CHAPTER 3
Turkmenistan’s Military Co-operation and Foreign Relations with Russia.
Turkmenistan declared its sovereignty in Aug. 1990 and became a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States CIS on Dec. 21, 1991, together with ten other former Soviet republics (Georgia joined later). Turkmenistan territory is large, second only in Central Asia to that of Kazakhstan, but it has long borders with Iran and Afghanistan and access to the Caspian Sea. (Lena Johnson, 1998, p.7.)

Turkmenistan is one of the world's leading natural-gas producers. Russia is Turkmenistan's biggest market. Turkmenistan's positive treatment of Russian minority population has created conducive atmosphere for stable relations with Russia. Russian interest centers on the fact that Turkmenistan is a large country in the southern periphery of the former Soviet Union, of great economic potential, rich in natural resources, evenly distributed population and a watershed between Islamic fundamentalism and the Slav world. Moreover, its role in the strategic defence cordon of the Russian federation remains paramount.

During the initial years after independence, Turkmenistan mainly fell in line with Moscow and joined the CIS. However, it had early demonstrated a preference for bilateral relations with Russia instead of multilateral CIS cooperation. In 1993, it declared itself a 'neutral country' and in December 1995 the UN General assembly recognized Turkmenistan's status of 'permanent neutrality'. As a consequence, Turkmenistan distanced itself from most multilateral cooperative efforts. President Niyazov saw the potential in exploiting the huge resources of gas and oil in his country. Firmly determined to develop its economic potential, Turkmenistan adopted a policy to attract foreign investors for exploration and extraction of oil and gas and to find routes for export to external market. (Rashid Meredov, 2005, p.1)

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, both the Russian Federation and the new states of Central Asia felt the need to cooperate in the military sphere. Both sides have different reasons for this and they identify some common threats to their national security. Cooperation in the military field between the Russian Federation and the Central Asian states was realized through bilateral agreements. In a
geopolitical context like that of Central Asia, it’s quite natural that Russia seeks all possible ways of establishing friendly relations with all Central Asian countries. Both sides have common security concerns like the prevention of the spread of military conflicts in Central Asia, and the possible growth of Islamic fundamentalism. Through its military doctrines, Russia appeared to have taken upon itself the defense of external borders of the former Soviet Union. Russian security experts pointed out that the former Soviet borders were well fortified and guarded. Russia’s new borders were not formalized through treaties. Several important radar bases and other facilities crucial for defense were located on the territory of the other Soviet republics. It was not easy to create such systems on Russian territory in a shorter period. Security of external borders of the CIS as well as the maintenance of peace and stability in the entire region came to be regarded as being crucial for the maintenance of Russian security. (Jyotsna Bakshi, Oct 2000, p. 72)

For the Russian Federation, it’s important that the Central Asian states remain within CIS common military operational and technical standards: planning, codes, service regulations, military equipment and arms. In pursuing its strategic aims Russia is willing to offer support to Central Asian states. There is also a greater willingness on the part of Russia to implement policy on a bilateral basis rather than only on a multilateral one. (Martha Brill Olcott, 1997, p.7) Russia has shown its interest in forging close cooperation with the Central Asian states. It has argued that the perceived increase in the threat of Islamic extremism in Central Asia, supported by forces outside the CIS gives Russia and Central Asian states a common security concern that serves as a basis for closer security cooperation. This policy has increasingly been pushed by Russian authorities since August 1999, when the Russian military operation began in Dagestan. The CIS military exercises Southern Shield-2000 took place in March-April 2000 in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan aimed at countering terrorist invasion. (Micheal A.Smith, 2000, p.13)

In May 2000, the first foreign visits made by Vladimir Putin after his inauguration as president were to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan with the aim of
reestablishing closer relations with the Central Asian countries. In his engagement with the region, Putin's key claim was that, as demonstrated in Chechnya, only Russia has the capacity and will to battle the threats of international terrorism and Islamic extremists, which are also the dominant. Security concerns for the Central Asian governments Putin's strategy of focusing on the threat of international terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism has been well received in Central Asia. ("Can Russia Sustains its Dominance in Central Asia?", (Online: Web), Accessed on 7th Sept, 2007, www.ingentaconnect.com/content/sage/sdi/2001/00000032/00000002/art00009, p.2)

Another point that increases the importance of Central Asia for Russia is that the Central Asian zone of the CIS is located in the so called arc of instability that includes the southern borders of the Commonwealth and separates Russia from countries raising security concerns such as Afghanistan and China. Thus political military cooperation with the countries of this "buffer region" in the interests of long term prevention of real and potential threats along the southern borders is to Russia's benefit. The necessity for joint efforts to settle the Tajik Civil War in the 1990s was another reason for cooperation between the Russian Federation and Central Asian states. The issue of a Tajik settlement was a subject of constant consultation between Russia and Central Asian states at the highest political levels including ministries of foreign affairs, defense, border guards and other departments. In accordance with an August 1992 agreement between Russia and four Central Asian states, a twenty five thousand strong Russian-Central Asian force was created to protect the Tajik-Afghan border and protect Tajikistan from the threat of Islamic militants. (Ibid, p.3)

Russian military involvement in the Central Asian states has been regarded by the latter as an opportunity to postpone the full development of their national armies. So, the Russian army holds a very strong position fully equal to that of the local armies. While highly expensive, this military presence presents Russia with certain advantages in the realm of security policy, to impede the rise of local conflicts, and the rise of extremism. The Central Asian military establishment remained heavily dependent on Russian support. Few Central Asians became officers in the Soviet
Army, so officer corps of Central Asian armies is largely staffed by Russian officers. (Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, 1998, p.13)

The armed forces of the Central Asian states are still in their development stage. Indeed they are fractured remnants of the former Soviet Army and so lack a consolidated command structure that would include control, communication, provision, mobilization, personnel training and military-industrial complex. A New system of military management has already been established in these states. Also new military doctrines and policies are being devised. In addition to all these, laws on national defense and military service have been adopted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. (Vyacheslav Ya. Belokrenitsky, 1994, p. 1103)

Threat to Security

The Central Asian States typically declare that they base their foreign policies on the principles of peaceful co-existence, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, respect for each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and permanence of existing state borders. The military doctrines of the Central Asian states categorically renounce war as a means of resolving international and inter-state problems. They further declare that the primary goal of foreign policy is to avert military conflicts through preventive diplomacy which seeks to preclude or overcome the causes of tensions and contradictions. (Rustam Burnashev 2001, p. 143.)

Notwithstanding the absence of a threat of any large-scale aggression, the countries of Central Asia can be subjected to powerful pressure from existing or potential conflicts in the region and surrounding areas. Conflicts, even if they erupt within the boundaries of a single state, will constitute a general problem for the region as a whole, since refugees and combatants will cross into the territories of neighbouring states. Virtually all the ethnic groups that might be drawn into potential conflict reside on the territory of several states in Central Asia. The state borders here are more porous that national security interests would ask for. Transforming the old
Soviet administrative borders into state boundaries with the entire infrastructure is very expensive. Moreover, the demarcation of boundaries can lead to new conflicts where ethnic communities living in border areas are physically divided - a practice that dates back to the Stalin era.

