TITLE: EXPORT CONTROL DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Executive Summary

This report details attempts by Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan to develop nonproliferation export controls. These states of Central Asia are precariously lodged between two nuclear powers (Russia and China), one inheritor state (Kazakhstan), two states of proliferation concern (India and Pakistan), and two aspiring nuclear powers (Iran and Iraq), making them a potential route linking supply with demand. Thus, the greatest threat from these states is that they could be used as transshipment points for materials, technology and equipment produced elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. In addition, the four Central Asian states, with perhaps the exception of Turkmenistan, possess some sensitive articles which could be used for production of weapons of mass destruction. Tajikistan, for example, is the site of a factory engaged in production of ballistic missile components. Uzbekistan has a relatively developed scientific research complex with experts who work at the Nuclear Physics Institute in Tashkent and at the state space agency, "Uzbekkosmos." Kyrgyzstan has facilities engaged or previously engaged in uranium mining.

Despite the threat that these states could contribute to proliferation by serving as transshipment points or possibly, although less likely, actually provide materials, know-how or technology that could benefit a proliferant state, there has been little progress towards the development of export controls in the region.

- Uzbekistan has issued three decrees which broadly set forth categories of items related to WMD whose export is regulated, and identified the agencies responsible for issuing and approving licenses. However, some agencies charged with export control responsibilities have yet to see licenses; therefore it would be premature to speak of a working system. Another problem surrounds dual-use items in Uzbekistan. Officials charged with licensing such items are not familiar with international dual-use lists and not competent to determine what items or technologies may be dual-use in nature.

- Kyrgyzstan issued a decree that was to establish an export control commission with representatives from numerous agencies, however this commission never formed and the process for issuing licenses of controlled items is being revamped. Problems and corruption surround the licensing process as the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry and even members of parliament sign-off on licenses without consulting appropriate agencies. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry and the Department of Science and New Technologies of the Ministry of Education are working to develop more detailed control lists and a draft export control law by the end of 1997 that will hopefully rectify such problems.
Tajikistan has issued a decree regulating exports of dual-use chemical items but the document was simply copied from a Russian Federation decree. The current domestic unrest means that export control is an item that fails to even register on the agenda of the current government.

Turkmenistan has taken no steps to develop the legal basis for a system of nonproliferation export controls. However, Turkmenistan has allegedly banned the import and export of "weapons and ammunition, military hardware and materials for their manufacture, explosives, and ... nuclear materials."

Attempts to establish border control and Customs authorities in the region have been beset by numerous problems. With the exception of Uzbekistan, control over external borders is managed by Russian troops. Internal CIS borders are not rigidly monitored or entirely unmanned. Customs authorities in these states lack equipment and training to identify sensitive weapons-related material and equipment. Moreover, Customs officials in Central Asia are targets of bribery given their meager wages.

The general political and economic hardship in the region make it politically challenging to commit scarce resources to the establishment of nonproliferation export controls. Even if more resources were directed to nonproliferation, economic instability in Central Asia has spawned an environment in which corruption has become the rule rather than the exception. Furthermore, while most officials in the region sympathize with the goals of nonproliferation, proliferation is largely seen as a U.S. problem.

Despite reasons for great pessimism and the likelihood that efforts to promote export control may have few immediate results, efforts by the United States to do so should not be abandoned. However, greater attention should be given to domestic realities in these states. The United States should promote the development of basic systems of export control that require minimal resources and that emphasize training of Customs officers and licensing. These states seldom engage in export of controlled commodities; therefore, rather than exposing officials from Central Asia to the U.S. system, step-by-step guidelines should be provided for establishing export control measures which correspond to their domestic situation and resource limitations. The United States should also work with officials of Central Asia in identifying dual-use and other equipment on their territories which are relevant to the proliferation problem. Efforts then can be directed at monitoring the sales and export activities of a limited number of firms. Finally, export control systems should be pitched in broader terms as providing these states with the ability to interdict contraband and as a potential source of revenue.
The collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent fragmentation of the vast Soviet nuclear fuel cycle and associated military-industrial complex has been a source of considerable concern for the West since 1991. The loss of centralized control over technologies, components, knowledge, and even entire weapons raised the very real danger that such materials might find their way on to the territories of states suspected of seeking weapons of mass destruction. Central to the Western response has been a renewed emphasis on the importance of supply-side mechanisms, and in particular the development of adequate mechanisms for controlling sensitive exports from the former Soviet states. This report focuses on the attempts of the Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to develop systems of nonproliferation export control.

