AGENDA

- Introduction
- Assumptions
- Ground Rules
- Background on the issue (What is the question?)
- Challenge of major points
- Challenge Conclusion
- Further Analysis, Comments and Questions

**Ready? Let’s have FUN with foreign policy !!**
ASSUMPTIONS / GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

• You understand the issues surrounding the Rogun and Kambarata 1 projects
• You know who the IMU and the Taliban are, as well as the basic issues surrounding Central Asian concerns regarding the post-2014 security environment
• You have a general understanding of Central Asian Natural Resource Issues (oil, gas, water, land)
• You are familiar with Uzbekistan’s former role as the administrative center of the Central Asian states within the USSR and how Uzbekistan views itself in that context (and its aspirations)
• You know what the SCO and CSTO are – and their relative importance
• The status of the UZB military in relation to other CA nations
• You are familiar with the New Silk Road Initiative and the NDN
• You have a basic understanding of the US’s role in Central Asia, and in particular, you understand Russian and Chinese influences (Manas, $1B)
• You know what EDA is and the issues surrounding UZB
RULES / GUIDELINES

• I am not the “expert” on Central Asia. I am a motivated student of Central Asia. I expect you to challenge me and tell me when I’m wrong

• If anyone knew the real answer to this question, we wouldn’t be writing a policy paper on it trying to figure it out; don’t be afraid to suggest something

• We’ll use the “talking stick” method. We don’t move to the next person until the speaker feels like everyone understands their point; I enforce civility

• Remember you are on the record; we are NOT under Chatham House Rules

• I need a notetaker, volunteer?

• Since we are on camera, be sure to refer to my work as brilliant at least once if you get up to speak.

• Let’s have some fun! Policy and analysis is supposed to be FUN for geeks like us! Embrace your inner policy wonk!
A meeting between Uzbek President Islam Karimov and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin in April of 2013 outwardly appeared to be all smiles: Agreements were signed, and an ostensibly positive meeting between both parties ended with promises for cooperation. The trajectory of the two states’ relationship underscores a possible shift in Uzbek policy towards a more bilateral-based foreign platform rather than participation in multilateral, international organizations in Central Asia. However, UZB doesn’t seem interested in aligning itself with Chinese or Western alliances either. Tashkent’s recent departure from the CSTO preceding this meeting in Moscow illustrates such political maneuvering. Therefore, an undercurrent of tension between the two states in the weeks and months leading up to the meeting, hardly went unnoticed. Thinly veiled political jabs – Putin was quoted as saying that President Karimov has a “very subtle sense of the situation there”, referencing the security situation in Afghanistan – and the Russian issuance of a gas bill highlighting Uzbekistan’s debts to the Federation (a Russian newspaper observed this as dispensing a bill to a “malicious defaulter”) constituted the icy undertones amid the most recent meeting between the presidents. To complicate things further, the Russian Federation recently reached a tentative agreement with Uzbekistan’s rival neighbor, Tajikistan, in an attempt to extend $200 million dollars in military aid in return for prolonging the lease on the Russian 201st military base, until 2042.
THE QUESTION

• What in God’s name is Uzbekistan up to?
• Why is this important?
  • We have to make recommendations to POLICY folks on what they should do – especially on what I NEED them to do for me
  • We have to start thinking now about the resources we’ll need a year from now to build and create programs and training that meet both US and UZB needs.
  • Most people can’t pronounce Kajakilakastan correctly – if we can’t get it right, no one can. They are looking at us to tell them what to do.
  • We know what’s up with KAZ, TJK, KGZ, TKM .. UZB is the Wild Card. In this business, you get paid to worry about Wild Cards.
• What started all of this……
  • UZB formally withdraws from the CSTO (again), but then the next month gets all cuddly with President Putin. What does that mean and is it important? Is UZB adopting a policy of aggressive bi-lateralism, active neutrality, or is this just business as usual
MAJOR POINTS

• Karimov’s health and the issue of succession are part of the equation
• UZB doesn’t want to belong to Russia’s exclusive sphere of influence
• UZB wants to balance Russian influence with China and the West
• The US will not be UZB primary partner. The US will be in third place
• UZB will continue to want US assistance in specific areas – especially in security, security assistance, professionalization and training, transportation and logistics
• UZB will not go to war over the Rogun Dam – but it will be incredibly ugly and the US, EU, and China will offer major financial support to keep tensions low. Russia will also offer to step in and play the role of peacemaker, which Karimov (if alive) will reject. He will, however, take their money.
• UZB would like to have a stronger US partnership, but rightly understands that the US probably won’t commit at the level UZB needs to fully extricate itself from Russia’s influence
CONCLUSIONS

• UZB is moving towards (aggressive) bi-lateralism, and not positive neutrality.
• UZB will develop closer ties with China
• There is a place for continued US presence, but for once, we have to be satisfied as the third party and not vie for dominance. This is a US policy shift because, although the US has always considered CA to be an economy of force mission, we are not used to thinking of ourselves as an outsider.
• UZB will continue to want the US to provide technical assistance and exchanges on leadership professionalization at all levels, doctrine, strategy, and integration with NATO and the UN – and UZB will continue to NOT ask for this type of cooperation from Russia and China.
• UZB will continue to aspire to become the regional hegemon; this will continue to cause friction
• UZB will continue to eschew multi-lateral events with its neighbors
• UZB will accept some cooperation with Russia on regional security issues – especially terrorism-related
RUSSIA AND UZB …..AGREE?

Karimov still needs Putin and Russia for economic development projects and security related assistance, while Putin still needs Karimov’s Uzbekistan to buffer a potential proliferation in VEO’s from Afghanistan and South Asia. The relationship between Uzbekistan and Russia is likely to continue under bilateral framework, but any meaningful Uzbek-Russian rapprochement in the near future is unlikely, as Moscow wants a submissive (or at least happily cooperative) Karimov regime participating in it’s version of force projection schemes: a desire that Tashkent has so far been able to curb. The US can best help UZB by not trying too hard to force the situation in one way or another, in this case, too much engagement could be counterproductive. Nonetheless, we should continue to offer any and all assistance consistent with current goals and plans– while carefully weighing the effect of that assistance on UZB’s neighbors.
QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS