CHAPTER - V

DIVERSIFICATION OF SECURITY RELATIONSHIP OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES WITH WEST, NATO, OSCE, AND THE U.N.

Historically, Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have strong defence and security links with the Russian Federation. The seven decades of Soviet rule gave Central Asia strong feeling of security and stability as an integral part of a militarily strong super power. During this period, it remained free from internecine conflicts and felt no threat to its security from neighbouring external powers. In the post-Soviet era, Central Asian states’ strategic relations as well as the comprehensive security links with the Russian Federation have further strengthened through the joint institution of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and signing of separate bilateral and multi-lateral defence agreements.

The most significant dynamics within the Commonwealth of Independent States with far reaching security implications was ‘the Treaty on Collective Security’ signed between all Central Asian states (except Turkmenistan), Armenia and Russia, on May 15, 1992, at Tashkent.¹ This Treaty provided security guarantee of all newly independent Central Asian states. Furthermore, the separate bilateral and multi-lateral security and defence agreements within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States with Russia, enhanced security guarantee of Central Asian republics. This formation of security alliance between Russia and the Central Asian states (Tashkent bloc) compelled all Central Asian states not to pursue a path of separate and independent military development, but to fully depend upon Russian military support and active participation.

¹ SWB, SU/1389, P.C3/1, May 25, 1992.
But at the same time, in the changing contemporary international security environment, an exclusive dependence on Russia in the defence and military sphere is not to the liking of the Central Asian leaders. They are trying to become self-reliant in defence affairs as well as in security matters. At the same time, they are diversifying their strategic relations with western countries, particularly with the United States, Germany and France. Furthermore, they are also in the process of integration into North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), North Atlantic Co-operative Council (NACC), the United Nations and other western international security structures.

In the wake of active Russian foreign policy based upon the principle of the Euro-Atlantic Union (primarily represented by Mr. Andrei Kozyrev Russian Foreign Minister, Yegor Geydar the Russian acting Prime Minister and President Boris Yeltsin) and subsequently, newly formulated Russian military doctrine in the 'near abroad' of 1993, aimed at creating 'zones of influence' and declaring the whole of the former Soviet Central Asian territories as an area of 'vital interest' for Russia, and claiming the right to defend the Russian-speaking population living inside Central Asian states, the leaders of the republics started exploring other avenues to ensure the stability and collective security of the Asian countries in general, but to Central Asian republics in particular.

The moves of Central Asian leaders, particularly Islam Karimov and Nursultan Nazarbayev, for the collective security of Asia, is not a new phenomenon. During the Soviet period, Breznev, for the first time in 1969, had propounded a plan for collective security in Asia, and pursued with great ardour. Even Gorbachev followed this plan but it was not pursued by Mr. Boris Yeltsin, the President of the Russian Federation.
After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the idea for holding a conference on Asian security was first put forward by the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the 47th session of U.N. General Assembly on October 5, 1992. He proposed a ‘Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia’ on the lines of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Although it was an attempt ‘to create an efficient mechanism of preventive diplomacy in Asia’ but objectively, he had in mind pan-Asian security structures of the OSCE type. The eventual goal was a ‘machinery for permanent interaction between the continental systems of collective security in Asia, Europe, Africa and the U.S.A, with the further prospect of setting up a unified global system of collective security and co-operation’.

Subsequently, the conferences of Experts from Foreign Offices of Asian States were held at Alma-Aty, on March 29-30, August 30 and September 1, 1993, in which India also participated. Later on, Uzbek President Islam Karimov used the same forum on September 28, 1994, to launch his project: a “permanent seminar of the United Nations on questions of security, stability and co-operation in Central Asia”. He was all for the indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and for a declaration that ‘the Central Asian region be a nuclear free zone’, also implying Kazakhstan’s de-nuclearization.

Later on, even the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Andrei Kozyrev, discussing with his visiting Chinese counterpart, Mr. Qian Qichan, in Moscow on September 22, 1995, emphasized the need to build-up a ‘community of security in Asia’ and the Russian Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev also proposed for a collective security system in the Asian-pacific region.

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4 Ibid.,
Both President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Islam Karimov have pursued their proposals in their own way. While Nazarbayev's proposal was amplified for a Euro-Asian Union, Islam Karimov emphasized over the regional security in Central Asia beyond the unified security structure of the Commonwealth of Independent States as well as the Tashkent Collective Security Agreement, which was signed by Russia and the Central Asian States (excluding Turkmenistan) on May 15, 1992.