The states in this region are far from sharing a consensus on a whole number of questions. The artificial character of state boundaries could play a destabilizing role. The territorial disputes could come to the fore if extremist, nationalist, or religious-nationalist groups were to come to power. Indeed, representatives of several movements have already announced their territorial claims against neighbouring states. Resources add another explosive dimension to the border question. Thus, the likelihood of conflict will increase if mineral deposits in border areas are opened up for exploitation. Moreover, the shortage of water resources can further aggravate tensions, particularly in Uzbekistan's relations with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. (Ibid, p. 144)

Another potentially dangerous factor derives from the conflict and enmity between nationalities and classes. Although it has thus far been possible to measure and prohibit the extreme outbursts, there are periodic increases in tensions between Uzbeks and Tajiks, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. For sometime, the authorities have been able to keep the situation under control, but interested forces could seek to provoke dissatisfaction and push the ethnic and territorial question to the fore. Important as the foregoing factors are, the most serious threat to security is internal and concentrated in the socio-economic and political spheres. The states here face a crisis because of rising social and economic tensions, mass unemployment and impoverishment of the population, and growing conflicts among ethnic and clan groups. The task of maintaining internal stability under the prevailing conditions can reinforce authoritarian tendencies in the existing regimes. Moreover, internal threat can come from a different strata that has gone underground and adopted radical methods of political struggle - to a large degree because of the lack of political culture and opportunities to conduct an open struggle. (Ibid, pp144-145)
There are also threats originating from Central Asia's Southern neighbour. The Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests and Iran's test of an intermediate-range ballistic missile in 1998 changed the situation in the Central Asian region, which now finds itself almost surrounded by powers which possess nuclear weapons and missiles. The Central Asian states have nothing to counter this potential threat, which, although not directed against them, may still confront them with the task of containment, all the more so as further relations with the countries concerned are unpredictable. (Vitaly V. Naumkin, 1999, p.89.)

Besides traditional threats to the security of the Central Asian states, there are many new menaces, challenges and risks, prominent among which is the traffic in drugs. The Central Asian states are increasingly affected by the illicit production and transport of drugs. Government bodies are incapable of keeping the situation under control, which is made still worse by the fact that drug dealing is often used to achieve particular political aims. The money received is used to finance illegal political and military activities, first of all to purchase arms, fund armed groups or support extremist groups working for the destabilization of society. (Ibid, p.92) According to Russian experts, drug dealing in the CIS countries has very close links with the criminal world and organized criminal groups on the one hand and with separatist and extremist movements and their leaders on the other. Turkmenistan is another important link in the drug traffic from Asia to Europe. It has also a long-standing tradition of drug consumption. The drugs used there are either indigenous or imported from Afghanistan and Iran. A worrying development is the dramatic increase in the area of opium poppy plantations on irrigated land in the Karakum area. Until recently, Turkmenistan was only a purveyor of semi-processed narcotics, but local processing is now on the increase. (Ibid, p. 93)

Role of Russia and the CIS

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that signaled the end of the Soviet Union came into existence in its present form on 21 December 1991 at Alma
Ata in Kazakhstan with eleven of the former Soviet republics joining it (excluding the Baltic States and Georgia). According to Ajay Patnaik "since then its evolution has been turbulent, mired in confusion as regards its objective and the future shape it ought to take. The fact that it survived the early scepticism and distrust in the face of a tide of nationalism that sealed the fate of the USSR is a testimony to its logical progress. It survived not because it was a transitional arrangement to facilitate a 'civilized divorce', but because without it the successor states are doomed to longer years of hardship and would be left to fend for themselves in an uncertain world. Despite whatever grievances the former republics felt towards the all encompassing union, there remains a positive feeling about the economic advantages this vast space offered, from natural resources to market, from security to world status. The dependence on Russia is even more in the case of some and the CIS provides a framework through which a less unequal and less exploitative relation with Russia can be worked out. (Ajay Patnaik, 1995, p. IX.)

CIS Collective Security Pact

The collapse of the Soviet Union caused the loss of the united Soviet force structure. By 1990, the integrity of these forces had already faced a serious challenge when a number of republics declaring their sovereignty asserted their right to create national armies. In December 1991, the first CIS summit in Minsk recognized the situation and left it to the individual countries to decide whether to control their conventional armed forces independently or transfer them to a CIS command structure. Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova chose to establish their own forces. Others seemed more favourable to the idea of a joint CIS command, but very soon their positions changed. Even Russia decided to create its own national army, although it would have dominated the joint command. As the goal for the armed forces structure shifted from "unified to joint", the next step was to create a CIS collective security system. (Shireen T. Hunter, 1992, p. 112.)
The Treaty on Collective Security was signed during the May 15, 1992 summit of the heads of CIS member states in Tashkent. The original signatories were Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The treaty aimed at ensuring military and political stability during the transition period. Its main objective was to prevent the Afghan conflict from spreading to Central Asia. Article 1 and 2 of the treaty commit the signatories to refrain from the use of force in their relations and to consult with each other on all important security matters. Article 3 establishes a collective security council consisting of the heads of participating states and the commander of the CIS joint armed forces. Article 4 establishes the principle of mutual assistance in the case of aggression. Article 5 through Article 11, address the question of military coordination to repulse aggression, stress implementing the treaty's provisions in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, and provide for a treaty life of five years, after which it is subject to renewal. The political and executive organ of the pact is the collective Security Council and its secretariat, which is headed by the secretary general. (J H Saat, 2005, p.3)

At the end of 1993, a number of factors led Russia to conclude that strengthening the CIS collective security pact would provide some advantages rather than limiting its freedom of action. First, it would enable Russia to "avail herself of a legal basis for interference". Second, the creation of an integrated defence system within the context of the CIS collective security pact can reduce the cost of military reforms in Russia. In particular, part of military equipment could be transferred, or, sold at reduced prices to Russian allies. (Shiren T. Hunter, op.cit, p. 113.) When the CIS was established, no provisions were made for the manner in which Soviet-era property, including military installations and equipment, should be divided among the successor states. (Ibid, p.119.) The initial declaration of independence and the formation of the CIS included specific declarations on the control of armed forces and nuclear weapons designed to reassure the international community. Nuclear weapons are generally divided into two categories: strategic and tactical. The protocol of the agreement on the CIS signed at Minsk and Alma Ata (December 1991) by eleven
republics attempted to determine succession of the military leadership and established
the coordinating committee of Councils of Head of State (CHS) as the Supreme CIS
body. The four nuclear weapons states - Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine -
signed agreements establishing unity of control over strategic weapons. They agreed
on no first use, unified strategic armed forces for collective security and joint
decisions on nuclear matters. Belarus and Ukraine agreed on the elimination of
nuclear weapons from their territory and on coordinating until then with the Russian
Federation. It was also decided to ratify nuclear agreements. Belarus and Ukraine
agreed to join the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968 and the
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) agreements as non-nuclear states.
Kazakhstan and Russia were to retain nuclear weapons. The Russian President was
entrusted with the charge of the nuclear management. (Anuradha M. Chenoy, 1995, p.81.)
Subsequently, however, Kazakhstan also transferred its nuclear weapons to Russia
and joined the NPT.

After disintegration of the Soviet Union and the formation of the CIS, army
units located on territory of Union Republics went over to their jurisdiction, and arms,
military equipment and infrastructure went over to the ownership of the new states.
The strongest military groupings were disposed in the western part of the USSR;
three military districts in Ukraine, Belorussian Military District in Belarus, Baltic
Military District in Baltic countries and Transcaucasus military district on the
territory of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The so called interior districts that
were manned poorly and not outfitted with the newest weapons were mainly in
RSFSR (Russia) territory. Troops stationed in Germany and in former Warsaw pact
countries subsequently were withdrawn to Russia but their effectiveness was
substantially lowered in the redeployment and new bases were not sufficiently
prepared. ("CIS Collective Security", (Online: Web), Accessed on, 3rd June 2003,

After the disintegration of USSR, many new states at first favoured retaining
common armed forces for collective security. They believed that national armed
forces in particular shall be small. Subsequently the positions of heads of new states underwent great changes. Three points played a substantial role in this regard. The first one was economic. The new states were in no position to allocate funds for maintaining common armed forces proportionate to their participation. The second was that the army was an attribute of statehood. Finally, the third one was the desire to place the "power ministers" under their own control. Therefore, each state began establishing its own Ministry of Defense and forming rather large armed forces. It must be said that Russia was one of the last to take such steps. (CIS Collective Security, (Online: Web) Accessed on June 06, 2007, p.2; /www.fas.org/news/russia/1996/druma198_s96003.htm.)

