not take seriously the need to create safety valves in their societies such as political institutions at the national and/or at the local level that create opportunities for ordinary citizens to become political stakeholders. This is all the more necessary given that the process of economic reform has had very uneven effects across society. Many more people have been denied the sense of being economic stakeholders than those who have felt increasingly empowered.

Even before the attacks of September 11, the leaders of the central Asian states all championed the cause of stability over that of democratization or political reform. None of the country's have yet to hold a free and fair presidential election, although all but Niyazov of Turkmenistan have competed in "contested" elections.

Over the past decade, much of the stated reason against political liberalization on the part of central Asia's leaders has been the risks posed by the region's religious revival, and the increased popularity of radical Islamic groups, which might be further empowered by a more open political process.

Uzbek fears date from the time of the Tajik civil war, in the early 1990s. These fears were compounded as the situation deteriorated in Afghanistan, which was a

source of seditious ideas, arms and narcotics even before the Taliban took power and allowed al-Qaeda to establish a training ground for international terrorism. The disorder in Afghanistan complicated the process of state-building throughout central Asia. In general, Uzbek domestic and foreign policy was probably most shaped by the developments in Afghanistan, especially after the February 1999 bombings in Tashkent. The Uzbek government was determined that IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) militants should never be able to enter their country at will and they recognized that the training that they were receiving in Afghanistan was transforming the nature of the Islamic threat confronting the regime. This further hardened the Uzbek government's determination to both delineate and defend its national boundaries (which were mined in some areas inhabited by Tajiks and Kyrgyz). The Kazakhs and Kyrgyz also began to better protect their borders (although they did not mine them).

Not all of Uzbekistan's fears were imaginary. The threat from Juma Namangani and his IMU were real, although quite possibly exaggerated, as many have held that the February 1999 bombings would not have occurred without collusion of those close to Karimov himself. Namangani may or may not have been killed in Afghanistan and the camps of the IMU were at least partially destroyed. However, all of central Asia's leaders are warning of the possibility of new IMU incursions and, should these occur, not only the regimes, but the cause of democratic reform will also be further imperiled.

The Karimov regime has agreed in principle to support democratic reforms as part of the strategic partnership framework. While the US agreed to "regard with grave concern any external threat to the security and territorial integrity of the republic of Uzbekistan," and promised the country "dynamic military and military-technical cooperation," the Uzbek government made a lot of political promises. In the area of political relations, "Uzbekistan reaffirmed its commitment to further intensify the democratic transformation of its society politically and economically." The United States will provide the Government of Uzbekistan assistance "in implementing democratic reforms in priority areas such as building a strong and open civil society, establishing a genuine multi-party system and independence of the media, strengthening non-governmental structures and improving the judicial system." In the area of legal cooperation, the Uzbeks recognized "the need to build in Uzbekistan a rule by law state and democratic society," and agreed to "improve the legislative process, develop a law-based government system, further reform the judicial system and enhance the legal culture."¹

Most of these reforms remain for the future. The Uzbek government has made a lot of promises about what it will do at a later date, including the election of a bicameral legislature elected in 2004, but the President did extend his term to 2007 through the use of referendum. The government has promised to eliminate formal press censorship, has registered at least one previously banned human rights group, and has made other small symbolic steps showing the Uzbek government's commitment to introducing rule by law, including the prosecution of police officials for the use of excessive force in interrogating accused religious extremists.

However, the Uzbek government's policy toward religion remains largely unchanged, and it has been behaving much like its Soviet predecessors, believing that it can dampen the fires of religious ferment by state regulation of religious practice. This has served to push extremist groups underground. Given Uzbekistan's current demographic and social situation, the potential for new recruits remains high.

The government in Tashkent faces the challenge of educating, integrating and employing a new generation of Uzbeks—nearly forty percent of the population is under 14—and given how little economic reform has occurred in the country it really still is the government's challenge, as there is still only a tiny private sector to draw on for assistance. Today's Uzbek youth is generally poorer and sicker than their parents were. Although less well educated, they are far more knowledgeable about Islam and far better integrated into global Islamic networks. The same pattern is repeated everywhere in the region, except in Turkmenistan, where there is no shortage of poverty, but where the country's Islamic revival has proceeded in more traditional channels.

The proceeds of central Asia's burgeoning drug trade, the source of which is being revitalized from the current harvest of poppies in Afghanistan, has help fund the perpetuation of militant Islamic groups that have been proliferating in Uzbekistan and throughout central Asia. The largest of these, the Hezb-ut Tahrir, call for believers to unite and return Islam to the purity of its founding through the creation

¹ See <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/8736pf.htm> for a copy of the complete text of the United States-Uzbekistan Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework.

of a new Caliphate. It is outlawed everywhere but Turkmenistan, where it seems to lack a significant presence (unlike the drug trade, which does have a significant presence and is said to be directly benefiting the leader of the state).

Following massive arrests, adherents of the movement have gone underground in Uzbekistan, but their numbers are increasing in the border regions of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, particularly among unemployed youth who are paid to distribute the movement's religious tracts. These people are poised to return to Uzbekistan if any opportunity to do so appears.

Throughout the region, groups like the Hezb-ut Tahrir are benefiting from the failure of all of these countries to create any real secular institutions for channeling opposition. The case of Turkmenistan is most extreme as the national authorities have been determined to carve out a model of political and economic development that is supposedly in keeping with national cultural specificity's and largely focuses on making a secular religion or cult around the person of the country's first president.

Throughout the region, failures of state-building are creating future security risks. Unlike a few years ago, when the situation in Afghanistan could be blamed as a root source, the current crisis in political institution-building is very much a product of decisions made in the national capitals themselves. It would be a very large mistake on the part of the governments in the region to assume that the growing US security presence in the region will serve to shield them from the consequences of their decisions.

The honeymoon period associated with independence is coming to an end and, comparatively speaking, it has also been a honeymoon period here. Notwithstanding the civil war in Tajikistan, the situation in central Asia has been far more peaceful over the past decade than many observers initially anticipated. However, as the region's leaders age and tire, the frustration of their politically isolated and, in some cases, increasingly impoverished populations seems sure to grow.

Advocates of democracy building may be frustrated by some of the changes occurring in Russia or in Ukraine, but the situation there is quite positive in comparison to that found in central Asia. Governments in states like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which had initially given at least limited endorsement to the ideals of democratic reform are now sharply restricting the freedom of action of their citizens and are eliminating any meaningful role political opposition groups can play. As a result, many are growing more frustrated by the increasing social and economic inequalities that now characterize their societies and by the diminishing opportunities to express their dissatisfaction through legal channels in the existing political system.

In recent months, we have seen signs of restiveness among the elite and masses in several central Asian countries. The situation in Turkmenistan is most noteworthy. There is little prospect of even symbolic change in Turkmenistan as long as Niyazov remains in office, something that is leading to the mobilization of the Turkmen elite. Like Stalin, Niyazov fears disloyalty on the part of his government and rotates state officials in and out of office with regularity. Moreover, when someone is let go, the full savagery of the President's power is unleashed on him.

A good example of this is the campaign against Niyazov's former security chief, Muhammad Nazarov, dismissed in March 2002, and charged in May 2002 with "premeditated murder, procurement of women, abuse of power, bribe-taking, illegal arrests, the manufacture and sale of counterfeit documents, seals, stamps and blank forms, embezzlement and the abuse of power," charges which collectively could get him 25 years in prison. Moreover, 22 men formerly under his charge also face prosecution. In March 2002, the head of the border guards, Major General Turkish Tyrmyev, was also dismissed. In May 2002, the Turkmen Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the financial sector, Khudaiberdy Orazov, and the head of the central Bank, Seitbai Kandymov, were both dismissed. The latter faces a host of criminal charges, including that of "immodesty," according to the country's official newspaper "Neitralnyi Turkmenistan" (Neutral Turkmenistan). Niyazov also announced plans to increase the size of the national security service to some 5000 people in a reorganization that will both expand its reach and make the existing leadership more vulnerable to removal in rather Stalinesque ways.