Islam Karimov, while addressing 48th session of the UN-General Assembly, proposed to set-up in Tashkent a 'Permanent United Nations Seminar' on issues of 'Regional Security and Cooperation'. He advocated that this seminar would discuss the possibility of the establishment of a reliable system of regional security in Central Asia. Such a system may work out measures for 'safeguarding and restoring peace in case of conflict and war, including collective diplomatic, financial, economic and other sanctions against those who violate peace and territorial integrity and prepare recommendations for the United Nations for the establishment of stability and peace in this region'.

A seminar on 'Security and Co-operation in Central Asia' was subsequently held on September 15-16, 1995, in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, which was attended by the delegations representing the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as well as representatives from the permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council, and also from the neighbouring states of Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and India. While addressing the seminar, Islam Karimov, in order to strengthen peace and stability in the Central Asian region, emphasized the

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5 Ibid., SWB, SU/2414, P.G/1, September 19, 1995.
6 SWB, SU/2414, P.G/1, September 19, 1995.
need to work out a mechanism for co-operation principally between international organizations. He also stressed upon the need for international organizations such as OSCE, NATO, NACC, CIS, the U.N. and other international organizations and institutions to take an active interest in ensuring peace and security in Central Asian regions.\footnote{7}

A statement adopted by the forum said 'the Central Asian states recognize as a matter of principle the indivisibility of regional security and collective responsibility for maintaining it. In this context the participants in the Tashkent Conference-Seminar welcome the signing of the protocol on the main principles of establishing peace and accord in Tajikistan and on extending the agreement on a cease-fire which was signed in the framework of the intra-Tajik dialogue under U.N. auspices and with the participation by the countries observers'.\footnote{8}

All participants in their joint statement, unanimously expressed their deep concern over the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, deteriorating situation in Tajik-Afghan border, and for the maintaining integrity of the regional security, called for more effective use of the existing structures of the UN as well as OSCE, OIC, NATO and CIS.

After the Tashkent Seminar, a two-day international seminar on 'Regional Security in Central Asia', was organized in the Kazakh Capital, Alma-Aty, on December 7, 1995. It was attended by the Foreign Ministry Officials from all the Central Asian republics and experts from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, the USA, Russia and Britain, and discussed the role of the Central Asian states with regard to major regional and international issues. The seminar was sponsored by the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, Kazakh’s Strategic Research Institute, and the London International Institute for Strategic Studies.\footnote{9}

\footnote{7} Ibid., P.G/2.
\footnote{8} SWB, SU/2414, P. G/2, September 19, 1995.
\footnote{9} SWB, SU/2482, P.G/1, December 9, 1995.
Soon after, a two day conference on ‘Security, Co-operation and Confidence Building Measures in Asia’, was held in the Kazakh capital, Alma-Aty, on February 7, 1996. Representatives from Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan participated observers from ten other countries, including Vietnam, Egypt, Indonesia and Japan also attended this conference along with representatives of the United Nations, the OSCE, and a number of other International Organizations.10

Participants of this conference mainly discussed three draft documents, including a ‘Declaration on the principles of relations between the member states of the Conference on Interaction and Measures of Trust in Asia (CIMTA)’, ‘Rules and procedures of conferences on interaction and measures of trust in Asia’ and the ‘structure and institutions of CIMTA’.11 Subsequently, an international conference on ‘Regional Stability and Security in Central Asia’ was also organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 12 to 17 August 1996. This conference was sponsored by George C. Marshal Centre for Security Studies, Garmisch, Germany.12

In the end of 1997, a ‘Conference on Confidence Building in Asia’, called by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, was again held in Alma-Aty on December 3, 1997. Deputy Foreign Ministers from 16 countries including Russia, China, India and Egypt attended the conference and discussed cooperation and confidence building in Asia.13

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10 SWB, SU/2530, P.G/3, February 8, 1996.
11 Ibid.,
13 SWB, SU/3097, P.G/1, December 9, 1997.
The Deputy Foreign Ministers discussed 'a new ideology of interstate relations designed to define a political climate on Asian continent in the 21st century, primarily to guarantee security, settle disputes by peaceful means, control armaments, observe human rights, protect the environment as well as cooperation in fighting terrorism and drug trafficking'.

The Central Asian leaders, besides their efforts in organizing regional security seminars and conferences, have also taken initiatives for military integration in Central Asia. During the summit meeting of the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in Bishkek, April 29-30, 1994, where Kyrgyzstan joined 'the Agreement on the Creation of a Single Economic Space' but it was more noteworthy that integration of these three Central Asian states was a positive indication with regard to defence issues.

Subsequently, during a session of the Interstate Council of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, held on December 15, 1995 in Jambyl, a Council of Defence Ministers was created, to continuously guide the development of concrete proposals on military cooperation. It specified that the Council, as a working body of the Interstate Council, would consider all relevant issues of regional security, defence co-ordination and co-operation. For such co-operation it was tasked to co-ordinate military exercises, air defence, mutual supplies, as well as the maintenance of arms and equipment, military research and other activities.