The traditional Soviet emphasis on tank-heavy ground forces never suited the needs of dynamic large-scale military operations and also those of local conflicts in the future. This leaves an important role for rapid-deployment forces in the overall structure of the Russian armed forces. These are based on airborne troops and marines capable of operating autonomously in any sector from which an external threat to the country's security may be posed. They would require appropriate transport facilities and a developed infrastructure, including propositioned arms dumps. (Adelphi Paper. No. 281, 1993, p.23.)

To provide for the contingencies of both local (low-intensity) war and a larger conventional war draft, Russian military doctrine suggests that its armed forces should include at least three components. First, a limited number of theatre troops (forces) in permanent combat readiness would be stationed forward to repel local aggression. Second, mobile reserves (rapid-reaction forces) would be held further back. These would be capable of deploying rapidly to any region to assist the permanent readiness troops to repel a medium level aggression. Third, strategic reserves would be formed during a period of threat and during wartime to conduct large-scale operations. (James W. Reed, 1993, p.47.)

Russia's security dilemma is a real issue and cannot be lightly dismissed as the result of losing its status as being one of the world's two great super-powers. Thus,
from a purely Russian perspective despite the existence of the special NATO-Russia Joint Council and greater co-operation with a range of international bodies and organizations over the past decade, events over the last few years in particular would seem to have placed Russia in an increased state of concern as regards its own security. For example, NATO's air campaign against Yugoslavia was a campaign which was carried out irrespective of the opinion of the UN Security Council. In April 1999, despite Russia's opposition, NATO expanded to include the former Warsaw Pact countries of Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary, thereby edging the very real military infrastructure of NATO closer to Russia's borders. Added to this there is also the possibility that at some future stage NATO bases may appear, for instance, in Poland, thereby increasing NATO's military presence in a very sensitive part (Europe's North-west) of the world closer to Russia. India and Pakistan have already publicly demonstrated their nuclear weapons capability. India having nuclear weapons would not upset Russia. After all, given the traditional enmity between India and China, it will keep China on its toes, but Pakistan having nuclear weapons would be a matter of concern for the Russians who make accusations of direct Pakistani involvement in the conflict in Chechnya. There is possibility that the CIS could easily drift apart in the not too distant future and conflicts within the former Soviet Union space could take place. Events in Tajikistan could take serious turn as could the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia or the internal conflicts in Georgia. In other words looking at the whole scheme of things from Russian perspectives, there is genuine concern about the future for Russia's political and military leaders. (Steven J Main, 2000, p.2)

COLLECTIVE SECURITY EFFORTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

CIS Collective Security Treaty

There are threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the CIS states. This is why the CIS countries thought since the early years that joint activities against these threats produce useful solutions to questions related to the security sphere. For
this reason, in early 1992, within the framework of agreements on friendship and mutual assistance, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan prepared the Draft Treaty on Collective Security. Then, three more states, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan agreed to sign a multilateral treaty on collective security. On 15 May 1992, in Tashkent, just six months after the CIS was formed, six states of the CIS Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed the Treaty on Collective Security. They also signed other agreements ranging from space launching facilities; use of air space to the financing of joint armed forces. All the Central Asian states except for Turkmenistan signed the document. Later in 1993, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Belarus joined the pact. The signing of this Treaty has become a starting point for the development of collective security within the CIS. The treaty, which came into effect in 1994 when it was ratified by all the signatory countries, states that the member states may withdraw from it upon the expiration of a five-year term. ("Six CIS States to Extend Collective Security Pact", (Online: Web), Accessed on, 2 Feb 1999, http://www.uzland.uz/news/02_06_99.htm, p.1)

A second stage in the period of CIS Collective Security efforts began after 1999. The first period can be evaluated as having produced very little. Cooperation lacked dynamism and the targeted aims could not be reached properly. In the period after 1999, one may say that cooperation has climbed to a higher level by the member states creating concrete mechanisms for the implementation of the treaty. Especially after some developments in the security context of Central Asia such as the rise of fundamentalist movements, more concrete steps were taken to make CIS Collective Security Treaty being implemented. While Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan did not renew their membership in 1999 the presidents of other six member countries of the CIS Collective Security Council decided to unite their efforts to strengthen regional security and anti-terrorism cooperation. ("CIS States Push on to Strengthen Collective Security, People's daily-China", (Online: Web), Accessed on 25 May 2000, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/20000525/eng20000525_41583.html, p.3.)
GUUAM

Another group in the former Soviet territory which has a security dimension is the GUUAM group. This group consists of five states; Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. The CIS is divided into two main strategic foreign policy orientations: pro-Westernism and Russophilism. GUUAM represents the former group and the latter is represented by the Russian Federation, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. (Ibid, p.4)

GUUAM group was formally founded as a political, economic and strategic alliance designed to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of these former Soviet Union republics within the group. On October 10, 1997 during the summit of the Council of Europe, the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine met and stated their interest in developing bilateral and regional cooperation. The governments of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova decided to pool their diplomatic resources to oppose Russia's efforts to station its weaponry in or near the territory of the organization's member states. ("Military Cooperation between Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova in the GUUAM Framework.", Tomas Valasek, (Online: Web), Accessed on December 2000, http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/BCSIA/Library.nsf/pubs/ValasekGUUAM, p.1)

The first GUAM meeting was held in Baku in late 1997 and deputy foreign ministers attended the meeting. They agreed to coordinate their efforts in peacekeeping, conflict resolution, energy, international organizations and closer ties with the West. On April 24, 1999, GUUAM was enlarged by one more member; Uzbekistan, which joined the group at GUUAM summit held during NATO/EAPC Summit in Washington D.C. (Dr. Jennifer D. P. Moroney, 2001, p.39.)

In the same summit, they issued a joint statement expressing readiness to expand cooperation with NATO in the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, thus distancing them from Russia. The five presidents' statement asserted that GUUAM is "not directed against

GUUAM has also sought security cooperation beyond the CIS. In March 1999 the defense ministers of Azerbaijan and Georgia concluded a memorandum on military cooperation within the framework of integration into NATO and the European Union. Georgia and Azerbaijan have attended exercises in PFP (Partnership for Peace) states, hosted exercises on their own territories and openly proclaimed their desire to join NATO. However, NATO’s reluctance to recognize GUUAM within the Alliance’s Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council forced Uzbekistan to find common cause with Russia to fight "Islamic terrorism". The Uzbek government concluded a bilateral security treaty with Russia in May 2000 and has participated in CIS military meetings and exercises. (Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, 2001, p.381)

In the military sphere, GUUAM countries try to find a way out of the Russian dominated security structures. All five GUUAM members either refused to join or quit CIS security arrangements. Military cooperation in the GUUAM is expected to serve as a stepping stone to establishing institutional ties with NATO or joining NATO. However not all the GUUAM countries have the same perspectives in military issues. And also for many states in the GUUAM group, it is not possible for them to be objective actors in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and Transdniestrian conflicts because they are parties in these conflicts.

After 9/11 event, GUUAM members and the United States issued a joint statement on terrorism. It is stated that the United States and the GUUAM member states will cooperate in their struggle against terrorism. During the meeting, the possibilities for increased cooperation on counter-terrorism between the United States and GUUAM were explored. ("Joint Statement on Terrorism", (Online: Web), Accessed on 15th November 2001, http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/prsrl/6162.htm p.1)
The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an international organization composed of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People of Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The SCO was created on the basis of the Shanghai Five, which came into being after signing in 1996-97 the agreements among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia and Tajikistan on building military confidence and mutual reduction of military forces in border areas.