The report is divided into four sections: the first addresses the proliferation threat presented by the region and its neighboring states; the second outlines the export control developments to date; the third identifies the impediments restricting the development of effective systems; and finally, policy recommendations for improving export control in the region are set forth.

The Proliferation Threat from Central Asia

The location of the Central Asian states renders them a potentially major source of weapons proliferation. Squeezed between two acknowledged nuclear powers (Russia and China), one inheritor state (Kazakhstan), two states of proliferation concern (India and Pakistan), and two aspiring nuclear powers (Iran and Iraq), the Central Asian states represent the logical geographical route linking supply with demand. The inadequacy of control over internal borders throughout the former Soviet Union means that effectively, sensitive material, technologies, and weapons components can move unimpeded throughout the former Soviet space and exit via Central Asia directly on to the territory of the proliferant states. The establishment of the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and its extension to include Kyrgyzstan, in reality only serves to confirm officially that control over internal borders is logistically unfeasible. A significant danger exists therefore, that the Central Asian states will emerge as key transshipment points for proliferation related materials, technology and equipment produced elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

In addition to the threat consequent on the geopolitical location of the Central Asian states, it should also be noted that a variety of sensitive items continue to exist on the territories of the region. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan have a long history of association with the former Soviet
nuclear complex. In Tajikistan, uranium is still mined at Adrasman, Chavisay-Yangiabad, Kyzyl-Dzhar, and Taboshar. Tajikistan’s major defense enterprise is the Zarya Vostoka factory located in Taboshar. The complex’s solid motor production plant is one of the largest and best equipped solid propellant ballistic missile motor production plants in the former Soviet Union.

In Uzbekistan, the principal facilities engaged in producing and processing uranium are operated by the Navoi Mining and Metallurgy Combine and located at Nurabad, Uchkuuduk, Zaf-Arabad and Zarafshan. In addition, a twenty megawatt research reactor is located at the Nuclear Physics Institute in Tashkent. The reactor houses eight kilograms of uranium-235 with fuel enriched to the ninety percent level. The Institute also produces and exports radioactive isotopes of high quality. Among the other high-tech facilities located in Uzbekistan are the Chkalov Aircraft Production Corporation, and the “Physics Sun” facility, where a uniquely powerful solar furnace is used to generate advanced materials with potential defense applications and to conduct research into the flight dynamics of high-speed missiles. Uzbekistan also inherited a number of space research enterprises from the FSU which were incorporated into the state space agency, “Uzbekkosmos,” in 1993: the agency specializes in satellite and space related technologies.

Most of Kyrgyzstan’s uranium mining and processing facilities are now no longer operating. The state’s main uranium processing plant in the state is located at Kara Balta. Mining has ceased at the complex but the mill is still operating to process Kazak uranium under the terms of a 1995 agreement. Additionally, the Ak-Tyuz mine continues to produce thorium, zirconium, scandium and other rare earth metals. Almost all of Kyrgyzstan’s major defense enterprises have now either ceased operating or converted to civilian production. Of the four Central Asian states therefore, only Turkmenistan would appear to possess nothing in the way of sensitive items on its territory.

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4 ITAR-TASS, October 24, 1995.
6 Uzbekistan inherited five significant space research enterprises from the USSR which were drawn under the umbrella of the State Space Agency, Uzbekkosmos, in 1993. See, FBIS-SOV-95-071, April 13, 1995, p. 97.
7 All information from the CNS Database.
Attempts to Create Systems of Export Control

Legal Basis

In Uzbekistan, the legal basis for the regulation of import and export activities is provided by three decrees—those of April 19, 1994; July 25, 1995; and March 31, 1996—of the three, only the second is of much relevance to the issue of nonproliferation. Entitled “On Measures For Future Liberalization and Improvement of Foreign Economic Activity,” this Cabinet of Minister's decree sets forth a list of items for which licenses must be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations subject to approval from the Cabinet of Ministers. Among the items listed in Annex 4 of the document are weapons and military equipment, items used for their production, uranium and other radioactive materials and items related to the production of radioactive materials. Annex 8 of the decree relates to the transit of goods through Uzbekistan. Unless, specifically approved by the Cabinet of Ministers, the transit of weapons, explosives and other military hardware, flying apparatuses, their components and related technologies, machine tools and machines designed for weapons manufacture is prohibited.