To ensure national and regional security, the three states also decided to coordinate their efforts in the directions of: Individual defence—forming and

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strengthening national armed forces; Collective defence—forming a system of collective security in the framework of the CIS. Since the Agreement on Collective Security, signed in Tashkent in May 1992 still does not have mechanisms for its realization and still does not work, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have to proceed with efforts aimed at the coordination of their defence activities in Central Asia, the creation of a system of Euro-Central Asian Security, the co-ordination of defence policies and co-operation, as well as peace-keeping activities – jointly with member-states of the OSCE and NATO, the creation of an Asian system of security; the strengthening of cooperation and confidence building measures – jointly with the Asian States, the creation of a global system of security – jointly with all the UN member – States but primarily with the members of the Security Council.\footnote{Oumirserik Kasenov, p.39.}

It was during the meeting of the Interstate Council of States of Jambyl, that a resolution was also signed on the formation and organisation of a joint peacekeeping battalion of the three republics — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan under the aegis of the United Nations. The Presidents of the three republics appealed to the UN Secretary-General to send a UN mission for consultations with representatives of their Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, and also requested the preparation of the necessary documents in order to join the Agreement on Reserve Forces of the UN. This decision to form a joint peace-keeping battalion separately to CIS peace-keeping efforts, reflected concern over the situation in Tajikistan and Afghanistan and probably an understanding of the inefficiency of collective peace-keeping forces in the framework of the CIS.\footnote{Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, December 16, 1995.}
To eliminate the possibilities of Russian domination over Central Asian States, the Central Asian leaders are also trying to create a security space broader than the post-Soviet security space which would include the United Nations, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, (OSCE), and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). This could be designated as the Euro-Central Asian system of security space. Their active participation in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme as well as in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) of the NATO, and staging of numerous NATO military exercises on the territory of Central Asia, are indicative of their desire to became self-reliant and independent from Russia's strategic security umbrella. Having gained full political sovereignty, the Central Asian regimes perceive the involvement of these various international institutions in their region as one of the basic guarantees for their stability and independence. On the other hand, the strategic objectives of NATO and Partnership for Peace Programme are to involve Central Asian states in the European Security structure based on cooperative processes and on mutual consultations in case of threat; to increase military cooperation and information exchange; to contribute to stability in the region through democratic control over the military and balanced civil-military relations and to increase interoperability for *inter alia* peace-keeping operations on the basis of a common conceptual approach.¹⁹

I. CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AND ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE): TOWARD AN EURO-CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY SPACE

The role and responsibility of the OSCE on the territory covering all of Europe, Euro-Asian Russia, Trans-Caucasia and Central Asia (by geographic

proximity one could describe this as the Euro-Central Asian region) is very high. This is the only organisation, which unites all states of the region and is charged with the responsibility of ensuring security and co-operation. The OSCE regarded as significant for the Central Asian republics by providing them an added instrument to balance Russia's influence as well as its domination and to enhance their presence on the international scene.

Soon after their independence, the Central Asian states gained membership of the OSCE. But it was not by virtue of their geographical location but as a legacy of their position in the former Soviet Union. As a result they were positioned in a space of security and co-operation much broader than that of the post-Soviet space. Since the strengthening of security and co-operation is the major mission of the OSCE, the Central Asian states are very much interested in contributing to the success of this mission. The active participation of Central Asian states in the activities of the OSCE has helped to bolster up their security, sovereignty and territorial integrity, development of legislative and democratic political institutions, the respect of human rights and rights of national minorities.

The creation of a united Euro-Central Asian space of security and co-operation does not contradict the efforts of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's to create a system of security on the Euro-Asian continent by convening Conference on Co-operation and Confidence Building Measures in Asia' (CCCMA). The latter initiative is, too, derived from the experience of the European OSCE security process and has also many similarities with the OSCE experience of collaboration with certain Mediterranean countries which are not members of this organisation. In this way, the OSCE should also accept positively the processes of regional integration in Central Asia within the framework of the CIS.
The leaders of the Central Asian states believe that Euro-Central Asian system of security may place the Central Asian region in the European processes of security and extend onto its territory the common principles of inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity. The Central Asian states would like to enter into a broader security space than the post-Soviet space, which might reduce the domination of Russia in the Central Asian region, and to increase opportunities of the OSCE to implement or control peace-keeping operations on its territory. Further, they argue that the Euro-Asian system of security may stop disputes about the possible expansion of NATO, diminish frictions between Russia and NATO, Russia and the USA, and Russia and the West as a whole, in connection with Russia’s policy in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space. The border between the ‘far’ and ‘near’ abroad would be eliminated in favour of the single Euro-Central Asian space of security and after that there would emerge a reasonable balance of mutual relations between the OSCE, NATO, EU, and CIS, which as a whole under the aegis of the UN might characterise the Euro-Central Asian system of security.

