A Cacophony of Voices

A Neoclassical Realist study of United States Strategy toward Central Asia and Southern Caucasus 1991-2006

Björn Ottosson
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Björn Ottosson
Till mor och far
Sammanfattning


Studien teori vilar på tre pelare. Den första pelaren utgör av strukturrealismen. Studien utgår från att den internationella miljön utövar ett starkt tryck


Denna studie visar att USA:s strategi gentemot CASC till en avsevärd del var formad av USA:s specifika strategiska kultur. Genom hela den stude-rade perioden var USA:s officiellt deklarerade mål att försöka integrera regionen i den liberala demokratiska gemenskapen. USA:s agerande var ofta förenligt med denna retorik, men gäng på gång agerade man också oförenligt med denna. Inte minst när spridningen av demokratiska värderingar förenades med kostnader.

En av studiens mest intressanta slutsatser är att USA:s specifika strategiska kultur hade en stark påverkan på USA:s strategi oberoende av trycket från den internationella miljön. Studien visar också på hur USA:s strategi gentemot CASC var inkonsistent, inkoherent, byråkratiskt okoordinerad, mottaglig för påtryckningar från inhemska intressegrupper, samt frekvent underordnad strategiska målsättningar utanför regionen.
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### Abbreviations

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<td>AIOC</td>
<td>Azerbaijan International Operating Company</td>
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<td>AOR</td>
<td>Area of Responsibility</td>
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<td>AWACS</td>
<td>Airborne Warning and Control System</td>
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<td>BTC</td>
<td>Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Pipeline</td>
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<td>CACI</td>
<td>Central Asia Caucasus Institute</td>
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<td>CASC</td>
<td>Central Asia Southern Caucasus</td>
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<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>United States Central Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFE</td>
<td>Conventional Armed Forces in Europe</td>
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<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CINC</td>
<td>Commander in Chief</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>CSAR</td>
<td>Combat Search and Rescue</td>
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<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<td>CSL</td>
<td>Cooperative Security Location</td>
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<td>CTRP</td>
<td>Cooperative Threat Reduction Program</td>
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<td>DCI</td>
<td>Director of Central Intelligence</td>
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<td>DPG</td>
<td>Defense Planning Guidance</td>
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<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
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<td>EAPC</td>
<td>Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council</td>
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<td>EBRD</td>
<td>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>Eurasian Economic Community</td>
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<td>ETIM</td>
<td>East Turkestan Islamic Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUCOM</td>
<td>United States European Command</td>
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<td>EXIM</td>
<td>Export–Import Bank of the United States</td>
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<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation</td>
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<td>FCO</td>
<td>British Foreign and Commonwealth Office</td>
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<td>FMF</td>
<td>Foreign Military Funding</td>
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<td>FOS</td>
<td>Forward Operating Location</td>
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<td>FSA</td>
<td>Freedom Support Act</td>
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<td>FSU</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
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<td>GUAM</td>
<td>Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova Organization for Democracy and Economic Development</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Court of Justice</td>
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<td>IGO</td>
<td>International Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>ILSA</td>
<td>Iran and Libya Sanctions Act</td>
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<td>IMET</td>
<td>International Military Education and Training</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IMU</td>
<td>Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>IPAP</td>
<td>Individual Partnership Action Plan</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
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<td>IRC</td>
<td>International Red Cross</td>
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<td>IRI</td>
<td>International Republican Institute</td>
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<td>IRP</td>
<td>The Tajik Islamic Renaissance Party</td>
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<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security and Assistance Force</td>
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<td>ISI</td>
<td>Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence</td>
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<td>JSCC</td>
<td>Joint Security Cooperation Consultations</td>
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<td>JSTARS</td>
<td>Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System</td>
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<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td>Karshi–Khanabad Air Base</td>
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<td>MEP</td>
<td>Main Export Pipeline</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFN</td>
<td>Most Favored Nation</td>
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<td>NACC</td>
<td>North Atlantic Cooperation Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>NEPDG</td>
<td>National Energy Policy Development Group</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NIE</td>
<td>National Intelligence Estimate</td>
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<td>NIS</td>
<td>Newly Independent States</td>
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<td>NMD</td>
<td>National Missile Defense</td>
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<td>NPT</td>
<td>Non-Proliferation Treaty</td>
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<td>NSA</td>
<td>National Security Agency</td>
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<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
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<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Security Strategy</td>
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<td>OBC</td>
<td>Overseas Basing Commission</td>
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<td>OEF</td>
<td>Operation Enduring Freedom</td>
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<td>OIF</td>
<td>Operation Iraqi Freedom</td>
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<td>OPIC</td>
<td>Overseas Private Investment Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARP</td>
<td>Planning and Review Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDD</td>
<td>Presidential Decision Directive</td>
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<td>SCO</td>
<td>Shanghai Cooperation Organization</td>
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<td>SOFA</td>
<td>Status of Forces Agreement</td>
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<td>START</td>
<td>Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty</td>
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<td>TDA</td>
<td>United States Trade and Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIFA</td>
<td>Trade and Investment Framework Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAV</td>
<td>Unmanned Aerial Vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTO</td>
<td>United Tajik Opposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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Acknowledgements

Writing a thesis is a solitary undertaking. Fortunate for me, I have been surrounded by people that have given me moral support and invaluable advice throughout the entire process. This dissertation would not be what it is had I not had two great supervisors – Jan Hallenberg and Kjell Engelbrekt. Professor Hallenberg has offered me more than one could possibly ask of a supervisor, and his comments on the text as well as his untiring reassurance and long experience as a supervisor have been tremendously important for me in completing the dissertation. Professor Engelbrekt is a meticulous reader and has throughout the process provided me with sharp and insightful comments, which the final text has greatly benefitted from. I will never forget their generosity, encouragement and support.

I have also been privileged to receive comments from number of people associated with the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University, the Swedish National Defense College and the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. I am particularly indebted to Jonas Tallberg, Magnus Reitberger, Anke Schmidt-Felzmann and Johan Engwall for their thoughtful reading of the manuscript at a late stage. They not only helped me identify shortcomings in the manuscript but also offered useful advice on how to further improve the thesis. I am also grateful for the comments and suggestions provided by Michael Blomdahl and Mark Rhinard at an earlier stage of the process.

I wish to thank Svante Cornell and the Institute for Security and Development Policy, who made it possible for me to spend time at the Central Asia Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. My time there was very stimulating. I am indebted to Katarina Lesandric, who made me feel so welcome, and to Dr. Frederick Starr who not only shared his deep knowledge of Central Asia and the Caucasus region but also provided me insightful advice regarding writing and life in academia.

Many friends and colleagues have helped, provided thoughtful input and made my life more intellectually stimulating throughout the years. Lily Lanefelt, Idris Ahmed, Jacob Westberg, Niklas Bremberg, Nina Burge, Max Waltman, Fredrik Doeser, Hans Agnè, Eva Hansson, Ulf Mörkenstam, Barbara Kunz, Linda Ekström, Tyra Hertz, Monica Svantesson, Linus Hagström, Per Daléus, Andreas Gottardis, Karl Gustafsson, Michele Micheletti, Diane Sainsbury as well as well as the larger community of Ph.D. students at the Department of Political Science in Stockholm deserve my deepest gratitude.
I also send my appreciation to Merrick Tabor for proof reading the manuscript and for improving my English. In addition, I want to thank Lena Helldner, Schauki Karim, Pasquale Cricenti, Aline Rojas Österling and Pernilla Nordahl for their help in practical matters related to my Ph.D. project. I express my gratitude to Helge Ax:son Johnsons Foundation for financially supporting the final phase of my thesis.

My greatest debt goes to my family – Christina, Bengt, Jens, and Cathrine – for their unconditional love and unwavering support during the entire project. Finally, I want to address a big ‘thank you’ to those who have been affected the most by this project – Beatriz, Sara and Björn.
1. Introduction

When the Soviet Union disintegrated, "a black hole" was created in the middle of Eurasia.1 Almost overnight, many Soviet republics became independent states. Historically this was a totally new situation for many of them, especially for the states of Central Asia and Southern Caucasus (CASC).2 It also left the U.S. in a unique position. It was now the world’s sole superpower and arguably "the most powerful global actor the world has ever seen".3 For U.S. policymakers, CASC was a blank spot on the map, since there had never been any significant contacts between the U.S. and these states. It is said that nature abhors a vacuum, and a question that follows from these dramatic changes is: Did the U.S. take advantage of the newly created power vacuum in the heart of Asia? If so, what did the U.S. do? Which strategy did it choose to pursue?

Not surprisingly, there was no consensus among policymakers about how the U.S. should act in relation to CASC, since analysts derived their expectations from different assumptions about the nature of international politics and U.S. strategy. On the basis of the assumptions of offensive realism, one would expect the U.S. to establish a presence in CASC quickly before Russia could recuperate and reassert itself, since the new power asymmetry created an opportunity for the U.S. do so. Such a move would also help the U.S. to contain Iran and the new emerging power, China. It is more difficult to derive precise expectations from defensive realism, since it allows a certain indeterminacy concerning the disposition of states toward action. However, since the Soviet collapse dramatically increased U.S. security, it would most probably lead the U.S. to stay out of CASC in order to avoid self-defeating overstretch. For the United States to devote resources to the land-locked CASC and possibly provoke regional powers, at a time when the threat of the rise of a Eurasian hegemon had just vanished, would be irrational from a defensive realist viewpoint. If the U.S. had pursued one of these two courses of action, we would not have a puzzle. However, the U.S. did neither.

Instead, the U.S. slowly and gradually became engaged in CASC, and over the years its actions have been rather puzzling. For instance: it banned aid to Azerbaijan, one of the two states in the region former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski described as geographically pivotal; it supported Kyrgyzstan as a model for the region, despite it being one of the

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2 CASC is considered to comprise Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.
smaller and poorest countries in the region with no chance of ever having such a role; it supported a highly controversial pipeline project, despite the fact that the commercial viability of this was questioned and that cheaper and shorter routes were available; it remained remarkably quiet when Uzbek security forces killed hundreds of its own citizens in what became known as the Andijan massacre; it described CASC as strategically important, occasionally even as vital, and declared ambitious goals, but then followed up with insufficient action and meagre funds in support of those goals; and, finally, it managed to have its forces evicted from Uzbekistan, the other country Brzezinski described as pivotal, at a time when it was regarded by the U.S. military as the core state of the region.

This development and these outcomes are puzzling, and no one predicted this kind of U.S. interaction with the region. One reason this is the case is that so many studies of strategy assume that the U.S., and states in general, act coherently and have some sort of plan. Furthermore, such studies often claim implicitly or explicitly that states rationally and coherently pursue a specific strategy. For instance, John Ikenberry has concluded that the U.S. has followed a strategy of order formation by creating an institutional order with constitutional characteristics and congenial rules that protect its interests, maintain its power and extend its influence, whereas John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt have argued that the U.S. has pursued a strategy of offshore balancing. Christopher Layne, on the other hand, in an attempt to challenge the latter claim has argued that the U.S. is pursuing a strategy of extra-regional hegemony. In the aftermath of the decision on the part of the U.S. to pursue regime change in Iraq, some authors have insisted that the U.S. is in fact pursuing a strategy aimed at establishing primacy and even a global empire.

Another problem with this literature, in addition to these assumptions, is its level of aggregation. Most descriptions of U.S. strategy are so highly generalized that they become virtually impossible to falsify. The U.S. is generally said to support liberal values, such as democracy and human rights, and to attempt to institutionalize them. More comprehensively, the U.S. is said to seek to maintain a balance of power on the Eurasian landmass. It is hard to argue to the contrary. Highly aggregated studies are important, since they attempt to identify broad patterns and make general assessments. No

doubt many of them have made substantial contributions to our understanding of U.S. strategy.

However, what happens if we take a closer look? Do these generalizations capture U.S. post-Cold War strategy toward all of the regions of the globe, or is it rather the case that it pursues different strategies toward some regions? Furthermore, will it still look like the U.S. is pursuing a coherent strategy, or does its actions look less coordinated and coherent when we scrutinize its activities more closely? By looking at U.S. actions toward Central Asia and Southern Caucasus, my study will to explore this theme in a systematic and detailed manner. The aim of this study is thus to answer the following questions: **What was the U.S. strategy toward Central Asia and Southern Caucasus from 1991 to 2006, and why did it evolve the way it did? Did the U.S. act in a consistent and coherent manner toward the region? If not, why?**

There are two major reasons that this particular aim is worth pursuing. The first is empirical. U.S. relations with CASC, in particular, have not been studied sufficiently. Precious few studies about these relations have been published, especially if compared with the abundance of studies made of U.S.-Middle East or U.S.-Europe relations. There is also a general lack of knowledge about the region, including its potentials, dangers and relations with the U.S. It offers the U.S., among other things, access to non-OPEC controlled energy and thus presents an opportunity for the U.S. to diversify its energy supplies and decrease its dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf region. There is also a remarkable gap in the literature on the U.S. war on terrorism. After 9/11 numerous books and studies have been published about the subject, but a majority of them overlooks or understates CASC’s role in this war. The Central Asian republics provided crucial bases for military and intelligence operations in the war on terror. Access to bases was a crucial component of *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF), and U.S. combat operations in Northern Afghanistan could not have been sustained without them. The air corridor over the South Caucasus was also of great importance for successful deployment in and around Afghanistan.

Since the U.S. became militarily involved in the region, it has been forced to make many choices worthy of study by anybody interested in U.S. strategy. The stakes in the region are considerable, and U.S. relations with local governments are crucial for a positive outcome in Afghanistan. This makes accurate knowledge of the U.S. relationship with CASC highly relevant. The present study is probably the most detailed tracing of the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC hitherto available. It will provide the reader with a narrative that will increase our understanding of this insufficiently

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7 *Operation Enduring Freedom* is the U.S. Government’s name to describe the global war on terrorism.
studied subject and fill gaps in existing literature. This is the primary contribution of the present study.

Moreover, as already suggested above, if one assumes that the U.S. seeks to pursue a clear and coherent strategy, its declared policy and its actions toward CASC have been quite puzzling. They have frequently been short-sighted, ambivalent and inconsistent and have given the impression of being a product of contradictory impulses. A few examples of these puzzling actions have already been cited, including the spectacular diplomatic failure in Uzbekistan. In early 2002, the U.S. signed a strategic partnership with Uzbekistan. Due to a combination of miscalculations and mixed messages, the partnership quickly soured, and in 2005 U.S. forces were evicted from the country. This was striking, since many in the U.S. had just a few years earlier begun to perceive Uzbekistan as the potential core state of Central Asia. This study hopes to shed some light on this failure, not only because of its strategic importance but also because it was not brought about by an isolated event. I will show that the Uzbekistan debacle was the result of a particular pattern of actions symptomatic of U.S. relations with the region.

The second reason for conducting this research is theoretical. Major shifts in the distribution of power are of great interest in most perspectives on international relations, particularly those inspired by realism. Shifts that change the polarity of the system are even more important, since system polarity is the main independent variable for structural realism.8

Not surprisingly, the Soviet collapse was accompanied by numerous studies and predictions. Often these included some strategic advice derived from their particular understandings of international politics. Even structural realists who claimed that their theory was not about the policies of single states usually offered such advice. Offensive realists expected a U.S. expansion and a pursuit of extra-regional hegemony simply because the new power asymmetries created opportunities for it. Relying on a deterministic view of the dynamics of balance of power, defensive realists predicted that other states would inevitably rise to the status of great powers and counterbalance the U.S. With this in mind, they perceived any pursuit of hegemony as self-defeating overstretch and thus advocated a more defensive U.S. strategy.

Balance of threat theorists expected counterbalancing only if other states were to begin to perceive the U.S. as threatening. Thus, if the U.S. exercised its predominance through international institutions and multilaterally (i.e. non-threatening), other states would acquiesce and band-wagon behind it. This conclusion rendered the notion of the ‘benevolent hegemon’ plausible. The balance of threat theorists shared this notion with liberalist theories,

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8 A note on terminology is always in order, since there is some variation in the field regarding what to call these theories. The term neorealism will not be used in this text, since it was originally applied to liberalist works that claimed to be realist. In order to avoid this confusion, the term structural realism will be used to refer to those that are writing in the tradition of Kenneth Waltz.
though they arrived at from different theoretical assumptions. Both expected and welcomed U.S. leadership and an expansion of assertive liberal open door policies. U.S. actions toward CASC can be regarded as particularly suitable as a test case for a study of the origins, development and consistency of U.S. strategy. Before the independence of the states that now constitute the region(s), the U.S. had no significant contact with the area. Study of U.S. strategy toward other regions is far more complicated, because of all of the historical variables and path-dependencies that have to be considered. This cannot be overstated. There are no laboratories in the social sciences, and it is difficult to find suitable and delineated cases. In the field of international relations it is perhaps even more difficult. The U.S. relation with CASC is probably as close to a laboratory setting as you can get. This study of U.S. strategy toward the CASC will relate to, and to some extent provide material for, the continuous evaluation of the theories mentioned, including a number of U.S. post-Cold War strategic alternatives.

This study also has its own, narrower set of theoretical ambitions. There is a comprehensive policy-oriented literature on the directions in which U.S. strategy ought to go. This literature is accompanied by a vast historical, descriptively oriented literature on U.S. strategy. There are, however, not many works that try to combine the two and offer ideas about how we can predict future U.S. strategy. This study can be regarded as such an attempt, since it is also sets out to outline a framework for U.S. strategy that will help answer the research questions set out above.

It should be noted that I attempt to outline a framework for U.S. strategy, not for strategy in general. The causes of and processes that lead to a particular strategy probably differ from one state to the next. However, the international system is arguably the most suitable starting point for any attempt at explaining any single state’s strategy. The international system is an environment in which state action takes place, thus exercising a powerful and generalizable influence on all states. This is important for theory development, since the further we can advance with a structural explanation, the further we have gone in developing a generalizable theory applicable to all states. From a theory development standpoint, it is then preferable to consider the influence of broad general causes, such as power and culture. This will create a theoretical foundation with potential application beyond the U.S. I believe this to be the soundest and potentially most fruitful way to begin, even if the primary object is to outline a framework for U.S. strategy.

The theory in this study is, therefore, based on three pillars. The first is structural realism. With its focus on the international environment and the pressures it exerts, the study accepts the systemic imperative described by structural realists. The second pillar is cultural/constructivist theory. The study presupposes the notion of malleable norms and identities promoted by such theories. The third and most important pillar is, of course, neoclassical realism, and, inspired by it, I will outline a framework in which U.S. strate-
gic culture functions as an intervening variable between the international environment and state action.

To reiterate, there are several contributions made by this study. First and foremost it makes an empirical contribution to the literature on U.S. strategy toward CASC, a subject that has not been studied sufficiently. It also fills gaps in the literature on the U.S. war on terror. Since the study takes the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent independence of the states of CASC as its starting point and covers U.S. strategy toward this specific region for 15 years and over three separate presidential administrations, it also makes a contribution to the literature on U.S. post-Cold War strategy. Due to the way in which the study is organized, treating the administrations as separate cases, it will also make a contribution to literature on the strategy of different presidential administrations.

Even though its theoretical ambitions are secondary to the empirical analysis of U.S. strategy toward CASC, the study still makes some theoretical contributions. The framework, with its focus on strategic culture as an intervening variable, is a contribution to the ongoing effort to bridge the gap between realist and constructivist perspectives. The detailed tracing of the evolution of U.S. strategy also has powerful advantages in the heuristic identification of new variables and hypothesis.

1.1 More "real", less "ism"

Parsimony is often regarded as the key virtue in theoretical works in international relations. Unfortunately, the net result of parsimony is often that it produces zero-sum notions of the dynamics of international relations, strategy and foreign policy. It is either that the foreign policy preferences and behaviour of states reflect the interests of private actors powerful enough to impose their goals on the agents representing the state, or that they reflect the international distribution of power, or culture, identity, and socially constructed interpretations of particular situations and reality. I do not think anybody denies that all of these factors help shape state strategy. I agree with Andrew Moravcsik when he writes that "the question facing international theorists today is not whether to combine domestic and international explanations into a theory of 'double edged' diplomacy, but how to best do so".9 In this vein, this study is inspired by neoclassical realism.10

10 The term neoclassical realism was coined by Gideon Rose. He used it to describe attempts by realist inspired scholars, such as Randall Schweller, Thomas Christensen, Stephen Walt, William Wohlforth and Fareed Zakaria, to include domestic factors in their explanations of
Classical Realists such as Kennan and Morgenthau never viewed the factors now designated by many as realist, liberalist or constructivist as mutually exclusive. They assumed that a state’s strategy must reflect its position in the international environment. However, they viewed domestic and cultural factors as being of fundamental importance when trying to understand a particular state’s actions. Many seem to have forgotten how the classical realists were critical of how liberalism and idealism shaped U.S. strategy. For them, it was obvious that liberal ideas and an idealistic culture had real power in the American policy making process. Policymakers needed support for their policies and thus needed to conform to socially constructed norms, and in the case of the U.S. these were liberal at the time of their criticism. To paraphrase Max Weber, political actors may be motivated primarily by interests rather than ideas, but ideas are ‘switchmen’ that determine the tracks along which those actors pursue their self-interest.11

The virtue of neoclassical realism is that it can bridge different theoretical perspectives. Gideon Rose provides the following characterization of the neoclassical realist project:

It explicitly incorporates both external and internal variables (...). Its adherents argue that the scope and ambition of a country’s foreign policy [are] driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities. This is why they are realist. They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical.12

Neoclassical realism should thus be understood as an attempt to merge classical realist insights with structural realism in a coherent framework for explaining the external actions of states. It is theoretically rigorous and methodologically aware to a higher degree than classical realism and far more empirically sensitive to short term effects of strategy than structural realists.13 For neoclassical realists, a state’s external actions cannot transcend the constraints of the international environment in the long run. However, over the short and medium term, they do not, in any automatic way, follow the

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13 Steven Lobell, Norrin Ripsman, and Jeffrey Taliaferro, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in Steven Lobell, Norrin Ripsman and Jeffrey Taliaferro (eds.), Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
objective distribution of power. For neoclassical realists there is "no immediate or perfect transmission belt" linking material capabilities to action.\(^\text{14}\)

Many neoclassical realist studies aim at finding intervening variables between a state's external actions and the international distribution of power, such as elites, perceptions, state strength, nature of goals and culture. By introducing such variables, they sacrifice parsimony for complexity, but they also turn the insights of the classical realists into theoretical propositions. At present, it seems to be a very progressive research program and has an appealing ability to include domestic variables within a realist framework. It also straddles diplomatic history and international relations theory, which gives its explanations both richness and rigor.\(^\text{15}\)

A neoclassical realist study can take many forms. For cross-country comparisons, when differences between strategies of a number of states are to be explained, a high level of generalization can be justified.\(^\text{16}\) However, that is not necessary or suitable for the longitudinal analysis of the strategy of a specific state. For the latter kind of analysis, detailed historical analysis is preferable. Therefore, the major part of this study will be an historical account of U.S. strategy toward CASC. The research method of process-tracing fits the neoclassical realist project very well. By closely studying an empirical case, it is possible to make assertions about the relative explanatory power of an intervening variable. The method can also eliminate alternative explanations for a case and thus increase our confidence in others.\(^\text{17}\)

In the following chapters I will outline a neoclassical realist framework for U.S. strategy in which U.S. strategic culture functions as an intervening variable between the international environment and state action. That framework will guide my study of U.S. strategy toward CASC and help me answer my research questions. My aim is to show how this particular culture shapes and bends U.S. strategy in different directions, something which makes the latter seem puzzling and contradictory to many observers. It is noteworthy that so many realists seem to argue that U.S. strategy is guided by idealism and liberal values and that the reason for realism's lack of influence on U.S. strategy is its poor fit with U.S. culture, without incorporating this into their theories. This study will not only offer numerous examples of how U.S. liberal culture shapes its strategy but will also incorporate U.S. strategic culture within a realist framework.

\(^{14}\) Rose, (1988).


\(^{17}\) Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
In order to understand U.S. strategic culture I have turned to American political and diplomatic history and the works of scholars such as Thomas A. Bailey, David Hackett Fischer, Walter Russell Mead, Walter A. McDougall, Cushing Strout, William Appleman Williams and many more. As historians, they propose that the best way to understand U.S. external actions is to look at U.S. history and traditions. This argument fits well with neoclassical realism. In a way these scholars argue that U.S. strategic culture can be understood as the interplay between various American traditions and that its strategy seems to be a product of countervailing forces or ideas. Inspired by these historians, I will create a set of ideal types that will help me define U.S. strategic culture. The main argument is that U.S. policymakers constantly draw on these ideal types and have strong incentives to frame their policies so they are culturally acceptable. The strategic culture both constrains and enables actions, and one way to understand why U.S. actions sometimes seem contradictory or ambivalent to observers is to view them as the result of compromise and bargaining between different ideal types.

1.2 Structure and Scope of the Study

In Chapter Two I will argue that neoclassical realism offers a suitable starting point for outlining a framework for U.S. strategy. It lays the study’s theoretical groundwork and includes both the framework and an extensive discussion of U.S. strategic culture. In Chapter Three I will describe my method and account for the study’s data and sources.

Chapters Four to Six are empirical in nature, each being divided into two parts. The first part consists of an extensive and predominantly chronologically organized detailed narrative, while the second part entails a shorter analytical explanation guided by the framework. In foreign policy, and even more so in the domain of strategy, the federal government is supreme and its power concentrated in the executive branch. Therefore, the administrations of the U.S. presidents are regarded as the principal actor in this study. These empirical chapters cover the strategy of the administrations of the three presidents in office during the period examined. This structure is not only logical and reader-friendly, it is also suitable for the comparative purposes of the study and has strong theoretical support in that the framework acknowledges that elections (especially presidential elections) open up windows of opportunity for changing and adjusting strategy.

Even though I set out to study U.S. strategy, the focus and themes of the empirical chapters will vary to a considerable extent, as they follow the prioritizations of each administration. In order to limit the scope of the study, I have been forced to make several necessary choices. However, the limitations have not been made arbitrarily. Rather, they correspond to how the different administrations conceptualized the region, which interests they perceived and pursued and which states in CASC they regarded as impor-
tant. If U.S. strategy towards a country is fairly consistent with few changes over the years, there might be very little to say about it. Therefore, some of the eight countries are only mentioned briefly in the empirical chapters, while others receive more thorough treatment. For instance, over the entire period under study the U.S. only had slight contact with the excessively authoritarian and isolationist Turkmenistan, and U.S. strategy did not change in any significant way. This country thus virtually disappears from the study at times.

It is always hard to delineate a region, and CASC is no exception. The region (or regions) is not easy to define. I have followed the distinctions that many regional experts abide by, including many U.S. agencies. Therefore, CASC is considered to comprise of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. However, the U.S. strategic maps do not necessarily follow geographical delineations, and during the years those maps changed, which affected its actions toward some of the states. The conceptualization of the region, or regions, will not only influence the structure of the study but is also an important part the empirical study in itself. In fact, how the U.S. conceptualized the region is part of the answer to the research questions of the study.

In the first years following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, CASC was never placed at the center of anything on U.S. maps. It was either on the southern edge of the so-called ‘former Soviet Union’, on the far west of Asia or on the periphery of the greater Middle East. The State Department, the Defense Department and Congress all had different maps, and these changed over time. This affected more than the coordination of U.S. strategy. Now CASC is generally regarded as two separate regions. However, in the early 1990s U.S. officials spoke of these states as ‘the other newly independent states’, and there seemed to be no consensus on how to refer to this region or these states.

In the first empirical chapter I will argue that the George H.W. Bush Administration did not actually develop anything that can resemble a strategy toward CASC. The region was not defined, and there was no distinction made between Central Asia and Southern Caucasus. Instead, it had a strategy aimed at the entire post-Soviet space, and the countries of CASC were included by default as a subsidiary. Therefore, this chapter will look at U.S. strategy toward the entire post-Soviet space with a special focus on how this affected the states of the region. Because of its inherited nuclear weapons and vast energy resources, Kazakhstan received the most attention by the administration.

The second empirical chapter deals with the Clinton Administration. During these eight years the strategy toward CASC evolved, and the administration began rudimentarily to define the region and develop a strategy spe-

[18] In this study I will use the U.S. State Department’s spelling of these countries.
cific to it. However, it still did not make any clear distinctions between Central Asia and Southern Caucasus but spoke loosely of a Caspian region. The administration inherited several programs running in the region, which formed the foundation for U.S. relations with CASC. Energy resources and later terrorism became the two most important regional issues during Clinton’s presidency. Consequently, the chapter will focus on those issues.

The George W. Bush Administration is analysed in the third empirical chapter. By this time U.S. relationships had evolved. Not only was there now a more clearly defined distinction between Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, the U.S. had also established bilateral ties that in some instances had become quite deep. This makes the object of the study more difficult, as increased interest and involvement are, for obvious reasons, accompanied by an almost exponential growth of empirical material. However, this study is guided by the prioritizations of the administrations, and even though the U.S. had established relations with all of the states in the region, some were considered far more important than others. Uzbekistan’s importance had grown steadily during the Clinton years and was arguably regarded as the most important country of Central Asia when George W. Bush assumed office. The attacks on September 11, 2001 elevated the country’s importance even further. Therefore, the chapter will focus primarily on the U.S.-Uzbek relation.

Neoclassical realism’s method of choice is detailed historical analysis. Therefore, the empirical chapters are rather detailed. They will, however, also look beyond the region, since one must understand an administration’s overall priorities in order to understand its strategy. It is simply impossible to understand U.S. strategy toward CASC without taking into account U.S. relations with other powers and external events.

The post-Cold War U.S.-CASC relationship has not been studied to any great extent, there is, to my knowledge, no detailed historical narrative of it. This study is an attempt to remedy this. It is also the main contribution of this study. This affects the length of the study. I have tried to the best of my abilities to limit the number of pages. However, the historical narrative genre requires a lot of text, and much of what is being described cannot be easily found elsewhere. Since the study follows each administration, the length of each chapter varies, depending on the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC. Thus the chapter covering the eight years of the Clinton presidency is the longest, whereas the chapter covering the years between the disintegration of the Soviet Union and when George H.W. Bush left office in January 1993 is clearly the shortest.

The choice to end the study in 2006 is not arbitrarily; there are a number of reasons for this. In late 2005 the U.S. suffered what has been described as ‘Central Asia fatigue’. The causes of it will be described in the study. Simultaneously, the George W. Bush Administration became transfixed by the deteriorating situation in Iraq, which reached its apex in 2006. Moreover, it can be argued that the study, by ending in 2006, has laid the groundwork for
future studies of U.S. relations with CASC. In the concluding Chapter Seven I sum up the finding of the study, evaluate the framework, discuss alternative explanations and discuss avenues for further research.
2. Theory, the Neoclassical Realist Framework and U.S. Strategy

This chapter begins by defining and clarifying the concept of strategy. This is followed by a section on realist and cultural explanations of U.S. strategy and how neoclassical realism attempts to bridge the gap between them. I will then outline my framework for U.S. strategy. I will begin by specifying how strategic culture functions as an intervening variable between the international environment and U.S. strategy. This is followed by an extensive section aimed at describing U.S. strategic culture and how it has changed. The chapter ends with a brief presentation of a number of theoretically derived expectations.

2.1 Strategy

This is a study of U.S. strategy toward CASC. But what exactly is strategy, and how does it differ from foreign policy? There are numerous definitions of strategy, however the concept of strategy is linked to one man more than any other – Carl von Clausewitz. According to Clausewitz, tactics was about winning battles, strategy about winning campaigns and wars and grand strategies about deciding which wars to fight. For Liddell Hart, it was about the coordination of all of the resources at the disposal of a state – military, economic, diplomatic – toward the political ends of any given war. In other words, it is a political exercise conducted by the highest state officials that involves a broad range of instruments in addition to military. For these two thinkers strategy was primarily a wartime phenomenon. However, in recent years the definition has been stretched to include peacetime or non-wartime activities. In this new conception, not only the means of strategy, but also the ends, have been expanded to include a range of peacetime goals. Here is a sample of relatively recent, authoritative definitions of strategy:

A state’s overall plan for providing national security by keeping national resources and external commitments in balance.\(^{20}\)

A political-military "means-ends” chain, a state’s theory about how it can best "cause” security for itself.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{19}\) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Wordsworth, 1997).


Any broad-based policies that a state may adopt for the preservation and enhancement of its security.\textsuperscript{22} The full package of domestic and international policies designed to increase national power and security.\textsuperscript{23}

These definitions are broad but share some key features, and by drawing on the centrality of resources and their application to relevant ends, it is possible to limit the definition. Strategic interaction takes place in relations that involve scarcity, as highlighted by Kupchan, and the term refers to the balancing of means and ends in the face of potential conflict with others, as Posen suggests. This separates it from the broader term ’foreign policy’, which can be described as a state’s pursuit of all international ends by all available means. In a world with unlimited resources and no possibility of conflict, there is no need for strategy. However, in a world with limited resources, and potential conflict, strategic decisions are necessary and inevitable.

I accept that since strategy refers to the balancing of means and ends in face of potential armed conflict with international actors, strategic interaction means that military force and military policy instruments are at the heart of the concept. However, aid, diplomatic activity and trade policies can also be regarded as elements of strategy insofar as they are meant to serve as means in a state’s pursuit of security, power and prosperity in the face of conflict with others, which is the point of Nordlinger’s and Christensen’s definitions. This means, for instance, that U.S. famine relief in Ethiopia, a place where the U.S. has little interest, is not to be regarded as ’strategic’, but American aid to help finding employment for scientists previously at work in the Soviet arms industry is.

Now that the concept has been clarified, it is possible to list what strategy entails. It includes the pursuit of a wide variety of military and non-military interests, ends and objectives, which can be political, economic or ideological. It includes non-military means, subject to the specified restrictions. It includes wartime as well as peacetime policymaking. This study thus leans toward a rather broad definition of the concept. In the U.S. strategic decisions are made by the federal government, and its power is concentrated in the executive branch. Strategy is thus primarily an affair for the president and his national security council.

It is important to recognise that both theory and policy are at the centre of the concept of strategy. A strategy can be described as a set of cause-and-effect hypotheses postulating which policies are most likely to produce the desired strategic outcome, i.e., if we do A and B, the results X and Y should


follow. Policymakers must build on their assumptions about how the world works when they formulate strategy, and this has an important theoretical dimension. A specific strategy is always grounded in some theory or model. Such a model or theory can, of course, be implicit and unarticulated. However, there are always some basic assumptions about how things work. Neoclassical realists emphasize the fact that strategic choices are made by actual political leaders and elites. Therefore, it is in part their assumptions that matter. The strategic culture provides both assumptions, intuitions and models. Academic perspectives can also provide a theoretical grounding for policymakers, and there is usually a close affinity between such perspectives and the strategic culture.

States must constantly adapt to the shifting conditions and circumstances in a "world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate". The latter quote emphasizes that governments reside in an environment that requires them to make strategic decisions regarding a wide variety of issues, such as defense spending, deployment of military forces abroad, foreign aid and diplomatic stances toward other states. We cannot assume that administrations design and articulate specific strategies. But in a way, it does not matter whether a state has an explicit and coherent strategic plan, since states are forced to make strategic decisions, i.e., decisions where means and ends must be reconciled amidst the possibility of conflict. This is a study of such decisions. From this follows that strategy is both a theory of how to balance means and ends and a set of policy prescriptions.

2.1.1 The International Environment and Culture

The international system is arguably the most suitable starting point for any attempt at explaining any country’s strategy. The international system is an environment in which state action takes place and which exercises a powerful and generalizable influence on all states. This is important for theory development, since the further we can get with a structural explanation, the further we have gone in developing a generalizable theory applicable to all countries.

Structural Realism, with its focus on international pressures, is, therefore, the preferable starting point for this study. However, it is just a starting point, since structural realism has many limitations when it comes to explaining the strategy of a single state, especially in the short term, and this

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study only covers a 15-year time period. In the next section I will discuss these limitations in detail. Another leading international relations theory that has often been used to explain strategy is constructivism. Numerous scholars point to culture as the most important factor in explaining a state’s strategy. However, cultural theories that do not systematically take the international environment into account also suffer from many limitations.

Sadly, and sometime unnecessarily, a number of walls have been erected between these two theories. However, in recent years some of these walls have begun to crumble. Realism has often been depicted as resting on a materialist ontology and positivist epistemology and methodology. Constructivism, on the other hand, has been depicted as resting on an idealist ontology and post-positivism. The theoretical debates within the field of international relations over realism and constructivism revolve around a number of issues, and it is not possible to do them justice here.26 Today, though, an increasing number of scholars have begun to look over the walls and to acknowledge the possibilities of combining realism and constructivism. The difference between the two theories have also been somewhat exaggerated. Realism and constructivism are not coterminous with specific and mutually exclusive epistemological and methodological positions. For instance, not all realists are committed to positivism. Nor are all constructivists committed to post-positivism.27 In fact, both are broad schools of thought that encompass different theories and approaches based on a variety of different epistemologies that are sometimes similar. They also use a number of different methods and share some of them.28 It is possible that realism and constructivism are incompatible on some levels, but the question of incompatibility is to a large extent contingent on what conception of theory one adheres to.29 After identifying the limits of structural realism and cultural theories for my purposes,


27 It can, for instance, be argued that constructivist scholar John Owen uses positivist methods in his works, whereas Realist Randall Schweller assumes a post-positivist position as he explicitly questions the dichotomy between explaining and understanding.

28 See, for instance, Peter Katzenstein and Sil Rudra, Beyond Paradigms: Analytical Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

a section about neoclassical realism and the virtues of combining the two theories follows.

2.1.2 The Limitations of Structural Realism

In this section I address the limitations of structural realism for the purposes of answering my research questions and outlining my framework. It is not a critique of structural realism in general.

Realism is best conceptualized as a metascientific construct rather than as a single theory. Although there are several divisions within realism, all realists subscribe to some core assumptions that are held to be the key tenets of the realist research program. Disagreements between realists arise from basic philosophical differences placing emphasis on different assumptions or, more often, on varying interpretations of those assumptions. John Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz, for instance, share and understanding of realism’s core elements but employ different secondary assumptions about both state behaviour and international outcomes. Mearsheimer is perhaps the most influential proponent of offensive realism, whereas Waltz’s Theory of International Politics is regarded as the masterpiece of defensive realism.\(^{30}\)

All realists work from the supposition that international affairs take place in a state of anarchy. This usually means that there is no monopoly of the legitimate use of force at the international level, comparable to the domestic order of states. Anarchy and the fact that states inherently possess some offensive military capability means that states are always faced with security dilemmas and that, when all else fails, military force is the final and legitimate arbiter of disputes among states. Power is thus "ultimately the key" to state survival.\(^ {31} \) Self-help is the system mandated behavioural rule, and, since survival is the most basic motive driving states, threats to survival is the main problem generated by the system.\(^ {32} \)

For structural realists the distribution of power in the international system is the key independent variable for explaining international outcomes such as war and peace. They, of course, acknowledge that states differ with respect to variables such as history, culture, political system, etc., but their main point is that the pressure of the system is so pervasive that states are forced to act like units. This means that domestic factors are ignored.

Waltz’s theory was created to explain a certain type of phenomenon, and in his view it is a system theory and not a theory of foreign policy or strat-

egy. According to Waltz, the international structure "tells us a small number of big and important things". The problem with this is that much of "the daily stuff of international relations is left to be accounted for by theories of foreign policy", as Gideon Rose puts it. Waltz’s theory only gives us limited help in understanding the external behaviour of states. It does not make any assertions about domestic processes. For Waltz, the international structure is an environment within which state action takes place, and that environment "can tell us what pressures are exerted and what possibilities are posed by the systems of different structure, but it cannot tell us how, and how effectively, the units of a system will respond to those pressures and possibilities". He does not assume any rationality or constancy of will on the part of actors. For him, "each state arrives at policies and decides on actions according to its own internal processes" and is "free to do any fool thing they care to". Ignorance, however, comes with a price.

Despite the scope of Waltz’s theory, numerous self-proclaimed structural realists have tried to specify to what extent the international system determines the behaviour of specific states. To do so, they must specify a mechanism that explains why, when faced with particular systemic circumstances, states act in one way rather than another. Some structural realists, therefore, assume a weak form of rationality. The inherent danger in the

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37 Waltz writes: "Notice that the theory requires no assumption of rationality or of constancy of will on the part of all of the actors. The theory says simply that if some do relatively well, others will emulate them or fall by the wayside." Waltz, (1979), p. 65, p. 73, p. 118. See also Kenneth Waltz, "Evaluating theories," American Political Science Review, Vol. 91, No. 4 (December 1997), p. 915.
40 For a discussion of rationality in Waltz’s work, see Richard Ned Lebow, "The Long Peace, the End of the Cold War, and the Failure of Realism," International Organization, Vol. 48,
system and the goal to survive provides enough incentives for states to behave sensibly.\textsuperscript{41} This sensibility to costs can be called an assumption of rationality.\textsuperscript{42} And it is this rationality that constitutes the link between the international system and state behaviour. Realists accepting this rationality assumption must then analyse how states calculate and weigh costs and benefits. Different assumptions about the utility function of states lead to contrasting predictions, and it is usually the employment of these kinds of differing secondary assumptions that makes it crucial and meaningful to distinguish between structural realist theories. Most fundamentally, offensive realism parts company with defensive realism over the question of how much power states want.\textsuperscript{43}

Defensive realists argue that the anarchical system only induces states to avoid and minimize relative power losses, and not to maximize their own power. Status quo is thus the preferred condition for states. Power maximizing strategies cause insecurity, since expansion, even when successful, inexorably leads to overstretch and counter balancing, they argue. Defensive realists allow for a certain indeterminacy with regard to states’ disposition to act when, for instance, confronted with the question of why great powers make bids for hegemony. For them, the answer to this irrational behaviour is to be found at the domestic level. This indeterminacy is a problem for any defensive realist theory of state strategy, since they are in some way forced to open up the black box and, in an ad hoc manner, introduce domestic level variables. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to derive predictions about the actions of a single state from defensive structural realist theory alone, especially under a short period of 15 years, as is the case here.

Offensive realism, on the other hand, maintains its parsimonious character when applied to strategy. For offensive realists, such as John Mearsheimer, security is scarce in the anarchical system, and they perceive it as "a brutal arena where states look for opportunities to take advantage of


\textsuperscript{42} For a discussion of whether and, if so, to what extent, neorealist theories rely on rational choice, see Resende-Santos, (1995).

each other". For them, international relations are not a constant state of war, but it is a state of relentless competition — "daily life is essentially a struggle for power". One of its core elements is that you can never be certain about the intentions of others. A state can "be benign one day and malign the next", and states must, therefore, always take into account the possibility that changing conditions may turn 'friends' into 'rivals' and even 'enemies'. Uncertainty and fear not only make security interests fundamental for every state; they also determine state behaviour, and, for offensive realists, the most rational way for a state to deal with this situation is to maximize power. It is the only way to gain security.

Offensive realists do not need to open the black box. For them, the international distribution of capabilities is enough to explain state behaviour. Domestic variables are regarded as epiphenomenal. Offensive realism maintains its conceptual clarity and parsimony, but at what cost? It is indeterminate in many cases, and it has little to say about others. How do you, for instance, account for U.S. isolationism in the early 20th century? The criticism of offensive realism has been severe, although it is possible to derive predictions regarding U.S. strategy toward CASC from it.

For the purposes of my study, structural realism also has another limitation that has to do with the concept of time. For Waltz, the reason why the European states that lost their great-power status after WWII "no longer behave as they used to" is their 'profoundly different' international position. For structural realists, "capabilities shape intentions", and their theories imply that increases in power will eventually lead to a corresponding expansion in the ambition of a state's external actions and that decreases will

45 The U.S. had the power to tilt the balance of power in Europe many years before it engaged in WWI, however, it was extremely reluctant to do so. The war dramatically increased the relative power of the U.S. as the old empires crumbled, but the country chose to disengage. If states act to maximize their power, this is puzzling. Mearsheimer solves some of the theory's anomalies by introducing intervening variables, such as geography and technology. These variables alter the predictions about the strategic behaviour of the U.S. They are questionable and result in the theory losing some of its parsimonious character. The limits of power projection and water create Mearsheimer's variable "stopping power of water". This stopping power prevents great powers from transporting the amount of military power needed to establish dominance over distant continents. This means that when the U.S. has reached regional hegemony, it will not seek extra-regional hegemony. Mearsheimer thus finds himself predicting behaviour similar to that of defensive realists. Furthermore, he argues that the U.S. has, since it emerged as a great power, pursued a strategy of offshore balancing and should continue to do so. This raises another question: If the 'stopping power of water' is absolute, why should the U.S. commit resources to a strategy of offshore balancing when even a Eurasian hegemon will be stopped by this power? Will not a Eurasian hegemon also act defensively once it has achieved regional hegemony? The variable is also not particularly well specified. How or to what extent was the British Empire or the Empire of Japan stopped by water? See John Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).
46 Waltz, (1986).
lead to a corresponding contraction. However, they never seem to specify how much time it takes for a state’s ambitions to adjust to its relative position in the international system. Of course, structural realism is not alone in having difficulties with the question of time, but ‘wait and see’ is not a very satisfying answer when the predictions of a theory do not seem to come true. Not even structural realists claim that a virtual transmission belt links material capabilities to actions, but they cannot specify what accounts for the time lags. This study only covers a 15-year period, and it is possible to argue that the timeframe is simply too short for structural realism to show up in the data. Yet, the argument that this period is too short for relative power position to change U.S. strategy elevates the importance of domestic factors in shaping U.S. strategy, at least in the short-term. This is one reason that structural realism alone is not a suitable theory for answering the questions of this study. Another reason has to do with the position of the U.S. in the international system after the demise of the Soviet Union.

Most structural realists would agree with the argument that the more power a state has, the less it is constrained by the international environment. When they argue that the world became unipolar with the disappearance of the Soviet Union, they are also saying that the U.S. became less constrained than ever. The result is that the influence of domestic factors on U.S. strategy is relatively stronger compared to states that are more constrained by the system. This makes my study of U.S. strategy toward CASC a very problematic case for structural realism. Because of this limitation, it might not be a suitable theory on its own for this study. That is why I have chosen to use it as a starting point and not as the basis of the framework with which the analysis is conducted.

2.1.3 The Limitations of Cultural Theories

In this section I address the limitations of cultural theories for answering my research questions and outlining my framework. This is not a critique of cultural theory in general. Cultural theories have long enjoyed a prominent place in the field of international relations. The linkage between culture and strategy can be found in the classic works of Thucydides, Sun Tzu and von Clausewitz. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba developed the concept of political culture in the 1960s and defined it as a "subset of beliefs and values of a society that relates to the political system". Since then, it has been one of the most enduring alternative theoretical explanations of state behaviour.

Jack Snyder brought the political culture argument into modern security studies with his 1977 study of Soviet strategic culture.\(^49\) His works influenced other security policy analysts, such as Ken Booth and Colin Gray.\(^50\) In the 1990s, a new generation of academic works reasserted culture as a variable, and the rise of constructivism in the post-Cold War era led to a wave of culturalism in security studies. It can now be regarded as a broader research program that has taken an interest in a wide array of issues – from grand strategy, weapons acquisition, escalation and military doctrine to foreign policy decision making.\(^51\)

If the term culture refers to any set of interlocking beliefs, values and assumptions held together by a given group passed on through socialization, then strategic culture refers to the relevant cultural beliefs, values and assumptions that relate to conduct of political-military affairs, while the relevant group is the citizenry of a given state, in particular, its military and foreign policy elite. The strategic culture may include a commitment to values such as democratic principles, preferences for multilateralism or unilateralism, ideas about morality and the use of force, the rights of individuals and collectivism or notions about the role of the nation in global politics.

The core assumption of constructivist explanations of strategy is the notion that the pressure of international environment is essentially indeter-
minate. Critical of structural realism's materialism, constructivists argue that without the constitutive role of ideas, the distribution of power will not have any determinate effect on the actions of states. It must always be interpreted, and these interpretations are culturally imbued. For Alexander Wendt, it is the "intersubjective understandings and expectations" of states "that constitute their conceptions of self and other", and this is what explains why "U.S. military power has a different significance for Canada than for Cuba, despite their similar 'structural' positions". From a purely structural realist position, it is hard to explain why the U.S., for instance, is more worried by the possibility of an Iranian nuclear weapon than by Britain’s entire nuclear arsenal. Constructivist theory can easily explain this by pointing out that the Brits are friends of the U.S. whereas Iranians are not, since "amity or enmity is a function of shared understandings".

For cultural theorists, culture shapes strategy in many ways. It influences how international events, conditions, incentives and pressures are perceived, since policymakers are always forced to rely on preconceived beliefs and assumptions to interpret incoming information. Numerous IR-scholars have written about such beliefs and have described them as 'ideas', 'belief systems', 'operational codes' and 'policy paradigms'. These beliefs provide guidance under uncertain conditions and postulate which policies are most likely to produce the most efficient pursuit of the national interest. The national interest is also to a substantial extent defined by these beliefs. Strategic culture can thus be regarded as descriptive as well and normative, and cognitive as well as constitutive, and it becomes manifest on at least three levels: "The cognitive, which includes empirical and casual beliefs; the evaluative, which consists of values, norms and moral judgements; and the expressive or affective, which encompasses emotional attachments, patters of identity and loyalty, and feelings of affinity, aversion, or indifference." One characteristic component of cultural explanations is the notion of culture as a constraint. Culture circumscribes the range of the plausible by rendering certain actions unacceptable or even unthinkable. Ian Johnston defined culture as "an ideational milieu which limits behaviour choices". David Elkins and Richard Simeon write that:

Political culture consists of assumptions about the political world [...] that focus attention on certain features of events, institutions, and behaviour, define

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the realm of the possible, identify the problems deemed pertinent, and set the range of alternatives among which members of the population make decisions. Political culture, then, is a shorthand expression for a "mind set" which has the effect of limiting attention to less than the full range of alternative behaviours, problems, and solutions which are logically possible. Since it represents a "disposition" in favour of a range of alternatives, by corollary another range of alternatives receives little or no attention within a particular culture. Most people in a culture, therefore, will take for granted a particular course of action or consider only a few alternatives. That they choose from a restricted set will, for most of them, remain below the threshold of consciousness (…).\(^57\)

Most cultural theorists prefer to describe the strategic culture as the "property of collectives rather than simply of the individuals that constitute them".\(^58\) However, it is perfectly conceivable that the actors that hold those values may be identified if strategic culture is manifest in cognitive evaluative and expressive dimensions. This means that individuals and groups of policymakers or institutions can be said to be influenced and guided by these preconceived beliefs. Some leaders and officials really believe and have internalised the beliefs and norms of the relevant strategic culture, while others respect it and pragmatically use it for political purposes. The strategic culture thus limits and influences policy choices. It can be noted as well that culture also enables, even though this is not emphasized as much by most cultural theorists. Policymakers can gain support for, build coalitions around and legitimize policies by fitting their ideas and decisions within the strategic culture.

Most theorists also agree that elites are instrumental in defining strategic goals and the scope and direction of strategic adjustment, especially in the face of new challenges and threats. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that public opinion is an important part of the ideational milieu that defines strategic culture. The public shapes the broad parameters of acceptable state behaviour, something that is especially the case in parliamentary democracies, where government stability is founded on popular support. A state’s strategic culture is part of its broader political culture, and that culture, with its commitment to values and principles, is at the heart of the national identity. This means that culture not only renders certain alternatives unlikely, or even unthinkable, as the Simeon and Elkins quote implies, but also that violations of the values and principles that constitute the culture are likely to face strong domestic opposition. It is, therefore, difficult to propose new and different interpretations and strategic alternatives that challenge culturally prescribed interests, goals and means.

It is also difficult, since the influence of strategic culture is entrenched through formal and informal institutionalization. Peter Berger, for instance, argues that political culture is best understood as a combination of political


institutions and norms that "exist in an interdependent relationship, each relying upon the other in an ongoing way." He highlights that: "Formal institutions play a role in anchoring broader society beliefs and values and provide continuity and permanency to them. Culture forces, in turn, influence the shapes institutions take and provide them with legitimacy and meaning." The formal institutionalization within bureaucratic agencies and the informal institutionalization through discourse characterized by repetition make it difficult to discuss, much less to consider, alternatives that fall outside of the parameters set by the culture. As a result, the strategic culture tends to persist independently of material changes, including changes in the international environment.

Strategic culture research has been criticized over the decades for adopting an essentialist conception of culture that often assumes coherent cultural entities with clear and defined boundaries, more or less impermeable to change. However, in recent years questions of change in culture have been taken more seriously. Most cultural theorists inspired by constructivism recognize that established identities and associated practices cannot be changed voluntaristically and approach actors as ‘social facts’. However, they recognize them as malleable through reflection and discourse. This has lead many of them to become particularly interested in the learning processes that underlie change in identities. External shocks, dramatic events and traumatic experiences, such as wars, revolutions, economic catastrophes and natural disasters, that would thoroughly discredit core beliefs and values are viewed as common potential catalysts for change by most constructivist/cultural theories of strategy.

If external events cause strategic culture to change and it is these changes that cause strategy to change, one must pose the simple question: why not focus more on the external environment and why not incorporate that more systematically in theory? Constructivist theorists argue that material structure is indeterminate and that it, therefore, makes sense to begin with other variables. It is not that they deny the impact of material reality; it is rather that they contend that whatever role material conditions play in shaping our collective or individual goals, behaviour and choices, these conditions are mediated and thus deeply affected by our ‘socially constructed’ interpretations of reality.

However, there are a number of consequences of explaining a state’s strategy by pointing to its specific culture or internal processes without taking the international environment. The most pressing problems with such unit-level explanations are their inability to explain why states with similar domestic systems often act very differently internationally and why states with dissimilar systems act alike. If one adheres to a strictly constructivist view on international politics, the fact that states with similar ideologies or

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cultures betray each other and often engage in mutual competition and hostility, and the fact that states with different and opposed ideologies often engage in both secret and open collaboration with one another, becomes a puzzle. Nor can it account for the phenomenon of "strange bedfellows" in international politics. It is, for instance, difficult to explain the U.S. – China rapprochement during the Cold War from a constructivist perspective. From a structural realist point of view, it is not at all puzzling that China, despite its ideological similarity with the Soviet Union, chose to side with the U.S.

This study takes as its starting point the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which, from a realist perspective, resulted in a dramatic shift in the international distribution of power and the polarity of the system. To approach my research questions with a theory that does not at least relate to structural realism would be a serious omission. In a way, this study is biased toward realism, since these changes and the resulting power vacuum in the middle of Eurasia are clearly less important and exciting from the viewpoint of other perspectives.

2.1.4 The Contribution of Neoclassical Realism

In this section I present neoclassical realism and identify some variables and distinctions that will inform my framework.

Neoclassical realism can be seen as an attempt to refine and amend earlier work on relative power by elaborating the role of intervening variables. Neoclassical realists assume that there is an objective reality of relative power that has a fundamental impact on the outcomes of state interaction, and they all agree that structural considerations provide the best intellectual basis for analysis of international politics and strategy. Hence, power is the most important variable.

Neoclassical realists argue that a state’s external behaviour cannot transcend the constraints of the international environment in the long run but that over the short and medium term it does not, in any automatic way, follow the distribution of power. This is what Rose’s claim that there is "no immediate or perfect transmission belt" linking material capabilities to action refers to. This not only means that power related factors do not drive all aspects of a state’s behaviour or that the impact of power is direct and unproblematic, but also that one must analyze how systemic pressures are translated through intervening variables. Thus power only establishes the broad contours of a state’s behaviour. They argue that we must, therefore, leave the parsimoni-
ous world of structural theories and incorporate more variables in order to understand state interactions. They fully agree with Waltz when he writes:

The third image describes the framework of world politics, but without the first and second images there can be no knowledge of the forces that determine policy; the first and second images describe the forces in world politics, but without the third image it is impossible to assess their importance or predict their results.  

Waltz created a theory of the autonomous realm of international politics, but he never argued that domestic factors are irrelevant. The fact that he does not make any assertions about rationality and how domestic processes work does not make his theory incompatible with domestic level processes as casual variables. In fact, Jennifer Sterling-Folker argues the opposite.  

While the anarchic environment encourages the goal of survival and comparative assessments of process, it is domestic process that is responsible for the ability of states to emulate the processes of others. Thus it is domestic process that acts as the final arbiter for state survival within the anarchic environment.  

Neoclassical realists are not reductionists, in a Waltzian sense. They do not infer the conditions of the international environment from the internal composition of states. Instead, they focus on the internal processes, by which states "arrive at policies and decide on actions" in response to the restrictions and incentives of the international environment. Neoclassical realism is, therefore, to some extent compatible with structural realism. Writing from these theoretical assumptions, many scholars have started to fill in the blanks left by Waltz.

While not abandoning Waltz’s insight about the international structure and its consequences, neoclassical realists have added first and second image variables (domestic politics, internal extraction capacity and processes, state power and intentions, and leaders’ perceptions of the relative distribution of capabilities and the offense-defense balance) to explain foreign policy decision making and intrinsically important historical puzzles.

Neoclassical realists have taken it upon themselves to add first and second image variables and are primarily interested in how power is translated through intervening variables at the unit level. Since they argue that the notion of "a smoothly functioning mechanical transmission belt" linking material capabilities to actions is "inaccurate and misleading", they criticize the

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64 Sterling-Folker, (1997).
way that some structural theories treat some of the dynamics of international relations as laws of nature. However, they do predict that increases in power will eventually lead to a corresponding expansion in the ambition of a state’s external actions, and that a decrease in power will lead to a corresponding contraction.

They are also critical of how structural realists use rationality as a link between the international environment and state behaviour. Instead, they want to get closer to how policymakers actually understand their situation. Schweller argues that "[s]tructural imperatives rarely, if ever, compel leaders to adopt one policy over another; decision makers are not sleepwalkers buffeted about by inexorable forces beyond their control". Of course, decision makers are not oblivious to structural incentives. However, it is possible that they do not perceive these pressures themselves and the way states respond to them are determined by many factors.

For neoclassical realists, policymakers operate under dual pressure. They are pressured by both the international environment and by their own domestic processes. This helps explain why so many decisions appear to be inefficient, suboptimal or irrational. If external threats are primarily causal, some historical decisions appear to be inefficient. Such decisions, such as FDR’s inefficiency in obtaining a swift congressional support for U.S. involvement in Europe in World War II, are often cited as critique of realism’s explanatory power. However, Sterling-Folker argues that:

" [...] it is only with the theoretical framework specified by realism, which places process within the context of environment, that these outcomes make sense. The actors involved were simultaneously attempting to balance interests engendered by both the environment and the domestic processes to which they owed their immediate identities and interests."

In this example, Congress was, of course, balancing isolationist voters against national security. This means that the objective distribution of

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69 This is close to Putnam’s description of two-level games where decision makers are caught between the international and the domestic and are forced to balance interests at both levels when making international agreements. However it is not identical. Putnam examines domestic processes only after the context of a potentially cooperative situation has been identified. His analysis does not begin with a realist conception of an anarchic environment and seems to take attempts at cooperation as a given, leaving the reasons why negotiators would be inter-
power is not the only thing that matters. Other variables, such as strategic culture, including perception of power, are also of great importance. This puts the neoclassical realist in a middle ground between constructivists and structuralists.\textsuperscript{70} For neoclassical realists, the anarchic environment remains primarily though indirectly causal, while domestic processes remain secondarily but directly casual.

For neoclassical realists, the international environment is not perfectly accessible nor easy to read. To handle this difficulty, policymakers have to rely on preconceived beliefs and ideas, i.e. strategic culture. Several neoclassical realists have studied how policymakers have misread the international environment and acted in ways contrary to what to be expected from pure systemic theories. Both Fareed Zakaria and Thomas Christensen have written about the importance of events that make policymakers aware of cumulative effects of gradual changes in long term-power trends and thus create a perceptual shock.\textsuperscript{71}

Neoclassical realists acknowledge that strategy is not made by the nation as a whole. It is made by the government, and consequently Fareed Zakaria concludes that "what matters is state power, not national power".\textsuperscript{72} State power is the part of the resources of their entire society, human and material, the state can extract, direct and mobilize for its purposes. Zakaria uses this distinction to explain U.S. strategy. In his study \textit{From Wealth to Power} he argues that the weakness of the American state explains why it did not expand during the decades after the civil war, even though it had the opportunity and national power to do so. This is a phenomenon he calls "imperial understretch".\textsuperscript{73} Zakaria labelled his work state-centered realism and hypothesised that "statesmen will expand the nation’s political interests abroad when they perceive a relative increase in state power, not national power." Note how the perception of power is explicitly incorporated into the theory and functions as an intervening variable between relative power and action.

The analytical distinction between national and state power is central for neoclassical realists, and it brings the analysis closer to the policymakers’ opportunities and constraints while leaving realism’s core assumptions intact.\textsuperscript{74} Policymakers must not only take state strength into account when

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{70} Rose, (1988), p. 151.
\item\textsuperscript{71} ‘Perceptual shocks’ is a term utilized by both historical institutionalists and philosophers of science when explaining how ideas tend to persist in spite of changing conditions until a perceptual shock disproves the idea. See Zakaria, (1998); Christensen, (1994).
\item\textsuperscript{72} Zakaria, (1998), p. 9.
\item\textsuperscript{73} Zakaria, (1998), p. 38-39.
\item\textsuperscript{74} The main problem with balance of power theory is that it assumes "constant mobilization capacity", that is, that all states have a similar ability to extract resources from their society so that aggregate national resources may be equated with actual state power and global influence. This simplifying assumption ignores the trade-off between internal and external stability.
\end{itemize}
choosing actions to neutralize external threats or to satisfying national ambitions, they must also always consider the domestic costs attached to a particular action. Domestic politics must, therefore, always be taken into account. Schweller introduced the intervening variable "elite consensus" to explain the phenomenon of "unanswered threats" and "underbalancing":

At its core, elite consensus concerns the degree of shared perception about some facts in the world as being problems (vs. not), of a particular nature (vs. some other nature) requiring certain remedies (vs. others). It is a concept that takes into account the intuitively understood but too often ignored idea that the process of problem construction (or representation) is a subjective one that is only partly determined by objective facts. Specifically, elite consensus is a measure of the similarity of elites’ preferences over outcomes and their beliefs about the preferences and anticipated actions of others. It is also a function of the strategic setting, which includes the perceived actions available to the actors and the information structure of the environment, that is, what the actors can know for certain and what they must infer from others’ behaviour.\(^\text{75}\)

When there is little or no consensus, the political costs of decisive and bold government action increase dramatically. Elite consensus should not be regarded as a yes or no proposition but rather as a continuous variable that measures the degree to which political elites are fragmented.\(^\text{76}\)

There are many causes of elite fragmentation, and it may arise over a wide variety of issues. When elites are fragmented, it is much harder for the government to create and implement coherent and costly strategies. Proposals will be publicly criticized by disagreeing elites as costly, misguided, counterproductive, opposed to national values, etc. The problem with this situation is that any bargaining effort to appease the criticism in order to create more unity will increase the chances that the policy will result in incoherent half measures and will be characterized by ambivalence and inconsistencies.\(^\text{77}\) When there is little or ambiguous information available to actors, one would expect there to be less consensus about strategic choices and policy preferences.

The idea of trying to combine cultural theories with realism is not new, hardly controversial and perfectly in line with neoclassical realism. Furthermore, it should be noted that many cultural theorists do not share constructivism’s basic assumptions about the indeterminacy of the material, and most


\(^{76}\) Elite consensus varies, and that variation can be understood as a function of the "mix of international and domestic incentives attached to different options, actors risk taking preferences, their time horizons, and how they discount costs and benefits". Alan C. Lambourn, "Theory and the Politics in World Politics," International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 2 (June, 1997), P. 212. See also Schweller, (2006).

\(^{77}\) Schweller argues that democracies are particularly slow to balance for many reasons and underscores the fact that it is hard to create consensus in pluralistic democracies. See Schweller, (2006).
supporters of strategic culture, according to Jeffrey Lantis, aspired primarily to bring "culture back in" to the study of strategy. For a long time, many realists were skeptical of cultural theories. However, in recent years many seem to have realized the potential of these theories as supplements to realist theories for explaining deviations from expected behaviour. They can, for instance, help explain time lags between variations in state behaviour and structural change; account for seemingly 'irrational' behaviour where states act contrary to the imperatives of the system, such as overstretch or underbalancing, and help explain state action in structurally indeterminate situations. It was in part this trend that led Gideon Rose to coin the term neoclassical realism in the first place.

With a neoclassical realist inspired analysis, it is possible to accommodate the supporters of strategic culture and bring culture back in. Neoclassical realism makes a stronger case for the influence of cultural factors on strategy than the classical realists, and it acknowledges that there is a certain co-dependency between realist and cultural/constructivist theories of strategy. This co-dependency is increasingly recognized, and debate over labels such as 'realist constructivism' and 'constructivist realism' capture this.

Note that I have chosen to use the term framework instead of theory. The reason for this is the ad-hoc procedure involved in the incorporation of domestic-level variables. This is inevitable, since such variables cannot be derived from realism's core assumptions. The variable 'strategic culture' is primarily inspired by cultural/constructivist theories. The framework is also influenced by some variables that are normally associated with theoretical approaches other than realism, such as liberalism, cultural/constructivist theories and bureaucratic politics. This is, of course, not surprising, since realist theories and most notably structural realism have traditionally shunned domestic variables. The framework is not, however, atheoretical, since it involves a hierarchy between the international distribution of power and domestic variables.

2.2 The Neoclassical Realist Inspired Framework

In this section the neoclassical realist framework will be presented. It begins with a lengthy description of U.S. strategic culture. First, two broad and persistent features or paradigms of U.S. strategic culture are presented. Then, what I refer to as four 'subcultures' and their relation to the two paradigms will be outlined. Thereafter, I address how the international environment,
presidential leadership and domestic politics in conjunction determine the relative strength of the paradigms and subcultures. The section ends with a set of expectations regarding U.S. strategy towards CASC during 1991–2006.

In order to show how strategic culture works as an intervening variable between the international environment and U.S. strategy, I have created a framework that draws on several bodies of literature. It should be noted that I have chosen to use the term framework instead of theory. The reason for this is the ad-hoc procedure by which the domestic-level variables are incorporated. This is inevitable, since such variables cannot be derived from realism’s core assumptions. The variable ‘strategic culture’ is primarily inspired by scholars interested in strategic culture. However, the framework is also influenced by some variables that are normally associated with theoretical approaches other than realism, such as liberalism, constructivism, historical institutionalism and bureaucratic politics. This is, of course, not surprising, given that realist theories and, most notably, structural realism have traditionally shunned domestic variables.

As described in the section on cultural theories, the notion of culture as a constraint is very commonplace. Cultural scholars explain how ideas and institutions limit the range of possible solutions policymakers are likely to take into consideration when trying to resolve a particular policy problem. They argue that underlying normative and/or cognitive structures restrict the set of policy ideas political elites find acceptable or even think of. Furthermore, formal institutions mediate the degree to which elites transport different ideas into policy-making arenas for consideration.

The framework also draws on organizational institutionalism, since it opens up the possibility for a more dynamic theory of action that affirms the importance of agency. The framework acknowledges that strategic culture is not only constraining but also enabling.\(^1\) This underscores the notion that ideas do not float around freely and that human agency is involved. Behaviour, conceptualized as responses to pressures and opportunities in the external environment, is the term normally used in realist studies. However, this study will employ the term action, since it pertains to “intentional behaviour, caused by the desires and beliefs of agents.”\(^2\) As it entails both agency and intentionality, it fits better with neoclassical realism.

\(^1\) Concepts such as transposition and bricolage capture the notion that actors self-consciously devise solutions to their problems by deliberately manipulating explicit, culturally given concepts (scripts, cues, routines, etc.) that reside in the cognitive foreground.

My intervening variable is strategic culture, which constitutes an attempt to cross-fertilize the lessons of different strands of institutionalism. A strategic culture is made up of ideas, and ideas can be either normative or cognitive. Normative ideas consist of attitudes and values, whereas cognitive ideas are theoretical analyses that specify cause and effect relationships and descriptions. Ideas can be underlying and sometimes taken-for-granted assumptions residing in the background of policy debates. However, they can also be theories and concepts located in the foreground of debates, where they are explicitly articulated by policy makers.

Strategic culture defines the terrain of policy discourse. It constrains action by limiting the range of alternatives that policy-making elites are likely to perceive as useful and worthy of consideration. It also constrains action by limiting the range of alternatives that elites are likely to perceive as legitimate and acceptable to the public. It is important to emphasize that the latter logic of reasoning does not apply to public sentiments per se but rather to how elites perceive these sentiments.

2.2.1 American Strategic Culture

We embrace contradictory principles with equal fervor and cling to them with equal tenacity. Should our foreign policy be based on power or morality? Realism or idealism? Pragmatism or principle? Should its goal be the protection of interests or the promotion of values? Should we be nationalists or internationalists? Liberals or conservatives? We blithely answer, ‘All of the above’.84

Eugene V. Rostow

The crosscurrents of American history are many, and no single theory or term can explain or subsume them all, not even Louis Hartz’s ‘liberal tradition’ or William Appleman William’s ‘open door’ thesis.85 Many historians have recognized this, and instead of creating a single theory of American foreign policy or strategic culture they have created several categories to capture and characterize it. Thomas A. Bailey lists six: isolationism, freedom of the seas, the Monroe Doctrine, Pan-Americanism, the Open Door, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.86 Isolationism, republican expansion, and the

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setting of an example of freedom for others were the categories used by Cushing Strout. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. writes about the cycles of warfare between realism and messianism, between experiment and destiny. Henry Kissinger highlighted the dualities between idealism and power politics as well as isolationism and globalism as fundamental categories in understanding U.S. strategy. Walter A. McDougall works with what he calls two testaments, one old and one new, which each consists of four traditions, and Walter Russell Mead views U.S. strategy as the result of the interplay of four deeply rooted approaches, which he calls schools. The list can go on.

A central feature of most descriptions of U.S. strategic culture is the notion that the country’s strategy seems to be a product of countervailing forces or ideas. This study will use a highly abstracted version of U.S. strategic culture that tries to capture this particular quality. I will argue that the two main and persistent features of U.S. strategic culture are liberalism and non-entanglement. These will henceforth be referred to as paradigms, not only to distinguish this study’s categories, but also because the term paradigm is often associated with theories of constraint. The paradigms are elite assumptions that constrain the cognitive range of useful solutions available to policy makers and elite perceptions of public assumptions that constrain the normative range of legitimate solutions available to policy makers. The two paradigms will be thoroughly described in the following section and with their help my ambition is to show how strategic culture functions as an intervening variable that shape and bend U.S. strategy.

This highly abstracted version of the strategic culture does not, of course, capture all of the subtleties and nuances of U.S. strategic thought. It is not intended to, but should be regarded rather as an analytical instrument. To provide a fuller and more detailed picture, the study below also introduces the term subcultures to denote less abstract versions of U.S. strategic culture.

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91 Seymour Martin Lipset has not only argued that the U.S. has a special ideology that separates it from other countries but also that this particular ideology defines the limits of the political debate in the U.S., shapes its society and help to explain why its foreign policy has a moralistic and crusading streak. Seymour Martin Lipset, American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).
My arguments about U.S. strategic culture are not based solely on observations by historians; they are also backed up by numerous opinion polls. After the Cold War, foreign policy elites have been divided over defining potential threats and interest. As a result public opinion and foreign policy are now more tightly linked than during the Cold War era. In the decade after the Cold War, there were, according to Robert H. Puckett, "two general clusters of attitudes of foreign policy issues: (1) neo-isolationism, protectionism, liberal unilateralism, and conservative unilateralism; and (2) internationalism and multilateralism". According to Puckett "support for a minimalist or neo-isolationist strategy generally hover[ed] between 35 and 41 percent".\(^2\) This observation clearly supports the notion of two countervailing forces. Throughout the study I will refer to various opinion polls for two main reasons. First, they will demonstrate that the particular ideas expressed by the paradigms and subcultures actually have support among a considerable number of Americans. Second, polls, and especially those that tracks changes over time, will help support my arguments about the relative influence of the paradigms and subcultures.

### 2.2.2 The Paradigm of Liberalism

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. This much we pledge — and more.... To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny....to those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required — not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.

*John F. Kennedy Inaugural Address Jan 20 1961*

Liberalism plays a fundamental role in American life. This sweeping declaration of President Kennedy is perhaps only a condensed version of U.S. liberalism, but for millions of Americans these words have a special meaning. They not only give many a sense of the nation’s role in the world but also shape identities and say something profound about how Americans want to perceive themselves. The notion that Americans define their national identity according to a set of classical liberal ideas is hardly controversial. The

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justification for the rebellion against Great Britain was based on liberal beliefs making them inextricably linked to the creation of the United States as an independent nation. Why the power of liberalism has persisted over time is an open question; however, few claim that it has not. Liberalism in America has been the subject of numerous studies, and it permeates U.S. society to such an extent that it is often taken for granted. This separates the U.S. from most countries, including other democracies.

Liberalism has no real ideological rival in the U.S.93 This does not mean that American society has been static or unchanging or that individual liberal principles are never disputed in domestic politics. Ever since the nation’s founding there has been a debate, sometimes intense and even violent, over the specific meaning and application of it. American liberalism is a big tent, and within it there are numerous versions and interpretations. Throughout U.S. history this belief system has been interpreted to include groups and people that were initially excluded from it. However, over the years there has been stunning agreement regarding its fundamental principles that can be described as Lockean in nature: individual freedom, personal property, equality of rights, enterprise, rule of law, progress and limits of state power.

It is of fundamental importance to understand that the paradigm of liberalism refers to classical liberalism. It does not refer to the social liberalism developed from the progressive ideals of the early 20th century. Thus the currently somewhat derogatory term ‘liberal’ associated with support for a welfare state, mixed economy, minority rights, government entitlements and often the Democratic party and counterposed to ‘conservatism’ and the Republican party – does not apply here. In this study the term refers to classical liberalism.

One of the major arguments of this study is that culture mediates U.S. strategy. The paradigm of liberalism thus significantly shapes strategy. It both enables and constrains action, and it should be understood as a filter that limits options rather than as an independent variable. The paradigm creates a certain outlook on how the world works and offers many ideas about strategy. American liberalism is an outgrowth of a broader classical and transnational liberal tradition represented by thinkers such as Locke, Smith, Kant, Montesquieu, Paine, Cobden and Angell. Even though there are significant differences between the representatives of this tradition, they all share the belief that progress in international affairs is possible and that we are not stuck in an endless cycle of war and balance of power politics, as realism teaches.

Commercial liberalists argue for increased economic interdependence among states, because they believe trade serves as a disincentive to aggres-

93 This is what led historian Richard Hofstadter to insist that “[i]t has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one.” Richard Hofstadter quoted in Samuel Huntington, American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1981).
sion and war, and many Americans view business as the highest form of philanthropy and commerce as the fastest road to world peace. Regulatory liberalists, on the other hand, stress the ways in which different types of domestic governing institutions structure the interactions of societal groups, thereby determining which configuration of societal interests and ideas will most likely shape state preferences. The contribution to peace made by democratic governance is a cornerstone of this particular strand. Then there are those that stress the ways in which international institutions shape the behaviour of states and ameliorate the effects of anarchy that inhibit cooperation.

One of the strongest tenets of the paradigm of liberalism is the support for democracy abroad. Democracies make better partners than monarchies and tyrannies. The latter are unstable, unpredictable and unreliable for a wide variety of reasons. Democratic states, on the other hand, are more stable, predictable and reliable because they are more likely to reflect public opinion, which draws policies toward the centre and toward a rational concept of interest. Democracies are also more likely to share similar political, moral and commercial interests. This makes them more likely to develop similar economic policies that facilitate commercial activities and rule-of-law legal systems, which will increase their opportunities to prosper and decrease the possibilities of war. Democracy also guards against the most dangerous forms of misrule: tyranny and the domination of military elites, groups that sometimes favour war to peace.

Broadly conceived, the paradigm of liberalism creates an outlook according to which popular government, commercial exchange and international peace feed off of each other and create a virtuous cycle that moves the world toward peace and prosperity. Samuel Huntington made a pertinent observation regarding this outlook, suggesting that "Americans believe in the unity of goodness" and "assume that all good things go together" – social progress, economic growth, political stability, democracy – "and that the achievement of one desirable social goal aids in the achievement of others". This has a profound effect on U.S. strategy.

The U.S. was founded on the hope and dreams of a new order characterized by progress, peace, freedom, trade, rule of law and republican forms of government. This new order was expressly defined against the backdrop of the old European order characterized by militarism, blood aristocracy, corruption, secrecy, war, alliances, and balance of power politics. With the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the U.S. officially declared its determination to prevent the reimposition of European rule in Latin America. Over the years the U.S. has expanded this doctrine through its support of 'self-government',

94 Scholars often cite Kant or Montesquieu in tracing the roots of this liberalist strand. Norman Angell’s *The Great Illusion* provides the most illustrious attempt to conceive of war in times of economic interdependence as highly unlikely and an act of collective irrationality.
‘self-determination’, ‘de-colonization’ and repudiation of great power ‘spheres of influence’.  

The idea that the U.S. is exceptional and morally distinct from this old order is shared by many Americans. The idea that America’s revolutionary republican experiment has implications for the world is a common assumption, and ever since its founding there has been a widespread notion that its ideals will emanate from the country resulting in a more open, peaceful and democratic world.

Arguably, this system of beliefs has historically had a huge impact on U.S. strategy. Broadly conceived, the promotion of a liberal international order characterized by democracy and open markets has always been a central goal of the U.S. It is not only perceived as a worthy end in itself but also as one that America has a moral duty to promote. It is important to recognize that the act of promotion is also a practical imperative, since there is an equally widespread belief that this order serves the national interest. The U.S. would thrive in such an order, and it would be more secure, influential and prosperous than in any other form of international order.

It is possible to argue that there is a consensus in America regarding the virtue of a more liberal world order and that the U.S. should promote this order. In strategic terms there is agreement over this goal, and this is primarily what the paradigm of liberalism refers to. U.S. determination that post-World War II Germany and Japan be demilitarized, that their political orders be democratized and that their economic systems be liberalized so that they might be integrated into a global economy constitutes the most powerful example of this. Peoples liberated from the Axis powers by the U.S. were to establish their own sovereign governments, not become dependents of new empires. Tony Smith writes that:

The degree to which Washington decided virtually spontaneously that the only governmental form which it could wholeheartedly support in Germany and Japan would be democratic is an impressive demonstration of the powerful cultural biases working on American decision-makers, for their convictions existed in good measure independently of any deliberate calculation of historical, economic, or geostrategic reasoning.  

The paradigm of liberalism can be regarded as the default or dominant mode in U.S. strategic culture after WWII, and policymakers will, despite external pressures, gravitate toward strategies that fit with it.

The real debates about U.S. strategy have usually been over means, that is, how the U.S. should promote this order. This debate is a recurrent phenomenon, and it be argued that there are, very broadly speaking, two oppos-

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96 Note how this can also be interpreted as a rejection of policies often associated with realism.
ing points of views. H.W. Brands uses the terms 'exemplarists' and 'vindicators' to describe the two. The former argue that the U.S. best promotes its liberal ideals abroad by example and that the U.S. should not become entangled in the messy affairs of other states. The U.S. should be a sanctuary of freedom and a beacon of liberty, but it should not try to spread democracy 'at the point of bayonets'. The vindicators, on the other hand, argue that the U.S. should promote these ideals by all means, including the application of military force. They favour interventions for liberal goals and want the U.S. to make the world safe for democracy by rooting out authoritarianism and tyranny abroad. By remaking the international system in this way, the U.S. will become safe. They regard this as the country's moral duty and mission.

Even though these points of view offer different approaches to how the U.S. should act, they share the same goal and insist that the U.S. can and should be concerned with how other states conduct themselves, not just in the international arena, but also internally. Their difference can thus be described as being on a tactical level.

The notion of the U.S. as a model for other countries can be used to justify very different policies. When the U.S. wants to forcefully intervene somewhere, the arguments of the vindicators will provide a powerful case. When it for some reason needs or wants to scale back and tone down its ambitions and to make a lighter footprint on the international scene, the ideas of the exemplarists are there to help the country approach its difficulties in a rational and positive way.

The paradigm of liberalism entails a disdain for balance of power politics and realpolitik, which are associated with the old European order. This cultivates suspicion against the entire notion of strategy, since the concept is associated with secrecy, powerful elites, standing armies, intelligence services, covert operations and Machiavellian ethics. These practices do not fit well with the new order, and realists themselves constantly support this claim in their complaints that their ideas do not seem to resonate with U.S. culture.

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99 The phrase was used by Warren Harding during the 1920 Presidential election campaign to criticize Woodrow Wilson's Haitian policies.

100 As the violence in Iraq escalated in 2006, the German Marshall Fund asked "Let's imagine an authoritarian regime in which there is no political or religious freedom. To help democracy, would you support (...) Sending military forces to remove authoritarian regimes?" 34 percent answered yes and 56 percent no. German Marshall Fund, June 2006.

101 John Mearsheimer, for instance, writes: "Americans who think seriously about foreign policy issues tend to dislike realism intensely, mainly because it clashes with their basic val-
Secrecy has, according to liberal thought, a corrosive effect on public trust and democratic institutions. This makes many Americans suspicious of the intelligence establishment and military institutions. Efforts to subject these institutions to congressional oversight within a legal framework often have their origin in liberal values. Strategy is only perceived as legitimate to the extent that it promotes liberal goals abroad, and Americans who favour military intervention abroad do it for liberal reasons, unless it is for self-defense.

Over the years there has been a debate over whether America’s liberal culture serves the country well or constitutes a liability. There have, however, never been any doubts about the existence of this culture. Realist critics have made some important observations regarding its effect on U.S. strategy. Even though the universalism and the dream of liberty for all are important sources of soft power, its culture has a tendency to involve the country in all sorts of difficulties and dangers. Its preoccupation, not only with the external behaviour of other states, but also with their internal behaviour, creates tension between the U.S. and non-democratic states, some of which are of fundamental strategic importance from a realist perspective. There is constant pressure for governmental action against countries that persecute dissidents, permit the genital mutilation of women, suppress trade unions, hunt whales, eat dogs, oppress national minorities or otherwise offend the moral sensitivities of some organized U.S. constituencies. This has consequences. In addition to giving policymakers one painful headache after another, it decreases the comfort level of other countries with the U.S. and increases their concern that too much U.S. power endangers their vital interests.

Realists and others complain that this paradigm makes it difficult and even impossible to pursue an effective national security strategy. It considers war and conflict to be unnatural and atavistic and not a necessary feature of international politics. It limits options and constrains policymakers from engaging in practices that perhaps are necessary to protect the country. There is an inevitable and natural tension between the liberal culture and the pursuit of strategy, since every tactical choice will find opponents, and every effort at maintaining the status quo will constantly be challenged by those seeking radical change.

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103 When asked about the importance of promoting human rights abroad, about 50 percent of Americans see it as ‘very important’ and about 35 percent as ‘somewhat important’. Gallup, “U.S. Position in the World”.

The liberal culture also has a tendency to create an all or nothing approach. Progress is possible according to the paradigm, and if the U.S. could defeat and reform its adversaries once and for all, a new and manageable world order would ensue. Most Americans reject the realist notion that international relations is in essence about an endless management of anarchy. They also reject limited aims in wartime and usually declare ambitious goals. All in all, the liberal culture sets – ‘a high bar’ – for what can be called strategic success. This, in turn, sets up many Americans for disappointment, since there are usually no flawless victories in the world of international affairs. George Kennan and others have noted Americans’ tendency to produce euphoric expectations after momentary triumphs. When these hopes are dashed – which they typically are from time to time – disappointment and frustration follow. The arguments of the exemplarists thrive on such feelings, tempting the country to adopt a less interventionist posture. Disengagement follows, which leaves the country unprepared for new external challenges that will inevitably arise. This vicious cycle has repeated itself many times in U.S. history and is a product of its idealistic culture, realists argue.105

There are, of course, those that argue that the liberal culture has little or no impact on U.S. actions. The idea that the U.S. pursues a narrow strategic agenda and only uses liberal rhetoric to legitimize and rationalize decisions is common, both within and outside America. This raises the question of the potential discrepancy between rhetoric and practice. This distinction is important, and if the idea of a sharp discrepancy between public statements and actions is true, then the only influence the liberal culture has on U.S. strategy is that policymakers officially phrase their totally illiberal policies and decisions with a liberal vocabulary. This cynical position is rather farfetched. If U.S. liberal culture does not have any influence or does not exist, why would policymakers use liberal language in the first place? And, how could such language have the effects critics point to? This position is only plausible if one assumes that U.S. policymakers are completely different from all other Americans. However, even then it does not pose a problem for the assumptions of this study, since U.S. policymakers still have to fit their policies into U.S. liberal culture, thereby ruling out certain actions. This position is also undermined by an overwhelming amount of empirical evidence. It is thus safe to say that there is a genuine belief in liberal values in America. However, a more powerful criticism, backed up by a long line of realist scholars, is simply that rhetoric and declaratory policy is significant but marginally important in terms of outcomes. This is important, and the study is open to this possibility.

Historically, there can be no doubt that the U.S. has pursued its liberal goals in a self-serving and often hypocritical way. These goals are not neces-

sarily as important as policymakers, including most Presidents, suggest. The
decision making process is complex, and, even though these goals often are
regarded as important, they are still just part of this process. Remember that
it is not being argued here that America does not have, or historically has not
had, other goals than liberal ones. Notably, the Monroe Doctrine effectively
kept European powers out of Latin America while opening up for U.S. influence
at a bargain price through the British navy. What is being argued is that
U.S. strategy over the decades has to a remarkable extent been shaped by the
paradigm of liberalism.

The paradigm of liberalism is also institutionalized in the policymaking
process. There are numerous examples of this. In 1978 President Carter de-
clared that "human rights is the soul of our foreign policy". The State De-
partment has a human rights division, and its head is an Assistant Secretary
of State. It annually documents the human rights standards of any country
receiving U.S. foreign aid and assistance, and various amendments to the
Foreign Assistance Act restricts economic and military assistance to coun-
tries engaged in "a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally
recognized human rights". This kind of language and legislation effec-
tively constrains and limits policy options. Moreover, the U.S. has a ban on
assassinations and its military has strict rules of engagement.

This and all of the other ideas that constitute the paradigm of liberalism
separate the U.S. from other states, including great powers such as Russia
and China. Samuel Huntington wrote that American nationalism "has been
an idealistic nationalism, justified, not by the assertion of the superiority
of the American people over other peoples, but by the assertion of the superior-
ity of American ideals over other ideals". The strategies of other states can
be whatever they decide it should be, provided it is in their momentary self-
interest. However, U.S. strategy is judged by the criteria of universal prin-
ciples.

To briefly summarize, the paradigm of liberalism functions as an inter-
vening rather than an independent variable. Policymakers must constantly
relate to this paradigm and keep it in mind. They are constrained by it and
need to adjust their policy preferences to it. However, they can also use it to
legitimize their authority and their policies. Some may have internalised the
paradigm and probably really believe in it; others have to pragmatically ad-
just to it. One important effect of this is that U.S. policymakers, including

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106 Jimmy Carter, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights Remarks at a White House Meet-
107 See Foreign Assistance Act on 1961 [Public Law 87–195] [As Amended Through P.L.
113–296, Enacted December 19, 2014].
108 For a summary of U.S. ban on assassinations, see Elizabeth Bazan, Assassination Ban and
Research Service, 2002).
Presidents, often make grand and sweeping commitments in order to pass this self-imposed 'high bar', just as Kennedy did, as discussed in the beginning of this section.

2.2.3 The Paradigm of Non-Entanglement

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course…. Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why interweaving our destiny with that of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?

George Washington’s Farewell Address 1796

The idea that the U.S. should stay out of alliances and not become entangled in the affairs of others has been part of U.S. strategic culture since its founding. When George Washington left office, he declared that foreign policy should be the indispensable armor of the republic. However, he warned that folly, favouritism, faction and ambition could turn it into a danger to independence and liberty. His farewell address laid down a set of principles that would become enormously influential throughout U.S. history. Washington declared that the U.S. ought to seek good relations with all countries but should eschew political ties with any state, except for emergencies. Another principle was that the country should marshal its own strength to defend its interests, both against enemies and temporary allies. The U.S. ought simply to avoid unnecessary entanglements, take advantage of its isolated position and look to its territorial, demographic and commercial growth. By doing this, the country would eventually acquire the power to deter and avenge alone ‘annoyances’.

Non-entanglement was a constant theme in the nation’s early strategy debates. Thomas Paine argued in Common Sense that the "true interest of America [was] to steer clear of European contentions", and John Adams wrote that "we should calculate all our measures and foreign negotiations is such a manner, as to avoid a too great dependence upon any one power of Europe."

Neutrality, unilateralism, isolationism and autonomy have ever since the country’s founding been an important part of its strategic culture, and numerous Americans have subscribed to the notion that "excessive intervention in the Hobbesian world of international politics would corrupt and undermine the Lockean, democratic order that the American people had estab-

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lished at home." 111 John Quincy Adams’ famous address of July 4th, 1821 warns of entanglement and ambition.

Whenever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her [America’s] heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assumed the colors and usurped the standards of freedom...She might become dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit. 112

The lessons of Washington and John Quincy Adams serve as a guiding spirit for many Americans, and they are still often quoted.

Neutrality was and still is an important part of this line of thought. It was perceived not just as a pragmatic course for the new nation, but also as the morally justifiable choice. Entangling alliances would invite corruption at home and danger abroad. Neutrality, on the other hand, would serve both national growth and liberty. The paradigm of non-entanglement thus sees two kinds of threats to liberty and democracy emanating from the international environment. First, there are all of the things foreign states and actors may do to threaten U.S. liberty. Additionally, there are all of the things that Americans may do to themselves as they seek to defend themselves from others or as they seek to spread their values to others. This idea has influenced the country, and many Americans are reluctant to support ambitious strategies where the government actively searches abroad for opportunities. They simply do not see opportunities abroad; they mostly see threats. 113

Many Americans are attracted by the idea of hegemony, with all of the power and possibilities that it entails, such as creating a world order reflecting the values of the country. However, those favouring the paradigm on

113 During the period studied, slightly less than 40 percent of the American public agreed with the notion that "America should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own." A clear majority also agreed with the statement: "We should not think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home." In 2013, 51 percent said that "the U.S. does too much in terms of helping solve world problems." After 9/11 about one third of Americans believe that the government anti-terrorism programs have "gone too far in restricting the average person’s civil liberties." See Pew Research Center, "Public Sees U.S. Power Declining as Support for Global Engagements Slips: America’s Place in the World 2013".
non-entanglement are not seduced at all by such prospects. For them, the hegemon lives a hard and busy life, and the dangers and downsides are numerous. It must have a standing military of great power, and it must involve itself in many of the world’s conflicts. It must influence, peddle information and bribe on a grand scale. It must create a vast intelligence network, engage in secretive activities, deal and sometimes ally itself with actors of questionable character. Finally, the capital of a hegemonic state always becomes a place of secrets, where foreign powers try to bribe, corrupt and influence its policymakers.  

This paradigm entails strong support for the constitutional conduct of foreign affairs and highly values the checks and balances put in place by the country’s founding fathers. It reflects fear of concentrating power in central government and perceives the latter as a threat to liberty. Avoidance of war and large scale interventions are, therefore, regarded as important strategic goals, since they are inevitably extremely costly. Wars pile up debts that concentrate power in the central government. They also require secrecy that dilutes the public trust, endangers democratic government and strengthens the executive at the expense of the legislature. These reasons combined make many very reluctant to even participate in what some call ‘just wars’. Proponents of this paradigm naturally strive for a narrow definition of the national interest, and they constantly inquire as to "where the nation’s true security perimeter is to be found".

Historically, this paradigm has wielded tremendous influence, and the U.S. has in fact played less of a role than one would expect by looking at the international distribution of power. Fareed Zakaria and others have pointed out that the country failed to convert its material potential into usable forms of military, political or economic leverage during the decades after the Civil War. There are many reasons for this, among them the cultural resistance to a strong federal government, a large standing army, entanglements and international ambitions. Many years before ultimate U.S. involvement in WWI, it possessed the power to tilt the balance of power in Europe by intervening militarily or through commitments and economic aid. However, it was extremely reluctant to commit American lives, or even money, to influence the balance of power or to keep its markets open, despite many U.S. companies and the country as a whole having a clear interest in doing so.

After WWI, the U.S. Senate did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and the country never joined the League of Nations. A faction known as the ‘irreconcilables’, whose membership included Republican Senators such as William Borah and Hiram Johnson, opposed the League in any way, shape, or form, asserting that it threatened to undermine the American nationality.

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There was also a faction of ‘reservationists’, which included Henry Cabot Lodge. Both factions quoted Washington’s Farewell Address in resistance to the League.\textsuperscript{117} It is important to note that those opposed to the League did not dispute the value of a growing liberal order or an open door abroad. What they argued was that the military commitments to the League’s ends were too costly and unnecessary, given the interests at stake.

Very few Americans propose a total principled isolationism, and almost everyone knows that executing such a policy would be impossible. International economic relations and international trade have always been considered necessary and strategically important. This is why many historians perceive the term isolationism as a misnomer. Walter McDougall argues quite convincingly that the term unilateralism better captures this cultural trait.\textsuperscript{118} It would thus be wrong to argue that the U.S. has historically pursued a strategy of isolationism. What is being argued here is that there is a special sensitivity to, and a preference for avoiding, foreign entanglements. Before WWII there was a widely held notion that isolation served and protected America, a sentiment that persisted despite international pressures to get involved.\textsuperscript{119} The U.S. had reluctantly engaged in WWI and remained neutral during the turbulent 1930s. However, on a Sunday morning in December 1941 that notion was shattered by Japanese airplanes attacking the U.S. Pacific fleet in Pearl Harbor, and the country subsequently went to war.

Non-entanglement was the default position, and only strong external pressures and a perceptual shock was able to overturn it. The paradigm still continued to exercise its influence, though. Even today when U.S. involvement is unavoidable, advocates of non-entanglement propose policies guided by calculations to minimize costs, risks and potential damage done to its institutions. Overall FDR’s WWII strategy relied far more on capital and hardware than on manpower and sought to minimize U.S. casualties. Despite its vast population, the U.S. produced far fewer divisions than Germany or Russia.\textsuperscript{120} Almost immediately after the war, the U.S. initiated a massive demobilization of its armed forces, and in 1961 President Eisenhower famously warned, in his farewell address, about what he called the military-industrial-complex’s negative influence on U.S. democratic institutions.


\textsuperscript{120} See: Gaddis, (1982), p. 61; Williams, (1959), p. 49ff. This should in no way be interpreted as a minimization of the heavy price the U.S. has paid over the decades to sustain a leading role in world affairs.
These events are hard to explain if you assume that states are power maximizers, especially since they occurred at time when U.S. power was at an all-time high and it was less constrained than ever to pursue any goals whatsoever.

After WWII the paradigm of liberalism became the dominant paradigm, although the paradigm of entanglement still exerts considerable influence. There is a constant struggle between the two in which the supporters of non-entanglement wish to narrow the definition of the national interest. They want to keep costs and risks as low as possible and are reluctant to support any active projection of values. Like most Americans, however, they embrace the idea of the country serving as an example to others. The more states that emulate the U.S., the better. The exemplar tradition, therefore, has many supporters among those favouring non-entanglement.

The adherents of the paradigm of non-entanglement are generally suspicious and sensitive to costs regarding international institutions. They fear Americans will lose liberty if international institutions are strengthened and are, therefore, reluctant to support them. They would much rather keep their money or see their taxes go to domestic programs than overseas. Because of their narrow definition of the national interest, they also are extremely reluctant to use the military for non-combat missions, such as nation building.

The notion that the American public is somehow extra sensitive to casualties is a misperception, or at least an overstatement. If a given military operation is perceived to be in the national interest, the public will support it and tolerate casualties. However, if the operation is not perceived to be in the national interest or goes badly, the public’s level of tolerance will be radically lower. Americans simply do not want their young to die, for instance, in a humanitarian intervention with unspecified goals.

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121 In 1999, when presented with two statements on methods for dealing with international problems like terrorism and the environment, 56% agreed that in order to address such problems "it will be increasingly necessary for the US to work through international institutions", while 39% agreed that it is better for the U.S. to act on its own because "international institutions are slow and bureaucratic, and often used as places for other countries to criticize and block the US". In 2004, when asked about how much they agreed with the statement: "International organizations are taking away too much power from the American government": 9 % strongly agreed, 25 % agreed, 28 % disagreed and 3 % strongly disagreed. Even though the number of American’s that agree with the statement that international institutions such as the UN, WTO, WHO, IMF, NATO and the World Court ought to be strengthened is considerably larger than the number that disagree, the latter still comprises about one third of the population. See WorldPublicOpinion.org, "U.S. Role in the World: Multilateral Cooperation and International Institutions".

This paradigm is also to some extent institutionalized. The U.S. federal government is fragmented and more constrained than most other democracies. The constitutional checks and balances are highly valued by many Americans and especially by those that want to constrain the executive power and slow down policy initiatives that require a strong executive branch. The President has a privileged position regarding strategy, but he is still constrained. Congress, with its power over appropriations, together with other measurements, such as the War Powers Act and the Assassination ban, are not the only constraints. Public opinion also matters, and an unpopular president will face more opposition and pressure from interest groups. The paradigm resonates with considerable numbers of Americans. They are unenthusiastic about many things, such as military interventions that do not fit in within their narrow definition of U.S. interests. Moreover, the election cycle allows them to punish the President and his party.

The answer to the question of why this paradigm has been so influential is complex. It is possible to point to a number of variables, although the country’s geographical position is probably the most important. Two vast oceans have protected America from conventional threats through the years, and this has most certainly influenced its strategic thought. David Halberstam has commented, with regard to this sense of insulation:

Our isolation, which was physical in one era, clearly ended long ago, but it nonetheless remains a part of our outlook, a formidable undertow to a new reality of modern age, more psychological than physical now, more a hope than reality. Our geography therefore has always dominated our psyche: we are by instinct apart from Europe and we like being apart from Europe. Our modern history confirms our ambivalence to, and love/hate relationship with internationalism.123

As we shall see the paradigm of non-entanglement resurfaced after the end of the Cold War. Many argued that the ambitious U.S. Cold War strategy was, in fact, an historical anomaly and argued for as well as expected ‘a return to normalcy’.

The willingness or reluctance to deploy U.S. instruments of power varies to a considerable degree with administrations. One can, for instance, argue that conservatives in recent years have been willing to sustain rather high levels of defense spending while simultaneously being critical and reluctant to engage in new multilateral commitments. In general, ‘liberals’ or progressives have, on the other hand, taken the opposite view.124 However, viewed from a longer historical perspective, it becomes evident that this bifurcation has not always existed. In the 1950s conservatives were opposed,

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124 Many analysts trace this particular bifurcation of U.S. internationalism to the Vietnam War era.
not only to multilateral commitments, but to high defense expenditures as well. This illustrates the necessity of differentiating between the two paradigms, on the one hand, and party affiliations and labels such as 'liberal' and 'conservative', on the other. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that different political coalitions have applied elements of the paradigms selectively at various points in history.

As mentioned earlier, the two paradigms can be perceived as two countervailing forces. The exemplar idea can in a way be seen as a bridge between them. Even though the paradigm of liberalism often encourages an ambitious strategy, it does not regard military interventions as 'the normal state of affairs'. Its proponents assume that the world is moving toward a peaceful order through social interaction, interdependence and economic exchange. Regular military intervention is not necessary to ensure this evolution. Therefore, military interventions are regarded as something that sometimes may be necessary to fend off threats or alleviate human suffering but not a necessity to ensure the triumph of freedom. Throughout U.S. history the paradigm of non-entanglement has been perceived as at least not incompatible with very ambitious visions of world order. The paradigm of liberalism has therefore, at times played into the long-term assumptions of the paradigm of non-entanglement. (That is, the U.S. does not have to do anything radical or costly. In the long run, liberal values will prevail anyway.)

In the shorter term, however, these two countervailing forces create tension that is rather specific to the U.S. The paradigm of liberalism drives politicians, including presidents, to make grand and sweeping commitments and to set out ambitious goals. The paradigm of non-entanglement, on the other hand, forces them to reduce costs and risks to such an extent that the U.S. often provides insufficient support to actually realise its declared goals.

States naturally want to keep costs and risks low and to achieve their goals at a minimum price. That is rational. However, the paradigm of non-entanglement is about more than just reducing risks and costs. It is a cultural force that has over the years often hindered the U.S. from promoting its own influence and security and economic interests in an optimal way. It also creates a national tendency to not provide the necessary resources to meet its own ambitious and explicitly declared goals. Clearly, this is not the same thing as just trying to be cost effective in executing strategy.

The effects of the paradigm of non-entanglement can be studied by analyzing how the U.S. has historically converted its material potential into usable leverage over other nations. It is, for instance, possible to look at preparedness for military engagements overseas, peacetime alliance commitments, levels and forms of defense spending, peacetime troop deployments, diplomatic initiatives and levels and forms of foreign aid. It can also be studied by looking at various public declarations. When the President states that the U.S. "should not seek to be the world’s policeman", it resonates with this
paradigm. When Secretary of State James Baker famously argued in relation to the crisis in Yugoslavia that the U.S. did not have "a dog in that fight", it can be argued that he echoed Washington’s warnings about interjecting the country into European affairs. Furthermore, one can look at what the U.S. is not doing, despite opportunities.

To briefly summarize, the paradigm of non-entanglement functions as an intervening rather than an independent variable. Policymakers must constantly relate to this paradigm and keep it in mind. They are constrained by it and need to adjust their policy preferences to it. However, they can also use it to legitimize their authority and their policies. Some may have internalised the paradigm and probably really believe in it; others have to pragmatically adjust to it. One important effect of this is that U.S. policymakers, including presidents, want to minimize risks and costs.

2.3 The Paradigms and the Subcultures

The description of U.S. strategic culture as a conflict between the two paradigms is very abstract. It overlooks many nuances, and many Americans would not recognize themselves as belonging to either paradigm. In order to give a fuller and more detailed description of U.S. strategic culture, I will introduce four different subcultures and show how they relate to the two paradigms. This makes the study richer and provides a vocabulary more suitable to characterize the different administrations and their strategies toward CASC. These subcultures are primarily inspired by Mead and McDougall. However, in order to avoid confusion and misinterpretations, I have chosen to create my own typology. The four subcultures described below are: American Realism, Liberal Internationalism, Abstentionism and Assertive Patriotism.

127 On the subject of American political subcultures more generally, see David H. Fischer, Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Colin Dueck’s works also seem to be heavily influenced by these historians. See Dueck, (2006).
128 I have chosen not to use Mead’s or McDougall’s typologies for several reasons. Mead’s thick descriptions of his four schools of U.S. foreign policy include discussions of class, ethnicity, geographical regions and to some extent religion, which are superfluous for my purposes. Mead also makes more ambitious claims, as the names of the schools suggest – Hamiltonian, Wilsonian, Jeffersonian and Jacksonian. These names are not just contentious but also require a familiarity with U.S. history that many IR-scholars lack. Mead’s work comes with some baggage that is unnecessary for this study. Similar arguments also apply to McDougall’s eight foreign policy traditions. Moreover, both Mead and McDougall use the term Wilsonianism, but their descriptions differ. McDougall has also had such difficulty naming his traditions that he has given them long names and even bracketed "so called" after
The democratic process in the U.S. is informed by a set of deeply rooted approaches to strategy. These approaches, or subcultures, appear very early in U.S. history, and even though they have evolved over the years in response to domestic and international changes, they have remained identifiable over the centuries. The subcultures operate on many different levels and include visions for foreign as well as domestic policy, they express socioeconomic and political interests as well as political and moral values, and they reflect deep-seated regional, economic, social and class interests.

The subcultures have an overlapping quality and are not sharply delineated. They can be approached as, what Max Weber called, ideal types. They are not like blood types, with every individual typed according to one and only one label. Very few Americans are passionately attached to the ideas and values of just one subculture. Most are responsive to the appeals and logic of different subcultures and combine different elements of different subcultures in their makeup and dip in and out of them pragmatically on different issues.\footnote{Schweller, (2006).}

None of the subcultures constitutes a closed system, even though they are based on ideas and values. They are all, to some extent grounded in liberal values, I will argue, and this is a quality that at the end of the day facilitates cooperation and limits conflicts between them. They are thus able to coalesce and combine to form broader or narrower coalitions for different goals. The conditions for creating consensus are thus more favourable in the U.S., as compared to states where the public does not share any core values.\footnote{This is a great advantage, since it gives U.S. policymakers more options and allows them to be more flexible than their peers in more fragmented states, where strong regional, class, confessional or ethnic loyalties create a rigid system of political competition.}

The paradigms and the subcultures are not to be understood as mutually exclusive but rather as two different levels of analysis. A guiding metaphor for the relationship between the paradigms and the subcultures is the microscope. If you were to put U.S. strategic culture under the microscope, you would first see the two paradigms struggling with each other – one being dominant. As you increase the magnification you would see that the two
countervailing forces actually consist of the interplay between four elements. For instance, *Operation Desert Storm*, the U.N. supported eviction of Iraq’s forces from Kuwait, resonated well with the paradigm of liberalism. However, if you increase the magnification, you would see that the intervention was backed up by a coalition consisting of American Realists, Liberal Internationalists and Assertive Patriots.

With the help of the subcultures, it is possible to illustrate how proponents of very different ideas sometimes find themselves supporting the same strategy. A framework based on only the two paradigms would be rather blind to this reality. In that regard the subcultures take the observer closer to the real events and debates that shape U.S. strategy. The main focus of the empirical chapters will be to show how U.S. strategic culture functions as an intervening variable and how the administrations are constrained and influenced by the two paradigms, while the subcultures will enrich the study by offering more depth.

The figure below is intended to capture how the subcultures relate to the two paradigms. It visually demonstrates the relations between the two paradigms and the four subcultures and provides a set of concepts that help characterize and compare the different administrations. Forced to build coalitions, administrations are seldom found on the fringes of this model but usually somewhere in the middle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Assertive Patriots</th>
<th>Abstentionists</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>American Realists</td>
<td>Liberal Internationalists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
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<td>Paradigm of Liberalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
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Administrations relate to the paradigms differently. They can, for instance, be strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism while weakly committed to the paradigm on non-entanglement. It is also possible to imagine the converse. With the introduction of the four subcultures, it is possible to make more subtle and nuanced differentiations between various administrations. It is, for instance, possible to make a rather strong argument that the Nixon
Administration belongs in the lower left portion, while the Carter Administration belongs somewhere in the upper right portion.

Combined with the descriptions of the paradigms and subcultures, this figure can be used for multiple purposes. It can be used to describe an entire presidency or to illustrate changes over time within a presidency. It can be used to describe an administration’s officially declared strategy, rhetoric and concrete actions, including illustrating incoherencies and inconsistencies. This study will, for instance, illustrate how George W. Bush’s rhetoric was a precarious blend between primarily Assertive Patriotism and Liberal Internationalism. Furthermore, this characterization can be interpreted to be in line with descriptions of his administration as Neo-Wilsonian. It is, of course, possible that there will be discrepancies between rhetoric and concrete actions. If we observe such discrepancies, we are observing incoherence. The framework not only anticipates such discrepancies under some circumstances but, more importantly, that they will follow a particular pattern. Because of the dominance of the paradigm of liberalism, the rhetoric of the three administrations would be expected to be more in line with that paradigm than would its concrete actions. In other words, it expects a consistency in the inconsistency and incoherence.

The figure also lends itself to other studies not necessarily based on the same theoretical foundation. However, it is important to recognise that I place the description of U.S. strategic culture within a neoclassical realist framework in order to answer my research question and to show how strategic culture is an important intervening variable between the international environment and U.S. strategy.

Before the presentation of the four subcultures, one further point needs to be made. It is important to observe that I only use the works of Mead and McDougall as sources of inspiration for my subcultures. I do not, for instance, have any intention to comment or test Mead’s critique of what he calls "continental realism". His critique has some merit, but I would argue that very little of it is contrary to the assumptions of neoclassical realism, since his main target is a 1960s notion of the state as a unified rational actor and 1970s arguments that ideas and values do not matter in foreign policy.\(^{131}\) Therefore, I cannot see a strong argument against combining Mead’s work with a neoclassical realist framework. Moreover, Mead constantly refers to the international environment, and it is evident that his theory cannot be regarded as an exponent of *innenpolitik*, even though he never specifies any relationship between the domestic and the international. McDougall’s works share this trait. Furthermore, the reason for using Mead and McDougall is not only that I find their respective descriptions of U.S. strategic culture appealing or that they are acclaimed authors on the subject, but also that their writings are amenable to being used the way I intend.

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2.3.1 American Realism

The subculture American Realism has a special relationship with the international relations theory realism. Although there are similarities, they are not the same, and this often creates confusion, especially for European observers. American Realists basically have the same vocabulary as realists. They often use terms like 'balance of power' and 'the national interest', and, by analyzing U.S. national interests, American Realists have always sought to develop policies that safeguard those interests within the limits of U.S. resources. This modus operandi, combined with its basic notion that human nature is weak, greedy and wicked, makes it easy to understand the confusion.

However, they differ from realists with regard to some fundamental issues. When the early American Realists analysed the nation's interests, they observed that its situation did not resemble the situation of the land-locked European powers, trapped like scorpions in a bottle, doomed to continuously struggle for security and forced to conceive their interests in military terms. The country in a situation most resembling the U.S. was Great Britain, and with its water boundaries it was far more focused on commercial activities and far less militaristic than the continental powers. Well aware that America’s geographical and demographical advantages promised them a glorious trajectory to greatness, they were inspired by Britain, and since they were living on such a ‘delightful spot’, the U.S. could be even more focused on commercial activities. They defined the national interests was thus, more than anything else, determined by trade and the interruption of trade, rather than loss of territory, has preoccupied the minds of U.S. strategists ever since independence.

American Realists do not share the pessimism generally attributed to realism. The promising trajectories are not the only reason for this. Realists often view security as a zero-sum game, a game that had a fundamental impact on the European continent. The prospects for co-operation in such a game are not particularly good. However, American Realists, with their focus on trade, commercial relations and economic prosperity, stress that such relations are not zero-sum in character.

Over the years, American Realists developed a distinctive definition of U.S. national interests and a strategy for how to best pursue them. There is a substantial degree of continuity in their thought, even though their doctrine has evolved over the years. Freedom of the seas is the earliest of these interests, and interference in passage is regarded as a direct and immediate threat to U.S. interests. This principle was later accompanied with freedom of the air. A second related interest is that American cargo vessels must have the

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same rights and privileges as those of other states. Open markets for U.S. products have always been at center stage of the strategy, and the U.S. has always opposed the exclusive trading system of the European empires and the surviving trade preferences for ex-colonies after their demise. To secure U.S. interests, American Realists were capable of behaving and promoting policies resembling an imperial power when they believed it to be necessary.\textsuperscript{134}

They did not, however, extend the same regard for trade rights to foreign goods and were overwhelmingly protectionist prior to World War II. Now they favour free trade, but the core purpose of trade policy has over the years remained the same. American Realists still believe that it is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure national prosperity through an appropriate trade regime. Tariffs have never been merely a method for raising revenue. Rather, they have always been considered a political instrument to be used to shape national economic development.

American Realists takes the country’s strengths and weaknesses into consideration when determining its interests. This has led them to focus attention on ‘strategic’ materials available only from limited sources. Access to oil is an important interest today; rubber was yesterday. The implication of this is enormous, and for American Realists there are at least two potential dangers in the Middle East. First, there is the threat that an outside power might attempt to take control of the region or to interfere with the oil supplies. Then, there is the threat that a state within the region might attempt to do the same thing. American Realists are willing to go to great lengths to thwart these dangers.\textsuperscript{135}

From an American Realist point of view, many of the advantages of free trade are lost unless there is a free flow of money between the trading nations of the world. This has huge implications for foreign as well as domestic policy. To keep the world’s markets integrated, certain restraints on domestic policy must be accepted. States need to have sound monetary and fiscal policies for their currencies to be credible and useful mediums of international trade. Therefore, they are often preoccupied with questions regarding sound public finance, banking and legal enforcement of commercial rights.

The environment in which U.S. strategy was made changed dramatically with the decline of the British Empire. When the Empire fell apart, most American Realists thought in the terms and values of Anglo-American strategic and economic categories. The open door, freedom of the seas and an international legal and financial order that permitted the broadest possible global trade in capital and goods would remain strategic goals. Their optimism and refusal to see the world strictly in zero-sum terms was clearly revealed after WWII with the creation of a U.S.-based order. After 1945,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{134} U.S. policy toward Hawaii, Panama and the Philippines are illustrative examples of this.
\item \textsuperscript{135} Polls show that a clear majority of the American people see it as very important to secure the nation’s energy supplies. Gallup, "U.S. Position in the World".
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
their vision was to build a global economic system constituted by free and consensual participation of independent states attracted by mutual economic and security interests. Many American Realists regard business as the highest form of philanthropy and commerce as the fastest road to world peace. This conviction is deeply felt within their ranks, and this subculture is more comprehensible if one takes this into account. As the Soviet threat increased, they initiated and supported a collective and bilateral web of security treaties and international agreements with the aim of replacing the British Empire and containing the Soviet Union.

There are no ambiguities concerning U.S. commitments to other nations. They are pragmatic and flexible regarding alliances and can act swiftly when they recognize a more suitable strategy for achieving their goals. After World War II, they came to the conclusion that protectionist policies would not serve U.S. interests particularly well during the necessary rebuilding of Europe, Japan and the world order. That conclusion led them to abandon some of their most valued instruments of policy, and they went from being ardent supporters of protectionism to becoming the strongest supporters of free trade ever since.

When under the leadership of American Realism, the U.S. defines its interests in global terms. The national interest is realistically defined and advanced through a diplomacy that is neither isolationist nor unrealistically idealistic. Many in the Federalist, the Whig and the Republican parties have followed this line of thought, and it has had a profound effect on U.S. strategy over the centuries. In recent years, the Nixon-Kissinger team was the foremost example of this subculture, and the influence of thinkers such as George Kennan, Walter Lippmann and Hans Morgenthau cannot be denied. This subculture, and the nature of the interests it represents, are familiar to many observers and is a well-known presence in international relations, even though some misunderstand it.

American Realism has, however, one major political weakness: its appeal. It is pragmatic, non-idealist and rather skeptical of democracy promotion and the projection of values. On the other hand, it is often willing to commit vast resources abroad to secure what it perceives as being in the nation’s economic and strategic interest. In other words, it is only weakly committed to the paradigm of liberalism and the paradigm of non-entanglement. This makes up for a relatively poor fit with American strategic culture. For politicians, American Realism is far from the path of least resistance. Therefore, many instinctively shy away from it; others are forced to redress their policies in a language that appeals more to the American people.
2.3.2 Liberal Internationalism

From the beginning of the 19th century, substantial numbers of missionaries flowed out from the U.S. "determined to relieve the world's peoples of the burdens of superstition, paganism, feudalism, and ignorance; to combat exploitation of the poor; to promote democracy, public health, and literacy; to reform the world's sexual mores; and to end the suppression of women overseas." The ideas that form the basis of Liberal Internationalism are not just deeply rooted in the national character but also more directly related to the national interest than what first meets the eye.

Liberal Internationalists insist that the U.S. can, and should, not only be concerned with how other states behave internationally but also internally. The certitudes of the missionaries of the 19th century are now widely despised by modern-day missionaries holding more politically correct values, but there are continuities between them. The missionaries spread Western knowledge, skills and literacy along with religious doctrines to what they regarded as the unenlightened parts of the world. This export of values still remains a central concern of many Americans today.

When the missionaries returned to the U.S., they were the primary source of information on non-European peoples and cultures, but they were also a source of tensions. Their values collided, not only with the objectives of local rulers, but also with Western ambitions and economic exploitation. The missionaries monitored, stabilized and policed the conduct of U.S. businessmen and others overseas. Their situation was often complicated. Many saw themselves as allies to the peoples whom they lived among while at the same time being dependent on Western soldiers for their own safety and ability to work. It is easy to draw parallels between their situation and many of today's modern NGOs. In fact, the origins of many contemporary NGOs can be traced back to a missionary milieu, as can the idea that Western governments have a duty to support the development of poor countries through financial aid and assistance.

The missionary movement believed that the U.S. government should support its social and political objectives, and it demanded three things. First, they wanted the government to support them and guarantee their right of entry into other countries. Once there, they wanted legal protection for themselves, their property and the Christian minority, as converts were made. Second, they wanted their interests abroad to be protected. Third, they wanted the government to promote what in today's vocabulary would be called a human rights agenda in the developing world. The movement was rather successful in exerting influence over the U.S. government. However,

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137 The subculture is sometimes referred to as Wilsonianism, even though its ideas were actively shaping U.S. strategy long before Woodrow Wilson took office.
138 For instance, U.S. missionaries generally opposed the opium trade in China.
in order to understand its importance, one must recognize that the greatest impact of Liberal Internationalism was outside of government, with the creation of institutions and relationships.\textsuperscript{139}

Liberal Internationalists have a set of basic ideas about how the world works and how to define and defend U.S. national interest. Their first and most important principle is the notion that democracy is a superior system of governance and that democracies are far more reliable and better partners than are tyrannies and monarchies. For them, the U.S. does not only have a moral duty, but also a practical imperative, to support and spread democracy abroad.\textsuperscript{140} Influenced by the missionary movement, Liberal Internationalists became opponents of colonialism as a corollary to their support of democracy.

The second principle is the prevention of war and the promotion of world peace. Liberal Internationalists promote anti-war movements and try to mitigate the horrors of war through treaties, such as the Geneva Conventions, codes of conduct in treatment of prisoners and the International Red Cross program. They also try to impose limitations on the production, distribution and use of arms and to promote mechanisms for the resolution of international disputes, from bilateral arbitration treaties to the League of Nations, the U.N. and the ICJ. When the U.S. fails to comply with the ideas, rules and recommendations of these institutions, Liberal Internationalists will be the first to protest and the most energetic in their work to bring the U.S. into compliance.

Liberal Internationalism has universalistic ambitions. Nobody is excluded from its vision of a world of peaceful democracies. It does not have any boundaries regarding individuals, races, cultures, classes, religions or countries. Everyone is welcome, as long as they adhere to liberal democratic principles. They dream of an order based on international law that binds sovereign nations to accept its dictates to protect everybody and thus replace might with right. However, they are not pacifists and not particularly sensitive to cultural differences when they are used to legitimize dictatorships or what they regard as inhumane values. The growth of U.S. power created more opportunities for them to pursue their agenda, and U.S. forces are regularly engaged in ‘humanitarian’ and ‘democratic interventions’ as a consequence of their political pressure.

\textsuperscript{139} The missionary movement’s secular contributions have had an enormous impact on the world, and the spread of liberal democracy, human rights, minority and women’s rights, justice for refugees and disarmament are to a large extent the result of its activities. Throughout the world, international organizations carry on the missionary tradition when they fight against such things as child labor, debt peonage and female circumcision. Today, Liberal Internationalists seek to align U.S. strategy with this struggle.

\textsuperscript{140} When asked about the importance of building democracy in other countries, about 30 percent of Americans sees it as ‘very important’ and about 40 percent as ‘somewhat important’. Gallup, "U.S. Position in the World".
Liberal Internationalists often find themselves aligned with American Realists for one simple reason. The states that threaten U.S. commercial interests and the balance of power are often the same ones that ignore values precious to the Liberal Internationalists. More often than not, they align in support of war against states that commit crimes against the international order. At the same time, they clash when it comes to U.S. priorities regarding commercial interests, access to strategic resources and the spread of values, such as human rights. U.S. strategy toward Saudi Arabia and China are illustrative examples, where the two subcultures are diametrically opposed. There are, thus, many cases where the classical distinction and conflict between ‘order’ and ‘justice’ still apply.

Universalism, and the dream of justice for all make Liberal Internationalism an important source of U.S. soft power. At the same time, it will constantly involve the U.S. in all sorts of troubles, dangers and difficulties including quarrels with non-democratic states, some of which are of fundamental strategic importance. Every tactical choice will find opponents among them, and every effort at maintaining the status quo will be constantly challenged by Liberal Internationalists seeking radical change. They constantly want to raise the bar for what constitutes strategic success.

Liberal Internationalism is, as you might expect, strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism and only weakly committed to the paradigm of non-entanglement. Its proponents are willing to sustain the costs of promoting a global order characterized by open markets, democracy and strong international institutions. This willingness includes acceptance of what some Americans would describe as infringements on U.S. sovereignty and autonomy. They are also more than willing to engage in new commitments abroad and if necessary, to use force to promote their vision.\textsuperscript{141}

2.3.3 Abstentionism

The ideas of the Liberal Internationalists and the American Realists find adherents around the world. Assertive Patriots and Abstentionists are less well known, less understood and less liked. They spring from idiosyncratic elements of the broader American culture and believe that the country’s unique political, cultural and social heritage should be protected and preserved for future generations. These two latter subcultures are thus not universal in nature. They disagree on many issues but are both critical of the separation between foreign and domestic policy as different fields of concern.

For the Abstentionists, the U.S. is a revolutionary nation with a revolutionary mission. The American Revolution created an historic – even unique – opportunity to build a nation based on individual liberty and on pure prin-

\textsuperscript{141} See the discussion on the ‘vindicators’ in Section 2.2.2
ciples. For them, the highest aim of domestic policy has always been to seize that opportunity and to build a free country, and the highest aim of its strategy has been to preserve that sanctuary and revolution. To protect U.S. democracy and liberty is their calling. Where the promises of the revolution remain unfulfilled, they will be on the barricades of freedom, protecting the rights guaranteed by the constitution. They often find themselves in struggles against those who deny or infringe upon the liberties of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.

Abstentionists view liberty as something infinitely precious and democracy as an almost infinitely fragile plant that is difficult to grow and even harder to propagate. This separates them from the Liberal Internationalists, who believe that the tide of history is moving mankind from darker ages to a world of reason, democracy and peace. Abstentionists never take democracy for granted nor are they convinced that history necessarily favours the American experiment. They also fear a strong central government and regard it, at best, as a necessary evil. At worst, they see it as the most dangerous enemy of liberty. They are also skeptical of unchecked capitalism. For them, capitalism does not reinforce democracy in any simple way, and they warn that commercial interests can easily subvert the political process. This view separates them from those that believe that free government can be secured by commercial development.

Abstentionists believe that the American people should govern themselves as directly and simply as possible. At the same time, they warn that popular passion and unchecked majority rule poses a real threat to democracy. Assertive Patriots, on the other hand, believe that the American people will instinctively oppose threats of that nature. Abstentionists are not convinced of this and are, therefore, the strongest supporters of constitutional checks and minority-friendly rules to constrain the majority. Historically, their two key goals in domestic policy have been to prevent the central government from growing powerful enough to threaten the rights and freedoms of the citizens and states and to prevent bankers from creating a monetary aristocracy as fundamentally undemocratic as the old European blood aristocracies.

When combined, this set of priorities creates a particular outlook. Abstentionists see mostly threats when they look beyond the borders, and they believe that excessive intervention abroad can undermine the democratic order at home. George Washington’s farewell address and John Quincy Adams’ address of July 4th, 1821 are crucial lessons to them. This does not imply that they propose isolationism. Rather, it creates sensitivity to, and a preferred avoidance of, foreign entanglements, which they know will strengthen the government. When U.S. involvement is unavoidable, they
propose policies guided by calculations to minimize costs, risks and potential
damage done to U.S. democratic institutions.  

For Abstentionists, war is the absolutely worst thing that can happen, since it concentrates power in the central government. The avoidance of war and large scale interventions is, therefore, their most important strategic goal. Hence, war should always be the absolutely last resort. When it is unavoidable, they prefer a limited approach where the U.S. should gradually increase the amount of pressure – involving the least possible use of force. They share the Liberal Internationalist’s hate of war, but their hatred is based on humanitarian grounds, whereas the Abstentionists’ is political. The adherents of these two subcultures often support each other in various attempts to decrease the risks of war. Policies that recommend arms control, cease fires, negotiations and arbitration have a strong resonance among these two subcultures.

Another important principle for Abstentionists is constitutional conduct. They value the constitutional checks and balances and consider them to be vital tools to constrain executive power. They support the War Powers Act and the strengthening of congressional authority over military initiatives and routinely opposes ‘fast track’ authorities for trade negotiations and ‘package deals’. Abstentionists are also suspicious of the intelligence and military establishment. For them, secrecy has a corrosive effect on public trust and democratic institutions. Efforts to control intelligence institutions such as the CIA, to declassify as many documents as possible and to subject these institutions to congressional oversight within a legal framework often have their origin in this subculture.

For Abstentionists, the best way to avoid unnecessary conflicts is to define U.S. interests as narrowly as possible. By doing so, there will be few grounds for quarrels with others. This, however, leads to clashes with the other subcultures. They oppose the universal moral interests and ambitious agenda of the Liberal Internationalists, and they frustrate American Realists with their reluctance to see commercial interests as sufficient justification for interventions abroad. Abstentionists are also extremely reluctant to relinquish or exchange any U.S. autonomy in order to create an international trade system, a system they regard as excessive and potentially dangerous. They do not believe that any currently feasible international authority can be truly democratic, and when international institutions gain power over U.S. courts and legislatures, Americans lose liberties.  

Only threats to the nation’s very existence justify interventions abroad for Abstentionists, and over the decades they have advised against involvement in various conflicts. They are always skeptical of expensive federal

\[14^2\] In 1999 a Pew poll found that 30% of Americans were against air strikes against the Serbs in Kosovo and that 55% were ‘very worried’ about casualties. Pew Research Center, “Support for NATO Airstrikes with Plenty of Buts,” March, 1999.

\[14^3\] In the section on the paradigm of non-entanglement, I touched upon how many Americans are skeptical of international institutions.
programs, and they apply their anti-big-government argument to strategy and constantly question the necessity of various interventions and troop commitments abroad, especially since the end of the Cold War.

Historically, their influence over U.S. strategy has shifted many times. They were dealt hard blows with the failures of protectionism during the Great Depression and isolationism prior to World War II. The Cold War was another disaster, since they opposed it in its entirety and argued for a softer U.S. approach. They favoured a policy of deterrence at the lowest possible price and supported arms limitations and other agreements with the Soviet Union. They opposed relationships with tyrannical regimes in the interest of anticommunism, with the argument that such alliances would hurt both the country’s democratic institutions and its credibility as a force for good, since they would make the U.S. accomplices and enablers of murder, theft and torture.\(^\text{144}\) They were also highly critical of the efforts to root out communism within U.S. society, which they deemed excessive.

Even though the subculture had suffered several defeats, it remained influential. Richard Nixon’s détente policies, aimed at minimizing ideological confrontation by, for example, taking human rights off the agenda in order to decrease costs and risks, were supported by them. Their strategy during the Cold War sought to identify and exploit divisions within the communist block, and they argued for an accommodative strategy toward China and Vietnam, with the aim of detaching these states from the Soviet Union and thus undermining the opposing block, rather than a strategy of confrontation that would surely drive them toward the Soviet Union. Nixon’s rapprochement of China is, of course, the most illustrative example of this.

Vietnam, Watergate, Three Mile Island and the Pentagon Papers resurrected the Abstentionists. The damage done to American society by the Vietnam War, secrecy, the culture of security, the deceit of the government, the imperial presidency and ‘arrogance of power’ made their ideas look attractive again for many Americans. The nuclear accident combined with the failures of Keynesian economics and socialist policy alternatives created a new skepticism toward experts and scientists. The revival of libertarian policies and the Supreme Court’s rediscovery of federalism pointed toward a renaissance for this subculture.

Their thinking resembles the thinking usually found among country and area experts. They are willing to study and understand foreign countries, however they are equally willing to leave them as they are. This gives them a more disinterested appreciation and respectful approach to others, as compared to the other subcultures. Their skepticism toward the assertions of the other subcultures also makes them prone to analyze other states and cultures

\(^{144}\) Many Abstentionists even seemed to fear the negative impact of the repressive tactics of alleged friends of the U.S., more than they feared the communist states.
objectively.\textsuperscript{145} It also provides a particularly useful argument for U.S. policymakers when they for some reason need the U.S. to scale back its international presence and withdraw commitments. When policymakers want to make a lighter international footprint, they can easily fit their proposals into this subculture. The subculture is thus not only about constraints but also about enabling certain actions.

All in all, Abstentionists are strongly committed both to the paradigm of liberalism and the paradigm of non-entanglement. They are reluctant to engage in formal international entanglements and skeptical of the use of military force. However, they support multilateral institution building for specific purposes, such as disarmament, disaster relief, etc. At the same time, they remain critical of U.S. associations with undemocratic regimes. They want the U.S. to be primarily an example for others to emulate.

2.3.4 Assertive Patriotism

War and military action as a solution to foreign problems has always had an appeal to many Americans, and there are many occasions on which substantial numbers have called for war. When at war, the same segment of the population pressures for waging it ferociously. In U.S. history, the hawkish stance has often been the easiest and most popular. For politicians engaged in the Cold War, there were always more costs and risks associated with proposing compromises with the Soviet Union than with adopting a more confrontational stance. During the wars in Korea and Vietnam, U.S. presidents were put under intense pressure by both the public and military leaders to strike at the enemy with all available forces, and they feared the huge losses in popular support that a withdrawal would bring about. In order to understand this disposition, we have to turn to the influence of U.S. Assertive Patriotism.\textsuperscript{146}

This subculture is the one least well understood by foreign observers, and also the most disliked. Assertive Patriots are rather dubious about the possibilities of expanding the liberal order abroad. In general, they do not support the Liberal Internationalists’ initiatives for a better world; they do not support the Abstentionists’ calls for patient diplomacy in difficult situations; and, they are unwilling to pay for various trade policies proposed by the American Realists.

\textsuperscript{145} This disposition, combined with the desire to secure the nation’s narrowly defined ‘real interests’ at the lowest possible risk and cost, can arguably be regarded as an ideal starting point for strategic thinking. It is not surprising that many of America’s finest strategists have been influenced by these ideas.

\textsuperscript{146} This subculture is sometime referred to as Jacksonianism, Nationalism, and Populism. See, for instance, Mead, (2002), Chap. 7.
One reason why it often is so poorly understood is that it is more a reflection of religious, cultural and social values of a large segment of the American population, as opposed to an intellectual or a political movement. It is better described as a community with a set of common values and sense of identity that shape a particular outlook, rather than a set of ideas.\textsuperscript{147} However, policies that resonate with its values and instincts will enjoy widespread and powerful support. The ability to reflect and espouse these values is, therefore, an essential feature of American politics. Politicians such as Ross Perot, Jesse Ventura, Robert Taft, Pat Buchanan, John McCain, Donald Trump and Ronald Reagan are examples of persons who have successfully connected with these values.

Populism in America is based more on values and sense of identity among the early British settlers than the ideas of the Enlightenment. The concept of honor is essential to understanding the Assertive Patriots. There is an unacknowledged code of honor, which resonates with millions of Americans, that can be traced back to the early days of the nation. It has spread historically and is shared by many who do not belong to the ethnic and social nexus of its origin.\textsuperscript{148} The code consists of four key principles.

Self-reliance is the first principle of this code. Honest and hard-working people are the heart, soul and spine of the country for Assertive Patriots. Those that make their own way in the world, without relying on welfare or inherited wealth, are considered to be the real Americans, and they are entitled to be met with appropriate respect and recognition. Individual dignity, respect for earned accomplishments, loyalty to earned authority and respect due age are values they honor.

Equality is the second principle. For Assertive Patriots, there is an absolute equality of rights among those that pass the moral and economic test of this community. The idea of independence from church, state, social hierarchy, labor unions and political parties appeals to them. Individualism is the third principle. The right to self-fulfilment goes far back in U.S. history. For Assertive Patriots, Americans do not just have a right to self-fulfilment they have a duty to seek it. The fourth principle is courage. Standing up for what you believe -- for your honor, dignity and rights -- is an essential part of Assertive Patriotism. After European aristocrats had hung their weapons up on the walls, Americans continued to fight duels, and they are far more prone to settle personal quarrels with force. The freedom to own and use firearms is considered an important right and a mark of equality for Assertive Patriots, to the despair of many other Americans. Assertive Patriots are armed, not just to defend against foreign enemies, but also to guard against usurpations of the federal government and to protect one’s home and person against

\textsuperscript{147} For decades a majority of Americans have favored a constitutional amendment banning the desecration or burning of the American flag, despite this going against liberal principles. Gallup, “Public Support For Constitutional Amendment on Flag Burning, June, 2006.
criminals. To rally behind the flag in times of war is almost instinctual for Assertive Patriots, and the failure to help the nation in time of hardship is evidence of distorted values at best, but more probably of contemptible cowardice. For Assertive Patriots, an honourable person is ready to kill and die for family and flag.  

One measure of their influence is the degree to which successful generals become prominent political figures. General Colin Powell and General David Petraeus are recent examples, but the list stretches from Washington throughout the country’s history. Ten former generals have become presidents, and presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and George H.W. Bush were clearly aided in their political careers by their war records.

Assertive Patriots often make a distinction between those that are bound together by the code and those that are not. This distinction between insiders and outsiders has over the decades had huge implications for American life. Their ideas about strategy are closely related to the values and goals they promote domestically. They want their government to promote the well-being – political, moral and economic – of those sharing the code. The end result is rather similar to classic European realpolitik. They are skeptical of international law and the global meliorist element of the Liberal Internationalists. Reputation, honor and faith in military institutions also play a great role in their attitudes toward strategy.

Their worldview is to a large extent based on the distinction between the community and the dark world outside. They have one set of rules for dealing with each other and another for dealing with those on the outside. For them, it is perfectly natural that domestic politics is based on different principles than the anarchic world of international politics. They do not share the dream of converting the Hobbesian world into a Lockean world, and they do

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149 Support for the second amendment is strong, and about 40% of Americans have a gun in their home. Support for stand-your-ground law (sometimes called "line in the sand" or "no duty to retreat" law) is also strong, and most states have them. This law states that an individual has no duty to retreat from any place the individual has a lawful right to be and may use any level of force, including lethal, if the individual reasonably believes that he or she faces and imminent and immediate threat of serious bodily harm or death. Few, if any, Western democracies have similar laws.

150 Politicians who dodged the draft during the Vietnam War have always had a disadvantage reaching out to the Assertive Patriots, as compared to those that served. This issue will most certainly haunt politicians old enough to have been eligible for the draft to their graves.

151 When the American public is asked to list what the U.S. long range foreign policy goals should be, numerous issues – jobs, drugs, energy security, immigration – that are intimately linked to domestic concerns rank high on the list. In 2013 protecting American Jobs was the second most important issue for the public, closely behind protecting the country from terrorist attacks. Pew Research Center, "Public Sees U.S. Power Declining as Support for Global Engagements Slips".
not believe that a peaceful world order is around the corner – rather the opposite, and this has important consequences.\footnote{This belief has its origins to some extent in various interpretations of Christianity specific to the U.S. See Mead, (2002), pp. 248-250.}

For Assertive Patriots, everybody should take care of their own, and leave it at that. Charity, both domestic and foreign, should be in private hands. They do not have a high opinion of the government’s ability to distribute it nor of how development bureaucrats spend it. It will not create world peace, no matter how much we give, they argue. They are equally skeptical of attempts to create a world court of justice, institutional designs aimed at universal disarmament, etc.\footnote{In the section on the paradigm of non-entanglement I touched upon out how many Americans are skeptical of international institutions. Polls also reveal that Americans have grossly exaggerated estimations of the amount of aid actually given by the U.S. When asked to estimate what percentage of the federal budget went to aid, the median estimate during the period studied was around a staggering 20 percent. With this in mind, it comes as no surprise that a clear majority of Americans believe that the U.S. is spending too much on aid. See Steven Kull, “Preserving American Public Support For Foreign Aid,” Brookings Blum Roundtable Policy Briefs, 2011; Gallup, “U.S. Position in the World”.}

Because of the dangerous reality of international life, America must be armed and prepared, Assertive Patriots argue. U.S. diplomacy must also be as forceful and as unscrupulous as that of others, and Assertive Patriots do not object to attempts to assassinate foreign leaders or subvert foreign governments if their intentions are clearly contrary to U.S. interests. The same goes for pre-emptive and even preventive wars. For Assertive Patriots, the U.S. need not have an unambiguous moral reason for fighting. Sometimes, war is simply in the national interest. This separation of morality and war brings them close to classical realists and proponents of realpolitik.

The notion that the Gulf War was aimed at defending the nation’s oil supply resonated far more strongly with the Assertive Patriots than the argument that the U.S. had a duty to protect a member of the UN from aggression. They are far less enthusiastic about military interventions when they perceive no real U.S. interests at stake. Evidence of atrocities and war crimes does not change their opinion very much. For them, such injustices are part of international life. It was the Liberal Internationalists who eagerly supported the intervention in Yugoslavia, and it was Pearl Harbor that drove America into World War II and not the Nazi atrocities.

For Assertive Patriots, a code of honor exists in international life as well, and the U.S. must live up to and be perceived of as living up to that code. The idea that your reputation will shape the way others treat you is wide spread among them. Reputation is thus as important in international life as it is in domestic life, and America must keep its promises and commitments. Even in war, honor plays an important role. For Assertive Patriots, the only way to deal with bullies is to stand up to them. Diplomatic measures, beloved by others, are often regarded as futile and dishonourable appeasement.
This subculture allows for the recognition of two sorts of enemies. First, there are those that fight a clean fight and recognize the rules of war. They are in a way regarded as honourable and are entitled to be treated in the same way. Then there are those that violate the rules, for example terrorists who in peacetime aim their attacks against innocent civilians. They fight dirty and have thereby forfeited their protection and deserve no consideration or respect what so ever. No rules apply in wars against dishonourable enemies for Assertive Patriots.154

For Assertive Patriots, wars should be waged with all available forces. Limited war is regarded as an oxymoronic phrase.155 If the stakes are high enough to go to war, you should totally commit; if they are not, you should not fight in the first place. They are disinclined to embrace the idea of limitations on ones objectives in war, including on the use of force. This makes them extremely reluctant to use U.S. military for non-combat missions, such as nation-building.

The honor code does not in any way turn war into sport. It is the duty of U.S. military commanders to destroy the enemy fast and professionally with the fewest casualties possible. Casualties inflicted on the enemy are not the responsibility of the U.S. but of their own leaders. This mindset leads them to take a broad view of permissible targets. They regard striking at the enemy’s will to fight as a legitimate target, and this old cultural heritage accounts for much of America’s ruthlessness at war. From their perspective, the decision to use nuclear weapons to defeat Japan in World War II was both right and justifiable.

To treat a defeated foe with magnanimity is part of their attitude toward war. However, only enemies that have surrendered properly and fought with honor qualify for generous treatment. If the enemy does not surrender, they are less forgiving and generous and can hold a grudge against the former enemy for decades. This can constitute a problem for U.S. policymakers, and it is exacerbated by the fact that it is difficult to change their opinion. They

154 Shortly After 9/11, a vast majority of Americans, 72%, believed the U.S. treatment of al Qaeda and Taliban fighters at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was acceptable. Only a handful, 4%, considered it unacceptable. Even under Obama’s presidency, a majority of the American people have not wanted to close the prison. In a 2005 poll regarding interrogation techniques on prisoners suspected of having information about possible terrorist attacks against the U.S., 35% of Americans supported "threatening to transfer prisoners to a country known for torture", 29% supported "threatening prisoners with dogs", 18% supported "forcing prisoners to remain naked and chained in uncomfortable positions in cold room for several hours" and 16% supported "strapping prisoners on boards and forcing their heads under water until they think they are drowning" (waterboarding). In a 2006 poll regarding the preferred standard for CIA questioning possible terrorist suspects, 57% answered that the U.S. should abide by the Geneva Convention standards, but 38% believed that the U.S. should be able to use more forceful interrogation techniques. See Gallup, "Few American Object to Treatment of Guantanamo Bay Captives," February, 2002; Gallup, "Americans Continue to Oppose Closing Guantanamo Bay," June, 2014; Gallup, "A Retrospective Look at How Americans View Torture," December, 2014.

are slow to focus and slow to make long-term commitments to a given policy. However, once they have accepted a certain policy, it is, consequently, very difficult to change that particular policy. This makes Assertive Patriots far less flexible than proponents of European realpolitik.

The influence of Assertive Patriots on U.S. policy is enormous. Without their support, the U.S. cannot fight in major wars, and their beliefs and values are shared by millions. The subculture is stronger among ordinary people than among the elites and stronger in the heartland than on either of the two coasts. Its approach is very controversial and has created many problems for U.S. policymakers throughout history. It has also created a constituency for the idea that U.S. foreign policy is a mixture of ignorance, isolationism and ‘cowboy diplomacy’.

Overall, Assertive Patriots are weakly committed to the paradigm of liberalism. They are, on the other hand, strongly committed to the paradigm of non-entanglement, except in wartime. They do not want to transfer U.S. sovereignty to international bodies or spend money on projects overseas. They are suspicious of and very sensitive to costs in relation to international institutions and often have a tendency to perceive of them at best as inefficient bureaucracies, at worst as working against U.S. interests.

2.4 Dominant Culture and Subculture Coalitions

I have previously mentioned that the paradigm of liberalism became dominant after WWII and that the Nixon Administration’s strategy was to some extent was shaped by American realism. But why is this paradigm dominant, and how does one subculture, at least temporarily, become the most influential? I will argue that three factors operate in conjunction to determine the relative strength of the paradigms and subcultures. From a neoclassical realist perspective, the international environment is always the preferred starting point of analysis. The second factor is presidential leadership. In foreign

156 Colin Dueck writes that "despite the apparent oscillations between internationalism and isolationism, there has been one overarching constant in conservative and Republican foreign policies for several decades now, namely, a hawkish and intense American nationalism. By this I mean that since at least the 1950s, Republicans and conservatives have generally been comfortable with the use of force by the United States in world affairs, committed to building strong national defenses, determined to maintain a free hand for the United States internationally, and relatively unyielding toward potential adversaries. The typical conservative Republican foreign policy approach for over half a century has been, in a word, – hard line – a long term trend with considerable domestic political as well as international significance, especially since a majority of liberal Democrats began to abandon hard-line foreign policy views following America’s war in Vietnam." Colin Dueck, Hard Line: The Republican Party and U.S. Foreign Policy since World War II (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 2f.

157 It is and has historically been associated with white protestant males of the lower and middle classes.
policy and even more in the narrower domain of strategy, the federal government is supreme, and its power is concentrated in the executive branch. For this and other reasons, the President has substantial influence over U.S. strategy. The third and final factor is domestic politics. Elections lead to new administrations, and new coalitions usually want to make changes in U.S. strategy.

2.4.1 The International Environment

Neoclassical realists argue that the international environment is the most important factor influencing strategic choices over time. Changes in the international environment matter greatly when it comes to determining what strategy the U.S. will pursue. It is the international environment that ultimately drives the process of change in the strategic culture. When a specific national culture comes under severe international pressure, it will in the end adapt and change. There are numerous historical examples of this, and few can deny, for instance, the remarkable change of Germany’s strategic culture after WWII. Neoclassical realists argue that increases in power will lead to greater international ambition and decreases will lead to a corresponding contraction. Following this reasoning, increases in U.S. power tend to favour the paradigm of liberalism and the ambitious agenda of the Liberal Internationalists. The paradigm of non-entanglement and Abstentionism, on the other hand, gain impetus from perceived decreases in U.S. power and from situations in which its power is stretched and in need of consolidation. Decreases also favour the American realists, since they will make more Americans susceptible to the notion that the country simply cannot afford to be idealistic.

The appearance and disappearance of threats also affect U.S. strategic culture. The Assertive Patriots, with their focus on homeland defense and ardent support of vigorous policies such as pre-emption and prevention, gain influence with the appearance of new threats. Of course, the nature of the threats matters. Abstentionists gain from the disappearance of threats, while questions of the nation’s ‘true security perimeter’ receive more attention. When the Soviet threat diminished, U.S. policymakers quickly found themselves under pressure to cut military spending. Many Americans spoke of a ‘return to normalcy’, which in essence meant a dramatic downsizing of U.S. overseas commitments, and many sought the so-called ‘peace dividend’.

When describing the paradigms and subcultures, I gave several examples of how certain changes in the international environment changed U.S. strategic culture by favouring one paradigm and one subculture over the others. When the U.S. was a young nation, it was weak and surrounded by European powers. That environment favoured the paradigm of non-entanglement, but as U.S. power increased its strategic culture slowly and gradually became more influenced by the paradigm of liberalism. However,
changes in strategic culture do not smoothly follow changes in the international environment, and there are often time lags. Many years before the U.S. engaged in WWI, it had the power to tip the balance of power in Europe, although it was extremely reluctant to do so. The war dramatically increased the relative power of the U.S. as the old empires crumbled, however the U.S. still did not act as most power-oriented theories would suggest. The paradigm of non-entanglement remained dominant.

Traumatic experiences and shocks, such as revolutions, wars, economic catastrophes, revelations of grave misperceptions of the distribution of power and surprise attacks, can discredit and shatter core beliefs and values. Such dramatic events are usually accompanied by extreme psychological stress and, in their aftermath, a re-socialization process is sometimes needed, involving the participation of many groups and actors in order to interpret what happened and to move on. A window of opportunity for changing strategy opens up after such events. One example of such an event is the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The attack discredited the paradigm of non-entanglement and started a process that eventually led to the paradigm of liberalism becoming the dominant paradigm. After WWII, the U.S. was even more powerful than after WWI. This favoured the paradigm of liberalism, and the Liberal Internationalists and American Realists set out to create a new international order and replace the declining British Empire’s economic order.

The emergence of the Soviet threat favoured the Assertive Patriots, and for most of the Cold War years a hawkish stance was the path of least resistance for U.S. policymakers. However, the disaster in Vietnam not only was expensive and stretched the military, it also amounted to a traumatic experience that favoured the Abstentionists.\footnote{The notion that changes in the international environment affects the relative influence of U.S. subcultures seems to be taken for granted by Mead. He does not, however, explicitly define this relation, but it is obvious that his work cannot be classified as innenpolitik. This strengthens my argument that his work is compatible with neoclassical realism.} After the Vietnam War, the country became more reluctant to use its military. Military losses also favour Abstentionists, and under certain circumstances even relatively few casualties seem to leave marks on the country’s strategic culture. The *Desert One* fiasco in 1980 and the *Black Hawk Down* incident in 1993 seem to have made the military and many policymakers, including presidents, more risk averse.\footnote{The *Desert One* fiasco refers to the failed attempt to rescue American hostages held at the U.S. Embassy in Iran in April 1980. The *Black Hawk Down* incident refers to the failed mission to capture some of warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid’s lieutenants in Mogadishu, Somalia, in October 1993.} This is quite remarkable, since these failures were in a broader perspective minuscule. They were nonetheless politically disastrous for the two presidents responsible for them. There are several reasons for this, but one being the paradigm of non-entanglement.
Finally, the scarcity of strategic resources tends to favour American Realists. For greater part of the 20th century, the U.S. has been dependent on foreign oil. When the free flow of oil is threatened or oil prices dramatically increase, the American Realists gain more traction. In order to guarantee American and international energy security, the U.S. has over the last decades become deeply involved in the Middle East, and it has often promoted policies similar to other great powers. For many Americans, scarcity and dependence justify the country’s actions. Conversely, if resources are plentiful or if the U.S. were to become less dependent on foreign oil, due, for instance, to hydraulic fracturing, the relative strength of the American Realists would decrease over time.

How the end of the Cold War affected U.S. strategic culture will be discussed more extensively in later chapters.

2.4.2 Presidential Leadership

When it comes to determining the relative strength of the paradigms and subcultures presidential leadership is crucially important. The President is in a privileged position to shape U.S. strategy. Strategy is not made in the same way as domestic policy. The Senate only has an advisory function, though appointments and treaties require its consent. The House of Representatives has even less power, and its role is limited to appropriations and declarations of war. The judiciary has little involvement in the process, and the state governments have no role at all.

In comparison with domestic policy, the President is also given a greater degree of latitude by his own party and the public and is by far the most important figure in the strategy making process with regard to both agenda setting and coalition building. When the President is interested in an issue, that issue commands the bureaucracy and shapes the congressional debate to a considerable degree. The assumptions and specific preferences, the "operational code", of the President and his administration thus matter greatly. Advisors and key political and policy officials can have a great influence

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160 American realists have the weakest commitments to the two paradigms, and it is, therefore, no surprise that their policies often resemble that of other Great Powers.

161 Lee Hamilton (D-IN), one of the most astute congressional practitioners of foreign policy of recent decades, summarizes: "If there is anything a member of Congress knows it’s what’s important to a president, because when a president is interested in something, he’s got the full White House steam and the full bureaucracy up there on the Hill. When he’s not interested in something, you know that." Lee Hamilton quoted in Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 – The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008), p. 268. See also Lee Hamilton, A Creative Tension: The Foreign Policy Roles of the President and the Congress (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002).

162 This was the primary focus of John Lewis Gaddis’ Strategies of Containment.
over strategy, especially if the President is inexperienced regarding these issues.

The President can conduct U.S. foreign affairs on a day-to-day basis, from receiving ambassadors, initiating negotiations, signing agreements, responding to events abroad, exchanging state visits, arranging economic bailouts and conducting intelligence operations to even directing military diplomacy, without congressional support or approval. The power of the President in this regard should not be underestimated, and he can, for instance, circumvent the Senate by publicly declaring that the U.S. will abide by treaties that the Senate has refused to ratify. There are occasions when presidents have even waged war without congressional support or approval.  

In the short run, it is possible for the President to execute his strategy successfully without congressional support. There are, however, limits to the President’s freedom of action. The President is always involved in building coalitions and thus always constrained to various degrees by promises made and the necessity to accommodate his base, and over time congressional support begins matter. The President can make speeches, but without appropriations it is difficult to deliver on commitments. Without support, his policy proposals will be obstructed, legislators will search for opportunities to exert control over them and Congress will hold up ambassadorial nominations, request annual reports and reviews and attach riders to unrelated bills to force the President to come to terms. This power should not be underestimated either. Remember that the Senate never ratified the Treaty of Versailles, and the U.S. never joined the League of Nations, in spite of President Wilson’s wishes. It is important to recognize that Congress sometimes functions as a stimulus for action, and, as with the President, its strength depends to a considerable extent on public opinion.

In sum, as a leader of coalitions the President can under certain circumstances, depending on the other two factors, have a considerable impact on the relative strength of the subcultures. However, if the president is not interested or does not lead, his influence can be rather limited.

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163 Numerous covert operations, interventions, and even full scale wars have been fought without congressional approval. President Reagan’s support of the Contras and Nixon’s secret bombing of Cambodia are two examples of many. Moreover, the Korean War was never formally approved by the Congress.

164 George Stephanopoulos, one of President Clinton’s senior advisors, writes about these constraints: "Winning the White House had added retroactive weight to everything we had said before. (...) Promises that were briefly considered and barely noticed during the presidential campaign, we had learned, could set entire worlds in motion." George Stephanopoulos, *All Too Human: A Political Education*, (New York: Little Brown & Co, 2000), p. 157.
2.4.3 Domestic Politics

Domestic politics is an important factor in relation to changes in the relative strength of the paradigms and subcultures. The times when there are the greatest opportunities for changes, besides after traumatic experiences and shocks, are directly after elections. New governing coalitions form during election times, and they usually have both the incentive and inclination to propose changes.

The most important election is, of course, the presidential election, and changes in strategy are most likely to come after the election of a new president. A new president usually represents a different coalition than the preceding one and has strong incentives to propose changes. Even if he represents a similar coalition, a president usually wants to differentiate himself from his predecessors for political and personal reasons. The opportunity for introducing new strategies is, therefore, greater when the incumbent President is not up for re-election. The international environment and the strategic culture constrain the President, but there are nevertheless numerous alternatives available to the President.

In order to win a presidential election, coalition building is crucial. During the campaign, the candidates, including the incumbent President, must situate their message within the different paradigms and subcultures. This is necessary in order to gather support, and candidates need to have positions on numerous issues pertaining to strategy. Some are not specifically connected to either of the subcultures, and they adjust pragmatically to maximize support; others may have internalized the ideas and assumptions of a particular subculture. Either way, they have to relate to the subcultures and adjust to them.

As noted above, the relative power of the different subcultures varies, and a particular subculture may be strong because the international environment seems to favor it. They can also be strong or weak for domestic reasons. Politicians must be able to accommodate this situation if they want to be elected, remain in office or pursue successfully a given policy. The Vietnam War favored Abstentionist ideas, and many voted for Nixon in 1968 because of his pledge to end the war. This subculture soon came to be favored for domestic reasons as well, due to Nixon’s ‘arrogance of power’. In the 1970s many politicians ran on platforms heavily influenced by Abstentionism, and during that decade Congress initiated numerous oversight hearings and investigations in order to rein in the executive and the U.S. intelligence apparatus.165

It is important to recognize that in the short run domestic factors sometimes play a more significant role than the international environment in terms of why one subculture temporarily becomes dominant. During a presi-

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165 In 1973 the War Powers Resolution was passed. President Nixon vetoed it but was overruled by majorities in both chambers.
dential election campaign, foreign affairs is only one issue among many, and
the winner’s coalition spans across a whole range of issues that reflect a
popular expression of preferences of several policy dimensions from eco-

demic, cultural and social to international. Historically, foreign affairs have
not been at the center of U.S. elections, except in wartime. In a longer per-
spective, the Cold War years with its preoccupation with strategy is an
anomaly. The term ‘a return to normalcy’ is an expression of this. If the
country is not at war and the international environment has been fairly stable
with no great surprises, odds are that foreign affairs will only play a minor
role in the presidential election. Even if this is the case, it is quite possible
that the new president’s ideas about strategy will be different than those of
his predecessor, and, as he set out to implement changes, the balance be-
tween the different subcultures will be altered. In the short term one subcul-
ture can thus become influential for reasons that have little to do with the
international environment.

2.4.4 Cacophony: Inconsistency and Incoherence

The need to make strategic choices does not disappear in the absence of elite
consensus, broad coalitions, presidential interests and a dominant subculture.
It may rather increase. A lack of consensus is associated with increased
costs, since it makes it more difficult for the President to outline and imple-
ment coherent strategies, especially if they include bold or expensive initia-
tives. Criticism will increase, and enthusiasm within bureaucracies opposed
to the proposed policies will decrease. Bargaining efforts to appease criti-
cism and create more unity may also increase the risk that the policies will
result in halfway measures and will be characterized by ambivalence and
incoherence.

There are occasions on which the U.S. has policies emanating from two,
three or even four subcultures at the same time. When this happens, U.S.
strategy will be incoherent and inconsistent and give the impression of lack-
ing coordination. On such occasions, lobby groups can entrench them-
selves in certain niches. Arms lobbies, ethnic lobbies, government burea-
ucracies and private interests can influence particular issues more effectively
in this domestic environment. It also increases the likelihood that different
departments of the government and Congress may start to freelance and de-
velop their own points of view.

166 It is possible to argue that when policy is inconsistent, it by definition lacks strategy, since
the common definition of strategy includes consistency.
2.5 Strategic Culture and Strategy: The U.S. Post-Cold War Strategic Alternatives

A central purpose of my framework is to show how the strategic culture shapes and influences strategy. Therefore, it is important analytically to separate strategic culture from any particular strategy. U.S. national strategic culture is distinct and has persisted for generations, whereas particular strategies are chosen by policymakers at given moments in time. Even though U.S. strategy is influenced by its strategic culture, there are always several alternatives available. In this section I will summarize the strategic alternatives facing U.S. policymakers after the fall of the Soviet Union and briefly discuss how they relate to U.S. strategic culture. This section can also be regarded as a literature review of the research and debates on U.S. post-Cold War strategy. Moreover, since it is a summary of the strategic debates during the time period under study in the empirical chapters, it also serves as an important context for understanding U.S. strategy toward CASC.

During the Cold War, U.S. strategy changed relatively little. One of the main reasons for this was the existence of an elite consensus that the Soviet Union and communism constituted fundamental threats to the U.S. and a broad coalition backing the policies based on this consensus. Disagreements over particular tactics and policies as well as terms, such as hawks and doves, were used to structure and describe the U.S. Cold War debate. When the Cold War ended, the consensus disintegrated and the coalitions broke up. The various subcultures interpreted the end differently. They drew their own lessons and reasserted themselves, with the result that the dichotomy of hawks and doves no longer described any political alignment. Not surprisingly, commentators soon began to look back and reintroduce pre-Cold War terms, such as isolationists and internationalists, or found new poles, such as ‘multilateralist’ and ‘unilateralist’, to come to terms with the new configurations.

After the Cold War, American statesmen faced a new international environment. They also had to come up with answers to the question of what the U.S. should do and to indicate a direction. Naturally, a great debate was already going on, with a diverse number of contributors, from academics, journalists and policy analysts to government officials. There were numerous strategies proposed that attempted to map out this new world and provide direction. The differences between them was an indication that the relative consensus of the Cold War years no longer existed. This has important consequences for U.S. strategy toward CASC. If there is little unity regarding strategic questions, such as the U.S. role in the world, the likelihood that there will be unity regarding the strategic importance of CASC is small.