The Shanghai Five transformation into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) happened at a summit in Shanghai on 15 June 2001 when the heads of six countries signed the Declaration on SCO establishment and the Shanghai Convention on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism. The newborn organisation proclaimed "strengthening mutual trust, friendship and good-neighbourly relations among the member countries; promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade and economy, science and technology, culture, education, energy, transportation, ecology and other fields; making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region, to establish a new, democratic, just and rational political and economic international order" as its goals. The Council of National Coordinators was founded with the aim of establishing interaction among relevant ministries and departments of SCO member states. ("History of development of Shanghai Cooperation Organization", (Online: Web), Accessed on 12th August, 2007, http://www.sectsco.org/html/00035.html, p.1)

The emergence of the Shanghai five in the second half of the 1990s was a significant event in the history of contemporary international relations. Central Asia is situated at the centre of Eurasia. Historically, this cultural confluence witnessed the up and down of various religions like Confucianism, Islam, Buddhism and
Christianity. The sudden demise of the Soviet Union gave birth to five new countries in this region, creating a political "low pressure" for outside forces. The geopolitical atmosphere changed as the ethnic and religious factors, which were kept under control during the Czars and the Soviet period, came to the forefront. These factors lost no time to influence the political and economic arena. Moreover, the newly independent republics find themselves seriously involved and provoked by the sequence of the Afghanistan war, penetration of the religious fundamentalism, smuggling of drugs, trafficking of weapons, and growth of regional extremism, separatism and terrorism. All these put together made it hard for the new states in this region to consolidate their national sovereignty. It also endangered the political stability of the area as a whole. The shared desirability for stability and development made security co-operation a major topic in the third Shanghai five submit which was held in Alma Ata, Capital of Kazakhstan, in July 1998. At this meeting, the parties were unanimous that "any form of national disintegration, ethnic exclusions and religious extremism is unacceptable. They also for the first time made the joint declaration that "the parties will take steps to fight against 'international terrorism, organized crimes, arms smuggling, trafficking of drugs and narcotics, and other transnational criminal activities. (Xu Tao, 2001, p. 16.)

The developments in Eurasia at the end of the twentieth century proved that the above mentioned judgment by the heads of state from the "shanghai Five" were correct. For instance, on February 16, 1999, the extremist forces caused six bomb explosions targeted at President Karimov in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Chechen anti-government armed forces made explosions in Moscow and other places. On August 8 and 22, the armed forces of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) tried, by hijacking hostages in the south of Krygyzstan, to force the Uzbek government "to unconditionally release the detained 50,000 Islamic brothers", and they even craved and put efforts for "overthrow of the Karimov's autocratic regime." The international Islamic extremist forces colluded with the IMU by coordinating their efforts, demanding to establish an "independent Caliphate". The trafficking of drugs and narcotics, arms smuggling and other transnational
criminal activities became prevalent in Central Asia while religious extremist forces become active in the region. They have attempted to open a "free zone", as they hope that could be used as a transportation corridor for trafficking narcotics to Russia and European countries. In the wake of the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, 'East Turkistan' separatist forces that have been active in Central Asia are ready to make trouble as the security situation in the region gets worse. (Ibid, p. 17)

Russian President emphasized in 2002 that terrorists have drawn over and trained near 4,000 IMU forces for the purpose of overthrowing governments of Central Asian states. Naturally this would also pose a threat to Russia's border area. Though Khatab, head of the illegal armed forces in Chechnya, was shot dead, his remnant forces are yet to be wiped out. They still try to launch terrorist attacks in the border areas of Chechnya. The Chechen terrorists made another grave blast in Kaspisk during the Victory Festival', causing several people dead and hundreds injured. The terrorist in Eurasia are threatening the normal social order and people's peaceful life. Under such circumstances, the leaders and politicians of various nations have gradually realized that regional terrorism can be effectively contained and eradicated through international cooperation among major powers. (Rotfeld, A. D., 2001, p. 4.)

Since the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Shanghai, China, in June 2001, especially in the wake of 9/11, significant changes have taken place in the structure of international relations in the whole world and in Eurasian region in particular. This is reflected by the following facts: The United States has further spread its influence into Central Asia. Russia and USA signed agreement on strategic arms limitation and Russia and NATO signed Rome Declaration. Indeed, some changes have taken place in Eurasia's geo-strategic pattern in the wake of the events of 9/11. In order to consolidate their political power, maintain social stability and eradicate internal and external terrorism, religious extremist forces and organized crimes, many Central Asian nations chose to join the international anti-terrorist coalition by giving base-access to the United States and
other Western powers. This, however, does not contradict with their persistent policy toward big powers. According to Chinese strategic expert Xu Tao, "These are changes, but not substantial. All the Central Asian nations used to take an all-round cooperative and balanced diplomacy toward major powers. The latest development could only be regarded as quantitative changes in their policy." (XU Tao, 2002, p.1)

Theoretically, they are in total accordance with the principle of making joint efforts to promote and consolidate peace and stability in the region and the world as well. At the same time, every nation in Central Asia still attaches great significance to coordination and cooperation with China and Russia in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The Central Asian countries' military structures are still highly dependent on Russia, and all of them have bilateral military agreements with Russia. These arrangements assume that each country will have its own national armed forces. But the wide disparity in size and capability between Russia and its partners, along with the still underdeveloped state of Central Asian armies, inevitably restricts the latter's security autonomy for the foreseeable future. (Shiren T Hunter, op.cit, p.117.)

The Shanghai Five process initiated a new concept called ‘Shanghai Spirit’, which stresses the principles of inter-state trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for pluralism in civilization, and common development. ‘Shanghai Spirit’ is a summation of the successful experiences of the Shanghai Five mechanism, ranging from its continuing commitment to international peace and development, to providing a new way of thinking, offering a new model for solving international disputes, and promoting cooperation.

At the 2000 summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin recommended renaming the Shanghai Five group as the ‘Shanghai Forum’, in order to open the way for taking in new participants. On 15 June 2001, the heads of state of the original Shanghai Five member states and Uzbekistan signed the declaration creating the SCO, as a regional cooperative organization between the six countries. The Shanghai
Five group thus completed its transformation into a new organization with Uzbekistan as a formal member. From being a consultative mechanism for cooperation and confidence building in solving boundary issues, the group became an organization aimed at extensive cooperation in the economic, political and other fields. The new organization represents three-fifths of the Eurasian continent and one-quarter of the world’s population. The founding declaration of the SCO stresses that all its member states will strictly abide by the principles of good-neighbourly friendship, equality, reciprocity, friendly cooperation and common development; maintain their policy of non-alignment, not targeting other countries and regions; remain open towards others; and maintain friendly contacts and cooperation with other regions and international organizations around the world. The transformation of the Shanghai Five not only showed that the six states have other interests in common—especially as regards the fight against terrorism—besides resolving the border problem, but also demonstrated the developing potential of the organization. Since the development of the Shanghai Five process, a wide range of consultative mechanisms, including annual meetings of member states’ ministers for foreign affairs, defence, security, trade, law and environment, were established (Ren Dongfeng, 2003, p.9)

Over the past decade, many kinds of terrorist groups and religious radicals have posed a serious threat to the security and stability of the Central Asian states, as well as of China and Russia. Radical Islamist organizations, increasingly prepared to use terrorism to achieve their political objectives, have engaged in extreme violence in the region, mainly in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The distribution of ethnic groups across borders has created inter-ethnic tension and led to protracted border and territorial disputes. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) has operated in all three countries, especially in the Fergana Valley where their borders meet. The IMU was most active in 1999–2001, launching numerous military assaults in all three countries and carrying out a series of car bombings in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, as well as numerous kidnappings. These states have since become an important theatre in the US-led war on terrorism because of their proximity to conflict zones in Afghanistan and Chechnya, and also in view of the presence of radical
Islamic organizations, some allegedly linked to al-Qaeda. Thus, all of the six member states are victims of terrorism, and they are all active participants in anti-terrorism cooperation at the global level. The Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of the SCO, signed in June 2002, clearly stated that the members would cooperate in the fight against international terrorism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism (also called the ‘three forces’). The SCO was the first international organization to identify counter-terrorism as its goal. Already in June 2001, SCO member countries signed The Pact to Battle Three Forces. (Ibid, p.12)