Annex 6, added to the decree in January 1997, regulates the transfer of know-how and technology. The Ministry of Labor is responsible for licensing the professional activities of individuals or groups engaged in scientific projects and professional activity abroad, while the State Committee for Science and Technology evaluates and approves licenses for the export of scientific research, know-how and inventions. It is also responsible for overseeing and approving cooperative research activities between Uzbek institutions and foreign parties.

In theory, therefore, the system requires exporters to apply for a license; this is then submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval. At this stage, the Cabinet of Ministers can request input from a number of state organs, the most important of which are the State Committee for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Defense for technical advice, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for input on political aspects of export. In practice, however, the degree of interagency coordination is minimal; indeed, neither the State Committee for Science and Technology nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has yet been called upon to assist in a license evaluation. Thus, it would be premature to speak of a functioning interagency licensing process similar to that found in Western states.

A second major weakness of the Uzbek system is the absence of control over dual-use items. Some confusion exists over the status of control on these items. Some Uzbek officials claimed that Uzbekistan had drawn up lists and adhered to these; others however, maintained that while not possessing its own lists, Uzbekistan adhered to established international lists of dual-use items.10 In

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9 Interview with Uzbek officials from the State Committee for Science and Technology and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21-24 July 1997, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
10 Interview with Uzbek Officials, 21-24 July 1997.
neither instance were officials able to provide more detailed information suggesting that licenses for such items had not been reviewed or that such items simply would not be controlled from a proliferation perspective. Thus, while Uzbekistan clearly has identified state agencies with responsibility for export control, it can only be considered to possess a "system" of nonproliferation export controls in the broadest sense of the term.

Kyrgyzstan's initial attempts to establish the legal basis for an export control system culminated in the promulgation of decree 121 of March 1993. Entitled "On Matters of Export Control Over Products, Materials, Equipment, Technologies, and Services Used in Creating Weapons of Mass Destruction and Missile Delivery Systems, this decree served to implement the Presidential Order 537 of November 1992. These documents outlined the aims of the Kyrgyz system and called for the creation of an Export Control Commission. Membership in the Commission was supposed to consist of representatives from the staff of the President, the State Committee for National Security and the Ministries of Trade, Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Industry, Agriculture and Health. Ultimately, the resources to support the work of the Commission were unavailable and the Commission never formed.\textsuperscript{11}

Subsequently, decree 121 was superseded by Resolution 56 of February 1996. This Resolution includes an appendix detailing lists of controlled items. These include weaponry, military technology, work and service related to military cooperation, explosives, nuclear materials, technology and equipment, machine tools and radioactive isotopes. Also included is a section which states that there will be regulation over dual-use items which have applications to missiles, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Detailed information on these items was to be contained in lists drawn up subsequently. However, the lists have not been completed although the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry and the Department of Science and New Technologies of the Ministry of Education report that they hope to complete the development of lists and a draft export control law before the end of 1997.\textsuperscript{12}

A major weakness of Resolution 56 is that it fails to outline the procedures for license evaluation, referring instead simply to cooperation between "relevant agencies." In theory, the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the coordinating body for all export control issues. Licenses are issued by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Industry in consultation with the Ministries of Internal Affairs, Health, Foreign Affairs and Defense, the Department of Science and New Technologies and the State Customs Inspectorate. In discussions with Kyrgyz officials, however, it became clear that this procedure had never actually been followed during the evaluation of a license application. Instead licensing decisions are typically made by

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Interview with Kyrgyz officials, 28-29 July 1997, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.}

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}
bureaucrats within the Ministry of Foreign Trade without consultation or by officials within the legislature who were granted a vague role in licensing by existing decrees. This situation has led to numerous scandals surrounding approval of licenses for the export Kyrgyz natural resources and to recognition of the need to reform the system to raise accountability. As noted above, efforts are currently underway to draft an export control law, although a lack of funding could inhibit its realization.