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167 The dichotomy between hawks and doves was a product of the Cold War, and its usefulness in understanding U.S. strategy even during the Cold War is at best reasonable.
In order to impose consistency and clarity on this debate, IR-scholars came up with ways of categorizing the strategies. On the basis of their work, it can be said that the U.S. had at least four different strategic alternatives: Strategic Disengagement, Balance of Power/Selective Engagement, Primacy and Cooperative Security. These labels are frequently used in the literature on U.S. post-Cold War strategy. Since this is a study of U.S. strategy, it cannot ignore this debate or these labels. Below follows a short description of these four strategic alternatives and how they relate to the subcultures. It is hardly surprising that they are closely related, and this corroborates what has been argued above.

2.5.1 Strategic Disengagement

Strategic disengagement is by far the least ambitious and the least popular strategy among U.S. policymakers. However, it is popular among some commentators and intellectuals, such as Eric Nordlinger, Christopher Layne, Daryl Press, Eugene Gholz and Ted Galen Carpenter. Influenced by realism, its proponents conclude, after analyzing the distribution of power and variables such as geography and technology, that the U.S. is inherently a very secure country. In the absence of threats to the homeland, especially a major power threat akin to that posed by the Soviet Union, there is simply no justification for continued internationalism. Interventions are costly, and the U.S. is not responsible for, nor can it afford, maintaining world order.

Informed by the balance of power logic, they perceive U.S. international presence as a magnet for trouble. Whenever the U.S. gets involved in foreign

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169 Strategic disengagement is sometimes referred to as 'neo-isolationism' and 'strategic withdrawal', and 'cooperative security' as 'liberal internationalism'. Primacy has sometimes been described by critics as 'neo-Wilsonianism' or as 'neo-imperialism'. It is also possible to add more strategies, such as 'empire'. However, the four mentioned here are the most frequent. Besides, 'empire' was more a critical description of the George W. Bush Presidency than a strategy proposal.

170 This strategy is sometimes referred to as 'neo-isolationism'. I have chosen the term 'strategic disengagement' to avoid the negative connotations of the term 'isolationism'.

171 Some proponents of strategic disengagement pay particular attention to the defensive character of nuclear weapons. According to their understanding, nuclear weapons affect the offense-defense balance in such a profound way that attacking the U.S. would be irrational, considering the devastating retaliation. The fact that there are several nuclear powers on the Eurasian landmass also reduces the risk of aspirations on the part of an ambitious hegemon. Therefore, the maintenance of a balance of power in Eurasia does not require U.S. involvement.
political disputes, "the strong try to deter it; the weak to seduce it; the dispossessed to blame it." U.S. engagement is even counterproductive, since it actually makes the U.S. less safe by making it a target. In realist terms, it triggers counterbalancing. Hence, the U.S. should disengage from various engagements around the globe. It should also cease or substantially decrease its active promotion of values, since this often inspires ill-advised crusades that only serve to generate resentment against U.S. This means that the U.S. should primarily play the role of an exemplar and not be in the business of finding monsters to slay. The U.S. can safely assume the more passive posture of an 'offshore balancer', a strategic alternative eloquently formulated by Christopher Layne.

The U.S. should also scale down its responsibility for world order and definitively not pay more than others for it. International institutions can be regarded as arenas for acting out power relationships as and instruments at the disposal of powerful states. If counterbalancing is inevitable, the U.S. should prepare itself for more resistance within these institutions and avoid the possibility of ending up in a situation where it is actually paying for institutions that work against its interests. It is also important not to make commitments to institutions, not just because they can be regarded as commitments to other states, but also so as to safeguard U.S. autonomy and to make sure that it is not drawn into disputes it should avoid. This does not mean that the U.S. should abandon multilateralism and economic institutions completely but that it is important to have a healthy level of skepticism toward all institutions that constrict U.S. freedom of action. The strategy wants pragmatism, burden sharing and cost benefit analysis to guide U.S. policy toward institutions, rather than liberal ideology. Advocates of strategic disengagement are willing to trade considerable international influence for increased autonomy of action. It is important to recognize that many supporters of this strategy are primarily interested in the reallocation of resources rather than in the arguments themselves. They simply want to scale down U.S. commitments abroad and trade international influence for improvements in domestic welfare.

This strategy fits very well with Abstentionism, and it can be regarded as their default strategy in the 1990s. The libertarian Ron Paul is a good example of an Abstentionist supporting a strategy of disengagement.

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173 How exactly counterbalancing, or the balance of power overall, really works is an issue on which its proponents do not always agree. However, if counterbalancing is inevitable, then the U.S. should prepare itself for future great power rivalries and strategically disengage from certain areas in order to accommodate the emergence of multipolarity.
174 Those suggesting a strategy of offshore balancing are often very close to the proponents of Balance of Power/Selective Engagement. It is interesting that an offensive realist such as John Mearsheimer prefers offshore balancing as a U.S. strategy. As discussed earlier, this is a consequence of his 'stopping power of water' variable.
2.5.2 Balance of Power/Selective Engagement

This strategy is firmly rooted in the realist tradition. Henry Kissinger, Samuel Huntington, James Schlesinger and James Kurth can be counted among its leading advocates. This strategy aims at avoiding the pitfalls of both idealistic universalism and isolationism. With an appreciation for the perennial nature of international politics, it counsels prudence, moderation and balance. It focuses rather narrowly on interests defined in terms of power and assumes that great power wars in Eurasia are the gravest danger to the U.S. Ensuring peace among those powers is crucial. Therefore, the U.S. must remain engaged on this vast continent in order to reinforce stability by offering insurances to alleviate the security competition.

It is founded on the premise that U.S. capabilities are limited and that it is not possible to preserve the ‘unipolar moment’ indefinitely. The U.S. must, therefore, select wisely where, why and when to commit resources. This strategy neither assumes that international conflict will vanish as a result of democratization, interdependence and institutions nor accepts that U.S. interests are universal or identical to those of other states. Hence the U.S. should resist its distracting and even self-defeating, idealistic inclination to try to remake the world in its image and instead recognize the autonomy, interests and spheres of influence of other powers.

The notion of limited capabilities makes the advocates of this strategy sensitive to costs. They acknowledge that tough trade-offs must always be made and attempt to estimate the consequences in terms of U.S. material and political ability to intervene in more strategically important areas when considering interventions in areas of less importance. Such calculations are, of course, at the heart of the overstretch problem. Its proponents do not pretend that the U.S. can exercise hegemonic aspirations or liberalize the international system for free. Forced to prioritize between interests, they consider the promotion of democracy and human rights as a secondary issue. Furthermore, large parts of the globe are to be considered as secondary.\(^\text{175}\) Dictatorship and civil wars are relevant to U.S. interests to the extent they could energize great power competition or affect access to strategic resources, such as oil. This maintains the Persian Gulf at the core of U.S. security interests, primarily for the former reason.\(^\text{176}\) These choices do not imply a lack of

\(^{175}\) The proponents of this strategy emphasize the limits of U.S. capability and are, therefore, focused on how and what to prioritize. For instance, Robert Art, one of the most eloquent selective engagement advocates, begins his major book on the subject by providing the reader with a list of U.S. national interests. It read as follows: (i) homeland defense is to be considered "vital"; (ii) peace and stability among the great powers of Eurasia and the access to Persian Gulf Oil is "highly important"; (iii) international economic openness, the spread of democracy and human rights, and the avoidance of environmental catastrophes are to be considered as "important". Art, (2003), p. 7.

awareness of costs in terms of prestige and reputation, which can cause problems if ignored.

Its advocates argue that strategy really matters, and they believe that by making the right decisions it is possible to avoid aggressive counterbalancing and thus prolong the ‘unipolar moment’. This means that the U.S. should not act unilaterally, if it is possible to avoid, and should not define its enemies in terms of good and evil or as rogue states in need of democratization. The U.S. should maintain its alliances, forward bases and military deployments in regions of interest. However, it should not try to expand its influence without carefully considering both the possibility of overstretching and the reactions it might evoke.

Their approach to globalization, multilateralism and international institutions is pragmatic. The U.S. should be measured in its commitments and always subject any decision to scrutiny in terms of costs and benefits informed by the balance of power on a case-by case basis. They place a high value on autonomy and do not want to trade it for influence, unless the gains look favourable after a careful analysis. Specific policies of this strategy can always find support. However, those who tend to view international institutions as a goal in itself make a very different calculation regarding this tradeoff. Furthermore, support for specific policies does not mean that overall support for this strategy is particularly strong. This strategy fits very well with American Realism and can be regarded as its default strategy. Assertive Patriots can also find its prioritization of U.S. national interests appealing.

2.5.3 Primacy

The proponents of primacy emphasize the virtues of unipolarity. Robert Kagan, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliot Abrams, Charles Krauthammer, Joshua Muravichik and Zalmay Khalidzad can be counted among its leading advocates. Informed by hegemonic stability theory, they believe that a preponderance of U.S. power dissuades challengers and ensures peace and security. Primacists also believe that expansion of power is the best response to the uncertainties of the international environment. They agree with balance of power strategists that U.S. resources are limited, but they disagree on how limited they actually are. Most primacists perceive the limitation more as a lack of political will to mobilize resources than as an actual lack of resources. Primacists, who have numerous neoconservatives among their

177 The proponents of Selective Engagement/Balance of Power are often highly critical of unilateral roll-back, containment or sanction policies, which they perceive as unlikely to succeed.

178 One illustrative example of this is the debate regarding Huntington’s term “uni-multipolar system”. The strategy Huntington proposed was close to the balance of power alternative, and his term was criticised by primacists for not acknowledging U.S. preponderance of power.

179 The focus on the political will can be regarded as a neoconservative trademark.
ranks, are also far more idealistic than the proponents of balance of power and believe that it is possible to create a "benevolent global hegemony" based on American values.\textsuperscript{180}

For primacists, the main objective for the U.S. should be to preserve and prolong the unipolar moment by preventing the emergence of peer or near peer competitors. This can be done if the U.S. keeps its superiority, primarily in military capabilities and technology. This would lead other nations to realize the futility in attempts at counterbalancing and to opt bandwagoning instead.\textsuperscript{181} Therefore, they support new containment policies toward Russia and China while supporting the expansion of NATO and recommending considerable increases in defense spending and the construction of a national missile defense.

Primacists argue that the U.S. should always seek solutions that favour its own interests. This, of course, means that the collective good from time to time will suffer. Primacists, though, make little distinction between U.S. interests and the interests of others. What is good for the U.S. is generally regarded as good for the world. They support the notion of the U.S. as a benevolent hegemon or empire. They also quite straightforwardly argue that the unipolar world turns the Westphalian image on its head, making the world hierarchical rather than anarchical, and that America has the right to reap the benefits of its position.\textsuperscript{182}

This does not mean that U.S. leadership should be exercised unilaterally. The U.S. can and should work in a multilateral and institutional setting, but only to the extent that this furthers U.S. interests. Primacists do not accept any "multilateral handcuffing" of U.S. power and, therefore, recommend that it resist treaties, covenants and institutions that limit its freedom of action.\textsuperscript{183} The entire array of principles, norms, rules, conventions and procedures do not apply to the U.S. It is, of course, advantageous for the preservation of U.S. power if it can commit others to respect and act in compliance with this array. International institutions are thus not regarded as sacrosanct or as goals in themselves but rather as tools for maintaining order and a rallying point for others to bandwagon around.\textsuperscript{184} The notion that "unilateralism is the


\textsuperscript{181} Some primacists emphasize that the geographical position of the U.S. makes it non-threatening to major Eurasian powers and, therefore, gives them fewer incentives to counterbalance.


\textsuperscript{183} Krauthammer, "The Bush Doctrine."

\textsuperscript{184} In the debate regarding the U.S. approach to international institutions and multilateralism, it is possible to differentiate between balance of threat theorists and balance of power theorists. According to the former, the U.S. can quell the inclinations of others to balance against it by following accommodative policies through multilateralism and institutions. These commitments to multilateralism and institutions should not be substantial but sufficient to alleviate fear of coercion on the part of others and to persuade them that U.S. hegemony is rela-
high road to multilateralism" is illustrative of their thinking, and the idea that the (U.S.) mission should determine the coalition makes perfect sense to primacists. 185

This strategy includes a bold exercise of military power, a gradual disentanglement from the constraints of multilateralism and an aggressive effort to spread U.S. values. 186 For primacists, the world is still a very dangerous place, despite the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some view the post-Cold War era as even more unstable and threatening. 187 Primacists believe that security is interdependent, and they perceive multiple threats to the U.S. ranging from the rise of peer competitors, the disintegration of the international order due to lack of U.S. leadership, revisionist and ‘rogue states’ and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorism.

Policies of pre-emption and prevention, for primacists, are not controversial but rather an American prerogative. Such measures are necessary, especially with regard to the proliferation of WMDs. Such weapons are not just a direct threat to the U.S.; they also dramatically increase the costs and risks of interventions and thus undermine U.S. freedom of action. This is particularly pressing, since to successfully pursue primacy the U.S. needs to be a credible deterrent and frequently intervene. They, therefore, propose tough counter-proliferation policies toward ‘rogue states’, such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea. They do not believe that diplomacy or sanctions are enough to alter the behaviour of such states and argue for more forceful means, including regime change.

Because of its preoccupation with U.S. power and military capabilities, primacy is often associated with realism by many observers. This is a serious misunderstanding. Primacy is better understood as a marriage between idealistic, often Liberal Internationalist, ideas and means usually attributed to realists. Primacists are often referred to as Neo-Wilsonians, since they consider

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185 Primacists do not in any way view international institutions as morally superior or particularly effective. Rather, they regard them as ‘realpolitik by committee’ and warn against confusing paper with power. Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," The National Interest, Vol. 70 (Winter 2002).

186 Critics point out that this strategy fails to appreciate the role of cooperation and rules in the exercise of power. Hegemony is always partly consensual, and the pursuit of these policies would strip the U.S. of its legitimacy as a global power and compromise the authority that flows from such legitimacy, they argue.

187 Many primacists agree with CIA Director James Woolsey’s post-Cold War observation that the U.S. had "slain a large dragon" only to discover “a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes". James Woolsey quoted in Michael Gordon, "Joint Chiefs Warn Congress Against More Military Cuts," New York Times, May 20, 1993.
themselves to be morally driven and aggressive in their support of the use of U.S. armed forces for the projection of U.S. values.

Both Liberal Internationalists and the Assertive Patriots can easily find themselves supporting various primacist policies, even though they do not necessarily agree with the strategy in its entirety.

2.5.4 Cooperative Security

The proponents of cooperative security assume that security is interdependent. Therefore, U.S. interests are global in scope. Scholars such as John Ikenberry, Joseph Nye, John Ruggie, David Callahan and Graham Allison can be counted among its leading advocates. They share the belief that the key to constructing and sustaining a more benign world order is not a preponderance of U.S. power but rather a set of able-bodied multilateral institutions.

This strategy assumes that the world has dramatically changed in recent decades, and it does not regard great powers as the generic security problem. New issues and transnational problems, such as environmental degradation, poverty, ethnic conflict, organized crime, and migration, are now more significant than the balance of power. These problems cannot be solved unilaterally or by means of threats, coercion or military force. However, there is for the most part a common interest in solving them. Therefore, this strategy focuses on the promotion of international cooperation and coordination through broad networks of multilateral institutions. It is the best, and sometimes only, way to address them.

This strategy aims at creating democratic security communities – security regimes, essentially – complete with sets of principles, norms, rules and procedures that constrain, and even govern, the members. Some of its proponents argue that a standing international organization with substantial domestic and international legitimacy is necessary to coordinate multilateral action and to create the expectation of regular effective intervention for peace. By deepening and broadening the webs of overlapping, mutually reinforcing arrangements that are already established, a solid base can be created for this long term project. Hence this strategy recommends NATO expansion, arms control and reinforcement of all aspects of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as other sorts of confidence and security building measures. It also aims at expanding the liberal economic order by strengthening institutions that safeguard open markets, transparency and non-discrimination.

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188 In the debate about the fungibility of force, the proponents of this strategy usually downplay the importance of military power as an instrument of policy.

According to this strategy, institutions play a crucial part in promoting U.S. self-interests of security and prosperity. Not only can they establish an order in which the U.S. can thrive and its power and interests are institutionalized, they can also do this in an unthreatening manner. The U.S. should thus act multilaterally, restrain its exercise in power and strengthen – or as Ikenberry puts it "reclaim and renew" – the constitutional order that was put in place after WWII.\(^{190}\) In the long run this will serve U.S. interests, even though its freedom of action will be constrained from time to time.

The promotion of democracy, human rights and international law are central to this strategy and a matter of principle. As an order-builder, the U.S. should act with greater consistency in relation to these issues and pressure and shame all violators of these principles with no special consideration to any particular state. Such violations cannot be reduced to an internal matter of a particular state. Where ethnic cleansing, starvation and grave violations of human rights occur, the U.S. has a responsibility and an interest to act, preferably multilaterally, but that is not regarded as a pre-condition. Its proponents are by far the most enthusiastic with regard to the UN and U.S. peacekeeping missions and humanitarian interventions, even though they emphasize the virtues of diplomacy, foreign aid and soft power.

The proponents of cooperative security are heavily influenced by the democratic peace theory and the notion that economic interdependence serves as a disincentive to aggression. Therefore, democracy promotion is a fundamental part of this strategy, and it places democratic reform at the top of its agenda in relation to authoritarian and semi-democratic states, even in relation to such powers as China and Russia.\(^ {191}\)

The internal debate among the proponents of cooperative security is not about whether the U.S. should promote democracy, but rather how this is best done. They are usually divided regarding the application of military force. One strand does not have any objections to the use of force to protect human rights and to promote democracy. They want a liberalized world and an international order supported by U.S. military power. Then there is a strand that wants to demilitarize U.S. presence abroad and only favours the use of force in extreme cases. These strands can be seen as two poles of a continuum, with strategist that are to varying degrees skeptical of the use of force given its consequences and dangers and the general questions of what can actually be achieved with its application somewhere in between. This is a part of the exemplar versus vindicator debate, which surfaces time and again in the U.S., especially in times of international crisis.

\(^{190}\) Ikenberry, (2001).

\(^{191}\) This is important, as it touches upon the inherent conflict in this strategy. Those supporting the liberal economic order fear that those far more interested in democratization and human rights can potentially deprive the U.S. of many vital business opportunities in states perceived as non-democratic, such as China.
This strategy fits very well with Liberal Internationalism and can be regarded as its default strategy. American realists can also find parts of its order-building agenda appealing.

2.6 U.S. Strategy: Stability and Change

The aim of this section is to describe how strategic culture shapes U.S. strategy and when we can expect stability and change. It is to some extent also a recapitulation of what has been argued so far. For neoclassical realists, the international environment remains primarily though indirectly causal, while process remains secondarily but directly causal; hence the preoccupation of classical realists with finding intervening variables between the international environment and state action.

Whether they like it or not, policymakers are always under pressure to make strategic decisions. Information is often incomplete, and it always requires interpretation. There are usually time constraints as well. This forces them to rely on preconceived beliefs and assumptions, i.e. on the strategic culture. The strategic culture influences how international events, conditions, incentives and pressures are perceived and offers a guiding hand in determining how to pursue the national interest. It constrains choices and limits options on many levels.

In order to garner support and build a coalition behind a particular policy, policymakers must frame it in a way that resonates with the strategic culture. Since the paradigm of liberalism is and has been the dominant one since the end of WWII, most policymakers are not just motivated by it but compelled to legitimate their policies with reference to it. This limits the range of U.S. strategic goals and the range of means by which it can pursue them. The particular U.S. strategic culture restrains the country from behaving as an unapologetic aggressor on the international stage. Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany were not constrained in a similar way. The strategic culture is also to some extent institutionalized. Brutal tactics and harsh methods are associated with substantial political costs in the U.S., whereas other nations with a different strategic culture can use them at lower costs. The mistreatment of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq caused a massive political scandal in the U.S. Russia’s mistreatment of prisoners in the Chechen Wars are not associated with a similar domestic cost. Americans and millions around the world hold the U.S. to a different standard, and this is to a great extent a result of the dominant paradigm and the high bar that it sets.

To get around the constraints imposed by its culture, the U.S. government employs a number of different tactics, such as discretion, secrecy and the use of proxies. However, the fact that it has to use such tactics is evidence of the influence of its strategic culture. It is important to understand that the strategic culture does not prevent certain actions or renders them
impossible; it only constrains actions by associating them with severe political costs, which makes them less plausible.

Strategic culture also has an enabling function. By associating proposals with the strategic culture, it is possible to gain support and build powerful coalitions. In the empirical chapters I will show how a rhetoric of liberal internationalism was used to both gain support for and legitimize U.S. involvement in an expensive pipeline project in CASC. The pipeline was presented as a boon for the region’s democratization efforts.\(^{192}\)

Strategic culture has a tendency to persist, despite changes in the international environment, and U.S. strategy seems to change when there is a widespread sense that the prevailing policy is failing. External shocks and electoral turnovers are the two things that open a window of opportunity for changing course. Consequently, U.S. strategy does not change smoothly. Rather, it changes unevenly and episodically, often after a dramatic international or domestic political change. This fits well with the neoclassical realist notion that there is no immediate or perfect transmission belt linking material capabilities to action and the observation that there is often a time lag between changes in the international environment and state action.

Ideas "do not flow freely", and for strategy to change it is not enough that a window of opportunity is open.\(^{193}\) Someone must also put a new idea on the agenda and push it through. In a pluralistic state like the U.S., there are numerous actors involved in this process, from policy entrepreneurs and interest groups to bureaucrats. In order for an idea to pass successfully through a window and be openly put forth for consideration, it must not be seen to violate the strategic culture’s core values, i.e. the two paradigms. Ideas that do will probably not get through the window in the first place. The strategic culture functions as a filter on many levels.

The relative strength of paradigms and subcultures changes over time. A paradigm or a subculture can be strong because the international environment seems to favor it. It can also be strong or weak for domestic reasons. For instance, after a traumatic defeat in an international conflict, the Abstentionist subculture increases in relative strength, and it may become easier to push through ideas about scaling back U.S. international commitments.

However, the international environment, presidential leadership and domestic politics are all important factors behind why one subculture, at least temporarily, becomes the most influential, and there are almost always

\(^{192}\) It is important to recognize that I am not arguing that material interest do not play a role in the policymaking process. Of course, powerful oil interests played a crucial role in this decision. This will become apparent in the empirical chapters. One of this study’s theoretical contributions is to demonstrate how strategic culture partly shapes U.S. strategy, and this is something that is often overlooked in studies that focus on the material interests of actors.

many strategic alternatives available to policymakers. The President also has substantial leeway when it comes to strategic decisions. So, even though many Americans were appalled by the increased violence in Iraq in 2006 and the President’s party lost heavily in the congressional elections that same year due largely to the unpopular war, George W. Bush choose to double down and implemented what became known as the Iraq troop surge. Two years later, however, Barack Obama won the presidential election and his anti-war stance played a major role both in his victory over Hillary Clinton in the democratic primaries and in the general election.

It is costly for policymakers to disregard the strategic culture, if they want to get elected, remain in office or successfully pursue a given policy. If a strategic idea has the support of a broad coalition, it can usually be implemented without much modification. However, if such a coalition does not exist, it is very likely that will need to be modified and amended in order to pass the domestic hurdle. Bargaining processes like this increase the risks that the policy will result in incoherent halfway measures and will be characterized by ambivalence and inconsistencies.

U.S. strategy changed relatively little during the Cold War, due to an elite consensus and a broad coalition backing up the policies based on this consensus. After the end of the Cold War, these coalitions broke up, and the broad consensus disintegrated. This increased the probability of a more incoherent and inconsistent U.S. strategy. Good strategy is usually defined by how well means and ends are related. When, however, strategy is the result of political bargaining, it is more likely that there will be gaps between the two.

All of this has, of course, many consequences for U.S. strategy toward CASC. The disintegration of the Soviet Union left the U.S. as the sole superpower and arguably less constrained by the international environment than ever. However, the U.S. lacked historical ties to the new region created by the independence of the CASC states. It had previously had no clear interests, few policymakers knew anything about it and the Cold War consensus and coalitions were breaking up. These circumstances presented those that wanted the U.S. to engage in the region with many opportunities but also with numerous obstacles, and it was in this overall context that U.S. strategy toward CASC was created.

2.7 The Expectations

The most obvious way of engaging in theory evaluation is to derive hypotheses from theories and then compare whether and, if so, how well they correspond to the empirical evidence. The purpose of this study is not theory testing, and it is not designed as such. It is, however, important to demonstrate how my framework differs from structural realism. If structural realism were
to predict the same outcomes with regard to U.S. strategy toward CASC, the proposed framework would be largely superfluous.

This section will, therefore, begin with the identification of what U.S. strategy, or behaviour, toward CASC can be derived from structural realism. This is followed by a presentation of what U.S. strategy toward CASC is predicted by the proposed framework. Of course, these predictions are not just important for illustrating the difference between structural realism and the neoclassical framework but also for evaluating the framework. If many or all of the conceivable outcomes are consistent with a theory, then its explanatory power may be limited or negligible. The neoclassical realist framework is consistent with a wide range of outcomes, although there are also some outcomes that it clearly does not predict.

Predictions derived from other theories will not be discussed in this section. However, I will discuss alternative explanations in relation to my research questions based on other theories in the conclusions.\footnote{As argued earlier, this study is somewhat biased toward realism, since it takes the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the following power vacuum as its starting point.}

\subsection*{2.7.1 Expectations Inspired by Structural Realism}

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the distribution of power in the international system shifted dramatically. These shifts are the main independent variable of structural realism, and the collapse of the bipolar order can only be described as a revolutionary change. Structural realists, as argued earlier, are reluctant to offer predictions regarding the behaviour of single states. However, they do offer predictions regarding systemic outcomes, and from these it is possible to derive implicit predictions regarding U.S. strategy toward CASC.

Because of the logic of the balance of power, most structural realists expected that the international system would soon be pulled in a multipolar direction. This was the expectation of both Waltz and Mearsheimer, among others. The implicit strategy prescription following from this prediction was that it would be wise for the U.S. to pursue a strategy of strategic disengagement or balance of power/selective engagement in order to accommodate this inevitable drift.\footnote{In their studies and predictions, many scholars have substantially misinterpreted realism substantially by confusing the system’s effects on states with the lessons that they believe states should learn from the operation of that system. Furthermore, in this debate both realist and liberal scholars are guilty of incorporating normative assumptions about the way the world should work and misrepresenting the causal impact of domestic processes in the process.} In his seminal work, \textit{The Tragedy of Great Power Politics}, Mearsheimer also expected the U.S. to disengage strategically from parts of the Eurasian landmass. He reaches this conclusion due to
the ‘stopping power of water’. ¹⁹⁶

As argued earlier, Waltz defensive realism does not specify the disposition of states to act. International pressures are not regarded as determinants of state behaviour, and states can disregard them if they chose to do so. This indeterminacy problem leaves defensive realism without a foundation from which to derive predictions about U.S. strategy. What remains are prescriptions, and Waltz has argued that the U.S. ought to scale back its global ambitions and meliorism.

A fundamental assumption of both Mearsheimer and Waltz seems to be that unipolarity is impossible and that balance of power is the default mode in international relations. These assumptions are, however, contradicted by other structural realists who recognize that hegemonic systems are actually a rather common feature in world history. These realists, who have a close affinity to hegemonic stability theory, do not necessarily expect counterbalancing. Instead, they argue, that counterbalancing can sometimes be beyond the capability of other states and that the cost of such moves would outweigh the gains. The cost-benefit analyses of other states are to a great extent determined by how the hegemon acts. If it acts in a non-threatening way, bandwagoning may sometimes be the best strategy, they argue on the basis of the balance of threat theory. From this perspective, a different expectation for U.S. strategy toward CASC can be derived. In his essay Preserving the Unipolar Moment, Michael Mastanduno expects a primacist U.S. strategy:

According to realist logic, any great power should prefer to be a unipolar power, regardless of whether or not it possesses expansionist ambitions. For the state at the top, unipolarity is preferable to being a great power facing either the concentrated hostility and threat of a bipolar world, or the uncertainty and risk of miscalculation inherent in a multipolar world.¹⁹⁷

These realists do not expect the U.S. to relinquish any of its power or to disengage strategically in order to accommodate a smooth transition to multipolarity, but rather to try to preserve the unipolarity of the system for as long as it can. Offensive realists that do not take Mearsheimer’s ‘stopping power of water’ into account would reach a similar conclusion.

It is thus possible to find support for three of the four post-Cold War strategic alternatives in structural realism. If the U.S. were to pursue a strategy of strategic disengagement, balance of power/selective engagement or primacy toward CASC, structural realists could argue that U.S. behaviour correspond with their theory.

Those that predict a U.S. strategy of strategic disengagement or balance of power/selective engagement expect no U.S. engagement in CASC. For the former, this is obvious, since engagement in a new region would be even

more inconceivable than the continuation of existing U.S. engagements. The latter would come to a similar conclusion. With the Soviet threat gone and Russia withdrawing, there are no reasons for the U.S. to engage in the landlocked CASC. The region is of little interest to the U.S., and since the world would soon be drifting toward multipolarity, it would be irrational to expand into that area. It would be more rational for the U.S. to be selective and spend its limited resources on other areas. Engagement in Russia’s and other Eurasian power’s backyard would also trigger more counterbalancing, thus making the unipolar moment even more fleeting. Only if Russia or China really emerged as great powers with hegemonic ambitions would U.S. engagement in CASC, as a counterbalancing or containment effort, make sense.

Those that expect the U.S. to pursue a strategy of primacy foresee the U.S. taking full advantage of the power vacuum in the CASC region. They expect the U.S. to act quickly and to engage assertively in the region in order to consolidate its Cold War victory before Russia is able to recuperate and once again try to establish its hegemony in the region.

Note that a structural realists perspective does not predict a U.S. strategy heavily guided by liberal values. It is also worth noting that they do not expect any dramatic changes in U.S. strategy toward CASC to occur after 9/11 or in conjunction with elections, since change has to be attributable to changes in the international distribution of power, from these perspectives.

2.7.2 Expectations Inspired by Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism predicts that increases in material power will eventually lead to a corresponding expansion in the ambition of a state’s strategy and that decreases lead to a corresponding contraction. From this, it follows that U.S. engagement in CASC is to be expected, since the collapse of the Soviet Union dramatically increased the relative power of the U.S. However, there is no immediate transmission belt linking material capabilities to actions, and the relationship between changes in power and strategy is complex and indirect. Neoclassical realists do not assume that things happen automatically. Policymakers must work hard to put new issues on the agenda, and all proposals must pass several domestic hurdles before being implemented. Therefore, this framework does not expect U.S. engagement to be as smooth and rapid as offensive realists might expect.

It is also possible to derive several expectations regarding the quality of U.S. engagement from the framework, in addition to its tempo. The decline in consensus regarding U.S. strategy after end of the Cold War should not be exaggerated. It was a tremendous change, but it was not a shock that led U.S. policymakers to question their fundamental assumptions about the foundations of U.S. strategy. Rather, for most policymakers it confirmed the soundness of U.S. post-World War II strategy, and critics that wanted to change
U.S. strategy soon found that the window of opportunity was not as open as they had hoped and probably expected. The end of the Cold war thus confirmed the paradigm of liberalism and it remained dominant.

Because of this continuity, U.S. strategy toward CASC is expected to be shaped to a considerable extent by the paradigm of liberalism. From this and the relative increase in U.S. power after 1989, a U.S. strategy close to that of cooperative security is expected. This is very important, since this is precisely the strategic alternative structural realism does not expect and cannot really explain. If the U.S. pursued such a strategy, structural realism has not fared well, whereas the proposed framework has serious problems if U.S. strategy toward CASC only reflects the paradigm of non-entanglement and/or if the U.S. pursued a strategy that disregarded U.S. values of democracy and freedom.

The disappearance of the Soviet threat also worked in favour of the Abstentionists, and it strengthened the paradigm of non-entanglement. This means that the pressure to reduce costs and risks increased. The end of the Cold War thus increased the tension between the two paradigms, and this has many consequences. U.S. strategy toward CASC will, therefore, also be very sensitive to costs. The framework thus predicts sweeping declarations and ambitious goals about democracy and the integration of CASC in various international institutions but also that the U.S. will follow up these declarations with meagre resources not commensurate with its explicitly declared goals.

There will be a clear discrepancy between rhetoric and concrete actions resulting in the U.S. sending mixed messages to the CASC region. Because of the uneasy tension between the two paradigms, the framework expects U.S. strategy toward CASC to be both inconsistent and incoherent, especially under certain circumstances. If the President does not articulate an interest in the region and directs policy, the inconsistency and incoherence will be exacerbated. Without leadership, different branches of government will pursue their own agendas, and different lobby groups and private interests will have a relatively stronger influence on U.S. strategy. Since the framework expects inconsistency and incoherence if certain conditions are met, it will be severely discredited if the U.S. strategy toward CASC were to be consistent and coherent under those conditions. Note also that a certain consistency in the inconsistency and incoherence is expected.

The framework also has something to say regarding when changes in strategy are likely. Changes and perceived changes in relative power are not the only things that cause change. Elections, shocks, the disappearance of threats and the emergence of new threats can also lead to changes. The framework can thus account for many instances of change in U.S. strategy. For example, the attack on 9/11 caused a perceptual shock that led to a reason

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198 The policy window was farther open after 9/11. The terrorist attack was not just traumatic in itself but also widely interpreted as a policy failure.
essment of U.S. strategy. It also dramatically signalled the emergence of a new threat. The emergence of new unexpected threats tend to favour the Assertive Patriots, and this increases the demand for a more aggressive and militaristic posture. Scarcity of strategic resources and the discovery of new resources can also change U.S. strategy, according to the proposed framework. When the price of oil dramatically rises for some reason, the American Realist’s arguments about access and secure supply have a tendency to gain more traction.
3. Methods, Data and Sources

The starting point for the empirical study has now been established as: to describe, in considerable detail, U.S. strategy toward during CASC 1991–2006. The framework provides clear causal hypotheses regarding the relationship between a number of variables, and it explains why and how variation in one set of phenomena leads to changes in another. It also explains when to expect inconsistency and incoherence in U.S. strategy.

This section begins with a justification of this study’s primary method – process-tracing – and draws heavily on the works of Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. They argue that "process-tracing provides a common middle ground for historians interested in historical explanation and political scientists and other social scientists who are sensitive to the complexities of historical events but are more interested in theorizing about categories of cases as well as explaining individual cases". They further state that "the power of process-tracing for both theory testing and heuristic development of new hypotheses accounts in part for the recent ‘historical turn’ in the social sciences and the renewed interest in path-dependent historical processes.”199 This method can, among other things, be used to assess theoretically derived expectations, and it can be argued that process-tracing and neoclassical realism, with its focus on intervening variables, are made for each other.

After this, I will turn to the comparative elements of the study. Then follows a section devoted to how I practically go about to interpreting my empirical data. A brief paragraph regarding generalizability comes next. The section ends with a discussion about data and sources.

3.1. Process-Tracing

George and Bennett explain that process-tracing "seeks to uncover a causal chain coupling independent variables with dependent variables and evidence of the causal mechanisms posited by a theory."200 They describe it as "one means of attempting to get closer to the mechanisms or microfoundations behind observed phenomena" aiming to "empirically establish the posited intervening variables and implications that should be true in case if a particular explanation of that case is true”.201

One of their main arguments is that this method "can add to studies of deductive theories that put a ‘black box’ around decision-making and strate-

199 George and Bennett, (2004), pp. 223-224.
201 George and Bennett, (2004), p. 147.
Process-tracing is a very useful method for strengthening results by identifying a causal process that could lead from the independent to the dependent variable. Therefore, process-tracing is a valuable complement to rational choice and structural realist theories and a perfect fit with neoclassical realism. George and Bennett emphasize that "several scholar interested in explanations via causal mechanisms have noted the relationship between such explanations and the methodology of process-tracing", and offer numerous examples of such in their argument. Following Aggarwal, this study systematically analyzes three presidential administrations with an eye to how they appear to respond to international environment and other constraints, such as U.S. strategic culture.

Process-tracing has some important limitations that need to be addressed. The method provides a strong basis for causal inference only if it can establish an uninterrupted causal path linking the putative causes to the observed effects at the appropriate level(s) of analysis as specified by the theory being tested. My hope is to be able to show convincingly that U.S. strategic culture functioned as an intervening variable between the international distribution of power and U.S. strategy. Moreover, most theories frequently do not make specific predictions for all steps in a causal process, particularly for complex phenomena, and "when data is unavailable or theories are indeterminate, process-tracing can reach only provisional conclusions." Since this is a study of U.S. strategy, there is always the possibility that it misses important information due to the classified nature of some strategic decisions. It is, therefore, possible that with the declassification of government documents, new, important data will emerge that could confirm or disconfirm at least some part of this study’s findings. In that sense, its results are provisional. There is always a possibility that there may be more than one hypothesized causal mechanism consistent with any given set of process-tracing evidence. This is a problem for process-tracing, since it challenges the researcher to assess whether alternative explanations are complementary, or

203 George and Bennett, (2004), p. 147.
205 George and Bennett, (2004), p. 222.
whether one is causal and the other spurious. However, even "if it is not possible to exclude all but one explanation for a case, it may be possible to exclude at least some explanations and thereby to draw inferences that are useful for theory-building or policymaking." So, even though this study cannot exclude all possible explanations but one, it will at least exclude some explanations, such as that U.S. strategy toward CASC was driven solely by power considerations. George and Bennett argue that "in practice, process-tracing need not always go down to the finest level of detail observable. But by avoiding as if assumptions at high levels of analysis and insisting on explanations that are consistent with the finest level of detail observable, process-tracing can eliminate some alternative explanations for a case and increase our confidence in others." Process-tracing, thus, seeks to increase our confidence in a theory.

There are several varieties of process-tracing: 'detailed narrative', 'analytic explanation', 'use of hypotheses and generalizations', and 'more general explanation'. This study will make use of all of these varieties to varying degrees.

First of all, a major portion of the empirical study consists of a detailed historical narrative covering U.S. strategy toward CASC from 1991 to 2006. This study is probably the most minute, detailed tracing of a causal sequence hitherto available on this particular subject. The empirical chapters are divided into two parts: a detailed narrative and an analytical part. The latter part can be regarded as an attempt at analytic explanation that focuses on what I perceive to be particularly important: the international environment and the influence of U.S. strategic culture. This study also uses hypotheses and generalizations. It employs several generalizations of a probabilistic character in support of the explanation for the outcomes. The notion that limited presidential interest will result in an inconsistent and incoherent strategy is an example of this. Finally, throughout the overall research design and the comparative dimension that follows from examining three presidential administrations, this study partly aims at constructing a general explanation for understanding U.S. strategy by introducing culture as an intervening variable between the international environment and U.S. strategy.

George and Bennett argue that "if a theory is sufficiently developed that it generates or implies predictions about causal processes that lead to outcomes, then process-tracing can assess the predictions of the theory. In this use, process-tracing evidence tests whether the observed processes among

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206 George and Bennett, (2004), p. 222.
207 Process-tracing does not necessarily require a minute, detailed tracing of a casual sequence. Rather, it depends on which level of abstraction one opts for. Process-tracing can be applied both to microprocesses and to macro-phenomena and "does not necessarily focus on the individual decision-making level of analysis". George and Bennett, (2004), p. 211-212.
variables in a case match those predicted or implied by the theory.” Since I have been able to derive expectations from the neoclassical realist framework, the process-tracing method will also be used to confirm or disconfirm them. There is always the risk of confirmation bias, which can possibly result in an overstatement of the casual weight of my hypothesis of interest and a disregard for alternative explanations. This is a classical problem all scholars face. To some degree this is ameliorated by the fact that this study does not have the ambition to explain anything comprehensively, let alone exhaustively. Rather, I want to demonstrate convincingly that strategic culture is one important variable among many in understanding U.S. strategy.

3.2. A Focused Comparison

Case studies can be used for three overarching purposes: historical explanations, testing theories and developing theories. The case studies in this study are of the latter kind. It is, though, important to recognize that the primary purpose of this study is to answer the research question about U.S. strategy toward CASC. Its theory development ambitions are subordinate. If theory development were the primary purpose, the choice to study U.S. strategy toward CASC would be more problematic. However, U.S. strategy toward CASC can nonetheless be used as a case study to develop theory.

Case studies are important for many purposes, but there are several ambiguities associated with them. There seems, for instance, to be no consensus on the definition of the term case study. However, the most troublesome "ambiguity afflicting case studies is that such works generally partake of two empirical worlds. They are both studies tout court and case studies of something more general.” In case studies there is always an ambiguity between the general and the conditional. Treating the terror attacks on 9/11 either as an instance of the general phenomenon of terrorism or as a puzzling phenomenon in itself will have different implications for the explanatory claims being made.

This study subscribes to a definition of "case" as an instance of a general phenomenon. Case studies are then regarded as the intensive examination of such instances. Following Stephen Van Evera, case study analysis is the exploration of "a small number of cases (as few as one) in detail, to see whether events unfold in the manner predicted and (if the subject involves

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213 George and Bennett, (2004), pp. 119-120.
human behavior) whether actors speak and act as the theory predicts."\textsuperscript{214} Case studies can be regarded as probability probes; they are intended to assess the potential validity of the neoclassical framework. Following Harry Eckstein, "[p]lausibility here means something more than a belief in the potential validity plain and simple, for hypothesis are unlikely ever to be formulated unless considered potentially valid; it also means something less that actual validity, for which rigorous testing is required."\textsuperscript{215} The explanatory power of the framework is only assessed in a very limited way in this study. Further studies involving more cases and the juxtaposition of alternative theories could be designed to properly test the framework.

The unit of analysis in this study is U.S. strategy toward CASC, and its research design is constructed with comparative methods in mind. Since the President and his administration are regarded as the study’s principal actor, the empirical parts of this study have been broken down into three chapters, each covering one administration. These can be regarded as three cases of U.S. strategy toward CASC, and since I use the same methods and ask the same questions in relation to each case, it can be argued that this study employs the method of structured focused comparison. According to George and Bennett:

The method and logic of structured, focused comparison is simple and straightforward. The method is ‘structured’ in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is ‘focused’ in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined.\textsuperscript{216}

The method of structured, focused comparison borrows the device of asking a set of standardized, general questions of each case, even in single case studies, from the statistical (and survey) research model. These questions must be developed to reflect the research objective and theoretical focus of the inquiry. The use of a set of general questions is necessary to ensure the acquisition of comparable data in comparative studies. George and Bennett point out that structure and focus in comparative case studies are easier to achieve if a single investigator not only plans the study, but also conducts all of the case studies. The checklist created for studying U.S. strategy that I present in the next section can be regarded as such a set, and throughout the study I alone ask the same questions to each administration.

In order for a study to be regarded as ‘focused’, it "should be undertaken with a specific research objective in mind and a theoretical focus appropriate


\textsuperscript{216} George and Bennett, (2004), p. 67.
for that objective.\textsuperscript{217} The focus of this study is delineated in two ways. It is a study of the delineated domain of strategy. It does not cover every interaction between the U.S. government and the CASC region. It also regards the presidential administration as its principal actor. Moreover, the three empirical chapters are organized in a similar way, and in the concluding chapter I will discuss the similarities and differences between the three administrations.

\section*{3.3. Method in Practice}

The empirical part of the study is guided by the neoclassical realist framework. In the theoretical section I delineated the term strategy. In order to answer the main question of what U.S. strategy toward CASC was, the following list of questions, primarily inspired by Mike Winnevig and Colin Dueck, will guide and serve as a practical checklist for the empirical research.

First, one can ask questions regarding the administration’s official declarations:

- What threats does it perceive?
- What goals does it set out to reach?
- By what means does it confront the threats and secure the goals?

Then, one can ask questions regarding concrete action:

- Is military spending raised or lowered?
- Are alliance commitments extended or withdrawn?
- Are military deployments overseas expanded or reduced?
- Is foreign aid increased or decreased?
- What level of society or what issues is the aid appropriated for?
- Does the administration engage in significant new diplomatic initiatives, or does it disengage from existing diplomatic activities?
- Does the administration adopt a more aggressive and confrontational stance toward its adversaries, or does it adopt a less confrontational stance?\textsuperscript{218}

The answers to these questions will not only help to identify and characterize what U.S. strategy toward CASC was during the period studied, they will also make it possible to observe changes in strategy over time and assist in the assessment of whether the U.S. acted consistently and coherently or not.

\textsuperscript{217} George and Bennett, (2004), p. 70.
\textsuperscript{218} This list is primarily inspired by Colin Dueck, ‘America as She has Been’: The Role of Ideas at Key Turning Points in U.S. Grand Strategy, (Doctoral Dissertation, Princeton: 2001); Dueck, (2006); Mike Winnevig, A World Reformed: The United States and European Security from Reagan to Clinton (Stockholm: Stockholm Studies in Politics, No. 75, 2001).
However, they will not help answer ‘the why’ questions. That is what the framework is for.

A similar approach can be used to study the strategic culture, and in order to assess the relative influence of the paradigms and subcultures one can ask a number of questions, such as:

What are their basic assumptions about how the world works?
What do they take for granted?
What do they perceive to be in the U.S. national interest?
What threats do they perceive?
What policies do they believe are the most effective and appropriate to deal with threats?
How do they assess the domestic political risks and costs associated with the range of policy options to confront the threat or secure the interests?

The answers to these questions can be found by examining the strategy debate in influential books and journals, such as *Foreign Affairs*, newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, etc., and by opinions expressed by various federal departments and agencies as well as by Congress and the Presidential administration.

Naturally, elites in the U.S. disagree about many (or even most) things. However, the dominance of a particular paradigm or subculture should not be regarded as a simple yes or no proposal but rather as a continuous variable that measures the degree to which a paradigm or subculture dominates. I have, for instance, argued that the paradigm of non-entanglement increased in relative strength after the Vietnam War, and this can clearly be observed by looking at the strategy debates, newspaper articles and editorials, opinion polls, Congress and presidential administrations.

Consulting opinion polls also plays a crucial role in the effort to assess the relative influence of the strategic culture. For instance, both *Pew Research Center* and *Gallup* have numerous polls that tracks the public’s changing attitudes toward things such as U.S. position in the world, internationalism, threats, attitudes towards allies, the use of force, the importance of securing adequate energy supplies for the U.S., whether foreign trade in an opportunity or a threat, the role that the U.S. should play in trying to solve international problems, whether the U.S. should promote and defend human rights in other countries, and much more. The argument that the public’s interest in foreign policy was in decline in the early 1990s is clearly reflected in various polls. Polls also show that the public was indifferent toward expanding NATO and that support for Clinton’s various interventions was low. Observations like these corroborate the notion that the relative influence of the paradigm on non-entanglement was on the rise. Polls also demonstrate strong public support for the use of force post 9/11, including dramatically higher support for increasing defense spending. In January 2002, no less than 92% thought that the U.S. would have to use military force to reduce the
threat of terrorism, even if Osama bin Laden were captured or killed.\textsuperscript{219} This corroborates the notion that the 9/11 attacks increased the relative influence of Assertive Patriotism

Since process-tracing is the primary method chosen to answer the research questions and to show how the strategic culture functions as an intervening variable between the international environment and U.S. strategy, this study will make use of a wide array of sources. The framework proposes that the international environment and U.S. strategic culture enable and constrain policymakers. Policymakers are under dual pressure, since they have to take international environment into account and have to adapt their policies to the strategic culture. One of the best ways to evaluate this proposal is, therefore, through a qualitative content analysis of the officially declared U.S. strategy toward CASC. Verbal or declaratory politics is thus at the center of the empirical part of the study.

By analysing official statements, briefings and publications, etc., with the paradigms and subcultures in mind, it will be possible not only to evaluate whether the official strategy actually reflects them but also to assess their influence. Since these subcultures are quite comprehensive and not mutually exclusive, it is difficult to use quantitative methods or to code certain words or phrases. All official statements must be read closely in order to conclude whether their arguments, reasoning and proposals can be said to reflect and fit a given paradigm or subculture.

Answering what the threats, goals, and means are, on the other hand, is somewhat easier and can be dealt with in a more straightforward prima facie way. If something is declared by the President and his principals to be a "major problem", a "severe concern" or a flat out "threat", it will be analysed as a threat perception. Goals and means will be analysed in the same fashion. Phrases such as "our goal!", "our objective", "we aim at", etc. are examples of the former and "we will do … in order to achieve", "through using…we will reach the goal of", are examples of the latter.\textsuperscript{220}

If a greater number of statements fit one of the paradigms or, more specifically, a particular subculture, it can be argued that at least U.S. official language is influenced or shaped by it. Following this quite straightforward approach, President George W. Bush’s declaration that "it is the policy of the U.S. to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" can be regarded as influenced by the paradigm of liberalism and Secretary of State James Baker’s remark that we "don’t have a dog in this

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{219} Pew Research Center, "Americans Favor Force in Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and..." January 22, 2002.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{220} Relying on this approach can lead to problems, since goals in one statement can be presented as means in another. This is important to recognize when analysing and assessing the degree of consensus and influence of paradigms, given that the goals of some are regarded as means by others.}
fight" with regard to the crisis in Yugoslavia as an expression of the paradigm of non-entanglement.221 These two examples illustrate the logic of this categorization process. However, most statements are not as clear cut as these. Below is a brief and somewhat simplified example of how I interpret and categorize a statement. I will not go into the specifics of the particular occasion and context of the speech here; that will be done in the empirical study.

In July 1997 Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott made a speech entitled *A Farewell to Flashman: American Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*. In describing U.S. support, he declared:

If economic and political reform in the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia does not succeed -- if internal and cross-border conflicts simmer and flare -- the region could become a breeding ground of terrorism, a hotbed of religious and political extremism, and a battleground for outright war. It would matter profoundly to the United States if that were to happen (...).

Our support has four dimensions -- the promotion of democracy, the creation of free market economies, the sponsorship of peace and cooperation within and among the countries of the region, and their integration with the larger international community (...).

For the last several years, it has been fashionable to proclaim, or at least to predict, a replay of the "Great Game" in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The implication, of course, is that the driving dynamic of the region, fueled and lubricated by oil, will be the competition of the great powers to the disadvantage of the people who live there (...). Our goal is to avoid and actively to discourage that atavistic outcome. [...] What we want help bring about is just the opposite: We want to see all responsible players in the Caucasus and Central Asia be winners.222

Note how these statements fit the paradigm of liberalism. The passage highlights that security is interdependent and that the internal structure of states is of significance for their external actions. It is, moreover, stated that certain developments in the region can matter profoundly to the U.S. Implicitly, the passage makes clear that the U.S. has important interests in CASC. The means to deal with the problems that could potentially emanate from the region are internal reform, democracy, free markets and integration. The second paragraph lets us know that the U.S. is actively promoting liberal democracy and regional integration. This is indicative not only of the paradigm of liberalism but, more specifically, of the subculture of Liberal Internationalism. Abstentionists prefer the U.S. to set more of an example than to


become actively engaged. In addition, they do not share the notion that security is interdependent in a way described in the first paragraph.

The last paragraph is a rebuke of balance of power politics and zero-sum notions of international politics. It also signals great ambitions in the region on the part of the U.S. This positive outlook and the notion that it is possible to change fundamentally the dynamics of international relations to the better are typical of the paradigm of liberalism and, more specifically, the subculture of Liberal Internationalism. What is being stated runs contrary to some of the fundamental ideas of both the American Realists and the Assertive Patriots. The ambitious rhetoric that argues that the U.S. should actively attempt to change the behaviour of states in and surrounding the region is also a mismatch with the Abstentionists.

Note also how threats, means and goals are represented in the three paragraphs and how they all indicate that this statement is influenced by the paradigm of liberalism and, more specifically, the subculture of Liberal Internationalism. This is an example of how parts of the study will be conducted. Not every statement is as straightforward as this. Therefore, every statement must always be read in its entirety before any conclusions are made.223 If this statement were representative of all of the statements of an administration, its strategy would probably be close to the strategy of cooperative security, however only if the rhetoric is followed up by concrete action. In qualitative content analyses subjectivity is always an issue. However, by being transparent in my analysis and explicitly discussing my interpretations, I hope to live up to what is sometimes referred to as the intersubjectivity criterion.

It is important to recognize that this analysis is not guided by some process of elimination or exclusion, whereby every statement has to ultimately fit at least one of the paradigms or subcultures. That would run contrary to one of this study’s main ideas. The ambition is to demonstrate convincingly how U.S. culture shapes and influences strategy, and that can only be done by allowing for the possibility that it does not. A theoretically informed framework cannot be consistent with all outcomes. It is thus quite possible that both U.S. official declarations and actions do not correspond to U.S. strategic culture, even though the framework does not expect this.

The study does not rely on verbal politics alone. It also pays attention to concrete U.S. actions. Note that seven of the ten questions on the strategy checklist are concerned with this. Regarding concrete actions, it also important to recognize what the U.S. is not doing, despite opportunities. As argued earlier, it is perfectly conceivable that U.S. actions do not correspond with what its officials publicly declare. Concrete U.S. actions, such as the allocation of money (including what it is appropriated for), military deployments

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223 As will be illustrated in the empirical chapters, the title of this particular speech tries to signal that there is an historical opportunity to change radically the dynamics of the region.
and official visits are all important in answering the fundamental questions of this study. Many of the answers to these questions are to be found in the numbers. Thanks to the transparent system of government in the U.S. and its numerous Congressional checks, it is comparatively easy to follow the money, at least official appropriations.

In order to answer the questions regarding concrete U.S. actions and to gain an even more detailed picture, sources other than officially declared U.S. strategy will also be consulted. Each administration’s concrete actions will be intensively scrutinized with the help of secondary sources as well. Thus when the main research question is answered, both officially declared U.S. strategy and concrete actions will be taken into account.

In the previous chapter I discussed the importance of analytically separating strategic culture from a specific strategy. In connection with this, I also introduced four U.S. post-Cold War strategic alternatives. In the analysis part of the empirical chapters as well as in the concluding chapter, the strategies of the administrations will be discussed with regards to these alternatives. By taking into account the administrations’ declarations and concrete actions as mentioned above, it will be possible to categorize their strategies. This will succinctly summarize U.S. strategy toward CASC in a language familiar to most observers of U.S. strategy. This categorization process will be guided by the questions above and by Posen and Ross’ article "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy", which includes a table of competing grand strategies.224 This is not an easy task, since the strategic alternatives are highly generalized, and many concrete actions fit several of them. For instance, the strategy of selective engagement/balance of power has often been criticized for not proving clear guidance on "which ostensibly ‘minor’ issues have implications for great power relations, and thus merit U.S. involvement." Its proponents posit that most will not matter but admit that some will, and this makes almost all of the issues and U.S. engagements contestable. Chapter Two also makes clear why an administration’s strategy will seldom, if ever, consistently and coherently reflect only one strategic alternative. This is perfectly in line with Posen and Ross, who argued that the language of the Clinton Administration’s National Security Strategy of 1996 reflected "co-operative security and selective engagement, plus a dash of primacy".225 This categorization will thus be rather sweeping but will nonetheless encapsulate U.S. strategy toward CASC.

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3.4 Outlines for a General Explanation

The primary contribution of this study is empirical, and the framework has been created to answer the specific research questions. However, the study also has theoretical ambitions, and the usefulness of the framework for that purpose will eventually be evaluated. In this evaluation, several questions arise, the most important being: what theoretical implication can be drawn from this particular study? A large-N method is often appropriate to test theories. Since such a study will not be conducted, proponents of quantitative approaches may argue that a single case study like this is of very limited value in theory-building. A single case offers no general implications and can only disprove certain existing theories under rather specific conditions.

In order to infer theoretical implications from a case study, it is necessary to have more than one case and to compare them systematically. This is a problem for a study of U.S. strategy toward one region. However, this study’s main contribution is empirical and not theoretical. CASC is virtually a 'blank spot' on the map when it comes to U.S. strategy, and U.S. relations with it have not been studied sufficiently. This combination does not only make the empirical contribution of the present study greater by filling a gap, it also makes comparisons with U.S. relations with other regions difficult. The countries of this region came into existence at a specific moment in time, and the benefits of comparing U.S. strategy toward other regions in an attempt to create a large-N study would probably outweigh the gains. Saliency and specificity would be lost, especially the detailed account of the slow evolution of U.S. strategy toward a new region in the post-Cold War era.

Still, it is possible to argue that the sample size is not one, but three. This to some extent alleviates the challenge of inference and theoretical generalization. As discussed above, the study can be regarded as a study of three administrations. Moreover, David Collier has argued that "refinements in methods of small-n analysis have substantially broadened the range of techniques available to comparative researchers". Collier, George and Bennett as well as others emphasize that "within-case comparisons are critical to the viability of small-n analysis" and have contributed to move to "historicize the social sciences." This study employs some of these useful techniques, such as within-case comparisons, in order to increase the sample size further. First, it can be argued that the intensive scrutiny of each administration’s strategy allows for a greater number of observations. By limiting the number of cases, it is possible to explore each case in depth and grasp the particular context of each case. The number of observations is increased

226 Remember also that the theoretical claims of this study are modest. It seeks to explain U.S. strategy, not strategy in other countries or strategy in general.
through a controlled comparison of relevant variables. This kind of comparison insures variance between cases and makes it possible to draw causal inferences, despite the small number of cases. This is the general argument of proponents of qualitative small-N studies and of those with a preference for process-tracing, such as George and Bennett who argue that the combination of "cross-case comparison and process tracing, is a powerful way to create middle range theories that are consistent with both the historical explanation of individual cases and the theoretical patterns evident across cases."228

Based on this reasoning, the research design and the comparative dimension that follows from examining three presidential administrations, this study thus aims to contribute to a general explanation for understanding U.S. strategy that introduces strategic culture as an intervening variable between the international environment and U.S. actions.

3.5. Data and Sources

There are extremely few studies and books about U.S. strategy or foreign policy toward CASC, and most of them are exploratory or descriptive in character. RAND has published some studies, such as *U.S. Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles and Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Implications for the U.S. Army.*229 However, these are not studies of U.S. strategy, but rather overviews of potential U.S. strategic interests in the region. There are some edited volumes about the region written by regional experts that include chapters about U.S. foreign policy, such as *Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing,* but they are short and without exception descriptive in character.230 The same can be said about Shahram Akbarzadeh’s *Uzbekistan and the United States: Authoritarianism, Islamism and Washington’s New Security Agenda,* since, despite its title, the book contains only 30 descriptive pages about U.S. foreign policy toward Uzbekistan.231 Martha Brill Olcott’s *Central Asia’s Second Chance* contains some useful information but it is more a book about Central Asia than about U.S. foreign policy or strategy.232 Matthew Crosston’s *Fostering Fundamentalism: Terrorism, Democracy and

228 George and Bennett, p. 129, p. 149.
230 Eugene Rumer, Dmitri Trenin and Huasheng Zhao, *Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2007).
American Engagement in Central Asia from 2006 is better described as a no-holds barred critique of U.S. foreign policy than a serious academic study. It focuses solely on the George W. Bush Administration’s war on terror and is written in a sharply critical, Chomskyan vein.\(^{233}\)

In process-tracing, George and Bennett argue, "the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case."\(^{234}\) Because of my methodological commitment to process-tracing, a vast material has been collected and studied. I cannot stress enough that this study relies to considerable extent on primary data. Methodologically, this is a great strength, and the collection of this large sample of primary data can be regarded as a contribution to this insufficiently studied subject in itself. To some extent the same sources have been used to study both U.S. strategy and U.S. strategic culture. This is virtually inevitable, since presidential speeches are typically offer information about both U.S. strategy and U.S. strategic culture. U.S. official policy and strategy declarations can be found in a limited number of sources. The Department of State Dispatch (DSD), the Public Papers of the President, the series of National Security Strategy of the United States, relevant speeches and statements from the Secretaries of Defense, Treasury and Energy, speeches and papers from various undersecretaries, such as the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, official statements from Central Command, are all important empirical sources consulted in the study. Congressional records and hearings are also important sources. Hearings are a valuable source for a number of reasons. They are important for answering questions regarding the influence of U.S. strategic culture but also for getting a sense of what kind of domestic pressure administrations faced. They include lengthy testimonials, not only from various area specialists, but also from top level representatives of the executive branch and the bureaucracies responsible for U.S. strategy toward CASC.

This study also relies on secondary sources. Monographs, articles by area specialists, biographies of policymakers and newspapers, such as the New York Times and Washington Post, are examples of such sources. Publications from various think tanks, such as the Brookings Institution, the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation, and political and academic journals were consulted. I have studied a substantial amount of material produced by The Central Asia Caucus Institute. A few interviews were conducted to corroborate the study’s findings. In order to capture the relative influence of the strategic culture, several polls have also been studied. Regarding secondary sources, one rule of the thumb is to always approach them with a

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\(^{234}\) George and Bennett, (2004), p. 6.
healthy skepticism. This includes a thoughtful consideration of the nature of the source. Think tanks often have specific agendas, and the concepts and conclusions that feature in their various publications have a tendency to correspond with their current ideological or policy orientation. Personal biographies tend to omit things that can reflect poorly on the author. Newspapers do not always get the facts right, especially when it comes to analyses of distant events. Besides general skepticism, various statements were cross-checked in order to avoid such pitfalls.

As pointed out earlier, U.S. strategy toward CASC has not just been insufficiently studied. U.S. relations with the region were also virtually non-existent before the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Given this, there is little or no readily available material. In order to answer my research questions, I have been forced both to find and to analyse a substantial amount of empirical material. As stated above, I regard this empirical effort to be the primary contribution of this study.

In order to capture the most relevant official statements and to confine the material to a manageable amount, there has to be a rigorous selection method. For the most part I began at the top and worked downward. Speeches by the President, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense as well as speeches published in DSD were considered to be the most consequential documents. Since DSD’s ambition must be, or at least should be, to cover as many issues as possible and to select the most important statements, this selection method has many advantages. The second selection criterion was that the speeches should represent major foreign policy speeches containing at least some information that will affect U.S. strategy toward CASC. Third, all speeches that refer to any of the CASC countries have been studied, which actually proved to be manageable amount. (If such a selection method were to be used for some other regions or even single countries, the material would probably be too great for one person to deal with.

When very little material was found at the top level, I searched for material and sources at lower levels from various undersecretaries and from places such as the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. This was necessary in order to provide a thorough portrayal of U.S. strategy toward the region. This top-to-bottoms approach also provide an interesting insight into priority levels at various stages during the period examined, since it told me how important the region was considered by the President and the administration.

As will be illustrated, the U.S. did not initially have any formally declared strategy toward this area. There is very little to be found regarding these states during the early years of the George H.W. Bush presidency. The administration had, however, policies toward the entire former Soviet Union (FSU). These policies affected CASC, despite the fact that the region was considered peripheral. Therefore, much of the material available and analysed are officially declared policies toward the entire FSU. Since this was one of the administration’s top priorities, there is no lack of material. A sub-
stantial number of major speeches by the President and the Secretary of State and Defense regarding the FSU have been analysed.

As the U.S. relationship with CASC expanded and deepened, there was a corresponding increase in empirical material available. From then on, the selection of material became more important. The study has analysed every official statement by the President and the Secretary of State and Defense and all Congressional hearings that make reference to any of the seven countries or to the Central Asia, Caucasus or Caspian regions. Numerous major foreign policy statements dealing with FSU have also been studied. On specific matters associated with strategy, statements made on lower levels have also been analysed.

When George W. Bush took office in 2001, U.S. relations with CASC had grown considerably. U.S. involvement was more complicated and concerned a much broader array of issues. Because of this, a limitation on both the scope of the study and the material was required. The chapter focuses to a considerable extent on Uzbekistan, since it was considered by the administration to be the core state of the region. All speeches made by the President and the Secretary of State and Defense regarding the Central Asia, Caucasus or Caspian regions have been analysed, as well as major speeches concerning the countries involved. Regarding Uzbekistan, every speech made at the top level and numerous made at lower levels have been analysed in order to provide a more detailed picture. All Congressional hearings regarding CASC were also analysed.

Since there are many obvious reasons to expect U.S. strategy toward CASC to be affected by U.S. relations toward other great powers, its overall grand strategy and major foreign policy and strategic declarations, such as the National Security Strategy, were analysed. In combination with consulting of numerous books and studies of U.S. foreign policy and strategy, this will help me place U.S. strategy toward CASC within a grander strategic and political context. – That, in turn, that made U.S. strategy toward CASC far more comprehensible.
4. The George H.W. Bush Administration

We know what works: Freedom works. We know what’s right: Freedom is right. We know how to secure a more just and prosperous life for man on Earth: through free markets, free speech, free elections, and the exercise of free will unhampered by the state. (...)

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world.

George H.W. Bush Inaugural Address Jan 20, 1989

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part consists of a detailed narrative of the George H.W. Bush Administration’s strategy toward CASC. It is broken down into several sections. It begins with a brief introduction and a description of the international environment President Bush faced as the Soviet system disintegrated. Then follows a series of sections about U.S. initiatives and ideas about CASC, including sections about the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, the Freedom Support Act and U.S. interests in the region’s energy resources.

This first part includes a lot of context, such as the administration’s overall approach toward the collapse of the Soviet Union, Operation Desert Storm and U.S. disengagement from Afghanistan. This places U.S. actions toward CASC in a strategic setting. The administration launched several programs directed toward the entire former Soviet Union that were not primarily aimed at CASC. Nevertheless, they are the foundation of U.S. relations with these states. This is both important and indicative of how CASC was prioritized by the administration. Without a broader context, this observation would be lost. The context is also important for upcoming chapters, since events in Iraq and Afghanistan would later on have profound effects on U.S. strategy toward CASC. The second part consists of an analysis of the administration’s strategy based on the neoclassical realist framework. A brief summary of the administration’s legacy ends the chapter.

4.1 Introduction – An Unfamiliar Environment

Just days before leaving office, Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger summarized the legacy of the George H.W. Bush Administration. It had faced three broad challenges: to end the Cold War peacefully, to deal with the instabilities generated by the Soviet Union’s demise and to begin the construction of an architecture for a new world order. Eagleburger recapitu-
lated the ongoing post-Cold War strategic debate and argued that it oscillated between two positions:

Some view the recent global ascendance of democracy as the defining feature of this new era and argue that the end of the Cold War has made it both safe and necessary for the United States to pursue a Wilsonian foreign policy on behalf of the democratic cause. Others see a world full of unique danger and disorder and argue that a United States no longer able to dominate politically and economically as before must continue to pursue national security and international stability as its highest foreign policy objectives.\textsuperscript{235}

The interpretations of the unfolding events and predictions about what the future would bring displayed little uniformity. Francis Fukuyama’s well known essay from 1989 "The End of History" offered a completely different point of view than John Mearsheimer’s much debated article "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War" published in August 1990.\textsuperscript{236} Another voice in this debate was conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer who, near the end of 1990, argued in an influential essay entitled "The Unipolar Moment" that the U.S. should summon the "strength and will to lead a unipolar world, unashamedly laying down the rules of the world order and being prepared to enforce them."\textsuperscript{237}

These kinds of broad analyses were widely discussed, but they were hard to assess, pointed in different directions and offered little specific strategic advice. The new environment was unfamiliar, uncertain and unpredictable. And if there was one thing the label 'post-Cold War' revealed, it was that people knew where they had been, not where they were and even less where they were heading. It was in this international and intellectual environment that the President had to act.\textsuperscript{238}


4.1.1 The International Environment: Managing Turmoil

George H.W. Bush’s inauguration coincided with cascading upheavals throughout Eurasia. Just days into his presidency Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan, and only months later the Solidarity movement in Poland forced the first free elections ever held in a Communist governed state. That event precipitated a stampede throughout Eastern Europe. The crucial question the administration faced was how to handle the fragmentation of the communist bloc in a way that disabled it as a global challenge while simultaneously avoided a massive upheaval.

The political turmoil in the communist world was not confined to the Soviet realm. During the summer of 1989, student protests made it seem, for a moment, as if the Chinese regime was also on the brink of imploding. George H.W. Bush did not want to jeopardize the strategically beneficial Sino-American cooperation initiated by Nixon and deepened by Carter and, therefore, acted cautiously. On June 4, the very same day as the Polish election, the student uprising was crushed mercilessly on Tiananmen Square. President Bush’s response was in a way a reflection of his administration’s traditional mind-set. It involved caution, diplomacy, secrecy, reassurance and continuity. The administration avoided any identification with the cause of the students, and its public response to the massacre amounted to a mild rebuke. Secretly, Bush also sent his friend and most trusted advisor Brent Scowcroft to Beijing to reassure the regime of the perfunctory position of the U.S. on the matter. A few months later he publicly sent Scowcroft to China to demonstrate goodwill between the two countries. There was outrage over the massacre in America, and the President’s response was described in media as totally at odds with U.S. values.

The breakdown of Soviet control in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia isolated the East German regime and prompted the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. This event made German unification the main topic of the historic meeting between President Bush and Gorbachev in December 1989. This meeting was a success for the U.S. President. It resulted in Soviet acquiescence to upheavals in Eastern Europe and set in motion a process of consultations which led to the reunification of Germany, almost totally on Western terms.

In their joint memoir, A World Transformed, Bush and Scowcroft explain how they sought to avoid any repetition of the events in Eastern Europe in 1953, 1956 and 1968, when initial liberalization and turmoil produced a

retrogressive Soviet reaction. Their ultimate goal was transformation, not just accommodation. They also feared that Gorbachev would attempt to sow division in the Atlantic community. Therefore, they approached his overtures with caution. This was often interpreted in U.S. and European media as a lack of initiative. President Bush also suffered criticism for lacking of passion and for not celebrating more, or ‘dancing on the wall’ as he famously put it, something which Reagan might have done.

During 1990, President Bush skillfully facilitated the reunification of Germany. He seduced Gorbachev with visions of a partnership while encouraging his acquiescence to the demise of Soviet rule in Europe. He simultaneously reassured and persuaded Great Britain and France that a reunited Germany would not threaten their interest. With the assistance of West Germany, he not only got Gorbachev to accede to the unification but also to accept the German people’s freedom of choice in security and political matters, which in effect meant German membership in the EC and NATO. The unification shifted the centre of Europe’s political gravity eastward. Germany was now both more powerful and more self-confident. This added impetus to a wave of more European integration.

However, in August, two months before Germany celebrated its formal unification, a new crisis erupted. Presumably in an attempt to compensate for the costs of the war with Iran, Iraq invaded Kuwait. President Bush immediately concluded that the U.S. had to lead an international response. As Ambassador to the UN in the early seventies, he had witnessed the organization’s limitations and inabilities. The invasion presented an opportunity for him to demonstrate that the UN could work as FDR had intended. The credibility and legitimacy of the UN were at stake, and the administration worked hard to build the broadest possible international coalition authorized by the UN Security Council to enforce international law.

 Barely two weeks after the invasion, the UN Security Council demanded the withdrawal of Iraq’s forces. In a speech to a joint session of Congress,

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243 One of the most important studies of the negotiations surrounding the unification of Germany is Philip Zelikow and condoleezza Rice, Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
245 The Soviet Union was in no position to object, and by reminding the Chinese of U.S. reaction to the Tiananmen Square massacre H.W. Bush managed to secure the vote. On the
President Bush declared that the world was witnessing the emergence of a new world order:

The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, [...] a new world order -- can emerge: a new era -- freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony.  

In the following months President Bush pursued an agenda that included the implementation of sanctions, the evasion of calls primarily by the Soviet Union to find a face-saving way for Iraq to withdraw, the build-up of a massive expeditionary force in Saudi Arabia, which included forces of traditional allies but also of Arab contingents, and the persuasion of the American public and Congress to support his policy, including war. After a tough domestic battle, he secured the congressional votes needed, and in mid-January 1991 the air campaign against Saddam’s forces began. In February a massive ground offensive followed. The war was an awesome display of U.S. military superiority. For the administration, it was clear that it did something more than just evicting Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The effort would reinvigorate the UN and set a valuable precedent in establishing principles for international conduct, including the means to enforce them. Therefore, they did not want to go any farther than their UN mandate, and the decision to hold the troops after routing the Iraqi forces was rather uncontroversial within the administration. It was difficult for many Americans to reconcile themselves with the idea that Saddam would remain in power, however in 1990 it was the coalition that determined the mission.

The Bush-team had called for popular action against Saddam. They assumed that the Iraqi military would get rid of him and had not planned for a scenario in which he remained in power. There was no military coup, but there was an uprising among both Shiites and Kurds. When the dust settled, the administration was surprised to learn that Saddam still had more than twenty divisions at his disposal, including his Republican guard, more than enough to crush the rebelling Shiites and Kurds. Their defeat furthered the


249 Rose, (2010), Chap. 7.
Arab image that the U.S. was using Arab aspirations to maintain its hold over the region’s oil and increased the resentment between different groups within Iraqi society. It also created a humanitarian crisis, especially in northern Iraq, where Kurdish refugees were spilling into and destabilizing Turkey, a crucial NATO ally. This led to Operation Provide Comfort, a U.S. humanitarian intervention aimed at establishing a safe haven in northern Iraq.

The result of the war was far from what the administration had hoped for. Its plan was to liberate Kuwait and destroy Iraq’s offensive capabilities, but not its defensive capabilities since such a move would make it a prey for Iran, and then quickly withdraw. By that time, Saddam would presumably be gone to a military coup. Instead, Saddam remained in power, and the U.S. found itself enforcing ‘no fly zones’ over Iraq and trying to maintain the UN sanctions regime. Consequently, tens of thousands of U.S. troops had to remain indefinitely in the heart of the Middle East.

On September 23, 1991, in a speech before UN General Assembly, President Bush emphasized the opportunity to create a new world order based on democratic values. He also underscored the importance of international institutions:

> Where institutions of freedom have lain dormant, the United Nations can offer them new life. These institutions play a crucial role in our quest for a new world order, an order in which no nation must surrender one iota of its own sovereignty, an order characterized by the rule of law rather than the resort to force, the cooperative settlement of disputes rather than anarchy and bloodshed, and an unstinting belief in human rights.

On this occasion he pledged that the U.S. would not "retreat or pull back into isolationism", but would remain engaged and offer friendship and leadership. He also offered assurances that the U.S. would not seek a Pax Americana but sought a "Pax universalis based upon shared responsibilities and aspirations". The idea was that U.S. leadership of collective engagement would avoid the dangerous extremes of fallacious omnipotence or misplaced unilateralism.

The President had declared a ‘new world order’, but nobody seemed to know exactly what he meant by it. George H.W. Bush was a problem solver and manager. He was uncomfortable with discussions of grand ideas for the

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250 Although unanticipated at the time, the decision to not exceed the UN mandate came to be one of the most consequential decisions of the George H.W. Bush Presidency. See, for instance, Andrew Cockburn and Patrick Cockburn, *Out of Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999); Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2002); Rose, (2010).

251 Pollack, (2002); Rose (2010).


presidency, and he famously self-confessed that he did not possess ‘the vision thing’. Although the concept ‘new world order’ was criticized, its vague quality made it functional in the sense that different people could interpret it in their own way of it and support the President based on their own interpretation. In a way it functioned as a fig leaf for the administration’s pragmatic posture. Besides, through Operation Desert Storm the administration displayed the meaning of the ‘new world order’ more through demonstration and example than through rhetoric and philosophical concepts.

However, some within the administration were concerned about the inability to articulate a coherent vision and worried that the opportunity to frame this new era was passing. The President’s concept was also “decidedly old school”, since it stressed the importance of upholding international rules for maintaining order with a rather fixed focus on relations between states and not on new threats. In other words, there was nothing new about the ‘new world order’. It was more about getting the old one to work.

4.1.2 The International Environment: The Disintegration of the Soviet Union

In this section, I describe the administration’s cautious handling of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It also provides an insight into the domestic pressures it faced.

By late 1990 and early 1991, a time when the positive changes in Europe were being consolidated, a new concern began to dominate the administration: the stability of the Soviet Union itself. Its potential disintegration was associated with numerous threats. With its conventional forces and weapons of mass destruction, it still posed a direct threat to the U.S. and its allies, and its arsenal was located in several republics, making loss of centralized control, miscommunication, malfunctions, and proliferation a real possibility. The undemocratic and repressive nature of the Soviet system of governance was also perceived as a threat. It was regarded as unreliable and unpredictable. The administration was also worried about the combination of poverty, social unrest, authoritarianism and the strong potential for ethnic conflict, including possible spill-over effects on neighboring states.

The administration proceeded with caution, and when confronting unexpected developments it was often reactive rather than proactive. During

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254 According to David Gompert, a senior Bush advisor on the National Security Council, White House officials spent very little time reviewing the fundamental concepts and principles underlying the policies. See Daalder and Destler, (2009), Chap. 6. Richard Haas, one of Bush’s top national security officers, has also spoken about the President’s reluctance to speak about grand doctrine. See Chollet and Goldgeier, (2008), pp. 8-9.
255 Daalder and Destler, (2009), p. 204.
257 Daalder and Destler, (2009), Chap. 6.
the turbulent year of 1991, it mostly stood by Gorbachev. Earlier, it had viewed Gorbachev with considerable unease. In his desperate search for means to counter the political disintegration and to shore up his diminishing power, Gorbachev had begun to align himself with party and military conservatives. In December 1990, Eduard Shewardnadze had resigned his post as foreign minister, charging that Gorbachev was moving too far to the right, and in January 1991 Gorbachev seemed to have acquiesced to a limited military crackdown in the Baltics. Increasingly challenged by hardliners, the administration began to fear that Gorbachev might be ousted. Fearful of instability, it was, therefore, wary of backing any policies that might weaken Gorbachev’s hold on power. This was characteristic of Bush’s inner circle, and often its "first instinct was to do nothing, to hold firmly on the status quo". Increasingly concerned about an eventual collapse of "a strong center" in Moscow, Secretary Baker even urged the U.S. to "do what we can to strengthen the center".259

When the Baltic states began defiantly to reclaim sovereignty, the administration supported the unity of the USSR. Then in August 1991, Bush delivered what became known as the 'Chicken Kiev' speech. Thousands of Ukrainians had gathered in Kiev hoping to hear the President of the world’s leading democracy endorse their nationalistic aspirations for independence. Instead, they heard him declare that "freedom is not the same as independence' and that he would not aid any pursuit of "suicidal nationalism".260 This cautious and un-Reaganesque approach infuriated those that wanted a more assertive U.S. policy, and many perceived him as slowing down the pace of the Soviet transformation. In September, the editors of the New Republic wrote that the administration had "failed to grasp the two essential movements of its world: the growing clamor for democracy and the related impulsion of national sovereignty."261

During 1990, the U.S. had tried to influence the struggle between reformers and hardliners within the Soviet Union by offering modest assistance and increased credit guarantees. The Soviet Union was viewed with suspicion, and there was great reluctance to within both Congress and the administration provide assistance.262 However, after the attempted coup

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261 The editors further wrote that the administration’s "instinct has always been status quo" and that its actions demonstrated "less of a grip on 'a new world order' than a desperate, befuddled attempt to keep up with the new world". "What Foreign Policy?, New Republic, September 30, 1991, p. 6.
against Gorbachev in August, 1991 and the subsequent rise of a democratic movement in Russia led by Boris Yeltsin, this started to change. Germany, France and Italy called for increases in assistance to the democratic forces, and congressional leaders began to talk about higher levels of assistance designed to encourage change. The administration, though, was skeptical about what it could accomplish until Russia had built up its own commercial and legal institutions.