In less than three months after the establishment of the organization, the 9/11 attacks took place, followed by the US-led military operations in Afghanistan. These events led to drastic changes in the Central Asian geopolitical situation and had a substantial effect on the SCO. Internal institution building came to be seen as an important way to strengthen cohesiveness and enhance the vitality of the organization. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the SCO issued a statement at the prime ministerial level condemning terrorism. All of its member states provided varying degrees of support for the anti-terrorism war in Afghanistan. Considering that the SCO was so newly established and had no experience or even legal basis for conducting military operations outside the member states’ territory they managed to cooperate well with the USA in the war. The SCO did not, however, conduct any collective operation, partly because of its unfinished institutionalization and partly because of the fact that the USA ‘neither expected or requested military support’. (Ibid, p.13)

The St Petersburg Summit in May 2002 adopted a new charter. The six leaders reiterated the SCO’s opposition to terrorism and urged that counter-terrorism activities be conducted in accordance with the UN Charter and other international norms, without ‘double standards’ in judging terrorism. The summit declaration focused on efforts to step up economic cooperation among SCO members in Central Asia, thus marking the entry of the SCO into a phase of stable development. In October 2002, China and Kyrgyzstan held a joint antiterrorism military exercise in
their border areas in accordance with the plan drafted in May at the SCO defense ministers’ conference. This was the first joint military and cross-border exercise held by Chinese armed forces with foreign troops. (Gill, B. and Oresman, 2003, p.39)

At the Moscow Summit in May 2003, the six leaders stressed the need to deepen the SCO’s institutional construction. They approved the appointment of Chinese Ambassador to Russia Zhang Deguang as the first SCO Secretary-General and urged that the organization’s secretariat and anti-terrorism centre, two permanent institutions, be launched before 1 January 2004. The leaders signed the SCO Agreement on the Regional Anti-terrorism Organization and took steps to create an executive council to govern the anti-terrorism centre. The initial task of the latter will be to construct a database and establish information-sharing mechanisms. They also formally approved the SCO Charter. In addition, the summit’s declaration expresses the will to carry out constructive cooperation with other nations and organizations. The six leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the US-led war on terrorism, highlighting the SCO’s willingness to cooperate with neighbouring countries and their attitude towards the USA’s entry into the region. At the same time, the six countries decided to start a process of facilitating trade and investment and to search for concrete cooperation in the areas of the economy and trade. (Trofimov, D, 2003, p.15)

The Moscow Summit marked the fact that the organization had entered into a new era of development. In accord with a memorandum signed by the SCO defense ministers at the summit, a five-state (without Uzbekistan) joint military exercise was carried out in August 2003 in both Kazakhstan and China—the first multinational joint military exercise under SCO auspices. This exercise indicated that regional security cooperation was developing towards pragmatism and efficiency. In September 2003, the SCO prime ministers’ meeting decided that the two permanent bodies of the SCO—a secretariat based in Beijing and a counter-terrorism centre in Bishkek, respectively—should be put into full operation no later than 1 January 2004. At the same meeting the six countries signed or approved various documents relevant to the organization’s institutionalization, such as the SCO Anti-terrorism Set-up and
Personnel Arrangement and the Memorandum for Technical Launching SCO Permanent Body. Even more important, the prime ministers approved the Compendium for Multilateral Economic and Trade Cooperation of SCO Members, which formally started the SCO’s process of all-round economic cooperation. (Ibid, p.53)

**Russia-Turkmenistan Military Relations**

During the Soviet era, Turkmenistan was regarded as a crucial border region because of its proximity to Iran and other strategic areas such as the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan. For this reason, a large number of Soviet army troops were stationed in the republic. Since independence and the formation of a national armed force, Turkmenistan has maintained neutrality and isolationism, while at the same time pursuing a bilateral military alliance with the Russian Federation. Turkmen President Niyazov maintained close ties with Russia and Russian troops. At the same time, Russia continues to regard Turkmenistan as a key element in its sphere of military interests. Russia has signed agreements with Turkmenistan for stationing border guards and air defense forces in Turkmenistan. Russia also supports the building of the national armed forces by providing training for officers and sharing force maintenance costs. (Erol, M. S, 2002, p.37.)

As mentioned, Turkmen reliance on Russia was unavoidable for the financial and material upkeep of forces of the former Turkestan military district. By agreements between the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan, it’s determined that Turkmen national armed forces would be formed and trained under the joint command of Russia and Turkmenistan while certain forces in Turkmenistan be left under direct Russian control.

Turkmenistan has a unique behavioural pattern among all the Central Asian states. It prefers bilateral agreements with Russia rather than any collective CIS security efforts. In 1992, Turkmenistan signed a bilateral agreement with Russia
providing the Ministry of Defense of Russia assistance in setting up a Turkmen national army, providing equipment, training and funding. The army was to be under joint control of Russian-Turkmen command and could not be engaged in military actions without the consent of both sides. (Anton Alexeyev, 2002, p.4)

By 2002, around one fourth of troops in Turkmenistan were under direct Russian command and the rest under joint bilateral command. Russia is to provide logistical support and general financing. In August 1992, another agreement was reached on the deployment of Russian border troops in the republic for a five year period, with an option to renew for another five years. According to an agreement signed in 1993, Turkmenistan would pay all costs of maintaining military forces on its soil. This agreement granted Russia the right to maintain an air force and air defense systems with limited control by Turkmenistan. It addressed the continuing majority of Russians in the command structure by permitting Russian citizens to perform military duty in Turkmenistan and by making allowance for the training of Turkmenistan officers in Russian military schools. (Ibid, p.5)

It would not be wrong to argue that Russia’s bilateral security ties with Turkmenistan is one the most significant of all because they deal with the future security of southern borders of the CIS. Bilateral relations in this sphere are very important for both sides. It’s important for Turkmenistan because the financial burden of creating a national army seemed very heavy. Cooperation is also very important for Russia because; it strengthened Russia’s southern flank and without committing additional forces and allowed Russia not to withdraw its defense lines to the South of the Urals.

Turkmenistan held a referendum on independence on 26 October, 1991. The turnout was 94.1% and the overwhelming majority of Turkmens voted for seceding from the Soviet Union and forming an independent democratic state. On the domestic scene the government adopted a policy of economic and political reforms. In foreign affairs Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov declared a policy of neutrality. On
numerous later occasions he insisted that the period of confrontation in the world is over and therefore the greatest political priorities should be peaceful co-operation, non-interference in the affairs of other countries and complete disarmament. (Anton Alexeyev, 2002, p. 1)

From the very beginning of its independence, Turkmenistan decided to stay away from CIS military structures and to have its own army. It was a necessary step by Turkmenistan, following the position adopted in public by Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova, to create their own Ministry of Defence. (Valentin Shishlevskiy, 2002, p.45). The first indication of Turkmen intentions came during a visit to Ashkhabad on 15 January 1992 of the Commander-in-Chief of the CIS Joint Forces, Marshal Shaposhnikov. In fact, the visit was for the purpose of discussing ways of maintaining the unity of the Commonwealth Armed Forces, as well as co-operation and reform. At the close of the meeting then President Niyazov revealed that he had obtained Shaposhnikov's agreement regarding the creation of a Turkmenistan Defence Ministry. For the time being, formations and units on Turkmenistan's territory was to be under 'joint jurisdiction', with the Russian Defence Ministry retaining sole control over certain air defence and long range bomber units. The Turkmen Defence minister was to represent the interests of Turkmenistan in the Commonwealth's military council, and co-ordinate the activity of the armed forces deployed on the territory of the republic. On 27 January 1992, a presidential decree formally announced the establishment of a Ministry for Defence Affairs. (Richard Woff, 1994, p. 172.)