To come closer and to integrate within the OSCE security structure, a seminar sponsored by the OSCE on ‘Security and Confidence-Building Measures in Central Asia’ was held in the Tajik capital Dushanbe, on 24 April, 1996.20 This seminar focussed on the ongoing conflict in Tajikistan and its impact on security in the entire Central Asian region.

Another important summit of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) subsequently organised in Lisbon on 2 December 1996, was participated by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Uzbek President Islam Karimov. While addressing a Press Conference soon after Lisbon Summit, President Karimov disclosed that ‘Our primary purpose in participating in this Organisation is to get security guarantees for Uzbekistan – for our people, for our country’.21

20 SWB, SU/2598, P.G/1, April 27, 1996.
21 SWB, SU/2787, P.G/4, December 5, 1996.
Above all, the strategy of security of the Central Asian states would be effectively realised within a number of concentric circles. The system of national security is placed within regional Central Asian and CIS security frameworks, which in turn are built into the Euro-Central Asian and global systems of security. At the same time, it is very important for the Central Asian states, whose armed forces never will be comparable with the armed forces of such neighbours as Russia and China, to rely mostly upon effective foreign policy and economic cooperation with other states, above all with neighbouring countries.

After a few months the Secretary-General of the OSCE, Jiancarlo Aragona, visited Uzbekistan on July 14, 1997, to discuss with President Islam Karimov regional and international security, the situation in Afghanistan and the prospects for co-operation between the OSCE and Uzbekistan.

Jiancarlo Aragona stated that the OSCE shared Uzbekistan’s concern at the state of security in Central Asia, and that he wanted “to emphasise particularly the role played by President Islam Karimov in his activities within the OSCE framework, his initiative to make the neutral Asian region a zone free from nuclear weapons.” 22 He spoke highly about the results of his stay in the republic and added that “the mutual co-operation between the OSCE and Uzbekistan will rise to a new level and that the OSCE is prepared to offer Uzbekistan assistance in different spheres.” 23

II. CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AND NATO’s PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE’ PROGRAMME

Relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation hold the greatest importance for the Central Asian State’s strategic relations with the West. Soon after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and at the beginning of the independent existence of Kazakhstan, President Nazarbayev declared that:

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22 SWB, SU/2973, P.G/1, July 17, 1997.
23 Ibid.,
The North-Atlantic Treaty has a suitable goal for our rapprochement to assist the democratic development of the states of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, and to prevent regional conflicts as far as possible. ... NATO member-states for the purposes of co-operation with these states have committed themselves to providing their accumulated experience and considerable expert potential in defence policy. ... Considering all this, we will broaden contacts with NATO, provided their sphere and limits are strictly determined and they are not damaging for military co-operation with the CIS framework or bilateral military ties'.

In December 1991, as part of a strategy to integrate members of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet successors states within the Western Security structure, NATO heads of states and government responded by establishing the North Atlantic Co-operation Council. Later on this basis a completely new form of co-operation-programme ‘Partnership for Peace’ (PfP) was launched at the initiative of the American President Bill Clinton at the NATO summit in January 1994 at Brussels.

The process of integrating the Soviet successor states into the Western security structure was further ensured when the Alliance during its summit meeting in January 1994 at Brussels ratified its new Partnership for Peace Programme. The strategic objectives of NATO and PfP in this context can be summarised as follows: to prevent the emergence under conditions of political uncertainty and economic chaos of new totalitarian regimes and militarised states; to prevent the creation within the CIS framework of a new anti-NATO military bloc; to prevent the merger of Central Asian states with the Islamic world —

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especially with the countries where the ideology of orthodox Islam prevails; to assist the co-operation of the new states in order to provide regional and global security; to assist the co-operation of the new states in defence planning and defence issues by taking part in training-military exercises; facilitating the transparency of national defence planning and budgeting processes; ensuring democratic control of armed forces; maintaining the capability to contribute to UN and/or OSCE operations; developing co-operative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training and exercise in order to undertake peacekeeping missions and humanitarian operations when called upon to do so.26

NATO has devoted considerable efforts to implement these objectives and as a result the contacts of NATO with Central Asian states are developing and joint programmes in the sphere of security are being carried out. Within a year of NATO inviting the new Central Asian states to co-operate under the Partnership for Peace programme, the framework document was signed with all these states except Tajikistan. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have participated in the ‘Partnership for Peace’ (PfP) programme. The interest of newly independent Central Asian states to develop partnership with NATO is conditioned also by their belief that it will create options for military, political, economic and technical co-operation with the Alliance in establishing and developing their national armies. It is believed that such partnership will promote the creation of armed forces in these countries that will comply with democratic principles and world standards and be able to participate in UN peacekeeping operation.