Turkmenistan's government has been almost inflexible on issues of political and economic reform. Moreover, those who formally break with Niyazov, like former foreign minister Boris Sheikmuradov who resigned from his post as Turkmenistan's Ambassador to China in October 2001, have a price put on their head. Since going into opposition Sheikmuradov has formed a political party, The Peoples Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan, which manages a very active opposition website. This opposition group seems to have much greater energy, and hence potential, than earlier opposition efforts in Turkmenistan. A small group of pro-democracy activists

known as Azadliq (freedom) was organized during the Gorbachev reforms, and the United Turkmen Opposition, was formed in Russia by Turkmenistan's first Foreign Minister, Abdi Kuliev and former Oil and Natural Gas Minister Nazar Suyunov. While these two groups failed to gain support from Turkmenistan's ruling elite, Sheikmuradov's movement now includes Turkmenistan's former ambassadors to Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, a former deputy prime minister, and the former number two man in Turkmenistan's embassy in the US.

There have been disturbing developments in Kyrgyzstan as well. Although President Akayev promises that he will step down when his term expires, the range of acceptable political activity has been narrowing. The trial of a Kyrgyz legislator, Azimbek Beknazarov, led to peaceful demonstrations in his home town of Dzhellabad in March 2002, that were broken up by the police leaving seven dead. A month later, one of the demonstrators died of a stroke during a hunger-strike. The district administrator, Shermamat Osmonov, of the village where the demonstrations occurred, Aksu, was fired by President Akayev, almost immediately, despite repeated protestations by the State Secretary, Osmonakun Ibraimov, and the Minister of Interior, the newly appointed Temirbek Akmataliev, that the police opened fire in self-defense. As a result of international pressure, the police officers themselves now face prosecution. In what definitely has the feel of an official cover up, Beknazarov was arrested in January 2002 and charged with exceeding his official powers seven years before while he served as an investigator in the Toktogol regional prosecutor's office. Beknazarov, who was Chairman of the Jogorku Kenesh (parliament) committee on Judicial and Legal Affairs, had been a very vocal critic of the Akayev government's negotiated border with China, in which the Kyrgyz ceded 125000 hectares of previously disputed territory to Chinese control, and had called for Akayev's impeachment. This treaty, and the fate of Beknazarov and the pro-Beknazarov demonstrators, has become a cause celebre in Kyrgyzstan and has led to mounting numbers of demonstrators in southern Kyrgyzstan in particular, who gather daily to call for President Akayev's resignation. In May 2002, the Prime Minister resigned and in June a new government was named, but this itself has not led to an appreciable change in the political environment.

Although there has been strong pressure from the various OSCE states on Kyrgyzstan to have President Akayev pardon or otherwise release his former Vice President, Feliks Kulov, now head of the Ar Narmys party, just the opposite has occurred. Kulov, whose family now lives in exile, was convicted in May 2002 of three separate charges of embezzlement, and sentenced to serve a new 10 year term, concurrent with his previous seven year sentence, for abuse of an official position. Kulov was also barred from holding office for 3 years following his release.

The situation in Kyrgyzstan is probably the most disturbing, as it seems to have few easy solutions. The ideal would be for the US to work with the current Kyrgyz government to help it find ways to successfully increase public confidence, through the release of Kulov and the creation of a broader coalition, etc. If Akayev is able to get to the end of his term, there is a very good chance that the country will stage something which at least has some of the features of a free and fair election, providing an important example for the rest of the region.

Hopefully, this would be a situation that would have some influence on both Kazakhstan's and Uzbekistan's rulers. Despite the fact that Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, has continued to provide strong rhetorical support for the need for democraticization in Kazakhstan, actions taken by Kazakhstan's president and the country's senior officials provide little evidence that the country's leaders intend to take seriously a commitment to democratic reform.

A group of key reformers left the government in November and formed a political movement called Democratic Choice, in part over a spat with the president over the role played by one of his son-in-laws, Rakhmat Aliyev. Aliyev himself was pushed out and lost a number of his holdings. His media holdings Karavan and Kazakh Commercial TV (both owned by Alma-media) were temporarily suspended and the chief editor of the former, Aleksandr Shukhov, has been brought in for questioning by the Almaty police.

The Democratic Choice movement itself proved relatively shortlived as two of its organizers, Mukhtar Ablyazov and Gaklimzhan Shakiyenov, former Akim of Pavlodar Oblast, were arrested for various forms of malfeasance. Two other organizers, former first deputy Prime Minister Uraz Zhandosov and Alikhan Beymanov, created the "Ak Zhol" (White way) party, but it has yet to be demonstrated that this is a credible and independent opposition force.

While these developments do not in and of themselves change the face of political life in the region, they do show that the alliance with the US has done little to make the region's leaders feel compelled to introduce democratic reforms in their societies. Partly this is because they feel that they are largely able to get away with whatever

behavior they want—that there will be neither internal nor external consequences. They might be right about the latter—the international community might quietly sit back and let these men do as they wish as the priorities of the US in particular currently lay elsewhere—but international inactivity is not synonymous with indefinite local acquiescence.

Over the past several years, the region's leaders have begun to age and in some cases become noticeably physically frailer, but the pace of institutional development has slowed in key countries like Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. As already noted, there are some hopeful signs in Kyrgyzstan, which if born out would have enormous impact on the entire region. President Askar Akayev has been signaling that he doesn't plan to press for further constitutional modifications to enable him to continue to run for reelection. However, the only way that Akayev can convince observers of his sincerity is to make determined steps to free up the political process and create new institutions for elite recruitment.

Positive too are plans to turn ever more control in the country over to popularly elected local governments. This would have enormous benefit in Kyrgyzstan, creating new arenas of competition throughout the country and reducing the expectations of the central government. It too would serve as a model and potential spur to reforms throughout the region.

At the same time, all in the region are watching with interest efforts by Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliev to have his son, Ilham, designated as his heir. Many in Kyrgyzstan believe that President Akayev will also try to arrange a transfer of power to one of his children, especially if distant relative Nursultan Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan successfully pursues such a strategy. Akayev is rumored to be grooming his young son, Aidan, who was educated in the United States.

Efforts to reinstate some sort of modern-day princely system are very dangerous. Over the past five years, central Asia's leaders have been honing their "winner-take-all" philosophy. But the societies that they rule are complex, filled with populations that are reluctant to accept a loss of the benefits that they are used to enjoying and former political and economic stakeholders who are used to being accommodated. Throughout central Asia, members of the elite from disfavored clans and families have been sitting by, waiting for the opportunity to grasp more economic and political power. As institutions to ensure a peaceful transfer of power do not exist, there is no foundation on which for them to rest their hopes.

In the absence of a civil society, there are few secular political institutions around which opposition can coalesce. Islam, especially the mosque and the medresseh, is increasingly becoming a more attractive organizational center for ethnic Kyrgyz as well as ethnic Uzbeks, and it is very difficult to restrict popular access to it. As a result, the advocacy of Islamic goals can be useful for both the regime's supporters as well as for its detractors. Everything depends on the rules of the game and these are still in flux.

The challenge posed by Islam remains particularly acute in Uzbekistan. Islam is particularly deeply rooted in many parts of the country, and the precedent of competition between Islamic fundamentalists, modernists, and Islamic conservatives is a well-established one. All three traditions withstood the vicissitudes of Soviet rule. Some of today's radical groups even have their roots in an anti-Russian uprising that occurred in the Ferghana Valley in 1898 and a few of the leaders have even studied with a "holy-man" who witnessed the revolt as a young child, and who—much to Soviet displeasure—survived to a very old age. This revival easily reaches into Kyrgyzstan, through the Ferghana Valley. Throughout the region, governments mistakenly believe that religion can be managed by the state, as can the development of Islam, and that governments are competent enough to influence the social evolution of society.

