

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2011 7:17 AM
To: H
Subject: FW: Central Asia

Fyi – all things you know.

From: Mark Schneider [mailto:]
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2011 6:06 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Re: Central Asia

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Here are some quick notes:

Uzbekistan . Karimov is a highly unpredictable leader, adept at playing off outside powers like US and Russia against each other. He is capable of switching his allegiance without notice. Karimov trusts no-one: he will try to extract maximum concessions from the US and will surrender very little – especially in the area of human rights or democratisation – in return. Reliance on the Karimov regime for the NDN is a seriously risky step. Progress on human rights is non-existent – symbolic releases are no sign of change of heart by the region. Corruption is rampant. USG should:

- demand concessions on all basic freedoms – assembly, religion, political belief and others – which remain harshly circumscribed. Such restrictions further intensify resentment of the regime and radicalisation of a significant part of the population. He should be pressed to undertake some immediate steps and a timeline for some more substantive reforms.
- retain the current Mil-Mil restrictions: lifting risks the possibility of USG-trained or equipped forces being used against the Uzbek population.

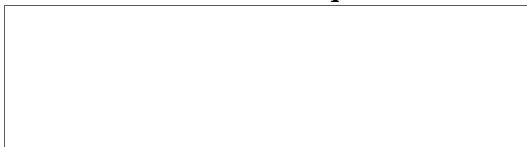
Tajikistan is rapidly running out of time. It is following a quiet but steady downward path, and is already operating at a low level of functionality. Though there is no indication of anything akin to an Arab Spring type outburst, no observer would be surprised if this happened in Tajikistan. Failure to push for real change – not hazy commitments to future improvements – will further increase the danger of systemic collapse or violent regime change. USG should:

- Press President Rakhmon urgently to broaden his government, bringing in genuinely independent and non-violent opposition figures. He should immediately open dialogue with any Muslim or Islamist group that publicly commits itself to non-violent and legal political struggle, and crack down on the most blatant forms of budgetary theft.
- Raise the issue of the involvement of very high level leaders in narcotics transshipment from Afghanistan

Though the Secretary will not be visiting Kyrgyzstan, please pay increased attention to southern Kyrgyzstan. The calm in the south is superficial, claims by the international community that it has stabilised the situation are wildly premature. Ethnic Kyrgyz nationalism has become deeply embedded in the southern psyche. Ethnic Uzbeks, whose plight is largely ignored, even by Uzbekistan, remain demoralised and the state has failed to present any convincing evidence to back its claims that Kyrgyz citizens of Uzbek descent has been trained in guerrilla camps since June 2010 and are no coming back to take revenge. (Senior counter terror figures have in fact denied earlier such reports). This does, however, increase tension and the image of Uzbeks as an existential threat to southern Kyrgyzstan. The potential for violence again in the south is significant--violence organized by state authorities under regional control.

best, Mark

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