Tajikistan has made only rudimentary progress in establishing the legal basis for export controls. At a September 1996 conference on southern tier export controls, organized jointly by the U.S. and Turkish governments and held in Washington D.C., the Tajik delegation unveiled their government’s draft law on export controls relating to dual-use chemical items. Prepared as the "Decision of the Republic of Tajikistan Government No. 32 of January 12, 1996," the draft law is entitled "On Procedures for Controlling the Export of Chemical Substances and Technologies Which Are Intended for Peaceful Purposes but Can be Used for Developing Chemical Weapons." The document appears to be impressively thorough; it allocates responsibilities for the evaluation and approval of license applications (they are to be issued by the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, after consideration by the Tajik Government); it also specifies criteria for the granting or refusal of applications and even outlines procedures for obtaining end-user verification. However, there are two major problems connected with the Tajik draft law. First, it remains to be seen how Tajikistan, beset by massive social, economic and political problems, and in the midst of a highly destructive civil war intends to implement the law. Second, on closer inspection one finds that Tajikistan’s "Decision No. 32 of January, 1996," is virtually identical to Russia’s "Decision No. 50 of January 15, 1996", the major difference being that the words "Russian Federation" have been replaced with "Republic of Tajikistan." Thus, while the Tajik law was praised at the September conference as indicative of the degree of political commitment to nonproliferation export controls, and as a symbol of progress in the face of adversity, the reality seems less convincing.

Turkmenistan has taken no steps to develop the legal basis for a system of nonproliferation export controls. In Turkmenistan, export and import licenses are issued by the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations to "enterprises involving foreign investments ... and branches and missions of foreign firms." The goods for which licenses are required are outlined in a series of lists contained in a presidential decree of November, 1994. However, these lists do not contain reference to sensitive nuclear goods or technologies. Instead, these appear to be controlled by a government enactment of July 18, 1992. According to the Interfax newsagency — "Turkmenistan has banned

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14 Kyrgyz officials expressed hope that U.S. assistance could support the work of a cadre of experts who could give shape to an export control system in Kyrgyzstan.

importing and exporting some products on its territory. The list includes: weapons and ammunition, military hardware and materials and parts for their manufacture, explosives, nuclear materials, ionising sources, machinery and equipment for producing armaments, precious metals, alloys or articles made of them.¹⁶ No information is provided that explains what constitutes "nuclear materials" however. When questioned on this point, Turkmen delegates to the September 1996 conference in Washington D.C. were unaware of the existence of any lists identifying nuclear materials, and expressed the opinion that it was extremely unlikely that such lists had ever been prepared.

**Border Control and Customs Authority in Central Asia**

In general, control over 'external' (non-FSU) borders throughout Central Asia is significantly tighter than that exercised over 'internal' (FSU) borders.¹⁷ Russia continues to assist in the guarding of external borders in all states except Uzbekistan. In Kyrgyzstan, control over the Kyrgyz/Chinese border was delegated by the government of Kyrgyzstan to the border troops of the Russian Federation under a series of bilateral agreements signed in late 1992 and 1993.¹⁸ Approximately 2,000 Russian border troops are currently serving in Kyrgyzstan, concentrated mainly on the Chinese and Tajik borders.¹⁹ Indigenous border troops are considered highly unreliable by most experts.²⁰ The limited data that exists on the organization of Kyrgyz customs suggests that the service is seriously undermanned and underequipped, and that the corruption of officials is ubiquitous.²¹ The Kyrgyz Customs Inspectorate was established in 1992 and currently employs just over 1,000 officers distributed sparsely along the internal borders and concentrated at two crossing points on the border with China.²² One official from Kyrgyz Customs noted there is a great need to

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²² Ibid.
receive Western equipment and training if Kyrgyzstan can ever serve as a barrier to proliferation. He
maintained that at present Customs officers "could not distinguish butter from uranium."

Control over Turkmenistan's 900-1000 km Iranian border and its 750-850 km Afghan border is
governed by the provisions of three bilateral agreements concluded with Russia in 1992, 1993 and
early 1994. Under these, border control has become a dual responsibility, and a bi-national
command structure has been established, with a Turkmen commander and a Russian chief of staff.
The Turkmen border guard currently numbers approximately 5,000, supplemented by up to 1,000
Russians. The status of Russian troops in Turkmenistan was reaffirmed in January 1996 under
the terms of a bilateral protocol. The accord confirmed the number of Russians serving in
Turkmenistan at 1,000, and made provisions for the establishment of a staff of border troops
advisers to assist in the training of Turkmen border guards. Turkmenistan has a long history of
involvement in the guarding of its own borders, and the Turkmen Border Command is considered
among the most effective of all the FSU states. The Turkmen Customs Service was supposedly
formed in November 1991, however, the decree providing legal authority for the Turkmen State
Customs Service to assume control over all customs operations in the country was not issued until
July 1992. Moreover, it seems that by mid-July 1993, very little in the way of customs control
was actually operating in Turkmenistan, forcing President Niyazov to issue a further decree to
implement that of July 1992. Customs posts now exist on external borders and at Ashkhabad
airport. By January 1995, there were reportedly three functioning customs posts on the border with

