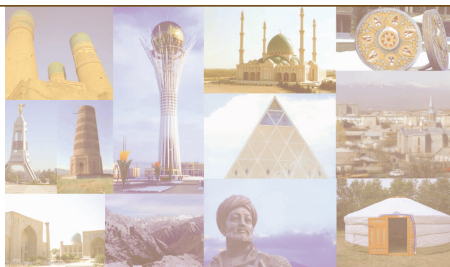


# CENTRAL ASIA OBSERVATORY

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CASA ASIA

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UZBEKISTAN



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Bimonthly article

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## Highlights

The period May-June 2009 in Uzbekistan, like the previous period, was once again politically normal in terms of domestic and foreign policy routine, with the general atmosphere being one of relative calm. Foreign policy was perhaps a little more active vis-à-vis Spain.

## Internal affairs

On 26 May, terrorist acts took place in Andijan and Khanabad. These crimes were committed by two or three bandits who attacked the militia guarding point at the entrance to Khanabad, right on the border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Shots were fired and a policeman was injured and one bandit killed. On the same day, a suicide bomber blew himself up in Andijan, killing one policeman and injuring several citizens.

The Uzbek authorities claim that the group penetrated the Uzbek cities from the territory of Kyrgyzstan. By and large, Uzbek media did not cover the event at all and no official statement was issued concerning the turmoil that was unleashed in the country, with the result that the population of Uzbekistan and the international community still remain poorly informed about these events. These developments once again attest to the undemocratic Soviet-type political system that exists in Uzbekistan. To demonstrate that the event was not a repetition of the Andijan terrorist insurgency of May 2005, President Karimov ordered the prosecutor general Rashitjon Kadyrov to hold an open hearing of the criminal case.

On 24 June, President Karimov signed a decree on the introduction of new civil passports. According

to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation (December 1944) and the decision adopted by the Montreal Assembly of the ICAO (2004), member states should provide for the introduction of biometric passports no later than 2010.

## Foreign and International Policy

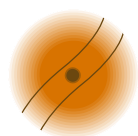
On 26 May, President Karimov began an official visit to Brazil, stopping off in Madrid on the way for a meeting with the Spanish king, Juan Carlos. It should be noted that in 2006 the government of Uzbekistan decided to broaden cooperation with Spain and in February 2009 a programme to further develop cooperation with this country was adopted. During President Karimov's previous visit to Spain in January 2003, the mayor of Madrid presented him with the Golden Key to the city, symbolizing that the Spanish capital is always open to Tashkent.

In the economic sphere, there are a number of joint Uzbek-Spanish companies such as "Texkominvest" (trade), "Maxam Central Asia" and "Maxam Uzbekistan" (chemical industry), "Balkan Eksport Import Asia" (production of construction materials). The Spanish companies "Preparados Alimenticios" and "Atlas Consorcio" (alternative energy technologies) also operate in Uzbekistan.

The creation of the Association of Spanish-Uzbek friendship Clavijo-Amir Timur in 2000 was marked by the organization of an event to celebrate the 600-year anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the state of Amir Timur and the Kingdom of Spain.

On 27-29 May 2009, President Karimov visited Brazil at the invitation of the President Lula da Silva. During his visit, the two presidents discussed relations

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between their countries, regional security in Central Asia, the situation in Afghanistan, processes underway in Latin America, the global financial crisis, reforming the UN, the fight against terrorism, extremism and drug traffic, and nuclear weapon-free zones in Central Asia and Latin America.

The two presidents also discussed the activation of bilateral trade-economic cooperation in such spheres as aviation, machinery, petro-chemical production, textile, agricultural production, tourism, transport, geology and the production of construction materials.

In the wake of the meeting, agreements between the two governments were signed on technical cooperation, economic and trade cooperation and cultural cooperation, among others. President Karimov expressed Uzbekistan's support of Brazil's aspiration to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

On 3 June President Karimov received the US Ambassador in Uzbekistan Richard Norland. The President noted that the meeting provided a good opportunity for exchanging opinions on bilateral and multilateral cooperation of mutual interest. During the meeting, cooperation between Uzbekistan and America in the spheres of regional security, trade and economic partnership, and the implementation of prospective projects in humanitarian and other fields were discussed.

In mid-June three events took place in the post-Soviet space, attracting the attention of the international community.

On 14 June 2009 the summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) took place in Moscow, at which the leaders of the member states adopted the decision to form the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces (CRRF) of the CSTO. Belarus and Uzbekistan refrained, however, from adhering to this decision, reflecting once again the lack of consensus required

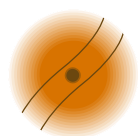
to turn the alliance into a full-fledged military block. The summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held on 15-16 June 2009 in Yekaterinburg (Russia), symbolizing a new step in the Organization's development from a simple border cooperation forum to a sophisticated semi-global -by geographical extension- geopolitical adventure. The SCO's progress is reminiscent of the classical philosophical law, *from simplicity to complexity*. Interestingly, the SCO summit coincided with the start-up summit in Yekaterinburg of the new "G", the G-4, made up of the BRIC states - Brazil, Russia, India, and China. In light of this G-4 meeting, Karimov's recent visit to Brazil would appear to be quite timely.

From 27 to 28 June, the US Congressman Eni Faleomavaega visited Uzbekistan and met with the deputy premier Ergash Shaismatov and foreign affairs minister Vladimir Norov. According to official announcements, the goal of the visit was to raise the awareness of the US Congress on the importance of the Central Asian region as a whole. Faleomavaega was the first US congressman to visit Uzbekistan in the last four years.

On 2 July, a Spanish delegation headed by foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos visited Uzbekistan. This visit will be covered in our next two-monthly analysis. Suffice to say it was very productive and successful.

## **Economy and business enterprise**

On 18 June 2009, Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, managing director of the IMF, discussed the challenges Uzbekistan faces in its efforts to ensure sustainable growth. He said: "I am very satisfied with my first visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan and thank the people of Uzbekistan, President Karimov, First Deputy Prime Minister Azimov, Governor of the Central Bank Mulladjanov and other senior officials for their hospitality and fruitful discussions. Our meetings focused on the challenges the country faces in its efforts



to ensure sustainable growth. I also had valuable exchanges today with the members of the senate and representatives of media."

"In my meeting with President Karimov, I welcomed the economy's resilience to the global crisis, which reflects largely the authorities' prudent policies that enabled them to accumulate considerable resources to support growth in this period. We discussed the longer-term priority for Uzbekistan which is to improve the standards of living of the population. We also exchanged views on the global crisis and the international economic situation that is likely to prevail after the crisis is over. In this context, we discussed the role of regional cooperation in an increasingly globalized world."

"I assured that the IMF stands ready to support the Republic of Uzbekistan in its efforts to reduce the impact of the global crisis in the short term and strengthen the medium-term goal of sustaining higher and broad based economic growth", he concluded.

It would appear, however, that Strauss-Kahn's highly "positive" evaluation of Uzbekistan's economic achievements is geared to prevailing on the Uzbek authorities to adopt a more positive attitude towards the West, especially in the sphere of ever-increasing Western activities in the region.

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