The central Asian elite, of course, is not formally against Islam, but is very wary of revivalist or fundamentalist Islam and people who are eager to live by "the exact teachings of the book." What they want is to keep these republics as secular states and to prevent devout Muslims from forcing all of their co-religionists into public observance of the faith. Even in Kyrgyzstan, pressure on secular elements to conform to religious precepts is strong.

The relationship of religion to mass belief is much more complex and interactive than the region's leaders credit it with being. Though the governments of central Asia are in no position to regulate the religious beliefs of the masses, they may exert their influence on social processes. But in trying to do so, these governments could inadvertently trigger social explosions.

It is for this reason that central Asia's governments must once again broaden the political sphere available to most ordinary citizens to include a host of secular alternative. For without this, the country has no real safety valve to use to release social pressure.

But political liberalization alone is not the answer. The region's social pressure cooker must be dealt with more directly as well, through programs that will effectively help alleviate the region's poverty, through nationally based economic projects, and an effort to capitalize on the potential of a central Asian regional market. Moreover, economic reform will create a new and more persistent group of claimants for the extension of rule of law into the political sphere as well and the kind of popular support base that is necessary for sustaining democratic political developments over the long haul.

Senator LUGAR [presiding]. Thank you both very much. Let me begin by picking up the point you made, Ambassador Courtney, about the Russian influence in these countries. Their approach has changed to a point of accommodation as a result of the war against terrorism. I understand that President Putin overruled the opposition of many officials in Russia who really did not want that degree of United States access to these countries, war on terrorism or not, but apparently persuaded the people in Russia that it would be in their interests. But it is clear this has been very recent, the thought that we would have these opportunities we're discussing today. These countries are not in our hemisphere; as a matter of fact, they are in what Russia would have viewed as its sphere of influence. But to what extent does that specter overhang the picture? In other words, is there a feel in these countries that despite the fact we've had a temporary interest in the region the United States may say we've settled what we came to do militarily in Afghanistan, we've trained an Afghan group of people to police the country, which was our objective, and now we must leave because you have other problems here.

What happens to these five countries if such a shift should occur or even let us say the United States as a matter of fact said well, we do in fact have more interest there, more staying power, despite official opposition of our government to expanding the international security force outside of Kabul, and United States participation. We heard this in the hearing yesterday so it's fairly firm that we're going to move that way, but we might change our mind and say Afghanistan is important, its success is important, that might have an influence on the other countries in the region.

Can you give us some flavor as to how these tilts might occur, because in the last year we have had a very big tilt, one which we and everybody, I suppose, questioned both staying power as well as the future of Russian cooperation as we have seen this past year?

Ambassador COURTNEY. The Russian shift does seem to be sudden. Going back to the early Yeltsin era a decade ago, the reformers in Russia in Yeltsin's government were focused mainly on dealing with the West and moving their country toward the West, and a decision was made consciously, or de facto, to leave the CIS up to retrograde officials in the Yeltsin government. So by and large the reformers whose names that we know, Guydar, Chubias, Yavlensky, people like that, they were associated with dealing with CIS issues.

Senator LUGAR. That's a very important point which I don't think I've heard made publicly as often as it needs to be.

Ambassador COURTNEY. It was a way for the Yeltsin regime to protect its rights plan by leaving less important matters but matters that were emotional to people who were from a more conservative bent. So the debate has been going on for a long time.

The view that we expressed, the United States expressed a decade ago, from the very outset, Secretary Baker and President Bush, was that Russia had an interest in secure and stable and prosperous borders all the way around, was something that intellectually some of the leaders understood but they didn't seem to be able to internalize. I would like to think that over the last decade, more and more Russians have indeed internalized that and seen that they do have a greater stake in their own internal conditions, economic and political, and that means moving toward more open societies and more contacts with the West, and I think we're seeing some of that just today and yesterday in Canada in the discussions.

As to what would happen if we pulled out of southern Eurasia, I think that would be destabilizing, in part because the countries of the area would wonder whether we were interested in them or interested in them only as a vehicle to serve some other interest, and as I indicated, there are so many potential security threats out there. For example, if a nuclear weapon gets stolen from a Russian nuclear facility, one possible way it would go out would be the least guarded border, which is the border with Kazakhstan, and go down to the south.

Biological weapons activities out there, although tremendous accomplishments have been made with the reduction program to eliminate them but there are still, as you know, a host of military biological weapon systems in Russia and a lot of people hovering around, including organized crime groups, that would possibly be interested in one or another aspect of the weapons of mass destruction establishment.

So we have a lot of very specific interests such as enhancement of border security so they can detect and interdict, so I think it's very important for the United States to remain and staying involved in Afghanistan, whether it is the ICAF in Kabul or some other way, the key is that the United States stay and finish the job and remain in southern Eurasia.

How often in human history was a security vacuum created as large as was created when the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan and then the Soviet Union collapsed? There's been a vacuum there for a decade. The United States has filled it, and again, probably remarkably in history, very few countries in the region seem to have objected, most everyone seems to like that. So this is clearly stabilizing and we should stay.

Senator LUGAR. Let me ask, let's say that the situation remains stable in the sense that we stay and there is not additional pressure coming from Russia on these states. There is the problem clearly in all of them if there is to be the sort of reform that we're talking about, the need for income, that is, not a vibrant economy, but at least some improvement. I had a good visit with the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan and I was impressed with the fact that there is very little money in the country, the per capita income is very small.

Now in the case of Kazakhstan, with the energy resources there, see some revenue stream coming. It may or may not be productive for all the people, but nonetheless there is some stream there that is possible. What are the prospects for the other four countries?

Can you outline any hope in terms of the revenue stream in the next decade, quite apart from next year?

Ms. OLCOTT. I think there is some potential for a revenue scheme, particularly if the customs barriers that exist within the region are eliminated or are sharply reduced. The region that includes southern Russia as well as central Asia really could form a natural market for a whole host of job creating activities in textile industry and in food processing, and support by the United States and the international financial institutions of more rapid entrance of all these states to the WTO I think would help facilitate it.

That requires Uzbekistan seeing through its currency reform. Certainly it would be nice if Turkmenistan had similar steps, but I think there is some prospect of job creation through regionally focused projects that are driven at the entrepreneur level rather than at the head of state level; the head of state level has had a more dismal success rate.

Senator LUGAR. That's an interesting point you're making. How severe are these barriers between these states, leaving aside between anybody else? Describe what the customs or the tariff business is between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.

Ms. OLCOTT. Kyrgyzstan is the only state that is a WTO member, and it has been very difficult for Kyrgyzstan to trade with Uzbekistan. The customs barriers, it depends upon the goods, what they are, and it has been even more difficult in some ways for Kyrgyzstan to reach its market in Russia across Kazakhstan. There have been a series of tariffs, especially on agricultural good, levied.

In addition to the existence of these tariffs and there's great difficulty in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, in addition to these kind of barriers, the corruption of moving goods is really problematic. It costs between \$1,000 and \$2,000 to move a truck across Kazakhstan.

Senator LUGAR. With customs officials, or where is the corruption?

Ms. OLCOTT. The corruption is police officials, customs officials, you name it, it's there. And this is, I think, the single biggest thing that we could do for these states is in the next 5 years move toward working with them for much better management of trade. I think it would lead to a healthy cross-fertilization of investment across the region. There is capital in some of these countries, and there's Russian capital as well that would come in and do some very healthy things.

Senator LUGAR. That's a very significant point that I have not heard explored before. We have not really thought of trade among the countries. We keep thinking of each in isolation. We discuss individual governments and their contributions security-wise or reliability human rights wise, but this seems to be unrealistic, people move. We've talked about nuclear material moving, but likewise we must discuss trade, food and material. As you point out there are all sorts of barriers and corruption. Tariffs are high, obstruction to access in the Russian market. There are a number of factors here which in terms of our state craft really need to be considered more heavily.