23 Interview with Chief of Customs Control Division of Kyrgyzstan, 29 July 1997 in Bishkek.
24 For a general overview of Turkmen-Russian military agreements, see, Susan Clark, "The Central Asian States:
Defining Security Priorities and Developing Military Forces," in Michael Mandelbaum ed., "Central Asia and the
and protocols between Turkmenistan and Russia governing the mechanics of border control in Turkmenistan, see
82-83; "Decision Made on Dual Control of Border Forces", Ostankino Television First Program Network, 28 July
ITAR-TASS, 16 December 1993, printed in FBIS-SOV93-241, 17 December 1993, p. 82; "Russia, Turkmenistan
January 1996, p. 70.
25 "Turkmenistan State Customs Service Set Up," Turmenskaya Iskra, 29 July 1992, translated in BBC Summary
of World Broadcasts, 15 August 1992 (NEXIS).
26 "Turkmenistan State Customs Service Set Up," Turmenskaya Iskra, p. 77.
1992, p. 77.
1993, p. 53.
Iran. According to US customs experts, the control exercised by both customs officers and border guards stationed at Turkmenistan’s external borders is among the tightest in the region.

Tajikistan established its own border guard force in December 1992, but this contingent numbering approximately 2,000 - soon proved entirely inadequate to deal with the constant incursions by armed opposition groups from across the Afghan border. Hence, in August 1992, responsibility for control of Tajik borders was assumed by the border troops of the Russian Federation. Currently there are about 18,000 border guards serving under Russian command stationed in Tajikistan. Twelve thousand of these are Tajik conscripts, supported by the Russian contingent and approximately 2,000 troops from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Unlike the Russian border guards stationed in other parts of the FSU, those posted to serve in Tajikistan are almost exclusively professional soldiers rather than conscripts.

Customs control in Tajikistan consists of fifty six Customs Units, distributed primarily along the internal borders with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Border troops control the small number of border crossing points at the external borders with Afghanistan and China. Customs officials are also stationed at Dushanbe Airport, where all outgoing flights are inspected, but only those incoming flights originating from outside the CIS states are subject to the same procedure.

Uzbekistan remains the only Central Asian state capable of exercising control over its own borders. This task is rendered substantially easier by the fact that Uzbekistan’s only non-FSU border is the short (Approximately 110 km) border with Afghanistan. All border troops in Uzbekistan were placed under Uzbek jurisdiction by Presidential decree in March 1992 as part of a broader attempt to emphasize military independence from Russia. The strength of the Uzbek Border Troop Command is estimated at between 900 and 1,000.

The Uzbek State Committee on Customs was established by presidential decree in August 1992, with special emphasis being placed on the role of Customs in the fight against illegal drug


32 Interview with U.S. Customs officials, September 26 1996; see also, “Kazakstan Export Control,” unpublished trip report of U.S. Customs, op cit.


34 Ibid.


36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.


39 Ibid.


trafficking and arms smuggling. Uzbek border guards and customs officials are considered by most experts to be the best organized and most effective in Central Asia. Uzbekistan’s Customs organ has also established a Custom’s laboratory although its work will largely focus on drug interdiction rather than nonproliferation.

In some respects therefore, the degree of control exercised over Central Asia’s external borders remains comparable to that exercised under the former Soviet Union, with much of the equipment, technology and facilities still intact, and with a significant proportion of the manpower continuing to be provided by Russia. Control over Central Asia’s internal borders is tenuous at best. The only tightly guarded internal border is that between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, where a consistent Uzbek military presence has been maintained in order to prevent the Tajik civil war from seeping across the border. Borders over which control is very limited include those of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan with Kazakhstan, that between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and that between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. While functioning customs services have been established by all four states, and customs posts exist at least nominally on all borders throughout the region, in many cases these posts remain either unmanned or operate on a part time basis.