George H.W. Bush concluded that the U.S. had an interest in influencing the transformation of Russia, but he did not have any grand ideas about how to do it and felt that it was premature to make decisions about future assistance before a comprehensive Soviet economic reform program was in place. This policy did not last long, and the administration soon declared that the Soviet Union only had to make a commitment to and have a plan for reform in order to receive U.S. aid.263 The shift was probably a response to the fierce criticism the President received for not doing more.

The coup and the Russian declaration of independence made the legal status of the USSR sufficiently opaque for the U.S. to decide independently who the legal representatives of the Soviet republics were. Cautiously, President Bush recognized the declarations of independence of the republics, but continued, in all legal matters, to rely on the Soviet government to abide by its international agreements. On December 8, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed the Belavezha Accords, declaring the Soviet Union dissolved and replacing it with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Four days later, the Russian Parliament ratified the accord, and the country formally seceded. At this time, Secretary Baker scheduled meetings with leaders of Soviet republics to inform them of U.S. intentions. On December 21, the Alma-Ata meeting formally declared the end of the Soviet Union. All of the former Soviet Republics, with the exception of the three Baltic states, joined the CIS and Russia assumed the USSR’s place in the UN-system. The Soviet Union was gone.264

4.2 Strategic Adjustments and the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

The purpose of this section is to describe the administration’s priorities and the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, including its focus on Kazakhstan.


From day one, President Bush was preoccupied with how to adjust U.S. defense structure to the changing environment. Early on, he concluded that he wanted to shift the distribution of military power in Europe with the goal of achieving a balance of forces in Europe at the lowest possible level. This would preferably be achieved through asymmetrical military cut-backs of Soviet forces.265 The President was under considerable domestic pressure to cut defense spending. A number of commission reports called for substantial cuts, and this idea was supported by several members of Congress and a large segment of the American public, according to polls.266 To scaling back U.S. forces in Europe would accommodate these demands. In many respects President Bush defied these demands, since they were at odds with his perception of the national interest. He did not want to relinquish the U.S. position of primacy in European security affairs or shift European security structures from NATO to organizations like the OSCE (CSCE).267

However, he did seek more burden-sharing, and the National Security Strategy of 1991 made clear that the U.S. would "encourage greater European responsibility for Europe’s defenses" and fully support Europe’s institutions "as long as they strengthen the Alliance".268 For that reason, he wanted to restructure NATO, while maintaining its unity and the U.S. role as its leader. This included cutting NATO’s troop strength, creating rapid reaction corps and reducing its reliance on nuclear weapons. He also wanted to recalibrate its focus from the military threats associated with the Warsaw Pact to other identified risks to the West, such as the proliferation of WMDs, social and political unrest in Eastern Europe, the FSU, the Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East and terrorism. At the NATO summit in Rome in early November 1991, a new post-Cold War strategic concept was agreed upon that stated:

Risks to Allied Security are less likely to result from calculated aggression against the territory of the Allies, but rather from the adverse consequences of

267 Bush and Scowcroft, (1998); Winnerstig (2000). This policy was, and had been for decades, related to the overarching goal of countering any bids for hegemony over the Eurasian land mass. It was also explicitly articulated in the NSS of 1990.
instabilities that may arise from the serious economic, social and political difficulties including ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes, which are faced by many countries in Central and Eastern Europe (…) Alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature.  

At the summit, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was established to function as a forum to encourage regional security discussions and confidence building measures between NATO and its former adversaries. Its inaugural meeting took place on December 20, 1991, almost simultaneous with the Soviet Union ceasing to exist. Initially, only NATO members and the nine Eastern European states joined in, but by March 1992 all of the members of the CIS were participants. This included the states of CASC.

Arms reduction and arms control agreements were important means by which to reach the goal of a balance of power in Europe and to influence, oversee and help assist the Soviet Union in disarming and dismantling its huge arsenal. The Soviet breakup had left huge quantities of WMDs, especially nuclear but also chemical and biological, without reliable and adequate safeguards or centralized control. Weapons and material were vulnerable to theft, misuse and sale. The technical expertise of Soviet scientists and military personnel was also a cause for serious concern, since their knowledge could easily become available to other states or actors willing to pay for it.

Many in Congress were alarmed by the situation, and they perceived the President as being too slow to respond to it. In fact, the administration played only a small role in the development and passage of the early legislation designed to remedy these problems. One reason for this may have been the public sentiment of anti-foreign policy that expressed itself in the November off-year election campaign for a Senate seat in Pennsylvania. During this campaign, the President was severely criticized for spending too much time on foreign affairs at the expense of the U.S. economy.

The early response by the U.S. was the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991, sponsored by Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Richard Lugar (R-IN). A number of programs were designed to meet the threats, includ-


270 Dennis Ross, one of James Baker’s top aides, offers a further explanation. In the months after Operation Desert Storm, the U.S. faced numerous strategic decisions regarding the Soviet Union and the brewing crisis in Yugoslavia. However, the President and his team were exhausted. "We could not generate the interest at the top, in a sense, they were spent," Ross explains. Daalder and Destler, (2009), p. 19.

271 See H.R.3807 (P.L. 102-228), November 27, 1991. The act recognized three types of threats to nuclear safety and stability: "(A) ultimate disposition of nuclear weapons among the Soviet Union, its republics, and any successor entities that is not conducive to weapons safety or to international stability; (B) seizure, theft, sale, or use of nuclear weapons or components; and (C) transfers of weapons, weapons components, or weapons know-how outside of the territory of the Soviet Union, its republics, and any successor entities, that contribute to
ing cooperation on the storage, transportation, dismantling and destruction of WMDs. The legislation was expanded and renamed the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program in 1993, and national security priorities, strategic goals and congressional directives were translated into a coherent program with five objectives.272

1. Assist Russia in accelerating strategic arms reduction to Strategic Nuclear Arms Reduction Treaty (START) levels.
2. Enhance safety, security, control, accounting, and centralization of nuclear weapons and fissile material in the former Soviet Union to prevent their proliferation and encourage their reduction.
3. Assist Ukraine and Kazakhstan to eliminate START limited systems and weapons of mass destruction infrastructure.
4 Assist the former Soviet Union to eliminate and prevent proliferation of biological and chemical weapons and associated capabilities.
5 Encourage military reductions and reform and reduce proliferation threats in the former Soviet Union.

These objectives were, in turn, translated into tangible programs through a complex bureaucratic process, which early on resulted in a disparity between authorized funds, obligated funds, and disbursed funds.273

There was broad congressional support for the 1991 legislation. At the time, many believed it would be a relatively short-lived program. It was limited in scope and did not support any new funding. It only authorized the Department of Defense to transfer up to $400 million from other programs to the CTRP. Considering the scale and severity of the threat, this sum was paltry, and the DoD, the principal agent, was not required to transfer any money or to undertake any of the programs. The operative word was that funds may be transferred, and the DoD was in charge of deciding whether or not to finance any specific CTRP-program. This, combined with the fact that funds had to be transferred from existing programs, created less enthusiasm at the DoD, especially since many perceived it as a preventive defense measure. The effort was also slowed down by the fact that Congress required the President to notice it on all proposals authorized by the bill and report quarterly on funds spent, the purposes of which they were spent and from which program they were transferred.

Not everyone supported the CTRP. It harmed U.S. defense projects by diverting their funding, critics argued. Others suspected that funds went to worldwide proliferation.” It also stated that: “funding of critical short-term requirements related to weapons destruction” should, “to the extent feasible, draw upon” U.S. technology and technicians.

272 This program is sometime also referred to as the Nunn-Lugar program.
business ventures in the FSU. Some also claimed that the U.S. was in fact funding Russia’s military position by aiding the transfer of nuclear weapons from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to Russia.\textsuperscript{274} The counter argument, which was the position of the administration, was that centralizing nuclear and fissile material in Russia would reduce the risks for proliferation and encourage their reduction, as compared to having them spread out among four different states.\textsuperscript{275}

The CTRP was also troubled by other complications. Multiple governmental agencies were involved, which often led to interagency conflicts. The recipient governments were suspicious both of the programs and of each other, which naturally made the enterprise a lot more difficult. The defense conversion programs faced similar problems. The Freedom Support Act provided for programs intended to shift military technologies and production capabilities to civilian uses. However, there was a provision that explicitly prohibited any funds from being authorized for this purpose, unless the President committed an equal or greater amount of funds for defense conversion in the U.S. Conversion was also perceived as less urgent than dismantlement and destruction programs. Disagreements also arose regarding whether the CTRP was primarily a military undertaking or should be linked to other policy goals, such as human rights and democratic reform. As a reflection of these disagreements, it was decided early on that no funds could be committed or disbursed unless this benefited U.S. national security.

Most attention and CTRP-funding were devoted to disarming and dismantling fissile material and delivery systems, as opposed to chemical, biological and conventional materials. The result of this was that long-term programs involving non-nuclear WMDs were limited. Stabilizing and controlling chemical and biological weapons were often regarded as more of an environmental problem than a military threat.\textsuperscript{276} The U.S., therefore, focused on Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. The weapons programs in other CASC states were not prioritized.

President Bush clearly perceived an interest in maintaining the dominant position of the U.S. in European security affairs and securing the Soviet Union’s nuclear arsenal.\textsuperscript{277} He made it clear that the U.S. would not disengage but would continue to rely on the security doctrine of forward deployment to counter threats and deter aggression. In May 1992, he explained what this meant.

First, we must maintain a strong strategic deterrent. And yes, our nuclear forces can and will be smaller in the future. But even in the aftermath of the cold war, Russia retains its nuclear arsenal. [...] Second, security means forward

\textsuperscript{274} Woolf, (2012).
\textsuperscript{275} This was known as horizontal non-proliferation.
\textsuperscript{276} Woolf, (2012).
\textsuperscript{277} Bush and Scowcroft, (1998); Winnerstig (2000).
deployment. From the 40 years of cold war to the 40 days of Desert Storm, forward deployed forces have contributed to the world’s stability and helped America keep danger far from its shores. Even in our new world, with the tremendous political transformation we’ve worked to bring about, the fundamental facts of geopolitics don’t change. Forward deployed (…) will keep America safe in the century ahead as they have in the century now coming to a close.278

However, there were places where the President perceived little or no U.S. interest: the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the civil war in Tajikistan, the situation in Chechnya, the crisis in Yugoslavia and post-war Afghanistan. These places, with exception of Yugoslavia, went almost unnoticed in U.S media. The administration prioritized the relationship with Russia and did not want to strain it unnecessarily. Besides, there were few gains to be had by becoming involved in the conflicts in Russia’s backyard.

There was a belief within the administration that Yugoslavia would endure without Tito.279 When Croatia and Slovenia, resentful of Serbian domination, declared independence from Yugoslavia in the summer of 1991, they set off a chain reaction that eventually led to the destruction of the multi-ethnic state. Exhausted after the Gulf War and preoccupied with the Soviet Union, the administration passively let what it perceived as a European crisis drift. "We don’t have a dog in that fight", as Secretary Baker famously put it.280

When Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan, the U.S. quickly disengaged and made little effort to galvanize the international community to help the war torn country. The U.S. had engaged Afghanistan to fight the Soviets and had little interest in understanding it as a polity and society. In this context, the U.S. allowed Pakistan to become the chief organizer of the resistance.281 Pakistan had a far superior understanding of the country and was able to visualize what a post-Soviet Afghanistan might look like. When it became apparent that the Soviet forces were losing, Pakistan increasingly began to promote radical Islamic leaders in Afghanistan. The war had shown that these small forces of tribal warriors could stop even a major power.

280 There were many reasons for the administration’s disengaged policy. It wanted to maintain a cordial relation with Russia, which had historically supported the Serbs. Besides, the Europeans seemed eager to deal with this ‘European problem’ themselves. It was also preoccupied with the re-election campaign and the recession. Telling of their disinterest, Bush’s and Scowcroft’s almost 600-page joint memoir, which covers the challenges the duo faced in great detail, only contains four brief references to Yugoslavia. See Bush and Scowcroft, (1998); Halberstam, (2001); Chollet and Goldgeier, (2008); and Silber and Little, (1997).
Support for radical Islam thus became the strategy of choice for Pakistan to stop their arch-enemy India from taking advantage of the power vacuum that would ensue after the Soviet withdrawal. This strategy gave Pakistan strategic depth at minimal cost. The administration did not endorse this development but did nothing really to stop it. It was reluctant to take any diplomatic risks associated with putting together an uncertain coalition to govern post-war Afghanistan. After some debate, a decision was taken in 1992 to "pull the plug" and completely disengage, and the extensive intelligence capabilities that the U.S. had built-up in the region were dismantled. At the time, few Americans cared about future of Afghanistan and the country was quickly forgotten. Years later, the consequences of this decision would become apparent.

4.3 CASC: The Other New States

In this section, I will describe how the administration perceived CASC, including early engagement in the region on the part of the U.S. I will show how it had to choose between different perceived interests and explain why it decided to promote Turkish influence in CASC.

On Christmas day, 1991, President Bush formally recognized the independence of a number of former Soviet republics. By then, the administration had stipulated some guidelines for dealing with these states, which included the "recognition of these states as independent and viable entities, support for their transition to market economies and democratic society, facilitation of their integration into international organizations, and encouragement of regional cooperative arrangements". From the outset, the administration made it clear that good diplomatic relations with the U.S. was conditional on democratic principles:

[The U.S.] recognizes the independence of Ukraine, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan, all States that have made specific commitments to us. We will move quickly to establish diplomatic relations with these States and build new ties to them. We will sponsor membership in the United Nations for those not already members. (…) [T]he United States also recognizes today as independent States the remaining six former Soviet Republics: Moldova, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Tadjikistan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan. We will establish diplomatic relations with them when we are satisfied that they

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have made commitments to responsible security policies and democratic principles, as have the other States we recognize today.285

In early 1992, Secretary Baker informed the President of the CASC states that U.S. diplomatic recognition and the establishment of embassies, which is a symbol of their sovereignty and entitlement to direct relations with Washington, were dependent on their commitment to human rights, market oriented reforms, arms control and the establishment of democratic institutions.286 Shortly thereafter, the U.S. established representation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and others would have to wait until they could demonstrate observable improvements in relation to the stipulated issues.

The decision was a clear indication that the internal structure of the CASC states was important to the administration. It also gave them incentives to reform. Kyrgyzstan’s President, Askar Akayev, had, shortly after his country’s independence, declared that he would follow the path of democracy and initiate reforms to liberalize the economy and create a civil society. This, combined with his background as a prominent scientist, soon earned him the reputation of being the ‘Thomas Jefferson of Central Asia’ among some of those few Americans who followed developments in the region.287

In this context, the idea that Kyrgyzstan could serve as an example for the region began to spread. This was more an indication of a lack of knowledge and misplaced idealism than the result of sound analysis, since Kyrgyzstan was tiny and far less powerful than its neighbors. Nevertheless, the idea took hold.288

The humanitarian situation was deteriorating in many parts of the FSU. During the winter of 1991–1992, the spectre of starvation was haunting Russia, and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and instability in Tajikistan made the situation even worse. In response, the U.S. initiated a conference on assistance in January 1992, and 54 countries agreed on the need to launch an immediate relief effort and to stop the turmoil from spreading further. This resulted in Operation Provide Hope, which, under the coordina-

tion of Richard L. Armitage, provided desperately needed food, fuel, medicine and shelter.

The U.S. sent medical supplies and excess DoD food commodities. Much of this was delivered through Turkey and were leftovers from *Operation Desert Storm*. Medical assistance and emergency medicines were also delivered by the Emergency Medicines Initiative and the Medical Assistance Initiative. The U.S. Department of Agriculture provided food aid and export credit guarantees, and the American Red Cross received over $500,000 to enable local Red Crescent organisations to increase regional services. The U.S. also launched and implemented a program to immunize infants in Central Asia. The operation was a four-phased endeavour that lasted until September 1994.

Moreover, the U.S. initiated bilateral efforts to encourage private investment, and several CASC states entered into agreements with the Overseas Private Investment Fund. The fund encouraged U.S. private investments in the region, provided direct loans and loan guarantees, assisted with project-investor matching and provided technical assistance to a wide range of recipients. The U.S. Export-Import Bank also made short-term financing insurance available for U.S. investments. One of the first foreign organizations that established a permanent office in Central Asia was USAID, which opened an office in Kazakhstan in September 1992. That office soon became the USAID Mission for Central Asia with responsibility for coordinating programs in the entire region. Field offices soon opened in each of the Central Asian states, and many NGOs financed by the U.S. government began working under contract to carry out projects designed by USAID.299 U.S. Peace Corps also sent volunteers to the region, the first group arriving in Uzbekistan in 1992. Numerous private initiatives from the U.S. were also launched.290

Given these efforts, it is possible to argue that U.S. values and interest coincided. By generously providing aid and assistance, it avoided instability. However, the administration was more pragmatist than idealist, and less than two months after the decision not to establish diplomatic relations with those states that had not made clear commitments to democratic principles, it reversed its policy. The primary reason for this was Iran. The possibility of Iran becoming the center of a hostile Islamic empire was taken seriously. There were fears that Iran would spread fundamentalism in CASC and alter the balance of power in the wider region, unless the U.S. and its allies took preventive measures.291

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299 Gleason, (1997), p. 152. To get an overview of all U.S. activities, see U.S. Government Assistance to and Activities with NSI of the FSU for each FY.
290 An example of this is the hospital partnership program between the University of Illinois and Tashmen Medical Institute No.2.
291 See, for instance, Eric Hooglund, "Iran and Central Asia" in Ehteshami Anoushiravan (ed.), *From the Gulf to Central Asia: Players in the New Great Game* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994); Nazar Alaolmolki, *Life After the Soviet Union: The Newly Independ-
This fear was evident in the debate regarding CASC’s place in U.S.
military planning. As a part of its biannual review of the Unified Command
Plan, the DoD reshaped the domains of the various Commands, including
each respective Area of Responsibility (AOR). In a decision making process
involving the President, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff, individual states were designated to a specific com-
mand. The command that a given state ended up in determined to a signifi-
cant extent the prism through which the U.S. viewed its relations. General
J.H. Binford Peay III, former Commander of the Army’s 101st Airborne Di-
vision in the Gulf War and later Commander in Chief of Central Command
(1994–1997), wanted to form alliances with the newly independent states to
encircle and contain Iran. However, it was decided that the CASC states fell
under the European Command, whose primary focus was to make these
states look West toward Europe and away from Russia for political and eco-
nomic inspiration.292 The region was classified as an ‘Area of Interest’,
which meant that far less attention and planning was devoted to it, as com-
pared to states formally designated as part of an AOR.

This quick policy reversal can be explained by the fact that the adminis-
tration had not given CASC much thought. In an article in the LA Times, a
senior official was quoted saying: "We’re very embryonic in our thinking
and strategizing. Throughout last fall, we dealt mainly with the European
side of the Commonwealth. Now, it’s time to begin focusing on Central
Asia, which has been neglected."293 This does not seem to have been an
overstatement. The region was scarcely mentioned in public speeches, and in
comparison to Eastern Europe the result is staggering. In most instances, the
states of CASC were not differentiated from each other, and on most occa-
sions Central Asia and the three states of Caucasus were spoken of as one
region. They were routinely referred to simply as ‘the other new states’. 294

In early to-mid-February 1992, Secretary Baker toured the FSU, when
he reportedly declared that Central Asia would be saved from Islamic funda-
mentalism.295 Shortly before his departure, Baker had testified before the
Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Iran was "active in some of the
former Central Asian republics" and that this was "one of the reasons we
think it’s important that we, ourselves, have contact and dialogue with these
former republics."296 There was an expectation that the administration would

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292 Dana Priest, The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America’s Military (New
293 Robin Wright, "Baker’s Central Asia Trip Poses Diplomatic Challenge," Los Angeles
294 Most Americans knew nothing about the CASC states, and sometimes they were referred
to as the "forgottenstans" by various commentators.
296 James Baker quoted in Thomas Friedman, "U.S. to Counter Iran in Central Asia," New
announce the establishment of U.S. embassies in all of the Central Asian states when he returned. In a New York Times article, Thomas Friedman wrote that the trip was to "secure at least their pro forma promises" to meet the U.S. conditions.297 The article further read: "[o]fficials say there is simply not time now to wait for ironclad commitments from these new nations because, as one senior official put it: 'They are up for grabs, and we need to make sure they look north and west and not south and east'."

Baker met the expectations, and on February 19, the White House announced that the U.S. would "take immediate steps to establish diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan", open embassies in them and support their membership in relevant international organizations, including the IMF and the World Bank.299

The Iranian threat was probably not the only reason for this decision. The Central Asian leaders had expressed dissatisfaction with being singled out and had via Turkey urged Washington to open diplomatic ties with them.300 Another reason was that there were large numbers of Russians inside these states, and by establishing diplomatic relations the U.S. could monitor their situation.301 The administration also had to consider the threat posed by weapons proliferation, and establishing relations was probably a prerequisite for real cooperation on non-proliferation issues.

It was no coincidence that the Central Asian leaders had gone through Turkey to express their wishes. They shared a cultural heritage as Turkic peoples, and Turkey was their historical bridge to the West. Naturally, Turkey immediately wanted to take advantage of this and the power vacuum in the region. This was a very favourable situation for the U.S. Turkey was an ally, and the promotion of Turkish influence was a solution to the spread of Iranian influence. During his February tour, Baker had called upon Turkey to take on the role of West’s representative in Central Asia. By this time the administration had begun consulting with Turkey and Egypt on how they could cooperate to minimize Iranian influence in CASC.

President Bush was eager to meet with Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel because of his country’s unique placement in this dramatically changed world. On February 11, 1992, they met in the White House to discuss a wide variety of issues. One of the main pre-planned topics was the coordination of their policies toward the southern belt of the FSU. According to David Gompert, the Senior Director for Europe and Eurasia on the National Security Council staff, "[t]here was an extensive discussion of the

297 Thomas Friedman, "U.S. to Counter Iran in Central Asia." All of the Central Asian states gave assurances to the U.S. in 1992 that they would pursue democratization. They also pledged, when joining the OSCE in early 1992, that they would abide by its principles.
298 Thomas Friedman, "U.S. to Counter Iran in Central Asia.".
300 Thomas Friedman, "U.S. to Counter Iran in Central Asia."
consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union and especially about the future of the Islamic republics of Central Asia", including the threats associated with instability and the opportunities to integrate these states into the larger community of democratic capitalist nations. During the meeting, Demirel affirmed Turkey’s offer to serve "as a model, a bridge and a gateway to these new states". Gompert explained the administration’s position: "Being a secular, democratic, Muslim state and a successful one – one which had undergone a successful economic transformation itself – Turkey views itself as a good model for these states. We agree completely." Upon Demirel’s departure, President Bush remarked that Turkey was not only "a friend" and "a partner" of the U.S., but "also a model to others, especially those newly independent Republics of Central Asia". In a region of changing tides, it endures as a beacon of stability," he added.

Turkey thus played an important role in the administration’s thinking about CASC. It could serve as a model and was perceived as a means of integrating CASC in the liberal economic community, counter Iranian influence and prevent the restoration of socialism and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. The U.S. and Turkey agreed to work together in the long term to integrate these societies. When faced with the direct question of whether the U.S. and Turkey had the objective of countering Iranian ambitions in the region, Gompert diplomatically stated that they simply "wish to introduce them to our values, our standards of behaviour, international conduct, the role of government toward society, the role of military within a society, and so forth". What was stated between the lines was probably obvious to everyone in the audience.

This looked brilliant on paper. It addressed almost all of the U.S. goals in the region. It would also be cheap and involve little risk or direct engagement, since Turkey had a high stake in its success and would do the real footwork. Turkey was also a long-term ally. The policy would thus be almost immune to domestic criticism. It would have been perfect, if it was not for one thing. After decades of Soviet rule, the states of the region were not particularly interested in a new big brother.

4.4 The Freedom Support Act and Winning the Peace

In this section, I describe the Freedom Support Act and how the administration tried to resists domestic pressures to scale back U.S. engagement abroad. This section is important for several reasons. The FSA was the foun-

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303 David Gompert, "Enhanced US-Turkish Partnership."
305 Gompert, "Enhanced US-Turkish Partnership."
dational legislation for many U.S. programs in CASC. It is also illustrative of how U.S. strategy is shaped by countervailing forces.

President Bush often spoke optimistically about the remarkable revolution that was taking place. However, his optimism was seldom unqualified, and he usually advised against any premature euphoria:

Our changed world is a more hopeful world, indeed, but it is not absent those who would turn back the clock to the darker days of threats and bullying. And our world is still a dangerous world, rife with far too many terrible weapons. [R]ealism requires us to remain vigilant in this time of transition. (...) The danger of proliferation remains. [And] the specter of mass destruction remains all too real, especially as some nations continue to push to acquire weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them.³⁰⁶

The administration realized that the international environment had changed, but it also believed that some geopolitical facts had not and regarded security as a scarce commodity. The U.S. had won the Cold War. However, if it did not win the peace, much of the effort would have been in vain, they figured. The Soviet collapse presented an enormous opportunity for President Bush to create an international environment favorable to U.S. interests.³⁰⁷ In order to seize that opportunity, though, he had to convince U.S. taxpayers of the necessity of continued engagement and substantial investments in Eastern Europe and the FSU. This was not an easy task, since it was predominantly the Soviet threat that united Americans, and especially Republicans, over the necessity of being heavily engaged abroad. For decades containment had been something almost everybody agreed on. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, the relative unity over U.S. strategy withered with it, and the Republicans quickly fragmented.³⁰⁸ This resulted in domestic pressure to scale back and cut defense spending and foreign aid. Many Americans now expected their fair share of the ‘peace dividend’.

In order to succeed, President Bush framed his policies around the notion of winning the peace. By linking the post-Cold War strategic situation to that of post-World War I and II, he created a powerful image, which relied to a considerable extent on fear:

History’s lesson is clear. When a war-weary America withdrew from the international stage following World War I, the world spawned militarism, fascism, and aggression unchecked, plunging mankind into another devastating conflict. But in answering the call to lead after World War II, we built from

the principles of democracy and the rule of law a new community of free nations--a community whose strength, perseverance, patience, and unity of purpose contained Soviet totalitarianism and kept the peace. (...) From the days after World War II, when fragile European democracies were threatened by Stalin’s expansionism, to the last days of the Cold War, as our foes became fragile democracies themselves, American leadership has been indispensable. (...) [T]oday we are summoned again. This time, we are called not to wage a war, hot or cold, but to win the democratic peace--not for half a world, as before, but for people the world over. The end of the Cold War, you see, has placed in our hands a unique opportunity to see the principles for which America has stood for 2 centuries--democracy, free enterprise, and the rule of law--spread more widely than ever before in human history.  

Disengagement would thus be extremely dangerous.  Engagement, however, would not only make America safer but also prosperous, since freedom and stability in these new states would mean markets and opportunities. These were the main arguments the administration put forth for engagement. The following passage from Bush’s speech at the Nixon Library in March, 1992, is a typical example:

We won the cold war. Democracy is on the march. (...) Yesterday we saw conflict, and today, yes, the world is a safer place. Yes, the Soviet Union -- aggressive, looking outward -- that we feared is no longer. But the successor republics are still struggling to establish themselves as democracies, still struggling to make the transition to capitalism. We invested so much to win the cold war. We must invest what is necessary to win the peace. If we fail, we will create new and profound problems for our security and that of Europe and Asia. If we succeed, we strengthen democracy, we build new market economies, and in the process we create huge new markets for America. We must support reform, not only in Russia but throughout the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The anemic domestic economic situation made his task of convincing Congress and the American people difficult. Bush tried to make the investments he asked for seem like a bargain: "As a nation, we spent more than 4 trillion to wage and win the Cold War. Compared to such monumental sacrifice, the costs of promoting democracy will be a fraction, and the consequences for our peace and prosperity beyond measure."  

310 It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss whether various representatives of the administration really believed in this analogy or whether they used it rhetorically for pragmatic purposes. However, there is evidence to indicate that George H.W. Bush really believed in it. See, for instance, Bush and Scowcroft, (1998).
The administration sought to counter pro-actively any isolationist tendencies. In retrospect, George H.W. Bush is known for being more interested in foreign affairs than domestic issues. He was also heavily criticised for this during his presidency. For Bush, who regarded both U.S. security and economy as interdependent, disengagement simply was not an option:

[A]lready, there are voices across the political spectrum calling, in some cases shouting, for America to "come home, gut defense, spend the peace dividend, shut out foreign goods, slash foreign aid". You all know the slogans. You all know the so-called solutions, protectionism, isolationism. But now we have the obligation, the responsibility to our children to reject the false answers of isolation and protection, to heed history’s lessons. Turning our back on the world is simply no answer; I don't care how difficult our economic problems are at home. To the contrary, the futures of the United States and the world are inextricably linked.  

At the end of 1992, the President, frustrated with what he perceived as isolationism, warned about the disastrous consequences of disengagement.

Strategically, abandonment of the worldwide democratic revolution could be disastrous for American security. The alternative to democracy, I think we would all agree, is authoritarianism: regimes that can be repressive, xenophobic, aggressive, and violent. In a world where, despite US efforts, weapons of mass destruction are spreading, the collapse of the democratic revolution could pose a direct threat to the safety of every single American. The new world could, in time, be as menacing as the old. Let me be blunt. A retreat from American leadership-- from American involvement--would be a mistake for which future generations, indeed, our own children, would pay dearly. 

The President was at the same time under pressure to do more for Russia and the NIS. Probably the most damaging criticism came from former President Nixon, who invoked memories of the 'who lost China' charges when he in spring 1992 stated that U.S. support for democracy in Russia was "pathetically inadequate" and that "the next fifty years will turn grim" if the U.S. failed to support Yeltsin. 

Under increasing dual pressure, the administration worked hard to put together a package that would address its ambitious goals. The President wanted a free and integrated Europe and envisioned the possibility of a European democratic peace, in which Russia and the NIS would be integrated into the community of liberal market democracies:

313 George H.W. Bush, "Remarks at the Richard Nixon Library Dinner."
314 George H.W. Bush, "Remarks at Texas A&M University."
I believe that the next frontier for us and for the generation that follows is to secure a democratic peace in Europe and the former USSR that will ensure a lasting peace for the United States of America. The democratic peace must be founded on the twin pillars of political and economic freedom. (...) After the long cold war, this much is clear: Democrats in the Kremlin can assure our security in a way nuclear missiles never could. Much of my administration’s foreign policy has been dedicated to winning the cold war peacefully. And the next 4 years must be dedicated to building a democratic peace (...).  

Secretary Baker expressed similar ideas on numerous occasions. Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he spoke about forging "a democratic peace" built on the shared values of democracy and political and economic freedom. He also argued that democracy in Russia and the other NIS would "be the surest foundation for peace – and the strongest foundation of our national security – for decades to come." In April 1992, he articulated the idea of a democratic peace even more explicitly.

While some would argue that the Cold War was primarily a geopolitical rivalry driven by competing interests, the real fuel for the fire of confrontation came from a more fundamental source: a marked and irreconcilable conflict over basic values. At its core, the Cold War was a titanic struggle between freedom and totalitarianism. (...) We can shift our eyes far beyond the negative goal of containment because now a positive purpose beckons: to support political and economic freedom and to build a democratic peace with Russia and Eurasia. (...) A democratic government in Russia will no longer pose a clear and present threat to the United States. Real democracies do not go to war with each other.

The administration’s goal was to transform the states of FSU internally and to integrate them into the community of liberal democracies. In April 1992, it put forward a legislative proposal entitled the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (the Freedom Support Act or FSA). This was a multibillion-dollar aid and assistance program for the entire post-Soviet space. It authorized a whole range of programs designed to support free market and democratic reforms, to stabilize and counter spill-over effects from social and political unrest and to integrate Russia and the NIS. The President also announced increased food and agricultural assistance, which included an immediate increase of $1.1 billion in credit guarantees for the purchase of U.S. agricultural commodities, and a financial assistance package to help them transform their

316 George H.W. Bush, "Remarks to the American Society of Newspaper Editors."
economies to free market systems. The same month, President Bush declared that the U.S. was embarking on "a mission" that could "advance our economic and security interests while upholding the primacy of American values--values which, as Lincoln said, are the 'last, best hope of earth'". On October 24, 1992, he signed the FSA into law and, ostensibly satisfied, declared that:

"Once again, the American people have united to advance the cause of freedom, to win the peace, to help transform former enemies into peaceful partners. This democratic peace will be built on the solid foundations of political and economic freedom in Russia and the other independent states. We must continue to support reformers in Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, and the other new states."

This was a win for the administration. It is interesting to note the order in which the states are mentioned in the quote. Russia comes first, then Ukraine with its considerable size and nuclear arsenal, followed by Armenia with its well-known lobby in the U.S., and finally "the other new states". In public statements, this order is repeated time and again, with only small variations. The CASC states are almost always mentioned last and simply referred to as "the other new states".

The President courted the private sector and explicitly declared that its help was "absolutely critical" in transforming the FSU. During the signing, he emphasized U.S. business opportunities and remarked that he was "pleased that the bill draws our private sector, as never before, into the delivery of technical assistance to Russia and the other new states". The FSA removed many Cold War restrictions that hamstrung the government in providing assistance and impeded U.S. companies from competing fairly in the NIS.

The FSA is a powerful example of the administration’s ambition to project U.S. values. Its fact sheet begins as follows:

The collapse of the Soviet Union provides America with a once-in-a-century opportunity to help freedom take root and flourish in the lands of Russia and Eurasia. Their success in democracy and open markets will directly enhance our national security. The growth of freedom there will create business and investment opportunities for Americans and multiply the opportunities for friendship between our peoples. Just as Democrats and Republicans united to-

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319 George H.W. Bush, "Remarks to the American Society of Newspaper Editors."
322 George H.W. Bush, Statement on Signing the FREEDOM Support Act."
gether to fight for freedom during the Cold War, we must remain united to win the peace.\textsuperscript{323}

This effectively crystallized the core beliefs of the administration. The FSA was designed to provide the tools for a more secure post-Cold War order. It expanded the authorities for humanitarian aid to ensure that basic human needs are met, promoted nuclear safety and demilitarization to prevent nuclear accidents and the spread of nuclear weapons, expanded assistance opportunities in building free markets, increased support for democratic institutions, improved access to credits for purchases of U.S. food, stimulated greater trade and investment by removing Cold War restrictions, supported development of a private sector, leveraged U.S. financial contributions through the IMF, supported a U.S. leadership role in a stabilization fund, expanded the U.S. presence on the ground and increased people-to-people contacts.\textsuperscript{324}

The U.S. initiated numerous programs to assist and support the transition to market economy. By early 1994 it had provided technical assistance and training programs in the fields of privatization, market economy, entrepreneurship and small business development, the U.S. state and federal tax system, tax policy and economic advisement, financial consultations, agricultural development, training and research, labor and management relations, international trade and investment, environmental health, maternal and child health and medical information systems to most states of CASC.

The U.S. also supported transition of these states to liberal democracy. By 1994 it had provided technical assistance and training programs on the rule of law, review and assessment of the constitution, election law and criminal law, law enforcement training, foreign policy, diplomacy, tolerance and pluralism, leadership and organizational skills, building a political consensus for economic reform, independent media, English-language training, the U.S. educational system, university administration, and academic exchanges. All of the states of CASC were offered a similar set of programs, and U.S. aid was thus appropriated to many different sectors.

Looking at all of these initiatives, it would seem as if the U.S. showed a considerable interest in CASC. However, the figures tell a different story. The initiatives were small in size, and only a fraction of the money allocated by the FSA and other programs went to CASC with one exception – Armenia. The FSA substantially increased aid and assistance to the FSU. However, despite the increase, U.S. aid was relatively paltry. In 1992 U.S. aid to the entire FSU was less than $700 million, and in 1993 it amounted to $2.5 billion. It rose to almost $3.5 billion in 1994 largely thanks to the FSA. To put these numbers into perspective, critics pointed out that the U.S. spent over


\textsuperscript{324} The White House, "Freedom Support Act of 1992 Fact Sheet."
S$3 billion annually on Israel and had spent over $6 billion on El Salvador in the 1980s. 325

U.S. aid and assistance to CASC during the George H.W. Bush years was meager, most of it consisting of food and humanitarian aid. The focus of FSA was not on the CASC states. They are to be found at the bottom of the list of recipients of U.S. assistance to the FSU. They were nevertheless included in the aid and assistance programs, which set in motion a process that would result in growing U.S. ties with these states. In a way they were both the foundation and the beginning U.S. of relations with CASC.

Armenia was an exception. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Americans of Armenian decent reside in the U.S. This helped to put Armenia’s interests on the agenda. They sent money home to help their countrymen during the war against Azerbaijan and successfully lobbied Congress for high amounts of assistance and for condemnation of Azerbaijan. The consequences of this were to become very controversial, but at the time few thought strategically about CASC. U.S. assistance to Armenia became, not only the highest amount per capita in the NIS, but one of the highest amounts per capita among beneficiaries of U.S. assistance in the world. 326

Aid to the NIS was not unconditional. The Foreign Assistance Act requires the President to "take into account not only relative need but also the extent to which [each] state is acting to ... meet certain standards", and a provision in the FSA, Section 907, prohibited most assistance to Azerbaijan. 327 This provision was a response to Azerbaijan’s actions toward Armenia in the Nagorno Karabakh dispute. It stipulated that U.S. assistance could not be given "until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh". 328 Because of this, Azerbaijan received almost no aid or assistance at all from the U.S.

In 1992 U.S. Ambassador to CSCE John J. Maresca was involved in developing the so-called Minsk Group into a conflict resolution mechanism to handle the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. This group would permit and legitimize a leadership role for the U.S. in the region at a time when where it had little presence or leverage. There was no outside leadership in the region at the time, except for Russia’s, and its influence was controversial because of Moscow’s ambition to retain or regain control over the NIS. There was

326 In the 1990s the Armenian lobby, according to Lee Hamilton, had established such a reputation for giving political contributions "that candidates would come to them seeking support". Armenia also had powerful friends on Capitol Hill, such as senators Bob Dole and Mitch McConnell. David King and Miles Pomper, "The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies: Lessons From U.S. Policy Toward Armenia and Azerbaijan," *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Summer, 2004).
328 Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act.
also a widespread belief that Moscow was trying to aggravate the conflict in order to subdue Azerbaijan.

Maresca stated years later that U.S. interest in this region in 1992 was very low and that the U.S. prioritized its relationship with Russia. Because of this, the efforts to influence Congress and to signal that the U.S. government was actively seeking an impartial role in the solution to the conflict were limited. According to Maresca, Congress passed Section 907, influenced by the Armenian lobby, and was "simply ignorant of the issue at the time and of the implications of their actions".329 Section 907 did not only undermine the perception of the U.S. as impartial, a necessity for being able to act as a legitimate negotiator, but also banned the U.S. from supporting Azerbaijan’s independence and investing in its vast natural resources.330 Many observers agree with Maresca’s statement that due to the lack of a clear strategy in relation to the conflict, the Armenian lobby was successful in its attempts to influence U.S. policy to its advantage.331 However, the focus on Russia and the Section 907 decision would become some of the most debated issues regarding the CASC region for several years to come.

4.5 The Black Gold: U.S. Interest in CASC’s Energy Resources

In this brief section, I describe early U.S. interest in energy resources in the CASC region. This also helps to explain why Kazakhstan became a prioritized CASC state.

The Soviet collapse also presented an opportunity for the U.S. to increase its energy security. The NSS of 1991 declared that U.S. oil dependency made it vulnerable but that the security of supplies could be "enhanced by a supportive foreign policy and appropriate military capabilities":

We will work to improve understanding among key participants in the oil industry of the basic fundamentals of the oil market. We will also maintain our capability to respond to requests to protect vital oil facilities, on land or at sea, while working to resolve the underlying political, social and economic tensions that could threaten the free flow of oil.332

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330 Section 907 effectively hamstrung the ability of the U.S. to provide humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan, since in post-Soviet Azerbaijan most relief institutions, such as hospitals, warehouses and even support vehicles, were owned by the government, and Section 907 prohibited American organizations from having any dealings with the government. This also affected the ability of organizations like National Democratic Institute to work with government officials in promoting liberal democracy and legal reform in a way they did in other NIS.
Given the turbulence in the Gulf region, which contains two-thirds of the world’s known oil reserves, the NSS emphasized increased production "from other areas" and the importance of "diversification of both productive and spare capacity". The exploration and development CASC’s energy resources would thus increase U.S. and world energy security.

It is not surprising that the administration prioritized Kazakhstan among the Central Asian states. In addition to its inherited nuclear weapons, it boasted some of the largest oil fields in the world. When Secretary Baker visited Uzbekistan, the most populous of the Central Asian states, he had already been to Kazakhstan several times. Even prior to the Soviet breakup, U.S. based Chevron Oil had begun negotiations with the Soviet Union with regard to oil exploration and production in the Northern Caspian Sea, including the Tengiz field located in western Kazakhstan. On May 18, 1992, Kazakhstan signed an agreement with Chevron, and in 1993, Tengizchevron was formed. This made Chevron the first major Western oil company to start a project in Central Asia.

In May, 1992, Kazak President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited the White House. President Bush stated that he was "pleased" with the Kazak-Chevron "landmark agreement" and remarked that even though he had never visited Kazakhstan, Secretary Baker had spoken to him about "the tremendous potential" of Kazakhstan. During the visit, the U.S. and Kazakhstan signed several trade agreements. At Nazarbayev’s departure, Bush declared that they had "taken an important step in the development of a strong, lasting friendship".

Nuclear weapons and oil played a fundamental role in leading the administration to view Kazakhstan as the most important state in CASC. In the years to come, the U.S. interest in the region’s energy resources and interest in transforming the CASC states internally would heavily influence U.S. strategy. The two interests would also become intertwined.

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333 Ibid.


336 In a Rose Garden ceremony, President Bush and President Nazarbayev signed the Agreement on Trade, the Bilateral Investment Treaty, and the U.S.-Kazakh Overseas Private Investment Corporation Agreement.

4.6 Analysis

This part consists of an analysis of the George H.W. Bush Administration’s strategy toward CASC based on the neoclassical realist framework. The analysis is broken down into several sections and will begin with an argument about how the changed international environment affected the strategic culture. A section about presidential leadership and domestic politics comes next. This is followed by two sections where I show how the administration related to the paradigms and subcultures and how its strategy was shaped by them. Then comes a section on conclusions where I explain what the U.S. strategy toward CASC was, including an assessment of its consistency and coherence and how well the framework fared. The chapter ends with a brief section about the administration’s legacy.

4.6.1 The International Environment and U.S. Strategic Culture

The proposed framework assumes that increases in power will eventually lead to a corresponding expansion in the ambition of a state’s external actions and that decreases lead to a corresponding contraction. It thus predicts that the Soviet collapse would eventually lead to a more ambitious U.S. strategy. However, it also maintains there is no immediate transmission belt linking material capabilities to actions and that the relationship between changes in power and strategy is complex and indirect. Systemic pressures must be mediated through intervening variables at the unit level.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union entailed a dramatic shift in the international distribution of power and spurred an intense strategic debate. The consensus that characterized the strategic debates during the Cold War years quickly disappeared. For many international relations scholars, the unthinkable had happened. The Cold War ended peacefully, and the Soviet empire just withered away. Realism, the predominant school of international relations, was not only discredited, its proponents could not really explain this event or say much about the new international environment. One reason for this was their preoccupation with the stability of the bipolar system. Another was that many of their secondary assumptions did not really allow for a single state truly to dominate the international system. This did not render the entire theory invalid, but it did temporarily silence many realists, since they simply did not have much to say about this state of affairs.  

It is possible to argue that this tendency was exacerbated by the fact that some realists did not really bother to amend their theories, but argued that this condition would be very fleeting, since other states would soon counterbalance the U.S. thus re-establishing multipolarity. Others, such as neoclassical realists, began to incorporate lessons from history and theories about hegemony to amend and improve their theories.

338 The relative decline of realism broadened the debate over international relations,
security and strategy even further. The world view found in the popular interpretations of Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History* was a clear departure from realism’s eternal struggle between nation states.

The end of the Cold War left the U.S. as the sole superpower, and the international distribution of power eventually became described as unipolar. U.S. defense expenditures were greater than those of its potential adversaries as well as its major allies combined. U.S. military technology was also, as powerfully displayed by *Operation Desert Storm*, far more advanced than any rivals. Even though the imbalance was less absolute in terms of economic capability, U.S. GDP was still largest by far. It also left the U.S. with an enormous degree of soft power and influence over the international institutions that shape political and economic affairs globally. This arguably made the U.S. less constrained by the international environment than ever to pursue its strategic goals.

It was probably difficult to get a clear picture of U.S. predominance during the early 1990s. It would take some time to get a sense how abysmal the state of Russia actually was. The picture was also obfuscated by the fact that ideas of declinism had recently resurfaced, most notably in Paul Kennedy’s *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. The struggling economy combined with real and imaginary notions of a highly efficient Japan gave this further impetus. This theme is a recurring phenomenon in U.S. debates. One of its obvious features is the notion that U.S. power is not as great as most Americans believe. This commonly entails arguments about the unsustainability and fragility of the U.S. position of power as well. In general, declinists argue for strategies involving cutting costs and focusing on core interests. This theme, in other words, strengthened the paradigm of non-entanglement.

However, since the general interpretation of the end of the Cold War was that the U.S. won, the U.S. Cold War strategy of engagement and promotion of democracy and economic openness remained highly regarded. The victory confirmed the soundness of the paradigm of liberalism and it remained dominant. Remember that the theory explicitly argues that policy failure opens up a window of opportunity for changing strategy; success does not.

The disappearance of the Soviet threat also strengthened the paradigm of non-entanglement and almost immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall pressure to scale down U.S. international commitments began to build up. Without the Soviet threat, there was no need for the U.S. to bear such costs. On a deeper level, it can be argued that the end of the Cold War strengthened two subcultures, the Abstentionists and the Liberal Internationalists, and

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339 The fact that the U.S. economy was struggling probably affected many Americans’ perceptions of U.S. power.
340 For a discussion of the sense of cultural decline in the early nineties, see Patterson, (2005), Chap. 9.
weakened the American Realists and the Assertive Patriots. The disappearance of a threat favours of the Abstentionists, while an increase in U.S. power favours the ambitious agenda of the Liberal Internationalists. Without the Soviet threat, the populist Assertive Patriots lost their cause, and their relative influence over strategy diminished. The Soviet breakup and increase in the relative power of the U.S. made the American Realist’s notion of scarcity and the necessity for trade-offs less appealing and thus weakened that subculture.

4.6.2. Presidential Leadership and Domestic Politics

When it comes to determining the relative strength of the paradigms and subcultures, presidential leadership is important. George H.W. Bush’s presidency coincided with great international turmoil and upheaval. However, Bush was elected before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet breakup. His administration was put together to fight the Cold War, and it was tested by the rapidly changing international environment.

As the Soviet threat diminished, domestic pressure to cut defense spending increased. That threat had kept America, and especially the Republicans, unified around the notion that U.S. global engagement was a necessity. When it disappeared, this unity quickly withered, and soon there were voices in Congress calling for disengagement. Even though many Republicans personally favoured an ambitious post-Cold War strategy, they began to buckle.

The President fought hard against what he perceived as isolationist tendencies and tried to educate the country by talking about the necessity of international engagement. He attempted to push the strategic culture in a more American Realist direction but was not particularly successful. This is not surprising, since the subculture of American Realism was not favoured by the end of the Cold War. The president was often criticised for talking too much about foreign affairs. His re-election campaign even advised him to not to mention it. That says a lot about the increasing strength of the paradigm of non-entanglement.

However, the paradigm of liberalism remained strong, and when President Bush decided to downplay the Tiananmen Square Massacre in order to preserve the Sino-American relationship, he had few defenders. He was also severely criticised for not being more assertive in his support for reforms in the Soviet Union and later in the FSU. His opponent in the upcoming Presidential election, Bill Clinton, criticized his human rights record and tepid response to various humanitarian crises. It was the politically expedient thing to do. The fact that President Bush’s actions on the international stage made him vulnerable says a lot about the strategic culture. It also shows that he was not able to reshape it to any significant extent. In the next section, I will show how he, influenced by American Realism, navigated between the Seylla and Charybdis of the two paradigms.
4.6.3. The George H.W. Bush Administration and the Paradigm of Liberalism

There is no question that the George H.W. Bush Administration’s strategy was shaped by the paradigm of liberalism. Time and again the administration proclaimed its adherence to U.S. liberal values. The virtues of democracy, economic openness and human rights were a constant theme in its verbal approach to Eastern Europe, and the FSU, including CASC.

The administration clearly displayed a preoccupation with the internal structure of the Soviet Union and, later, the NIS and set out an ambitious agenda to transform them into liberal democracies. It also tried to make the case that such an outcome would not only make the U.S. safer but also more prosperous. The administration frequently professed its belief in various versions of the democratic peace theory. President Bush explicitly argued that democracy could assure U.S. security in a way nuclear missiles never could, and he often underscored the vast new markets that could be opened for U.S. business if economic reforms were successfully undertaken.

For the administration, U.S. security and economy were interdependent and linked to the success of reform in the FSU. Therefore, it regarded the spread of democracy and economic openness as a national interest. In this effort U.S. values and interests coincided, the administration professed. Or, as the President once put it: "by helping others, we help ourselves." U.S. leadership of the humanitarian effort Operation Provide Hope can also be regarded as part of the influence of the Paradigm of Liberalism on the administration.

Democratic and economic reform in Eastern Europe and the NIS became one of the most important publicly declared goals of the administration. It is clear that the administration’s strategy was influenced by both Liberal Internationalism and American Realism. The beginning of the Freedom Support Act’s fact sheet is a perfect example of this. The idea of the spreading democracy, human rights and freedom fits perfectly with Liberal Internationalism. The focus on new markets and trade fits well with the American Realists. Proponents of both subcultures could, therefore, easily find themselves supporting the ambitious goal of integrating Eastern Europe and the FSU into the community of liberal market democracies.

Even though the President’s notion of a ‘new world order’ was lacking in specifics, it is difficult to argue that it is not a close fit with the paradigm of liberalism. George H.W. Bush hoped to make the UN system, put in place after WWII, work as intended. This meant U.S. leadership of collective engagements to stop aggression and to uphold and enforce international law. The statements surrounding it were sweeping and ambitious. How could a

341 George H.W. Bush, “Remarks at Texas A&M University.”
342 If this paradigm did not exist, operations such as Operation Provide Hope are difficult to explain.
proclamation of a ‘new world order’ not be? Furthermore, with Operation Desert Storm the administration not only built a massive international coalition, it also decided to set an important precedent by strictly adhering to the UN mandate. This was a remarkable display of restraint, and the administration allowed the country to be constrained by international rules. These decisions are very similar to what a proponent of cooperative security would prescribe.

Following the Monroe Doctrine, later made global by Woodrow Wilson, President Bush recognized the former Soviet republics as sovereign and independent states after the Soviet Union had formally dissolved and established direct diplomatic relations with them thereby repudiating any Russian claim to a formal sphere of influence. He also singled out some states in CASC and decided not to establish embassies in them until they clearly demonstrated their commitment to democratic and economic reforms, including human rights. However, he soon reversed this decision, primarily because of Iran, thereby showing his limited commitment to the paradigm of liberalism. The potential threat of increased Iranian influence had a higher priority for the administration, and it abandoned its principled position.

The administration’s declarations and vocabulary fit rather well with the paradigm of liberalism and the subculture of Liberal Internationalism. The President and his administration made numerous sweeping statements about spreading democracy, freedom, peace, justice, openness, free markets, prosperity and human dignity. The rhetoric was, however, not totally compatible with the paradigm’s notion of progress, i.e. the idea that the world was inevitably moving toward freedom and peace. President Bush often warned of the reversibility of the changes the world was witnessing and was not keen on displaying what he perceived as early euphoria. On several occasions the administration also signalled its belief in the notion that some geopolitical facts simply do not change. This was part of the administration’s preference for American Realism.

However, the real evidence of the administration’s limited commitment to the paradigm of liberalism is not to be found in its rhetoric but in its actions. George H.W. Bush was pragmatic, and Secretary Eagleburger praised his diplomatic flexibility. The strategic decision not to take a principled position before establishing diplomatic relations with Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Georgia and Uzbekistan in order to contain Iran is indicative of this flexibility. President Bush was more cautious and less ideological than his predecessor. When the communist regime in China was challenged by students on the streets of Beijing, he prioritized the Sino-American relationship. He also pursued the disintegration of the Soviet Union cautiously and seemed to prefer the status quo, stability and order to change. When the Ukrainian people expected him to endorse their nationalistic aspirations for independence, he let them down. Bush’s warning to Ukraine not to pursue any suicidal nationalism was a clear departure from the ideological stance of President Reagan.
The administration prioritized Eastern Europe and its relationship with Russia. It did not demonstrate any real interest in CASC, which resulted in Russia being more or less given a free hand to pursue its interests in the region. So, even if the U.S. formally recognized the independence and sovereignty of the CASC states, the administration’s actions suggest that, for all practical purposes, it regarded them as part of a Russian sphere of influence.

As an indication of the power of the paradigm of liberalism, the President was severely criticized in U.S. media and by Congress for some of these decisions. Its influence is so persuasive that it is extremely difficult for elected officials or for those hoping to some day run for office to publically defend them. To suggest or have suggested that the decision to downplay the Tiananmen Square Massacre in order to preserve U.S. relations with China during the uncertain times of 1989 was the right thing to do would, even decades later, harm one’s chances of getting elected or being appointed to higher office in the U.S.\(^3\) It does not really matter whether a strong argument can be made that it was an informed move, which probably could be done from a realist perspective. To even enter into a debate on the issue would most certainly ruin one’s chances, and most politicians are, naturally, well aware of this. Realpolitik does not fit well with American culture, and many Americans are skeptical of the concept of strategy. Strategy in peace time is only legitimate to the extent that it promotes liberal values. Because of such decisions, President Bush was accused of lacking a moral compass, and many distrusted his commitment to U.S. values, something which Clinton and the Democrats naturally took advantage of during the 1992 election.

To what extent the President and his administration actually believed in the tenets of the paradigm of liberalism is beyond the scope of this study. That is, it is possible that the administration was primarily interested in the stability of the FSU and just framed its message in such a way as to fit the paradigm in order to pursue its policies successfully. It is nonetheless clear that the administration tried to fit both its vocabulary and policies with the paradigm. It is also clear that when the President’s actions deviated from this paradigm, he was heavily criticized. As argued, by enabling and constraining action, U.S. strategic culture functions as a filter, making some choices more likely than others.

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\(^3\) One example of this was the debate that surrounded Chas Freeman. Freeman was an ambassador who was considered for a top intelligence appointment in the Obama Administration but who had to withdraw because of, among other things, inappropriate statements regarding the events at Tiananmen Square in 1989.
4.6.4. The George H.W. Bush Administration and the Paradigm of Non-Entanglement

Indicative of the influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement, the administration quickly found itself under considerable pressure to scale back U.S. overseas engagements as the Soviet threat diminished. With the end of the Cold War, the American public’s interests in foreign affairs and broad international engagement declined. With a sharper focus on domestic issues, many now began to demand their fair share of the ‘peace dividend’. This sentiment was channeled through Congress, and many elected officials felt strong pressure to accommodate it, even if they personally favored a more ambitious strategy. The declinism theme, which suggested that U.S. power was less overwhelming and more fragile than many seemed to think, probably increased this pressure.

The George H.W. Bush Administration was only weakly committed to the paradigm of non-entanglement. To convince the American people of the necessity to remain broadly engaged overseas President Bush used messages of opportunity and prosperity, historical analogies and fear tactics. If this paradigm did not have any influence, he would probably not have been forced to work so hard to sell its ambitious policies or to engage in debate with those favoring a less ambitious U.S. strategy.

The President proclaimed a ‘new world order’, which in essence was a call for American leadership of collective engagements and a reinvigoration of the UN. Preoccupied with the internal structure of the NIS, he also set out an ambitious agenda to transform them internally, with the ultimate goal of integrating them into the community of liberal democracies. It implied not only that the U.S. would actively involve itself in the internal affairs of other states, but also that U.S. taxpayers would pay for it. Much of this was clearly at odds with the paradigm of non-entanglement. Assertive Patriots, in particular, were reluctant to send billions of dollars to their former arch-enemy, which had not even surrendered properly. Neither the Abstentionists nor the Assertive Patriots shared the administration’s positive attitude toward international institutions. They were not enthusiastic about strengthening existing institutions or creating new ones, and they were critical of proposals that could be interpreted as a surrender of U.S. sovereignty or freedom of action. The President’s new world order rhetoric and Abstentionism is a complete mismatch.

The administration’s grand ambitions and statements fit well with the paradigm of liberalism. However, all proposals must pass several domestic hurdles before being implemented. When programs based on such ambitious statements are checked by a policy process influenced by the paradigm of non-entanglement, the end result is often far more modest. The discrepancy between the administration’s rhetoric and its concrete actions was, not surprisingly, huge. That is, the size of the programs and the resources provided had no chance to achieve its ambitious goals.
The Freedom Support Act was in a way presented as analogous to the Marshall Plan, since the administration frequently compared the contemporary historical situation with the post-WWII environment. This meant that the stakes were critical and the opportunities more or less limitless. The administration managed to pass FSA, but compared to other U.S. foreign assistance programs the funding was meagre, and compared with the administration’s rhetoric regarding the importance of reform, it was astoundingly low. The FSA combined with all other U.S. assistance to the FSU between 1992 and 1994 only amounted little to more than $6 billion. This can be compared with the approximately $13 billion in cash, goods and services (about $130 billion at current value) the U.S. provided to Europe between 1948 and 1951 through the Marshall Plan.344

There was a similar discrepancy between rhetoric and action regarding the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. The Soviet Union’s vast arsenal of WMDs was described as a severe threat. Despite this, there was a reluctance to provide funds for the programs, and no additional money was allocated to counter the threat. Instead, the DoD, the principal agent for the program, was given the authority to transfer $400 million from its existing budget, but it was not required to transfer any money or to undertake any of the programs. As an indication of the increasing sensitivity to costs, Congress kept a tight leash on CTRP-expenditures. Non-nuclear WMDs, such as biological and chemical weapons, were downgraded and became perceived more as an environmental problem, than a severe and immediate threat to the U.S. This meant in effect that they became an issue the U.S. did not have to prioritize or spend vast amounts of money on. Defense conversion in the FSU was also regarded as less urgent, and money spent on it had to be matched by equal or greater amounts spent at home. Because of the prioritization of nuclear weapons, Kazakhstan received far more attention than the other states of CASC.

One of the best ways to approach the question of the influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement is to look at inaction. The "greatest shortcoming was not in what he did but in what he did not do", as Zbigniew Brzezinski summarized George H.W. Bush’s presidency.345 The end of the Cold War and the Soviet breakup offered numerous international opportunities. However, despite his unprecedented international standing, Bush did not seize the day to shape the future or indicate a clear direction, Brzezinski argues. In his analysis of the Bush years, he writes of a "forsaken triumph" and points out several unexploited opportunities all over the world: the Middle East, Russia, Pakistan, North Korea, India, Yugoslavia, etc.346 Brzezinski writes,

344 It is also possible to argue that the Marshall Plan is surrounded by a mythology and that many Americans probably believe the effort was larger than it in fact really was. This makes the invocation of it an even more powerful rhetorical tool.
though, from the perspective of a strategist that takes little account of the domestic pressure the President subjected to. He was, after all, heavily criticized for being too interested in foreign affairs and not caring about domestic issues. This was one important reason why he lost re-election.

George H.W. Bush was less ideological and more reluctant to forcefully push for change than his predecessor. He chose not to identify with the cause of the Chinese students or the Ukrainians’ call for independence. Doing so could lead to instability, the administration seemed to calculate at the time. It responded passively to the coup that overthrew Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti’s first democratically elected President, and let the crisis in Yugoslavia continue. The notion that Yugoslavia was a problem the Europeans should solve and that the U.S. had to limit its engagement fit perfectly with the paradigm of non-entanglement. This position was, of course, criticised by many Americans watching civilians fleeing their homes on television. However, many also favoured this decision and the subcultures clashed over the issue. Also fitting with the paradigm of non-entanglement was the administration’s demands that the Europeans share more of the burden for their defense.

The administration prioritized Eastern Europe and Russia. It showed little initiative or interest in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the civil war in Tajikistan and the conflict in Chechnya, and more of less gave Russia a free hand in CASC. It perceived little interest and was reluctant to get involved in these conflicts. U.S. involvement would disturb the delicate relationship with Russia and the negotiations over Eastern Europe. By keeping silent and staying out, the administration practically acquiesced to Russia’s claims of a sphere of influence in CASC

Other examples of the administration’s commitment to non-entanglement were its support of Turkish influence in CASC, which would allow the U.S. to achieve its goals without direct involvement. Steve Coll has used the word "national instinct" to describe the administration’s reluctance to engage in any complicated tribal politics in war torn Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces.347 The administration also chose not to pursue regime change in Iraq after ousting its forces from Kuwait. Involvement of that kind would not only lead to U.S. casualties but also prompt the U.S. to assume responsibility for the governance of Iraq. In other words, it meant unnecessary costs and a potential quagmire. Another important reason for this decision was the administration’s desire to establish a precedent for dealing with international crisis through cooperation, which would have been ruined if the U.S. exceeded its UN mandate. The decision

not to oust Saddam fits rather well with both paradigms, even though it upset many Assertive Patriots unwilling to accept such restraint in war.\footnote{This explains to some extent why this decision was not controversial within the administration. It is also worth noting how the administration used arguments from both paradigms to gain approval of this decision.}

Moreover, the administration had assumed that insurrections or a military coup would lead to regime change on the cheap.\footnote{Rose, (2010).} When it became apparent that Saddam, after his withdrawal from Kuwait, was still in possession of forces capable to easily crushing the rebelling Shiites and Kurds, the U.S. initially did little to help these groups. This can be regarded as another example of the administration’s commitment to the paradigm on non-entanglement. When the Kurds in northern Iraq faced annihilation and a refugee crisis was brewing that affected Turkey, the administration decided to protect them and other groups under threat. These operations were, however, conducted with airpower, involving little risk of casualties, and can thus be regarded as a compromise between the two paradigms.

However, the administration did in fact engage the CASC region and, as another indication of its weak commitment to the paradigm of non-entanglement, the President, shortly before leaving office, committed U.S. troops to provide assistance and protection for humanitarian activities in Somalia.

### 4.6.5 Conclusions

The George H.W. Bush Administration was not moralistic or particularly principled but rather flexible and pragmatic. The President described himself more as a problem solver and manager than a visionary and himself admitted that he lacked the ‘vision thing’. The administration was preoccupied with order and often opted for stability rather than radical change. This, combined with a belief in the necessity of establishing a strong institutional framework for maintaining order and focus on U.S. business opportunities and trade, makes it is safe to say that the administration’s outlook was to a great extent American Realist in nature. It was rather weakly committed to both the paradigm of liberalism and the paradigm of non-entanglement and tried to avoid the pitfalls of both of idealistic universalism and isolationism. Its strategy toward CASC can best be described as a blend of balance of power/selective engagement and cooperative security.

President Bush was not really able to move the strategic culture in his preferred direction, and the relative influence of American Realism was in decline during his presidency. This was a consequence of the changing international environment. Deviations from the strategic culture are associated with
costs, and George H.W. Bush clearly suffered politically when he tried to
move beyond its constraints. His preoccupation with foreign affairs was a
political liability, and his strategic decisions were often criticized for being
at odds with U.S. values. President Bush had to adapt to constraints of the
strategic culture in many ways. During his re-election campaign he even
abandoned what many considered to be his greatest strength – his experience
in international affairs – since the electorate was tired of hearing about it,
according to his advisor.

The administration’s strategy toward CASC was shaped by both para-
digms as well as the subcultures of Liberal Internationalism and American
Realism. It can best be described as a blend of Balance of Power/Selective
Engagement and Cooperative Security. The administration’s rhetoric was
strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism. However, in terms of con-
crete actions, it was less principled, selective in its engagements and focused
on things it regarded as more important than CASC, such as Eastern Europe,
the relationship with Russia and a potential increase in Iranian influence.

The administration initiated several broad programs to assist the FSU in
its entirety. These programs mark the beginning of U.S. relations with
CASC, and they became the foundation for the relationship, even though
their focus was elsewhere. All in all, the administration’s engagement in
CASC was small in scale and its interests there were limited. However, it did
engage, and that is important with regards to the framework.

As expected, domestic pressure to withdraw and scale down U.S. inter-
national commitments increased with the disappearance of the Soviet threat.
The administration tried to resist these demands and had broad ambitions. It
set out to create a new world order and initiated programs aimed at demo-
cratic and economic reforms in the FSU, with the ultimate goal of transform-
ing them internally and integrate them into the community of liberal democ-
racies. Both the ambitions and the quality of this strategy were to be ex-
pected for several reasons.

The neoclassical realist framework is based on the idea that increases in
relative power eventually lead to a more ambitious strategy. It assumes that
the paradigm of liberalism is the dominant cultural paradigm in America.
Because the U.S. won the Cold War, there was no demand for a fundamental
rethinking of the U.S. strategy of engagement and promotion of democracy
and economic openness. The relative success of the Armenian lobby did not
come as a surprise either. With the lack of Presidential interest in and clear
leadership of U.S. strategy toward CASC, it was to be expected.

Finally, it can be argued that the framework provides some important
insights regarding the choice to support Turkish influence in CASC. This
decision perfectly balanced and fit with the two paradigms. It addressed al-
most all of the U.S. goals in the region. It allowed the administration to make
grand and sweeping statements about transforming the CASC states without
suffering criticism, since it would be cheap and involve little direct U.S.
engagement. A strategy of promoting ‘democracy on the cheap’ fits very
well with U.S. strategic culture. When it comes to U.S. post-Cold war strategic choices, it is arguably the path of least resistance.

It is difficult to assess the consistency and coherence of the administration’s strategy, since there were few direct interactions between the U.S. and region. It never declared any specific strategy toward the region and admitted that it had not really thought much about it. Its focus was clearly directed elsewhere. Almost all of the initiatives launched in the region were part of extensive programs aimed at the entire FSU, with CASC clearly not belonging to it prioritized parts.

Even though the administration never publicly announced a specific strategy toward CASC, there was a clear discrepancy between its rhetoric and concrete actions. It made grand statements about transforming and integrating the FSU, which CASC was part of. Those statements were followed up with meagre funds and insufficient assistance for realising them. CASC in particular was at the bottom of the list of recipients of U.S. assistance to the FSU, with the exception of Armenia. This exception also exacerbated the inconsistency.

Moreover, by looking at the administration’s concrete actions, it becomes clear that it acted as if it considered CASC to be part of a Russian sphere of influence. It did not want to upset Russia or to put negotiations over issues it considered to be more important at risk by becoming heavily involved in CASC. The administration publicly endorsed the efforts of various energy companies in the region but did not commit any serious government resources to help them.

When the administration recognized the independence of the CASC states, it took a principled position and declared that the establishment of U.S. embassies and their relationships with the U.S. were contingent on their commitment to human rights and democracy. Soon thereafter, it reversed this position, fearful of increased Iranian influence in the region. The administration valued flexibility. However, this combined with its prioritizations – containing Iran over remaining principled – rendered U.S. strategy toward CASC inconsistent and incoherent.\textsuperscript{350}

4.7 The Legacy of the George H.W. Bush Administration

In this section, I describe the legacy of the George H.W. Bush Administration. Decisions taken under this Presidency were to have important consequences for U.S. strategy toward CASC later on. They also set the stage for the incoming Clinton Administration.

\textsuperscript{350} This does not necessarily mean that the administration’s grander strategy toward Eurasia was inconsistent and incoherent.
When secretary Eagleburger summarized the legacy of the Bush Presidency, he underscored its pragmatism and flexibility. It had been "deeply committed to the principle and the practice of diplomacy", he, argued, and elaborated:

[Diplomacy] is an art which does not necessarily come easily to us. Our national virtue is that we are comfortable only with a foreign policy rooted in the values of our political tradition; our national vice is a tendency toward moralism in foreign policy and a kind of moral hubris which views the actions of others only through the prism of our own standards of conduct. President Bush resisted this latter tendency throughout his presidency, often at great political cost.  

Eagleburger used Bush’s China policy as an example. However, in this context it is also possible to mention the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan to counter Iranian influence. At the time, this particular choice was presumably not associated with any great political costs. However, it created a type of path dependence in U.S. relations toward CASC that would cause trouble in the future. The policy reversal was important, and in hindsight it can be seen to mark the beginning of delicate U.S. relations with CASC states, in which human rights, democratic- and market reforms and long-term goals constantly had to be weighed against other priorities and short-term goals.

The administration was not moralistic, and its decisions clearly show that it acknowledged that a principled promotion of democratic and economic reforms could, at least in the short term, jeopardize other goals, such as international stability, access and strategic relations. For George H.W. Bush, flexibility was a necessity for pursuing a successful strategy. This explains to some extent his difficulty in speaking clearly to the American people about the U.S. role in the world and giving the country a sense of direction. This does not mean that he did not try. Shortly before leaving office he declared that the country once again was being summoned by history:

This time we are called not to wage a war, hot or cold, but to win the democratic peace, not for half a world as before but for people the world over. The end of the cold war, you see, has placed in our hands a unique opportunity to see the principles for which America has stood for two centuries, democracy, free enterprise, and the rule of law, spread more widely than ever before in human history. For the first time, turning this global vision into a new and better world is, indeed, a realistic possibility. It is a hope that embodies our country’s tradition of idealism, which has made us unique among nations and uniquely successful. And our vision is not mere utopianism. The advance of democratic ideals reflects a hard-nosed sense of our own, of American self-interest. For certain truths have, indeed, now become evident: Governments responsive to the will of the people are not likely to commit aggression. They are not likely to sponsor terrorism or to threaten humanity with weapons of

\[351\] Eagleburger, "Charting the Course".  
mass destruction. Likewise, the global spread of free markets, by encouraging trade, investment, and growth, will sustain the expansion of American prosperity. In short, by helping others, we help ourselves.\(^{353}\)

Despite this call to spread U.S. values of democracy and freedom throughout the world, the President was constantly accused of being more interested in stability than freedom and of lacking a moral compass and a mission for the country.

For George H.W. Bush there was no historical necessity inherent in the transformations the world had witnessed during his presidency. He often pointed out that they were all reversible. Therefore, it was crucial that the U.S. did not withdraw from the world. With Clinton’s inauguration just about two weeks ahead, he brought up Washington’s Farewell Address and reversed it:

Two hundred years ago, another departing President warned of the dangers of what he described as "entangling alliances." His was the right course for a new nation at that point in history. But what was "entangling" in Washington’s day is now essential.\(^{354}\)

Despite the grim loss in the election, he was relieved that Clinton shared this idea. They were both convinced of the necessity of broad U.S. engagement internationally. Just days before leaving office, he signed START 2. During the previous month, he had committed U.S. troops and effectively taken command of a humanitarian operation in Somalia. This deployment, known as Operation Restore Hope, ironically would later be used as an example of potentially detrimental entanglement.

Eagleburger’s summary also included advise to his successor. "[T]he inherent centrifugal forces of multipolarity will conspire to drive us apart" and to avoid a "return to the dangerous balance of power politics", the U.S. must strengthen the ties that link the Western democracies and all of the multilateral institutions that the U.S. had established during the past half century. Without these, the U.S. would "never be able to confront the instabilities now arising beyond the Western fold". The next administration must try "to extend the core of democracies to include the former communist world, as well as other nations which have embraced our political and economic values", he urged. He underscored that:

Here, there is an absolute convergence between our interests and our ideals. Our security is especially linked to the fate of reform across the Eurasian landmass, which is the most heavily armed region of the world and [has been] the source of global conflict twice in this century. It is thus heartening that the

\(^{353}\) George H.W. Bush, “Remarks at Texas A&M University.”

incoming President has identified support for democracy in Russia and throughout Central and Eastern Europe as one of his highest priorities.\footnote{Eagleburger, "Charting the Course."}

There was a consensus within the administration that the U.S. relationship with Russia and reforms in the post-Soviet space were top strategic priorities. The CASC states were not mentioned or singled out in any of the final remarks by the outgoing administration. They were firmly in the shadow of Russia. There was, however, no unity regarding the direction that U.S. strategy ought to take. The administration left office with two departments responsible for strategy having with very different views of 'how the world works'. The legacies of the Department of Defense and the Department of State are of crucial importance for understanding the coming administrations.

At the Pentagon, a small group working under Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney cultivated a world view that was clearly different from the rest of the administration. It was skeptical of the prospects of global cooperation and believed that the pragmatists within the administration naively put too much faith in international institutions. It was also critical of any ideas that made U.S. interests dependent on international mechanisms that could effectively be blocked by other states not sharing those interests. The best and most explicit source of this groups’ view is the draft of the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance (DPG). It was the government’s first sketch of a post-Cold War grand strategy. In early 1992 it was leaked to the New York Times.\footnote{The draft was a product of the collective thinking of Undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz and his staff which included, among others, Zalmay Khalilzad, Lewis Libby, Stephen Hadley and Eric Edelman.}

It was a clearly primacist document and declared that "our first objective is to prevent the emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union". This statement is not particularly conspicuous, considering that it emanated from the Pentagon. More conspicuous was its speculations about future and its explicit plans to discourage all challenges to U.S. leadership and the established political and economic order. It further stated that the U.S. "must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role." There was no peace dividend in sight, and it portrayed a world in which the U.S. was surrounded by potential rivals.\footnote{Patrick E. Tyler, "Excerpts from Pentagon’s Plan: ‘Prevent the Re-Emergence of a New Rival,’ New York Times, March 8, 1992. See also Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop”, New York Times, March 8, 1992.}
The draft was subjected to a crossfire of criticism, including from within the administration. \(^{358}\) Cheney’s staff soon leaked another draft that played down some of its earlier statements. \(^{359}\) When the NSS of 1993 was released in January, most of what was stated in the earlier drafts was still there. However, few cared, since Clinton had won the election. Even if much was subsequently denunciated, the 1992 DPG "planted", according to Zbigniew Brzezinski, "the intellectual seeds for the policy of unilateralist pre-emption and prevention that emerged a decade later". \(^{360}\)

When it became apparent that George H.W. Bush was leaving office, State Department officials had to contemplate what kind of inheritance they would leave behind. In a secret memo addressed to Secretary designate Warren Christopher by Secretary Eagleburger, the State Department conveyed a view of how the U.S. should conduct itself that stood in stark contrast with what had come out of the Pentagon. While the DGP mostly emphasized potential threats, it offered a more optimistic vision in which the U.S. could lead by example, rather than by keeping others at bay.

It urged that the U.S. should work to be "a provider of reassurance and architect of new security arrangements; an aggressive proponent of economic openness; an exemplar and advocate of democratic values; [and] a builder and leader of coalitions to deal with problems in the chaotic post-Cold War World." \(^{361}\) The memo, which became a must read among the incoming Clinton team, emphasized a number of threats that can be described as untraditional, such as disintegrating states, the spread of HIV/AIDS, climate change and the proliferation of weapons. It also mentioned the growing domestic skepticism toward engagement abroad, highlighted the increasing global economic competition and interdependence and explicitly connected the U.S. position in the world with the state of its economy. \(^{362}\)

In contrast to the DPG focus on traditional threats and potential rival powers, it argued that the U.S. in the coming years would be far more preoccupied with the disintegration of states and the fragmenting forces of globalization. All in all, the memo argued for a strategy based on a broad definition of security and a high level of coordination, in which military arrangements, democratic values, economic growth and conflict resolution should be

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361 This memo was sent to Christopher just weeks before the new administration assumed office. See Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), pp. 47-50.
362 Chollet and Goldgeier, (2008), Chap. 2.
thought of as "parts of an integrated whole". Contemporaneously, these differences could also be found in academic circles, where primarily academic realists fought to keep international relations focused on states and to retain a narrow definition of security, in contrast to those favouring a more complex and evolving concept of security.

Since the President was not re-elected, the clash between the two views within the administration, that surely would have become overt during a second term, never came about. The perspectives survived, however, and much of what the Eagleburger memo stated became a part of Clinton’s worldview. The ideas put forth in the DPG survived in think tanks and surfaced in articles and reports. They also functioned as an ideational platform for criticizing the Clinton Administration.

364 The DGP can be described as a primacist strategy, and the State Department memo can be characterized as an argument for cooperative security.
365 The two competing strategies would probably have clashed over the situation in Yugoslavia.
366 Zalmay Khalilzad, one of the prime architects of the DPG, published several articles supporting its main points during the mid-1990s. See Zalmay Khalilzad, From Containment to Global Leadership: America & the World after the Cold War (Santa Monica: RAND, 1995); Zalmay Khalilzad, "Losing the Moment? The United States and the World after the Cold War," Washington Quarterly, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring 1995).
5. The Clinton Administration

In a new era of peril and opportunity, our overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world’s community of market-based democracies. During the Cold War, we fought to contain a threat to the survival of free institutions. Now we seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under those free institutions, for our dream is that of a day when the opinions and energies of every person in the world will be given full expression in a world of thriving democracies that cooperate with each other and live in peace.

William J. Clinton, September 27, 1993

When Clinton assumed office, CASC was peripheral to U.S. interests, and the focus of the broad programs to assist the FSU, which had been put in place by his predecessor, was directed elsewhere. The lack of interest combined with meager amounts of aid suggest that the CASC region became included in these programs incrementally.