26 Ibid.,
Thus NATO, for the first time, directly reached beyond the Ural mountains through the participation of Central Asian republics' in the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC) and Partnership for Peace ( PfP) programme.  

Having gained full political sovereignty, the Central Asian governments perceive the involvement of these various international institutions in their region as one of the basic guarantees for their stability and independence. The PfP programme serves the objective of strengthening and modernising their national armies. They considers this co-operation, supplemented by other military co-operation agreements with individual NATO countries, especially with the USA, France, Turkey and Germany, as an effective way of reducing their military and security dependence on Russia. Contrary to proposals by Moscow to reform the CIS armed forces – reintegrating their forces in a common military structure before their modernisation – both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have sought to strengthen their military independence with Western support.

At the same time, the strategic objectives of NATO and PfP is to involve Central Asian countries in the European security structure based on co-operative processes and on mutual consultations in case of threat; to increase military co-operation and information exchange; to contribute to stability in the region through democratic control over the military and balanced civil-military relations and to increase interoperability for interalia peacekeeping operations on the basis of a common conceptual approach.  

28 Ibid.,
Since the Partnership for Peace programme was initiated, military and civil representatives of the newly Central Asian states have taken part in the majority of events conducted within its framework: in seminars and conferences concerning security problems and the principles of constructing armed forces in democratic societies, and in various NATO training activities during which the objectives of peacekeeping activities have been elaborated. Military officers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan have also been welcomed to different military schools of NATO member states.

Central Asian units of armed forces have, for the first time, taken part in military exercises in the State of Louisiana, USA, under NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme. The military units from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan’s armed forces took part in the official opening of the exercises on August 8, 1995, alongside their counterparts from eleven other European countries and the USA, Germany, Great Britain and Canada.29

To deepen this co-operation, NATO Headquarters prepared similar more exercises. A 60 man battalion of Central Asian peacekeepers made up of Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Kazakh soldiers, which was still being formed, participated in the Cooperative Osprey Exercise in North Carolina, USA, in accordance with the NATO Partnership for Peace military exercise, on 16 August 1996.

Further to deepen co-operation with NATO, the Uzbek and the US military personnel held joint military manoeuvres on June 6-9, 1997, in the Fergana Valley, in Eastern Uzbekistan. The Ultra Balance – 97 exercises were held in accordance with a 1995 bilateral agreement between the Uzbek Defence Ministry

29 *SWB*, SU/2379, P.S1/2, August 11, 1995.
and the US Defence Department. A total nine US officers headed by Vice-Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force, General Joseph Ralston were involved. Uzbek Foreign Minister, Abdul Aziz Kamilov, held talks with US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albrigh, in Washington on June 12, 1997, and the two sides agreed to form a joint commission to expand co-operation in the areas of defence.  

The first stage of multi-national peacekeeping exercises under the NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme, involving troops from three Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, which had agreed to create a Central Asian peacekeeping battalion under UN auspices, as well as troops from Russia, the USA, Turkey, Denmark, Ukraine, Georgia and the Baltic States, began in southern Kazakhstan on September 15-17, 1997.  

A contingent of Kyrgyz and Uzbek troops also participated in air borne assault training exercise in Fort Brogg in North Carolina, in USA, as the first phase of exercises.  

The second stage of multi-national peacekeeping exercises with participation of a total of 1,400 troops from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the USA, Russia, Turkey, Georgia and Latvia, began near the Uzbek capital, in the town of Chirchik, on September 18, 1997. It was organised within the framework of NATO’s Partnership for Peace Programme. This special peacekeeping exercise ended on September 21, 1997.  

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30 SWB, SU/2942, P.S1/2, June 11, 1997.  
31 SWB, SU/3026, P.S1/2, September 17, 1997.  
32 SWB, SU/3028, P.S1/2, September 19, 1997.
The second bilateral joint Kazakh-US military exercises the Balance-Kayak-98 began on June 6, and lasted until June 27, 1998, in outside Alma-Ata. According to a senior Kazakh military spokesman, a Kazakh paratroops brigade and members of a group of US special service troops participated in this military exercise.33

A long peacekeeping exercise The Centrasbat-98 was also held in Central Asia, near Tashkent on September 22, 1998. As a part of the NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme, more than 700 servicemen from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, the United States, Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan participated in this exercise.34

These military exercises were held following a decision of the Interstate Council of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the three states whose servicemen form part of the Central Asian Battalion of UN peacekeeping forces. In addition to the battalion, a company from the 201st Russian Motorised-Rifle Division stationed in Tajikistan, 235 soldiers from a US Mountain division and also servicemen from Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan also took part in the manoeuvres.