Impediments to Export Control Development

The essence of the problem facing the states of Central Asia is that many of the most basic and fundamental prerequisites for the establishment and maintenance of effective export control systems are almost completely lacking in all four states. Critical here is the existence of a stable political and economic environment. To establish and run an efficient system requires expertise, continuity of personnel and a rationalized and relatively sophisticated bureaucratic apparatus. It is worth highlighting in this context that from the president down, the Russian system of export controls

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45Interview with U.S. Customs officials, September 26 1996.
involves the participation of seventeen ministries, agencies and other administrative bodies; in the U.S., the figure would be substantially higher again. Moreover, for the system to function requires not just the existence of such bodies, but also clearly delineated areas of responsibility and chains of command. Whereas the Russian system has benefitted enormously from the inheritance of many of the elements of the former Soviet system, the Central Asian states have had to construct their organs of government largely from scratch. As a consequence, bureaucratic structures in these states simply lack the maturity necessary to sustain a system of any complexity. Tajikistan is clearly the most dramatic manifestation of political instability, with the central government consistently unable to extend its authority over broad swathes of its own territory. In the other three Central Asian states, a veneer of political stability has been maintained at the very highest level. Presidents Niyazov (Turkmenistan), Karimov (Uzbekistan) and Akayev (Kyrgyzstan) have all successfully preserved their hold on power throughout the post-independence period; however, in all four states, the turnover of ministerial officials has been phenomenal. In Tajikistan for example, between December 1995, and September 1996, ten of the seventeen heads of key ministries were replaced. In Uzbekistan, over the same period, ministerial turnover ran close to 50%. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan has had a different finance minister for virtually every year of its independent existence. Kyrgyz officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also noted that the development of export controls has been hindered by rapid personnel turnover.

The problems of political instability and bureaucratic immaturity have been compounded in all four Central Asian states by the severe economic dislocation experienced since independence. Inflation has also been a major problem, with annual rates running over 1,000% in both 1993 and 1994. In this climate of social and economic hardship, it would be politically hazardous in the extreme to commit scarce resources to the establishment and sustenance of nonproliferation export controls. This point was forcefully made by the Uzbek delegation at the recent Washington forum. While sympathizing with the broad goals of nuclear nonproliferation, and recognizing the significance of export controls, the delegates argued that given the magnitude of the economic problems currently confronting Uzbekistan, it would be virtually impossible to "sell" the idea of export controls at home.

As well as diminishing the pool of available resources, the serious economic problems facing these states have helped to foster an environment in which the corruption of officials has become the rule rather than the exception. This problem appears to be particularly acute in the Central Asian region. Only recently (July, 1995), President Akayev stated of his own administration, "The

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48 Presentation by Uzbek delegate at Washington forum, September 1996.
merging of criminal structures with state power has occurred. The mafia influences all decisions, including governmental ones, through the corrupt civil service.\textsuperscript{49} In a similar vein, President Niyazov spoke in April 1993, of the extensive involvement of officials from the Interior Ministry and Customs Service with a "major mafia grouping which has been operating with impunity for several years."\textsuperscript{50} While the evidential anecdotes could continue at length, most informed observers recognize that corruption has ceased to be a source of scandal in these states and has instead seeped into the very fabric of societal structures.\textsuperscript{51} The unofficial payment of customs officers to ensure the smooth passage of goods across has thus become a routine and accepted norm of behavior in the region. A major problem is simply that the wages of customs officials are inadequate, typically ranging from $20 to $30 a month throughout Central Asia.\textsuperscript{52} Some states have begun to offer incentives to officers who make seizures, but while this measure has led to more seizures of contraband, one Kyrgyz Customs official believes that 40 percent of contraband still finds its way into or out of the country.\textsuperscript{53} Even with the new incentives offered by some states, the lack of harsh punishments doled out for corruption and the subsistence wages paid to officials results in a system short on enforcement of export and import regulations.

\section*{Policy Recommendations}

Given the political and economic instability and the resulting corruption in the region, U.S. efforts to promote export control may have few immediate or tangible results. This does not necessarily mean that the task should be abandoned. It simply means that the domestic political situation of Central Asia must be taken into account and that resources should be targeted with these specifics in mind. The government to government conferences and seminars at which presentations on the U.S. system of export control are offered have been of limited utility as they often have served to confuse officials who are new to the field of export control or engaged the wrong officials altogether.\textsuperscript{54} A more useful approach would be to offer concrete guidelines to states of the region for developing a basic system of export control. For most of these states it would be unrealistic to expect that major resources at multiple governmental agencies should be set aside for nonproliferation export control when there are only a few enterprises engaged in export of controlled commodities.