Ms. OLCOTT. I agree. We have to remember that the overwhelming majority of the population of these countries is under 21

and in every case except Kazakhstan, over a third are under 14. That means that we have to look at government revenue bases but we also have to look at opportunities of employment, of how families have life, because we don't want a new generation of terrorists to be born.

Senator LUGAR. Let me just followup with two questions on that point. You mentioned the desirability of exchange programs in which young people might come from these countries to the United States. But you say it's not very clear how they get out, and second, do they ever return. And that's rather bleak to say the least. We haven't done enough in this area, and I fear with a number of exchange programs, it's really getting off the mark.

Try to help me. If you were to have the money to do so, how extensively would you begin to try exchange programs? How many students would be candidates for entry into American universities? Or stretch it the other way, how many American students might want to go to any of these countries? Do you have any feel as an academic in this area?

Ms. OLCOTT. I don't have a feel for how many Americans would want to go there to study, but there are at this point thousands if not tens of thousands each year that would come from central Asia. One of the things that I think we have to be careful of in stimulating exchange programs is not to forget the need to help support educational reform on the ground, because it's going to get harder and harder for rural youth to have access to these exchange programs regardless of how many slots we make available to them, because the differential between elite education and mass education is growing throughout these regions.

So, exchange programs are great, but more work on the ground with educational reform working with these states, with programs like the Peace Corps, and more directly target educational projects, I think are equally, if not more important for the longer term trends.

Senator LUGAR. How important is our public diplomacy efforts? In the State Department we had testimony a couple weeks ago of five different programs of various areas. When you talk about focusing on young people, this is what our public diplomacy is aimed at. Charlotte Beers and other people came to say that they are broadcasting messages, usually through the broadcast of American music, with 5-minute newscasts and other informational efforts in the midst of the program. This is a new tactic as opposed to the Voice of America or more conventional broadcasting that we have done in the past. And it seems to have caught the favor of people who are say from 15 to 25 years of age.

Now, I am not acquainted with how much of that may be occurring in any of the five countries we're considering today or how much should be focused there. These states do have a majority of young people and there probably are some messages of either hope or information, that we should be sending. Do you have any impression about what we should do in terms of public diplomacy?

Ms. OLCOTT. I think one of the problems these regimes face, especially in rural areas, is the declining numbers of functioning TV sets and radios, so it's getting harder and harder to get to some more distant areas. I think the most valuable thing we do in media

is training independent journalists. That is not to speak against public diplomacy or the radios that we support, but I see the greatest long-term payoff to us by working with independent media.

Similarly with regard to public diplomacy programs, I think the longer term exchanges and training programs are really valuable, and I really advocate doing them with government people and not just with the nongovernmental sector. We have to increase the confidence of the generation that's already in positions of responsibility, even if we don't really like their views on a lot of questions.

Senator LUGAR. Ambassador Courtney, when you were Ambassador to Kazakhstan, how did you work with the State Department on public diplomacy? How did you try to express American ideals and morals to all the sectors of society?

Ambassador COURTNEY. Most Ambassadors discover when they go to post that the public diplomacy section is the most important in the embassy. In Kazakhstan the country was by and large a joint military test range in the Soviet era, they had very few contacts with the outside world. When the United States came in and opened up the embassy just weeks after Gorbachev signed the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Kazakhstanis welcomed us with open arms.

They very quickly saw America as a protector against a larger set of neighbors or unstable neighbors, and were very receptive to public diplomacy programming, and that included Radio Liberty, Voice of America, the journalist training efforts that we did, all forms. There was an independent newspaper started in Kazakhstan, which suffered a \$1 million fire when I was there, at one of its major newsprint warehouses. A similar fire has occurred at another independent newspaper more recently in Kazakhstan. That says something about how leaders who are less than democratic see the power of the media. So I would agree very much with Ms. Olcott that this is an area in which we should concentrate a great deal of resources and more resources.

Senator LUGAR. I'm just trying to think with you. Given our exhortations for leaders to reform and so forth, in fact it's the constituency of people, the base population in these countries that want changes. Now that may not mean they get them, but it's difficult to see a greater appreciation or yearning for democracy without sharing views of the benefits. That's why it seems to me speaking through public diplomacy a fairly large number of people eventually receive the message. This is extremely important for the future.

Ms. OLCOTT. I think we should also not minimize the size of the constituency for change in any of these countries. If we listen to the leaders, we really have a vision of the populations as being rooted in the past and not really understanding what participatory societies are about. The tragedy is that all these countries were more participatory in 1991, 1992 and 1993 than they are today, and that's what we suffer as our risk in these societies.

Senator LUGAR. Why is that so? Why has 10 years made a difference to the worse?

Ms. OLCOTT. Because the regimes in power virtually everywhere have reduced the sphere of political life. The media is less free in most of central Asia than it was at the time that independence was

granted. Parliaments have less political power today than they did in the early 1990s. Presidents are much more powerful figures than they were in the early 1990s. The judiciary was not independent then and it is making some strides in some places.

But what we stand to lose, and we have lost a lot of that momentum from the late Gorbachev period and the early period of independence, and what we risk is a generation that has never seen that political dynamism coming to maturity without the conditions of it ever being instituted. That triggers the kind of radicalism that we see in parts of the Islam world and we see in parts of central Asia.

Senator LUGAR. What other countries are likely to help us in this endeavor? Do you see coming on the horizon some increase in, say, the interest of NATO nations or the European Union or Australia? Are there others who might have an influence toward democratic governance.

Ms. OLCOTT. Europeans are very active throughout central Asia. The Germans are particularly active in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. The French are visible virtually everywhere.

Senator LUGAR. Why are they active? What interests do they have?

Ms. OLCOTT. The Germans had an interest in keeping the German population from emigrating to Germany. There was a historic German population in Kazakhstan, about 6 or 7 percent of the population containing German ethnicity, and they were given the right to be repatriated under Soviet rule, and the German Government after reunification tried to dampen that by encouraging investment programs in Kazakhstan that were geared toward getting these people to stay by giving them a greater role in the economy. So they have a traditional interest in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

But the European, the French and Italian oil companies are really active throughout the Caspian. The Japanese have had periods of great interest in central Asia and that interest I think could be revived.

Ambassador COURTNEY. The issue of the expansion of the European Union throughout much of the 1990s caused a certain paralysis in Western Europe about how actively they should get involved to the east. In Georgia, for example, which is closer to Europeans in several ways, the Europeans made a significant investment in energy, but it tailed off as we went further east.

I think the Europeans have come a long way since then and after 9-11, they realize that to a greater extent they should be there with us, but we should always remember that these challenges for the Europeans are always going to be something that will require U.S. encouragement to get them involved.

I understand that something like 90 percent of the heroin in Britain comes from Afghanistan and half of that may come through central Asia, so concrete specific interests are playing a role as well.

Senator LUGAR. Recently we've had visits in Washington from NATO ambassadors and Lord Robertson. I had a long discussion last Thursday with them about NATO's future in this area. This is purely out of area, but the war on terrorism is out of area, by

definition. Some NATO nations are prepared to work for us in a fairly long-term way when it comes to fighting this war against terrorism. Others are feeling their way along in this, they are not really sure how long, how far, they are willing to go. Some would prefer to hunker down back on the European Continent, as opposed to addressing the threats that may come to all of us, including them.

But to the extent they do begin to look at this, then they might take a look at the drug trade and see this is a greater part of the situation, and I see possibilities of an extension of European interests the same as our own. The pessimists would say only for a short time, you know, there will come a time when work in Afghanistan, is done.

But then we heard from Mr. Wolfowitz and Mr. Armitage here in this subcommittee that it's not just Afghanistan, it's Pakistan. This is very, very critical. That's another fact we haven't talked about today, but it's certainly in the area, a source of considerable interest in our diplomacy, both for security purposes as well as commitments. There are other reasons for staying in the area that may lead to greater longevity for us and for the Europeans. But we're breaking new ground.