President was to be the Commander-in-Chief of the new armed forces, a role he assumed back in October 1991 when the republic declared its independence. In a deliberate attempt to develop a personality cult, he was promoted army general in December 1992, even though he had no previous military experience. The appointment was preceded by the formation of a Supreme State Defence Council - the highest decision making body - under the chairmanship of the President. (Dianne L. Smith, 1998, p.19) While its functions and status are modeled on the former Soviet Defence Council, membership of the Turkmen Council has been adapted to suit the
In April 1992, Niyazov set out the basis for the creation of the Turkmenistan Defence Ministry and plans for the future regarding the creation of security and defence structures. At the same time, Niyazov outlined two other crucial aspects of military doctrine, namely the role of Turkmenistan within the Commonwealth and on appraisal of the Russo-Turkmen agreement of March 1992 and its long term implications for military co-operation and the evolution of the armed forces. According to Niyazov, speaking in September 1993, the military doctrine of Turkmenistan would be purely defensive in nature and the republic will remain true to that 'principle'. Manpower would be based both on the traditional 'compulsory system" for 18 months and a basic three year contract service. (Ibid, p.23)

National Security

During the Soviet era, military planners regarded Turkmenistan as a crucial border region because of its proximity to Iran and other strategic areas such as the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan. Consequently, a large number of Soviet army troops were stationed in the republic, which was virtually closed to foreigners. Since independence and the formation of a national armed force, Turkmenistan has maintained a posture of neutrality and isolationism, while at the same time pursuing a bilateral military alliance with the Russian Federation. Russia continues to regard Turkmenistan as a key element in its sphere of military interests. (Glenn E. Curtis, 1996, p.53)

Russia has secured agreements for stationing border guards and air defense forces in Turkmenistan. Russia also supports the building of national armed forces by providing training for officers and sharing force maintenance costs. The 1992 constitution provides that the republic shall maintain armed forces to defend state sovereignty and that military service for males is a universal obligation that prevails over other constitutional obligations. Turkmenistan's government is adamant about republic's particular needs and circumstances.
the need to develop and maintain strong, well-trained and well equipped armed forces to defend the country's independence. At the same time, it has stated that it will maintain a posture of "positive neutrality in regard to national security" ("Turkmenistan Strategic Considerations", (Online: Web), Accessed on 3rd July, 2007, http://www.photius.com/countries/turkmenistan/national_security/turkmenistan_national_security_strategic_considerations-2414.html p.1)

Under the agreement for shared command, the presidents of Turkmenistan and the Russian Federation act as joint commanders in chief. In Turkmenistan, the chief military policy-making body, the Supreme Defense Committee, consists of the president, the ministers of defense and internal affairs, the chairman of the Supreme Court, the procurator general, and the leaders of the five provinces. Prior to the creation of the Turkmenistan Ministry of Defense in January 1992, the republic's military establishment fell under the command of the Turkestan Military District of the Soviet armed forces.

Turkmenistan's dependence on the Russian Federation for security against aggressive neighbours, at least until the republic's armed forces become a viable deterrent, creates tension with the foreign policy goal of remaining as independent as possible from Russia. These conflicting national security considerations explain the Niyazov government's implementation of a bilateral military alliance with Russia while at the same time refusing to commit itself to substantial participation in regional military agreements that possibly would alienate Iran. (Ibid.p.2)

Military Doctrine

Turkmenistan’s military legislation stands out from other Central Asian states’ experience of post-Soviet military reconstruction. The first difference lies in Turkmenistan’s neglect to follow the wave of military reforms in the late 1990s. Such behaviour can be accounted for by the Turkmen government’s conviction that the increased activity of armed opposition underscored by the other four Central Asian states was irrelevant to its own security concerns and domestic stability. However, a
series of laws adopted in 2003 “On Civil Defense” and “On Turkmenistan’s Fight against Terrorism” account for similar types of threats to the national security. Activity of militant groups seems to be an important consideration for the security of the regime, appropriate legislation defining what constitutes terrorism is being developed. The second glaring difference in Turkmenistan’s legislation on the national military lies in an entrenched conviction about the importance of protecting the internal security order from challenges originating within the state as opposed to possible threats imported from abroad. The decree “On Turkmenistan’s Fight against Terrorism” provides a detailed explanation of the legal basis for fighting terrorist formations on the territory of Turkmenistan, the order of functional coordination between various state agencies, and the rights and duties of the civilian population in fighting terrorism. The decree “On Civil Defense” meticulously lists possible origins of societal instability: natural (earthquakes, river floating, etc.) and technological disasters constitute the core of the challenges to civilian security. (Erica Marat, 2007, p. 98)

However, sources of armed conflict are not specified. The decree “On Turkmenistan’s Fight Against Terrorism” lists functions of the national armed forces in times of war. Like the decree on “On Civil Defense,” it does not mention any possibility of conflicts on the border, or spillovers of external problems from neighbouring states. At the same time, the decree provides definition of terrorism and the identification of challenges as a result of armed groupings. Unlike the other four states of Central Asia, Turkmenistan’s identification of a terrorist threat is primarily defined through the security of state institutions and state representatives, and most notably the president: “terrorist act’ – is a direct crime of a terrorist nature in the form of blow up, arson... infringement of the Turkmen President’s life, other state or public employee...with the status of interim protection and immunity” In effect, the state legislature affirms that terrorist organizations might target the political regime. Another dissimilarity of Turkmen security politics from other states in the region rests on a vague identification of cooperative foreign interests. The country has a recognized neutrality status which has been a reason for Turkmenistan’s refusal to
join regional economic, political or security cooperation arrangements. Article 32 of
the "On Civil Defense" decree maintains only general stances on international
security cooperation interests, it does not specify any particular state, group of states
or international organizations. Although Turkmenistan was reluctant to develop
relations with its neighbours, the country was the first to join the NATO’s PfP
programme, which offered an opportunity to train local cadres under the aegis of the
organization’s international staff. National military structures were reorganized into
three branches: the army, air force, and border guards; the intention to establish
the fourth branch of naval forces in the Caspian Sea was announced in the beginning
1990s. This was also a period when the status of the three Motorized Rifle Divisions
(MRD) that were located on Turkmen territory remained unclear. Like most post-
Soviet states, the new government had the ability to claim control over the division;
however, the available military infrastructure and personnel required intensive
financing. Russia continued to support the base and retained partial control over the
MRDs. (ibid)

The Russian-Turkmen Treaty on Joint Measures signed in July 1992
stipulated that Russia would provide logistical and financial support to the post-
Soviet military for a period of five to ten years. It was agreed by both sides that
Turkmenistan would gradually bear the full costs of supporting the available military.
In 2005, the Turkmen-Russian joint command and Russia’s intensive financing of the
military, including some arms transfers, coincided with Turkmen cooperation on
natural gas transfers between the two countries. About 108,000 troops and 300
military units of the Soviet Army resided on the territory of Turkmenistan in the
beginning of 1990s. By mid 1992, nearly half of the military officials and soldiers,
mostly Russians from other Soviet states, left the country. The border guards in
MRDs are based in Ashgabat, Gushgy and Gyzylarbat. Turkmenistan comprises
about 5,000 personnel and the air forces around 2,000 men. The Border Guard
Command was established in 1992 in place of the Central Asian Border Troops
District of the Committee for State Security. Most of the border guard contingent is
placed along the Afghan frontier, which totals 1,750 kilometers and is vulnerable to
drug trafficking. The internal forces of Turkmenistan consist of approximately 25,000 personnel. However, the real number is most likely higher. Despite the fact that Turkmen armed forces are smaller in number compared to other states in the region, annual military expenditures are among the highest. It is assumed that the bulk of the expenditures are spent on the maintenance of law-enforcement agencies as opposed to buildup of military capacity. Further, according to the International Crisis Group's reports, army conscripts were placed in almost all public institutions across Turkmenistan (Ibid, p.99)

Niyazov had acknowledged Russia's legitimate military interests in the region, stating that his country's security interests would be better served through cooperation with Russia than through participation in multinational military organizations. Membership in the latter contradicts its foreign policy of noninterference, as well as its military doctrine that the principal function of Turkmenistan's army is to protect the country from external aggression. Another military doctrine holds that local wars, border conflicts, and military build ups in adjacent countries are the main source of danger to Turkmenistan. Although Turkmenistan has no disputed borders, its doctrine is based on concerns about the civil conflicts in Tajikistan and the instability in northern Afghanistan, especially after the collapse of its pro-Soviet regime in 1989, as well as on traditional tensions with Iran. On the other hand, Turkmenistan's leadership completely ignores the fear that Islamic fundamentalism would spread from Iran into the republic, which has small probability considering that Iranian fundamentalists adhere to the Shia branch of Islam, while the state controlled Islam of Turkmenistan belongs to the Sunni branch. ("Turkmenistan Military Doctrine", (Online: Web), Accessed on, 11th July, 2007, http://www.lupinfo.com/country-guide-tudy/turkmenistan/turkenistan64.html., p.1.)