During the course of the week long exercises on Uzbek and Kyrgyz territory, various tasks were rehearsed; protecting airfields, repulsing attacks on columns of peacekeepers, escorting humanitarian aid cargoes and refugees, and mine clearance. These tasks perfectly reflected today’s realities: the countries in the region are clearly concerned about the development of the situation near the CIS’s southern borders where Iran and the Taleban movement, which controls a large part of Afghanistan, are on the brink of a large-scale war.

33 SWB, SU/3247, P.S1/5, June 8, 1998.
34 Kommersant Daily, Moscow, September 23, 1998.
Besides military co-operation and peacekeeping exercises, under the Partnership for Peace Programme, Central Asian states have also established diplomatic relations with NATO by exchanging envoys mutually on regular basis.

A US military delegation, on the diplomatic mission to the Central Asian states, led by the US permanent representative to NATO, Robert Hunter, visited Kazakh capital Alma-Aty on 3 April, 1996. He met with Kazakh Defence Minister Alibek Kasymov and First Deputy Foreign Minister Nurlan Danenov, and expressed deep concern over regional security as well as US willingness to assist financially in the creation of a battalion of peacekeeping forces of Central Asian states under UN auspices.35

Uzbek President Islam Karimov, while talking to the visiting US delegation praised co-operative efforts of NATO, and expressed his desire that further co-operation under NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme will be important for Uzbekistan, and that the US delegation’s visit would ‘create good preconditions for strengthening our developing relations’.36

Soon after the visit of the US led delegation to Central Asian states, a NATO delegation headed by the Commander-in-Chief of the US Atlantic Command and former Supreme Commander of NATO’s Atlantic Command, Lt. General-John Sheehan met senior Turkmen ministers on April 15, 1996 and discussed possibility of Turkmen troop’s participation in NATO’S Partnership for Peace programme. This was the second high ranking NATO delegation to visit Turkmenistan in the last fortnight as the Robert Hunter, US representative to NATO visited the republic on April 8, 1996.37

35 SWB, SU/2581, P.G/2, April 5, 1996.
36 Pravda Vostoka, Tashkent, April 6, 1996.
37 SWB, SU/2595, P.G/3, April 17, 1996.
The NATO delegation also visited Kyrgyzstan and met Kyrgyz Defence Minister Col. General Mryzakhan Subanov. Both officials agreed that 22 Kyrgyz servicemen of the Joint Kazakh-Kyrgyz Battalion will take part in a large-scale NATO summer military exercise for a US marine Corp. An accord was also signed by both the officials, which allowed to continue the practice of training of Kyrgyz soldiers and officers in NATO military schools.\(^\text{38}\)

In the post-Soviet era, the bilateral contacts and co-operation between NATO and the Kyrgyz Republic as well as a number of high-level political and military contacts, including visits by senior NATO, US and other officials to Bishkek, have created favourable conditions for expanding the military co-operation and strategic relations. In June 1995 and May 1996, a delegation of Kyrgyz military and government representatives visited NATO headquarters to familiarise themselves with NATO’s activities and the framework for co-operation.\(^\text{39}\) Kyrgyzstan has also participated in dozens of peacekeeping exercises in the framework of NATO’s Partnership for Peace programmes. These exercises enhanced the level and quality of training of Kyrgyz troops and enabled them to come closer to modern standards for peacekeeping operations. The Kyrgyz Republic has also established relation with the George C.Marshall Centre for Security Studies, in Garmisch, Germany, which sponsors various activities relevant to the problems of Central Asia.\(^\text{40}\)

To develop further military co-operation and transparency in relations with the newly independent Central Asian States, NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana, in his second visit to these republics, arrived Alma-Aty on March 11,

\(^{38}\) Ibid.,
\(^{40}\) Ibid., p.33.
1997. Both Javier Solana and President Nazarbayev agreed to broaden co-operation with NATO within the framework of the Partnership for Peace programme. Solana expressed NATO's readiness to help in training of Kazakh's military officers.\(^\text{41}\)

Javier Solana also had talks with Uzbek Defence Minister Rustom Ahmedov and Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Komilov in Tashkent on March 13, 1997. Komilov clarified the stand of Uzbekistan to the visiting NATO Secretary General stating that Uzbekistan in accordance with its foreign policy principles would not join any military or military-political blocs.\(^\text{42}\) However, Solana's talks with Ahmadov focussed on the forthcoming exercises of the Central Asian peacekeeping battalion, formed by Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan under the aegis of the UN.

III. CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the wake of disintegration of the Soviet Union, the newly independent Central Asian states were featuring proportionally high on the United State's agenda. Without major changes in approach and perceptions of the US policy vis-a-vis Central Asian states, full diplomatic missions in all Central Asian state's capitals and official visits to the region have been organised at the level of the US Vice-President, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defence.

Soon after the collapse of Soviet Union in December 1991, the United States started to focus on developing bilateral strategic relation with all Central Asian states, which subsequently began with the visit of James Baker, the U.S.

\(^{41}\) *SWB, SU/2867, P.G/1, March 15, 1997.*

\(^{42}\) *Ibid.*
Secretary of States, to the region in January 1992. Shortly afterward the United States opened diplomatic representations in all these republics. Although, main US interests in the region are economic in nature, rather than strategic, but priorities are to resolve the issue of Kazakhstan’s nuclear weapons as well as to dismantle the considerable number of nuclear arsenals and warheads which had inherited from the Soviet Union. Furthermore, to fend off the danger of proliferation by preventing the sale or otherwise transfer of nuclear fissile materials or technology to ‘the Hot Spots’ of other countries of the world especially to Iran, or international armed terrorist groups; to prevent the spread of radical Islam, to contain influence of Iran and to promote Turkey’s role as the main regional players as well as roll model for Central Asian states; to develop an appropriate and important role for the United States in exploiting the region’s mineral resources especially its oil and natural gas; to anchor these countries within the Western security structure sphere of influence, and economic system; and to promote western democracy and human rights are also considered to be in the agenda of the US policy towards Central Asian states. At the same time, the United States also wanted to achieve these goals without in any way jeopardising relations with Russian Federation.

The US–Central Asian states’ strategic relations have strengthened further more after the frequent visits to Washington by the President of the each republic and the U.S. officials to the Central Asian states.

The U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry, while on a diplomatic mission to the region, visited Uzbek capital Tashkent, on April 5, 1995, where he discussed possible prospects of broad military co-operation between the two

44 Ibid.,
countries with the Uzbek President Islam Karimov as well as Defence Minister Major-General Rustam Ahmedov. While discussing with William Perry, Islam Karimov hailed the US presence in Central Asia as a 'guarantee of stability'. Both the leaders reiterated their commitment for 'close military co-operation between the two countries' participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme, and finally agreed for a 'programme of joint action envisaging re-training of Uzbekistan's national military personnel and conducting of joint military exercises'.

Describing Uzbekistan as 'an island of stability in the roaring sea of instability', Perry stated 'Uzbekistan's participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme had been a major factor in the republic's transformation into a region of peace and security'.

Subsequently, Uzbek President Islam Karimov, visited Washington on June 24, 1996 and signed a package of agreements on economic and military co-operation with the USA. US President Bill Clinton assured his visiting Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov that he will continue to help Uzbekistan to set-up strong ties with the West as well as integrate fully with the world community. He also stated that his country would assist Uzbekistan in establishing 'constructive' relations with neighbouring countries in Central Asia.

The talk between the two Presidents primarily focussed on security issues 'especially in the military sphere', security of Central Asian states and ways of expanding Washington – Tashkent strategic co-operation. US Defence Secretary

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45 SWB, SU/2273, P.G/1, April 8, 1995.
46 Ibid., p. G/2.
47 Ibid.,
48 SWB, SU/2649, P.G/4, June 27, 1996.
William Perry described Uzbekistan as an ‘important strategic partner of the United States’. Karimov expressed his country’s willingness to expand its participation in NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme, and assured that the newly formed Central Asian Peace Keeping Battalion will participate in the forthcoming military exercises – the Co-operative Osprey, to be held on August 16, 1996, in North Carolina, USA.

To deepen further bilateral relationship between the two countries. Uzbek President Islam Karimov again visited Washington on February 27, 1998, where he met his US counterpart Bill Clinton, and confirmed their commitment to expand relations between the two countries.

The US president stated that owing to Uzbekistan’s participation in NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme and the OSCE, the foundations for peace and security were being laid in Central Asia.

The Uzbek president’s message highlighted the importance attached by Tashkent to the promotion of its relations with Washington and described the USA as a ‘reliable partner’. Karimov’s message also included that ‘to Uzbekistan, the development of large-scale and long-term relations with the USA as the world’s leading power is a strategic priority in its foreign policy’.

The Uzbek President’s message also supplemented the possibility of widening bilateral relationship by stressing the commitment of both countries that ‘our two countries are interested in a continuation of the dialogue on various aspect of global and regional security with regard to which the positions of the two

49 SWB, SU/2650, P.G/2, June 28, 1996.
countries are now close and or fully coincide. Uzbekistan in every way supports
the US efforts aimed at ensuring security and co-operation in Central Asia. Experience has shown that the USA can become a reliable support and guarantor
of the independent and free development of the newly independent states in the region'.