As you pointed out, prior to September 11, the degree of interest in all of this was unfortunately minimal. Now it's substantially greater. Let me just ask one more question along this line. For American business, obviously we're aware of the extraordinary energy interest in Kazakhstan. What sort of other activity is occurring in other industries, or what might be encouraged? What is logical in terms of American business investment? Frequently that is a point of leverage and a point of democratization in its own way, as people come and go with the flow of commerce. Do either one of you have any idea as to what the openings might be in that area?

Ambassador COURTNEY. In addition to energy, and to go back to your earlier question about income in the countries, if one takes a look at Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, the three countries that have substantial energy income in the region, and the income distribution of that impact in terms of how much of that income reaches down to the poorer people, the issue is that broad based economic growth and investment is required there, and it has to be done under circumstances that are less corrupt. Corruption is probably the No. 1 issue that harms economic development in the region.

The second part of it really has to go to agriculture. If you look at every single one of those societies, agriculture including husbandry, they all have comparative advantages from the economic perspective in those areas, but in none of those countries are people able to buy and sell land freely or to use it as collateral to obtain a mortgage so that a farm credit activity can get going. And we know from our own history in America that without being able to collateralize land, you just can't have strong agricultural credit. If I could pick one single thing that the United States business could do beyond energy, it would be the focus in the agricultural sector, and that would cover all aspects of that, including food processing. But that requires the opportunity for collateralization.

Senator LUGAR. This is another legacy from the Soviet period. We just saw the Duma take some preliminary steps to permit the sale of lands to Russians within Russia. This is a big step even 10 years after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Ms. OLCOTT. Kyrgyzstan actually does allow private land ownership and this year they are beginning to allow some collateralization with U.S. assistance. But I agree, I think agricultural reform is really a key to survival of societies, and also, agricultural equipment sales is really one area of potential U.S. engagement. The mineral extraction sector, Uzbekistan, one of its biggest projects is mineral mining, you know, working in the gold sector. Service providers throughout the mining sector may have a market there, but it's very difficult to get the kind of return on capital from these small- and medium-size enterprises that U.S. firms are used to, and the kind of management time that has to be invested there is really enormous. So except for the big projects, I think it's going to be hard to encourage too much U.S. participation.

Senator LUGAR. Especially with the customs problems, the difficulty in getting across borders. For example in Eastern Europe, discussion would focus on the Czech Republic or Slovakia. They were small markets but they were profitable. American companies could produce steel in Slovakia and export it to several surrounding countries. But that gets back to an earlier point that you made, that the market has to be enlarged. It is enlarged by barriers coming down and access to Russia as a very large potential customer in the area should be encouraged.

Ms. OLCOTT. And we can help them more through technological training than through investment, and what we should be more interested in is facilitating economic stability.

Senator LUGAR. I thank both of you. I'm hopeful that the record of our hearing will be helpful to other colleagues, likewise to our administration and to others in the NGOs who are working these problems intensively, as both of you have throughout much of your career.

Let me ask on behalf of the chairman that we have unanimous consent, which I will give being the surviving Senator here, to keep the record open until the close of business tomorrow, and this for the benefit of those who have additional comments as witnesses or Senators who wish to raise questions, issue statements or what have you. Thank you very very much for being with us today, and the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:50 p.m., the committee adjourned, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR SAM BROWNBACK

I would like to first address the title of this hearing to clear up any misunderstandings. "Balancing Military Assistance and Support for Human Rights" makes it sound like there is a choice to be made between the two. Nothing could be further from the truth. Military assistance takes many forms. Training of soldiers requires human rights vetting. Human rights training and democracy programs are conducted concurrently with train and equip programs. Through various engagement

activities, our military is assisting in the development of democracy throughout the world.

Balancing human rights concerns with strategic and economic concerns is always a difficult task—and a subject worthy of inquiry. Central Asia is comprised of a set of new nations—barely over a decade old, which are dealing with a number of difficult issues. These nations are the first to admit that there remains work to be done in the area of human rights—just as our own nation did not have a perfect human rights record for many years after our creation. The task of building a new nation from scratch is difficult enough, but when you are transforming from a system that did not respect the rights of individuals, did not place a premium on human rights and in fact, inherited a tradition of political repression—as these post-Soviet nations did, the challenge is all the greater.

This does not mean we should refrain from examining this important topic, but we should take note of the fact that many of these nations have made conscious choices to move toward the West, toward democracy and away from the radical extremist elements we see in a number of other countries.

Which brings me to a critical point: we should be examining this important topic with a broader lens. What about human rights issues in Saudi Arabia and Egypt? These too are alliances that we have had for various strategic reasons—but we have shied away from critically reviewing. These countries certainly deserve as much scrutiny as central Asia—we send them more aid or sell them more weapons, we have had longer relationships with these countries—and by all rights, the abuses in these countries, at least the descriptions I have seen, are significantly worse than central Asia—particularly for women.

If we are to examine this important topic with the depth it deserves, we should make sure that we do not cast our focus too narrow. I realize that this subcommittee is tailored to central Asia—but if we are to have a hearing on this important topic, then I hope we will also have the opportunity at the full committee level, to delve into the concerns about human rights abuses in with our other allies. For that matter, we should also be scrutinizing the axis of evil: Iran, Iraq and North Korea—where human rights are all but an unknown concept.

I hope this will be a balanced hearing. In light of the great cooperation we have received from central Asia post 9/11, it would not serve us well to treat our new friends unfairly.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORNE W. CRANER TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT G. TORRICELLI

Question. Secretary Craner, I want to raise with you a case you are familiar with involving a constituent of mine from New Jersey, Mr. Mansur Maqsudi. As you know, last July, Mr. Maqsudi decided after roughly ten years of marriage to seek a divorce from his wife, Gulnora Karimova, the daughter of President Karimov. Since then, the Uzbek government has imprisoned and mistreated a number of Mr. Maqsudi's relatives, expropriated without any compensation his business in Tashkent, and deprived him of having any communication with his two children; now ages nine and four. In March of this year, you publicly promised the chair of the House International Subcommittee on Human Rights, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, that you would personally raise this issue at the highest level with the government of Uzbekistan. Recently you were in Tashkent and I would like you to describe concretely to the subcommittee what you have done to help Mr. Maqsudi, an American citizen, in freeing his three relatives who are still in jail, all of whom have serious health problems and have committed no crime other than being related to Mr. Maqsudi, and in helping to make sure that Mr. Maqsudi is not unlawfully deprived of his right to be in touch with his children, who are also U.S. citizens.

Answer. I appreciate your attention to and share your concern on this very difficult issue.

Since my March testimony, when Rep. Ros-Lehtinen asked for and received my assurance “that this issue will be raised at the highest level with the government of Uzbekistan”, I have worked to ensure that the case was receiving such attention here at the State Department.

Ambassador John Herbst has raised the issue repeatedly with the highest levels of the Uzbek government. Beth Jones, our Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, on a number of occasions has also conveyed our views on this issue to the highest Uzbek officials here and in Tashkent. Officials of the Bureau of Consular Affairs in

Uzbekistan and Washington, who have the primary responsibility on the portion of the case involving the children and one parent who are American citizens, also continue to pursue it. We have also pushed the Government of Uzbekistan, again at the highest levels, to respect the rule of law and to provide the Uzbek relatives who are not American citizens access to their lawyers and their family members. Secretary of State Powell and I have repeatedly emphasized to the highest levels of the Uzbek government, here and in Tashkent, that respect for citizens' individual liberties, the rule of law in Uzbekistan and international law are a precursor for deepening and broadening the relationship between our two countries. As we have made clear to the Uzbeks from the attention we have devoted to it and the levels at which we have raised it, resolution of this case would send a strong signal of movement in this direction.