During the Clinton years, contacts between the U.S. and the CASC states gradually expanded. Without any tangible interest or specific initiatives on the part of the President, Congress, influenced by various interests, began to affect U.S. strategy toward CASC. Initially, human rights and democratic and economic reform were the central focus, but that soon changed. During the mid-90s, the region’s energy resources began to receive more attention. Within a few years, it went from being a backwater to being perceived as a strategically important area. During the latter half of the decade, a new threat emerged: international terrorism. Militant Islam and the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan would seriously complicate matters, and energy resources and terrorism would change the U.S. strategy toward CASC in a profound way. The Clinton Administration was faced with several important decisions, ranging from how best to integrate these states into the community of liberal market democracies, while at the same time fostering stability and reducing Iranian and Russian influence, to gaining access to the energy resources and helping them in their struggle against Islamic fundamentalism.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first consists of a detailed narrative of the Clinton Administration’s strategy toward CASC. The narrative is organized primarily chronologically. It is, though, also organized thematically, i.e. in relation to energy resources and terrorism. It begins with a brief introduction and a section that describes the domestic and international environment that the administration faced, including its general outlook. After that, follows a section about its focus on Russia and a section about the debates and criticism of its strategy toward CASC. A section that describes the early changes in the administration’s strategy toward CASC comes next. This is followed by several sections that focus on U.S. interest in the region’s energy resources and how this changed U.S. strategy. Then
follow several sections describing the administration’s increased effort to combat terrorism in the region. This part has the character of chronologically organized narrative, despite this thematization, since the administration took a strong interest in the region’s energy resources in the middle of the 1990s, while its more serious effort to combat terrorism in the region began in late 1998 at a time when its interests in the region’s energy had peaked. The second part of the chapter consists of an analysis of the administration’s strategy based on the neoclassical realist framework.

5.1 Introduction – The First Post-Cold War Election

The Soviet breakup signified a tremendous change in the international environment. However, the change was not a shock in the sense of leading U.S. policymakers to question their fundamental assumptions about U.S. strategy. The result was rather the opposite, and most observers interpreted it as a confirmation of the soundness of U.S. Cold War strategy. There was no demand to reassess or question its foundations. This attitude was also reflected in public opinion. The strategy debates of the 1992 presidential election clearly illustrate this.

George H.W. Bush was under pressure to cut defense spending, and his interest in foreign affairs was not popular. During the election, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton promised that he would “focus like a laser” on domestic issues. At the same time, he criticized the President for not assertively supporting human rights and democratic values, pointing to the cases of China, Haiti, Bosnia and Somalia. The promise was, of course, appealing to many of those longing for their share of the ‘peace dividends’, while the criticism appealed to those who now saw an opportunity to promote their goals of more energy and consistency than during the Cold War.

Like most Democrats, Clinton shared, or at least did not question, the assumptions behind U.S. Cold War strategy, and he campaigned on an ambitious internationalist agenda. So did President Bush. They shared the idea that U.S. leadership was crucial in these changing times. Their major disagreements over strategy were thus tactical in nature. There were, however, dissenters. During the primaries, Patrick Buchanan had challenged President Bush for the GOP nomination on a more conservative and neo-isolationist platform. He had called for "a new nationalism, a new patriotism, a new foreign policy that puts America first" and lashed out against Bush’s "cruc-


368 Clinton’s internationalism was to some extent motivated by the idea that it would reward him politically. Many democratic strategists, including Clinton himself, believed that in order to win, the democratic nominee had to project a strong and credible national security strategy and that meant avoiding to a considerable extent “leftish” and “dovish” arguments. It was also probably motivated by the fact that Clinton seemed convinced that this was a sound strategy.
sade for democracy” and “new world order.” In the general election Bush was weakened by Texas billionaire Ross Perot, who entered the race as a third party candidate on an anti-NAFTA platform.

George H.W. Bush suffered during the election. His pragmatic management of great power relations combined with his reluctance to talk about big ideas did not serve him well. Many perceived him, unlike Reagan, as lacking both a moral compass and a mission. He was also troubled by the fact that Saddam remained in power. Clinton used this perception in an effort to win over neoconservatives and democratic hawks. Many of them were upset with the President for not standing up for U.S. ideals and for what they perceived as his acquiescence to declinist ideas. Clinton offered a bolder vision in which the U.S. would assert moral authority and “not coddle tyrants from Baghdad to Beijing.”

He spoke passionately about the spread of democracy, which in an effective way provided a defining purpose for the country in the post-Cold War world. Born after WWII, Clinton was perceived by many as a new kind of Democrat unburdened by the recent dovish legacy of the party. He received the support of several prominent neoconservatives and later beat Bush two to one among Reagan democrats.

However, foreign affairs was not a top issue during the election. This was an important change compared to the Cold War years. The state U.S. economy dominated, and the public’s interest in events abroad was in decline. It was in this environment that Clinton had to act, and there was little guidance available. The ‘End of History’ and the ‘Unipolar Moment’ were memorable phrases, but no intellectual stepped forward with a clear direction for the U.S. in this new era. Clinton had also promised to be more assertive abroad and at the same time devote his energy to domestic issues.

5.1.1 Pushing the Tide – Engagement, Enlargement and U.S. Leadership

The primary purpose of this section is to describe the Clinton Administration’s overall approach to strategy. It provides important context for its strat-

371 For instance, Stuart Eizenstat, a former top advisor to President Carter, outlined a strategy memo entitled "Winning Back the Neoconservatives". See Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), p. 35.
373 Robert Kagan voted for Clinton believing he would stand up for U.S. ideals. Zbigniew Brzezinski and James Woolsey also became Clinton supporters.
egy toward CASC and illuminates the difference between the administration and its predecessor.

The central theme of Clinton’s first term was domestic revival. In contrast to the situation under his predecessor, foreign affairs were downgraded. However, states are always forced to make strategic decisions, and for Clinton globalization provided a convenient formula for fusing the domestic and the foreign into a single and seemingly coherent theme. This relieved him to some extent of the obligation to define and pursue a clear strategy. Clinton spoke with conviction about globalization. He described it as "the economic equivalent of a force of nature" and argued that its logic was inexorable and irreversible and made the division between the foreign and domestic obsolete. 374 This led Zbigniew Brzezinski to remark that Clinton "viewed foreign affairs as a continuation of domestic politics with other means", paraphrasing Clausewitz’s famous dictum that "war is a continuation of politics by other means". 375

The focus on the domestic sphere had several important consequences. It influenced both how decisions were made and how appointees were selected. Another aspect of the view of foreign affairs as an extension of domestic politics was that the pressure on Congress to broaden its attempts to legislate strategy increased. The notion that some geopolitical facts do not change was not taken to heart by Clinton. He had different ideas about ‘how the world works’. For Clinton and most members of his administration, the world had entered into a new era of globalisation, characterized by increased interdependence and economic competition. This resulted in an increased emphasis on what can be described as non-traditional threats and proliferation of WMDs, failed states, drug trafficking, terrorism, organized crime, ethnic and religious violence and environmental degradation at the expense of more traditional concerns, such as the balance of power. It also resulted in increased attention to the economy.

Clinton had read Robert Reich’s The Work of Nations thoroughly. He elevated the importance of the economy and reorganized economic policymaking in the White House. As a counterpart to the National Security Council, the National Economic Council was created, with Robert Rubin appointed to lead it. In his confirmation hearing, Secretary of State designate Warren Christopher, stated:

First we must elevate America’s economic security as a primary goal of our foreign policy. (…) [W]e must advance America’s economic security with the same energy and resourcefulness we devoted to waging the Cold War. (…) In an era in which competition is eclipsing ideological rivalry, it is time for di-

374 William J. Clinton, “Remarks at Vietnam National University in Hanoi, Vietnam,” No-
vember 17, 2000. See also Alfred Eckes, Jr. and Thomas Zeiler, Globalization and the Ameri-
plomacy that seeks to assure access for U.S. business to expanding global markets.\textsuperscript{376}

The Secretary of Defense’s report to Congress would later read: "International borders are no longer the barriers they once were. While interdependence has [positive features] it also means that events in other parts of the world are increasingly able to affect the U.S. security is now increasingly tied to the security and stability of other regions.\textsuperscript{377}

The focus on interdependence led the administration broaden its definition of security. It also implied that the U.S. was going to become even more engaged in the affairs of others. Clinton considered U.S. leadership to be indispensable and tried throughout his Presidency to explain to the American people how this new world worked.\textsuperscript{378}

[I]n the global village--with this kind of global economy--there is simply no clear dividing line between domestic and foreign policy. We can’t be strong abroad unless we’re strong at home. And we cannot be strong at home unless we are actively engaged in the world which is shaping events for every American.\textsuperscript{379}

The administration opposed what it perceived as isolationist tendencies. Just as its predecessor, representatives of the administration compared the international environment to the aftermath of the World Wars. After World War I the U.S. chose to retreat, with tragic consequences. However, but after World War II America responded positively, and the "sacrifices were great, but the payoffs were even greater".\textsuperscript{380} This statement was typical of the administration, and it used it frequently in calling for bipartisanship and support.

Clinton believed that the end of the Cold War created many opportunities for increasing global security and cooperation. It would open up possibilities for comprehensive U.S.–Russian initiatives to limit the arms race that had drained capital and been a source of tensions for decades as well as and create an opportunity for broadening the global system of shared security. It would also clear the way for the emergence of a stronger Atlantic community, and together the U.S. and Europe could serve as the energizing inner

\textsuperscript{378} Anthony Lake, Clinton’s National Security Advisor, emphasized that U.S. "interests and ideals compel us not only to be engaged but to lead". Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," Address at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, September 21, 1993, DSD, Vol. 4, No. 39 (Sept 27, 1993).
\textsuperscript{379} William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Annapolis," April 1, 1993.
core of globalization. These ideas did not deviate much from the general direction George H.W. Bush had set out, and the management of the FSU, especially Russia, still remained critical to achieving most of these goals.

The Clinton Administration perceived the FSU’s military capabilities as a formidable threat. Regardless of Russia’s intentions, the mere existence of its arsenal was threatening. Social and political unrest in the FSU, with its potential spill over effects on neighbouring states, was also a cause of concern. Successful reform in Russia was, therefore, a top priority for the administration. In May 1993, Secretary Christopher declared that no relationship was more important to U.S. long-term security than the strategic partnership with Russia: "if Russia reverts to dictatorship or collapses into anarchy, the consequences would be appalling": the "shadow of nuclear confrontation could return", the "peace dividend would be cancelled", "co-operation in foreign policy would vanish" and "the world-wide movement toward democracy would suffer a devastating setback".

The administration sought major reductions in former Soviet nuclear and conventional arms. It focused on the implementation of the various arms reductions treaties, such as START I and II. The Non-Proliferation Treaty and the CTRP continued to be important means for pursuing this goal. The cap on the nuclear arms race had important strategic consequences. After the U.S. promise to Russia not to exploit its advantage to obtain a decisive strategic superiority was codified, the U.S. could devote its vastly superior resources to improving its ability to project its conventional military forces globally and enhancing their capabilities. This gave the U.S. a capacity Russia could not even attempt to match.

President Clinton maintained the posture of forward deployment. In June 1993, Christopher declared that the U.S. commitment to Europe’s security was "undiminished and unwavering" and that it would maintain a level of U.S. forces in Europe "equal to the challenges of the new security environment". This would reassure allies and facilitate action, if necessary. The goal of primacy in European security affairs was also preserved, which meant more than just keeping NATO under U.S. leadership. Clinton sought to reinvigorate and renew the organization. For many Europeans this was not

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381 See, for instance, Perry, (1995).
enough, and soon proposals from Germany and Eastern European countries to expand NATO eastwardly became a vexing issue. Expansion would pose a direct challenge to Russia and be extremely harmful for the U.S.-Russian relationship if not handled properly. To solve the NATO question, a delicate balancing act was necessary. The result was the Partnership for Peace (PFP).

The scaling back of U.S. forces and defense cuts were not going to be as substantial as many had hoped or feared. The administration was determined that the U.S. remain the world’s only superpower: "The collapse of the Soviet Union enables us to significantly scale back our military establishments. But, nevertheless, our power must always be sufficient to counter any threat to our vital interests. We must be able to deter, and, when necessary, to defeat any foe."385 This meant that the U.S. would maintain its global scope and reach and signalled that the administration did not have any plans to facilitate a transition to a multipolar order, but rather intended to try to preserve the unipolar moment.

Deterrence and arms reduction was necessary and important, but the real remedy to the world’s problems was liberal democracy. Democracy was on the march, and Clinton wanted to give impetus to this movement.386 That meant promoting a liberal order based on open markets, free trade, democratic governments and human rights. The administration seemed to assume that such an order would create a spiral of international peace and prosperity. In a speech entitled From Containment to Enlargement Clinton’s National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, explained its overall approach:

To the extent democracy and market economics hold sway in other nations, our own nation will be more secure, prosperous, and influential, while the broader world will be more humane and peaceful. (…) The expansion of market-based economics abroad helps expand our exports and create American jobs, while it also improves living conditions and fuels demands for political liberalization abroad. The addition of new democracies makes us more secure, because democracies tend not to wage war on each other or sponsor terrorism. They are more trustworthy in diplomacy and do a better job of respecting the human rights of their people. These dynamics lay at the heart of Woodrow Wilson’s most profound insights (…).387

The idea of the democratic peace was clearly enunciated by the administration. In March 1993, Warren Christopher declared that "[d]emocracies tend not to make war on other democracies", and in his confirmation hearing he had argued that "[d]emocratic movements and governments are not only more likely to protect human and minority rights, they are also more likely to resolve ethnic, religious, and territorial disputes in a peaceful manner and

386 Christopher, "Statement at Senate Confirmation Hearing."
387 Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement."
to be reliable partners in diplomacy, trade, arms accords, and global environmental protection."\(^{388}\) Enlarging the community of market democracies would make the U.S. both safer and more prosperous. Therefore, it became a top strategic priority. The enlargement strategy, according to Lake, had four components:

First, we should strengthen the community of major market democracies--including our own--which constitutes the core from which enlargement is proceeding; Second, we should help foster and consolidate new democracies and market economies, where possible, especially in states of special significance and opportunity; Third, we must counter the aggression--and support the liberalization--of states hostile to democracy and markets; Fourth, we need to pursue our humanitarian agenda not only by providing aid but also by working to help democracy and market economics take root in regions of greatest humanitarian concern.\(^{389}\)

The administration emphasized that there was no conflict between U.S. ideals and interests in this endeavour. It gave assurances that the U.S. was not about to embark on a "democratic crusade" but described it as a "pragmatic commitment". Moreover, the core of the strategy was "to help democracy and markets to expand and survive in other places where we have the strongest security concerns and where we can make the greatest difference". In this regard, the FSU stood out as "the most important example".\(^{390}\)

The idea that states that had never been democracies, or had very different cultures than the West, were not susceptible to democracy promotion, as Samuel Huntington would later suggest, was dismissed by the administration: "[I]t is wrong to assume these ideas will be embraced only by the West and rejected by the rest. Culture does shape politics and economics. But the idea of freedom has universal appeal. Thus, we have arrived at neither the end of history nor a clash of civilizations but a moment of immense democratic and entrepreneurial opportunity. We must not waste it."\(^{391}\) The idea that the internal structure of other states was a U.S. concern was clearly shared by the administration. Clinton explained why:


\(^{389}\) Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement."

\(^{390}\) Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement."; William J. Clinton, \textit{A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement}, (Washington, DC, White House, February, 1995). See also Christopher, "Statement at Senate Confirmation Hearing"; and Christopher, "Budget Priorities for Shaping a New Foreign Policy."

\(^{391}\) Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement." Huntington made the argument that trying to project western values into other civilizations was not just doomed to fail, but counterproductive to U.S. security. Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993).
During the Cold War our foreign policy largely focused on relations among nations. Our strategies sought a balance of power to keep the peace. Today, our policies must also focus on relations within nations, on a nation’s form of governance, on its economic structure [and] on its ethnic tolerance. These are concern to us, for they shape how these nations treat their neighbors as well as their own people.392

The administration’s ideas about interdependence and democratization meant that the U.S. had to be more willing to intervene politically, and sometimes militarily, in other states. Humanitarian intervention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and nation-building were, according to the administration, both legitimate and necessary means. Given the nature of many of the new threats, the most efficient means to address them were multilaterally and through institutions. This would also make interventions more legitimate and cheaper through burden sharing. UN Representative Madeleine Albright described the approach as "assertive diplomacy".393 This shift was not appreciated very much at the Pentagon, but it was forced to adapt. In 1993, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Frank Wisner, stated that peacekeeping was to be "at the core" of its post-Cold War activities.394

In pursuit of its goals, the administration also sought to rely more on the private sector. Anthony Lake described this as another part of enlargement: "In all these efforts, a policy of enlargement should take on a second meaning; we should pursue our goals through an enlarged circle not only of government officials but also of private and non-governmental groups."395

Despite its enlargement rhetoric, the administration occasionally mentioned that "other American interests at times will require us to befriended and even defend non-democratic states for mutually beneficial reasons."396 This indicated that it was willing to compromise its principled positions. It also undermined the notion of harmony between U.S. interests and ideals. There was also another problem with the approach. The administration wanted to liberalize the global economy and spread democracy, but was notoriously vague on how economic integration and democratic reform were related to each other and how to prioritize between them. Clinton was soon faced with

392 William J. Clinton: "Remarks to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Annapolis."
393 Madeleine Albright, "Use of Force in a Post Cold War World," Address at the National War College, National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, September 23, 1993, DSD, Vol. 4, No. 39 (Sept 27, 1993). Anthony Lake wanted the foreign policy team to deliver a single message. However, he was unable to convince his colleagues and there was never any agreement on a single concept to describe the administration’s strategy. See Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), p. 69.
395 Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement."
396 Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement."
decisions on how to deal with the emerging China. Should he waive the normal human rights stipulations and extend most favored nation status (MFN) to China in order to facilitate the progressive integration of its economy into the world system? Or, should he wait and use the MFN status as a carrot to induce China to make democratic reforms? Clinton chose the former. The reasoning behind it seemed to be that in the long run countries that accept international rules and are drawn into greater interdependence would inevitably develop a growing respect for human rights. Globalization would thus eventually redress the morally troubling concession. On the basis this logic, the administration could engage economically in authoritarian regimes, such as the states of CASC, while arguing that this would eventually lead to democracy. Naturally, not everybody accepted this, and Clinton was criticized for choosing economic opportunism before democratic reform.

Leadership was a constant theme for the administration. The NSS of 1994 stated that leadership had "never been more important" and ended by declaring the administration’s commitment to exert "leadership in the world that reflects our best national values". This theme did not change in any significant way during Clinton’s tenure. In 1996, Clinton declared that the U.S. was the indispensable nation: "The fact is that America remains the indispensable nation. There are times when America, and only America, can make a difference between war and peace, between freedom and repression, between hope and fear. [Where] our interest and values demand it and where we can make a difference, America must act and lead."

Clinton had an optimistic world view and seemed to perceive the movement toward more freedom and democracy as inevitable. He also refused to accept the purported zero sum quality of international politics according to which one country’s gain was another’s loss. For Clinton, globalization ended the zero-sum game that defined the Cold War. He often argued

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398 It is important to note that the ideas of globalization and interdependence not only served as assumptions informing the administration about how the world worked. The rhetoric and vocabulary of globalization also effectively discredited proposals that could be labelled as isolationist.
400 See Winnerstig, (2000).
that the real challenge was for countries to come up with ways to cooperate with each other.\textsuperscript{402} The rejection of the zero-sum idea was implicit in numerous speeches, although on some occasions it was explicit. In her confirmation hearing, Madeleine Albright declared that "in the post-Cold War era, big power diplomacy is not a zero-sum game" and later argued that:

NATO poses no danger to Russia, just as Russia poses no danger to NATO. (…) The truth is, the quest for freedom and security in Europe is not a Zero-sum game in which Russia must lose if central Europe gains (…). Such thinking has imposed enormous human and economic costs during the last 50 years. And we have a responsibility as well as an opportunity to transcend it.\textsuperscript{403}

This was not only a rejection of realism. It also tells us something interesting about the mind-set of the administration. Many were predicting that the forces of multipolarity would soon begin to shape the international environment and that the U.S. had to accommodate that transition or try to remain a hegemon. They conceived of conflict in the future and anticipated that a new Great Game was about to begin to fill the power vacuum created by Soviet breakup. Statements rejecting zero-sum notions indicated that the administration would not be willing to play the game. From a realist point of view, this was naive and would increase the risk of misinterpreting other states’ actions. If the U.S. did not play a zero sum game while others did, it would not be hard to figure out who the loser was going to be.

5.1.2 The Partnership for Peace and the Russia First Policy

The purpose of this section is to describe the Clinton Administration’s focus on Russia and the Partnership for Peace Program. It also demonstrates how the importance of CASC ranked compared to other issues.

Clinton pledged to improve and coordinate U.S. ties with the NIS. Even before assuming office, he had set policy guidelines for the FSU. From the very outset, he was preoccupied with cultivating a robust U.S. relationship

\textsuperscript{402} This was the main argument of Robert Wright’s book \textit{Nonzero}, which Clinton later mentioned in his public speeches as dovetailing his own ideas about how the world works Robert Wright, \textit{Nonzero: The Logic of Human Evolution} (New York: Little, Brown, 2000). See also Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), p. 288.

with Russia.\footnote{Talbott, (2002), p. 78.} A few days before the Vancouver summit meeting with President Yeltsin, three months into his presidency, Clinton stated that he believed it was "essential" to "do all that we can to strike a strategic alliance with Russian reform.\footnote{William J. Clinton: "Remarks to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Annapolis."} This would be the goal of the summit. Immediately after it Clinton announced a $1.6 billion assistance package to Russia.

The package did not signify a policy shift from the previous administration, however there were some changes, such as an increased level of assistance targeted at privatization.\footnote{It went from $20 million to $60 million. Tarnoff, (2002).} The more extensive and rapidly privatization occurred, the more irreversible 'the revolution' would be, the administration figured. A day before the summit, Clinton appointed his friend Strobe Talbott as Ambassador at Large for the NIS. He also appointed Vice President Gore to co-chair a commission on technological cooperation with the Russian Prime Minister, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown to co-chair a business development committee with the Deputy Foreign Minister and a full-time ombudsman to facilitate U.S. investments. This signalled that Russia was a top priority for the President.

The Congressional debate regarding the costs and effectiveness of the aid to Russia dragged on, but once again external events would hasten development. In September 1993, a political crisis erupted in Russia. Under increasing pressure President Yeltsin had dissolved the legislature and called for elections. With the possibility of political reversals, Yeltsin supporters in Congress argued that it was now critical to demonstrate continued U.S. support for reform. Two days later, the FY1993/1994 aid proposal to Russia and the NIS was approved by the Senate. It is important to note that the aid was not unconditional. Congress attached conditions, some, though not all, of which allowed for a Presidential waiver, which would affect whether Russia and the other NIS remained eligible.\footnote{The early debates on aid in 1992 and 1993 focused on issues regarding funding and conditionality. This focus shifted, however, and the debates in 1994 and after seemed to be more about on the effectiveness of U.S. assistance efforts.}

Regarding the NIS, Clinton put U.S. relations with Russia first. One example of this was the PFP program, which was the result of a balancing act between Russian sentiments and the pressure to expand NATO.\footnote{For an excellent study of the U.S. decision to expand NATO, including the PFP, see James Goldgeier, Not Whether but When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999).} NATO’s involvement in the Caucasus had begun somewhat accidentally as a subsidiary to the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE).\footnote{The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (or CFE Treaty), signed in Paris on November 19, 1990, by the 22 members of NATO and the former Warsaw Pact, entered into force in 1992.} The
treaty was negotiated by NATO and the Warsaw Pact to increase confidence and reduce the risks of war in Central Europe. Its jurisdiction extended from the Atlantic to the Urals, including the Caucasus, and it stipulated a ceiling on the quantities of military equipment the blocs could maintain. The blocs were divided into zones primarily constructed around Central Europe, but the Flank Zone included the Caucasus. The states of the Caucasus were not independent at the time and not the subject of any serious commercial or security interest, but were included in the agreement with respect to Central European security.

When the Soviet Union disintegrated, Russia was acutely concerned about its ‘near abroad’. Moscow announced that it could not meet its pledged reductions in the Flank Zone and requested that NATO adjust Russia’s CFE obligations. This was a dilemma for NATO, which was faced with either acquiescing and accommodating Russia in the Flank Zone and thereby ignore the interests of Georgia, Azerbaijan and, more importantly, Turkey, or risking the breakdown of an otherwise successful and important arms control agreement.

The U.S. and NATO permitted the higher Russian force levels. This decision was made partly because many believed that Russia would maintain its forces in the region regardless, but mainly because the treaty helped to maintain stability in Central Europe, an area considered far more important than Caucasus. The decision was a clear indication of the administration’s priorities. It was not received well by policymakers in Baku, Tbilisi and Ankara, who perceived their countries as being sacrificed by the U.S. and NATO.

In response to the NATO question, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin began to devise a plan that would link Eastern Europe and the NIS to NATO. This plan – ingeniously labeled the Partnership for Peace – would make expansion more likely but delay any actual decision. The PFP would not extend NATO’s Article V protection. It would, however, help resist any Russian claims to wield veto power over NATO activities in the states concerned.

Promoting a good relationship with Russia was crucial to Clinton, and he did not want to give any ammunition to hardliners in Moscow nor to alienate Yeltsin. There were widespread fears that expanding NATO too rapidly could provoke a backlash. Russian forces were at the time still deployed in Poland and the Baltics. The situation in Bosnia also exacerbated the situation, since it was an open challenge to NATO’s credibility. Clinton also faced domestic criticism from more hawkish elements, who wanted him to

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410 Numerous U.S. analysts and officials within the Department of State and the DoD objected to the idea of expanding NATO. Historian John Lewis Gaddis, Sam Nunn and Paul Nitze were among those that feared that it would revive the antagonisms of the Cold War. Secretary of Defense William Perry even considered resigning in late 1994 when the expansion plans were set in motion.
stop coddling the Russians and move ahead.411 The debate was intense among U.S. foreign policy elites. However, as an indication of the declining interest in foreign affairs, the American public was generally indifferent regarding the matter.412 Secretary Christopher explained the U.S. position:

The U.S. believes that the objective of promoting security and stability in Europe could be undermined if NATO were to be expanded too rapidly. We want to avoid premature selections or hasty prejudgments. Such a course as that would risk dividing Europe by creating new blocs and unintentionally replicating a bit further to the east a line of demarcation that NATO has fought for such a long time to erase.413

In order not to agitate Russia, the PFP was intentionally designed to be open ended. It extended an open invitation, and its proposed members included NATO and the states participating in NACC, the CSCE and other European states, including Russia. This meant that the states of CASC were also invited to join. In November, 1993, Christopher explained the PFP before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

This partnership would play an important role in the evolutionary process of NATO expansion, creating an evolving security relationship that could culminate in NATO membership. This Partnership for Peace is a first step by the alliance to help fill the vacuum of insecurity and instability that was created in Central and Eastern Europe by the demise of the Soviet empire. It reflects our strong belief that the reform movements in Eastern Europe must be bolstered by the prospect of security cooperation with the West.414

The partnership would be a testing ground for states wishing to join NATO, On January 7, 1994, Christopher declared that it would "allow the nations to demonstrate their credentials for potential future membership."415 A few days later in Prague, Clinton made it plain that the question was not whether NATO would expand, but when:

Let me be absolutely clear: The security of your states is important to the security of the United States. (...) While the Partnership is not NATO membership, neither is it a permanent holding room. It changes the entire NATO dialog so that now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members but when and how.\textsuperscript{416}

The administration repeatedly emphasized that the PFP and NATO expansion should not be interpreted as a move against Russia. The NSS of 1995 would later declare: "NATO expansion will not be aimed at replacing one division of Europe with a new one. In this regard, we have a major stake in ensuring that Russia is engaged as a vital participant in European security affairs. We are committed to a growing, healthy NATO-Russia relationship and want to see Russia closely involved in the Partnership for Peace."\textsuperscript{417} The expansion of NATO did not only secure U.S. primacy over European security affairs but was also a means of securing the integration of the new members into the community of liberal democracies. The NSS was explicit on this point: "Expanding the Alliance (…) will build confidence, and give new democracies a powerful incentive to consolidate their reforms."\textsuperscript{418}

All of the CASC states, with the exception of Tajikistan, joined the PFP in 1994. However, the focus of the planners was almost entirely on Eastern Europe. Its openness had primarily been designed to avoid agitating Russia, and NATO seemed to have no clear policy for CASC. Understandably, the PFP was perceived by many in the NIS as a path toward inclusion in NATO. This perception was also nurtured by NATO’s ambitious statements about the goals of the partnership. The PFP fact sheet stated that participation did "not guarantee entry" but was the "best preparation for states interested in becoming NATO members".\textsuperscript{419}

In practice, the PFP was designed to promote civilian control of the military: enable joint operations with NATO-led peacekeeping and humanitarian missions; encourage transparency in defence planning and budgeting; and, open communication among PFP countries. However, there was very little political guidance as to what NATO’s priorities in CASC actually were, and the planners had intentionally attempted to avoid foreclosing any policy options. Senior NATO officials stated that future membership was open to all of the CASC states, even as they admitted off the record that there was no possibility of any of these states ever being permitted to join.\textsuperscript{420} The lack of clarity and guidance and the mixed signals would complicate things in the

\textsuperscript{417} William J. Clinton, National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.
\textsuperscript{418} William J. Clinton, National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.
future. It was also indicative of the general lack of interest in CASC as a region.

Clinton’s initial years in office have been described as the American-Russian honeymoon, but there were some tiffs.421 The December 1993 parliamentary election and the subsequent resignations of several prominent reformers from Yeltsin’s cabinet led to a debate about the efficacy of U.S. assistance. Then, in early 1994, the fall out of the Ames spy case led to additional pressure. This incident played right into the hands of those mistrusting Russia, and some members of Congress even called for a freeze on assistance.422 These developments strengthened the idea that the U.S. should stop relying so much on Russia as the focus of reform and target more of its assistance on the other NIS. Soon thereafter, the administration indicated it would pursue a 50–50 split in future resource allocation decisions.

President Clinton met with Kazak President Nazarbayev in the White House on February 14, 1994, and announced a significant increase in assistance due to Kazakhstan’s moves to eliminate nuclear weapons and economic reforms. Together they signed the U.S.-Kazak Charter of Democratic Partnership, which covered everything from politics and military cooperation to technology, ecology and health care. At the signing ceremony, Clinton stated that they had "established the basis for a long-term partnership of immense strategic importance and economic potential for the U.S."423 That day Clinton also announced the formation of a U.S.-Kazakh Joint Commission headed by President Nazarbayev and Vice-President Al Gore. During the preceding years, U.S. based oil company Chevron and others had invested heavily in Kazakhstan, and its energy resources were a hot topic during the meeting. It was clear that Kazakhstan remained the most important state in CASC for the U.S. and, when asked how he viewed Kazakhstan in relation to the wider region, Clinton answered:

The United States believes that Kazakhstan is critically important to our interests and to the future of democracy and stability in Central Asia because of its size; because of its geographic location, near China as well as Russia, as well as so many other countries that are important in that area; because of its immense natural wealth; and because of its progress in promoting reforms; and because of its strong leadership. So it’s a very, very important country to us and a very important part of our future calculations.424

422 Aldridge Ames was a CIA counter-intelligence officer who was convicted of spying for the USSR and Russia.
424 William J. Clinton, "The President's News Conference With President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan."
Clinton also maintained the policy of promoting Turkish influence in CASC. In mid-October 1993, he met with Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller in Washington to develop "an enhanced relationship". Clinton declared that he was "committed to preserving and strengthening [the U.S.’s] long tradition of close cooperation with Turkey". In a subsequent joint statement, the Prime Minister explained Turkey’s role in CASC.

Turkey - whose geographic position literally centers it in the ring of fires blazing from the Caucasus and the Balkans - serves as a secular, democratic model for its neighboring countries seeking to develop pluralistic political systems. Likewise, Turkey’s secularism acts to deflect the rising tide of fundamentalism. We must consolidate the democratization process within the framework of this new era. Turkey is totally committed to this process from Central Asia to the very heart of the European continent. And I am confident, Mr. President, that you will agree that we have the complete support of the United States to assist us in this endeavor. In the long run, strengthening democracy in my region of the world not only promotes peace and stability there but also advances the cause of global peace. 

President Clinton concurred. It fit perfectly with the Engagement and Enlargement theme. However, by mid-1993 it had become clear to informed observers that Turkey would not be able to replace Russian influence in CASC. Turkey had domestic problems, and the peoples of Central Asia were ambivalent toward its ambitions. The death of the Turkish President Turgut Özal in April, 1993, also deprived this drive of some of its momentum. Özal had spearheaded the efforts to encourage the development of commercial and government contacts in CASC. Before his death, he had gathered the leaders of the newly independent Turkic states for a series of summit meetings. The first meeting was held in Ankara in 1992, and after his death the initiative lived on. The U.S. continued to support Turkey in the region, but it no longer considered it to be a "simple fix". 

5.1.3 The Strategic Debate – Consensus, Criticism and Attention Deficit

The purpose of this section is to describe the foreign policy establishment’s early debates about CASC. It provides important context for understanding

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426 William J. Clinton, "The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tansu Ciller of Turkey."
427 Olcott, (2005), p. 73.
428 Olcott, (2005), p. 53. In a discussion with Dr. Frederick Starr, Starr summarized the attitudes in Central Asia toward Turkey: "They had just gotten rid of their big brother and were not looking for a new one."
what kind of pressure the administration faced and how the region was perceived.

The Republicans were divided among themselves regarding which direction the nation should take. The end of the Cold War had "severed the Republican internationalist tradition from Republican nationalism". The party was turning inward, and many wanted to do away with as many constraints on the U.S. as possible. The Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia and the debacle on Haiti gave rise to the enduring phrases associated with Clinton’s early interventions of ‘mission creep’ and ‘nation building’. As a consequence, the Powell doctrine was strengthened. Clinton had disappointed many neoconservatives, but they also found themselves abandoned by a GOP more interested in the ‘peace dividend’ than in promoting values abroad.

After the Republican landslide in the 1994 congressional election, it became more difficult for the Clinton to pursue his enlargement agenda. Congress tightened the purse strings, the State Department’s budget was reduced and it became harder to initiate new programs and to maintain financing for existing programs. The Republicans were overtly confident after winning both houses of Congress, and in order to demonstrate that they were now in charge, Secretary Christopher was not invited as a lead witness, as is customary, when the House International Relations Committee opened its first hearing in January 1995. Instead, his predecessor James Baker took the floor and outlined what he described as a paradigm of "selective engagement".

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431 There are no formal Powell Doctrine documents or anything similar. The notion was created by journalists in the run up to Operation Desert Storm and is to a considerable extent similar to the Weinberger Doctrine. Essentially, the doctrine expresses the idea that military action should be used only as a last resort and only if there is a clear threat to a vital national security interests; force, when used, should be overwhelming and disproportionate to the enemy’s forces; there must be strong support among the general public; costs and risks must have been fully analysed; consequences of the military action must have been fully considered; and, there must be a clear exit strategy from the conflict in which the military is engaged.
433 The Republican Party gained 54 seats in the House of Representatives and thereby attained a majority in the House for the first time since 1954. It also picked up eight Senate seats, and shortly after the election the balance was 53-47 in their favour. The party also won twelve governorships. The election of 1994 is sometimes referred to as the Republican Revolution.
It is important to recognize that the desirability of fostering objectives, such as democratization, the creation of free markets, responsible security policies and integration with the West, was widely shared. The real disagreements were over what the appropriate level and scope of U.S. involvement should be in the NIS, including CASC. The answer was dependent on the assessment of this particular region’s overall importance to U.S. interests. Reflecting the grand strategic debate, there was no consensus. Those who perceived security as highly interdependent argued that the U.S. should engage in order to help prevent political instability that could potentially produce spill-over effects in important nearby states, including friends and allies such as Turkey. Alleviating human suffering and spreading democracy in this part of the world would also, in the long term, increase U.S. security. Others argued that the U.S. historically had few interests in this land-locked conflict-ridden region and that major involvement might place U.S. personnel in danger. For them, the U.S. should seek primarily to encourage demilitarization and cooperative threat reduction measures but not pursue any other goals.

It was thus possible to build broad support for security assistance to the region. Military education and training programs had additional benefits as well. Such programs would foster the creation of a professional western style military and a democratic civil military relation which would reduce the chances of military coups. Moreover the training they would receive through PFP was multilateral in scope and could spur regional cooperation. Support for security assistance, however, did not in any way, shape, or form imply any formal security guarantees.

There was not much debate over whether the overall goal of democratizing CASC was sound or not. The debate was more concerned with how this could best be done. While the leaders of the CASC states generally appeared to juxtapose democratization to stability and always opted for stability, the administration and many others perceived these two to be complementary, particularly in the long term. The idea was that, although these states had only made scant progress with regard to democratic reform, over a generation they would emulate positive features of Turkish or secular democracies. Human rights activists were critical of this policy. They wanted the administration to push these states harder on human rights and democratic reform and pointed out that the focus on slow and gradual change unwittingly assisted the repressive regimes in remaining in power, something that, in turn, might encourage a countervailing rise of Islamic fundamentalism as an alternative channel of dissent. More radical critics urged reducing or cutting off most aid to those regimes that seriously violated human rights, arguing that aid provided tacit support.

There were also some who argued that the region was historically attuned to authoritarianism and that any democratization effort there was,
therefore, unlikely to succeed. This perspective was less common, but it received intellectual support from Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*, which advised against the projection of Western values.

There was no consensus among the few analysts who specifically focused on CASC. They were unified, though, in their complaint that the region suffered from an attention deficit. This was hardly surprising, coming from area specialists. It was also no surprise that some of them argued that the administration should reduce its refereeing of Russian, Iranian and Chinese influence in the region so that the CASC states could develop freely. This argument was also supported by some renown strategists. With references to the classical geopolitical writings of Halford Mackinder and others, they considered the region, geographically located between great powers, to be as important for the control of the Eurasian landmass. Seen in this context, U.S. interest in CASC was strategically important, even vital. The interesting point with this perspective was that the primary reason for U.S. engagement was in order to gain an advantageous strategic position vis-à-vis its far more important and powerful neighbours. This meant that the U.S. had other interests in engaging CASC besides democratization or access to its resources. The region thus also entered the debate as a subtopic in discussions about U.S. strategy toward Russia, Iran and, later, China.

Regarding the CASC-Iran nexus, there were voices calling for the U.S. to recognize the region’s ties to Iran, and to stop pressing the CASC states to limit them. Increased trade with Iran would help them to develop and thereby increase their stability and resilience against both internal and external pressures. This sub-debate became less academic when energy resources, terrorism and WMDs entered into the equation, and it highlights some of the strategic choices the administration faced.

The U.S. interest in restricting Iran’s influence conflicted with the desire of many of the CASC states to build pipelines through Iran. Developing the region’s energy resources was perceived as the top priority for its economic development, and routes through Iran were regarded as the most economically viable. Those that supported the idea of a U.S.-Iranian rapprochement could strengthen their case by arguing that allowing pipelines through Iran would lead to a less hostile Iranian attitude toward U.S. investments and pro-U.S. governments in CASC. These arguments, however, hardly made a dent

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435 This argument emphasized the absence of movements like Solidarity in Poland or the velvet revolutionaries in Czechoslovakia and the fact that the peoples of the region had not had to fight for their independence. Frederick Starr, "Power Failure: American Policy in the Caspian", *National Interest*, No. 47 (Spring 1997).
436 Zbigniew Brzezinski was the most influential proponent of this argument. By engaging CASC, the U.S. could facilitate the balance of power on the Eurasian landmass. From this geopolitical perspective the question was whether offshore balancing was the most suitable strategy, or if the U.S. should become more directly engaged.
in the U.S. Iran policy, since allowing routes through Iran would increase its influence.

In May, 1993, the administration announced that it would adjust U.S. strategy toward the Gulf region and outlined a policy of dual containment. The new aim was to contain Iran and Iraq rather than trying to balance them against each other. In 1995, President Clinton strengthened sanctions against Iran, and in August, 1996, Congress passed the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act. One goal of the act was to deny Iran the ability to support terrorism and to fund the development and acquisition of WMDs by limiting its ability to explore, extract, refine and transport its energy resources. These actions clearly signalled U.S. strategic priorities: containing Iran was far more important than the economic development of the CASC. The debate regarding the U.S.-Iran relationship became more aggravated as the potential energy resources of CASC received more attention and the U.S. became involved in pipeline diplomacy. However, the fiercest debate was over Clinton’s Russia policy.

Not surprisingly, Russia was at the center of the post-Soviet debate. The dominant perspective was that if reform failed in Russia, the likelihood of success in other states would be non-existent and that a less democratic Russia would likely soon seek to reabsorb the region. For that reason, Russia ought to be prioritized. Reforms there could also serve as an example for CASC.

There was not really any disagreement regarding the goal of democratizing Russia and the NIS. The prioritization of Russia was, however, questioned. Critics pointed out that the administration seemed to be guided by an idealistic hope that Russia would reform, which resulted in a far too accommodating posture. This criticism was primarily aimed at those that seemed to acquiesce to Russia’s claims of historic rights to a sphere of influence in its ‘near abroad’. In February, 1993, Yeltsin had called for Russia to be given "special responsibilities" for ensuring stability in the territory of the FSU. In effect, Russia seemed to be seeking a ‘Monroe Doctrine’ for its near abroad when it wanted the international community to recognize the territory of the FSU as a region where it had special rights and interests.

Even though Clinton openly supported the sovereignty and independence of the NIS, he was accused of acquiescing to Yeltsin’s demands. Paul Wolfowitz and Zbigniew Brzezinski were highly critical of Clinton’s Russia policy, and they were the ones that set the tone of the debate. For them, it was obvious that Russia used the CIS as a mechanism for integrating the NIS

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438 It should be noted that some were inclined to accept Russia’s claims for realist reasons. Realists do not have any objections to the notion of spheres of influence and since the U.S. did not have any real interests in the CASC, some did not object to the idea of Russia assuming responsibility for maintaining order in the region.
under its leadership. They were both affiliated with the School of Advanced Studies at John Hopkins in Washington, and their critique came to be influential.

Wolfowitz had served in the George H.W. Bush Administration as Undersecretary for Defense Policy. It was on his insistence that the U.S. had established Defense Attaché offices at its embassies in Central Asia and that the first military-to-military contacts took place. Besides being a former National Security Advisor, Brzezinski had travelled in CASC in the fifties, and this experience had reinforced his original academic interest in the region. With his background and regional expertise, his advice was given attention. Because of these circumstances, it is appropriate to present their criticism more extensively.

In January 1994 Wolfowitz wrote that the administration identified its own success so closely with Yeltsin’s that it had become hostage to his future, a future over which the U.S. had little control. This not only made it less capable of assessing Yeltsin critically but also led the U.S. to subordinate “its policy toward other countries in the region to concern about how those policies will affect Yeltsin, even where U.S. interests may be large and the effect on Yeltsin marginal.” He charged that the administration was “unresponsive to the security concerns of the East Europeans”, “unenthusiastic in its support for Ukrainian independence”, “unwilling to challenge Russia’s actions in its so-called ‘near-abroad’” and that its “policy of ‘Russia first’” was slipping into a dangerous and misguided policy of ‘Russia only’.” Naturally, Wolfowitz also rejected the PFP, criticizing Clinton for not pursuing a real expansion of NATO.

A few months later, Brzezinski disqualified the administration’s attempt at replacing containment with a partnership as "premature" and driven by "idealist optimism". The assumption underlying and functioning as a reinforcing premise of Clinton’s Russia policy was the notion that the prospects for the emergence of a stable and enduring Russian liberal democracy, were reasonable high. Brzezinski questioned this and argued "that the weight of history" would "not soon permit Russia to stabilize as a democracy" and that "the single minded cultivation of a partnership with Russia, while downgrading other interests", would "simply accelerate the reemergence of an ominously familiar imperial challenge to Europe’s security". He warned that Russia’s imperial impulses remained strong and pointed out that

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442 Early critics of PFP faulted the program as lacking in substance and perceived it as a political smokescreen for indecision on NATO expansion.
444 Brzezinski pointed, in particular, out U.S. position on the CFE Treaty.
it was using military, economic and institutional means to subordinate many of the former Soviet republics. He concluded that its current objectives were "at the very least proto-imperial", "if not openly imperial".445

Instead of this "counterproductive" approach, Brzezinski offered an alternative that he called "geopolitical pluralism". Its main point was that by strengthening the independence of Russia’s neighbors, an environment would be created that would inhibit Russia’s imperial impulses.446 He provided numerous examples of the tactics this strategy would employ. It "would call for a balanced distribution of financial aid to Russia and to the non-Russian states". It would "treat Moscow and Kiev more even-handed", because "without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire". It would condition U.S. aid to Russia on the end of its efforts to subordinate it neighbors. And, finally, it would pay more attention and interest to the independence of the states of CASC. This last proposal is particularly noteworthy, because this was one of the rare occasions when CASC was singled out as an important area, in the early debate on U.S. post-Cold War strategy.447

Brzezinski emphasized that even modest involvement would have "considerable political impact" in CASC. Interestingly, he also argued that human rights and democracy ought not determine U.S. relations with CASC, pointing particularly to the U.S.-Uzbekistan relationship.

U.S. political relations with Uzbekistan, and to some extent Turkmenistan, both of which appear determined to resist external domination, have lagged because in Washington’s view these largely Muslim countries have made insufficient progress toward democracy. Yet U.S. policy toward Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, for example, does not appear to be motivated by the same concern and, for equally good strategic reasons, neither was it in years past toward Taiwan or Korea.448

The realist saying that human rights are a luxury that a sober foreign policy often cannot afford seems very close at hand here. This is a rare and important passage, and it does not shirk the conflict between ideals and interest, order and justice, U.S. short-term and long-term goals and the necessity of choice. Brzezinski wanted U.S. strategy to consist of "a dose of tough-minded geopolitics, mixed with a friendly sentiment for the Russian people but also with sympathy for the aspirations of the non-Russians."449

In essence, Wolfowitz and Brzezinski argued that the U.S. should prioritize and strengthen Russia’s neighbors in order to inhibit or deter Russia.

445 The use of Russian settlers as a justification for claiming the right to intervene in CASC was particularly noteworthy to Brzezinski.
446 Brzezinski supported NATO expansion for similar reasons. It would fill the "security vacuum" that tempted the Russian imperialists.
447 It is also noteworthy that Brzezinski made an explicit differentiation between the Central Asian states and the three states of Caucasus.
However, at the time of their criticism, few seemed to care about the CASC region. The area specialists had a point when they complained that CASC suffered from an attention deficit.

5.1.4 U.S. Ideals and Interests – Uzbekistan: From Pariah to Key State

The purpose of this section is to describe the evolution of the Clinton administration’s early approach to CASC. It demonstrates how it initially prioritized democratization and reforms but gradually compromised its principled positions as it began to perceive other interests in the region. I will show how a tension between U.S. ideals and interests began to build up which is important for understanding the consistency and coherence in U.S. strategy. The section focuses particularly on how Uzbekistan went from being a pariah to a key state.

The administration’s attitude toward CASC states was initially shaped by their commitments to democratic and economic reform. Tiny and poor Kyrgyzstan was advanced as an example to the region because of President Akayev’s seemingly visionary statements about reform. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, had not made a good impression. Since its independence, the country was known for its poor human rights record. It did not receive a favorable treatment by the administration and received less assistance than some of the other CASC states.

It is telling that on one of the first occasions when Uzbekistan was singled out and mentioned in a public statement without reference to the NIS or Central Asia, only negative remarks were made. In June 1993 the State Department informed about an incident that threatened the bilateral relationship. On May 25 officers of the National Security Service had reportedly beaten and detained a U.S. embassy Foreign Service national employee at Tashkent Airport. The U.S. embassy in Tashkent protested against this incident the same day. More than two weeks later, the Uzbek government replied by publishing an article signed by the head of the Uzbek Foreign Ministry’s press office in all major daily Uzbek newspapers. It openly alleged that the U.S. embassy misrepresented the facts. In response, the State Department declared that the U.S. government had "determined that as long as U.S. employees are being harassed and beaten by the Uzbek authorities, it would be entirely inappropriate to engage in activities from which Uzbek

450 This was totally unrealistic and reflected a lack of knowledge about the region. More informed analysts knew that tiny Kyrgyzstan would not be able to influence any of its larger and more powerful neighbours.
451 This is the first time Uzbekistan is singled out in the Department of State Dispatch.
452 The National Security Service is the Uzbek successor to the KGB.
officials would benefit". That included the termination of a visit by Uzbek parliamentarians that was underway, and an initiative to review U.S. bilateral activities with Uzbekistan. 453

When Uzbek President Islam Karimov a couple of months later visited the U.S. for the first time to attend the UN General Assembly’s 48th session, he did not receive any invitation to the White House. However, both trade and security contacts increased during 1994. In January a bilateral agreement regulating trade entered into force, providing for the extension of MFN status to Uzbekistan. In August the U.S. additionally granted exemptions from many import tariffs under the Generalized System of Preferences. 454 Security contacts through the CTRP between the two countries were also begun in 1994. 455

The administration’s interests in the region was growing. When Vice President Gore and Secretary Christopher visited Central Asia during the fall and-winter of 1993–1994, the most important question was Kazakhstan’s nuclear weapons. In December, Kazakhstan signed a Safe, Secure Dismantlement agreement that provided U.S. assistance for their ultimate destruction. That same month, Gore expressed the intention to establish a Central Asian-American Enterprise Fund. It would have a similar purpose and similar authority as the already existing Enterprise Funds in Russia and Central Europe and would complement U.S. assistance in the region. 456 The fact that this fund was established much later than the others is an indication of the administration’s priorities.

These initiatives were appreciated by U.S. businesses and by those sharing the administration’s ideas about economic interdependence. Others more interested in human rights and democratic reform complained that the U.S. was not pressing these issues enough in the region. This statement by Human Rights Watch is illustrative of this criticism.

The United States’ almost solo efforts to condemn abuses in Uzbekistan appeared to wane in 1994. Vice-President Gore’s whirlwind one-day visit at the end of 1993 gave the government ill-deserved recognition without substantive rebuke, missing a critical opportunity to publicize the ample information on violations in the State Department’s Country Reports on Human Rights Prac-


455 These initial efforts focused on finding peaceful work for Uzbek weapons scientists and the elimination of biological weapons infrastructure. Seth G. Jones, Olga Oliker et al, Securing Tyrants or Fostering Reform?: U.S. Internal Security Assistance to Repressive and Transitional Regimes (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), p. 43.

456 The fund was capitalized by $150 million in foreign assistance. The Enterprise Fund concept was created in the Support for Eastern European Democracy Act of 1989 and was extended to Russia and other NIS through the 1992 Freedom Support Act.
tices for 1993. In January, the unconditional granting of Most Favored Nation status in January squandered another opportunity to press for improvements.457

Despite the criticism, it is important recognize that the U.S. was one of the few states that had human rights on its CASC agenda and actually voiced criticism.

In May 1994 Strobe Talbott delivered the administration’s first major speech about Central Asia: Promoting democracy and prosperity in Central Asia. It was explicitly intended to outline "the broader goals and strategy of the Clinton Administration" and Central Asia’s place in its "thinking about the world as a whole".458 From the outset, Talbott made clear what would determine U.S. relations:

[T]he leaders of Central Asia must recognize that if their states are to join the community of democratic nations, there must be steady progress toward free and fair elections; respect for the right of citizens to form political parties; and for freedom of speech, press, and religion. With each of the nations of Central Asia, as well as all other countries of the world, our bilateral relations will be significantly affected by how these nations respect--and protect--the basic rights and freedoms of their citizens. During this long transition period, we will stay with the reformers and we will be as persistent and patient as they are. And we are optimistic about their eventual success. That is because the common denominator of democracy and the market--freedom--has universal appeal.459

This statement clearly reflects the outlook of the administration. Its ideas of an order that would spiral into peace and prosperity relied to a considerable extent on the ‘power of example’. Logically, it resembled the domino theory of the Cold War. Talbott’s following statement is illustrative of this reasoning.

The theory here is simple: If reform succeeds in Russia, it is more likely to succeed among Russia’s neighbors. By the same token, if racial harmony and democracy come to South Africa, that country could go from being a pariah on the continent to a model for others to make the transition. This same thinking underlies our support for the development of market democracy in the New Independent States of Central Asia.460

This argument can been seen as an expression of the administration’s 'Russia first' policy. However, the U.S. was not only interested in democra-

458 Talbott, "Promoting Democracy and Prosperity in Central Asia."
459 Talbott, "Promoting Democracy and Prosperity in Central Asia."
460 Talbott, "Promoting Democracy and Prosperity in Central Asia."
tization. The region’s resources and location were also of growing importance for the U.S.

Central Asia is a gateway to three regions that are of great strategic importance to the United States: To the east lie China and the rest of Asia; to the south lie Iran, Afghanistan, and the Islamic world; to the west and north lie Russia and Europe. Moreover, in its own right, Central Asia is a region of vast natural and human resources offering the potential for the prosperity of its own people and benefits for American entrepreneurs with the foresight to do business there. The mineral deposits in Uzbekistan alone are estimated to have a market value of $3 trillion, and Turkmenistan produces 85 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year.461

Talbott also praised the human resources of the region and specifically singled out the Kyrgyz President, not only as the "Jefferson" of Central Asia, but also as its "Benjamin Franklin". He explicitly spoke of the connection between national security and trade, and from this vantage point the administration had begun to perceive a new threat that related to the future economic security of the U.S. It feared the possibility that other states would establish strong ties with the region and shut the U.S. out. Talbott made clear that the "administration wants to be sure that American business is competitive in Central Asia—that we don’t lose in the global competition with Japan, Germany, South Korea, the People’s Republic of China, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran—all of whom have begun serious efforts to develop business ties to the region." In effect, this meant that the administration was not in fact positive to all economic integration and that the relationship between U.S. interests and ideals was not unproblematic. Talbott did not clarify but spoke rather generally about the transformational power of the free market as means of democratization. He ended by summing up what can be described as the administration’s core approach:

Now, to be sure, American companies are not investing in the region for reasons of altruism; they’re doing it because it makes good business sense. By the same token, our Administration is investing in the region because it makes good foreign policy sense, good national security sense. That is, we are investing in the region for reasons that go to the heart of what we see as America’s vital national interests. By nurturing and sustaining private enterprise, we see ourselves as helping not only the centerpiece of economic reform, but also one of the key building blocks of democratization and collective security as well.462

The goals and means outlined by Talbott would be reiterated in almost every speech regarding CASC in the following years. However, the administration paid little attention to CASC, and its actions did not reflect the few, though

461 Talbott, "Promoting Democracy and Prosperity in Central Asia.”
462 Talbott, "Promoting Democracy and Prosperity in Central Asia.”
stem-winding, speeches about it. U.S. interest was, however, growing, and
democratization was not the only thing on the agenda. The region’s energy
resources had gradually begun to capture the attention of the U.S. and the
rest of the world, and the security initiatives were being translated into prac-
tical programs.

In 1994 all of the CASC states, with the exception of Tajikistan, had
joined PFP. Uzbekistan, the state with largest and most sophisticated mil-
tary force in the region, began, to receive more attention, despite its flawed
reform record. In April, 1995 Secretary of Defense William Perry made a
visit to Uzbekistan that resulted in initiatives to set up joint committees for
planning defense conversion.645 During the visit, Perry declared that Uzbeki-
stan was strategically located and a potential regional economic power. He
pledged U.S. support to foster its emergence as a pillar of democratization
and stability in the region. It has also been reported that he described Uzbek-
istan as "an island of stability in Central Asia".646 Perry’s statements
were rather conspicuous, given the overt U.S. concerns about Uzbekistan’s
poor human rights record. The visit indicated that the idea that Uzbekistan
was important for regional stability seemed to have taken hold.

In the January 1996 issue of Foreign Affairs, Frederick Starr argued that
more attention should be paid to Central Asia and especially Uzbekistan.
The ideas he put forward provides insight into how analysts in the Pentagon
had begun to view Uzbekistan. According to Starr, Uzbekistan played an
important role in "making Eurasia stable".647 The purposes of the article
were to introduce Uzbekistan to a wider audience and to debunk the idea that
Kyrgyzstan could ever serve as an example for the region.648 This timely
article received the attention of the policy establishment.

Starr argued that there were three possibilities for the region. "It could
come under the influence the hegemony of one or more power, Russia being
the most likely candidate. It could lapse into chaos (...). Or it could achieve
equilibrium and coherence from within, through the emergence of an anchor
state or states".649 The latter alternative would obviously be the best. Starr
argued that one or more strong states in Central Asia could fill the existing
political vacuum and thus protect Russia’s fragile democracy from the po-
tentially fatal temptation of expansionism".650 The argument was very simi-

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463 This was also discussed during the newly appointed Ambassador- at-Large James Collin’s
visit in March 1996.

464 Jim Nichol, Central Asia’s New States: Political Developments and Implications for US
Interests (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service,
2001). Perry had by then been in Kazakhstan many times. A memorandum on U.S. advice for
Kazakh defense industrial conversion was signed during Nazarbayev’s February 1994 U.S.
visit, and follow-on agreements were signed during Perry’s March 1994 and April 1995 visits
to Kazakhstan.

465 Starr, "Making Eurasia Stable."
466 Conversation with Frederick Starr, November 2008.
467 Starr, "Making Eurasia Stable."
468 Starr, "Making Eurasia Stable."
lar to Brzezinski’s. Starr argued that "a stabilizer" in the region "would quickly become the third leg of a tripod of power in the former Soviet Union, alongside Russia and Ukraine". That would create a "healthy balance", which would be the best servant of U.S. interests region. Strengthening Ukraine and Uzbekistan was the best means for fostering Russia’s development as a 'normal' country, free from regional insecurities and imperial longings.

A substantial part of the remainder of the article made the case that only Uzbekistan had the potential to become such a stabilizer. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two states which so far had had better relations with the U.S., and all of the other states of Central Asia, were riddled with too many problems – from weakness of institutions, lack of scientific intelligentsia, ethnic tensions, inter-clan rivalries to underdeveloped industry and Russian presence – in order to resist outside pressure and chaos from within.

Starr placed himself between those wanting the U.S. to put pressure on Uzbekistan concerning human rights and reform and those that excused its record in order to gain access. He acknowledged that its record was poor but emphasized that historically democracy was a remote concept in the region. More importantly, he also tried to explain Karimov’s approach to reform, including his various attempts at decreasing the country’s dependence on Russia. All in all, Starr offered a rather sympathetic portrayal of Karimov’s presidency and compared him to conservative reformers in general. He advised against pushing too hard on democratic reforms and argued that the U.S. should patiently recognize that stable positive change take time and appreciate the value of a stable and strong Uzbekistan. Starr’s assessment was that the U.S. had been "slow to recognize Uzbekistan’s significance". Therefore, he perceived Secretary Perry’s praise of the country as "an island of stability" as a positive sign.

Uzbekistan would soon receive more attention as the U.S. began to perceive more interests in CASC. The idea of not pushing these states too hard also began to resonate more clearly. This resulted in a growing gap between U.S. ideals and interests, and it was clear that they did not easily coincide as the rhetoric implied, at least not in any unproblematic way, or in the short run.

When Karimov attended the UN General Assembly’s 50th session in October 1995, he did not receive any invitations from the U.S. government.

60 Uzbekistan’s assets, such size, population, relatively small ethnic Russian minority, relatively developed economy and industry, intelligentsia and central location in the region made it the best candidate. He also noted several liabilities, such as its engineered borders that do not correspond to either ethnic or natural boundaries, its cotton monoculture with an irrigation system that created one of the world’s worst ecological disasters, Tashkent’s transportation and communication system, that once served as a hub in the Soviet Union, being closely tied to Moscow, its lack of democracy and regional its factions and family-based network that dominates the political life and inhibits the possibilities of political compromises.

60 Starr, "Making Eurasia Stable.
61 Starr, "Making Eurasia Stable."

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However, by 1996 things had changed, and in June he visited the White House for the first time. President Clinton was initially disinclined to meet with Karimov face to face, even after the details of his visit had been arranged. The reason for this was Uzbekistan’s appalling human rights record. A photo opportunity was not a favor Clinton necessarily wanted to grant him. However, on June 25 they did meet. There was no joint statement, only a very brief statement by the Press Secretary that declared that "the two presidents addressed key political, economic, and security issues of mutual interest, including progress in political and economic reform." The Press Secretary informed that "President Clinton underscored the strong U.S. interest in the independence, stability, and prosperity of the states of Central Asia", and that he had stressed U.S. "efforts to assist Uzbekistan in promoting solid links with the West, constructive relations with neighbouring countries and full integration into the global community". It was further stated that the U.S. "seeks close ties with Uzbekistan across the full range of issues in recognition of the key role Uzbekistan plays in Central Asia". This last quote is of particular importance, since it indicated that the arguments about Uzbekistan’s regional importance had resonated.

During a question and answer session with the Press Secretary before the meeting, only two questions were posed regarding Karimov’s visit: Would the President discuss Uzbekistan’s human rights record, and would he give Karimov any guarantees about safeguarding him from Iranian incursions and the encroachment of fundamentalists. The two questions reflected the two poles between which the few public discussions about Uzbekistan oscillated: the human rights record and Iranian influence.

Clinton’s reluctance to meet with Karimov suggests that human rights and democratic reforms were one of the most important factors determining the official relationship between the two states. The fact that there were no joint statements sends such a signal. However, the meeting did take place, and the press briefing indicated that Uzbekistan was perceived as an important state for the U.S. The signal was also contrasted with a completely different sound emanating from the Pentagon. The day after his White House visit, Karimov received a full honors arrival ceremony, including photo ops, at the Pentagon. He met with Secretary Perry, and judging from the memorandum of this meeting, the tone was now quite different. It stated that there was a "strong cooperative relationship" between the two countries and

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472 By this time, the Kazakh President had visited the White House several times.
473 White House, Statement by the Press Secretary, "Clinton Karimov Meeting," June 25, 1996. It has been suggested that the brief meeting was made possible by Karimov’s decision to grant pardons to 89 political prisoners. It has also been reported that only five prisoners were actually released.
that Karimov’s visit exemplified "the growing significance of the U.S.-Uzbekistani bilateral and multilateral security partnership".476

Perry and Karimov discussed the growing military to military contacts and agreed that the posting of a Defense Attaché at the U.S. embassy in Tashkent had significantly enhanced communications. Secretary Perry praised Uzbekistan’s active participation in the PFP and its efforts to form a combined peacekeeping battalion with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, including plans for a joint exercise in the spirit of the PFP in Central Asia in 1997. They concluded the meeting with a commitment to continue to build on the "solid foundation of partnership currently in place".477

The contrast between these two meetings is intriguing. It seems that the administration sent two different signals to Karimov. One way to understand it is that there was a lack of coordination between the White House and the Pentagon. Another way to understand it is that they pursued alternative or competing agendas. Both, are, though, indicative of inconsistent behaviour and a lack of a coherent strategy, unless the strategy was indeed to send these mixed signals. In the latter vein, a third way to understand it is that the President had approved and was fully aware of everything that happened at the Pentagon. He just did not want to get too friendly with Karimov, since it would lead to domestic criticism and thereby let Perry reveal the real position of the administration.478 As an indication of the growing interest in the region’s energy resources, Karimov also met with U.S. Energy Secretary Hazel O’Leary during his visit.

By the mid-90s, the idea that CASC was important had begun to gain assent in Washington. In the fall of 1996, scholars associated with the Washington-based School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins created the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute (CACI) "in response to the increasing need for information about these regions" and "to call the attention of US policy makers to this region."479 Under the leadership of Frederick Starr, the institute invited top officials, held lectures and published articles to put this part of the world on the agenda.

James F. Collins, the Ambassador at Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary on the NIS, spoke at its inauguration. His presence indicated that the ideas emanating from the people associated with CACI resonated within policymaking circles. Collins declared that the administration had defined the following U.S. objectives in the NIS, including CASC: support for the independence, sovereignty and security of each of the Central Asian states; assistance in the establishment of free-market economies and democratic

477 U.S. Department of Defense, "Memorandum for Correspondents."
478 Note how this latter understanding illustrates the constraining effects of U.S. liberal culture, since it implies that Clinton feared reprisals for accommodating the President of one of the world’s most repressive regimes.
governments committed to equal opportunity and human rights for their citizens; integration of these states into the world community of political and financial institutions as well as their participation in the Euro-Atlantic security dialogue and cooperative programs; encouragement of these states to pursue peaceful relations among themselves and with their neighbors and to resolve local conflicts with international mediation; prevention of any trafficking in WMDs; cooperation on other transnational threats of terrorism, narcotics, and environmental degradation; and, enhancement of U.S. commercial interests and the expansion and diversification of global energy supplies. 480

In terms of substance, not much had changed since Talbott’s speech in 1994 almost two and a half years earlier. Democratization, market reforms, and integration were still at the center of the administration’s approach. So was its relative emphasis on non-traditional threats. Collins deplored the slow progress of democratic reforms but declared that regional governments were "increasingly receptive to dialogue" with the U.S. He signaled that the region was a priority for the administration and rebuked the argument that putting too much pressure on them to reform could potentially backlash:

Some in the region believe that too swift a transformation will simply lead to instability or ‘Islamic extremism’. One continuing point we make is that there is no contradiction between democracy and stability. On the contrary, pluralist, open, and tolerant societies are essential for stability and prosperity. 481

It was statements like these that made some accuse the administration of naïve optimism and of shunning reality by not recognizing that it is sometimes necessary choose between stability and reform. Less idealistic analysts argued that pushing hard for swift reforms could potentially lead to the fall of regimes in CASC. The anarchy that would follow could, in turn, lead to greater influence of Islamic fundamentalism and hegemonic bids from Russia or Iran. U.S. impatience could also alienate the regimes, resulting in them seeking support from other powers to guarantee their security. They would simply embrace the hug of the Russian bear and leave the U.S. without influence in this, from some perspectives, significant part of the world.

Collins made no reference to the idea that a strategy usually implies distinguishing between short-term, middle-term and long-term perspectives and that it is usually necessary to make trade-offs, so that short-term decisions do not undermine the longer-term strategy. However, he underscored the region’s vast energy resources and emphasized that the U.S. had "both a strategic and commercial interest in increasing and diversifying world energy supplies". He reiterated U.S. support for "rapid Caspian energy develop-

481 Collins, "Inauguration of the Central Asia Institute."
ment" and the crucial need for private Western investment. He also underscored the need for legal regimes surrounding the Caspian Sea and for a policy seeking to minimize Iran’s involvement. Collins acknowledged that the existing transport systems were inadequate for moving the growing volumes of oil and gas to world markets and declared that the administration supported "the development of additional and multiple export routes, including a route through Turkey." He concluded that the U.S. had a "new and growing interests at stake in Central Asia" and that it was "vital that Americans develop the tools, find the resources, and use the talent needed to promote our goals of an independent, open, stable, secure, and economically developed Central Asia". In his final remarks, he singled out the efforts of Wolfowitz and Brzezinski and specifically praised Starr’s Foreign Affairs article on Uzbekistan. He also commended CACI for its "leadership in awakening the U.S. to the importance of Central Asia".483

Arguments urging patience and leniency toward repressive regimes did not fit well with the administration’s public profile, but they would become more influential as the region’s energy resources became more apparent, especially among those that put U.S. material interest first and did not want to squander any opportunities.

Not much seemed to have changed in the administration’s publicly declared approach regarding means and goals. However, when the region’s importance increased, the gap between U.S. interests and ideals widened. The pursuit of access and opportunities did not, in any easy way coincide with democratization, especially not in the short run. The gap between the administration’s rhetoric and concrete actions grew in a similar way, as the mixed signals during Karimov’s visit demonstrate. U.S. interest in CASC gradually grew during the early Clinton years. The perceived threat from Iran and fundamentalist Islam remained, but the perceived threat of economic competition in the region increased. Soon U.S. interest would increase to even higher levels. The administration would adjust its acquiescent posture toward Russia and become more involved in the region, which would exacerbate the discrepancies even further.

5.1.5 Chechnya and the Gradual End of the Russia First Policy

The purpose of this section is to describe how international and domestic changes led to a gradual end of the Russia first policy and a more assertive U.S. strategy in CASC. I demonstrate how Russia’s performance in the Chechen War changed U.S. perceptions of Russia. The section will also discuss subtle changes within the GOP that are of importance for understanding the George W. Bush administration.

482 Collins, "Inauguration of the Central Asia Institute."
483 Collins, "Inauguration of the Central Asia Institute."
After the honeymoon of the early 1990s, the U.S.-Russia relationship gradually deteriorated. There was Russian resentment regarding NATO expansion, its relative exclusion from the Bosnia diplomacy, increased U.S. support to Ukraine and growing U.S. interest in CASC’s energy. As Soviet power had been the greatest threat since the end of World War II and since the beginning of the Cold War, the U.S. had sought to contain or roll back its strength and influence. Clinton’s task was in a way the opposite. He feared Russian weakness and the possibility that constant crisis would allow hard-liners to define its external actions, an outcome that could lead to outbreaks of violence, a destabilization of Europe, or worse.

The question of whether Russia was a friend or a foe preoccupied Clinton. In the final analysis, the Russia first policy was based on the threat of Russia’s capabilities. However, one thing in particular changed U.S. perceptions of Russia and gradually altered the U.S. approach to it, including its ‘near abroad’ – Russia’s performance in the Chechen War.

In Chechnya, the emergence of an assertive Russian state with ambitions to control the natural resources leaving CASC and to counter Islamism on its southern flank collided with virulent bitterness of Russian influence and invigorated nationalism in the FSU. The result was a conflict that degenerated into excesses in brutality.

After the Soviet breakup, Chechnya quickly became a chaotic place, and shortly after Dzhokhar Dudayev unilaterally declared Chechnya independent in the autumn of 1991, it was on the brink of civil war. In December 1994, after two years of violence and refugee flows in the tens of thousands, Russia launched a ground offensive. However, it underestimated the resistance. Its soldiers faced guerrilla tactics from the outset and failed to produce anything resembling the desired results. Other former Soviet republics that looked on were highly critical and became more determined to increase

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484 It is also possible to argue that delayed Russian anger over declining international status and economic disintegration surfaced.
485 Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky was the face of this threat for a couple of years.
486 During the turbulent times when the Soviet Union was dissolved, a Federation Treaty that granted concession over autonomy and taxes to 86 of the 88 former Soviet republics was drawn up. Chechnya was excluded from this list. At the time, neither side seemed concerned about this fact. Russian troops left Chechnya during the early months of 1992, resulting in a widespread belief that Chechnya was an independent republic. For Russia, however, the absence of an agreement did not imply independence, rather the contrary. See, for instance, Olga Oliker, Russia's Chechen Wars 1994–2000: Lessons from Urban Combat (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001); Robert W. Schaefer, The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011); Matthew Evangelista, The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union? (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).
487 During the years preceding the offensive, Russia had supported a coalition of opposition forces in Chechnya and covertly supplied them with equipment. In November 1994 the coalition tried to capture the capital but failed miserably due to bad organization.
their independence. Images of the war reminded the peoples of CASC of the Soviet’s war in Afghanistan. Thousands of Muslims from the wider region joined Dudayev’s side. Yeltsin’s approval ratings dropped, and Russia feared the risk of regional escalation. In 1995 there was fighting going on inside Ingushetia and Dagestan, and thousands of refugees fled to North Ossetia. The Russian army suffered severely due to logistical problems as well as lack of counter-insurgency training, lack of organization and low morale.488

In March 1996 insurgents overran parts of Grozny, the Chechen capital. After months of fierce fighting, which included insurgents recapturing parts of the capital in August, a formal ceasefire was signed. Later in May 1997, the Khasavyurt Accords were concluded in the Kremlin. Still, the issue of independence had not been resolved, despite the fact that the Chechens believed that they had an agreement.

George H.W. Bush had never taken much interest in Chechnya, and when the Russian ground offensive began Clinton responded cautiously. Secretary Christopher stated that Yeltsin had probably done what he needed to do to prevent the secession of Chechnya, and the State Department noted that the Russia’s actions would not harm the ‘strategic partnership’.489 Criticism of this policy increased as the extent of the human rights violations was gradually revealed. The Republican Congress criticized Clinton and pledged a tougher stance toward Russia and a strengthening of the other NIS. In spite of this, U.S. official criticism was limited and amounted to a statement claiming that Russia was in breach of its commitments under the Helsinki Act.490

However, U.S. strategy toward Russia and CASC was gradually changed due to Chechnya. The war revealed to U.S. military and civilian leaders the dismal status of Russia’s armed forces. Its conventional forces were in no way comparable to U.S. capability. When the Chechen’s recaptured Grozny in August 1996, many in the U.S. lost respect for Russia as a great power and ceased to perceive it as an adversary they had to nurture good relations with.491 President Yeltsin had also been re-elected in July 1996, which meant that the U.S. no longer had to support his policies for fear of an anti-western reaction in the election.492 Russia’s weakness had a profound effect on U.S. strategy. From 1997 the U.S. became much more involved in CASC, which had previously almost been regarded as a Russian

490 Compared to both Western and Eastern European states, U.S. criticism was weak.
492 Clinton had for instance refused to announce any timetables for new NATO members until after the Russian election.
sphere of influence.\textsuperscript{493} The collapse of the Russian economy in 1998 weakened the country even further.

After the 1996 U.S. presidential election, the administration also became more assertive. This is often illustrated by the replacement of Warren Christopher with Madeleine Albright. However, there were several reasons for the administration’s change in posture. Clinton’s agenda was constrained by the republicans in Congress, although he had support regarding NATO expansion. By the summer of 1995, there was a widespread fear that the conflict in Bosnia would upset the delicate balance that existed between NATO and Russia. For Clinton, NATO was a key to creating a stable and peaceful Europe, and the inability to solve the conflict raised several questions regarding the future of the organization. According to Talbott, Bosnia was "the beast that could eat not only NATO, but the Russian-American partnership".\textsuperscript{494} The administration was divided regarding Bosnia. Clinton had read Robert Kaplan’s book \textit{Balkan Ghosts}, which explained the violence in terms of ancient ethnic hatreds, an argument that did not exactly sell the idea of the outside involvement. Clinton’s indecisiveness made the French President Jacques Chirac famously note that the position of leader of the free world was ‘vacant’. In July, after the Srebrenica massacres, Clinton threatened air strikes against the Serbs and removed the UN from the command chain.\textsuperscript{495} After Serbian forces shelled a marketplace in Sarajevo, NATO unleashed an air campaign that lasted for several weeks. The campaign coincided with a U.S. led diplomatic effort, headed by Richard Holbrooke, which resulted in the Dayton Agreement.

Clinton had taken a risk and succeeded. He restored the credibility of U.S. leadership and defined a purpose for NATO. He "emerged from the fall of 1995 as a vastly more self-confident and commanding leader".\textsuperscript{496} Bosnia also taught an important lesson. The U.S. could boldly use military force and get results. It also reinforced the skepticism of working with the UN and the international community to resolve crises. The administration tried to ensure that the mission had an exit plan and sought to avoid mission creep. However, it also knew that the ambitious goals would be impossible to reach within the time frame stipulated by the Dayton Agreement. During the debate, Holbrooke argued that self-imposed time limits weakened the U.S. and rendered implementation more difficult. The idea of staying until the job was done came to be embraced by the administration, and Secretary Albright declared that "[t]he mission should define the timetable, not the other way

\textsuperscript{493} This can be regarded as a prime example of how the distribution of power and the perceptions of power affected U.S. foreign policy.
\textsuperscript{495} Before this point UN officials had to approve targets before air strikes. This dual key system had undermined the credibility of the threats of military action
around. A few months later, in early March of 1996, Clinton faced down China in the Taiwan Straits. These successes, in combination with his management of Russia, gave Clinton a strong foreign affairs record for the upcoming presidential election.

Bob Dole, Clinton’s opponent in the 1995 presidential campaign, personified ‘the greatest generation’. However, for many, that probably only made him look old and made Clinton look like the candidate for the future. Even though Dole’s national security team consisted of Donald Rumsfeld, Jeane Kirkpatrick and Paul Wolfowitz, they struggled to separate Dole’s agenda from Clinton’s. The two candidates were basically in agreement regarding support for Russian reform, NATO expansion, NAFTA, and Bosnia. That, however, did not stop the Republicans from attacking Clinton for being weak and incompetent. However, according Jack Kemp, Clinton was simply not “particularly vulnerable on foreign policy”. However, within the conservative foreign policy elite, Clinton’s win became a turning point.

In sum, in the beginning of the second half of the 1990s, U.S. interest in the region was growing. The administration’s confidence was on the rise, and Chechnya demonstrated Russia’s weakness to the world. A combination of both international and domestic developments resulted in a more assertive U.S. strategy toward CASC in the following years.

5.2 U.S. Interest in CASC’s Energy Resources

This thematic section focuses on how the Clinton Administration’s interest in the CASC region’s energy resources would change its strategy.

5.2.1 The Multiple Pipelines and the Main Export Pipeline

In this section, I describe U.S. early interest in CASC’s energy resources, including the administration’s preference for multiple pipelines.

Western oil interests in Russia had lain dormant for many years but never disappeared. There was a general suspicion of Soviet production

498 Close to the Taiwanese election, China announced that it was going to conduct live fire exercises in the straits. In order to deter China, Clinton in effect sent the largest American naval armada since Vietnam to Southeast Asia. The Chinese backed down in the face of this show of force. However, Clinton did not seek a confrontation. Instead, he initiated a diplomatic effort to reduce conflict and set an agenda of high-level meetings in order to try to integrate China into the global community. See Mann, (1998); Tyler, (1999).
499 Yeeltsin had accepted NATO expansion, Russians served alongside NATO forces in Bosnia and U.S. non-proliferation policy seemed to be working.
500 Jack Kemp was Dole’s vice-presidential running mate. Kemp quoted in Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), p. 144.
methods among Western geologists. The Soviet fields were recklessly developed with little consideration to their longevity, and many experts believed that it was possible to make supposedly exhausted fields profitable again using new technology and methods. Even before the formal disintegration of the Soviet Union, Western companies had begun negotiating with Soviet officials regarding its energy resources. When the disintegration became reality, most companies had their eyes fixed on Russia. However, several factors made them shift their focus southward, from Russia to CASC.

Russia was burdened with outdated and anarchic legal and tax systems. It did not have a modern banking system, and there was a state supported gas and oil monopoly. Western companies were also met with suspicion and unfavourable treatment. Transneft, the state-owned transportation company, controlled the bulk of the domestic crude and blocked foreign investors from using their facilities through monopolistic practices. Russian oil companies were also troubled by severe internal problems, and during the 1990s production was in decline.