In addition to the joint statement, the US and Uzbek sides also signed a
number of documents, including a plan of co-operation between the US Defence
Department and the Uzbek Defence Ministry for 1998.

The Joint Commission, formed on the initiative of the US and Uzbek Presidents, also discussed a number of bilateral issues, including the progress of military co-operation and regional stability.

Besides USA, Uzbekistan has also developed a long term military co-
operation programme with Germany. Col. Burkhard Kuenapfel, the German military attache in Tashkent, told in a news conference on April 11, 1997, in Tashkent, that 'Uzbek tank and artillery personnel and signals and air defence
officials, whose rank ranges from deputy defence minister to commissioned officer, are undergoing training in Hamburg, Munich and other German cities'.

He also reiterated that the German officers will act as advisors to the Uzbek army and take part in servicing Uzbek Mig – 29 Fighter planes, and purchase of a number of the German army’s Alpha-Jet training aircraft by Uzbekistan.

52 Ibid., p. G/3.
54 Ibid.,
So far as the US-Kazakh bilateral military co-operation is concerned, USA has given special status to Kazakhstan because of its possession of strategic nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Although after the dissolution of the USSR, USA persuaded Kazakhstan to sign Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty – I (START - I) as well as START – II and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But only after the visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Washington on February 13-17, 1994, where he secured a pledge from US President Bill Clinton to develop bilateral and diplomatic relations, the strategic relationship developed.

During the meeting Nazarbayev handed over the ratification documents for Kazakhstan’s entry to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). He and Clinton signed a US-Kazakh “Charter of Democratic Partnership”, a memorandum of understanding on defence co-operation and on exchanges of technical information and on co-operation in the field of nuclear safety.\(^{55}\)

At a press conference after their meeting President Clinton described the meeting as “very good” and said that it marked a “bright new era in US-Kazakh relations”.\(^{56}\)

Nazarbayev also visited the Pentagon on 14 February, where he met US Defence Secretary William Perry and signed two agreements on military co-operation. One agreement gave “official status” to co-operation between the defence ministries and armed forces of the two states, the other concerned the setting up of a commission to help Kazakhstan’s defence industry to develop new consumer markets.\(^{57}\)

\(^{55}\) SWB, SU/1926, P>G/1, February 19, 1994.
\(^{56}\) Ibid.,
\(^{57}\) Ibid.,
In Washington, an agreement was also signed by both leaders, where $84,000,000 contribution to the cost of dismantling Kazakhstan’s nuclear weapons was granted. In another agreement, which was also signed by the both Heads of States bounded the USA to pursue ‘active (diplomatic) measures’ in the event of Kazakhstan’s border being threatened’. 58

The US-Kazakh military co-operation further developed after his third official visit of President Nazarbayev to Washington. President Nazarbayev signed an accord on increased military co-operation with US Defence Secretary, William Cohen, on November 17, 1997. 59 This deal also provided for US assistance in training of Kazakh’s military personnel.

To develop bilateral military co-operation with Kyrgyzstan, a US delegation led by the co-ordinator of US policy in the Commonwealth of Independent States countries, James Collins, visited Bishkek on March 8, 1996, and after discussing with senior Kyrgyz military officials as well as President Askar Akayev for military and economic co-operation, reached an agreement on Kyrgyzstan’s closer involvement with NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme. 60 Subsequently, the official visit of President Askar Akayev to the USA on July 9, 1997, which culminated in a meeting with Vice-President Al-Gore and President Bill Clinton, further strengthened bilateral military and economic co-operation.

Similarly both Turkmenistan and Tajikistan also followed the policy of political path to develop diplomatic and strategic relations with the United States.

58 Ibid.,
59 Keesing’s Record of World Events, Vol. 43, No.11, p.41912, 1997.
60 SWB, SU/2557, P.G3, March 10, 1996.
of America. When US delegates headed by James Collins visited Ashkabad, on March 9, 1996, President Neyazov met them and discussed three packages of issues-political, economic and military.\footnote{SWB, SU/2557, P.G4, March 10, 1996.}

With the passage of time, each Central Asian state has unilaterally pursued a policy aimed at diversifying its military relations with the USA, and other European NATO member countries. It is quite clear that an exclusive dependence on Russia in the defence and military sphere is not to the liking of the Central Asian leaders. They are trying to become self-reliant in defence matters by moving out of the Russian orbit. However, this integration into the Western international security structure has also its own pitfalls as it compromises the independent development of the newly independent Central Asian republics.