On May 3, 2002, after Ambassador Herbst had met with the Uzbek foreign minister and negotiated with Mr. Maqsudi's estranged wife, a U.S. consular officer received her consent to visit with her children. Our consular officials for many months had been trying to arrange such a meeting to determine the children's well-being. The results of this visit, subsequently reported to the Maqsudi family, were that the children are healthy and receiving much attention and care. We understand the families themselves are attempting to resolve the issue of family visits. We also recently requested information, through our Embassy, on the health of the imprisoned relatives and to confirm that they are able to receive needed medications even as we continue to press the government of Uzbekistan to treat them in accordance with international law.

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORNE W. CRANER TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR GORDON SMITH

Question. Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Beth Jones has been clear that in central Asia the administration is placing equal emphasis on issues of military cooperation and the promotion of democracy and human rights. However, in your testimony you state that "any deepening and broadening of our cooperation will depend on continual progress in respecting human rights and democracy." Are you suggesting placing conditions on our assistance to these central Asian republics?

Answer. Senator Smith, thank you for a question that addresses an important issue of U.S. foreign policy. Since September 11 I have taken two trips to central Asia and have met with many officials from the region here in Washington, D.C. My message to government authorities and to the people of the region has been consistent—that in order to receive the continuing support of the American people, who above all value respect for human rights and democratic institutions, the governments of central Asia will have to demonstrate in concrete measures their commitment to democracy and human rights. This is a message that has been conveyed by all U.S. government authorities.

The governments of central Asia are at a critical juncture in their relations with us. If they want to go further and broaden their cooperation with us beyond security matters, they will need to institute political reforms, otherwise our relations will not be able to progress and instead will remain limited in their scope.

DRL's assistance via the Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) will continue to remain focused on targeted opportunities where we can make a difference through innovative programs. We will continue our support for civil society, including human rights activists, NGO leaders, independent journalists and other democratic forces, to enable them to hold their governments accountable and advocate for peaceful change.

Question. Deputy Assistant Secretary Pascoe suggests that to bring democracy to central Asia "may require generational change." How much, and what percentage of the total of your HRDF is directed towards this audience?

Answer. I agree with Deputy Assistant Secretary Pascoe that a full transition to democracy in central Asia with the consolidation of democratic institutions is a long-term proposition. However, with the exception of Turkmenistan, there are strong, viable democratic forces in the central Asian countries and these forces are deserving of our support. We believe it is important in the short, medium and long term to encourage democratic opposition and human rights activists in their courageous battle to bring about peaceful change.

In terms of funding programs with DRL's Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF), allow me to clarify what HRDF is, and is not, about. In my confirmation hearings for Assistant Secretary I pledged to reform HRDF, and in particular, to make it a fund that distinguished itself as a resource for cutting-edge programming.

I am happy to report that I have done so; HRDF funds are reserved for targeted, innovative projects that will have a direct impact in countries of U.S. foreign policy significance.

Using these new criteria, I am pleased to note that we have indeed allocated a substantial portion of HRDF to \$3,045,000 (23% of total) for democracy and human rights programs in central Asia and for fiscal year 2002 we have notified to Congress \$1,996,000 for central Asia, which represents 33% of the \$6 million earmark for Muslim countries.

While all of our programs will ultimately effect a generational change, HRDF is not specifically designed for long-term programs. To achieve such generational change we work closely with our colleagues in the Department of State and USAID who are engaged in supporting complementary long-term exchanges and training programs. The programs most targeted at generational change are exchange programs administered by the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). In FY 2002, ECA received approximately \$19.25 million in FREEDOM Support Act funding to support academic and professional exchange programs for approximately 850 citizens from the central Asian countries. This number includes academic year or longer stays in the U.S. for approximately 260 central Asian high school students on the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX), some 55 central Asian students on the FSA Undergraduate program, and some 68 central Asian graduate students on the FSA Graduate/Muskie program. ECA also supports approximately 30 open access internet sites throughout central Asia which are used heavily by young exchange program alumni to keep open ties to their U.S. mentors and host families, and to obtain access to information not otherwise available in their countries.

Question. What is your view of working with the political parties in Tajikistan? As Tajikistan is the only country in the region with a vocal opposition in the Parliament will U.S. financed training be open to the Communist Party and the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP)?

Answer. During the past five years since the peace accord ending their brutal five-year civil war, the government of Tajikistan has taken some steps to accommodate a political opposition. While the elections in 1999 and 2000 were indeed an improvement from civil war, they were neither free nor fair and electoral legislation is in need of reform, especially regarding party and candidate registration. Lack of war, however, is not democracy, and we would like to see Tajikistan's governing institutions continue to improve.

While Tajikistan is indeed the only central Asian republic that has a government with an opposition party represented (and notably the only republic to permit political parties of a religious character—Islamic Renaissance Party), we would like to see more parties able to receive training and actively participate in government, especially those who are having difficulty registering. We commend the government's demonstrative commitment to establishing democratic institutions, and look forward to working with them as they continue to improve.

DRL is currently not funding from HRDF any political party programs in Tajikistan. However, we would like to do so in the future as we view Tajikistan as a country with many opportunities to promote democracy and human rights. If we should fund political party building programs, they would be open to all democratic, reform-oriented political parties. Currently, USG assistance programs administered by USAID support the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) in providing technical assistance to the full range of democratic political parties, focusing on improved communication between headquarters and regional party branches and the development of membership recruitment strategies. The assistance also concentrates on women's political participation and has resulted in a protocol drawn up by political parties representing all sides of the political spectrum that expands the role of women and youth in their respective parties.

RESPONSES OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LYNN PASCOE TO ADDITIONAL
QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR GORDON SMITH

HIZB-UT TAHRIR

Question. The Hezb-ut Tahrir (HUT), the underground group that favors the creation of a new Caliphate is often mentioned as a point of concern by visitors from central Asia. Yet little is known about its strength, where its finances come from and what if any connections it has with terrorist organizations. What can you tell us about the Hezb-ut Tahrir? Is it a threat to U.S. interests in the region? Is its repression by the governments of the region of concern?

Answer. Unlike the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HT-The Islamic Liberation Party) is a transnational organization—with support among Muslims in Europe and an organizational base in London. It has urged the non-violent overthrow of governments across central Asia and the establishment of an Islamic caliphate throughout the Islamic world.

HT was founded in the Middle East (reportedly Jordan or Saudi Arabia) in the 1950's. It promotes a utopian view of political Islam under which social problems like corruption and poverty would be eradicated by the application of sharia. Although HT has not been clear how this would be achieved, its idealistic vision has taken on increasing saliency because of the region's economic problems and social discontent. The organization uses a mixture of local history and socio-economic and political arguments, combined with calls for international religious solidarity to promote its cause against authorities.

HT is organized in secretive five-member cells whose members later form their own groups or halkas. Only the leader of each halka has a connection to another halka. (This method has helped HT spread rapidly, reportedly doubling in size each year in certain parts of central Asia.) Public expression usually is conducted through leaflets. Recruitment generally is conducted through friends and family, mirroring traditional social constructs. Members often emphasize the "inner jihad" or a psychological transformation as the impetus for joining the group.

In central Asia, HT members are generally ethnic Uzbeks as HT focuses primarily on removing Uzbekistani President Karimov. Nevertheless, HT has been more active recently in recruiting in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, perhaps due to repression of its members in Uzbekistan and these countries' sizeable Uzbek population. Outside Uzbekistan, HT's appeal has centered on discontent with Kyrgyz and Tajik government policies toward religious practices.

Much of HT's appeal reportedly is based in its rejection of violence. This is probably especially attractive in areas that have suffered purported inter-ethnic violence such as the Ferghana Valley. HT's propaganda, however, remains virulently anti-Western and anti-Semitic, and post-September 11 HT rhetorically has supported action against the "infidel" powers fighting in Afghanistan. Some of the attraction to HT is its forbidden nature, the opportunity it presents for the alienated to express discontent, and the historical tradition of expressing dissent through religion in the Ferghana Valley.