Turkmenistan Force Structure
units were withdrawn or disbanded within the following year. By 1993, the republics armed forces comprised around 34,000 active-duty personnel attached primarily to the army and air force. At that point, the reduced force operated 200 military units while seventy remained under Russian control. Turned over to Turkmenistan's command were one army corps directorate, two combined arms units stationed at Gushgy and Gyzylarbat, several air defense and airforce aviation units, technical support and logistical units and virtually all the armaments and other military property. The armed forces are divided into four branches—the army, air force, navy and border guards. (Ibid, 11)

Army

The independent All Arms Army of Turkmenistan consisting of three arms of service is the largest component of Ground (Defence) forces. These were formed out of the former Soviet Army Corps headquartered in Ashgabat together with three motorized rifle divisions (recognized into brigades) located in Ashgabat and Termez. (Valentin Shishlevshkiy, Op.cit, p.48) The army, which had been reduced to about 11,000 personnel by 1996, is organized into one-corps headquarters, three motorized rifle divisions, one artillery brigade, one multiple rocket launcher regiment, one anti tank regiment, one engineer brigade, and one independent helicopter squadron. There are also signal reconnaissance and logistics support units. The three motorized rifle divisions are based at Ashgabat, Gushgy, and Gyzylarbat. The army’s inventory includes about 520 M-72 main battle tanks, 338 armoured infantry fighting vehicles, 543 armoured personnel carriers, 345 pieces of a towed artillery, sixteen self-propelled guns, 114 multiple rocket launchers, sixty three mortars, fifty four anti tank guns and fifty air defence guns. (“Turkmenistan Force Structure”, op.cit, p.2.)

In the year 1999, for the first time women were recruited. Fifty five girls aged between 17 and 23 were admitted to the military institute. After obtaining a diploma they were sent to where they were to serve. They too are committed to serving for five years without interruption under any circumstances. Purpose oriented training of women officers, were carried in six speciallities- social and legal protection of service
men, military psychology, provision of military cargo transportation, material supply of the armed forces, military economy and financial planning and communications. (Summary of World Broadcasts, SU/3585 SI/3, 13 Jul. 1999.)

**Air Force**

After the disintegration of the USSR, Turkmenistan inherited the largest Air Force groupings in Central Asia stationed at two major bases near Mary and Ashgabat. At the end of 2000, the Air Force had a personnel of 3,000. The Air Force fleet comprised up to 250 helicopters and aircraft of different systems. ("The Armed Forces of Turkmenistan", (Online: Web), Accessed on, 14th July, 2007, http://www.cast, rulenglish/publish/2002/may-iune/alrexeyev.html, p.5.)

The main airforce base is at Gyzylarbat. In 1994 the organization of the airforce remained contingent on further negotiations on disposition and control of former Soviet units. Pending such negotiations, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation maintained one air force and one air defense group in Turkmenistan.

**Table No. 12**

**Turkmen Air Force Aircraft**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L-39</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiG-21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiG-23/MiG-23U</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiG-25</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>MiG-29</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su-25</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su-17</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU-154B</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.worldairforces.com
Navy

The Turkmen Navy is currently subordinate to the command of the border force. Its main base is Turkmenbashi (formerly Krasnovodsk). The Navy personnel together with coast guards number less than 2000. The Coastal Defence Forces were based on Turkmenistan's share of the Caspian Flotilla, in accordance with an agreement in March 1992 between the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Now primarily involved in anti-smuggling operations, the Flotilla was once under the command of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet at Sevastapol. The Russian-Turkmen naval activity in Caspian Sea (agreement signed on September 1, 1993) provided for extension of facilities at Krasnovodsk on the Caspian for use by warships of both states, the creation of combined naval units and joint naval exercises. (Alentin Shishlevskiy, 2002, p.48)

Border guards

About 5,000 personnel serve in the Turkmenistan border guard, which is commanded jointly by Turkmenistan and Russia. The Border Guard Command was established in 1992 to replace the Soviet era Central Asian Border Troops District of the Committee for State Security (K.G.B) of the Soviet Union. The border guards patrol the wild, mountainous Afghan and Iranian frontiers, which total 1,750 kilometers and are rated the most sensitive borders of the country. The guards have small arms and some armoured personnel carriers. (Ibid,p49)

In the table below are shown the Turkmenistan Force Structure and the Armed Force Structure of Turkmenistan
Material Supply

In the mid-1990s, Turkmenistan lacked adequate material and technical support for its armed forces. However, a protocol with the Russian Arms Company (Rosvooruzheniye) provided for delivery of much-needed arms to Turkmenistan's military in 1995-96 in return for natural gas. Under this agreement, Turkmenistan was to supply 6 billion cubic meters of gas annually to the Russian Natural Gas Company (Gazprom) for sale to industries that will fill arms orders for Turkmenistan. Rosvooruzheniye also was to transfer 30 percent of this revenue to hard currency accounts in Turkmenistan.

Even earlier Turkmenistan had signed an arms for gas deal with Russia. Turkmenistan signed an agreement on 27th December 1994 on supplying gas to Russia in exchange for Russian arms. The agreement was signed in the Turkmen capital by the then Turkmen deputy premier in charge of oil and gas Khekim Ishanov, and the visiting first deputy head of the Russian state arms company Rosvooruzheniye. (Summary of World Broadcasts, SU/2188 G/5, 29 December, 1994.)

Table No. 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment and Training

The 1992 constitution provides for universal conscription of males for service in the national armed forces. The period of regular service is eighteen months for army draftees and one year for those with higher education. Draft deferments from active military duty are granted only to individuals involved in seasonal animal herding. A presidential decree of July 1992 allowed two year alternative service at a state enterprise for conscripts in certain categories, but this decree was nullified in December 1994. (Glenn E. Curtis, op.cit, p.83)

Conditions of service seriously deteriorated in the years immediately following independence. Large numbers of Turkmens were absent without leave from units outside and within Turkmenistan. Fighting on ethnic grounds and regional grounds were common among conscripts, instances of insubordination and failure to comply with orders increased, and relations between the Russian officer corps and Turkmen troops were strained to the breaking point. In recent years, discipline has been strengthened somewhat by improved working conditions, amnesty for some cases of absence without leave, the removal of political organs from the armed services, and increased opportunities for service within Turkmenistan. In addition, legislation has improved pensions given to career personnel in the Ministry of Defense, the Committee for National Security, the Border Guard, and the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, when men reach the age of fifty five and women the age of fifty. (Ibid,p.84)

All personnel except officers in the armed forces are conscripts, more than 90 percent of whom are Turkmen. By contrast, about 95 percent of the officer corps is made up of Slavs. After many Russian officers had left Turkmenistan under the negative conditions of the early 1990s, others were prevented from leaving by a September 1993 agreement giving Russian citizens the option of fulfilling their military obligations in Turkmenistan, swearing allegiance to either state, or transferring to any region of Russia after five years of service in Turkmenistan.
Turkmenistan officers are trained in military educational establishments of the Russian Federation's Ministry of Defense, while Russian officers in Turkmenistan train draftee sergeants and specialists. Some limited training is provided in the military faculty established at Turkmenistan's State University. The Turkmenistan Armed Forces personnel are trained according to Soviet military doctrine, using Soviet training methods. Recruits receive a four year basic training and then take an oath and allegiance. This is followed by months of specialist training appropriate to the arm in which the personnel will serve. Thereafter the soldiers are assigned to their definitive units. (Valentin Shishlevshiy, op.cit, p.48.)