\textsuperscript{49}Ustingov, Michael, "Kyrgyzstan" unpublished paper, December 1995.
\textsuperscript{50}"Dismissal Follows Mafia Exposure," FBIS-SOV-93-063, 5 April 1993, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{51}Personal communication with U.S. Customs officials, September 26, 1996.
\textsuperscript{52}This was a figure provided by officials in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, July 1997.
\textsuperscript{53}Interview with Kyrgyz Chief of Customs Control Division, State Customs Inspection, 29 July 1997.
\textsuperscript{54}Uzbek and Kyrgyz officials who have attended export control forums in the United States often return perplexed about the U.S. system. Officials from Uzbekistan were rightfully confused and amused by the participation of the F.B.I. at an export control meeting because the presentation dealt with hostage negotiation and nuclear terrorism which seemed to them both irrelevant and unrelated to export control in general.
Because Central Asian states are most likely to contribute to proliferation as transit points, more efforts should be directed at enhancing controls at exit points—external borders, airports and ports. The states of the region are most concerned with interdicting drug smuggling but assistance programs could link anti-narcotic and nonproliferation activities. The United States could also offer measures for detecting corruption if it has not permeated to the highest levels. Finally, the Customs agencies in many states of Central Asia lack training in recognizing proliferation-related articles, including radioactive materials. If an item is seized because it is not recognized or properly labeled, it is not clear that these states have the expertise to quickly analyze materials or identify equipment which might be dual-use in nature (e.g., machine tools).

A second step would be to work with these states in developing awareness of the materials, equipment and know-how on their territories which are relevant to the proliferation problem. Officials from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan admit that they lack both specific information on the possible location of dual-use equipment on their territories and familiarity with multilateral control lists. Once an assessment has been made, enterprises with controlled items can be made aware of their obligations to acquire licenses before exporting. In other words, rather than drafting regulations that may or may not come to the attention of enterprises, the states of Central Asia should make an effort to reach out to the handful of enterprises with controlled items over their territory and exercise tight control over the export activities.

Because some states believe that proliferation is largely an American problem, the U.S. must convince these states that creation of an export control system will not unduly sap resources and that their will be tangible benefits to creating effective export controls. Most of the states of Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are anxious for U.S. assistance and investment but assistance has not been effectively linked to the develop of nonproliferation export controls. The states are aware that nonproliferation is an important issue to the U.S. and have therefore moved to establish a nuclear weapons free zone as a token gesture. Officials in the region, however, fail to see that export controls might gain even more favor with the United States since it would result in more than just words.

Finally, for those states, such as Kyrgyzstan who are ready to move forward, resources should be provided for developing the necessary expertise to support an export control system. Efforts should be directed at establishing a small cadre of experts within each state of Central Asia who can develop a system which is not unduly complex or resource intensive. Because these states lack adequate technical expertise and information about end-users for evaluating licenses, the U.S. could promote the establishment of regional centers or provide information services and databanks to assist state bureaucrats in making licensing decisions.

Interview with Uzbek and Kyrgyz officials, 21-29 July 1997.
In conclusion, the states of Central Asia have taken only the most preliminary steps towards developing export controls and it is likely to take many years together with greater regional stability before effective export control systems are in place. Before any significant work in this direction begins, the states of the region must be convinced that developing export controls will have benefits aside from just supporting U.S. nonproliferation goals. To date only Kyrgyzstan seems to be somewhat interested in taking concrete actions. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, have hardly placed export control on the political agenda and continue to insist that they have little need to develop such mechanisms. Thus, any movement towards the development of export control in these states hinges upon both a concern over proliferation as a security issue (or perhaps preventing unlawful exports since it can result in economic losses) and second the ability to implement a system if there is concern. Unfortunately, these basic prerequisites have not been adequately met. Thus, in the short-term, there is little reason to expect that these states can prevent the flow of technology and material through the region. Assistance, however, may have benefits over the long-term if resources can be targeted to take into account the likelihood that these states will serve as transshipment points rather than major exporters of weapons-related items and if the states of Central Asia believe that there will be political and economic benefits to developing export controls.