The economic infrastructure of the states south of Russia was also miserable. They not only lacked the legal systems to operate a modern economy but also an institutionalized understanding of the fundamental economic principles underlying international commerce. The scarcity of modern equipment made the situation even worse. Extraction and transportation of oil and gas located in CASC were associated with additional problems. The area is land-locked, and the oil must cross multiple international jurisdictions. Therefore, arrangements must be made not only with regard to securing the product, but also with regard to construction of infrastructure, transit fees and payment arrangements. The pipelines must also cross some of the world most politically unstable areas.

Virtually the entire modern infrastructure of the region reflected the years of Russian and Soviet domination. Dependencies had intentionally been created by having all highways, railroads and pipelines lead to Russia. Most pipelines from the Caspian terminated in the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. There the oil was transferred to tankers and shipped to the Bosphorus, a route that is congested as well as politically and ecologically sensitive. From there, the oil could reach the Mediterranean and Western markets.

There were also various disputes between the states surrounding the Caspian Sea. The littoral nations of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan were involved in border disputes and had conflicting legal claims to offshore oilfields in the Caspian Sea. Whether to consider the legal status of the Caspian Sea as ‘closed’ or ‘open’ had direct implications for the exploitation of the sea-bed, or continental shelf zones, under the principles of ‘common’ or ‘separate’ ownership. To summarize, it can be argued that the dispute was about whether the Caspian Sea was as sea or a lake. Despite all of this, investing in the energy resources of CASC was more promising than investing in Russia.
The estimates of the region’s oil reserves kept rising through the early 1990s, and the attention the region received followed that trajectory. Many oil companies, including several U.S.-based, were relentless in their pursuit of opportunities in the region. By the spring of 1992 Chevron had already reached agreements with the Kazak government.\footnote{James H. Giffen was heavily involved in facilitating meetings between U.S. oil companies and Kazak representatives. In 2003 he was arrested for violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1997. It has been reported that he facilitated payments of more than $30 million in bribes to Kazak officials in order to secure a favourable outcome in the negotiations regarding the Tenghiz oil fields, among other things. See Michael Dobbs, David Ottaway and Sharon LaFrankiere, "American at Centre of Kazakh Oil Probe," Washington Post, September 25, 2000.} This was followed by what was referred to as the "contract of the century", dubbed after a statement by Azeri President Heydar Aliyev, when the Azeri government in September 1994 signed a production sharing agreement with a consortium forming the Azerbaijan International Operating Consortium (AIOC).\footnote{The major shareholder was BPAmoco, and the consortium consisted of Lukoil, Socar, Unocal, Statoil, Exxon, TPAO, Pennzoil, Itochu, Ramco and Delta, among others.} Shortly thereafter, the Azerbaijan-American Chamber of Commerce was established, which lobbied Congress on behalf of the corporations and Baku.\footnote{Robert Greenberger and David Rogers, "Azerbaijan Pays Lobbyists $2.5 Million to Plug Its Image and Oil Potential," Wall Street Journal, June 23, 1995; Peter Stone, "Caspian Wells Come in for K Street," National Journal, Vol. 31, No. 11 (March, 1999).} The U.S. was involved in supporting this contract on many levels, and several notable meetings between U.S. and Azeri officials took place during the three and half years of negotiation preceding it.\footnote{In 1993, William White, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Department of Energy and Congressman Greg Laughlin (D-TX) visited Baku, and in mid-August 1994 Ilham Aliyev, SOCAR’s Vice President of Foreign Economic Relations and son of Azerbaijan’s President, met with Rosemarie Forsythe, the U.S. National Security Council’s Director of Russian, Ukrainian and Eurasian Affairs. That meeting was followed by a visit to Baku by U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN Madeleine Albright on September 3. During the Population Conference in Cairo a week later, Vice President Gore met with Azeri President Heydar Aliyev. Thanks in part to U.S. policy, the AIOC production sharing agreement included higher standards for environmental protection than any previous one in the region.} After the contract was signed, President Aliyev and President Clinton met in New York. Soon thereafter Madeleine Albright remarked that the U.S. did not recognize any extra-legal privileges or any sphere of influence for Russia or any other country beyond its own territory.\footnote{Madeleine Albright, "Principle, Power, and Purpose in the New Era," Address to the Secretary’s Open Forum, Washington, DC, October 28, 1994, DSID, Vol. 5, No. 45 (1994).}

In early 1995, a U.S. pipeline policy toward CASC began to take shape. Through most of the early and mid-1990s, the administration favoured the idea of having multiple pipelines for moving oil to markets. There were many arguments for this. It would make it possible to rather quickly develop capabilities to move ‘early oil’, i.e. oil from already existing or easily accessible and exploitable fields, to markets. It would also serve as a safety pre-
caution in case of disruptions from, for instance, internal disputes and make it easier to expand transportation capacity to accommodate growth in production. Furthermore, it would help the CASC states to avoid the possibility of being pressured from a monopolistic pipeline operator. The idea that no single power would be able to exercise control over the region through energy routes was very appealing to the U.S., since it would alleviate Russian and Iranian leverage over the region.

At the time, there were an abundant number of pipeline proposals suggested. One thing they all had in common was that Russia fiercely opposed routes that did not go through or terminate in their country. The support of multiple pipelines for bringing Caspian oil and gas to world markets was perfectly in line with U.S. publicly declared national security strategy. It would diversify world energy supplies, increase energy security for the U.S. and its allies, eliminate traditional energy monopolies on which many of the CASC states were dependent, avoid the emergence of choke points, such as the Bosphorus, and, finally, advance opportunities for U.S. business and provide support for the new nations of CASC.

Zbigniew Brzezinski had advised the administration early on to support multiple pipelines. In the fall of 1995 he was sent to visit President Aliyev in Baku. This was at a time when the initial decisions were being made concerning the export pipelines from Azerbaijan, and his message was that the U.S. favoured multiple pipelines. In October 1995, Clinton also expressed his support for multiple pipelines in a phone conversation with President Aliyev. Although, pipelines dominated the discussion, they were both concerned about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and expressed support for the peace process under the auspices of the OSCE’s Minsk Group.  

When pipeline proposals were debated, they dealt with two different issues. First, there was the immediate demand for pipelines for early oil. There were also proposals for pipelines with considerable higher capacity to transport expected quantities of oil from the larger fields being developed offshore. These were sometimes referred to as the main export pipelines (MEP). The construction of a pipeline of this kind would entail considerable costs, and U.S. support was considered to be fundamental for securing financing for such an enterprise. Various routes were discussed, and the stakes for the participating parties were high. The idea that the U.S. had an interest in influencing the route of the MEP for Azeri and Caspian oil was quickly gaining momentum.

During 1996 U.S. devoted increased attention to CASC. However, it was in 1997 that concerns about it really seemed to be elevated to a level of a national interest. The academic community, policy analysis organizations and think tanks increased their focus on the region. Congress also began to

devote more attention to it.\textsuperscript{507} In that year, certain geopolitical ideas about the region fused with the interests of the oil industry, which resulted in U.S. support for a huge and controversial pipeline project.

\subsection{5.2.2 The Caspian Bonanza and the East-West Corridor}

In this section, I describe how U.S. interest in the region’s energy deepened and began to be perceived as a national interest.

During 1997 the number of meetings and conferences about CASC’s energy resources increased substantially. In February in, Cambridge Energy Research Associates sponsored a conference in Houston, Texas, that was attended by about 1500 governmental and corporate representatives from all over the world. Ilham Aliyev and Richard Kauzlarich, U.S. ambassador to Azerbaijan, were among the attendants. A few days later, they travelled to Washington to attend a conference sponsored by the U.S.-Azeri Chamber of Commerce entitled "Azerbaijan: From Communism to Democracy and Oil".\textsuperscript{508} During Aliyev’s stay in Washington, the Heritage foundation, a conservative think tank whose primary mission is to provide advice to the U.S. Congress, hosted a banquet in his honour.

The foundation had at this time begun to publish regular advice on CASC, but already in January of 1996 Ariel Cohen, a research fellow at the foundation, had declared that ‘a new great game’ was playing out in the region. Cohen argued that its energy reserves were "vital to Western geostrategic and economic interests" and that it was in the U.S. interest to "ensure free and fair access for all interested parties to the oil fields of the Caucasus and Central Asia". This included being tough on "Russian Imperialism in the Near Abroad", as Cohen phrased it.\textsuperscript{509}

In March 1997, the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held the first hearing ever by an entity of the U.S. Government on Central Asia.\textsuperscript{510} This is quite indicative of how Washington had previously prioritized this region. The hearing was not only illustrative of the ignorance of the region but also of the tension between U.S. ideals and interest. Judging by the statements, it is clear that at least some members of Congress had begun to perceive a political opportunity by being associated with the emerging region.

The Chairman of the Subcommittee, Doug Bereuter (R-NB), opened the hearing by declaring that the region was "an extremely critical geographic

\textsuperscript{507} King and Pomper, "The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies."
\textsuperscript{508} This conference was attended by former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, among others.
\textsuperscript{510} "Aid activities in Asia and the Central Asian Republics," Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, One Hundred Fifth Congress, first session, March 5, 1997.
and political area" that the American people was "woefully ignorant" of. Howard L. Berman (D-CA) emphasized that there were some "very interesting things going on" in the region and that the U.S. had "an opportunity" to "frame the political and economic structure of these new states in a direction compatible with our democratic and free market". He also criticized the "relatively paltry amounts" spent, given the importance of the issue.

Thomas A. Dine, USAID's Assistant Administrator for Europe and the NIS, described the region as "an area of great and increasing significance" and emphasized that U.S. "currently substantial" commercial interests would become "much greater as the region lives up to its potential". Nancy Lubin, the President of JNA Associates, was more uneasy. She underscored numerous problems associated with reform, particularly that some programs were providing tools to the most repressive sectors of society. Lubin also claimed that the progress noted by USAID reports was "far more rhetorical" than "visible in practice". Her testimony indicated that there were suspicions within the human rights community that the U.S. was downplaying problems in order to improve relations with the regimes.

Iran was also a topic, and as a representative of the administration Dine summarized its thinking about the Iran-CASC nexus:

There was a fear with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the creation of these five new countries in Central Asia that there would be a relationship among Iran and the five countries, and there would be a contest between Iran and Turkey. (...) Well, it turns out that, yes, these are Muslim societies, but they are Sunni Muslims.

Dine’s statement suggests that this distinction was not initially considered, or at least did not affect U.S. policy. This corroborates the argument that policy was being formulated by people with no or only rudimentary knowledge of the region, or of Islam, for that matter.

In March 1997, Samuel Berger was appointed as National Security Advisor. The growing importance of CASC was confirmed in his first major address. It touched upon many issues, such as the U.S.-Russia relationship and NATO expansion, which he described as "navigating" between "Scylla and

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511 "Aid activities in Asia and the Central Asian Republics."
512 "Aid activities in Asia and the Central Asian Republics."
513 JNA Associates is a Washington based consulting firm that specializes in assessments, joint ventures and projects in the FSU and especially Central Asia. Lubin underscored that the programs did not take into account the particular realities of the very different states of the region. She also pointed out that there was a lack of regional expertise involved and too few built in follow-ups and accountabilities in many programs.
514 "Aid activities in Asia and the Central Asian Republics."
515 "Aid activities in Asia and the Central Asian Republics."
516 This distinction was never made in any of the policy speeches prior to this. It was pointed out by area specialists, many of whom questioned the threat of Iranian influence in the region from the outset.
Charybdis”. However, he specifically singled out Turkey, the Caucasus and Central Asia as areas of special significance for U.S. engagement.

There are other places where our engagement is more important than ever. (...) The great resource potential and strategic location of the Caucasus and Central Asia gives us a strong stake in working with others to strengthen their stability and build up our ties to the region. And it is profoundly in our interest to help Turkey, at a strategic and cultural crossroads (...).517

As CASC was receiving more attention than ever before, Frederick Starr accused the administration of "not living up to its rhetorical support".518 In an article entitled "Power Failure", he summed up much of the criticism of U.S. strategy toward CASC. Starr argued that the U.S. barely acknowledged Russia’s sensibilities in Central Europe, but "indulges them to excess" in CASC. He described how "officials at every level, right up to and including the White House" were preoccupied with "studying oil deals and pipeline routes" without incorporating these concerns within a larger geopolitical framework. "Lacking this larger perspective", the U.S. "is left not with a real policy toward the region but a melange of corollaries of policies whose real focus is elsewhere." This situation was critical, since once energy deals were sealed and pipeline routes settled adjusting course would be much more difficult.

Starr acknowledged that Russia lacked the ability to project real power beyond its borders but argued that it was able to exert considerable pressure over its southern borders through the energy field. He underscored that the energy sector was the largest and one of the least reformed sectors of its economy and argued that there was a Russian "energy-policy complex". Russia’s use of energy as a means of achieving its goals had by this time been emphasized for years by several Russia specialists, and Starr succinctly summarized it.

Moscow’s policy is simplicity itself: First, it dictates that its southern neighbors must export all their oil and gas through Russian pipelines or, failing that, minimize the capacity of alternative lines and assure that Russian firms own a stake in them; second, it intrudes Russian firms into multinational energy consortia put together by Azerbaijan or the Central Asian states; third, it forces the Central Asians to allocate energy to CIS countries that do not pay their bills, thus assuring that a producer country like Turkmenistan remains poor; fourth, it claims or creates Central Asian debts to Russia and then forces payment in the form of shares in the region’s refining and processing facilities as

518 Starr, "Power failure."
they are privatized; and, fifth, wherever possible it uses Western credits and investments in Russian firms to pay for these projects.  

In sum, Starr argued that Russia threatened declared U.S. goals and that the administration had failed to produce "an adequate response" due to its naive misperception of Russia. Even though it had embraced the principle of diversity of pipelines and opposed Russia’s view of the Caspian as a lake, he declared that its "Russia first" policy remained intact and that its "belated reactions and general policy biases have done more harm than good". Starr clearly wanted a far tougher Russia policy, and he was far from alone.

U.S. Iran policy was also an important part of its 'power failure', according to Starr. It drives "a wedge between" the U.S. and "all the other advanced industrial nations, it pushes Iran closer to Russia and China" and it is having "a disastrous impact on Central Asia and Azerbaijan by denying to them the obvious outlet for their oil and gas and forcing them into Russia’s arms". Starr claimed that the Iranian threat was exaggerated and that U.S. policymakers seemed to have "convinced themselves" that CASC was a ripe target for Islamic fundamentalism, without having even rudimentary knowledge of religion in the region. Starr wanted the U.S. to rethink its Iran policy. This was, however, a more lonely position.

Articles about the region, especially those with a focus on energy and Russia’s rough policies, also began to find their way into national media more frequently. In May, former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Peter Schweizer, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, wrote in the New York Times that "[a]s the West celebrates the apparent expansion of NATO into Central Europe, Russia is making a concerted bid to achieve a strategic victory of its own: dominance of the energy resources in the Caspian Sea region". They described the stakes as "enormous" and that there were "up to 200 billion barrels of oil and natural gas in the region". This controversial figure was considerably higher than previous estimates. It had emanated from the State Department’s Caspian Region Energy Development

519 Starr also pointed to Russia’s attempts to gain veto power over the developments in the Caspian by insisting that it is a lake, thereby insuring that oil from the Tengiz field would only be transported through Russia’s Black Sea Port. Starr, "Power failure."

520 Starr went as far as to say that the U.S. had been "woefully ignorant of Central Asia" and treated its people as "less worthy of American solicitude" than the Balts or the Central Europeans, pointing to U.S. policy with regard to the CFE Treaty.

521 Starr, "Power failure."

522 Starr wrote: "In entertaining such speculations, U.S. policymakers, like their counterparts in Moscow, have become ardent champions of Samuel Huntington’s notion of a ‘clash of civilizations’. In following this line, Washington ignores the fact that most Central Asian Muslims are not Shi’a but Sunni, and of the very traditionalist Hanafi school at that." He further argued that fundamentalism was an "insignificant force" in Central Asia and that Russia’s warnings about it were "self-serv[ing]", Starr, "Power failure."

Report and subsequently been quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* ten days earlier.\(^{524}\) Weinberger and Schweizer wrote further that open access to the Caspian was "critical" for the goal of diversifying U.S. energy sources and reducing its reliance on the Gulf. They described Russia as "squeezing" Azerbaijan and illegally arming Armenia. The piece emphasised the rapprochement between Russia and Iran, underscoring their joint statement of June 1996 in which the two countries declared they should "cooperate with regional states to prevent the presence of U.S. power in the Caspian Sea.\(^{525}\) They placed a lot of blame on the Armenian lobby for the U.S. failure to reflect its "strategic interests" and criticized Section 907 and the high levels of assistance Armenia received. Arguing that "U.S. long-term security interests" were "at stake", they urged President Clinton to persuade Congress to change its aid policy and encourage closer relations with Azerbaijan.\(^{526}\)

In May 1997 the White House released "A National Security Strategy for A New Century". This was the first time Caucasus, Central Asia and the Caspian were mentioned in a NSS report. Two statements regarding CASC were made, both concerning oil and gas. The report spoke of "potential oil reserves of 200 billion barrels" and argued that "a stable and prosperous Caucasus and Central Asia will help promote stability and security from the Mediterranean to China". It further stated that these states had "made progress" but that much remained to be done, "in particular in resolving regional conflicts such as Nagorno-Karabakh".\(^{527}\) CASC was also mentioned in the Report of the National Defense Panel released in December. A section about U.S. power projection capabilities stated that "as oil and gas fields in Central Asia gain in strategic value, we may need to project power greater distances, farther from littorals or established bases".\(^{528}\) Establishing access, including potential bases and basing rights, in CASC was beginning to be regarded as a national interest.

By 1997 an elite coalition had formed poised to change U.S. strategy toward CASC. Largely due to the efforts of the Azeri lobby, repealing Section 907 became somewhat of a cause celebre in Washington, and many former high ranking officials from both parties participated in the effort. Among them were: two former National Security Advisors, Brent Scowcroft and Zbig-

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\(^{525}\) Weinberger and Schweizer, "Russia’s Oil Grab."

\(^{526}\) Weinberger and Schweizer, "Russia’s Oil Grab."


niew Brzezinski; former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney; former Secretary of State James Baker and White House Chief of Staff John N. Sununu from the Bush Administration, and Lloyd Bentsen, Clinton’s influential former Secretary of the Treasury. Fighting the Armenian lobby was part of the cause. In August 1996 their pressure had already resulted in a harshly worded editorial in the Washington Post that condemned the Armenian lobby and its influence in Congress.529

At CACI in July 1997, Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State, delivered what most analysts regard as the Clinton Administration’s most seminal speech on U.S. strategy toward CASC. It was mostly a reiteration of its policy, in which Talbott spoke about promoting democracy, free markets, peace, cooperation, and integration. It also featured the spiral or domino idea. The big change was not in substance but rather the elevation of CASC’s importance:

> If reform in the nations of the Caucasus and Central Asia continues and ultimately succeeds, it will encourage similar progress in the other New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, including in Russia and Ukraine. It will contribute to stability in a strategically vital region that borders China, Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan and that has growing economic and social ties with Pakistan and India. (…) The ominous converse is also true. If economic and political reform in the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia does not succeed — if internal and cross-border conflicts simmer and flare — the region could become a breeding ground of terrorism, a hotbed of religious and political extremism, and a battleground for outright war.530

Note how Talbott characterized the region as "strategically vital" and influential enough to serve as an example to the other NIS. His next statement explained part of this characterization:

> It would matter profoundly to the United States if that [reform failure] were to happen in an area that sits on as much as 200 billion barrels of oil. That is yet another reason why conflict resolution must be job one for U.S. policy in the region: It is both the prerequisite for and an accompaniment to energy development.531

Talbott’s statements signified that conflict resolution, energy extraction and transportation were connected. Just as in the NSS, conflict resolution in the region could be interpreted as a means and subsidiary to the goals associated with energy extraction. The administration’s renewed interest in the Na-

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530 Talbott, "A Farewell to Flashman.”

531 Talbott, "A Farewell to Flashman.”
gorno-Karabakh dispute coincided with its growing interest in the region’s energy resources.

The optimism of the administration permeated the speech. Its title – A Farewell to Flashman – refers to Lt. Harry Flashman, a character in a European colonial-era historical novel by George M. Fraser. The purpose of this reference was to make a point about the Great Game and to overcome prejudices and predispositions.

For the last several years, it has been fashionable to proclaim, or at least to predict, a replay of the "Great Game" in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The implication, of course, is that the driving dynamic of the region, fueled and lubricated by oil, will be the competition of the great powers to the disadvantage of the people who live there. Our goal is to avoid and to actively discourage that atavistic outcome. In pondering and practicing the geopolitics of oil, let’s make sure that we are thinking in terms appropriate to the 21st century and not the 19th. Let’s leave Rudyard Kipling and George McDonald Fraser where they belong -- on the shelves of historical fiction. The Great Game - - which starred Kipling’s Kim and Fraser’s Flashman -- was very much of the zero-sum variety. What we want to help bring about is just the opposite: We want to see all responsible players in the Caucasus and Central Asia be winners.532

The ideas underlying this statement were far from the notion that ‘some geopolitical facts do not change’. Talbott was not subtle in his critique of real-politik:

Some would say that is self-evident, but others would say it is "ahistorical" in that it disregards the inevitable and irresistible temptation of the Great Powers to replay the great game for the prize of oil and gas from the Caspian Basin. Overcoming old prejudices and predispositions from the era of Lt. Harry Flashman needs to be a constant theme in our own diplomacy in the region, and we are using our good offices to that end.533

This can be interpreted as saying that the realist ideas about states’ pursuit of power in an anarchical world were nothing more than old prejudices that led to self-fulfilling prophecies. Talbott argued that it was possible to create a win-win situation for all participants, if all just worked together. He also announced that the administration now opposed Section 907, which worked against U.S. interests. The effort to persuade the administration had begun to bear fruit. However, Talbott signaled no changes regarding Russia. He treaded very lightly and offered no criticism of its CASC policies. It was thus clear that the administration was going to increase its engagement in the region. In line with the enlargement theme, Talbott closed by stressing that support for integration as well as democratic- and economic reform in this

532 Talbott, "A Farewell to Flashman."
533 Talbott, "A Farewell to Flashman."
"vitally important region" was not just a task for governments but also for NGOs and businesses.534

In the same month as Talbott’s speech, there seemed to be some confusion within the administration when it announced that it would not oppose a $1.6 billion Iran-Turkey pipeline to carry natural gas from Turkmenistan across Iran to Turkey. After moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami had won the Iranian Presidential election in May, there was a glimmer of hope for improvement in the U.S.-Iranian relations within the administration.535 Secretary Albright declared that the U.S. would not necessarily oppose foreign investment in building this pipeline "to help Turkey and Turkmenistan", as long as it was not used for shipping Iranian gas. The administration suggested that the project did not violate the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, because it did not constitute an investment in Iran’s industry. Albright insisted that there was "no attempt here to change policy". Few observers agreed, and soon the administration backed off from its announcement with numerous statements opposing any routes through Iran.536 This was yet another example of how difficult it was to change U.S. Iran policy.

There were also other developments indicating that CASC’s importance was growing. In October 1997, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova formed the cooperation organization GUAM. It was promoted largely by Ukraine, its main purpose being to counterbalance Russian influence within the CIS. It had started in 1996 as a consultative forum for discussing security and the CFE Treaty. Initially it had two main questions on its agenda: cementing a common position regarding Russian troops and munitions in Moldova and Georgia and the separatist conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. The U.S. was positive to this initiative and supported it politically through the State Department and financially through a $44 million grant from Congress. In 1996 China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia had formed the Shanghai Five group for security confidence-building purposes. Naturally, Russia and China dominated the organization, and it led, among other things, to a higher level of coordination of their policies toward Central Asia, including U.S. and NATO activities in the region.

Russia, China and Iran were all worried about NATO’s increased activities in CASC. Some analysts have linked this to the growing interest in the region’s energy.537 However, things were far more complicated. NATO’s

534 Talbott, "A Farewell to Flashman."
policy toward CASC was unclear. It sent mixed signals, and its activities seemed to develop more incrementally than as result of a clear policy. Since the launch of the PFP, there had been a proliferation of programs directed at the new participants. This added to the confusion and misperceptions regarding the extent of NATO’s commitment to CASC. Despite economic and social problems, the CASC states proved to be enthusiastic participants in the PFP. For instance, in November 1996 President Karimov visited NATO headquarters and met with Secretary General Javier Solana, and in March 1997 Solana visited Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan participated in activities organized within the framework of the EAPC and the PFP, including Individual Partnership Program, and after 1996 participated in joint military exercises.538

Contact on the ground was complemented by expanding links on senior levels. Distracted by the Kosovo War, the media paid little attention when the leaders of the CASC states came to Washington for ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of NATO. Their visit clearly demonstrated that these states, though distant from Europe, aspired to closer relations with NATO. In late 1995, NATO and Central Asian leaders agreed to form the Central Asian Peacekeeping Battalion (Centrasbat), one of seven regional units organized under the PFP. As an indication of the importance of this development, the U.S. Secretary of Defense visited the region again in 1996.

Regarding mixed messages, there was a tendency for the official of certain member states to issue statements without making clear whether they were speaking in their capacity as NATO officials or as representatives of their respective states. For instance, Admiral Harold Gehman, NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, stated in 1998 in response to a question whether the Central Asian states were permitted to join NATO, that "there were no restrictions and that the doors were open."539 This led not only to high hopes, but also to confusion.540 NATO did not always speak with one voice either, and there was no consensus view on the region. The U.S. supported a strong role for Turkey in CASC, but that position met with ambivalence on part of many European states critical of the dominant position of the military within the Turkish state and how it treated its Kurdish population. To add to the confusion, national assistance to partner countries was in many cases wrapped in the guise of PFP-activities, when it actually did not have anything to do with it. NATO labelled these programs as being ‘in the Spirit of PFP’. That meant that NATO, although recognizing these programs, did

538 "Cooperative Aura", "Cooperative Automation", "Cooperative Banner", "Cooperative Chance", "Cooperative Demand", "Cooperative Determination", "Cooperative Guard", "Cooperative Nugget", "Cooperative Osprey", "Cooperative Support", "Strong Resolve", "Cooperative Safeguard" are some of the exercises that have been conducted with the participation of Uzbek representatives. Other CASC states can boast of similar lists.
540 President Eduard Shevardnadze, for instance, declared during the 1999 parliamentary election that Georgia would join NATO within five years.
not take any direct responsibility for them. These programs are distinct from PFP activity and represent purely bilateral assistance. The line separating the two is clearly demarcated at NATO headquarters, but the distinction was frequently lost on observers and participants. The confusion around the Cen-
tralbat exercise of 1997 is an illustrative example.

By 1997 many U.S. officials had declared that the U.S. had a strong interest in both the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Perhaps the most important concrete example of this interest at the time was the U.S. military involvement in the Centralsbat exercise in September 1997. In the longest non-stop aerial deployment in U.S. military history, 500 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division made a parachute drop over Uzbekistan after having flown over 7,000 miles from North Carolina. After the drop, the Commander of U.S. Atlantic Command and NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic Jack Sheehan stated that if the UN decided to authorize a peace-support operation involving Central Asian military forces, "the US is ready to stand beside them and participate".\footnote{Bhatty and Bronson (2000). See also Klare, (2004).} This was the first assertion of U.S. willingness to dispatch military forces to Central Asia and the first demonstration of its power projection capabilities in the region. Turkish troops also participated in this exercise, with strong U.S. approval.

Many observers did not realise that this was not a PFP exercise and thus not a NATO operation. Regional leaders perceived it as a NATO operation, and the Kazakh foreign minister stated that the exercise "embod[ied] Kazakhstans cooperation with NATO within the framework of the Partnership for Peace Programme".\footnote{Kasymzhomart Tokayev quoted in Bhatty and Bronson (2000).} Both Russian and Chinese press reported it as such. Even NATO officials themselves did not seem to be entirely clear regarding the operation.\footnote{Bhatty and Bronson (2000).}

PFP and ‘in Spirit’ activities in CASC increased steadily, and the U.S. perception of both Russia and it interests in CASC was changing. The U.S. stepped up its engagement in CASC. In 1997 it became heavily involved in supporting a MEP for Azeri and Caspian oil. AIOC had scheduled decisions concerning main export routes for October 1998. This was of great importance, since the administration would much rather see the oil and gas flow going East-West rather than North-South. The idea of creating an East-West Eurasian transport corridor had been gaining momentum. In November 1997 Federico Pena, U.S. Secretary of Energy, was sent to the region to build support for this. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, this was "critical to ensuring diversity and security of oil supplies".\footnote{U.S. Department of Energy, "Pena Wins Support for East-West Eurasian Transport Corridor for Caspian Oil and Gas," November 15, 1997.} Pena met with the leaders of the region and proposed that the U.S., Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan work together to prepare proposals for a pipeline.

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\footnote{Bhatty and Bronson (2000). See also Klare, (2004).}
\footnote{Kasymzhomart Tokayev quoted in Bhatty and Bronson (2000).}
\footnote{Bhatty and Bronson (2000).}
\footnote{U.S. Department of Energy, "Pena Wins Support for East-West Eurasian Transport Corridor for Caspian Oil and Gas," November 15, 1997.}
from Baku to Ceyhan.\textsuperscript{545} He underscored the necessity of "the fullest participation and support from the private sector". In each meeting he also reinforced U.S. Iran policy, which meant opposition to any transit through Iran or investments in its energy sector. Pena’s trip was a success. After the leaders endorsed the proposal, he declared that the U.S. had made "significant progress on a matter of serious strategic importance".\textsuperscript{546}

From a U.S. geopolitical perspective, the idea of an East-West pipeline from Baku via Tblisi to Ceyhan, while bypassing Russia, Iran and the crowded and potential choke point of the Bosphorus, was ideal. It would diversify the energy supply, making the U.S. and the rest of the world less dependent on the Gulf and the Hormuz strait. It would empower the CASC states and enhance Turkey’s regional power while simultaneously limiting Russian and Iranian influence. It would also increase European energy security and benefit Israel, which was expected to be a significant consumer.\textsuperscript{547} These ideas were fused into a powerful geopolitical framework, with this particular MEP being placed within a broader geopolitical discourse that pitted East-West against North-South and envisioned a reopening of the ancient Silk Road.

The notion that the rapid development of the region’s energy resources was critical for peace, stability, independence, prosperity and democratic and economic reform came from many directions, including from various people associated with oil interest. Some probably believed in it; others supported it for pragmatic reasons. It suggested that U.S. interests and ideals coincided and was, therefore, easy to sell. The administration indicated early on that it supported it.

A framework was created that linked oil and gas with democratic and economic reform. It envisioned the region, by developing its energy resources, lifting itself by its own bootstraps. The East-West framework fused with the bootstrap framework in support of this particular MEP. When combined, the frameworks legitimized and served as a base for building a coalition in support for the project. The combination was powerful. It had widespread appeal across the political spectrum, and it seems as if many came to believe that building this pipeline would achieve almost all of the U.S. goals in the region.

During the latter half of 1997, U.S. relations in the region deepened. In late June 1997 the State Department announced that a U.S.-Uzbek Joint Commission would be formed to expand all aspects of the bilateral relationship, since it was "a very important country" for the U.S. in both geopolitical and

\textsuperscript{545} Secretary Pena met with President Demirel and Prime Minister Yilmaz of Turkey, President Ter-Petrossian of Armenia, President Aliyev of Azerbaijan, President Niyazov of Turkmenistan and President Shevardnadze of Georgia.

\textsuperscript{546} U.S. Department of Energy, "Pena Wins Support."

\textsuperscript{547} There has been surprisingly little written about Israel as a beneficiary of the BTC.
commercial terms.\textsuperscript{548} The commission was intended to provide a structure for maintaining high-level contacts on a regular basis and was chaired by the Ambassador at Large Steven Sestanovich and the Uzbek Foreign Minister.

The administration also invited several of the region’s leaders to Washington. On August 1 Clinton met with Azeri President Aliyev. In a joint statement, they emphasized "the importance of rapid development of Caspian energy resources" and agreed on "the vital importance of the Eurasian transport corridor to the economic future of Azerbaijan and the entire region". Suiting the occasion, Clinton reiterated his "strong support for repeal of Section 907" and declared that the U.S. encouraged Azerbaijan’s "integration into the global economy" and the emerging European security structures. They also discussed security threats, such as international terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and proliferation of WMDs and agreed to explore an "expansion of security cooperation".\textsuperscript{549}

In November Uzbek Prime Minister Utkur Sultanov visited the U.S. He discussed the East-West pipeline routes with administration officials and supported the idea of bypassing Russia and Iran.\textsuperscript{550} That same month, Clinton met with Kazak President Nazarbayev in the White House. The region’s energy resources were on the top of the agenda.\textsuperscript{551} Their joint statement underscored the "special importance" they attached "to the close and productive relationship" between their countries. They renewed their commitment to regional security cooperation, including enhanced bilateral military-to-military cooperation. This was reflected in the Defense Cooperation and Military Contact Plans for 1998 that were signed during the meeting. They also discussed the "serious threats" posed by international terrorism, narcotics trafficking and international criminal activity and committed themselves to expanding cooperation in combating them.\textsuperscript{552} Nazarbayev was in Washington primarily for the fourth annual meeting of the U.S.-Kazak Joint Commission, during which several specific working groups were established to focus on the region’s energy resources.

The growing U.S. interest was also indicated by a dramatic increase in U.S. official visits to the region. Uzbekistan was, for instance, visited by more U.S. officials in 1997 than ever before.\textsuperscript{553} Kazakhstan was still perceived as the most important state in CASC by most policymakers, and technically it was accorded the same access to the administration as Russia en-

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{548} Nichol, (2001).
\item \textsuperscript{549} William J. Clinton, "Joint Statement on Azerbaijan-United States Relations," August 1, 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{551} Mike McCurry, "Press Briefing by Mike McCurry," White House, November 18, 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{552} William J. Clinton, "Joint Statement on U.S.-Kazakhstan Relations," White House, November 18, 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{553} Five governmental delegations visited in 1997. In August, Senator John McCain (R-AR), Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX) and U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson visited. Three months later, in November, first lady Hillary Clinton visited the country for two days.
\end{itemize}
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joyed through the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, since the U.S.-Kazak bilateral relationship was managed through the Gore-Nazarbayev Commission. The U.S.-Uzbek Joint Commission, on the other hand, was established on a lower level. It was chaired by an ambassadorial appointment, and his counterpart was a foreign minister.  

5.2.3 The Pivotal States of CASC: Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan

This brief section attempts to explain the growing importance of Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan for U.S. interests in CASC.

In 1997 Zbigniew Brzezinski published The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives. It was widely discussed and put CASC on the map for a wider audience. It included much of what Brzezinski had been saying during the past years and made the argument that the proper management of CASC could prolong the 'unipolar moment'.  

Inspired by classical geopolitical thought, Brzezinski argued that Eurasia was the globe’s most important playing field. It was there that a potential peer competitor to the U.S. would arise. According to Brzezinski, the best point of departure for formulating a strategy for the long-term management of U.S. geopolitical interests was "to identify the geostrategically dynamic Eurasian states that have the power to cause a potentially shift in the international distribution of power" and to "pinpoint the geopolitically critical Eurasian states whose location and/or existence have catalytic effects either on the more active geostrategic players or on regional conditions".

To identify the former – Russia and China – was not particularly difficult. Thus much of the book focused on identifying the latter, the so called "geopolitical pivots". Pivots are states "whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behaviour of geostrategic players". Geography often provides some states with a "special role either in defining access to important areas or in denying resources to a significant player". This makes them pivotal. States that "act as a defensive shield for a vital state or even a region" could also be regarded as pivotal.

Brzezinski argued that strong independent neighbours would inhibit Russia’s hegemonic aspirations, which, in turn, could induce it to exercise its European option more unambiguously. He regarded Ukraine as a pivot and

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554 Olcott, (2005), p. 70.
556 Halford Mackinder’s old saying "Who rules East Europe commands the heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; Who rules the World-Island commands the world," played an important role in Brzezinski’s argument.
had for a long time urged the U.S. to more assertively support it.\footnote{Brzezinski, (1997), p. 46.} This was hardly any news. However, in the book he elevated Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan to the status of pivotal states and argued that that they, together with Ukraine, were "especially important" in this endeavour. This, on the other hand, was news to many and a perfect example of what he meant by "geopolitical pluralism".

An independent Azerbaijan can serve as a corridor for Western access to the energy-rich Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia. Conversely, a subdued Azerbaijan would mean that Central Asia can be sealed off from the outside world and thus rendered politically vulnerable to Russian pressures for reintegration. (…) Azerbaijan’s vulnerability has wider regional implications because the country’s location makes it a geographical pivot. It can be described as the vitally important "cork" controlling access to the "bottle" that contains the riches of the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia. An independent, Turkic-speaking Azerbaijan, with pipelines running from it to the ethnically related and politically supportive Turkey, would prevent Russia from exercising a monopoly on access to the region and would thus also deprive Russia of decisive political leverage over the policies of the new Central Asian states.\footnote{Brzezinski, (1997), p. 121, p. 129.}

Azerbaijan was thus an obvious target for Russia. If not restrained, Russia would be able to seal off the entire region from the West, including Turkey, and increase its leverage on the other CASC states, not least of all recalcitrant Uzbekistan. Brzezinski could not stress the importance of this enough and argued that the independence of the Central Asian states could "be rendered nearly meaningless if Azerbaijan becomes fully subordinated to Moscow's control",\footnote{Brzezinski, (1997), p. 46ff.} Strengthening Azerbaijan’s independence was, therefore, crucial. The best way to do this was to link it to Western markets by pipelines that did not pass through Russian controlled territory, i.e. strongly support the BTC.\footnote{Brzezinski, (1997), p. 46ff}

Brzezinski argued that Azerbaijan was the Western gateway into the region and that Uzbekistan was the "soul" for its diverse national awakenings. Uzbekistan was not only the most vital and most populous state in the region but also the "least vulnerable to Russian pressures". Kazakhstan had more natural resources but was too ethnically vulnerable to prevail in an open confrontation with Russia. Uzbekistan was geographically shielded by Kazakhstan, enabling Uzbekistan to assert more forcefully its independence and oppose Russia’s reintegration attempts. Uzbekistan "represents a major obstacle to any renewed Russian control over the region" and is therefore the "prime candidate for regional leadership".\footnote{Brzezinski, (1997), p. 121, p. 130.} Brzezinski regarded Uzbekistan

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as the region’s core state and its independence as "critical to the survival of the other Central Asian states". It was, therefore, "deserving America’s strongest geopolitical support", along with Azerbaijan and Ukraine.\(^{564}\) He also made a case for a U.S.-Iran rapprochement, arguing that Russia would be weakened if the CASC states were able to use Iran as an outlet for their energy. This would strengthen them and negate the collaboration between Iran and Russia.

Brzezinski referred to the region as the "Eurasian Balkans", emphasising its diversity, including the risks of ethnic violence. He regarded it, though, as "infinitely more important as a potential economic prize" than the Balkans, due to its enormous concentration of natural resources. Throughout the book he underscored the need for investment in the region. He also argued for a less moralistic U.S. policy and, as if taken directly out of a realist handbook, Brzezinski wrote that the "the U.S. lives in morally gray world and cannot succeed by trying to make it black and white".\(^{565}\) He argued more implicitly that the U.S. should not alienate the pivotal states by pushing them too hard on democratic reform.

*The Grand Chessboard* had a real impact on the debate.\(^{566}\) It increased people’s interest in the region and changed how many, including policymakers, talked about it. For all of those already interested in CASC, it became a book you had to take a position on. Some liked it; others hated it. But virtually everyone seemed to have read it.

In November of 1997 Sheila Heslin, who had been the director for Russian, Ukrainian and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council in 1995 and 1996, argued in the *Washington Post* that the U.S. had to "demonstrate its unequivocal support for rapid Caspian energy development" and prioritize conflict resolution in the region. Sounding like Brzezinski, she wrote further:

The United States simply cannot afford to allow Russia and Iran to dominate the energy resources of the Caspian, with the enormous political leverage that would confer in the region and even in Europe. (…) Increasingly, the Caspian region is emerging not only as a critical component of Western energy security, but also as a linchpin in the evolving balance of power in Eurasia, Asia and the Middle East. The United States must act, and soon, to promote our strategic interest in the emergence of a fully independent, prosperous and secure South Caucasus and Central Asia at peace with its powerful neighbors and with strong ties to the West.\(^{567}\)

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All in all, 1997 was a remarkable year for the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC. The region, or now regions, was really put on the map for a wider audience. The debate about CASC had moved from relative obscurity to the op-ed pages of the country’s largest newspapers, and both houses of Congress held hearings on it. The Clinton administration became not only more assertive, but also directly engaged in a huge pipeline project, and its representatives spoke of the region as strategically important and sometimes even vital. The main reason for this development was its energy resources. As the U.S. perceived a greater interest, the tension between U.S. ideals and interests was exacerbated. A powerful framework that linked U.S. ideals, interests and goals alleviated some of this tension by allowing policymakers to argue that U.S. ideals and interest coincided in the effort to develop the region’s energy resources.

5.2.4 The Silk Road Strategy Act, BTC, and the Tension between Ideals and Interests

This section has three purposes. The first is to show how the administration got behind the BTC project. The second is to describe the scope and nature of U.S. assistance to the project. Third is to illustrate the increasing tension between interests in developing the regions energy resources and interest in democratization and human rights.

U.S. interest in CASC had increased so rapidly that Dick Cheney in June 1998 declared that he could "not think of a time when we have had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian."

It is significant that he used the term ‘Caspian’. The driving force behind this interest was mainly the potential riches of the Caspian Sea. Earlier in 1998 the President of Chevron Overseas Petroleum, Richard Matzke, had declared that "in a reversal of history, the industry today is showing potential to drive geopolitical events, rather than being driven by them", and the President of International Exploration and Production for Mobil Corporation compared the Caspian oil rush to "the oil business in the Middle East back in the 1930s and 1940s". This underscores how novel this region was to most Americans.

Media attention increased in 1998, though not every story celebrated the oil boom. The criticism of the administration’s focus on energy resources grew louder, and the notion that it was sacrificing U.S. ideals for access be-

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came somewhat of a theme. For many Americans naturally suspicious of U.S. corporate interests, there was no doubt that oil interests were influencing U.S. policy. A number of articles about the revolving door between the U.S. Government and Oil Companies and stories of bribes and corruption surrounding various deals with the authoritarian regimes confirmed their suspicions. There were also warnings that the region could be afflicted with a severe case of the 'Dutch disease', if the energy resources and the overall economy were not handled responsibly.  

The administration openly supported investments on part of U.S. companies. To demonstrate its commitment to the East-West energy corridor, it began to formalize bilateral energy agreements with Turkey, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan in late 1997 and initiated energy dialogs with Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan under the umbrella of the bilateral commissions.

In February 1998 the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Asia held another hearing on U.S. interests in Central Asia. The interest in the administration’s strategy was now greater, as noted by Chairman Bereuter who opened the hearing by referring to the 'great game':

One hundred years ago, Central Asia was the arena for a great game played by Czarist Russia, Colonial Britain, Napoleon’s France, and the Persian and the Ottoman Empires. (...) One hundred years later, the collapse of the Soviet Union has unleashed a new great game, where the interests of the East India Trading Company have been replaced by those of Unocal and Total, and many other organizations and firms.  

The analogy gave some indication of the stakes, and Bereuter stressed that other players were pursuing "significant new investment opportunities" in the region. Before the testimony began, Howard Berman added that "all of us are quickly understanding the vital importance of the Caucasus to our future".

Robert W. Gee, Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, Department of Energy, underscored the administration’s support for multiple pipelines and the Eurasian transport corridor, emphasizing that commercial considerations determined the routes. He also pointed to Section 907 as an obstacle to U.S goals. Frederick Starr was also invited, and his testimony

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570 Dutch Disease is a broad concept that refers to the phenomenon that increases in revenues from exploration of natural resources (or massive influx of foreign capital) can lead to decline in other sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture. There are numerous reasons for this, one being that these revenues strengthen the country’s currency, thus making various sectors less competitive internationally.


572 Gee used the term Caucasus in his testimony. There seemed to be little consensus over the years regarding how to refer to the region. Terms such as the Caucasus, the Caspian, Central Asia, and Southern Caucasus were used with little or no regard for specificity.
included much of what he had argued earlier. The hearing also touched upon
Unocal’s plans for a pipeline that would extract oil from existing pipeline
infrastructure in the region and then run it from Turkmenistan through Af-
ghanistan to Pakistan. Even though the U.S. supported the project, Gec ad-
vised caution, since the U.S. did not recognize the governing regime in Af-
ghanistan. Unocal’s Vice President of International Relations, John Maresca,
testified that there were no contract negotiations going on in Afghanistan and
that nothing would be built until there was one single Afghan Government.
Unocal had, however, held talks with "all the factions". Dana Rohrabacher
(R-CA) pressed Maresca on Unocal’s relationship with the Taliban and em-
phasized that they were heavily involved in opium production, mistreated
women and provided a safe haven for international terrorists, including an
"infamous Saudi terrorist". He, however, acknowledged that the pipeline
would be "a tremendous asset to the region" and that Unocal was a "fine
company" "trying to make the best of a bad situation".

In April the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations
held a hearing on the U.S. role in CASC. The region was no longer just a
subcommittee matter. It was obvious that the administration had elevated the
importance of CASC. However, when its representatives faced questions
aimed at specifying its importance, there was confusion that indicated a lack
of coordination. This hearing also brought to light the inherent tensions in
the strategy. Before any questioning began, Brad Sherman (D-CA) re-
marked:

It seems that for whatever reasons, God decided to put oil in the most difficult
parts of the world, and our focus now on Central Asia is reminiscent of the fo-
cus of the Middle East earlier this century and our continuing focus on the
Middle East. I think that we should avoid the mistakes we made in the 1950’s
when our State Department focused too much on oil and not enough on
American values (...) Once again, we look toward another area of the world
that will be an oil-exporting area and a complicated area, and we should again
not focus on oil to the exclusion of American values. It will be best for our
values and best for our oil policy if we recognize that democracy and justice
must be our guiding lights.

For Sherman, there was too much focus on pipelines and too little on democ-

racy. He clearly disagreed with the notion that the development of the re-
gion’s energy resources would solve most of its problems.

Congressman and co-chair of the Armenia Caucus, Frank Pallone (D-
NJ), was also critical of the direction in which U.S. policy seemed to be

573 On February 4, 1998, an earthquake had rocked northern Afghanistan, leaving thousands
dead, injured or homeless. Rohrabacher’s tone changed when he heard that Unocal was one of
the few companies involved in humanitarian assistance in its aftermath.

574 "The U.S. Role in the Caucasus and Central Asia," Hearing Before Committee on Interna-
heading. Unsurprisingly, he was concerned about the growing coalition against Section 907. Repealing it was contradictory to Armenian interests. So was the entire idea of a pipeline from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Turkey, while bypassing Armenia. He would much rather see routes through Armenia. Pallone was, however, fighting a losing battle. The administration stood firmly behind the repeal effort, and during the hearing Secretary Pena warned that it "limited U.S. advance" in CASC. When the EU, Japan, Iran or others "step in to fill the void, the U.S. loses influence, and U.S. businesses lose opportunities". Therefore, repealing Section 907 was the "most significant action that Congress could take to further our [U.S.] efforts in the Caspian". The administration thus positioned U.S. commercial interests against the policy of the Freedom Support Act.

When faced with a question regarding Caspian’s importance, Pena answered that it was "important" to U.S. national security and "very important" to U.S. national security and to the world’s security that its energy resources were made available to world markets as soon as possible. Lee H. Hamilton (D-IN) was not satisfied with Pena’s answers. In order to get a sense of the administration’s priorities, he asked whether Pena would describe the region "as important or vital to U.S. interests?" Pena replied that it was "both vital and important". Hamilton responded by saying: "Presidents don’t use the word ‘vital’ casually. Vital means vital. And it means that we have to have access to it. And as you described it as vital, that sends a real signal, I think, to all of us".575

Later in the hearing, Hamilton pressed Steven Sestanovich, the Ambassador at Large for the NIS, even harder on the semantics of U.S. interests. Sestanovich was evasive and his vocabulary confused, indicating that the administration had not formulated a clear policy toward CASC. He initially objected to describing the region as being of "vital" importance to the U.S. and suggested that "very important" was a good alternative. Shortly thereafter he changed his mind and accepted the description, speaking of "big stake" of the U.S. in the "historic transformation" in Eurasia. There was also confusion as to whether the administration objected to the presence of Russian troops in Armenia and Georgia. After a lengthy exchange, Sestanovich stated that it did not object and that he did not believe Russia was seeking direct control over the region.

The economic viability of the East-West pipeline also came into question. Hamilton took up the argument put forward by many critics: that it would be twice as long and cost approximately twice as much as a southern route through Iran. Pena replied that it was not the government that was going to finance the project but the private sector. If this is the case, "[w]hy

575 “The U.S. Role in the Caucasus and Central Asia.” The NSS 1998 established the precedent for categorizing U.S. national interests as either vital interests, important national interests or humanitarian and other interests. This was most certainly done to avoid a confusing variety of vocabulary in describing U.S. interests.
isn’t it in the U.S. national interest here to just stand aside and let the marketplace figure out the best route”, Hamilton replied. This highlighted the fact that the administration was not just being guided by commercial interests but also by geopolitical ideas that were not necessarily compatible. Clearly, Hamilton was concerned that there seemed to be a lack of coordination in the development of the Caspian policy. Underscoring the number of agencies involved, he asked why not a single coordinator had been appointed to provide a more clear line of responsibility.

Finally, the hearing also touched upon some interesting things about U.S. aid activities in CASC. Richard Morningstar, Special Advisor to the President and the Secretary of State and Coordinator of Assistance to the NIS, pointed out that the assistance effort was the primary tool for accomplishing U.S. objectives and, therefore, "a critical instrument in U.S. policy toward both the regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia". Not surprisingly, he believed that funding was inadequate. Donald Pressley, USAID’s Acting Assistant Administrator for Europe and the NIS, stated that "[o]ur overall strategy, particularly where authoritarianism still lingers, is to support democratic ideals at the grassroots level until they can ultimately reach the upper echelons of these nations, thus making centralized control harder to sustain". This particular approach, which implied involvement in the civil societies if these states, had important consequences. Almost all of the authoritarian leaders in the CASC-states were former Soviet officials. Losing centralized control was something they perceived as threatening. For them, national security was equivalent to regime stability. They, therefore, perceived some U.S. aid activities as diametrically opposed to their interests.

In March 1998 Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan issued a joint communiqué in support of an East-West transport corridor. Two months later at the Crossroads of the World Conference in Istanbul, Secretary Pena declared that the administration’s new Caspian Sea Initiative brought together for the first time in history the heads of the U.S. government’s three independent trade and investment agencies (EXIM, OPIC and TDA) "to coordinate the development and support of concrete project opportunities in the Caspian". This was, according to Pena, "indicative of the priority the United States government has placed on this effort". The agencies had recently formalized a relationship by establishing a Caspian Finance Working Group, which met regularly. The group reported to a multi-agency group on Caspian issues that convened at the White House. In 1997 and 1998 Congress approved legislation that allowed Azerbaijan to receive assistance from these agencies. There was great U.S. optimism at the conference,

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576 "The U.S. Role in the Caucasus and Central Asia."
577 "The U.S. Role in the Caucasus and Central Asia."
which was hosted by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. Pena reiterated the bootstrap idea. Senator Chuck Hagel dismissed all notions of zero-sum thinking and argued that the corridor would strengthen national independence, provide opportunities and connect the region to the world while helping to build peace, stability and security.\(^{579}\) Simply put, building the pipeline would be a win-win situation for everybody.

Hagel’s presence indicates that the region also had seized the attention of the U.S. Senate. In fact, already in July 1997, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held its first hearing to examine U.S. policy toward CASC.\(^{580}\) In October 1997 the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion held hearings on U.S. energy policy in the Caspian.\(^{581}\) On this occasion, Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) presented a new concept to advance U.S. interests, and shortly thereafter he introduced the Silk Road Strategy Act. Similar legislation was sponsored in the House by Benjamin Gilman and Doug Bereuter.

The purpose of the bill was to re-energize and refocus U.S. assistance initiatives in the region. This was "necessitated by the failure of current U.S. policy" to effectively advance U.S. interests.\(^{582}\) It underscored the potentially "enormous economic gains" and established a framework for elevating and differentiating the eight states of CASC from the status of FSU and NIS, labels that frustrated that states which viewed themselves as independent, sovereign states. Special attention was given to Azerbaijan and the negative impact of Section 907. It explicitly posed East-West against North-South and underscored Iran’s and Russia’s negative influence, suggesting that they were coordinating their activities in the region.\(^{583}\)

The bill also included a noteworthy section on promoting human rights. It began by arguing that one of the challenges the U.S. faced was to determine when to use its assistance to promote reforms and when to disengage. After framing it as an ‘either or’ decision, it suggested that the U.S. take the pro-U.S. receptivity in the region, the "compelling U.S. geostrategic and economic interests" and the fact that disengagement would not improve human rights when making this decision seriously into consideration. It warned that by failing to act, the U.S. "would miss an opportunity to secure inde-

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\(^{580}\) "U.S. Foreign Policy Interests in the South Caucasus and Central Asia," Joint Hearing Before the Subcommittee on European Affairs and Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate, 105th Congress, July 1997. Caspar Weinberger was one of the witnesses.


\(^{583}\) The bill explicitly underscored Russia’s attempts to control the oil and gas flowing out of the region.
dependence of the states that, in the worst circumstance, could be the building blocks of a hostile, regional empire reproducing the threat and tensions of the Cold War". It also suggested that the authoritarianism could be attributed to a great extent on ongoing conflicts, which Russia and Iran exploited and, at times, fomented. What followed from this section was not only the obvious response that the U.S. should remain engaged but also that it must be prepared to accept a certain level of authoritarianism in the region. This echoed what Brzezinski and others had argued in previous years.

Throughout 1998 the Silk Road Act was debated and amended. To the joy of the coalition behind it, the Clinton Administration expressed its full support for it in May 1998. Criticism of the bill was severe, and the minority view attached to it argued that it "repudiated the fundamental principles of the Freedom Support Act" by exempting eight of the thirteen republics of FSU from its requirements. Authorizing and providing new forms of aid to certain NIS countries without requiring progress in the direction of goals of the FSA would "undermine the long-term goals and abiding principles of U.S. foreign policy", the criticism continued. Azerbaijan’s poor human rights record was highlighted in an argument in favour of retaining Section 907, which would be abrogated by the bill initially proposed. However, the main criticism was directed against its "excessive focus on oil and gas interests". It clearly posed U.S. values against a narrow focus on energy resources:

While the U.S. has a strategic interest in maintaining adequate supplies of energy at reasonable prices from diverse sources, pipeline politics should not be permitted to overshadow some of the larger issues and concerns of U.S. policy. The United States has a fundamental interest in promoting basic American values and principle, such as respect for human right, democracy, and the rule of law. In their absence, the long-term goals of peace and stability, security and prosperity are often unattainable or meaningless.

These values and principles must serve as a starting point for U.S. policy in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Yet S. 1344 [the Silk Road Strategy Act] would take the reverse approach. By increasing the availability of U.S. assistance for countries that have failed to demonstrate a commitment to democratic principles, the bill sends the message that economic interests will dominate U.S. policy decisions.

The critics argued that the bill "rewards poor performance and eliminates incentives for improvement" and seems to be based on "a misconception that stability will flow from oil wealth" and "unfortunately suggests that economic prosperity can be achieved outside the context of political freedom and the rule of law", instead of suggesting that "human rights, democracy and free markets are goals that need to be achieved in relationship to one

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another." Furthermore, they criticized that most restrictions on assistance contained a national interest waiver, thus granting the President substantial leeway to waive restrictions. They also warned that the bill might have negative effects on U.S. relations with Russia, China and other states in transition. In sum, they argued that the bill represented an "ill-advised attempt to shift U.S. policy away from the more balanced approach reflected in the Freedom Support Act, with potentially serious negative consequences." 588

The Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion' held a second hearing in February 1998 and a third in July 1998. 589 The Chairman, Chuck Hagel, was clearly interested in CASC, opened the July hearing by emphasizing the necessity for "a strong visionary American leadership" in consideration of the stakes involved and the possibility to transcend zero-sum thinking:

America is the one country that can help bring these nations together. As a distant power, the United States has no imperial designs on this region. Our own national interests coincide with the national interests of the countries of this region: respect for national sovereignty, independence, and economic growth. Decisions made this year will set the geopolitical and economic course of this region for the next century. The United States must help these nations realize that potential. If we do not, others will surely fill the leadership void. 590

Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, agreed with Hagel and continuously stressed that it was "not a zero sum proposition" and that "everybody can win if we do this right". Stephen Sestanovich was once again questioned as to why not a single coordinator had been appointed to pull everything together. Once again, his answers were somewhat peculiar. Sestanovich argued that coordination was, in fact, "impressive" and that the issue was too important to have a single coordinator, since "really high level policies and issues that involve very, very high priority of the United States generally involve the participation (...) of more than one agency". He then compared U.S. relations with CASC to the U.S.-NATO relation, thereby indicating his view of its importance.

Zbigniew Brzezinski was invited, and his testimony included many of the arguments found in The Grand Chessboard, including his criticism of U.S. Iran policy. By this time Iranian President Khatami had spoken about a

"dialogue of civilizations" and proposed cultural exchanges. President Clinton had offered talks on "the basis of equality and mutual respect". A month before the hearing, Secretary Albright had invited Iran to draw up "a road map leading to normal relations". This was the administration’s first comprehensive reply to Khatami’s cautious overtures. To the delight of many supporters of rapprochement, a thawing of relations seemed possible, and a development of this kind would have profound implications for CASC.

However, not everyone was positive about the evolution of U.S. policy toward CASC. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD) voiced many of the criticisms of the growing gap between U.S. ideals and interest when he expressed his concern over the contradictions in U.S. policy, explicitly highlighting the conflict between short- and long-term interests:

It seems to me the United States has a fundamental interest in promoting basic American values and principles, such as respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. If you are unwilling to subscribe to that as a basic fundamental concept, then I would just go on to suggest that the long-term goals of peace and stability, security and prosperity, which are essentially really to developing these strategic concerns on the energy resources, are often unobtainable or meaningless. (...) So I think it is important that as we develop a strategy to gain access to energy supplies from this or any other region we proceed from these values and principles as a starting point and not as an afterthought. Not only is that the only way we can be assured of protecting U.S. interests over the long term, it is the best way of ensuring peace, stability, and prosperity for the people of the region.

For Sarbanes, U.S. values ought to serve as the foundation for any strategy, and he was "considerably concerned" about the "excessive focus on the issue of oil and gas interests". He even suggested that the Silk Road Act ought to be amended and have its name changed to "the Oil and Gas Interest Bill".

Regional expert Martha Brill Olcott, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, was also critical of the evolution of U.S. policy: "In six short years conventional wisdom in Western policy circles concerning these states has shifted 180 degrees", and they have gone from "being inconvenient additions" to the international scene to being perceived as "potential strategic assets". She further described how U.S. policy was initially designed to differentiate between the states according to their human rights and reform record but that the U.S. was now sending "a different message". The "Presidents of the energy-rich states are now welcome official visitors in Washington, regardless of how undemocratic their regimes are". She underscored the gap between U.S. ideals and interests and argued that "[p]ipeline politics has come to eclipse concerns over sustaining macroeconomic reforms, and fear of political instability has begun to clearly over-


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shadow our commitment to the cause of popular political empowerment." The U.S. was "pussyfooting with a bunch of very corrupt leaders, because we do not want to risk them getting angry at us", decried Olcott. She pointed out that the amounts of money devoted to reform education and social welfare systems were "pitifully small", while the bulk of foreign direct investment was "going disproportionately into the three oil and gas rich states". At the end of her testimony, she made an important remark concerning the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality.

In fact, it seems that the west has made an even more callous choice about the Caspian region, although there is little in the public rhetoric to suggest that this might be the case. While western policy makers may talk about the Caspian region as one of new and real strategic importance, we see this area as little more than a back-up for the potentially much vaster reserves in the more strategically located Persian Gulf region. In an energy hungry world, the Caspian resources are certainly worth trying to 'snare', but the west will only help develop them if we can do so at a reasonable cost.\(^{593}\)

Olcott urged the U.S. to develop a more comprehensive and long-term strategy "than simply developing the oil of the region". By not prioritizing sustainable economic development, it was in fact "building up proto-revolutionary situations in this part of the world", she argued.

In the final testimony, Van Krikorian, Chairman of the Armenian Assembly of America, declared that U.S. policy had been "derailed" and that its goals of establishing democracy had been compromised. The U.S. was pushing "bad deals" as a result of "promoters hype" that "grossly exaggerated" estimates of the Caspian’s oil, argued Krikorian. He criticized the ‘bootstrap idea’ and reiterated that energy resources do not necessarily lead to democratization and stability. He also questioned the notion that commercial viability determined the routes, since it would be cheaper to route the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline through Armenia.\(^{594}\) Krikorian was not alone in his criticism. It was not only Armenians that were skeptical, and during the year criticism of the administration’s preferred route had mounted. The estimates were being questioned, and the difference between ‘proven’ and ‘estimated’ reserves was emphasized more frequently. The commercial viability of the route was also called into question, as was the length of the route as compared to other routes.

There was further evidence of increased U.S. seriousness about CASC, as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine effectively


\(^{594}\) Kirkorian was also upset that John Maresca, who was the U.S. mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, went to work for a major oil company after leaving government and was now lobbying for closer U.S. ties with Azerbaijan. "That sent a message about U.S. rhetoric and reality", declared Kirkorian. "Implementation of U.S. Energy Policy in the Caspian Region," July 8, 1998.
became part of the European Command’s AOR on October 1, 1998. These changes in the Unified Command Plan had been announced by the DoD in February that same year. 595 Central Asia would continue to be regarded by EuCom as an ‘area of interest’, but it was scheduled to become part of Cent-Com’s AOR exactly one year later.

BTC gained support from the Ankara Declaration of October 29, 1998, adopted by the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. The Declaration was witnessed by Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, who had Caspian issues among his key priorities. In an interview in the New York Times shortly after, he described U.S. interests in CASC.

This is about America’s energy security, which depends on diversifying our sources of oil and gas worldwide. It’s also about preventing strategic inroads by those who don’t share our values. We’re trying to move these newly independent countries toward the West. We would like to see them reliant on Western commercial and political interests rather than going another way. We’ve made a substantial political investment in the Caspian, and it’s very important to us that both the pipeline map and the politics come out right. 596

The interview appeared, though, in an article that honed in on the contradictions of U.S. policy. Veteran correspondent Stephen Kinzer described how the administration, driven more by geopolitical ideas than by economic rationality, "fervently" promoted a specific route. It quoted several prominent specialists in making this case. Richard Matzke was quoted as saying that the route "probably isn’t the most rational solution". Robert Ebel, an energy specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, questioned the project’s economic viability and argued that it was more political than commercial. Thane Gustafson, a Washington based energy consultant, described how there was a split between oil people and the geopoliticians: "the geopoliticians are still breathing heavily, but for the oil people it’s more like a sigh". 597 According to Kinzer, there were also doubts within the administration as to whether the BTC would be built in the next few years, because of reservations on part of the oil executives’ with regard to the route. He was, though, certain that it would be framed as a victory nonetheless.

Kinzer was right, and despite the growing doubts about BTC’s economic viability, the administration maintained its enthusiasm, trying to facilitate the finance of its construction. On November 18, 1999, an intergovernmental agreement in support of the BTC pipeline was signed by Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey during an OSCE meeting in Istanbul. Ten days ear-

597 Julia Namay, a Washington-based consultant working with companies active in the Caspian, was also quoted as stating that "this is not really about oil…oil is just a political cover" for strategic goals. Kinzer, "On Piping Out Caspian Oil."
lier, the James Bond movie "The World Is Not Enough", set in Baku with a plot revolving around pipelines, had it premier as a symbol of the arrival of a new region. President Clinton attended the signing and declared that the "truly historic" agreement would "advance the prosperity and security of a region critical to the future of the entire world". He gave assurances that the U.S. had a continuing commitment and would work through the EXIM, OPIC and TDA on a commercial finance package for the project.  

Bill Richardson, who also attended the signing, declared that it was "a big day" for the U.S.-Turkey relationship and a "major foreign policy victory for President Clinton". He claimed that this had been a high priority for President Clinton and that he had been "intensely engaged" during the final weeks to ensure that the deals went through. Richardson emphasized that this was "not just another pipeline" but "a strategic framework that advances America’s national security". During a press conference that followed, the administration’s enthusiasm was challenged by the fact that a number of oil companies did not support the project and had not even found oil. In response to a question about how they were going to encourage U.S. companies to sign on, Richardson stated that financing by EXIM and OPIC was going to be "substantial". John Wolf, the Secretary of State for Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy, called it "a super day" and predicted that the construction could begin in 2001. It would, in fact, take longer than that. The official ceremony launching the construction was held on September 18, 2002, long after Clinton left office.

The Silk Road Strategy Act became law on November 29, 1999. Its ideas and priorities had prevailed, and it included a national security provision allowing the President to waive Section 907. However, the peak of enthusiasm for the Caspian had passed by this time. The international environment had also changed, as indicated by the press statement of the bill’s sponsor, Sam Brownback, the day it passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

The U.S. needs to show more leadership and strength in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. (…) "Until now U.S. policy in the region has been seen only through the prism of our Russia policy; these countries are free and independent and should be treated as such. They are in a strategically important region of the world, standing against the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. We need to make the most of this opportunity to help these countries maintain their sovereignty and independence, as well as their pro-western policies. (…) The entire region is under increasing anti-western influence and pressure from Iran, Afghanistan, and other countries. It is subject to a corresponding increase in anti-western/anti-U.S. attitudes. We want to ensure peace and stabil-

599 Bill Richardson, "Press Briefing by Energy Secretary Bill Richardson and Special Advisor to the President and to the Secretary of State for Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy John Wolf," November 18, 1999.
A new threat had emerged: militant Islam.

5.3 U.S. Interest in Combating Terrorism in CASC

This thematic section focuses on how the Clinton Administration’s interest in combating terrorism would change its strategy toward CASC.

5.3.1 A Brief Introduction to Militant Islam in CASC

The purpose of this section is to describe the spread of fundamentalist Islam in CASC. It provides important context for understanding U.S. security assistance during both the Clinton and the George W. Bush Administration.

Religion was repressed in the Soviet Union. Consequently, religious identity served as a badge of political dissent in many places. In Central Asia, Islam was subjugated, but it was kept alive in underground networks. These enabled moderate and radical versions of Islam to revive quickly when the Soviet Union disintegrated. Such networks were particularly strong in the Ferghana Valley. It is important to recognize that militant Islam is not indigenous to the region. Rather, Central Asia became exposed to it through foreign contacts, particularly with South west Asia. The most important development facilitating this contact was the Soviet War in Afghanistan, although the civil wars in Tajikistan and Afghanistan and the Chechen wars also increased exposure.

5.3.1.1 The Tajik Civil War

As an indication of the level of U.S. interest, the Tajik Civil War of 1992–1996 went more or less unreported, despite around 50,000 estimated deaths and 1.2 million refugees or internally displaced persons. The war, however, had a profound effect on the region.601

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601 The conflict barely raised interest beyond Central Asia. There are several reasons for this, including the inaccessibility and dangerous nature of the situation for journalists (a number of them were killed) as well as the fact that few knew or cared about this region at the time. See, for instance, Ahmed Rashid, Jihad: Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), Chap. 5; Rob Johnson, Oil, Islam and Conflict: Central Asia Since 1945 (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).
In the late 1980s, order in Tajikistan was deteriorating. Ironically, many political leaders in CASC feared that Gorbachev’s program of perestroika would encourage an Islamic revival, which would make control more difficult. To some extent they were right, since it gave opposition groups more opportunities to express their dissatisfaction. There were soon calls for independence. Demonstrations increased in both frequency and scale. In 1991 a chaotic presidential election spurred intense protests that would not abate. In March 1992 the protests turned violent, and the communist regime led by President Rakhmonon Nabiev responded with force. The result was a breakdown in order. Different opposition groups formed guerrilla units and established bases in the valleys. The ethnic Tajiks in Afghanistan entered the conflict, offering logistical support and supplying weapons for some of these groups. In order to augment his forces, Nabiev armed different militant groups, and in May full-scale fighting broke out. Russia backed the regime, while nationalists, Islamists, democrats and different clans formed a heterogeneous opposition.

The chaos was not confined to Tajikistan. Some 200,000 ethnic Russians were trying to flee the country, and different insurgent groups retreated periodically across the mountainous border into Afghanistan. A number of external actors were also directly involved in the conflict. Faced with disorder, Russia quickly committed itself to a military intervention in order to restore stability. Ahman Shah Massoud, the legendary Tajik-Afghan warlord, supported the Tajik opposition, and with his help the diverse United Tajik Opposition (UTO) was created. The Tajik Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) lobbied Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan for support, while secular Tajiks sought support in Moscow. Uzbekistan also intervened. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, President Karimov was determined to assert Uzbekistan’s independence and to replace Russia’s hegemony in the region. He immediately recognized the threat militant Islam posed to his regime and feared that Tajikistan could become a base for Islamist- and opposition forces.\(^\text{602}\) He supported the Tajik regime and accepted the Russian military intervention, knowing it was necessary. He was, though, constantly anxious about the thousands of Russian troops near his eastern border and wanted them gone as soon as they had served their purpose. He also tried, but failed, to convince Russia to support the Uzbek-Afghan warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, who operated in north-western Afghanistan. Dostum supported the Uzbek-Tajiks in the war while simultaneously engaged in the Afghan civil war.

There are many parallels between Russia’s intervention in Tajikistan and in Chechnya. In both instances Russian forces were not able to secure order, and the conflicts degenerated into atrocities and insurgencies.\(^\text{603}\) By

\(^{602}\) Rashid, (2002).

1996 jihadists across the Muslim world had found their way to the war. There was fighting going on all over the country, including in the capital.

An external event also accounted for the real turning point in the war. In 1996, the Taliban won central and southern Afghanistan. Both the Tajik regime and the IRP concluded that a weak Tajikistan would easily fall prey to an oncoming Taliban onslaught. The IRP leadership also believed that Uzbekistan and Russia were out to destroy them completely. These circumstances made rapprochement a suitable strategic choice. It also led other actors to re-evaluate the situation. Karimov figured that the best way to protect the Uzbek population in Tajikistan was peace combined with an increased effort to fight militant Islam. Both Russia and Iran considered it essential to support Massoud in his war against the Taliban. This made them prone to compromise.

5.3.1.2 The Afghan Civil War and the Rise of the Taliban

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, it did little to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Afghan people. With a combination of nationalism, religious devotion and personal values of honour, toughness and courage, the Mujahedins proved to be a formidable opponent. They knew the territory and had popular and ideological support. However, without external support they would have struggled. As part of the Cold War effort, the U.S. provided some $2 billion, including sophisticated weapons and technology, to the Mujahedins.604 This figure was matched by Saudi Arabia, which saw an opportunity to contain Iran by creating and supporting a pro-Wahhabi regime in Kabul. Iran, on the other hand, supported Shia groups in Afghanistan to counter Soviet influence in the greater region. Pakistan aligned itself with the Pashtuns to fight the Soviets.

The Mujahedins was an organization of competing factions held together by a common enemy. When the Soviet forces withdrew, they quickly turned on each other. In early 1992 Afghanistan was in a state of civil war.605 Iran and Pakistan were the only external players really trying to manipulate the outcome of the conflict. In 1995 there was a glimmer of hope when Massoud

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604 Shortly after the Soviet invasion in 1979, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski outlined the possibility of creating a Vietnam for the Soviet Union in a memo that became a blueprint for the U.S. proxy war in Afghanistan. It included proposals for supporting rebels with money, arms and technical advice. For instance, the U.S. provided the Mujahedins with the shoulder launched Stinger anti-aircraft missile. See Cooley, (1999); Coll, (2004).

605 The warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was favoured by Pakistan, eliminated several Mujahedins leaders to increase his political power, and the warlord Dostum took control over Mazar-i-Sharif. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).
gained control of the capital. This was, however, overshadowed by an offensive undertaken by a new faction – the Taliban.606

Even though the Taliban was to a considerable extent organized by the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) with support from the Pakistani military, Pakistan did not have full control over it. The Taliban drove the divided warlords of the south out of Kandahar and then prepared an offensive toward Kabul. Dostum withdrew to the north-west to consolidate his power, and Massoud withdrew to the north-east. Kabul fell to the Taliban in late September 1996. This led Massoud and Dostum to join forces, thereby creating the Northern Alliance.

The Taliban were Pashtuns, recruited primarily from religious schools and refugee camps in the north-west tribal areas of Pakistan. It also attracted many foreign idealists and dogmatists as well as individuals indignant over the relative position of the Muslim world. Fearful of uprisings, the Taliban ruled with fierce repression. Afghanistan was going to be the model Islamic state, according to Taliban leader mullah Omar, and it tried to control society and ensure compliance by imposing strict cultural and social disciplines.607

In 1998, the Taliban seized control over central northern Afghanistan and threatened the Tajik regime.608 Tajikistan functioned as a conduit for the Taliban drug trade and, weakened by the civil war, poverty, shortages of food, water and power as well as recalcitrant violent groups, the Tajik regime supplied arms and equipment to Massoud in order to fight the Taliban on their behalf.609

The Taliban had almost no experience of conducting international affairs. They were reluctant to interact with foreigners, refused to negotiate with the UN and met oil companies and offers of assistance offerings from IGOs and NGOs with arrogance. It had, however, formed a relationship with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan – the most notorious terrorist organization in Central Asia.610

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606 For an informative study of the Taliban, see Rashid, (2000).
607 There would be, for instance, no TV, radio, music, dancing, or visual representations of living beings. Women suffered disproportionately under Taliban rule and were denied almost all basic human rights. In May 2001, the Taliban introduced a law stating that all non-Muslims had to wear a visible yellow patch, a practice that resembled the Nazi practices in Europe.
608 The Taliban tried furiously to drive Dostum out of Mazar. In 1998, they succeeded, resulting in gruesome massacres, including the killing of 9 Iranian diplomats. This spurred an international crisis when Iran responded by moving its forces to the Afghan border. In 1998 Massoud sent a letter to the people of America arguing that help was critical. Ahmad Shah Massoud, A Letter to the American People (1998).
609 This trade increased the level of corruption in Tajik society and created security problems when drug gangs and government forces clashed.
610 For an extensive account of the IMU, see Rashid, (2002).
5.3.1.3 The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

Founded in 1998, the IMU was committed to destroying the Karimov regime. Its founders, Mullah Tohir Yuldeshev and Juma Namangani, had fought Karimov since Uzbekistan’s independence. They thrived during the Tajik civil war, during which they initiated contacts with different jihadist groups, including bin Laden’s International Islamic Front. The subsequent peace led to them losing a lot of their power. However, they knew that the Taliban would support their cause. The Taliban allowed them to establish bases in Afghanistan on the condition that they would fight Massoud’s forces. That is when they announced the formation of the IMU.

In the preceding years they were responsible for numerous attacks inside Uzbekistan. Karimov’s response had been fierce. In 1998, the regime passed the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations, which stated that all mosques and their ulema must be registered. The law itself and the enforcement of it alienated many young Muslims. That, together with corruption, inequality and unemployment, led to the growth of unrest. In February 1999 Tashkent was rocked by a wave of car bombings primarily aimed at President Karimov. The attacks caused intense anxiety in the capital. Later in the summer, both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan were targets of an IMU offensive.

The Taliban also hosted Osama bin Laden. This relationship was not as easy as some may believe. Many Taliban resented bin Laden’s fatwas and hubris. Mullah Omar, though, respected tribal traditions, which implied he had to offer hospitality to veterans of the Soviet war. He also had a more profound interest in the funding that came with bin Laden’s presence. Bin Laden was also a useful ally against the Taliban’s enemies in the north.

During the winter of 1999, IMU’s cooperation with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda increased. It received funding from al-Qaeda and Saudi donors and increased its economic base by expanding its drug smuggling operations. In the summer of 2000, the IMU began infiltrating Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. They attacked the security forces of both countries and smuggled weapons and equipment to sleeper cells. These cells enabled the IMU to maintain year-round pressure instead of having to rely on summer campaigns alone. During 2000 there were several attacks. For instance, in August an IMU-team ambushed an army patrol in Kyrgyzstan and killed 22 men, and shortly thereafter a climbing expedition that included four U.S. citizens was kidnapped.

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611 Rashid, (2002).
612 Rashid, (2002); Akbarzadeh, (2005).
613 The Taliban also hosted the hijackers that captured Indian Airlines flight 814, in December, 1999.
614 The IMU quickly earned a reputation for paying their fighters well, which made them attractive to many young men.
The IMU fighters were prone to fight to their death rather than to being captured.\textsuperscript{616} They were determined, but they did not make much of an attempt to win hearts and minds, and their campaign did not weaken the resolve of the regimes. However, the regimes did not respond to the IMU in a coordinated manner. Karimov accused both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan of inactivity but did very little to increase regional cooperation. Instead, he did the opposite by strengthening Uzbekistan’s border security and laying minefields along its frontiers. This resulted in a severe decrease in cross-border trade and civilian casualties, but the terrorist infiltration and drug-smuggling continued.\textsuperscript{617} Karimov was also eager to project power outside of his borders. The Uzbek airforce made strafing runs into both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Rumours about incidents and instances of collaboration with the IMU were abundant. During the fall of 2000, Karimov sharpened his tone and, in an effort to put pressure on Tajikistan to do more, he cut gas supplies during the winter.\textsuperscript{618}

As regional tensions intensified, the IMU’s cooperation with the Taliban and al-Qaeda deepened even further. With the help of their combined networks, IMU reinforced with new recruits from the wider region. It was estimated to have 2,000 men, including Afghans, Arabs, Chechens, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Uighurs from Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{619} In September 2000 Massoud’s headquarters at Taloqan fell. The event led Russia, Iran and Tajikistan to increase their support for him. The following summer the Taliban initiated an offensive against Massoud, and the IMU stepped up its attacks inside Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. On September 9, 2001, Massoud was assassinated by al-Qaeda operatives in a suicide bombing.\textsuperscript{620} This was a major victory. Two days later, al-Qaeda committed the worst terrorist act in history, when they attacked New York and Washington with hijacked airliners in a suicide mission killing almost 3000 people.