In the long term the links with Moscow will remain the cornerstone of Turkmenistan's defence policy. During 1992, three important agreements were concluded between the Russian Federation and the republic: a treaty of Friendship and co-operation; a treaty governing joint measures in connection with the creation of Turkmen Armed Forces; and a Border Treaty. The first agreement was based on a formula adopted by the Soviet Union in the 1930's that governed relations with all friendly states until 1991, was the subject of negotiations in Russia and Turkmenistan throughout the first half of 1992. The treaty was finally ratified by the Supreme Soviet (Majlis) on 30 September and governs cultural, political, economic, trade and diplomatic ties. (Richard Woff, op.cit p. 134.)

The second agreement, concerning the armed forces, provided for the handover to Turkmenistan of more than half of all military formations and installations of the former Soviet Army within Turkmenistan in five years. Until that time, all nationalised formations would remain under the operational control of a joint Russo-Turkmen command: aviation and air defence units, together with border troops detachments, would be subject to Russian control. Meanwhile 50 Russian officers were offered contracts by the Turkmen Defence Ministry and in some cases by presidential decree. Agreement on the transfer of former Soviet assets was reached in June and ratified by the Majlis on September 1992. (Valentin Shishlevshiy op.cit p.52.)
The reason for Russian interest depends upon the fact that Turkmenistan is a large country on the southern periphery of the former Soviet Union, with great economic potential and rich natural resources, a sparse population, and a buffer between radical Islamic states and the Slav world. Moreover, its role in the strategic defence cordon of the Russian Federation remains paramount. In turn Turkmenistan lacks senior trained native personnel to command and administer its armed forces and at present few facilities provide higher military training and education. In early 1993 about 95 percent of all officers serving in Turkmenistan were representatives of the Slav nations, or came from other republics of the CIS.

Consequently, both sides recognize the need for a lengthy handover period, allowing Moscow to make provisions to withdraw the force under its jurisdiction, restructure its defence posture in the region, and lend valuable assistance in the evolution of Turkmen armed forces. The treaty between the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan of June 1992 recognizes that the total troops on the republic’s territory exceeded defence sufficiency. Consequently, 70 units and formations remained under Russian jurisdiction while 30 were disbanded, the remaining 200 were handed over to Turkmen Defence Ministry. The treaty provided for a provisional joint Russo-Turkmen command to control and administer the reorganization, training and the creation of a maintenance and supply infrastructure. (Richard Woff, op.cit, p. 134.)

On 1st September 1993, then Russian Defence Minister Grachev held consultations with the President and Senior Turkmen officers and five agreements were initiated. The agreement dealt with the status of Russian officers serving in the Turkmen Armed Forces on contract, training and education of Turkmen cadets and officers, at Russian military schools and academies, finance and assistance, naval activity in the Caspian sea, and cooperation between the Russian and Turkmen intelligence services. Agreement was also reached on the setting up of Russian task force to be attached to the Turkmen Defence Ministry. The naval agreement provided for the extension of facilities at Krasnovodsk on the Caspian for use by warships of both states, the creation of combined naval units, and joint naval exercises. In
addition, both sides had agreed to set up a training centre for pilots and aviation technician, which could also be use by other CIS armies. While Russian technical assistance remained of utmost importance, from January 1994 Turkmenistan financed the armed forces deployed on its territory.

At the close of Grachev’s visit, President Niyazov greeted the signing of the bilateral military agreements as a step in ensuring Turkmenistan security. Niyazov stated that Turkmenistan regarded Russia as its defender, friend and supporter. (Valentin Shislevshiy, 2004, p. 52.) While the republic did not plan to join any international blocs or alliances, it would continue to expand co-operation with Russia. In turn Russia hailed Grachev visit to Turkmenistan as a sign that both Russia and Turkmenistan would expand military co-operation in the future. President Niyazov recognized that Turkmenistan cannot imagine its future without Russia.

Though it is not a part of any regional security groupings Turkmenistan’s strong military and defence ties with Russia has strengthened its sense of security. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Turkmenistan inherited one of the largest armed forces in Central Asia. However, since that time neutrality and isolationism have been the crucial elements of Turkmenistan’s defence doctrine and the domestic armed forces have been neglected. In 2004 the army had about 25,000 active personnel the Air Force had 3000 and the many Navy had 1000. A Naval Coast guard has been in the planning stage since the mid 1990s. After a gradual withdrawal of Russian commanders from Turkmenistani units in the 1990s few foreign troops remain in Turkmenistan. The armed forces depend on a high percentage of increasingly outmoded Soviet era equipment.

Given the ongoing instability and conflict in its neighbourhood, Turkmenistan has been feeling increasingly insecure and looked to Russia for its security. As early as 1992, a bilateral treaty named Russia as guarantor of Turkmenistan’s security. Though the last Russian border forces withdraw in 1999 and to maintain its neutrality
Turkmenistan consistently had avoided multilateral military groupings of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), it participates in the Caspian Sea Flotilla with Russian and Kazakhstani Naval Forces. Simultaneously its military ties with Russia has improved with resumption of military materials from Russia in the late 1990s.

Russian military involvement in the Central Asian states has been regarded by the latter as an opportunity to postpone the full development of their national armies. So, the Russian army holds a very strong position fully equal to that of the local armies. While highly expensive, this military presence presents Russia with certain advantages in the realm of security policy, to impede the rise of local conflicts, and the rise of extremism. The Central Asian military establishment remained heavily dependent on Russian support. Few Central Asians became officers in the Soviet Army, so officer corps of Central Asian armies is largely staffed by Russian officers. The armed forces of the Central Asian states are still in their development stage. Indeed they are fractured remnants of the former Soviet Army and so lack a consolidated command structure that would include control, communication, provision, mobilization, personnel training and military-industrial complex.

After the disintegration of USSR, many new states at first favoured retaining common armed forces for collective security. They believed that national armed forces in particular shall be small. Subsequently the positions of heads of new states underwent great changes. Three points played a substantial role in this regard. The first one was economic. The new states were in no position to allocate funds for maintaining common armed forces proportionate to their participation. The second was that the army was an attribute of statehood. Finally, the third one was the desire to place the "power ministers" under their own control. Therefore, each state began establishing its own Ministry of Defense and forming rather large armed forces. It must be said that Russia was one of the last to take such steps. Since independence and the formation of a national armed force, Turkmenistan has
maintained neutrality and isolationism, while at the same time pursuing a bilateral military alliance with the Russian Federation. Turkmen President Niyazov maintained close ties with Russia and Russian troops. At the same time, Russia continues to regard Turkmenistan as a key element in its sphere of military interests. Russia has signed agreements with Turkmenistan for stationing border guards and air defense forces in Turkmenistan. Russia also supports the building of the national armed forces by providing training for officers and sharing force maintenance costs.

It would not be wrong to argue that Russia’s bilateral security ties with Turkmenistan is one the most significant of all because they deal with the future security of southern borders of the CIS. Bilateral relations in this sphere are very important for both sides. It’s important for Turkmenistan because the financial burden of creating a national army seemed very heavy. Cooperation is also very important for Russia because it strengthened Russia’s southern flank and without committing additional forces and allowed Russia not to withdraw its defense lines to the South of the Urals.
End Notes for Chapter 3


7. Ibid, p.3


11. Ibid, p. 144

12. Ibid, pp144- 145


15. Ibid, p. 93


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29. Ibid,p.4


35. Ibid,p.17


38. Shiren T Hunter, op.cit, p.117.


40. ibid ,p.12

41. Ibid, p.13


44. Ibid, p.53


47. Ibid, p.5


51. Ibid, p.23


54. Ibid, p.2


56. Ibid

57. Ibid, p.99

59. Ibid, 11

60. Valentin Shishlevshkiy, op.cit, p.48


64. Alentin Shishlevski, op.cit., 2002, p.48

65. Ibid.,p49


67. Glenn E. Curtis, op.cit, p.83

68. Ibid,p.84

69. Valentin Shishlevshiy, op.cit,p.48.

70. Richard Woff, op.cit, p. 134.

71. Valentin Shishlevshiy, op.cit, p.52.


73. Valentin Shishlevshiy, op. cit., p. 52.