It is unclear what the group's future plans are and researchers have noted conflict among some members about the efficacy of violence such as used by the IMU—with which many members sympathize. Indeed, differences over HT tactics—and perhaps its rejection of violence—reportedly led to factions splitting off in 1997 and 1999.

Overall, neither Hezb ut-Tahrir nor the IMU has extensive support in the region. The tri-border area encompassing the Ferghana appears to be the most fertile ground for HT, with some researchers estimating that up to 10 percent of the local population are supporters. Although the number of HT's recruits continues to increase, the vast majority of believers in the region do not necessarily share HT's radical program of politicization of Islam. Journalist interviews with recruits suggest the decision to join an extremist group—HT or otherwise—is driven by disappointments of the post-Soviet era rather than an attachment to radical Islam. Therefore, HT's focus on ending corruption and abuse by powerful rulers appeals to the more secular as well.

Government response to HT growth varies in the four countries (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and, less so, Kazakhstan) in the region where HT is actively recruiting. The Karimov government has taken the hardest line, having arrested and reportedly tortured thousands of HT members, their friends and family—and others who are simply devout believers. Jailed HT members reportedly find fertile recruitment inside prisons. The Uzbekistani government's inability to differentiate between radical and moderate Islamic groups probably pushes more people to extremist groups.

The Kyrgyz government is less strident in its dealings with HT. Jail terms for those convicted of "anti-government behavior" are relatively lenient at two to four years. Most members appear to be Uzbek and are concentrated in the Osh area—the site of extreme Kyrgyz-Uzbek clashes during the late Soviet era. The government's treatment is likely intended to avoid a repeal of these clashes.

Tajikistan has seen recruitment primarily in the heavily Uzbek-populated north. The Rahmonov government's uneasy alliance with its Islamist opposition party (IRP) has translated into harsher treatment for HT members, who are sentenced to an average of 8-12 years for "anti-government activities." In fact, the IRP's decision to join the Tajik government—and its subsequent marginalization—has reportedly led to an increase in HT recruitment among Tajiks, although the IRP denies this.

HT's presence in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has led to regional tensions as well. The Karimov government has pressured both its neighbors to crack down on militant Islamic organizations it believes seek shelter in its weaker neighbors.

NATO INVOLVEMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

Question. Lord Robertson went on to say "Ask yourself whether the countries of central Asia would have been so ready, willing and able to offer the critical assistance that helped us bring down the Taliban without 10 years of cooperation with the United States and its allies in NATO's Partnership for Peace. These relations were critical. Now they are about to get an upgrade." Could you describe the growing relationship between NATO and central Asia?

Answer. We are seeking to develop immediate and practical programs within the Partnership for Peace and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council to further strengthen the relationship between NATO and central Asian partners.

- We are encouraging more active central Asian participation at NATO and will continue to support greater central Asian involvement in the full spectrum of NATO Partner activities.
- We will seek enhanced individually tailored Individual Partnership Programs to assist central Asian states in priority areas such as combating terrorism, drug trafficking and border controls.
- PFP enhanced efforts in central Asia will be aimed at expanding central Asian familiarity with NATO's military practices in the same way it has promoted understanding and reform in central Europe.
- We favor the creation within the framework of the EAPC of an ad-hoc central Asian working group as a means of promoting stability and combating terrorism.
- Our ultimate goal is to do for central Asia and the Caucasus in this decade what we did for Eastern Europe in the 1990s.

CENTRAL ASIAN COOPERATION ON WMD PROLIFERATION

Question. NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson was in Washington last week. In discussing what NATO hopes to achieve at the Prague Summit in November he stated that NATO will "take a decisive step forward in our relations with countries across Europe and into central Asia. The logic is clear. Meeting challenges such as terrorism and proliferation requires the broadest and deepest possible cooperation. What are the Governments of central Asia doing to help NATO and the United States with the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD)?"

Answer. The central Asian countries have been strong partners in the disposal and counterproliferation of WMD, and have engaged closely with the United States in a number of programs in this area. Some of the more prominent programs and/or areas of cooperation with the central Asian countries which were host to former-Soviet weapons programs (Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan) are:

Material Protection, Control, and Accounting (MPC&A): The MPC&A program, managed by the National Nuclear Security Administration, is helping to secure weapons-useable are underway with key central Asian countries like Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan: Kazakhstan is the newest member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. There they have made a commitment to apply export controls on nuclear and nuclear related equipment, materials, software, and technologies. Kazakhstan is also a State Party to the NPT.

BN-350 Spent Fuel Disposition Program: The United States and Kazakhstan continue to work towards agreement on a U.S.-proposed approach for the safe and secure transport and long-term storage of BN-350 spent nuclear fuel (weapons-grade plutonium) from Kazakhstan to Baikal-1. Current joint efforts include a technical feasibility study of the U.S. dual-use cask approach and visits to the proposed Russian cask designer.

There are additional efforts between the United States and Kazakhstan to decommission and decontaminate the BN-350 reactor and also ensure its safety in the meantime.

Russia Fuel Return Program: The United States Government continues to work with Russia and the IAEA on a plan to repatriate to Russia civil HEU fuel from Soviet or Russian-supplied research reactors in approximately 16 countries, some of which are in central Asia.

Uzbekistan: Under the Russia Fuel Return Program, the United States and Russia agreed that shipment of nuclear fuel from Uzbekistan back to Russia is a priority. Technical experts from Russia, the United States, and Uzbekistan continue discussions toward this goal.

The United States and Uzbekistan have necessary agreements in place to allow for shipment of the nuclear material from the Tashkent reactors. (Specifically, the United States Government signed a Nonproliferation Agreement with Uzbekistan in March 2002 which included the necessary protections and provisions for such a shipment).

Nuclear Safety: U.S. and Uzbek experts also are currently upgrading the reactor facility to permit the safe and secure loading of spent fuel.

Central Asia and the United States also cooperate in the areas of redirecting former-weapons scientists and establishing/implementing effective export controls and border security.

KYRGYZSTAN

Question. In Mr. Craner's testimony his characterization of the current situation in Kyrgyzstan appears to differ from that in your testimony. In Assistant Secretary Craner's testimony he states that "Kyrgyzstan is once again headed in the direction of greater democratization and respect for human rights." That the "The Kyrgyz authorities have taken steps to restore public confidence." While Ambassador Pascoe states that the situation in Kyrgyzstan has "reached a crisis point this year." What is your view of recent events in Kyrgyzstan?

Answer. I think Assistant Secretary Craner was correct when he used the words "cautiously hopeful" in his testimony to describe the current situation in Kyrgyzstan regarding progress towards democracy and human rights. He did so because Kyrgyzstan, despite some recent political unrest and the government's backsliding on commitments to fundamental freedoms like freedom of press and freedom of assembly, continues to have the most potential, largely because it has the most vibrant civil society in central Asia. During the first six months of this year, Kyrgyzstan suffered its most significant political crisis since independence ten years ago. Although calm currently prevails, dissatisfaction with the Government's handling of events remains widespread and many observers expect protests to resume in the fall. In order to advance national reconciliation, President Akayev has begun a constructive dialogue with the moderate opposition, the non-governmental organization community, and the independent media.

However, the Administration continues to press the Government of Kyrgyzstan to be more inclusive and transparent as well as to implement the recommendations made by the State Commission investigating the tragic events of March in which five unarmed protesters were killed. To assist Kyrgyzstan to make further progress with its reforms, we are expanding our engagement to alleviate growing poverty and stem extremism through job creation, to enhance democracy by promoting greater citizen involvement in civil society, an independent media with the establishment of an independent printing press, and accountable governance, to increase protections for basic human rights, and to eliminate corruption. Assistant Secretary Craner and I both agree that promotion of human rights and democracy remains a priority for U.S. foreign policy and that continual advancement is necessary for the full flowering of United States-Kyrgyz relations.