5.3.1.4 The Chechen Wars

The Chechen wars also exposed CASC to radical Islam. The first war led to a massive exodus of refugees. Their stories of atrocities and torture helped to radicalize the region. As discussed in the previous chapter, Russia had not settled the Chechnya issue. When attacks in Dagestan escalated, Russia responded with force, resulting in the second Chechen War. Because of the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Johnson, (2007); Rashid, (2002).
\item Agriculture and irrigation were also affected by this decision. Rashid, (2002), p. 161, p. 177, p. 198.
\item Posing as journalists, al-Qaeda operatives managed to arrange an interview with Massoud during which they killed him with explosives hidden in a camera.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
legacy of the first war, both sides exercised even greater brutality from the outset.

For many involved, the war was not just for Chechen independence. Technically speaking, Russia no longer controlled the state. Rather, the war was for the Islamization of Chechnya and for the fulfilment of the global jihad. The Chechen President also declared a holy war.\(^\text{621}\) The conflict soon degenerated into what can be described as a low-level asymmetrical war. Russian forces acted more methodically than in the previous war, however their actions received criticism internationally and were described as a form of 'state terror'. This time U.S. criticism was sharper, and in March 2000 Madeleine Albright expressed her alarm in an address before the UN Commission of Human Rights.\(^\text{622}\) She feared that Russia was on a path of isolating itself internationally. That did not shake the resolve of Vladimir Putin, Russia's new President. Putin was eager to apply force. He enjoyed support at home and seemed to be less concerned with Western criticism. After September 11, 2001, he immediately drew attention to the links between Chechen jihadists and the ideology of al-Qaeda. This, combined with the fact that international attention was now focused elsewhere, silenced much of the criticism emanating from the West, including from the U.S.

Moreover, the ruthlessness of the Chechen jihadists seemed to know no limits. In October 2002, they took over 850 people hostages in what has become known as the Moscow Theatre Siege. It left over 170 people dead and at least 700 injured.\(^\text{623}\) Almost two years later this deed was eclipsed by the Beslan School Siege.\(^\text{624}\) This had a profound effect on the war. It hardened Russian domestic opinion against the Chechens and strengthened Putin's position. It also weakened popular support for the insurgency, as many Chechens, even insurgent leaders, felt that this time the terrorists had gone too far.

\(^{623}\) The terrorists demanded a complete Russian withdrawal from Chechnya. Noncompliance would result in a systematic extermination of the hostages. After days of negotiations, Russian Special Forces attacked, using a weaponized chemical agent. The medical personnel treating the hostages were not initially informed about which chemical agent had been used, which tragically resulted in a very high death toll.
\(^{624}\) In Beslan on September 1, 2004, over 30 terrorists seized control of a school and held over 1000 people hostage, the majority of them children. The incident ended catastrophically. After Russian forces stormed the school, more than 370 people, most of them children, were found to have died. For an informative study of these two incidents, see John B. Dunlop, *The 2002 Dubrovka and 2004 Beslan Hostage Crises: A Critique of Russian Counter-Terrorism* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006).
The Chechen Wars changed Russian attitudes toward Islam. Their distaste for militant Islam was reinforced, and popular support for harsh policies against anything resembling jihadism increased.²²⁵

### 5.3.2 U.S. Ideals and Interests: Counterterrorism, Democratization and Human Rights

This section has three purposes. The first is to show how terrorism rose on the Clinton Administration’s agenda in the late 1990s. The second is to describe the scope and nature of increased U.S. security assistance to CASC. The third is to illustrate the increasing tension between U.S. security interests and interest in democratization and human rights.

Even though Clinton had read Benjamin Barber’s *Jihad vs. McWorld* published in 1995, which highlighted the transformative impact of radical Islam and globalization, terrorism was not near the top of his agenda.²²⁶ The 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and the Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia in 1996 were important incidents, but they did not elevate terrorism to a top priority.²²⁷ The 1995 National Intelligence Estimate on Terrorism warned of a new type of terrorism, however terrorists were still regarded as agents of states or as domestic criminals. The national security community was also preoccupied with other things, such as Iraq, missile defense, tensions between India and Pakistan and the escalating crisis in Kosovo.

In the summer of 1996, bin Laden issued his first fatwa, calling on all Muslims to expel the U.S. from Saudi Arabia. It did not receive much attention in the U.S., but the CIA created a special unit to analyse intelligence and plan operations against his network.²²⁸ The intelligence collected was not really synthesized, and bin Laden was only briefly mentioned in the 1997 NIE on Terrorism. It was known that bin Laden resided in Afghanistan after his expulsion from Sudan in 1996. However, after the Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan had become a bureaucratic backwater within the U.S. government, and most Southeast Asia specialists focused predominantly on India and Pakistan.²²⁹ Due to the lack of interest and to budget cuts, U.S. intelli-

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²²⁷ The U.S. thought Hezbollah, acting on behalf of Iran, was responsible for the Khobar Towers attack. Shortly after the Oklahoma City bombing, Clinton secretly issued Presidential Decision Directive 39 that called on the U.S. to "deter" and "defeat" terrorist attacks.


gence on Afghanistan and Central Asia had declined to a catastrophically low level, and language training within the CIA and U.S. military was almost non-existent.630

When Madeleine Albright began her tenure as Secretary of State, an NSC policy review concluded that India, Pakistan and Afghanistan ought to be given more attention. At the time, the U.S. had "no policy" toward Afghanistan.631 The rising tensions between India and Pakistan as well as non-proliferation, however, effectively monopolized the State Department’s attention. Consequently, Afghanistan and bin Laden were crowded out.632 Despite the fact that Albright found the Taliban despicable, the administration was willing to give them a chance. The State Department hoped to end the civil war, and the South Asia Bureau believed Unocal pipeline proposals could function as a carrot. Even if it was highly unlikely it would ever be built, they hoped that the idea of profits could lure the factions to the negotiating table. In April 1998, Bill Richardson visited Afghanistan in order to press to for negotiations. No U.S. official of that rank had visited Afghanistan for decades. He asked the Taliban to expel bin Laden but received the reply that they were unaware of his whereabouts and that he "was not a threat" to the U.S.633 At the time, the administration was more interested in finding ways to end the war and ameliorate the human rights situation than pressuring the Taliban on bin Laden.

Meanwhile, the CIA was planning different scenarios for capturing bin Laden. In early 1998, it was ready to seek formal approval. After numerous dry runs and reviews, the plans were, however, cancelled. There were many reasons for this, such as potential repercussions in Pakistan, the killing of bin Laden being seen as an assassination and the low prospects of success. Terrorism was, however, gradually receiving more attention. In May 1998 Clinton issued two PDDs on counterterrorism and appointed Richard Clarke as national coordinator for security, infrastructure protection and counterterrorism.634 The decision to include Central Asia in CentCom’s AOR was taken that same month. This signalled the growing importance of the region and

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630 Dr. Frederick Starr told me in a discussion in 2008 that budget cuts had profound consequences. See also Ahmed Rashid, Descent into Chaos: How the War Against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia (London: Allen Lane, 2008), Chap.14.; Robert Baer, See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA’s War on Terrorism (New York: Crown, 2002).
632 In May 1998 India tested several nuclear warheads. A few weeks later Pakistan detonated five nuclear warheads. The Coordinator for the Office for Counterterrorism, Michael Sheehan, wanted terrorism to be the most important issue in relation to Pakistan, but the State Department thought otherwise. See Rashid (2008), Chap. 3.
was illustrative of the perceived weakness of Russia. Many at the Pentagon now viewed China as the long-term threat to U.S. interests there.\footnote{Central Asia would formally and effectively be part of CentCom’s AOR on October 1, 1999. William R. Kunzweiler, United States Central Command: New Player in Central Asia’s "Great Game" (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1998).}

Even though the administration urged the Saudi regime to convince the Taliban to expel bin Laden during the summer of 1998, it was clear that it did not prioritize terrorism. It did not really put pressure on Pakistan, due to its focus on alleviating its tensions with India. There was also reluctance within the Pentagon to do so, since it did not want to harm its longstanding relationship with the Pakistani military. This was also apparent in the planning of the Centrabat exercise in 1998. Karimov, who was concerned primarily with terrorism, wanted it to take place in and near the Ferghana Valley in order to draw more attention to that part of Central Asia and to send a powerful message to the different elements residing there. His effort was unsuccessful. The exercise took place instead in Chirchik, Uzbekistan, and Osh, Kyrgyzstan, and was focused on peacekeeping skills, such as manning UN checkpoints, searching vehicles and dealing with mobs demanding food.

The bombings of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya on August 7, 1998 became a turning point for the administration. Even though more Americans were killed at Khobar Towers, these attacks were different. They demonstrated an operational capability to coordinate two nearly simultaneous attacks on U.S. embassies in two different countries. The attacks dramatically increased the administration’s attention on bin Laden, Afghanistan and neighbouring Central Asia.\footnote{The attack killed over 200 people, including twelve Americans. The 9/11 Commission Report states that the "period after the August 1998 embassy bombings were critical in shaping U.S. policy toward bin Laden". The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 188.} On August 20 President Clinton retaliated by sending cruise missiles into Afghanistan with the purpose of trying to kill bin Laden.\footnote{Facilities in Sudan were also targeted in the U.S. response.} After the strike, Clinton addressed the nation and declared that "countries that persistently host terrorists have no right to safe havens", that it would "be a long, ongoing struggle between freedom and fanaticism, between rule of law and terrorism" and that "we must be prepared to do all we can for as long as we must."\footnote{William J. Clinton, "Address to the Nation on Military Action Against Terrorist Sites in Afghanistan and Sudan," White House, August 20, 1998.} He also imposed sanctions on the Taliban. A month later Clinton urged, before the UN General Assembly, that "all nations must put the fight against terrorism at the top of our agenda."

The administration re-evaluated the terror threat. In the mid-90s bin Laden was "on the radar screen", but "in 1998 he was the radar screen", according to Sandy Berger. George Tenet, in an internal memo, declared: "We
are at war. Richard Clarke became "obsessed" with bin Laden and drew up a plan for military action. The administration increased its diplomatic effort to convince the Taliban to expel bin Laden and authorized the CIA to allow their tribal assets to use force to capture bin Laden and his lieutenants.

Operation Infinite Reach was the name of the initial cruise missile response. Follow-on plans were given the code name Operation Infinite Resolve. Submarines armed with cruise missiles were positioned off the Pakistani coast with a mission to target the terrorists in Afghanistan. However, there was a lack of intelligence and good military targets, and Clinton was at the time distracted by the Levinsky affair. Many within the small group of principals were skeptical. To use expensive missiles on what Hugh Shelton described as "jungle gym" camps was the equivalent of pounding sand, in the opinion of Defense Secretary Cohen and others. Deputy National Security Advisor James Steinberg added that such attacks offered "little benefit" but "lots of blowback" and that the U.S. could be perceived as "bomb-happy." Special Operations Forces were informed that they might be ordered to attempt high-risk in-and-out raids. However, Shelton made sure that Clinton was aware of all of the significant logistical problems inherent in such an operation. He was worried about a Black Hawk Down scenario. The Desert One fiasco also loomed large in discussions of the prospects for these missions.

Since Afghanistan fell under CentCom’s AOR, any actual military action carried out there would fall under General Anthony Zinni’s Command, and he was even more sceptical of follow-on cruise missile attacks than Cohen and Shelton. His distinct preference was to build up the counterterrorism capabilities of neighbouring countries. By the summer of 1999 the military and diplomatic options had been practically exhausted. The CIA and CentCom, though, were establishing deeper ties with the Central Asian states, especially with Uzbekistan, and this was consequential.

During the 1990s overall U.S. troop numbers were in decline. However, in key regions, U.S. military commanders increased their visibility and profile as they took on greater responsibilities. They became [Roman] proconsuls,

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641 The 9/11 Commission Report, pp. 119-120; See also Richard Clarke, Against All Enemies: Inside America’s War on Terror (New York: Free Press, 2004). As an indication that terrorism had moved up on the agenda, the CSG (Counterterrorism Security Group) did not have to report through the Deputies Committee, like most standing committees, and a so-called Small Group was formed, consisting of those principals cleared for access to all sensitive information connected with counterterrorism and activities concerning bin Laden.
643 The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 120, p. 213, p. 351.
644 The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 120.
in the words of security analyst Dana Priest, who argued further that "[o]n Clinton’s watch the military slowly, without public scrutiny or debate, came to surpass its civilian leaders in resources and influence around the world". Anthony Zinni, the CinC of CentCom, was one of those who emerged as a prominent diplomat-general. This development was partly a consequence of the Republican’s cuts in the budgets of the State Department and foreign aid agencies. This was, though, also a choice, perhaps of necessity, on behalf of the administration, which wanted their military leaders to adopt higher diplomatic profiles in order to shape regional environments as part of their new post-Cold War mission. Defense Secretary Perry regarded this as an important component of "preventive defense".

Even before pipeline routes were set, Zinni contemplated the likelihood that the U.S. military would one day be asked to ensure an uninterrupted flow of the region’s oil to world markets. When it was decided that the Central Asian states were to become part of CentCom’s AOR, Zinni wanted to pursue a "forward leaning engagement strategy". Zinni considered the region to be important and wanted the U.S. to establish more contact with the Central Asian states, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, and pull different government agencies together to develop a coordinated approach. However, that job belonged to the State Department, and its priorities laid elsewhere.

From the time of the Centrasbat exercise in 1997, military assistance to Uzbekistan increased. Despite its human rights record, it was granted Foreign Military Funding (FMF). There were qualitative as well as quantitative changes. In May 1999, the U.S. and Uzbekistan signed several security related agreements. One concerned counterterrorism, and a second established a closer relationship between the Uzbek Defense Ministry and the Pentagon. The Silk Road Strategy Act was instrumental to these changes. It also laid the foundation for including the transfer of excess DoD articles to a number of CASC states, authorized by the Security Assistance Act of 1999. Partly as a consequence of its growing relationship with the U.S., Uzbekistan withdrew from the CIS Collective Security Treaty in early 1999. At NATO’s fiftieth anniversary celebrations in Washington in April, it announced its intention to join GUAM, thereby forming GUUAM.

Much of this was also a result of CentCom assuming responsibility for Central Asia. Funding for International Military Education and Training (IMET) and law enforcement training increased, while FMF for arms purchases doubled. Zinni stated before the Senate Armed Services Committee that these programs were "invaluable means of enhancing stability" and that

the region’s importance would "continue to grow" as access to it natural resources increased.\textsuperscript{548}

In addition to direct U.S. assistance, Uzbekistan also received unspecified privately donated humanitarian commodities. Loan guarantees provided by the Exim Bank increased in 1998 to $379 million. In 2000, border security assistance programs were initiated through the Export Control and Related Border Security program with $2 million in funding. Interestingly, the USAID money for citizen participation increased to $5 million in 1998 but was reduced in 1999 and 2000. It is, however, important to recognize that most of the U.S. security assistance money to Uzbekistan in the late 1990s still went to the effort to clean up its biological weapons sites.

As another indication of growing U.S. interest, the U.S. Army commissioned a study of the risks to regional stability. The study entitled \textit{Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus} was published in 2003, although it had been largely completed before September 11, 2001. It included analyses of U.S. power projection capabilities in relation to the region, including potential bases and airfields.\textsuperscript{549} In January 2001, the Atlantic Council and CACI published a joint study \textit{The Strategic Assessment of Central Asia}. It made the argument that Central Asia was important to U.S. regional and global interests.\textsuperscript{550}

Since 1997, U.S. Army Special forces had worked with Central Asian units from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, training them in field tactics, airborne assault operations and counterinsurgency techniques. However, neither Zinni nor Joseph Presel, U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan, believed this was enough to prepare them to counter the threats they faced. Security assistance had increased, but it was not nearly enough to finance any larger programs. Zinni’s team was constantly running out of money and had to improvise. It drew money from the CTRP-funds and even bought equipment, using its own operations and maintenance funds to pay for them. "The system is badly broken (…) we use chewing gum and bailing wire to keep it together", Zinni complained.\textsuperscript{551} Needless to say, many of those responsible for the region within the CIA and CentCom were critical of the lack of interest on part of Washington.

Zinni tried hard to provoke a serious policy discussion, but to no avail.\textsuperscript{552} He urged Defense Secretary Cohen to visit the region, but Cohen


\textsuperscript{549} Oliker and Szanya, (2003).


\textsuperscript{551} According to Dana Priest, Zinni was clearly frustrated with the lack of coordination and the bureaucratic competition over money, turf and authority. Priest, (2003), p. 100.

\textsuperscript{552} In one of those efforts, Zinni tried to convince Hugh Shelton to allow the State Department and Congress to have more influence over the CinCs’ overseas ‘Engagement Programs’. 248
was not interested. In February 2000 he warned of the problems in Central Asia before the Senate Armed Services Committee. He described Afghanistan as "a sanctuary for extremists and an exporter of violence" and argued that the "combination of radicalism, terrorism, gray-arms and narco-trafficking undermine[d] the already fragile governments in the region" with "implications for the entire AOR".653

In order to draw more attention, Zinni figured he needed a simple concept to epitomize the seriousness of the situation. He came up with the idea of calling the Central Asian states "the front-line states".654 The original ‘front-line states’ were the states neighbouring South Africa. Harassed by South Africa, they united to uphold trade sanctions to pressure the apartheid regime to change. Zinni hoped that they could, in a similar way, encircle and cut off the Taliban regime. Both Presel and the CIA station chief liked the idea.655

In 2000 Zinni met with the Uzbek defense minister who painted a dire picture. He described Afghanistan as "the center of terrorism" but argued that everything was connected and that terrorists could easily cross borders and were coming from all over the wider region.656 He requested more equipment, but all Zinni could do was to ask him to be patient. Clearly frustrated with the lack of leadership and political will, Zinni stated that leaders in the region were "unsure what to make if the relationship with the U.S.657

On the flight from his last visit to the region, Zinni regretfully stated that he "should have done more to pull together a program on Central Asia".658 Despite his disappointment, U.S. engagement in the region had in fact increased and had altered the balance of U.S. policy. The focus on security had increased the gap between the administration’s rhetoric and concrete actions and between U.S. ideals and interests.

In late 1999, Michael Sheehan, the State Department’s Coordinator for Counterterrorism, underscored the links between the Taliban, bin Laden and militant Islamic groups in CASC before the Senate Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs. He made the argument that the only way to combat terrorism was to "persuade other governments to work with us". He stressed the need for an integrated strategy that included intelligence sharing, law enforcement cooperation and armed force.659 During the year, the U.S.

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660 "Extremist movements and their threat to the United States," Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S.
had deepened its ties with several of the Central Asian regimes, most notably Uzbekistan, through secret counterterrorism cooperation.

In the beginning of 1999, the administration had debated internally whether to enlist the Northern Alliance as an ally for covert action. The Counterterrorist Center had pressed for developing this partnership, even if doing so would put the U.S. on one side in the Afghan Civil War. For DCI Tenet, Massoud, the leader of the Alliance, was the most interesting possible new ally against bin Laden. In February the U.S. got behind Massoud and asked for his to help in capturing bin Laden, but not killing him, given the ban on assassination. This was reportedly seen as a joke by Massoud, who could not understand the ‘not killing’ part at all.

A few months later, Clinton authorized the CIA to work with several governments to capture bin Laden. The CIA had covertly initiated an effort to train and equip an Uzbek team to go after bin Laden inside Afghanistan. The Uzbek regime had during the year allowed the CIA and the NSA to install equipment to intercept Taliban and al-Qaida communications on their soil. In the fall, Tenet unveiled his new strategy simply known as "the Plan". It proposed world-wide disruption, rendition operations, increased technical intelligence gathering and increased contacts with the Northern Alliance. In late October, officers from the Counterterrorist Center secretly met with Massoud, in Afghanistan. Massoud committed to helping gather information about bin Laden’s whereabouts and to capturing him if he had the opportunity.

In October 1999 Pervez Musharaf seized power in Pakistan, which resulted in a rapid deterioration of the U.S.- Pakistani relationship. This made U.S. counterterrorism cooperation with the Central Asian states, especially with Uzbekistan, more important. After receiving an update on U.S. covert actions against bin Laden in March 2000, Clinton signalled that he...
wanted to do more. Just weeks later, both DCI Tenet and FBI director Louis Free visited Uzbekistan. During the spring closer relations with Uzbekistan and the Northern Alliance were explored.\(^{667}\)

In mid-April, Secretary Albright made an official visit to Uzbekistan. The trip was presented as the inauguration of a new expanded relationship with the region. In Tashkent she delivered a speech that illustrated the administration's growing dilemma of competing interests. It wanted to combat terrorism. In order to do so efficiently, it needed the trust and cooperation of the authoritarian regimes. It also wanted to democratize and improve human rights. However, in order to do that, it needed to put pressure on the regimes and to do things contrary to their interests, such as supporting grassroots movements. The situation was made even more difficult by the fact that the regimes generally perceived regime stability and national security as the same thing.

Albright reiterated the administration's belief in interdependence and the liberal domino theory: "Today, America is prosperous and at peace", "[b]ut we know that we cannot afford to rest -- or fail to engage this part of the world" and "while you are geographically distant", "you are very closely connected to some of our most vital interests". She emphasized that the U.S. focused its efforts on situations where "success in one country or region will have an influence on surrounding areas" and then spoke about the "acute" threats in the region. She specifically singled out Afghanistan as "a huge problem for regional stability" and assured that the administration was "deeply distressed" by the terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan and armed incursions into Kyrgyzstan.\(^{668}\)

Albright invited all of the Central Asian governments to a regional counterterrorism conference in Washington and promised more assistance, training and equipment to increase border security and to combat terrorism and narcotics trafficking. However, she also stated that the U.S. would "not support any and all measures taken in the name of fighting drugs and terrorism or restoring stability" and warned that "[o]ne of the most dangerous temptations for a government facing violent threats is to respond in heavy-handed ways that violate the rights of innocent citizens." Terrorism was "a criminal act" and should be treated as such, and the best way to combat it was "to increase law enforcement capacities while at the same time promoting democracy and human rights", she declared. Repression, on the other hand, could "cause moderate and peaceful opponents of a regime to resort to violence" and turn civilians into extremists, she warned. Therefore, it was "essential to distinguish between people who advocate or commit criminal

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\(^{667}\) In the spring of 2000 Uzbekistan claimed to have intercepted a truck carrying radioactive material in the form of scrap metal. This incident reinvigorated the interest in non-proliferation activities in the region.

\(^{668}\) Madeleine Albright, "Speech at University of World Economy and Diplomacy," Tashkent, Uzbekistan, April 17, 2000.
acts and those who are simply expressing their religious faith." This lecturing was not received well by Uzbek officials, but the Secretary probably believed in what she was saying. Albright was also pressured by both the human rights community and the U.S. Congress to address the repression in the region.

During 2000 Clinton was increasingly frustrated by the insufficiently reliable intelligence about the specific location of bin Laden needed to launch a strike. The Pentagon had refined their list of targets and initiated programs aimed at reducing the time lag between "sighting and striking." One of those programs was a joint CIA-Pentagon program Richard Clarke named "Afghan Eyes". It consisted of deploying the small unmanned aerial vehicle (UAF), or drone, called the Predator, which could survey the territory and send back video footage. On September 7, 2000, they flew over Afghanistan for the first time. They were launched from Uzbekistan, which was a well kept secret by everyone involved. It was a great success. Clarke immediately realized its potential for identifying targets in addition to bin Laden, such as stocks of chemical and biological weapons.

At about the same time as the Predators were flying, and shortly after the four Americans were taken hostage in August 2000, the IMU was declared a terrorist organization by the State Department. This was a victory for Karimov, who had been urging the U.S. to take this step. Some U.S. diplomats had argued that the U.S. should pressure Karimov for human rights assurances before any such declaration, with all of its legal ramifications, was made. However, U.S. intelligence agencies, including the FBI, supported the decision. They were legally prevented from sharing intelligence with Uzbekistan until the IMU was officially designated a terrorist group, and since the IMU was believed to have close ties with bin Laden’s network, they were eager of this to be done.

At the end of 2000, the U.S. and Uzbekistan had established a partnership to combat bin Laden’s network and the IMU. Programs to enhance economic development were a prominent feature of the U.S. aid package for Uzbekistan, and support for its military, security and law enforcement agencies had risen. The U.S. military and the intelligence community had deepened its relationships with their Kazakh and Kyrgyz counterparts as well.

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669 Albright, "Speech at University of World Economy and Diplomacy."
672 There was intense disagreement over whether the Pentagon or the CIA should pay for the program. Finally, the White House stepped in and imposed a cost-sharing agreement. Bob Woodward, Plan of Attack (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Rashid, (2008), p. 59.
During the year, Clinton had fought for more sanctions against the Taliban. In December, two months after the attack on the *USS Cole*, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1333, which included an arms embargo.\(^{675}\)

Criticism of the administration’s strategy became more outspoken during the last years of the decade. Its focus on security assistance was provocative for the human rights community, especially since the human rights situation in many states of CASC was deteriorating. In 1998, the State Department’s Country report on human rights practices concluded that Uzbekistan’s "human rights record remained poor, and the Government continued to commit serious abuses in several areas". The two following years the report stated that "the government’s poor human rights record worsened".\(^{676}\) This occurred during a time when U.S. engagement was growing rapidly and Uzbekistan was beginning to be perceived as a core state.

There were no doubts that the gap between the administration’s rhetoric and its concrete actions were growing. When the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations held a joint hearing in April, 2000, the tone was clear. A disappointed Doug Bereuter opened the hearing by declaring that the administration’s efforts were "not yielding the desired results" and that "indecision regarding the real importance of U.S. interests vis-à-vis other priorities have resulted in a largely fractured U.S. policy toward the region and the relegation of these states to a policy backwater." Chairman Smith had a similar opinion and stated that "the deterioration of democracy, the lack of the rule of law, and the violations of human rights" was a "source of serious concern, frustration and disappointment" and "seriously jeopardized genuine stability in the region".\(^{677}\)

Regional expert Martha Brill Olcott testified that developments from a democracy building perspective were "disappointing" and appeared "to grow worse with every passing year".\(^{678}\) Cassandra Cavanaugh, a researcher at Human Rights Watch, also testified to the deteriorating situation:

Nearly a decade ago, the dissolution of the Soviet Union raised hopes that a vast new areas of the globe would come under democratic forms of governance. These five states of former Soviet Central Asia have done the most, I think, to dash these hopes. Once known as countries in transition, at the turn of the new century the Central Asian states, I would argue, have largely seen their political transition from communism completed, the transition is over, but it was a transition to authoritarianism, not to democracy.\(^{679}\)


\(^{677}\) "Democracy in the Central Asian Republics."

\(^{678}\) "Democracy in the Central Asian Republics."

\(^{679}\) "Democracy in the Central Asian Republics."
Cavanaugh supported the administration’s declared vision of an integrated policy that recognized that democratization, economic development and stability were inseparable. She criticized the administration, though, for not living up to it. For her, it was obvious that economic support and security assistance were being prioritized. Dana Rohrabacher stated bluntly that it was clear that the U.S. Government did prioritize human rights and democracy and that "[t]his particular government and this Administration has made a mockery of that." During the hearing there were discussions about how they were going to monitor Secretary Albright’s upcoming trip to the region.

Later in 2000 a hearing was held on the State Department’s Annual Report on International Religious Freedom during which Acacia Shields, a Human Rights Watch researcher, accused the administration for distorting the facts surrounding religious prosecutions in Uzbekistan:

This year’s IRF report recognizes neither the anti-religious nature of this repression nor the human rights crisis it has produced. It argues that victims are engaged in activity that is primarily political and therefore that Uzbekistan cannot be said to be violating the victim’s religious freedom. Only sophistry has allowed the administration to avoid classifying Uzbekistan as a country of particular concern for its gross violations of religious freedom.

The U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, Robert A. Steple, defended the administration and stressed that the actions of the Uzbek regime were understandable in light of the Tashkent bombings.

The imbalance between the largesse of the U.S. military and CIA and the meagre diplomatic civilian resources available was not only worrying human rights activist but also U.S. ambassadors in the region. They, including others at the State Department, believed that adding more covert military and security programs would tip the balance even further. For them, the question was: How could the leaders of these states take the U.S. language regarding democratic reform seriously, if most of the money and assistance flowing in were for surveillance, counterterrorism training and weapons? It was obvious that the U.S. was sending mixed signals.

It is clear that the major concerns behind the administration’s increased engagement in CASC during the latter half of the 1990s were energy resources and counterterrorism. In relation to support for human rights and democracy, the administration’s actions were not commensurate with its language and hardly lived up to Secretary Albright’s statement about fighting terrorism

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680 "Democracy in the Central Asian Republics."
681 "Democracy in the Central Asian Republics."
and promoting democracy at the same time. The State Department’s criticism of the authoritarian regimes was never followed up by any serious rerimands. The U.S. offered many, though rather small, carrots, but never used, or even threatened to use, the stick. Money and security assistance kept flowing in, despite a deteriorating human rights situation. Moreover, the money offered for democratic reform was also so meagre that threatening to withhold it would probably not have provided much real leverage anyway.

It is important to recognize that even though the administration had elevated terrorism on its agenda and stepped up its engagement in the region, terrorism, bin Laden and the Afghanistan-Central Asia nexus were still not even close to the top. The administration’s actions were not commensurate with its internal language. Security assistance can only be considered substantial in relation to the meagre amounts allocated for other issues, such as democratization. In recent years numerous books have been published describing the frustration many within the intelligence community felt when facing a bureaucracy that did not take the threat seriously.684 Not surprisingly, there was an intense debate about the administration’s assessment of the terrorist threat after 9/11. Many argue, in hindsight, that Clinton chose to hit the snooze button when the alarm clock went off.685

Despite the administration’s overall priorities in Central Asia, the interest in security issues, fighting terrorism and establishing good military relations far outweighed human rights and democracy promotion in terms of resources. Despite this imbalance, Zinni and others complained about the lack of funding, coordination and top-level interests. This is a strong indication of just how important, or rather unimportant, this region actually was to the administration. Moreover, the administration always argued that its interests in combating terrorism and its interest in human rights and democratic reform coincided. Theoretically and in the long-term, this may be the case. However, in practice and in the short-term, there was an uneasy tension between them. In the mid-1990s the administration avoided taking a principled stand and pressuring for democratic reforms in order to establish good relations and gain access to CASC. In the late 1990s it took a similar path in order to combat terrorism.

684 The 9/11 Commission Report provides an invaluable source of information for these claims. Richard Clarke and his staff members Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon have all written books about this. They describe the turf war between the CIA and the FBI, and the Pentagon’s reluctance to provide plans for dealing with the terrorist infrastructure in Afghanistan. Clarke, (2004); Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin, The Age of Sacred Terror (New York: Random House, 2002). Zinni complained and Sandy Berger has stated that “from 1998 on, we saw this as the dominant threat we faces…but people weren’t listening”. See Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), p. 267; Priest, (2003). George Tenet wrote in his memoirs, with regard to the administration’s indecisiveness and priorities, that “policy-makers seemed to want to have things both ways: they wanted to hit bin Laden but without endangering U.S. troops or putting at significant risk our diplomatic relations”. George Tenet, At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), pp. 123-124.
5.4 Analysis

This part consists of an analysis of the Clinton Administration’s strategy toward CASC based on the proposed framework. It begins with a section about how the changed international environment affected U.S. strategic culture. A section about presidential leadership and domestic politics comes next. This is followed by two sections where I show how the administration related to the paradigms and subcultures and how its strategy was shaped by them. The chapter ends with a conclusions section where I explain what the U.S. strategy toward CASC was, including an assessment of its consistency and coherence and how well the framework fared.

5.4.1 The International Environment and U.S. Strategic Culture

The Soviet breakup entailed a dramatic shift in the international distribution of power. During the turbulent early 1990s the international environment had been somewhat murky. During the Clinton years the picture, however, became clearer. This had a number of consequences and many of the changes hinted at during the George H.W. Bush years became a reality.

During Clinton’s presidency the U.S. was undisputedly the world’s only superpower. Its defense expenditures were greater than those of its potential adversaries as well as its major allies combined. U.S. military technology was, as powerfully displayed in the Balkans by its airpower and accurate cruise missiles, far more advanced than that of any of its rivals. U.S. power was not just unquestionable; it was also perceived as legitimate by many countries. Clinton was almost universally liked, and America’s voice was credible and had a powerful influence on the international institutions that shape political and economic affairs globally. Even though the imbalance was less absolute in economic capability, U.S. GDP was still largest by far. The U.S. economy was also growing, and the budget deficits of earlier administrations were turned into surpluses. This turnaround further enhanced the appeal of the U.S. and the Clinton Presidency. The American way was perceived as a successful fusion of free enterprise and effective political guidance worthy of international emulation. When contrasted with potential alternatives, its global prestige and soft power just increased. The Soviet system had failed, and the Russian economy was in shambles. Many Western European countries displayed tepid growth. After the Japanese bubble had burst, that country was no longer perceived as the threat to U.S. supremacy that it had been earlier.

The declinism theme was wiped away with the growing economy and the criticism of realism, as a school of international relations, increased. This criticism often came from new competing academic perspectives that were less preoccupied with the notion of scarcity. Many seemed to agree with Fukuyama’s notion that the key ideas propelling the world forward had fun-
damentally changed. When Russia’s military was unable to subdue poorly armed Chechen rebels and was overrun in Grozny, it became clear just how far away any potential adversaries were from challenging U.S. power. The world was truly unipolar. In the Pentagon military leaders even joked about the lack of enemies. Taken together, these changes made Clinton even less constrained by the international environment than his predecessor.

The idea that the U.S. had won the Cold War was firmly rooted, and the Cold War strategy of engagement and promotion of democracy and economic openness remained in high regard. The George H.W. Bush years did not change that, and the paradigm of Liberalism remained dominant. However, the end of the Cold War also strengthened the paradigm of non-entanglement and the pressure to scale down U.S. international commitments that had started to increase during the Clinton years. Without the Soviet threat, there was no need for the U.S. to bear such costs. Many American’s expected a ‘peace dividend’ and ‘a return to normalcy’.

On a deeper level it can be argued that the end of the Cold War strengthened two subcultures – the Abstentionists and the Liberal Internationalists – and weakened the American Realists and the Assertive Patriots. The disappearance of a threat works of favour of the Abstentionists, and an increase in U.S. power works in favour of the Liberal Internationalists ambitious agenda. Without the Soviet Union and other threats, Russia was weak and terrorism was not perceived as a real threat. The populist Assertive Patriots lost a cause, and their relative influence over strategy diminished. The increase in relative power of the U.S. made the American Realist’s notion of scarcity and the necessity for trade-offs less appealing and thus weakened that subculture.

5.4.2 Presidential Leadership and Domestic Politics

When it comes to determining the relative strength of the paradigms and subcultures, presidential leadership is important. For Clinton’s 1992 presidential campaign, it was important that the Cold War seemed to be over and that the nation was in need of a new leader for a new era. Clinton promised to "focus like a laser" on domestic issues. However, he also promised to stand up more assertively for U.S. values around the world. With the Soviet Union gone, the pressure to scale down U.S. international commitments and to reduce defense spending increased. The Soviet threat was unifying, especially for the Republicans, and when it disappeared the party began to split. Many remained convinced that the U.S. ought to remain internationally engaged, but the number of Assertive Patriots in their ranks grew.

Clinton won the three-man race of 1992, but his mandate was weak. He only received 43% of the popular vote, which was the lowest number since Woodrow Wilson’s win in 1912. He got off to a rocky start. Vetting prob-
lems, the issue of gays in the military, the Black Hawk Down disaster, Haiti and the controversial health care plan, among other things, laid the foundation for the shellacking in the 1994 congressional elections. After winning both houses of Congress the republicans began to constrain Clinton’s agenda. They tightened the purse strings, the State Department’s budget was reduced and it became difficult for Clinton to initiate new programs and to maintain financing for existent programs. The republicans of the class of 94 were rather Assertive Patriotic in nature and significantly more skeptical of Liberal Internationalist humanitarian interventions, peacekeeping and multilateralism than the Democrats. They wanted to narrow the definition of the national interest and proposed that the U.S. be more selective in its engagements. On the other hand, it opposed cuts in defense spending and, in fact, pressed for increases. To some extent this helps explain the gradually increasing influence and responsibilities of U.S. military commanders.

Clinton had little foreign policy experience. He was clearly more interested in domestic policy and did not want to waste political capital on international issues unless he had to. He was initially reluctant to deploy the U.S. military. This was not because he was a staunch Abstentionist but rather because he was uncomfortable with the idea of using the military and very sensitive to the potential costs associated with it. In the face of international crises, Clinton was unassertive. It was this trait that led French President Jacques Chirac to declare, with regard to Bosnia, that the position of leader of the free world was ‘vacant’. After his success in Bosnia and subsequent re-election, Clinton became more assertive.

The international issue Clinton truly cared about was globalization. He spoke about it constantly and tried to educate the American people about interdependence and the necessity of being internationally engaged. In this effort he did truly lead and tried to convince protectionists, a majority of which were democrats, of the virtues of the free market. However, the meaning of globalization was rather fuzzy, and without a clear overarching principle to guide his strategy, the promotion of domestic interests greatly influenced his administration. In fact, it can be argued that the promotion of domestic interests and the promotion of globalization were the same thing. With an emphasis on securing contracts for U.S. firms, Clinton conducted an international economic policy that was common for state governors.

Restained by Congress and with a focus on domestic issues and the economy, Clinton adapted more to the strategic culture than he shaped it. He relied heavily on opinion polls, and skillfully accommodated various pressures and demands in order to consolidate his political capital and win elections. Clinton fought the isolationist tendencies, and during his presidency the Democratic Party became less protectionist. The paradigm of liberalism remained dominant, but Clinton did not really change the direction of the

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686 Without strong international pressure or an overarching consensual principle to guide U.S. strategy, the promotion of domestic interests is in a way the default U.S. strategy.
strategic culture, and that meant that the paradigm of non-entanglement grew stronger. His tendency to accommodate and adapt led to an increase in the relative influence of the strategic culture on U.S. strategy. Consequently, the countervailing nature of the two paradigms became more pronounced during his presidency.

5.4.3 The Clinton Administration and the Paradigm of Liberalism

There can be no doubt that the Clinton Administration’s strategy was to a considerable extent shaped by the Paradigm of Liberalism. The paradigm, and more specifically Liberal Internationalism, served as the foundation for almost all lengthier strategy speeches by both the President and representatives of his administration. The virtues of democracy, economic openness and human rights were constant themes in its verbal approach to the NIS, including CASC. There was no real debate regarding fostering objectives such as democratization and integration with the West.

Clinton’s adherence to the Paradigm of Liberalism was stronger than his predecessor’s. He spoke of the historical movement toward more democracy as something inevitable and described globalization as comparable to a force of nature that would profoundly change how the world worked. This separated him from George H.W. Bush, who warned of the reversibility of events. Less constrained and less fearful of reversibility, this administration turned some of its attention away from great power conflict and traditional threats. It perceived the world’s main problems as complex in character and impossible to solve unilaterally. Therefore, it was crucial to find new ways to cooperate. Clinton spoke positively about win-win scenarios and was seemingly less concerned with relative gains, as the administration explicitly rejected the notion of international politics as a zero-sum game. Both its rhetoric and its concrete actions reflected the ‘unity of goodness’ notion.

The administration’s declared strategy of engagement and enlargement in a profound way fits with the paradigm of liberalism. The belief that democracies do not go to war with each other was the primary rationale behind a strategy that explicitly sought to internally transform the NIS and other states into liberal market democracies. This could be done by various means, but a key term was integration. Integration would not only make the U.S. and the world safer but also make it more prosperous. Integration was described both as a goal and as a means. In practice, it meant, among other things, inviting countries into various international organizations, especially economic ones. This would teach them to accept rules and conform to norms, facilitate meetings and cooperation, build confidence and increase interdependence. A core aspect of this was preserving and expanding NATO, including the PFP and FSA.

The administration underscored the theme of democratic peace, the notion of economic- and security interdependence and the relentless force of
globalization, in his effort to get the American people to support his strategy, which not only entailed that the U.S. should be internationally engaged but that is should be concerned about the internal structure of other states. It also made the case that U.S. ideals and interests coincided in this effort. The fact that American politicians often make such claims is important from the perspective of this study. It seems to be an underlying assumption and norm in the U.S. that its strategy should reflect its values. Presidents as well as most politicians adapt to this norm. When it is possible to make the case that the country’s ideals and interests coincide, they often do. When these clearly do not coincide, it becomes a talking point for critics. Moreover, when an administration, for some reason, has to make a decision that creates a gap between the two, it is often perceived as a deviation or anomaly that has to be explained.

Clinton’s notion of globalization plays an important role in how the administration dealt with and, most probably, perceived the relationship between U.S. ideals and interests. The administration wanted to liberalize the global economy and spread democracy. However, it was notoriously vague on how economic integration and democratic reform were related to each other and how to prioritize between them. It was, though, clear to the administration that they were somehow linked. When faced with the decision of whether to pursue principled support for human rights and democracy or to extend an open hand to authoritarian states to facilitate their integration into the world economy, its declared strategy offered little advice. When it came to China, Clinton waived human rights stipulations and extended most favoured nation status to the country, reasoning that in the longer run countries that accept international rules and are drawn into greater interdependence will inevitably come to accept greater respect for human rights. Globalization would thus eventually redress this morally troubling concession. On the basis of this logic, the administration could become involved economically with authoritarian regimes, such as the states of CASC, while arguing that this would eventually lead to democracy. Critics pointed out that this reasoning provided the administration with an alibi, allowing it to conduct whatever strategy it preferred. This is to some extent true. It allowed Clinton to be pragmatic. However, it is clear that the administration frequently stated in public that it believed that economic integration would further movement toward democracy.

There are numerous other examples of how the paradigm of liberalism influenced the administration’s strategy toward CASC. Even though the engagement and enlargement strategy was not primarily directed toward CASC, it still applied to the region. From the outset, the administration supported the independence and sovereignty of the CASC states and repudiated any Russian claims to a sphere of influence in the region. It dismissed any argument that the region was not susceptible to U.S. democracy promotion and its representatives spoke about the universal appeal of democracy and freedom.
The administration wanted to help them transform internally by supporting
democratic and economic reforms.

The administration initially adopted positions that clearly fit the para-
digm. Tiny Kyrgyzstan was thought of as an example for the region, due to
President Akayev’s statements about reform, and President Clinton was re-
luctant to meet with President Karimov due to Uzbekistan’s poor human
rights record. It took years before Karimov was invited to the White House,
even though the administration had recognized Uzbekistan’s importance in
the region. The ban on assistance to Azerbaijan was justified with arguments
fitting the paradigm, as was the administration’s support for Turkish influ-
ence. Turkey, of course, was a U.S. ally and NATO member with ethnic ties
to the region. However, the fact that it was an Islamic country governed by a
secular democratic constitution was also an important reason that it consid-
ered it to be such a suitable model.

The administration’s support for the BTC project is also a clear demonstra-
tion of the influence of the Paradigm of Liberalism, including the idea of the
unity of goodness. The support was to a great extent based on the belief that
it would serve the states of CASC well. The project would diminish their
dependence of Russia, thereby strengthening their independence and sover-
egignty. It would also lead to prosperity and facilitate democratic reforms.
Furthermore, its construction would make Europe less dependent on Russia
and in effect inhibit Russia’s imperial impulses. The economic growth and
democratic reforms would, in turn, bring stability and eliminate the problem
of terrorism. And, with all of those problems solved, the true potential of the
East-West corridor could be realized. The bootstrap framework was not just
something devised to seal the deal. It fit the administration’s ideas about
globalization and economic integration, and many seemed to believe in it.
From the administration’s point of view it would help everybody in the re-
region. It was described as a win-win strategy and as a project in which U.S.
ideals and interest coincided.

During Clinton’s second term the administration also stepped up its
criticism of Russia’s conduct in Chechnya. It initiated sanctions against the
Taliban regime. When terrorism moved up on the agenda, the paradigm still
firmly influenced and constrained policy choices. The administration clearly
feared violating the ban assassination ban when considering its options re-
arding bin Laden and al-Qaeda. When Secretary Albright visited Tashkent,
she lectured the Uzbeks on human rights and counter-terrorism. She declared
that terrorism was a criminal act and should be treated accordingly and that
the best way to defeat it was to "increase law enforcement capacities while at
the same time promoting democracy and human rights". In other words,
the solution to the problem of terrorism is to be found within the paradigm of
liberalism. Albright’s lecturing was not received well by the Uzbeks, but it

6 Albright, “Speech at University of World Economy and Diplomacy."
reflected the administration’s policy. This is significant in relation to the influence of the paradigm, especially since the U.S. had a clear interest at the time in nurturing a good relationship with the Uzbek regime. Furthermore, Albright was under pressure from Congress to do this, which demonstrates how the paradigm permeates the U.S. body politic.

Finally, the best example of the administration’s commitment to the paradigm of liberalism has to be its war of choice in Kosovo. It was described as a war for humanitarian reasons, and contrary to one the foundations of international politics – the respect for state sovereignty – the administration argued that state sovereignty was not absolute and that a governments had to be held responsible for how it treated its citizens. President Clinton declared "we cannot be indifferent, at home or abroad. That is why we are in Kosovo." Even though the administration went to war over what can be described as Liberal Internationalist principles, there were also many limits to its commitment to the paradigm of liberalism and a clear and growing discrepancy between its rhetoric and concrete actions.

To what exact extent the President and his administration actually believed in the tenets of the paradigm of liberalism is beyond the scope of this study. That is, it is possible that the administration was primarily interested in catering to domestic constituencies and gaining access to Caspian energy resources and, therefore, merely framed its message to fit the paradigm in order to pursue its policies. It is, however, clear that the administration tried to adapt both its vocabulary and its policies to the paradigm. It is also clear that when its actions deviated from this paradigm, it was criticized. As argued previously, by enabling and constraining action, U.S. strategic culture functions as a filter making some choices more likely than others.

5.4.4 The Clinton Administration and the Paradigm of Non-Entanglement

Indicative of the influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement, support for broad U.S. international engagements decreased with the end of the Cold War. Many Americans turned inward. The public’s interest in foreign affairs declined, and demands for the ‘peace dividends’ increased. This sentiment was channeled through Congress, and many elected officials felt strong pressure to accommodate it, even if they personally favored a more ambitious strategy. George H.W. Bush was heavily criticized for his interests in foreign affairs, and Clinton used this against him and promised during the 1992 election to focus like a laser on domestic issues. Clinton also promised to act more assertively on the international stage. The uneasy tension between these two promises would persist throughout his entire presidency.

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As argued in the previous section, the Clinton Administration was strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism. Its rhetoric was Liberal Internationalist in nature, and it often staked out an ambitious position. However, when taking into account its concrete actions, it becomes clear that the administration was also rather strongly committed to the paradigm of non-entanglement. Its rhetoric was often not supported by any real commitments or actions for meeting its declared goals.

Compared to his predecessor and other Cold War presidents, Clinton was uninterested in foreign affairs. He did not want it to interfere with his domestic agenda and often left it to leading bureaucrats. Clinton was also very reluctant to use military force or to put Americans in harm’s way. Without the end of the Cold war and the subsequent increase in the influence of the paradigm on non-entanglement, it is uncertain whether would have been elected. The administration also had a clear preference for multilateralism. One strong argument for this position was the costs of unilateral action. Taken together, this made the administration rather reactive. It allowed various issues to drift, allowing some of them to escalate into serious problems. When this happened, Clinton sometimes took political risks and displayed leadership. He often found himself forced to act not just because of increasing domestic pressure, but also in order to protect the credibility of the U.S. and the administration he had put on the line by his grand statements.689

It should be noted that Clinton’s freedom of action was constrained by the career military. The legacy of the Vietnam War weighed heavily on the military, and it nurtured a principled rejection of the concept of limited war. The military wanted to return to something that can be described as an ‘all or nothing’ approach to war. It resisted military interventions and wanted to set a high bar for them. However, once a decision to intervene was made, it insisted on the use of overwhelming force and clearly defined goals. This became known as the Powell Doctrine. Within the military establishment there was a strong reluctance to deploy if these conditions were not met. With regard to Kosovo, for instance, the Pentagon did not even want to make plans for the deployment of ground forces. In many cases military commanders also prioritized force protection and minimal risk to U.S. soldiers before trying to accomplish what they perceived as goals that were too ambitious. The low tolerance for casualties for reasons not clearly perceived as being in the national interest was also shared by the American public, and Clinton knew this. This restrained the administration and diminished its bargaining power, since it was not able to use the military as a flexible tool.690

689 It is possible to make the case, at least in some instances, that Clinton’s disinterest and reluctance to engage early on may have encouraged the growth of various problems.

690 Madeleine Albright once complained about this, saying to Colin Powell: “What’s the point of having this superb military that you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?” See Powell, (1995), p. 576.
There are numerous examples of the uneasy blend of the administration’s primarily Liberal Internationalist rhetoric and its sensitivity to costs. One of the most illustrative is its handling of the intervention in Somalia. George H.W. Bush had approved the mission. However, Clinton greatly expanded it just a month into his presidency. He supported a resolution declaring Somalia a "failed state", while Madeleine Albright described it as "an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country".  

Despite this rhetoric, the public was not particularly supportive. The conditions were very unfavourable for any large scale operation. When 18 U.S. soldiers were killed in the Black Hawk Down incident, millions, all over the world looked to the White House, interested in how the new President would respond to this challenge. Clinton chose to withdraw U.S. troops. The costs were too high.

As an indication of the limits of the administration’s adherence to the paradigm of liberalism it did almost nothing to stop the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Fearing another Somalia, it was reluctant to use the word genocide, despite estimates of over 800,000 deaths, since doing so would obligate the country to act under international law.

Another example that demonstrates the administration’s commitment to both paradigms is its handling of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. It took over two years for Clinton to act with resolve. By then, the crisis in Bosnia had escalated, putting Clinton under considerable pressure. It threatened the credibility of NATO, the U.S. standing in Europe and U.S. leadership globally. When the U.S. engaged, it did so relying almost totally on airpower. The administration also armed mercenaries to fight the Serbs, but no regular U.S. troops were deployed. The engagement can only be described as low risk and low cost. The half-hearted intervention gave the world the impression that the U.S. was unwilling to sustain costs. When the war was over, ground forces were introduced as peacekeepers. The administration, however, was reveal publicly how long they were going to be deployed. Clinton was up for re-election in 1996 and wanted to avoid criticism by all of those disliking peacekeeping missions, such as the Assertive Patriots. Clinton acted more quickly with regard to Kosovo, although he relied on an air power strategy and prioritized force protection. His response to Saddam’s

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692 There were similar tendencies in Clinton’s actions in relation to Haiti. He spoke of democracy and humanitarian aims but did little to help Haitian refugees, and his threats to the Cedras regime were not particularly assertive. This led to a series of humiliations that eventually convinced Clinton to take bolder action.

693 Even though President Clinton threatened to deploy ground forces and declared that all options were on the table, there was a strong reluctance both within the administration and at the Pentagon to deploy.
transgressions can also be characterized as low cost and low risks, since it consisted almost exclusively of air strikes.\footnote{The administration’s reliance on air power and technology made some analysts write about ‘new wars’, ‘virtual wars’ and ‘hegemony on the cheap’.}

It is important to understand that the aim here is not to criticize the handling of these cases, but rather to underscore the preference for and pattern of avoiding costs and risks, i.e. a commitment to the paradigm of non-entanglement.

In speeches, Clinton argued that humanitarian missions, human rights and the spread of democracy were important for U.S. national security. However, in most cases he could not really convince the American people that real national interests were at stake. This constrained Clinton’s range of policy options and is illustrative of how the paradigm of non-entanglement exerts its influence. It is, of course, possible to argue that Clinton did not act forcefully in many cases because there were no real U.S. interests at stake. However, one must then ask the question why the administration declared that the U.S. had important and even vital goals in promoting democracy and human rights in many distant regions in the first place. The framework that takes strategic culture into account can help explain this.

Enemies of the U.S. also perceived America’s sensitivity to costs, especially to casualties, as a weakness that could be exploited. It is well known that bin Laden was inspired by how easily the U.S. had been forced out of Somalia and, therefore, perceived the U.S. as being especially sensitive to terrorist tactics. It is also known that both Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic seemed to believe that the U.S. could be defeated, or at least outlasted, by using strategies that took advantage of this perceived weakness. In other words, the idea that the paradigm of non-entanglement exerts a profound influence on U.S. strategy is widely shared and not particularly controversial.

There was a huge discrepancy between Clinton’s ambitious statements about the importance of engagement and enlargement and the money allocated to support the strategy. Clinton wanted to cut defense spending and decrease troop levels, but he never initiated any radical changes, and the existing force structure was basically maintained, though somewhat reduced in size. The new forces doctrine stated that the military should be able to deal with two major contingencies simultaneously. The combination of new types of missions, such as humanitarian interventions, and sliding costs for procurements, modernization and salaries led the Republican Congress to put pressure on Clinton to increase defense spending. At the same time they pressured him to make substantial cuts in foreign affairs expenditure. In fact, U.S. spending on foreign affairs throughout the 1990s was astonishingly small, especially in light of the administration’s rhetoric. The U.S. spent far
less than 0.5% of its GDP on diplomacy and foreign aid. About $20 billion per year was allocated to cover funding for the State Department, including all embassies and postings overseas, contributions to the UN and its numerous operations, the promotion of democracy and economic reforms and military aid and assistance, including the CTRP. These funds were also under constant public scrutiny, including from populists and Assertive Patriots.

U.S. relations with the UN were not particularly good during Clinton’s presidency. One reason for this had to do with the Republican class of 1994. Many of the newly elected Republicans were skeptical of the organization and of Liberal Internationalism in general. In a way, the 1994 election was a testament to the increasing influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement. The administration was thus not just under considerable pressure to keep the budget for foreign affairs down but was also constrained as to how funds could be allocated. This political reality together with the fact that the administration perceived few interests in CASC provides a context for understanding the administration’s strategy toward it.

There are numerous examples of the Clinton Administration’s adherence to the paradigm of non-engagement in its strategy toward CASC. Some of the best examples involve what the U.S. did not do. It showed little initiative or interest in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, the civil war in Tajikistan or the conflict in Chechnya and did not pursue NATO expansion in the region. However, there are other examples as well. It continued the low risk and low cost policy of supporting Turkey. Despite its rhetorical support of the sovereignty of the CASC states, it gave Russia in practice a free hand in the CASC. Moreover, most U.S. programs in the region were small in size and assistance was meagre. It seems as if many representatives of the administration and the U.S. government believed that U.S. assistance was larger than it really was, since they seemed to believe that the U.S. had a lot of leverage in the region.

The administration stepped up its support for the independence of the CASC states when it became involved in the pipeline politics of the region. However, its involvement in the BTC project and other pipelines was in fact limited. The administration emphasized that the government would not make any direct investments or use taxpayer money to pay for any pipelines. Rather, it brought together the U.S. independent trade and investment agencies, facilitated meetings, credits and loans, created working groups and tried to coordinate the development and support of concrete project opportunities in the region. The administration made it clear that the private sector would be in the driver’s seat in these enterprises. Despite this, it was widely criticised for its involvement. Many argued that the government should not get involved and potentially wind up as a guarantor for issues and projects that should be handled solely by the private sector. Abstentionists, in particular,

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were critical of the BTC project and the close connection between the U.S. government and oil companies.\textsuperscript{696}

Another example of Clinton’s commitment to non-entanglement was the lack of a clear policy toward Afghanistan. According to the \textit{9/11 Commission Report}, the administration simply had "no policy" toward the country during much of the 1990s. Clinton also downsized the intelligence community, which had an impact on U.S. intelligence capabilities in the wider region. This cut can be interpreted as fitting with the paradigm. Terrorism and Islamic radicalism slowly moved up on the administration’s agenda in the late 1990s. However, it did not really want to become involved with or pay close attention to what the intelligence community was saying about developments in Afghanistan, including how the Taliban-al-Qaeda nexus affected the region. Only after the Embassy bombings in 1998 did Clinton respond with military force. Diplomatic means and sanctions were, though, still the President’s preferred means, and his military response – cruise missile strikes – was clearly devised to minimize U.S. risks and costs.

When the administration stepped up plans to capture bin Laden, potential costs and risks heavily influenced the pursuit. The U.S. used unmanned drones to try to spot al-Qaeda camps and operatives. Needless to say, one of the main benefits of UAVs is that no pilots are put in harm’s way. UAVs are inherently low risks and they are cheap. U.S. operatives were not going to do any capturing. Instead, they would train Uzbek and Pakistani teams, thereby reducing risks and any direct U.S. involvement. The administration was initially reluctant to assist and enlist Massoud to fight the Taliban and al-Qaeda, since it feared being perceived as taking sides in the conflict or becoming too entangled. When it finally began to secretly support Massoud, its assistance was meagre. The administration was also reluctant to violate or being perceived as violating the ban on assassination. There was a strong reluctance at the top level to take the risk of going through with any mission to capture or possibly assassinate bin Laden, unless they were 100% certain that it was going to work and that there would be a minimal number of civilian casualties. The result of this was that the few times an opportunity to do something actually presented itself, the missions were aborted at various stages, since it was not possible to be certain enough.

Despite the increase in U.S. assistance, CentCom Commander Anthony Zinni was constantly short of funds and had to make excuses to Central Asian leaders because of the lack of interest in Washington. There was a reluctance to get involved and to spend money in the region, even though Zinni described it as the front line. After 9/11, Clinton’s cruise missile response after the embassy attacks and his efforts to combat international terrorism have been described as catastrophically weak. However, this criticism

\textsuperscript{696} The CATO Institute published several analyses critical of the BTC-project and U.S. government involvement in the Caspian.
was not raised at the time, and one can only speculate as to how the American public would have responded to a failed mission in Afghanistan with U.S. casualties. Clinton surely did not want to take any such risks with so little to gain. He never contemplated a large military deployment or anything like an invasion of Afghanistan. Nobody suggested it, and if anyone did, the vast numbers of Americans committed to the paradigm on non-entanglement would probably have gone through the roof. There would simply not have been any support for it.

During the George H.W. Bush presidency, the U.S. had few interests in the region, and Russia was still regarded as a great power. As a testament to the influence of the paradigm of liberalism and the George H. W Bush Administration’s weak commitment to the paradigm of non-entanglement, the U.S. engaged the region. During the Clinton presidency, U.S. engagement increased. The U.S. clearly had greater interests in the region, and the perception of Russian power was changing. Clinton thus had more opportunities and incentives to engage the region than his predecessor. The fact that he did not do more has much to do with his rather strong commitment to the paradigm of non-entanglement. Finally, it should be noted that the paradigm of non-entanglement not only constrained Clinton but also enabled him to focus on domestic issues.

5.4.5 Conclusions

The Clinton Administration was strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism but also strongly committed to the paradigm of non-entanglement. Clinton was not particularly interested in foreign affairs and did not really change the strategic culture. Rather, he adapted to it. There was a clear and growing discrepancy between rhetoric and concrete action. The administration made grand statements about promoting democracy and standing up for liberal values, but its actions were not commensurate with its language. Its outlook can be described as an uneasy blend of Liberal Internationalism and Abstentionism, and its strategy toward CASC can best be described as a blend of balance of power/selective engagement and cooperative security.

The administration’s interests in CASC were limited. It seemed to have had little knowledge about it and did not initially place it within a broader geopolitical framework. Clinton inherited several broad programs to aid and assist the region. Those programs grew incrementally during his presidency. The PFP program initiated by Clinton grew in a similar fashion. Just like the Freedom Support Act and the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, the PFP was not primarily directed at the region. Even though the administration’s total engagement in the region was limited, it did in fact increase dur-
ing the Clinton years. This is important with regard to the proposed framework.

As expected, there was domestic pressure to withdraw and scale down international commitments after the Soviet breakup. The public’s interest in foreign affairs was in decline, and its support for various interventions was at best limited. This was to a great extent a result of the disappearance of the Soviet threat. However, just like his predecessor, Clinton largely resisted these tendencies and put forward ambitious plans. He wanted to transform the states of the FSU internally and integrate them into the community of liberal market democracies. Both the ambition and contents of Clinton’s strategy fit the framework for several reasons. The framework is based on the idea that increases in relative power eventually lead to a more ambitious strategy. During the Clinton years, U.S. power was increasing. It is not surprising that the administration became more assertive in the region after Russia’s display of weakness in Chechnya and its economic collapse. Finally, because the U.S. won the Cold War, there was no demand to rethink and fundamentally change the U.S. strategy of engagement and promotion of democracy and economic openness. Liberalism thus continued to be the dominant cultural paradigm, even though the influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement was on the rise. In addition, Clinton inherited George H.W. Bush’s agenda with several programs underway, including the idea of supporting Turkish influence in the region, which perfectly balanced the two countervailing forces.

The fact that the Clinton Administration became involved in pipeline politics that would overshadow other issues in the region is also not surprising. With little interest or overarching principles to guide his strategy toward the region, Clinton catered to important domestic constituencies. When the region’s energy resources became apparent and various groups and interests began pushing for U.S. engagement, the administration was forthcoming. The discovery of strategic resources strengthened the American Realists and, as the estimates of the region’s resources grew, the argument for not pushing the CASC states too hard on reforms got more and more traction. The BTC project seemed, thanks in large to the bootstrap and the East-West framework, to address nearly all of the U.S. goals in the region. On the surface, it fit the paradigm of liberalism almost perfectly. Both Liberal Internationalists and American Realists could get behind the project, since it would further the democratic and economic development of the CASC states and strengthening their independence and sovereignty, thereby inhibiting Russia’s imperial impulses and giving the U.S. and its allies access to the region’s resources through a route not controlled by Russia or Iran or passing through the Hormuz Strait. Since U.S. involvement in BTC was limited and did not include direct investments, it was not that controversial from a non-entanglement point of view, even though some Abstentionists complained. However, it raised the question of how to prioritize between economic inte-
gration and principled support for democracy, which is a problem inherent to the paradigm of liberalism.

Strategic thinking usually implies distinguishing between short-term, middle-term and long-term perspectives. That trade-offs between them are usually necessary so that short-term decisions do not undermine the longer-term strategy. However, when all good things go together, which was the administration’s standpoint, such thinking becomes less important. The administration constantly refused to acknowledge, at least publicly, that there were any problems with its approach. In speeches, no differentiations between the short, medium, and long term were made, nor were there any discussions on the necessity to prioritize between different ‘goods’. Instead, its representatives argued, just as they did about globalization, that stability, security and democratic- and economic reform were all linked and mutually reinforcing. As expected by the framework, there was a reluctance to say anything that could be interpreted as contradicting the paradigm of liberalism. This strengthens the notion that strategy is only a legitimate pursuit in the U.S. as long as it focuses on promoting liberal goals.

The administration thus never made clear how to prioritize between democratic reform and economic reform. When faced with the decision of whether to pursue principled support for human rights and democracy or to extend an open hand to authoritarian states to facilitate their integration into the world economy, the administration was opportunistic and susceptible to pressure. The administration’s choice to side with the effort to repeal Section 907 was, therefore, not surprising.

The inconsistencies and incoherence in the U.S. strategy toward CASC, which to a great extent was a result of George H.W. Bush’s priorities and flexibility, grew and became more conspicuous during the Clinton years. To some extent, this has to do with the increased engagement in the region. The programs initiated or ongoing in the region were primarily aimed elsewhere and seemed to suffer from confusion and a lack of coordination regarding their aims in CASC. Like his predecessor, Clinton started from a principled position by putting human rights and democratic reform in the foreground. However, those issues became subordinate to issues regarding the region’s energy resources.

The administration’s strategy was also inconsistent and incoherent with regard to how to prioritize between its need for security cooperation and stability, on the one hand, and democratic reforms and respect for human rights, on the other. In the second half of the 1990s, the Taliban rose to power in Afghanistan, and instability and the threat of militant Islam in the region increased. After the 1998 embassy attacks, the threat from terrorism was re-evaluated. Clinton sent signals to the vast security bureaucracy that he wanted something done. As a result the importance of bin-Laden, the Taliban and the Afghanistan-Central Asia nexus were elevated.
Consequently, short-term security goals, such as increased intelligence cooperation in order to learn more about the whereabouts of bin Laden and potential terrorist camps, effectively eclipsed declared U.S. long-term goals in the region. It also resulted in mixed signals to the region. Publicly, Washington criticized the states in the region for their poor human rights records and lack of progress on democratic and economic reform. However, out of the public eye, the administration increased military and security assistance, sent equipment and provided training in counter-terrorism and intelligence gathering methods to several states in the region and initiated covert operations with Uzbekistan to counter terrorism. This also coincided with a deteriorating human rights situation, as the regimes cracked down on terrorism and those they perceived as threats. This further amplified the mixed signals. The possibility that these increases might undermine longer term U.S. interests was not an issue that seemed to preoccupy the administration, despite the fact that various ambassadors and military and intelligence officials tried to raise it.

The administration’s focus on energy resources also affected the perceptions of the CASC states of U.S. interests. The result was that many perceived a clear disconnect between U.S. rhetoric and concrete actions and that there was a gap between U.S. ideals and interests. However, the administration constantly emphasized its support for democracy, market reforms and human rights, and firmly stood by Ambassador Collins’s statement that "there were no contradiction between democracy and stability".

All in all, the Clinton Administration exaggerated the CASC region’s real importance. It seemed to have no clear idea about how to prioritize in the region. Was economic reform of greatest importance? Were democratic reform and human rights of greatest importance? Were stability, counterterrorism and security cooperation of greatest importance? The answer seemed to be that they were equally important, and this resulted in mixed messages, lack of coordination, opportunism, short-sightedness and high susceptibility to pressure. This was hardly a surprising outcome, given that the administration had, in fact, very limited interests in the region. Martha Brill Olcott had a point when she argued that U.S. policymakers, beyond the hype, actually perceived the region as a back-up for the much more strategically important Gulf region that could be worth trying to snare if the price was right.

In speeches, representatives of the administration made grand statements about transcending great power conflict and sweeping commitments about transforming and integrating these states in the liberal order. These words were then followed up with concrete action characterized by meagre funding and insufficient assistance and support for realising the declared goals. The administration publicly criticized the states in the region for their lack of democracy but never seemed to take any principled positions if they were associated with costs, such as potential lack of access. A strategy of 'democracy on the cheap' fit very well with U.S. culture and, when it comes
to U.S. post-Cold War strategic choices, it is arguably the path of least resistance. Clinton was disinterested in foreign affairs and CASC. During his eight years in office, U.S. strategy toward CASC seldom deviated from this path.
6. The George W. Bush Administration

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world. America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. (…) Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time. So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.

_George W. Bush 2nd inaugural address_

When George W. Bush assumed office the U.S. had several programs operating in CASC. However, the region, or now regions, was peripheral to U.S. interests. The attacks of 9/11 would change U.S. strategy toward CASC in a profound way. The administration’s decision to respond militarily to the attacks on 9/11 brought the region back into the limelight. This time, though, the focus was on Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan, and not on Caspian energy resources. The George W. Administration was faced with several important decisions, ranging from how best to integrate these states into the community of liberal market democracies, while at the same time fostering stability and reducing Iranian and Russian influence, in order to gain access to bases necessary for conducting military operations in Afghanistan and cooperation in the global war on terror.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first consists of a detailed narrative of the George W. Bush Administration’s strategy toward CASC. The narrative is organized primarily chronologically and will focus more on the U.S.-Uzbek relationship, since this clearly received the most attention by the administration. It begins with a few sections that describe the domestic and international environment the administration faced, including its general outlook, prior to 9/11. After that there is a description of the administration’s strategic adjustments after 9/11. Then comes a series of sections describing how the tension between U.S. interest in democratic reforms and security cooperation would create a rift not only between the U.S. and the CASC region, but also between the State Department and the DoD. This part ends with a section on how this tension, combined with both domestic and external pressure, created a crisis in the U.S.-Uzbek relationship and the strategic consequences. The second part of the chapter consists of an analysis of the administration’s strategy based on the neoclassical realist framework.
6.1 Introduction – The 2000 Election and a Distinctly American Internationalism

Foreign affairs was not a major issue during the first presidential election of the 21st century. That being said, there were clear differences between the candidates regarding the role of the U.S. in the world and a major disagreement about the effectiveness of certain means. Al Gore’s vision was far more ambitious than that of George W. Bush. However, they agreed on the necessity for being tough on Iraq. This was the only question on which Governor Bush adopted a more hawkish posture than Gore.697 During the campaign Bush declared that he was not going to be as interventionist as Clinton. He warned of overextension and argued that the U.S. ought to project its power with humility in order to avoid sparking anti-American backlashes.698

Known as a hawk within the Clinton Administration, Gore made the case for a broad definition of security. His complicated relationship with Clinton was not the only obstacle facing him. Before winning the Democratic Party’s nomination, he had been challenged by Bill Bradley, who fiercely criticized the interventionism of the 1990s. This criticism was shared by Ralph Nader, who had entered the race as a third party candidate on an anti-corporate and anti-interventionist platform. Gore countered this criticism by placing himself in the tradition of the country’s post-World War II engagement.

George W. Bush was inexperienced in foreign affairs. The best source concerning what kind of strategy he would pursue was perhaps provided by Condoleezza Rice’s article “Promoting the National Interests” published in 2000.699 The article was an indictment of the Clinton Administration’s strategy, or more specifically lack thereof. Rice argued that the Clinton Administration dealt with every issue "on its own terms – crisis by crisis, day by day", and by failing to set priorities it created a vacuum that was filled with parochial groups and transitory pressure.700 She deplored the fact that the ‘national interest’ had been replaced with ‘humanitarian interests’ or the interests of the ‘international community’. She argued that there were "strong echoes" within the administration of the "Wilsonian thought" that the U.S. "is exercising power legitimately only when it is doing so on behalf of someone or something else". Rice proclaimed that "multilateral agreements and institutions should not be ends in themselves" and warned that its "at-

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700 Many shared this criticism, and Clinton had been described early on as an "an absentee landlord on foreign policy". See Elizabeth Drew, On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency (New York: Simon and Schuster 1994), p. 357.
tachment to largely symbolic arrangements and its pursuit of, at best, illusory ‘norms’ of international behaviour [had] become epidemic.”

U.S. military deployments was also criticized. "[M]eans and mission were not matched", and the armed forces were stretched almost to the breaking point. The Kosovo campaign was being fought with limited means and without an exit strategy, she complained, adding that "if it is worth fighting for, you had better be prepared to win". Rice was clear regarding the use of force:

The president must remember that the military is a special instrument. It is lethal, and it is meant to be. It is not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is certainly not designed to build a civilian society. Military force is best used to support clear political goals (...). It is one thing to have a limited political goal and fight decisively for it; it is quite another to apply military force incrementally hoping to find a solution somewhere along the way. A president entering these situations must ask whether decisive force is possible and is likely to be effective and must know how and when to get out. These are difficult criteria to meet, so U.S. intervention in these "humanitarian" crises should be, at best, exceedingly rare.  

Rice further argued that using the military "as the worlds ’911’ will degrade capabilities, bog soldiers down in peacekeeping roles, and fuel concern among great powers" and that an "overly broad definition of America’s national interest is bound to backfire as others arrogate the same authority themselves". Later in the year, Rice would remark: "we don’t need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten".  

Even though she echoed Wolfowitz’s criticism of Clinton’s Russia policy, she agreed with the notion that the U.S. was less threatened by Russia’s strength "than by its weakness and incoherence". She also commented upon the situation in Chechnya and, by extension, CASC:

The war in Chechnya, located in the oil-rich Caucasus, is particularly dangerous. [...] The war is a reminder of the vulnerability of the small, new states around Russia and of America’s interest in their independence. If they become stronger, they will be less tempting to Russia. But much depends on the ability of these states to reform their economies and political systems – a process, to date, whose success is mixed at best.

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701 This was described during the campaigns by Republicans as a ‘death spiral’.  
704 Rice, (2000). At the Republican Convention Rice declared that “if we have learned anything in the last several years it is that a romantic view of Russia – rather than a realistic one – did nothing to help the cause of stability in Russia.” See "Senior Bush Advisor Condoleezza Rice,” Council on Foreign Relations: Live from the Convention, August 9, 2000.
Rice urged the next administration to "[p]roceed from the firm ground of the national interest, not from the interests of an illusionary international community" and to prioritize great power relations when formulating U.S strategy. She also emphasized the threat of rogue regimes armed with WMDs and argued for accelerating the effort to construct a NMD.705 Even though George W. Bush accused Clinton’s Russia policy of assisting "a corrupt and favoured elite" and excusing "brutality" in Chechnya, he signalled that his strategy would be far less idealistic, more pragmatic and rooted in a narrow definition of U.S. interests. He described his approach as "A Distinctly American Internationalism", which illustrates this point perfectly.706

The Bush campaign used the idea of weakness on defense and security associated with the democrats successfully. Dick Cheney used the slogan "Help is on the way" on the campaign trail to reach out to military families and those supporting a strong defense.707 Also of help was the fact that Bush’s team, known as ‘the Vulcans’, had an almost unprecedented standing.708 They were even admired by democrats and seemed to project "a return to professionalism".709

The GOP was divided, and rallying the party was not an easy task. Numerous republicans in Congress were critical of the interventionism and nation-building missions of the 1990s. Most neoconservatives supported them but were critical of the mismatch between the declared goals and the resources allocated to achieve them. They argued that the U.S. needed a strategy and a budget that reflected its global responsibilities. George W. Bush did not try to reconcile these positions during the campaign. His strategy was in no way transformational, and he declared that he had no intention of using power to promote U.S. values, build nations or defend those suffering under repressive regimes. At the same time, he emphasized military preparedness and supported increases in defense spending and the construction of a new generation of weapons technology.

Terrorism was seldom mentioned during the campaign despite the fact that the third debate took place only days after the attack on the USS Cole.710 When Bush mentioned terrorism, he almost always did so in context of the

708 Mann (2004). Les Gelb, a former President of the Council on Foreign Relations and a friend of many Clinton officials, said: "I thought the Bush team would be the best one I’d ever seen (...) [t]hey had unbelievable standing with the foreign policy community, the press, the public." Les Gelb, quoted in Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), p. 307.
710 On October 12, 2000, U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole suffered a terrorist attack while harboured in Yemeni port of Aden, which killed 17 sailors and wounding 39.
missile threat and the need for NMD. In the end, Bush’s narrow definition of U.S. interests had more in common with the congressional republicans than the neoconservatives. Many of the latter, therefore, ended up supporting John McCain in the primaries. However, his ideas appealed to the military establishment.

The democrats were under considerable pressure from the party’s base to cut defense spending. The democratic leadership had anxiously supported the nation-building agenda. They knew about the cost sensitive attitudes of many Americans, especially if bodies were brought home from missions that did not have strong support. The controversial idea of nation-building had also never been received well by high-ranking military officials. As a result, force protection was prioritized. In the Balkans U.S. troops stayed behind the walls of massive bases, and missions that seemed dangerous, such as going after war criminals, were avoided. One effect of this was that much of the military planning was organized around how quickly U.S. troops could get out. There were no real efforts being made to institutionalize the lessons from the interventions of the 1990s. As a consequence, the U.S. did not really have the capability for any large scale nation-building efforts when George W. Bush took office.

Bush had exaggerated the bad relationship between Clinton and the military. He did, though, have a point in claiming that Clinton had decreased civilian control over the military. In order to reverse this, he appointed Donald Rumsfeld as his Secretary of Defense. During a discussion with President Elect Bush, Rumsfeld argued that Clinton had been squemish and that his natural pattern of behaviour when challenged had been "reflexive pullback". Neither approved of Clinton’s weapon of choice – the standoff cruise missile – and agreed that if the U.S. was threatened the President should unleash the military and expect a forward-leaning plan. Bush’s other appointments also reflected the ideas he projected during his campaign: Colin Powell at Department of State and Condoleezza Rice as National Security Advisor. Vice President Cheney also became a force within

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711 Daalder and Lindsay, (2003), p. 39.
715 Rumsfeld had served as Secretary of Defense under President Ford, and his bureaucratic infighting skills were renowned.
717 Other significant appointments included John Bolton, Richard Haass and Richard Armitage at Department of State; Douglas Feith and Paul Wolfowitz at the DoD; John Negroponte
the administration. Many of the DGP authors also received prominent appointments.

The Clinton Administration, including Gore, believed that institutions, treaties and alliances were more than means. They could help create norms that shaped the behavior of states. This kind of thinking, according to which the pursuit of cooperation had become an end in itself, was completely backwards and ‘globalonkey’ from the point of view of the new administration. It argued that trust in symbolic agreements was naive and dangerous and only created false hopes; it was power and demonstrations of resolve that influenced both allies and enemies, not words or paper treaties.\footnote{Leadership, Wolfowitz wrote, consists of "demonstrating that your friends will be protected and taken care of, that your enemies will be punished, and that those who refuse to support you will live to regret having done so". Paul Wolfowitz, "Remembering the Future," \textit{National Interest}, No. 59 (Spring 2000), p. 41. See also Chollet and Goldgeier, (2008), Chap. 9.}

The George W. Bush Administration seldom spoke of globalization. Its focus was on managing great power relations. It also argued that ensuring freedom of action was far more important than global popularity and, therefore, sought to loosen constraints on U.S. power. This should not be done for the sake of ambitious goals of remaking the world in its image, but for pursuing narrow national interests. "[O]rder is more fundamental than justice", declared Richard Haass when he articulated this new, more pragmatic posture.\footnote{Richard Haass, "What to do With American Primacy," \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol. 78, No. 5 (Sept/Oct 1999).}

\subsection*{6.1.1 Changing Course: The First Eight Months}

The George W. Bush Administration immediately began loosening the constraints on U.S. freedom of action. It opposed the ICJ, declared the Kyoto protocol to be "dead", began a process of withdrawing from the ABM treaty and halted the effort to improve the U.S.-UN relationship.\footnote{Condoleezza Rice, quoted in Jeffrey Kluger, "A Climate of Despair," \textit{Time}, April 9, 2001.} In June 2001, Charles Krauthammer enthusiastically argued that this "new unilateralism" amounted to such a radical policy change that it should be called 'the Bush doctrine'.\footnote{Charles Krauthammer, "The Bush Doctrine: ABM, Kyoto, and the New American Unilateralism," \textit{Weekly Standard}, June 4, 2001; Charles Krauthammer, "The New Unilateralism," \textit{Washington Post}, June 8, 2001.} He was one of first to use this term, and it can be regarded as the first meaning of the 'Bush Doctrine'.\footnote{This shift in U.S. policy had more to do with ideas and assumptions about how the world works than about international pressure. It is hard to argue otherwise, since there were no real changes in the international distribution of power at the time that can account for this shift.}
Within the George H.W. Bush Administration the conflicting views of the DGP authors and the State Department never clashed openly. Now they did. The conflict has been portrayed as one between multilateralists and unilaterals, in which Powell was the representative of the former and Cheney and Rumsfeld of the latter.  