RESPONSE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORNE W. CRANER AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LYNN PASCOE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR GORDON SMITH

CASPIAN BASIN AND U.S. ENERGY SECURITY CAUCASUS

Question. The Vice President's National Energy Strategy pointed to the importance of the exploration, development and transportation to market of Caspian energy. The importance of multiple pipelines was again referenced in the summit between President Bush and Russian President Putin last month in Moscow. How does central Asia and more specifically those central Asian Republics that are contiguous to the Caspian factor into our need for energy diversification? In light of difficulties with OPEC and instability in the Middle East has the Caspian basin become more important to U.S. energy security?

Answer. Caspian oil—from central Asia and the Caucasus—is key to maintaining our strategy of diversification of energy sources to ensure U.S. energy security. The Caspian basin holds roughly 4% of the world's oil reserves, and is potentially a significant source of non-OPEC oil. In central Asia, Kazakhstan has the potential to be one of the five top exporters of oil in the world in fifteen years. This year's production will likely exceed 900,000 barrels a day, increasing to as much as 5 million barrels per day in 2015, more than Kuwait or Iran. Turkmenistan has one of the world's largest deposits of natural gas—estimated at 101 trillion cubic feet—and oil

production of about 160,000 barrels a day. While Caspian resources will not render Middle East difficulties irrelevant, over the coming years the region's oil and gas producers will become much larger players on the world market.

Our policy objective is to encourage production and export of energy resources in the region in the most efficient manner possible. We agree with the Congress that, multiple pipelines will be crucial to ensuring energy security. Our Caspian energy policy for multiple pipelines will help the countries in the region secure their economic and political sovereignty and is showing some real successes. The CPC pipeline opened and is shipping Kazakh oil from Tengiz to the Black Sea. We expect the construction phase of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline to start next month, with a groundbreaking ceremony scheduled to take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, on September 18. The pipeline received final approval on August 1 by the participating companies and two new companies have been set up to manage the construction and financing. The Kazakhs are ready to start negotiations on sending future oil shipments into that line. The BTC pipeline will be a major step forward in shipping Caspian oil to global markets. Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan are also working with the Asian Development Bank and World Bank to examine a trans-Afghan gas pipeline, but the economics will be difficult absent a market in India. We continue to urge Russian support of our multiple pipelines policy.

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORNE W. CRANER TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS
FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SAM BROWNBAC

Question. Watching the continuing violence and bloodshed between Israelis and Palestinians makes me wonder how Jews are treated in the Muslim states of central Asia, especially Kazakhstan, and how will the violence in the Middle East influence the future of these historic Jewish communities?

Answer. Although we hear very few reports of anti-Semitic actions against Jews in central Asia by the general population, we monitor this issue closely and report on it in the Department's annual reports to Congress on religious freedom and human rights. Posts and visiting representatives from the Department regularly meet with members of the Jewish communities in each country. When we hear reports of acts of vandalism against cemeteries or of the distribution of anti-Semitic leaflets, we raise these concerns with appropriate government officials. There are reports of anti-Semitic pamphlets printed abroad being circulated by members of Hizb ut-Tahrir. In general, the governments of central Asia treat the Jewish communities with respect and appear responsive to any concerns we raise on their behalf.

In Kazakhstan, the government donated land in 2002 for the construction of a synagogue in the new capital, Astana. Government officials attended a groundbreaking ceremony in May of 2002. A synagogue opened in September of 2001 in the city of Pavlodar, also on land the government had donated. Thus, even in a country where the Jewish population is well below one percent of the population, the Jewish community in Kazakhstan continues to remain vital.

In Uzbekistan, there are more Jews than in any other central Asian country. Roughly 30,000 Ashkenazy and Bukharan remain concentrated in the bigger cities of Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand. Almost 70,000 emigrated to Israel or the U.S. since independence, largely because of bleak economic conditions. Those that remain are often the elderly who complain of not having enough younger members of the community to maintain Jewish cemeteries. There is no pattern of discrimination against Jews. Synagogues function openly; Hebrew education, Jewish cultural events, and the publication of a community newspaper take place undisturbed. Although the Hizb ut-Tahrir has circulated throughout the country anti-Semitic pamphlets, the government has confiscated them, arresting the Islamic extremists associated with the distribution when it can. Except for these extremist groups, there are amicable relations among the various religious communities. In October of 2000, there was a synagogue fire in Tashkent that authorities believe was arson. Authorities were quick to investigate, and the Jewish community indicated that it did not believe the attack was anti-Semitic in nature. The Government of Uzbekistan maintains good relations with Israel.

In Turkmenistan, the Jewish community is said to be under 1,000 individuals, some descendants from families that came to the country from Ukraine during World War II, and some Bokharski Jews living near the border with Uzbekistan. There were no complaints received from these communities during the past year. There is no rabbi and synagogue in the country. The numbers continue to decrease as a result of emigration to Israel, Germany, and the U.S.

In Tajikistan, Jews are less than 1 percent of the population, and there is only one registered Jewish religious organization. There were no complaints reported to our mission last year.

In the Kyrgyz Republic there is one Jewish synagogue registered and a small Jewish congregation meets in Bishkek. In March 2002, members of the Jewish Cultural Society reported that they had heard calls for violence against Jews in Russian and Kyrgyz from a loudspeaker at a mosque in central Bishkek. According to the Israeli Embassy in Almaty, the Kyrgyz Government is investigating and will file a report.

We do not expect the violence in the Middle East to impact very much on the Jewish communities in central Asia. There is little societal support for ethnic/religious violence, except where Muslims have converted to another religion, such as Christianity. The governments have not encouraged the distribution of anti-Semitic literature, and generally have paid close attention to those extremist elements that could represent harm to the Jewish community.

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORNE W. CRANER AND AMBASSADOR B. LYNN PASCOE TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SAM BROWNBACK

Question. Kazakhstan seems to be the leader in central Asia in terms of reforming its economy. As you know, the Commerce Department recently designated Kazakhstan as a market economy. Is the United States planning to ensure that economic reform spreads through the other nations of central Asia, which seem to be lagging behind?

Answer. The United States Government supports a wide range of programs that directly promote market reform in all five of the central Asian states. A series of complimentary programs in economic, democratic and humanitarian assistance indirectly reinforce market reforms. A comprehensive listing can be found in the "Annual Report on U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with Eurasia" prepared by the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia. Illustrative examples of such activities follow.

In Kazakhstan, our economic reform assistance helped the Government improve its business and investment legal and regulatory environment (key for accession to the WTO), strengthen the country's banking sector, and improve insurance, customs, mortgage, and private pension systems. USG training and technical assistance helped the Government of Kazakhstan to create a National Fund designed to shelter Kazakhstan's economy from the destabilizing effects of sharp fluctuations in international oil prices. Also with the help of U.S. assistance, Kazakhstan's banks adopted international standards such a system of deposit insurance.

In 1998, Kyrgyzstan became the first country in the former Soviet Union to join the WTO, with considerable help from the United States. Kyrgyzstan is continuing to strengthen its market reforms and, with U.S. assistance, is establishing the most advanced institutional infrastructure for private land ownership in central Asia. U.S. aid is also helping the State Customs Inspectorate modernize and simplify customs procedures. This modernization will result in cost-savings, as computerization and selective inspection procedures based on specific risk parameters will expedite the customs clearance process and stimulate regional cross-border trade.

The Government of Tajikistan is enthusiastic about on-going USG assisted banking and fiscal reform efforts. We plan to engage further with the Ministries of Economy, Finance and State Revenues, and the National Bank should our supplementary budgetary request be approved.

We closely coordinate our assistance with other donors in Uzbekistan. The USG is preparing to provide macroeconomic technical assistance to the Government of Uzbekistan, provided the Uzbeks implement necessary economic reforms.

We stand ready to provide economic reform assistance to the Government of Turkmenistan as soon as it demonstrates its commitment to reform. Until then, USG assistance will focus on security, health care reform, and the next generation of leaders through educational exchanges and civil society development.