George W. Bush himself was more of a pragmatist than anything else. He had a preference for an “á la carte multilateralism” that included ad hoc coalitions. This was a lesson from Kosovo. Secretary Rumsfeld immediately undertook what he called ‘transformation’. In his confirmation hearing, he argued that the military was outdated and organized to fight old enemies. He envisioned a more lean and flexible military. In order to accomplish this, some larger U.S. bases would be downsized and replaced by a ‘lily pad’ of numerous smaller bases all over the world to assure U.S. access in strategically important regions. These were referred to as forward operating locations (FOSs) and cooperative security locations (CSLs). Rumsfeld was confident and commanding, but he encountered severe resistance from the senior uniformed military, which believed that fighting wars required substantial numbers of troops and dismissed what they perceived as an over-reliance on state-of-the-art technologies. Almost immediately, there were calls for his resignation.

Rumsfeld was also preoccupied with the notion of surprise and ‘unknown unknowns’. Terrorism was, however, not prioritized within the administration. This was regarded as a "Clinton issue" and a sideshow to core U.S. interests, and the President did not press the issue. A plan to eliminate al Qaeda was being developed, but no formal recommendations were presented. The long-time partners Cheney and Rumsfeld took a hard-line stance on a number of issues but did not push for any comprehensive strategy. Wolfowitz, the most articulated primacist, was inside the administration but had little influence initially. When he tried to bring up the issue of Iraq, he was quickly outmanouevred by Powell. Many speculated that

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723 This description has some merit, although, the ideological division has been exaggerated. Powell was hardly a devoted supporter of multilateralism. He was pragmatic, much like George H.W. Bush, and Rumsfeld and Cheney were not at all doctrinal unilateralists opposed to every international agreement or organization. Powell had ostensibly jokingly called Cheney and his civilian aides, most notably Wolfowitz “right wing nuts” in his autobiography. The person best fitting the description as a unilateralist within the administration was arguably John Bolton. Powell, (1995), pp. 242-243, pp. 328-329, p. 438, p. 474, p. 526.


726 CLS can be defined as a military facility with few or no U.S. troops but that may have pre-positioned equipment and contract personnel.


729 "They were in the box", Richard Armitage declared, referring to Wolfowitz and his neo-conservative ideas. Richard Armitage quoted in Chollet and Goldgeier (2008), p. 308. See
Powell would become one of the most powerful Secretaries of State the nation had ever seen. However, he was unable to form a genuine relationship with the President. At the end of the summer he began losing influence within the administration, and in September the cover of Time Magazine asked: "Where Have You Gone, Colin Powell?"  

Reflecting his background and political vulnerabilities, George W. Bush did not place foreign affairs at center stage. His two top priorities were a substantial tax cut and education reform. However, just months into his Presidency he was forced to deal with an international crisis. In April 2001, a U.S. spy plane crashed in China. Bush had routinely criticized Clinton for confusing the world as it is with how it ought to be, and Clinton's view of China as a potential strategic partner rather than as an actual competitor had been one of his best examples. As an indication of the administration's focus on managing great power relations, it diplomatically avoided a clash with China. This infuriated those who wanted a more assertive U.S. posture. The Weekly Standard, for instance, accused the President of "weakness" and charged that his apologetic actions amounted to a "national humiliation".  

6.1.2 Subtle Changes: U.S.-CASC before 9/11

U.S. strategy toward CASC did not change in any substantial way after the election of George W. Bush. Reflecting the fact that many in the new administration had ties to the energy sector, one of President Bush's first initiatives was to create the National Energy Policy Development Group (NEPDG). The group, led by Vice President Cheney, worked intensively, and by early April it had held dozens of meetings with interest groups, most of them from energy producing industries. It was clear from the outset that Caspian energy would have a prominent place in the final report.

While Cheney worked with the NEPDG, the State Department initiated an effort to broker peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. On April 3 Secretary Powell met with President Kocharian of Armenia and President Aliyev of Azerbaijan at the Key West Peace Talks co-hosted by Russia and France. It was the first time that the chief representatives of the three Minsk Group co-chairs – the U.S., France and Russia – met with both presidents in


70 Johanna McGreary, "Odd Man Out," Time, September 10, 2001; Powell and Armitage used to joke that Bush had put Powell in the "icebox" or the "refrigerator" – only to be used when needed. Woodward, (2002), p. 13.  


the same place. On April 9 President Bush met separately with President Kocharian and President Aliyev at the White House.733 Even though U.S. representatives spoke about progress, it was clear that no breakthrough had been achieved. Bush reportedly urged the two presidents to keep up the momentum toward a peaceful solution and stated that he considered peace in the South Caucasus "as a top priority of his administration's foreign policy".734

On May 16 the NEPDG report was released. It recommended the President to direct the Secretaries of State, Commerce and Energy to support the BTC project and to "deepen their commercial dialogue with Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and other Caspian states to provide a strong, transparent, and stable business climate for energy and related infrastructure projects". This included establishing the commercial conditions that would allow companies operating in Kazakhstan to export oil via the BTC pipeline. The report supported the multiple pipeline policy, emphasized the need for diversification and recommended the President "to support the efforts of private investors and regional governments to develop the Shah Deniz pipeline as a way to help Turkey and Georgia diversify their natural gas supplies and help Azerbaijan export its gas via a pipeline that will continue diversification of secure energy supply routes".735 The massive Shah Deniz gas field was discovered in 1999, and the proposed route went from Azerbaijan via Georgia to Turkey bypassing Armenia.

The CTRP continued, and in June the U.S. and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to enhance defense cooperation.736 That very month, President Bush met Putin for the first time and 'peered into his soul'. Bush immediately viewed his relationship with Putin in personal terms. The meeting indicated that U.S.-Russia relations would be warmer than anticipated.737 This did not, however, resolve any differences over NATO's expansion and U.S. NMD. Human rights in CASC were also on the agenda. In July the State Department spokesman Richard Boucher declared that the U.S. was deeply concerned about the death of an Uzbek human rights activist and former MP

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in police custody. Boucher emphasized that such incidents "present a serious obstacle" to the bilateral relationship.  

The CIA’s and CentCom’s activities in Central Asia continued as well, but for all practical purposes this front-line remained invisible. In June 2001, the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia held a hearing on U.S. policy in Central Asia, which indicated that little had changed. Chairman Benjamin Gilman declared that Central Asia was "a very important region for U.S. interests" and underscored its "enormous energy export potential". He also argued that the U.S. had "a strong interest in assisting the Central Asian governments with their legitimate domestic security concerns", such as "extremist movements", but also emphasized their "serious human rights problems" and that President Karimov used legitimate concerns "as a pretext to crack down on legitimate and social activities".  

Clifford Bond, Acting Principal Deputy Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the NIS, testified that the U.S. goal was to "see these states develop into stable, free market democracies". He stated that his department had sent signals to the CASC indicating that the U.S. acknowledged Russia’s traditional role in the region and had no interest in replacing or competing with the legitimate security interests of other regional powers. "We have made every effort to represent our policies as win-win to the Russians" in order to ease their anxieties regarding their 'near abroad', Bond assured. He reported that progress in the efforts to connect the BTC to the Kazak port of Aktau were being made, but also that Tajikistan was on the brink of collapse and could become a haven for militant Islamists. All of this was familiar. However, there were some differences. Near the end of his testimony, Bond used the Great Game analogy and said that "[a]s long as the Central Asian governments remain vulnerable through their inability to create modern political and economic institutions, through a lack of regional cooperation and a failure to overcome ethnic and national rivalries, the danger of external domination will remain." Previously, government representatives used to say that this game was about to end or that the present had little resemblance with the 19th century. They also used to blame external powers. Bond seemed to be putting more blame on the Central Asian states themselves. This nuance can be interpreted as a reflection of the administration’s prioritization of great power relations. According to Bond, the game was on, but the U.S. could help these small states to become stronger, thus ending it.

740 Bond highlighted this by mentioning up that Deputy Secretary Armitage and Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Trubnikov had jointly chaired the most recent session of the U.S. Working Group on Afghanistan, which had taken place in May.
741 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia."
Joseph Pitts (R-PA) lamented the lack of attention and urged the U.S. to engage the region "in all aspects." He expressed concerns over militant Islamists but also over human rights, and pointed out that the behaviour of the regimes seemed to generate increased support for the insurgency. Bond shared Pitts’ concerns and singled out the Uzbek regime for "creating a climate in which extremism, Islamic fundamentalism, is attractive". The notion that repression was counterproductive was clearly gaining traction.

Dana Rohrabacher expressed concerns about the lack of coordination between the various efforts on the part of the U.S. and the fact that the administration was behind in appointing people to deal with the region. At the time, a restructuring of the State Department was going on. In May the Office of the New Independent States had merged with the Bureau of European Affairs, thus creating the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Another small change was that there seemed to be more pessimism. Rohrabacher declared that there had been "a tremendous opportunity" for reforms, but very little had been done to seize it. He also dismissed the notion that investments would somehow generate democracy.

In fact, the human rights situation was deteriorating. Only days before the hearing Human Rights Watch issued a memorandum urging the U.S. to "take a consistent and principled approach to International Religious Freedom Act implementation", designating Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as countries of particular concern and sending a "clear signal" to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that continued repression also "risks their designation as countries of particular concern". The memo was brought up at the hearing, but Bond did not agree with its recommendations with reference to ongoing bilateral dialogues.

At the end of the 1990s, Chinese activities had begun to receive more attention. Bond declared that it could "play a constructive role in the region". This was met with fierce skepticism. Iran received little attention, and Bond concluded that its export of fundamentalism had been "very unwelcome" in the region and added that its activities were still of concern.

All in all, not much had changed in terms of policy. There was, though, more pessimism, and the tension between U.S. ideals and interests persisted. The statement submitted to the record by Pitts summarizes in a way how many probably perceived the situation: "In the years following the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, there was hope and optimism about the future of Central Asia. Unfortunately, U.S. foreign policy towards the region – one

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742 Shelley Berkley (D-NV) was also "very concerned about the rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia". "U.S. Policy in Central Asia."
743 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia."
745 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia."
746 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia." Rohrabacher perceived China as "a major threat" to the region’s stability and that it had "very serious plans" for it.
that emphasizes a stand back and watch approach – has failed miserably.\textsuperscript{747} The region was going "backwards". Corruption and weapons proliferation was getting worse, the human right situation had deteriorated and terrorists "run free through many countries". However, it also offered a glimmer of hope: "It is not too late". Through engagement, the "U.S. can still affect positive change in the region".\textsuperscript{748}

6.2 September 11: Shock, Military Response and the CSAR Issue

President Bush quickly decided to respond militarily to the attacks on 9/11. He declared that the U.S would "make no distinctions between those who planned the act and those who harbour them" and issued an ultimatum to the Taliban to hand over bin Laden or suffer the consequences. These events have been well documented and this muscular approach can be regarded as the second meaning of 'the Bush Doctrine'.\textsuperscript{749} The importance of CASC, and especially Central Asia, instantly reached new levels. In order to conduct military operations in Afghanistan, bases and over-flight rights there were needed. U.S. planners began aggressively seeking access, especially to bases in Uzbekistan. According to Tommy Frank’s vivid account of the staging of Operation Enduring Freedom, "horse-trading was underway all across the region". For Franks, Uzbekistan was "vital to the operation".\textsuperscript{750} The RAND study Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and South Caucasus, which included analysis of potential air bases for U.S. operations, had concluded that Uzbekistan had the best infrastructure and lines of communications to support "major airlift operations" and "power projection operations in the Uzbek-Tajik-Afghan border".\textsuperscript{751} Franks had met Karimov twice during the past year and knew of his concerns regarding IMU as well as regarding a Russian intervention if war flared up in the region. During these meetings they discussed the possible use of the old Soviet air base Karshi-Khanabad, known as K2. Franks believed that in order to gain access, they had to convince Karimov that the U.S. was going to stay the course.\textsuperscript{752}

Karimov had courted the U.S. and NATO for years, in spite of Russian pressure. Hosting U.S. combat troops was, however, a sensitive issue because of the widespread anxiety about being involved in military strikes on a Muslim neighbour. Therefore, the matter was surrounded by secrecy. The Bush Administration tried to offer assurances that the conflict was not di-

\textsuperscript{747} "U.S. Policy in Central Asia."
\textsuperscript{748} "U.S. Policy in Central Asia."
\textsuperscript{750} Tommy Franks, American Soldier (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), p. 256
\textsuperscript{751} Oliker and Szarya, (2003), p. 264ff.
\textsuperscript{752} Franks, (2004), p. 256
rected against Islam. The administration usually described it as not being between civilizations but as a struggle for civilization against extremism and barbarism and as a struggle within Islam. 753

The stakes in CASC had gone up dramatically. Karimov knew this of course. He also knew about the U.S. failure in Somalia and worried that the U.S. was not really serious about its long-term commitments. What he perhaps did not know was how well the idea of establishing bases in Central Asia fit with Rumsfeld’s lily pad vision. Either way, Karimov had high expectations and used all of the leverage he had in the negotiations. He believed that close cooperation would result in dramatic increases in assistance and that a U.S. base would stimulate the local economy.

The attacks on 9/11 enabled the administration to improve and reshape relationships throughout the world. 754 It also had the support of Congress in this endeavour. On September 19 high ranking Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) declared that all legislation had to be viewed "through the prism of the situation we find ourselves in" and that "[w]e need to reward those countries that cooperate with us in fighting terrorism and punish those countries that don’t". 755 It was clear to the administration that it had to deal with Russia one way or another on the matter of establishing basing rights in Central Asia, and they reached out to all their of Russian counterparts. Powell was to deal with the foreign minister, Rumsfeld with the defense minister and Rice with the security advisor. 756 They also knew that some of the Central Asian states would be offended by them going through Russia. Uzbekistan was alienated from Russia, whereas Tajikistan would probably not do anything without its approval. 757

Putin spent the first two days after 9/11 trying to convince the leaders of CASC not to enter into any understandings with the U.S. without first consulting Moscow. When Karimov and other leaders rejected this warning, Putin quickly reversed his position and announced that he had convinced the leaders to cooperate with the U.S. Only days after 9/11, Uzbekistan publicly stated that it was willing to discuss the use of its airspace and airbases for operations in Afghanistan. 758 As a part of their negotiation tactics, the Uzbek moved slowly. The administration did not react to Putin’s initial ac-

753 How many hearts and minds this won over remains unclear. This effort also got off to a bad start when the DoD furtively decided to call the operation Infinite Justice. The origins of this name can be traced back to the 1998 Operation Infinite Reach. When it was disclosed, Muslim groups protested against the name on the basis that their faith teaches that Allah is the only one that can provide ‘infinite justice’.


tions. Instead, Powell urged the President to call Putin to ask him to encourage the Uzbeks. Rice, on the other hand, thought this might have the opposite effect.

On Thursday September 20, President Bush declared to a Joint Session of Congress that bin Laden was behind the attacks and issued a five-point ultimatum to the Taliban: deliver all of the leaders of al-Qaeda to the U.S.; release all foreign nationals; close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp; hand over every terrorist and every person in their support structure to the appropriate authorities; and, give the U.S. full access to terrorist training camps for inspection. The President specifically singled out IMU as one of bin Laden’s allies, which sent a clear signal to the Uzbeks. He also declared: “Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”759 The U.S. had put enormous pressure on Pakistan and this statement was aimed right at it.760

On the weekend Bush called Putin, who agreed to help and to inform leaders of CASC that Russia had "no objection to a U.S. role in Central Asia as long as it has the object of fighting the war on terror and is temporary and is not permanent".761 Surprisingly, he also declared that Russia would do more than traditional U.S. allies. Soon the CIA was provided with extensive on-the-ground intelligence, in particular about the topography and caves of Afghanistan.762 Russia had a common enemy with the U.S. in militant Islam. However, it was concerned over U.S. long-term plans in the region, hence the emphasis on the temporary quality of any military deployment.

The administration was divided on how to deal with the Uzbeks. Powell emphasized that they had "to be very clear" on what they were asking. Rice knew that Karimov wanted action taken against his enemies, especially IMU, and worried that he would characterize every opposition figure as a terrorist. Powell and Rice seemed more concerned about the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan than the other principals, who were focused on combat operations."We need to get al Qaeda before they get us", replied Cheney in response to these considerations, indicating the sense of urgency.763

It is well known that the Pentagon did not have any sophisticated plans for conducting operations in Afghanistan.764 The CIA, on the other hand, had been working with the Central Asian states and the Northern Alliance for years. On September 17, it received enormous latitude and funding for con-

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760 For details about U.S. pressure on Pakistan, see Rashid (2008), Chap. 2, 4.
ducting the war in Afghanistan, including making tactical decisions with the assistance of foreign intelligence agencies.\textsuperscript{665} Its plan included the deployment of CIA paramilitary teams with the Northern Alliance, which would eventually link up with U.S. Special Forces units, bringing firepower and technology to the opposition fighters in Afghanistan, thereby creating a northern front. They were going to fly in from Uzbekistan, establish contacts with the Northern Alliance and then "go find al Qaeda and kill them", in the words of Cofer Black, the Director of CIA’s Counterterrorist Center.\textsuperscript{666} The Northern Alliance would be doing most of the ground fighting, while the Special Forces units would follow on and pinpoint targets for U.S. bombing runs. This kind of on-the-ground human intelligence for designating targets would allow for extraordinary precision. In addition, the idea of arming the\textit{Predators} flying from Uzbekistan with remotely controlled Hellfire missiles was also being circulated.

The CIA’s quickly assembled ten-man team, formally called the Northern Afghanistan Liaison Team but known as ‘Jawbreaker’, was lead by 59 year old CIA-veteran Gary Schroen, who had been pulled out of retirement because of his knowledge and language skills. Uzbekistan was at the centre of this war. The details of this operation have been covered in a number of books. However, the role of the Central Asian states is often omitted or only mentioned in the passing.\textsuperscript{667}

Before any major operations could begin, one important issue had to be resolved. When the U.S. conducts combat air-operations, it deploys helicopter teams in the vicinity to rescue downed pilots. This is known as Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR). This was a bedrock doctrine for Shelton, Myers and most military officers.\textsuperscript{668} Two weeks after 9/11, none of the Central Asian states had agreed to CSAR. Without it, no combat operations could commence. CSAR was the last lifeline for pilots, and it was a presumption that the military commanders would do everything in their power to ensure its operation. It was not just about the lives of the pilots. A downed pilot behind enemy lines is a potential hostage. Secretary Rumsfeld did not challenge the doctrine, and Rice believed that there were only a few ways to


\textsuperscript{666} Cofer Black was notorious for his vivid language. About bin Laden, he said: "I want his head in a box", and about U.S. enemies in Afghanistan: "they will have flies walking their eyeballs". President Bush did not object to this language, and it resonated with many Americans, especially Assertive Patriots. The terrorists deserved no respect. See Woodward, (2002), p. 141.

\textsuperscript{667} Gary Berntsen and Ralph Pezzullo,\textit{Jawbreaker: The Attack on Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda: A Personal Account by the CIA’s Key Field Commander} (New York: Crown, 2005); Coll, (2004); Gary Schroen,\textit{First In: An Insider’s Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan} (New York, Ballantine, 2005).

make mistakes in this operation, one of them being having a pilot captured. \(^{769}\)

On September 27, Powell announced that the CSAR-issue had not been resolved with the Uzbeks and that they were asking for guarantees and assurances. The whole idea of setting up a northern front was at risk. Without CSAR, the Special Forces units could go nowhere. An impatient Cheney complained to Powell that the delegation was "not senior enough" and that the U.S. ought "to swing through the area with a high level person". \(^{770}\) He also suggested that the President should call Karimov to settle the matter. \(^{771}\)

On September 28 the Uzbeks allowed a U.S. team to assess the possibility of running CSAR, including checking whether the airstrips could accommodate C-5s, the giant transport airplanes. \(^{772}\) The administration also wanted the Uzbeks to allow U.S. Special Forces to operate from their territory. Naturally, the Uzbeks wanted things in return, such as security guarantees. The pressure was intense. If the Uzbeks said no, there would not be any air operations in the north, only in the south, where Oman provided facilities for CSAR. The CIA’s main operations were in the north, and now it looked like all of the bombing was going to take place in the south, which would result in a total mismatch. At this time President Bush suggested that Russia might provide CSAR and wondered if it was possible to "start in the south and do the north later". \(^{773}\)

Powell continued to negotiate with the Uzbek Foreign Minister and the military. The matter then went to Karimov, who sat on it. Whatever Powell offered, the Uzbeks wanted more. \(^{774}\) In addition to requesting that the U.S. target IMU in Afghanistan, Powell said that they "wanted a bilateral treaty of mutual defense, love, cooperation and economic support" and "some proof that the love would be permanent, a kind of 'Will You Be There Tomorrow?' declaration". \(^{775}\)

On September 29 Rumsfeld reported that the assessment team had arrived in Uzbekistan but that they would "not [be] able to use Special Forces in the north" and were "going to more fully develop the idea in the south".

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\(^{769}\) All involved must vividly have remembered the U.S. hostages in Teheran 1979–80 and Lebanon in the mid-1980s and their impact on U.S. policy. The Desert One fiasco was probably also lurking in the background.


\(^{770}\) At the time, John Bolton, the Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, was dealing with the Uzbeks.


\(^{771}\) For the CSAR to be operational 67 C-17 deliveries with personnel, equipment and helicopters was needed.


\(^{774}\) This was part of Karimov’s leadership style. He wanted to show his was in charge. It has been reported that the Uzbek’s wanted immediate membership in NATO. A request the U.S. of course could not grant them for numerous reasons. They also wanted money, such as 50 million in loans from the U.S. Exim-Bank and a declaration of a permanent friendship with the U.S.

He also stated that there was a shortage of good targets. Powell also spoke about the possibility of operations in the North at a later date. President Bush reportedly responded to this by saying: "Let’s push hard". "Let’s not give up in the northern piece, let’s develop an option for Special Forces in the north. Let’s not give up". 776 It was obvious that the administration felt pressured to act quickly militarily and that the bombing of the north was hanging on a thread.

The following day NATO invoked Article 5. Despite this and the UN-resolution, the administration shunned offers of assistance for the operations in Afghanistan on the part of its allies, with exception of the U.K. and Australia. 777 This was to some extent a lesson from Kosovo. The British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, got the delicate job of wooing Iranian support. The Taliban was no friend of Iran, and President Khatami agreed to seal its long Afghan border. 778

The CSAR issue would delay operations. CentCom sent a team to Russia to inquire about CSAR and establish contacts with Tajiks. The U.S. still had no permission to deploy any Special Forces in Uzbekistan. Even if they had, they would not be able to go anywhere until CSAR was up and running. Powell now began to question the need for CSAR, but Myers was adamant. 779 Rumsfeld said he would not go in without CSAR and risk losing a pilot for "mud-hut-type targets", but if they had real high value targets he would consider it. 780 There was a sense among the principals that the delay would be unacceptable to the President. Rice pessimistically suggested that they "at the end of the day, [would] not be able to rely on the Uzbeks". 781 On October 1, DCI Tenet reported that 'Jawbreaker' had made contact with the Northern Alliance. This was Myers' first day as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and he had to bring the bad news of the delays to the President.

Two days later things changed. Rumsfeld had been on a whirlwind trip to the Middle East and Central Asia during which he managed to secure permission for CSAR from the Uzbeks. 782 On October 5, he held a joint press conference with Karimov in Tashkent. Karimov declared that he opposed ground operations and air strikes against Afghanistan executed from Uzbek territory and underscored that U.S. access was limited to cargo aircraft and search and rescue and that no U.S. Special Forces would be based in the country. He never identified the base to be used by the U.S. but stated

777 The Article reads: "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all (…)." This article is sometimes referred to as the musketeer clause, as it echoes the 'all for one, one for all' motto of the protagonists in Alexander Dumas' novel The Three Musketeers.
778 There have also been reports that Iran offered to provide CSAR to U.S. pilots. Rashid, (2008), p. 66.
that Uzbekistan could not stand on the sidelines in the struggle against
terrorizm. He also stated that intelligence sharing between the two states would
be "stepped up". Rumsfeld spoke of Karimov’s generous and "spontaneous"
coopération and stated that they had "worked out a series of arrangements"
and that a bilateral document was in progress. When asked what the U.S.
had offered in exchange, Rumsfeld replied that there had not been any spe-
cific quid pro quos. Karimov quickly added that he "would like the Russian
journalists, in particular, to take this into account". At the end of the press
conference Rumsfeld mentioned the prospects for a long-term relationship:
"[t]he interest of the United States in Uzbekistan, it should be well under-
stood, precedes the events of September 11", and it "is of a long-standing
relationship with this country and not something that is focused on the im-
mediate problem alone." This was what Karimov had sought, and he re-
plied that he had listened to Rumsfeld’s remarks with "great satisfaction".

In his biography American Soldier, Tommy Franks claims that what
went unmentioned at this press conference was that Karimov, in fact, had
allowed the staging of Special Forces at Uzbek bases but kept it secret in
order to avoid unrest. So, while Karimov and Rumsfeld spoke of Uzbeki-
stan’s willingness to facilitate humanitarian support and search and rescue,
U.S. Special Forces were secretly setting up Task Force Dagger at K2, pre-
paring for insertion into Afghanistan. It is very difficult to know what was
offered during the negotiations. However, Rumsfeld had probably followed
the President’s order and "pushed hard". In his account of the negotiations,
Franks writes that Rumsfeld really wanted access in Uzbekistan:

Rumsfeld believed in realpolitik. He would fly halfway around the world for a
sit-down meeting with Uzbek President Karimov – whose human rights re-
cord was tarnished at best – in order to secure the vital K-2 airbase for Ameri-
can operations in Afghanistan. He’d probably have shaken hands with the
devil if that had furthered our goals in the war on terrorism….Like a New
Frontier cold warrior, Rumsfeld was willing to ‘pay any price, bear any bur-
don, to support any friend, oppose any foe,’ to assure America’s survival."

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783 Donald Rumsfeld, “Secretary Rumsfeld Press Conference with President of Uzbekistan,”
784 Rumsfeld, "Secretary Rumsfeld Press Conference with President of Uzbekistan."
785 Rumsfeld, “Secretary Rumsfeld Press Conference with President of Uzbekistan.”
786 Franks, (2005), p. 286. See also Statement by General Charles R. Holland, Commander in
Chief, Special Operations Command Before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and
Capabilities of the Armed Services Committee, U.S. Senate, 107th Congress, Mar 12, 2002.
Holland spoke of the value of U.S. presence in the region before 9/11: "Increased peacetime
forward SOF [Special Operations Forces] presence establishes relationships which can later
prove vital to gaining access to otherwise denied areas. This was recently demonstrated by the
relatively smooth manner in which SOF were granted access to the Karshi-Khanabad Air
Base in Uzbekistan early in the Afghan conflict."
The tough negotiations with the Uzbeks spurred the U.S. to begin pursuing other bases, such as the Manas International Airport in Kyrgyzstan. But now they had an agreement, and the U.S.-Uzbek Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) provided for use of Uzbek airspace and for up to 1,500 U.S. troops to use the K2 airbase 90 miles north of the Afghan border near the towns of Karshi and Khanabad. It was open-ended but included a provision stating that it could be terminated by either party by giving 180-days notice. In exchange, the U.S. provided security guarantees and agreed to target IMU-terrorism, who were fighting alongside Taliban and al Qaeda forces. The agreement was signed on October 7. Only hours later, the U.S. air campaign began.

On October 12, the two countries jointly declared that they recognized "international terrorism as a serious threat to peace" and, therefore, had signed an agreement that established "a strong basis for bilateral cooperation in the struggle against terrorism". They spoke of "a qualitatively new relationship based on a long-term commitment to advance security and regional stability" and pledged to "work closely together in the campaign against terrorism". This included "the need to consult on an urgent basis about appropriate steps to address the situation in the event of a direct threat to the security or territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan."

Four days later Secretary Powell sent a letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which he recommended that the Section 907 restrictions on financial aid to Azerbaijan be lifted in view of that country's assistance to the U.S. anti-terrorist campaign, including granting the U.S. overflight rights, the use of its air bases and intelligence support.

6.2.1 The War: Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan

On October 7, President Bush informed the nation and the world that military action against the al-Qaeda network and the Taliban had begun. He underscored that the U.S. would not separate the perpetrators of 9/11 from those that harbored them: "Every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and

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788 The U.S. statement on combating terrorism called for the two sides to consult in the event of a threat to Uzbekistan’s security. Richard Boucher, "Joint Statement between the Governments of the United States and Uzbekistan," Washington, DC, October 10, 2001.
790 Boucher, "Joint Statement between the Governments of the United States and Uzbekistan."
killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves. And they will take that lonely path at their own peril."  

The CIA and CentCom worked closely together. During the weekend CIA stations in Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan received orders to instruct all of their secret assets inside Afghanistan to begin sabotage operations everywhere. The U.S. had no plan for committing ground forces, and the Northern Alliance was ordered to hold off on any significant military movement until after the initial air strikes. As soon as the airstrikes began, the fog of war set in, and there was a lack of intelligence about what was happening on the ground.

The administration felt pressured to produce a victory quickly, and that meant taking Kabul. This was problematic. If the capital fell into the hands of the Northern Alliance, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan would be alienated. It would also make Pakistan uneasy, since it entailed more Russian and Iranian influence in Afghanistan. There were also doubts about whether the Northern Alliance was actually capable of seizing the city. The first step was to take Mazar-e-Sharif, which was only about 40 miles from Uzbekistan. That would make it possible to open up the Friendship Bridge, thus establishing a land route between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan that would enable a greater inflow of military and humanitarian assistance.

There was a general distaste for nation-building within the administration. Rumsfeld immediately distanced himself from any U.S. responsibility for helping the Afghans form a post-Taliban government. President Bush suggested publicly on October 11 that the UN should "take over the so-called 'nation-building'." The next day he told his advisors that he opposed "using the military for nation-building" and that they "ought to put in place a UN protection and leave". This sent important signals to the region.

Not surprisingly, the President’s request for patience was not respected by the media, which immediately raised questions about strategy, progress and timetables. Less than three weeks into the campaign, Newsweek used the dreaded 'Q' word — quagmire — evoking Vietnam. The Washington Post published an op-ed article by Robert A. Pape, an expert on air power, who argued that U.S. strategy was "not working". Only 19 days in, ABC an-

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703 This message was shared in full text with General Franks to ensure full transparency.
794 If the Taliban still retained control of the capital during the winter, it would be tough to claim victory.
795 The Taliban was a sworn enemy of Iran. Now Iran had an opportunity to get rid of them, and they secretly provided the U.S. with intelligence through the Six Plus Two Group.
chorman Peter Jennings asked Pakistani President Musharraf if the U.S. was facing a quagmire. He replied: "Yes...it may be a quagmire." Pressure was building fast. On October 30, William Kristol argued in the Washington Post that the plan was "flawed" because of too many self-imposed constraints. Charles Krauthammer wrote that the war was being conducted with "half-measures". These two conservative writers expressed a clear distaste for limited war. The next day R.W Apple Jr. asked in the NYT: "Could Afghanistan become another Vietnam?" It was clear to the President that they were losing the public relations war. The pressure to produce results before the winter was intense. President Bush and Rice now began to talk about alternatives, such as Americanizing the war by introducing ground troops.

The operational line between the CIA and CentCom had quickly become blurred, and there was an intense discussion between Rumsfeld and John McLaughlin, the Deputy DCI, about who was actually in charge. None of them wanted to take responsibility, since there was real uncertainty about the outcome.

The lack of intelligence about the enemy’s strength in northern Afghanistan was a problem and the President was worried that they were "pounding sand". General Franks wanted to move in Global Hawks, high altitude long-range unmanned surveillance planes, and JSTARS (Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System), which detects ground movements over large areas and does what AWACS do for air surveillance. However, when he visited Tashkent on October 30, there were disagreements over basing rights. Less than a week later, Rumsfeld and Karimov met again. Their press conference, though, indicated that the negotiation was not settled. Human rights and reforms were not points of discussion during these meeting, which were confined to arranging Uzbek involvement in OEF.

The general feeling about of the overall situation seems to have been characterized by uncertainty. Then events on the ground rapidly changed. On November 9, Mazar-e-Sharif fell, and the debate about taking Kabul immediately re-emerged. Only days later there were reports of disorder in Kabul.

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802 As progress stalled, there were discussions of introducing ground forces. The figure of 15,000–20,000 and 50,000–55,000 were mentioned during these discussions. Woodward, (2002), pp. 257f, 291.
806 Donald Rumsfeld, "Media Availability with Uzbek Minister of Defense Qodir Gholomov," Tashkent, Uzbekistan, November 4, 2001; See also Akbarzadeh, (2005), p. 74.
On November 12, General Myers reported that the Northern Alliance controlled about 50% of Afghanistan and had effectively cut the county in half. Three days earlier he had reported that it controlled less than 15%. \(^{807}\) The Kabul issue had been overtaken by events. The Taliban and al Qaeda scattered and fled by the thousands south to the borders of Pakistan and east to the Tora Bora region. \(^{808}\) In a few days the confrontation had gone from what was perceived as a classic stalemate to an extraordinary display of U.S. power. The situation, however, remained unsatisfactory, since the Uzbeks lingered in opening the bridge.

On November 16, Secretary Powell expressed strong appreciation for Uzbekistan’s contribution to OEF in a meeting with his Uzbek counterpart. He described Uzbekistan as "a key coalition partner", and reported that the U.S. was "developing a significantly increased" assistance package as part of its "commitment to fostering a long-term relationship". \(^{809}\) A couple of days later, the Chairman of the U. S. Senate’s Armed Services Committee, Carl Levin (D-MI) and the ranking Republican committee member John Warner (R-VA) met with President Karimov in Uzbekistan.

As the days went by, OEF increasingly began to look like a real success. On top of that, when Franks visited Tashkent again on November 21, rumours were circulating that Juma Namangani had been killed.\(^{810}\) Rumsfeld now took the position that the outcome had been certain all along. He dismissed all earlier suggestions that things were not going well as uninformed and declared that what had taken place "was exactly as planned". He then joked and heckled the media for its use of the 'Q'-word.\(^{811}\)

At the end of the month, a senior Uzbek delegation visited Washington for consultations. In a joint statement, both countries expressed commitment to a qualitatively new long-term relationship. The U.S. reaffirmed its deep appreciation for Uzbekistan’s "historic" support, and Uzbekistan "pledged to accelerate its program of reforms to achieve economic liberalization and a market economy". \(^{812}\) What was not publicly stated was that there had been intense discussions about the Friendship Bridge. The Uzbeks reportedly questioned the bridge’s structural integrity and claimed that there were hos-

\(^{808}\) It has been argued that the Taliban employed a 'disperse and regroup strategy' to counter the onslaught.
\(^{810}\) His remains have never been found, and his death has not been conclusively proven. Most believe that he died in an air strike near Kunduz in November 2001.

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tile forces in its vicinity as a negotiation tactic to receive assurances of significant increases in assistance.\textsuperscript{813}

In December intelligence reported that hundreds of IMU-fighters had been killed during the Northern Alliance November offensives. "President Karimov will be pleased", Rumsfeld remarked when receiving the news.\textsuperscript{814} On December 7, the Taliban southern stronghold of Kandahar fell, leaving the Northern Alliance, its Pashtun allies and the U.S. in charge of the country. That day, Powell explained to reporters en route to Uzbekistan that Central Asia had been "been something of a backwater for us":

And then you have something like the 11\textsuperscript{th} of September come along, and it just breaks through a lot of barriers. We need military help, we need access to your base, to suddenly open up other opportunities for further dialogue. The key here is not to just say thank you for the use of your base and we’re out of here, but to use that opening for other purposes of liberalization, democracy, putting their economies on a sounder basis.\textsuperscript{815}

In Tashkent, Powell consulted with Karimov on a broad range of issues. The most important reason for his visit, though, was certainly the Friendship Bridge. In a joint press conference on December 8, Karimov announced that the bridge would open the next day. It had been closed since the Taliban took Mazar-e-Sharif in 1997. Secretary Powell declared that he had "assured" Karimov that U.S. interest in Uzbekistan and the region went "far beyond the current crisis in Afghanistan" and that the U.S. looked forward "to deepening and widening" the relationship.\textsuperscript{816} CNN’s Andrea Koppel reminded everyone of Uzbekistan’s dismal human rights record and asked: "President Karimov, what do you say to your critics who say that you are nothing more than a brutal, repressive, authoritarian dictator?" She then asked Powell what assistance Karimov had asked for from the U.S. Karimov and Powell avoided answering these questions directly. However, when asked about Russia, Powell spoke of a "fundamentally changed" relationship and a "new level of cooperation" between the two countries.\textsuperscript{817}

On the surface, the U.S.-Russia relationship was rosy. However, in Moscow there were deep concerns. The arrival of every new U.S. soldier in CASC diminished Russia’s influence. At the height of the U.S. military campaign, a motion condemning U.S. presence in Uzbekistan was put to the vote in the Duma. It was defeated, but it did receive 38% of the vote, which

\textsuperscript{813} "Contributions of Central Asian Nations to the Campaign Against Terrorism," Hearing Before the Subcommittee of Central Asia and South Caucasus of the Committee of Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 107\textsuperscript{th} Congress, First Session, December 13, 2001.

\textsuperscript{814} Franks, (2005), p. 345.


\textsuperscript{817} Colin Powell, "Joint Press Conference with President Islam Karimov."
reflects upon the level of unease, especially considering Russia’s interest in getting rid of the Taliban and other militant Islamists.\textsuperscript{818}

The Taliban had been ousted on the cheap. About 110 CIA officers and 316 Special Forces personnel, plus massive airpower, had done the job.\textsuperscript{819} However, the operation had depended on the shared interest of the U.S., the Northern Alliance and Pakistan. Fighting the Taliban was one thing. Fighting al Qaeda was another. When the battle of Tora Bora began in December, the al Qaeda fighters were not encircled, and many of them, including bin Laden, managed to escape. The Northern Alliance and Pakistan did not share the U.S. interest in capturing bin Laden and were, therefore, reluctant to fully engage. The U.S., on the other hand, did not whole heartedly engage in any nation-building process. The administration wanted to cede that to the UN. It did not contribute much to the post-war reconstruction process, and left Afghanistan’s friendly government with little effective control over the country outside of Kabul. This would have a profound effect on the surrounding states.

Despite the fact that bin Laden got away, OEF was perceived as a major success. Almost every politically significant actor had also supported it. The question of how the U.S. would reshape its strategy in response to the new security environment remained. Soon the war on terrorism became, in Zbigniew Brzezinski’s words, "the central organizing principle of the West’s global security policy".\textsuperscript{820}

\section*{6.2.2 Central Asia: The New Frontline}

In this brief section, I demonstrate how the importance of Central Asia rapidly increased in the months after 9/11.

As an indication of the increasing importance of CASC, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee formed a Subcommittee on Central Asia and South Caucasus.\textsuperscript{821} Throughout its inaugural hearing on December 13, 2001, Chuck Hagel and its other founders were congratulated for the initiative. Now, many wanted to be associated with the region. Centre stage now belonged to Central Asia, not to Southern Caucasus.

Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, began her testimony underscoring the importance of the Central Asian states: "I call these states the front line states".\textsuperscript{822} Zinni’s term, which had previously been ignored, was now in style. Jones argued that the U.S. was now

\textsuperscript{818} Akbarzadeh, (2005), p. 80.
\textsuperscript{821} The initiative to form this Subcommittee had been taken in August 2001.
\textsuperscript{822} "Contributions of Central Asian Nations to the Campaign Against Terrorism."
"linked with this region in ways we could never have imagined before September 11". She declared that the U.S. would "not abandon" it after the conflict was over and spoke of a long-term relationship. According to Jones, the administration wanted to intensify its engagement and was "committed to providing the resources, the high-level attention, and the multinational coordination to support reform opportunities". She also brought up the region’s natural resources and recalled that the construction on the BTC pipeline was scheduled to begin in the summer. 

With regard to U.S.-Russia relationship, Jones spoke of a "convergence of interests" and a new partnership. She described their cooperation in the region as "extraordinary" and "extremely productive" and mentioned that the first ever U.S.-Russia consultations on Central Asia that had been held on October 19. The U.S. no longer perceived Russia as an enemy or as a threat, and does not "in any way" perceive its interest in long-term relationships with the Central Asian states and interest in a deeper cooperation with Russia "as a zero sum game", stated Jones. She downplayed Moscow’s anxieties about U.S. military presence and did not mention Putin’s actions in the days after 9/11. Instead, she praised his leadership and encouragement of the Central Asian leaders to back the U.S. in the war on terror, arguing that this supported the notion "that Central Asia [was] not a zero-sum game". Like an echo from the Clinton Administration, she declared: "We have no desire to replay the nineteenth century ‘Great Game’ in the twenty-first. (...) Our shared interests with Russia indeed, with the other regional powers of China, Turkey and even Iran—are greater than our areas of competition."

Frederick Starr, who also testified, declared that the region finally seemed to be perceived as important in its own right:

Ten years ago there was not a single map in the U.S. Government that placed Central Asia at the center of anything. Either it was on the southern edge of the so-called ‘former Soviet Union’, the far west of Asia, or the extreme east of the Middle East. Your sub-committee (...) marks the U.S.’ acceptance of an important reality, namely, that this region, surrounded by four nuclear powers (and perhaps, soon, a fifth) and a NATO member, is important in its own right. We should not consider it an appendage of anything else, or any one country’s ‘backyard.’

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823 She mentioned President Bush’s invitation to the Kazak and Uzbek Presidents to visit Washington as the centerpiece of this intensified engagement.
824 The project was not in the limelight anymore, and high level representatives of the George W. Bush Administration seldom mentioned it. This had not only to do with the fact that their attention was focused elsewhere. The decision to build it had been made, its economic viability had been questioned and many of them had previously lobbied for it as civilians and probably wanted to keep their distance from it, at least publicly.
825 Jones also said that the "dangerous relationship" that existed between the U.S. and Russia "absolutely no longer exists".
826 "Contribution of Central Asian Nations to the Campaign Against Terrorism."
827 "Contribution of Central Asian Nations to the Campaign Against Terrorism."
Starr argued in a critical vein that the U.S. lacked a long term strategy and that there were "fundamental misunderstandings" about the region, including its true potential. If the U.S. engaged comprehensively for the long-term and succeeded, the gains would be enormous to almost everyone involved. This was part of the East-West vision championed by Starr and the CACI. Starr was also critical of the administration’s fixation on Russia. His assessment was completely different than that of Jones. He urged the administration to be more alert to Putin’s "complicated actions after September 11" and argued that Russia had "not yet reconciled to with the loss of empire":

This imperial hangover will eventually pass, but for the time being it remains a threat. It means that the Central Asians, after cooperating with the U.S., will inevitably face redoubled pressure from Russia if we leave abruptly and without attending to the long-term security needs of the region. That we have looked kindly into Mr. Putin’s soul does not change this reality.\footnote{828}

Central Asia’s contribution in the war against terrorism had been "significant and unprecedented", and success was dependent on their cooperation, according to the testimony of Fiona Hill of the Brookings Institution. Prior to 9/11 the U.S. "did not perceive a vital American interest in the broader region", she explained. The war against terror has provided that vital interest, and now the "U.S. must now decide how, and to what degree, it wants to move forward and set priorities in its relations with the Central Asian states", she continued. Hill urged the U.S. to bring long term stability to Afghanistan and to "drain the swamp" that produced and supported radical groups in the region. Much of her testimony focused on the negative consequences of the war, and she urged that human rights and democratic reform be immediately brought once again to the fore:

Prior to the war in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan was criticized in the U.S. Government and Congress for well-documented human rights abuses and infringements of political and religious freedoms. Since the war began in Afghanistan, this criticism has been muted. In fact, it has almost been silenced. And in 3 short months, President Karimov of Uzbekistan has been elevated from a Central Asian autocrat to a strategic partner of the United States. By leveraging his few assets of value to the United States, in this case bases and a bridge, he has extended his term and secured aid. I would argue that absent the war in Afghanistan, this would not have happened. In pursuit of the war in Afghanistan, the United States may have consolidated and bolstered another authoritarian and bankrupt regime in Central Asia and set back the prospects for regional development and stability.\footnote{829}

\footnote{828} "Contribution of Central Asian Nations to the Campaign Against Terrorism."
\footnote{829} Hill was critical of how the Uzbeks had used the Friendship Bridge as leverage, in spite of pressure from the U.S. international agencies. According to her, the Uzbek delegation that visited Washington in late November received a pledge of $100 million to open it.
Uzbekistan was the principal ally of the U.S. in the region, and Hill was not at all as satisfied with its performance. She regarded it as "a problematic partner", "a source of regional tension" and "a log jam for regional economic development". She dismissed its written commitment to reform as tokenism and urged the U.S. to protest against infringements on human rights, insist on reforms and immediately stop its rush to fund and initiate new security and military programs, which only "facilitate the creation of 'fortress Uzbekistan' and bolster its negative leverage with its neighbors". It was obvious for Hill that security issues dominated the U.S. agenda. She also made the inconvenient point that:

Uzbekistan’s lack of commitment can be directly correlated to a lack of confidence in the United States’ own commitment to a long-term presence in the region. In spite of the seeming new interest in Central Asia in the United States – underscored by the creation of this new Subcommittee on Central Asia and the South Caucasus in the Senate – the Central Asian states themselves are sceptical about future relations with the U.S. They have serious reservations about the nature and extent of any long-term U.S. presence in Afghanistan and the region, and already see U.S. government attention moving away as the military campaign in Afghanistan progresses more quickly than first anticipated.

Despite all of the sweeping statements that there would be no repetition of U.S. disengagement from Afghanistan, the Central Asian states and regional neighbors "fully expect that the U.S. will disengage—or at the very best engage half-heartedly", Hill argued. Their conviction of this was also bolstered by the fact that the administration would not lead the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan but ceded the task to the UN. The high level discussions of a shift toward the Middle East and elsewhere in the war on terror added to this conviction. Influenced by this expectation, "the imperative to grab concessions when and while one can seems like a rational strategy" for them, she continued.

In other words, they knew about the sensitivity of the U.S. to costs and short sightedness and, therefore, did not really trust its commitments. However, they were able to enjoy the fact that the U.S. needed them and were now downplaying previous criticism.

6.2.3 The U.S.-Central Asia Honey Moon

In this section, I show how the cooperation of the CASC states in the war on terror dramatically improved their standing in the U.S., with special focus

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830 Hill specifically pointed to the trade rupturing effects of Uzbekistan’s fortified and mined borders.
831 “Contribution of Central Asian Nations to the Campaign Against Terrorism.”
832 “Contribution of Central Asian Nations to the Campaign Against Terrorism.”
on the U.S.-Uzbek strategic partnership. It will also demonstrate that there were numerous signs from the outset that U.S. relationships in the region would be capricious.

Uzbekistan was one of the first supporters of the U.S. war on terror. Kyrgyzstan also proved to be a crucial partner, though, supporting the coalition air operations from Manas International Airport. Kazakhstan also played a significant role. It agreed to blanket over-flight rights and waive all fees normally associated with such rights. It also expedited rail transshipments of supplies to K2 and Manas. Turkmenistan agreed to over-flight and refuelling operations for humanitarian flights. Tajikistan’s major contribution was to allow the use of the Dushanbe International Airport for coalition basing and refuelling.

Armenia and Azerbaijan had also offered over-flight rights. Since Powell’s letter to the Foreign Relations Committee in October, there had been negotiations over the Section 907 waiver. On January 25, 2002, President Bush waived Section 907, justifying this on the necessity "to support U.S. efforts to counter international terrorism" and "to support the operational readiness of U.S. Armed Forces". To ease the blow to Armenia, the Senate agreed to support an amendment granting Armenia military assistance for the first time, including $4 million in military aid and $600,000 for IMET assistance. On that occasion, the White House Press Secretary stated that the President’s action "mark[ed] an important step toward advancing a new web of U.S. security relationships with both Armenia and Azerbaijan".

In early 2002, the U.S.-Uzbek relationship was at its peak. In addition to its support in the war on terror, two CTRP-projects had just been completed. Many U.S. politicians and policymakers now wanted to show their appreciation support on the part of the Central Asian states. During the year numerous prominent delegations visited the region, especially Uzbekistan. The talk of long-term commitments to the region became repetitious, and U.S. assistance increased dramatically. At the same time, criticism of the human rights situation had silenced, or perhaps more accurately been drowned out by all of the voices supporting the regimes.

On January 5, Zalmay Khalilzad, the President’s Aide for Regional Issues and Special Envoy to Afghanistan, visited Tashkent. The following day

833 The waiver also stated that it was "important for Azerbaijan’s border security and would "not undermine or hamper the ongoing efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan". George W. Bush, "Statement by the Press Secretary: President Lifts Restrictions on Assistance to Azerbaijan," January 30, 2002; George W. Bush, "Memorandum on Extension of Waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act With Respect to Assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan," December 30, 2003. See also King and Pomper, "The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies."

834 The former Soviet chemical research and production institute Nukus had been demilitarized, and the residual anthrax buried in the pits at Voz Island had been destroyed. U.S. scientists were also preparing a research project with Uzbek scientists to enhance the security of dangerous pathogen collections at various biological institutes.
a Senate delegation led by Joe Lieberman and John McCain arrived. Lieberman described the region as "a critical part of the world, strategically, economically and politically" and declared that U.S. interest was "going to be permanent". One reason for this had to do with 'the swamp', a term frequently used to describe the underlying conditions responsible for terrorism. Lieberman stated that the U.S.-Uzbek relation had been too limited and declared that the U.S. wanted to develop the bilateral relationship "on all fronts". He added a caveat, though: "[u]nless Uzbekistan continues to move" toward democracy and human rights there would "be limits on the support". McCain remarked that the relationship was "vital to winning this war", and Chuck Hagel argued for a regional perspective, underscoring that "[w]e do not have a zero sum game here." 835

On January 12–13, six congressmen visited Tashkent. A few days later the Senate majority leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) and a high level delegation met with President Karimov.836 Daschle singled out Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for their "extraordinary effort" in providing support and stated that the U.S. ought to view its military success "as the beginning, not the end of our effort". He warned about leaving a void in Afghanistan and argued that a long-term perspective was "critical" to success. Daschle also stated that they had emphasized the importance of reform, but he mentioned no concrete programs.837

On January 21–24 General Franks visited Tashkent to show U.S. gratitude and to discuss a broad range of security issues. Rumours were circulating about a potential long-term U.S. presence. Russian reporters were especially eager to know about any signed bilateral documents.838 Chairman Richard Myers was faced with similar questions when he visited about a month later.839

A delegation co-chaired by Elizabeth Jones and Mira Ricardel, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Eurasia, visited Tashkent between January 28 and 29 for the first U.S.-Uzbek Joint Security Cooperation Consultations (JSCC). The JSCC covered a broad range of political, economic, humanitarian and military issues. This reflected the desire on part of the U.S. for greatly expanded ties, Jones declared. She underscored that the U.S. was "committed to the long term security and stability of Uzbekistan" and would continue to develop the bilateral defense and security ties "through military-to-military engagement plans, exercises, and trainings." She also reported

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that a Bilateral Working Group to provide a framework to guide the development of the relationship would be established.\textsuperscript{840} This announcement was totally overshadowed by President Bush’s first State of the Union address in which he spoke of an "axis of evil" and hinted that he would act preemptively and "not wait on events".\textsuperscript{841}

The prominent visits increased the prestige of the Uzbek regime. In mid-February the White House publicly announced an invitation to President Karimov, elevating it even further.\textsuperscript{842} Kyrgyzstan’s popularity also increased. Between February 11 and 15 a Kyrgyz delegation visited Washington and met with Powell and Wolfowitz, among others. This visit resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding on the further development of the bilateral cooperation and spoke of a "qualitatively new long-term relationship" based on common goals in combating terrorism; "eradicating the sources of extremism; maintaining peace and stability; and strengthening security in Central Asia."\textsuperscript{843}

On March 12, Karimov met President Bush in the Oval Office. This time there was a photo op. Bush reportedly told Karimov that "we are not going to teach you", regarding the previous criticism.\textsuperscript{844} No less than five bilateral treaties were signed during the visit, including an agreement to facilitate cooperation on nuclear nonproliferation and a $55 million credit guarantee offered by the Exim Bank. Most important was the "Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework". This was referred to as the 'Framework Agreement’, or simply 'The Agreement’.\textsuperscript{845} The preamble declared that the two countries were:

Seeking to establish qualitatively new and mutually beneficial relations in the political, economic, military, military-technical, humanitarian and other areas;

Recognizing the importance of consistent implementation of democratic and market reforms in Uzbekistan as a necessary condition for ensuring political, social, and economic stability, sustainable development, prosperity, and national security;

\textsuperscript{840} Elizabeth Jones, "Press Conference With Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Elizabeth Jones and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Eurasia Mira Ricardel," Tashkent, Uzbekistan, January 29, 2002.


\textsuperscript{842} For a record of visits, see Embassy of the United States in Tashkent Uzbekistan, "Record of Official Visits."


\textsuperscript{845} Daly et al., (2006), p. 22.
Recognizing the fundamental principles of the indivisibility of global and regional security;

Convinced that the independence, territorial integrity and sustainable development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the inviolability of its borders, is one of the key factors in maintaining stability and security in Central Asia;

With deep appreciation for the relations that have been established between the two countries and that are based on common goals, including combating international terrorism and eradicating economic and financial sources of support for extremism and terrorism; and

Reaffirming their commitment to the legal objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter and the political objectives and principles of the Helsinki Final Act of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (...) as well as the principles of international law and human rights set forth in both UN and OSCE documents.

A set of articles specified principles and areas of cooperation. Terrorism was highlighted, but democratization dominated. It stated that Uzbekistan would "intensify the democratic transformation" and implement "large-scale market reforms" and that it intended "to take steps aimed at liberalizing all spheres and sectors of the economy." The Uzbeks prepared the initial drafts, and U.S. officials were surprised by this focus. Skeptics perceived this appeal to U.S. sensitivities as a tactical move by the Uzbeks.

Security also assumed a prominent place. In addition to the preamble’s statements about the territorial integrity of Uzbekistan, Article 2.1 explains to a certain degree the Uzbek's willingness to agree on so many reforms:

Recognizing that the security of states in the region is key to the development, prosperity, and stability of Central Asia, and developing a qualitatively new, long-term relationship, the United States affirms that it would regard with grave concern any external threat to the security and territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The agreement signalled sweeping reforms in Uzbekistan. It did not, however, include any quid pro quos or any specifications regarding its support in the war on terror, and K2 was not mentioned. Nor was there any specification regarding monetary amounts, although everyone involved in the decision-making process counted on substantial increases in U.S. assistance. Shortly after the signing, a delegation led by Richard Shelby (R-AL), Vice-

547 "Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework."
548 "Declaration on the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Framework."
549 Daly et al., (2006).
Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, visited Uzbekistan. This was reported in Uzbek media as evidence of the rapidly expanded relationship with the U.S.

On April 27, Secretary Rumsfeld visited Kyrgyzstan for the first time. In a meeting with President Akayev, he singled out the use of Manas airport and declared that the "relationship between the embassy and the military officials in the country and our military officials from the coalition countries could not be better."

The human rights issue was always present, but at this time it was not near the top of the agenda and. The delegations that visited Central Asia during 2002 went there primarily to show appreciation and to deepen the relationships. Human rights and the need for reforms were often mentioned during the visits, but they were secondary issues.

The honeymoon was in no way perfect. Soon Iraq drew the administration’s attention away from Central Asia. Almost immediately after 9/11 the question of what to do with Iraq resurfaced. After the quick success in Afghanistan, this question became even more pressing. Conservatives seized on Islamic terrorism as the new Communism and described it as an existential threat. This unified the divided Republican Party, which dominated the political debate. To meet the threat, the administration had begun restructuring the government, and at some point during early 2002 it internalized the idea of regime change in Iraq. In the late summer Pentagon was ordered to begin planning for an invasion. As the U.S. was shifting focus, the human rights criticism became audible again.

In mid-July, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Paul O’Neill visited Tashkent to discuss, among other things, the economical aspects of the war on terror. O’Neill was quite unreserved in his praise of Karimov and spoke of his "deep passion" and prioritization of the "important needs of the people". In response to a question about the pace of Uzbekistan’s economic reforms, O’Neill stated that they were "moving as quickly as they know how to move." O’Neill’s comments caused an uproar in the human rights community.

General Peter Pace, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spent August 8–10 in Uzbekistan. Two weeks later General Franks was in Tash-

kent. The first question he fielded from reporters was whether his visit included "thoughts or plans for striking against Iraq". This is quite indicative of the shift in focus. Besides the constant rumours of a long-term security agreement, Franks also had to comment on reports that U.S. troops had been involved in incidents of torture. Franks stated that most of the arrangements had to do with the duration of OEF, but that he expected "a continuing growth" in the military-to-military relationships between the U.S. and the Central Asian states.\textsuperscript{856} The same day as Franks' press briefing, eleven congressmen led by Peter Hoekstra (R-MI) met with Karimov. Hoekstra invoked the 'we will not abandon you theme' and spoke of long-term commitments to the region. The story of how U.S. disengagement from Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal had created a security vacuum was at that time frequently recounted in U.S. media.

On September 20 Lynn Pascoe, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, delivered a speech at Yale titled "Security, Stability, Prosperity: Engaging the Eurasian Front-Line States".\textsuperscript{857} Pascoe focused on the BTC pipeline. Its inaugural ceremony had taken place two days earlier in Baku and was attended by Energy Secretary Abraham. Pascoe carefully pointed out that the multiple pipeline policy was "anti-monopoly" and "not anti-Russia". He then described how Central Asia, as a result of 9/11, went from being "a backwater of U.S. strategic interests" to becoming "front-line states". Pascoe stated that the U.S. had no intentions of building large, permanent bases in the region but wanted access for future contingencies and long-term military to military relationships. He dismissed the charge that the U.S. was downplaying human rights in order to ensure cooperation as "flatly false" and declared that how governments treat their people was "key to winning the ideological battle". True security and stability was inextricably linked to democracy, Pascoe professed. The U.S. will continue to encourage progress and is pursuing "a carefully calibrated policy in this strategic region that includes both sustained positive engagement when leaders embrace reform and negative engagement when they step backward", he explained. The speech illustrated the continuity in U.S. officially declared strategy:

Central Asia and the Caucasus are indeed a complex challenge for the United States. But 9/11 made it obvious that we had to meet that challenge. As we have told the leaders of each and every one of these countries: the United States is in this for the long haul. We have committed ourselves to a qualitatively new relationship with these countries. We will be a force for fundamental change, even if in many cases that change comes more slowly than we

would like. We, and the countries of these regions, have no real choice. The way to make these countries stable, secure, and prosperous is through movement toward democratic governments that respect human rights and the rule of law, and economic reform that integrates them more fully into the global economy. We can, and will, be there to help them in this endeavor. \footnote{Pascoe, "Security, Stability, Prosperity: Engaging the Eurasian Front-Line States."} \footnote{George W. Bush, "Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Askar Akayev on the Relationship Between the United States of America and the Kyrgyz Republic," September 23, 2002.} \footnote{Alan Larson, "Press Conference Alan Larson U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs," December 13, 2002.}

On September 23 President Bush met with Kyrgyz President Akayev in the White House. Both Presidents declared their "commitment to strengthen the long-term, strategic partnership". The U.S. recognized Kyrgyzstan’s "essential role" in the war on terror, reaffirmed its "deep appreciation for the strong relations" and promised to increase assistance to strengthen Kyrgyzstan’s defensive capabilities and border security. \footnote{The Article 98 agreement entered in force on 2002-09-18. The U.S. signed such agreements with many countries. This is a perfect example of the administration’s policy of loosening the constraints on U.S. freedom of action.}

Near the end of the year Alan Larson, Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs, met Karimov in Uzbekistan. Larson stated that Uzbekistan held a leading position in Central Asia. \footnote{The Article 98 agreement protecting U.S. citizens from the ICC.} During the year many U.S. officials had made similar statements. This not only increased Uzbekistan’s prestige but also nurtured its aspirations to become a regional hegemon. It also lent credence to the notion that the U.S. approved of these ambitions in order to gain access.

Uzbekistan was also one of the first countries to sign an Article 98 agreement protecting U.S. citizens from the ICC. The Article 98 agreement, which is essentially a bilateral immunity agreement, was typical of the administration’s reluctance to surrender any freedom of action to international institutions. John Bolton, then Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, spoke of the ICC’s infringements on national sovereignty and its harmfulness to U.S. interests. In 2002 Congress also passed the American Servicemembers’ Protection Act. It contained a number of provisions, including prohibitions on the U.S. to provide military aid to countries that had ratified the treaty establishing the ICC. The result of these laws was that if any country party to the Rome Statute did not enter into an Article 98 agreement IMET, FMF, Excess Defense Articles and other types of U.S. assistance would be suspended. Not surprisingly, all states of CASC, with the exception Armenia, signed on.

All in all, 2002 was a honeymoon period in the U.S.-Central Asia relationship in general, and in the U.S.-Uzbek relationship in particular. Many prominent U.S. visitors flocked to the region. There were assurances of long-
term commitments and substantial increases in assistance. However, there were also signs it would come to an end.

Despite the rosy relationships, the Central Asian states did not have any real guarantees, and the U.S. had not signed any long-term leasing agreements for any of the bases. The administration also sent rather ambiguous signals. It spoke of long-term commitments, but when Russia was brought up, it usually downplayed those very same commitments in order to deal with Moscow’s unease. The administration also frequently declared that U.S. presence in Central Asia was connected to Afghanistan and that it had no intentions of ‘replacing’ Russia or building permanent bases. It underscored that there was no competition in the region, definitively not a zero sum game, and preferred to talk about converging interests by emphasizing that both Russia and CASC would benefit from regional stability and the U.S.’ military operations, since militant Islam was a threat to all.

This did not work particularly well. Despite the repeated statements that the U.S. military presence was limited to operations in Afghanistan, Moscow suspected that the U.S. would stay for a long time and that Uzbekistan would remain its main strategic partner in Central Asia, especially since there were no time frames for U.S. departure. The Uzbeks, on the other hand, wanted real commitments. Their uncertainty of U.S. intentions grew as its focus shifted from Afghanistan to Iraq. This shift combined with the meagre investments in nation-building in Afghanistan also convinced Pakistan to continue its clandestine support of the Taliban.662

The Central Asian states had, however, earned a lot from the U.S. relationship, including opening up doors for closer security cooperation with the UK and other nations. The human rights community had reasons to be upset. During the year, U.S. criticism, even of the Chechen War, had silenced. Not surprisingly, Russia and other states had begun to designate their enemies as terrorists and frame various internal conflicts as part of the global war on terror. In August the U.S. designated the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a terrorist organization. This was probably done in order to enlist China’s support at the UN Security Council for U.S. Iraq policy, since it knew almost nothing about this group. As an example of the lack of knowledge about the region, U.S. interrogators had no idea who or what the Uighurs were. There was no information about them in the CentCom database, so they had to rely on Encyclopaedia Britannica to learn about them.663

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662 Operation Iraqi Freedom was critical in convincing Musharraf that the U.S. was not going to invest heavily in stabilizing the region, and he acted accordingly. Rashid (2008).

6.3 Ideals and Interests: Democratic Reforms and Security Cooperation

CASC had been a hobby horse for human rights activists for many years. The war in Afghanistan, though, really put the region on the map for many Americans who had never heard of it before. This resulted in more attention and scrutiny. Coincidentally, the administration toned down its language regarding human rights and democratic reform and substantially increased security assistance. OEF had broad domestic and international support, and U.S. media were primarily focused on the military operations. As a result, criticism of the region was marginalised. However, it would eventually catch up. In the following sections, I will demonstrate how the tension between U.S. interest in democratic reform and human rights, on the one hand, and security cooperation, on the other, would create a rift not only between the U.S. and the CASC region, but also between the State Department and the DoD.

6.3.1 How to Balance Military Assistance and Human Rights

In this section, I will demonstrate how questions regarding the balance between U.S. security cooperation and support for human rights and democratic reforms was immediately raised after 9/11. It will also demonstrate how representatives of the administration and members of Congress sought to avoid the question by arguing that there was no conflict between the two.

The notion that the U.S. was going to sacrifice, and in fact already was sacrificing, human rights for security cooperation was widespread already from the outset of OEF. On December 30, 2001, the Washington Post's editorial board wrote that the message Secretary Powell was sending to the leaders of the region was: "If you play ball with the US in Afghanistan we will look the other way as a decade of Democratization efforts is ground to dust".\footnote{"Crumbling Hopes for Democracy," Washington Post, December 30, 2001.} All of the Central Asian states had horrible track records on human rights, as this was constantly pointed out by various NGOs. The Helsinki Committee of the Congress was an important arena for these groups. On March 6, 2002, Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) argued that:

One glaring example of the Bush administration’s willingness to forego human rights concerns altogether in the name of short-term, tactical support of the ‘war on terrorism’ is Uzbekistan. As the United States expands financial and military aid to the government of Uzbekistan, that country had intensified its severe human rights abuse. (…) The message from our government to the
world’s human rights abusers must not be you can violate human rights with impunity so long as you do it in the name of combating terrorism. \(^{865}\)

The main argument of the critics was that most of the extremism was caused by repression. This notion was strong prior to 9/11. After 9/11, it became a general theme. The militarization of the fight against terror was criticized with the argument that it would radicalize those holding anti-American sentiments and thus expand the base of support for the terrorists. In March 2002, Pauline Luong Jones and Erika Weinthal warned precisely about this in *Foreign Affairs*: Uzbekistan "may well worsen the very problems Washington needs to tackle", and propping up as a "fortress" and regional hegemon would not only "fail to address" but "actually exacerbate a key source of Central Asian instability". They argued that the regime’s repression fostered the radicalization of Islamist movements and galvanized popular support behind them. Uncritical support would only embolden it to carry out its repression across its borders and thus destabilize the region. The U.S. should, therefore, decrease its focus on security and prioritize human rights and aid. They agreed that cooperation with Karimov was necessary but warned that U.S. policy was too focused on Uzbekistan, thus leaving the U.S. in a dependent position. \(^{866}\) The criticism that the administration was placing all its eggs in the same basket would become more pronounced as the U.S.-Uzbek relationship began to deteriorate.

The criticism early on did not affect the administration. On the six month anniversary of 9/11, President Bush stated that "we could not have done our work without critical support from countries, particularly like Pakistan and Uzbekistan". \(^{867}\) The Framework Agreement was signed the following day. A couple of weeks later, the International Red Cross (IRC) announced their withdrawal from Uzbekistan. The IRC had lobbied for years to gain access to the Uzbek prison system. In January 2001, permission was finally granted, but due to uncooperative Uzbek officials the IRC soon concluded it was impossible to carry out its work. Despite this particular setback, various reports of torture in Uzbek prisons increased the political pressure. This eventually led the UN to commission a report on torture in Uzbekistan. Theo van Boven, a professor of International Law at the Maastricht University, was appointed to investigate the charges. He soon concluded that torture was not just incidental but "systematic". \(^{868}\)


One argument was particularly convenient for dealing with U.S. involvement with questionable regimes. The essence of it was that Washington had chosen the 'lesser of two evils' and had opted to work with Uzbekistan against militant Islamism. This argument alleviated some pressure, but the criticism came from many directions and refused to go away. Even though the State Department was criticized for exaggerating the positive aspects of the reforms in the region, much of the criticism actually originated from within or from groups that were funded by it. In fact, Lorne Craner, the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, was one of the most powerful critics of the Karimov regime.

Uzbekistan was the country Craner visited the most in 2002, with three visits. His criticism was very sharp compared to others, and it is clear that his statements were not coordinated with the Secretary of State, the White House or the Pentagon. In the absence of visits and substantive statements from higher ranking officials or others at his level, he became perhaps the most important civilian spokesperson on Uzbek affairs. Craner not only took his own assigned responsibilities seriously but also the administration’s freedom agenda, and he frequently quoted President Bush and Secretary Powell on the universality of freedom.

On July 7, Craner, while visiting Tashkent, stated that the U.S.-Uzbek relationship could not rest on security alone and that if the U.S. was to "have a serious, long-term relationship, there ha[d] to be reforms, in both economic and political areas." He emphasized that both the President and the Secretary of State shared this view. When he visited again four months later, he stated that:

Over the past year, relations between the U.S. and Uzbekistan have improved dramatically. We are grateful for the support that Uzbekistan has provided in the war on terror. But the United States will not sacrifice its long-term commitment to protect human rights for short-term political expediency. The U.S. is deeply concerned about human rights in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek government has in turn made a commitment to improve human rights, but we see mixed results on the ground, and there is obviously still a long way to go. For the past 25 years, the two main U.S. political parties - the Republicans and the Democrats -- have firmly embraced the belief that America must advance fundamental freedoms around the world. Human rights thus have the strong backing of both parties, all branches of government, and most importantly, the

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869 "Our Friend the Tyrant" and similar headlines were common in describing the U.S.-Uzbek relationship.
870 Many in the human rights community perceived the regimes' reform steps as stage managed and timed to please the U.S. Elizabeth Anderson, Human Rights Watch’s Executive Director of the Europe and Central Asia division, argued that Karimov’s reform promises "were mere window-dressing, intended to hide Uzbekistan’s persistent problem and placate international critics". Human Rights Watch, "Uzbekistan. Two Brutal Deaths in Custody", August 9, 2002.
871 Craner visited China and Columbia twice during the year.
American people. This did not change on September 11. If anything, in the reaction to terrorism, we see even more of a need for human rights and democracy. President Bush and Secretary of State Powell are firmly committed to this policy. (...) We hope and expect that our relationship will continue to develop and grow. However, this can’t happen unless Uzbekistan’s record on human rights improves.  

Craner was not at all as positive to the developments in the region as other representatives of the administration, and his statements stand out. They were filled with references to the administration’s freedom rhetoric and could be interpreted as including ultimatums.  

In October 2002, Freedom House opened a Tashkent office partly funded by the State Department and USAID. At its inauguration Craig Murray, U.K. ’s Ambassador to Uzbekistan, controversially lashed out at Uzbekistan’s repression and lack of movement toward democracy. Many human rights groups operating in CASC did not want to work with their host governments. Instead, they wanted to work with the civil society, usually defined in Hegelian terms, i.e. against the state. Not surprisingly, this approach created friction between them and regimes throughout CASC. In Uzbekistan many NGOs did not want to have anything to do with the government, especially with the Ministry of Interior, which was a bastion of conservatism resisting reform. Karimov complained about this, since there was an internal struggle between reformers and conservatives inside the country. This distinction was seldom made in the human rights reports, and Karimov was often treated as if he was almost an omnipotent leader, which is far from the truth.  

With the increased attention, the tension between U.S. rhetoric and actions became more conspicuous. The conflict between security, on the one hand, and human rights and democratic reforms, on the other, is not just an analytical assessment. It was explicitly out in the open. In late June, the Subcommittee on CASC held a hearing entitled "Balancing Military Assistance and Support for Human Rights in Central Asia" to address it.

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874 "Press Statement and Press Conference of Lorne Craner."
876 Years earlier, Donald Pressley, Acting Assistant Administrator for Europe and the NIS, USAID, had testified that the strategy was "to support democratic ideals at the grassroots level until they can ultimately reach the upper echelons of these nations, thus making centralized control harder to sustain". See Section 6.4.4.
878 "Balancing Military Assistance and Support for Human Rights in Central Asia," Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Central Asia and South Caucasus of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 107th Congress, Second Session, June 27, 2002. During this hearing the Gulnara affair was mentioned. The U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan brought it up in meetings with the Uzbek Minister of Foreign Affairs.
Chairman Torricelli (D-NJ) began by declaring that Central Asia was "one of the most vital regions of the world" and "at the very center" of U.S. policy. He expressed concern that the administration was downplaying reforms in order to avoid friction with its "key partners". He described how the U.S. prior to 9/11 had prioritized democratization and declared that it "would be a serious mistake if we were to sacrifice our agenda for the promotion of democracy and human rights in exchange for security cooperation". Torricelli then made the familiar argument that fighting terrorism and promoting democracy and human rights were "not mutually exclusive" but "probably mutually reinforcing". He, therefore, urged the U.S. to pursue them simultaneously, underscoring that engagement would only serve U.S. interests in the long run "if it is carried out in accordance with American values".

"[T]oday we seek to address one of the most difficult policy questions in American foreign policy, and that is, how does the U.S. continue to advance its national security interest while preserving its commitment to human rights and the values we hold so dear", Senator Richard Lugar began his remarks. Lugar spoke of "the tremendous geostrategic importance" of the region and added that the challenge of "striking the right balance between human rights and security cooperation [was] not a new challenge in Central Asia".

After these statements, Lorne Craner testified that it was unnecessary to worry about whether the U.S. would abandon human rights as a result of the war on terror, arguing that they were in fact more important now than they were prior to 9/11. Craner explained that freedom and democracy were the best weapons against terrorism and emphasized that both the President and Secretary Powell were "unhesitating in their support of human rights and democracy throughout the world". Promoting such values in the Central Asian states, which he described as "frontline states in the struggle", was, therefore, "even more important" than in other places. He also claimed that there was "a firm consensus among all U.S. decision-makers" that the U.S. had made clear that cooperation was conditioned on the continual progress of democratic reforms. Like Torricelli, Craner ended by stressing that the administration firmly believed that the "fight against terrorism [was] also a fight for democracy" and that finding a proper balance between them "need not be a question of balancing competing interests, but [could] as we’re attempting, be an issue of mutually reinforcing goals".

Craner’s claims of a firm consensus were to some extent contradicted by the testimony of J.D. Crouch II, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy. Crouch described how the U.S. relationship with the region prior to 9/11 had contributed to quick access and how U.S. "mili-

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879 To support this claim, Craner quoted selected parts of both President Bush’s State of the Union Address and a speech by Secretary Powell.
880 "Balancing Military Assistance and Support for Human Rights in Central Asia."
881 "Balancing Military Assistance and Support for Human Rights in Central Asia."
tary relationships with each nation [had] matured on a scale not imaginable prior to September 11th. For Crouch, it was clearly in the U.S. interest to develop military to military contacts. He underscored that the military operations had increased U.S. leverage in the region but emphasized the need to reassure the Central Asian states that the U.S. would not abandon them.

"[F]rom our point of view, there is no conflict whatsoever" between the human rights, democracy and security cooperation, Lynn Pascoe began his testimony. Pascoe pointed out that everybody present at the hearing seemed to agree on this and declared that it is "our message at all levels, from the top on down, in every meeting that we had" that Central Asian states: "have to have the economic and political reform (...) they have to have political stability, they have to have democracy, they have to have human rights and they have to have economic development". Similar to Craner, Pascoe spoke about how "experience proves that individual liberty, free markets, good governance, and international peace are interconnected and mutually reinforcing". He was, however, far more positive about recent developments. Pascoe stated that engagement was in the national interest, and he emphasised that the U.S. encouraged "more active" Central Asian participation in NATO activities. "Our ultimate goal is to do for central Asia and the Caucasus in this decade what we did for Eastern Europe in the 1990s", Pascoe declared with regard to NATO. His testimony demonstrated that there was no lack of ambition.

Despite the title of the hearing, very little was actually said about how to find the proper balance between security and human rights. Many circled around the subject, refusing to take sides, to make any clear prioritizations or even to draw a distinction between the short and long term. The result of this was that many ended up with the position that the U.S. should do it all at once and that everything was equally important. It was quite clear that any statement that contradicted U.S. ideals could easily get one into trouble. The politically expedient and correct view was that security, stability, democracy, human rights and economic reform were complementary and mutually reinforcing, not in conflict with each other, even in the short term. This was an easy way of avoiding difficult choices. This view not only dominated the hearing but also the official statements of both the administration and Congress.

The testimony of William H. Courtney, U.S. former Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Georgia, was similar in this regard. Courtney argued that the U.S. should remain actively engaged, increase security assistance, work to change the underlying conditions that caused extremism and pursue specific human rights and democracy goals as an integral part of U.S. programs. He did not mention the potential conflict between increasing security assistance and the pursuit of human rights and democracy nor how to actually do all

\[882\] Whether Pascoe was referring to the State Department or the administration is not clear.
this at once.\textsuperscript{883} It is telling that when Senator Lugar fired a barrage of questions about how the U.S. would practically go about reaching its goals, he received no clear answers. However, despite the notion that everything was important, the money allocated for security assistance was far greater than for any other issue.

Not all of the witnesses had a positive view of recent developments. In general, representatives of the administration were more positive that independent experts. The former also perceived U.S. leverage as being far stronger. Martha Brill Olcott, now at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, explicitly began her testimony declaring that she was "going to be much more pessimistic" than those that had preceded her. She questioned U.S. leverage and argued that the short-term focus on security undermined the region’s long-term development and corrupted the U.S. in the process. Olcott emphasized the deep roots of the authoritarian regimes and argued that no major political redefinition was likely in the short and medium term. As compared to Pascoe, she perceived little progress and pointed out that the promises the Uzbeks had made as part of the 'Framework Agreement' had not been translated into real action. Developments characterized by a lack of progress "do show that the alliance with the US has done little to make the region’s leaders feel compelled to introduce democratic reforms in their societies" and that "they feel that they are largely able to get away with whatever behaviour they want—that there will be neither internal nor external consequences". The best way to advance U.S. national interests was, therefore, to hold the Central Asian states to international norms, in Olcott’s opinion.

This suggestion was, however, disputed by Senator Sam Brownback, who argued in a written statement that the U.S. should not put pressure on the Central Asian states that had chosen to move toward the West. Brownback pointed out that there was much to be done in these new states, just as the U.S. "did not have a perfect human rights record for many years after our creation". He argued that:

\begin{quote}
[W]e should be examining this important topic with a broader lens. What about human rights issues in Saudi Arabia and Egypt? These too are alliances that we have had for various strategic reasons—but we have shied away from critically reviewing. These countries certainly deserve as much scrutiny as central Asia—we send them more aid or sell them more weapons, we have had longer relationships with these countries—and by all rights, the abuses in these countries, at least the descriptions I have seen, are significantly worse than central Asia—particularly for women.

If we are to examine this important topic with the depth it deserves, we should make sure that we do not cast our focus too narrow. (...) I hope this will be a balanced hearing. In light of the great cooperation we have received
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{883} There was still no established consensus about how to refer to the region or regions. Courtney referred to it as southern Eurasia.
from central Asia post 9/11, it would not serve us well to treat our new friends unfairly.\textsuperscript{884}

This resembles what Brzezinski had argued years earlier. It is apparent that Brownback viewed these states as strategically important. Brownback’s position had support among many of those who favored a tough stance against terrorism. One of the most ardent defenders of the U.S.-Uzbek relationship was Steven Schwarz, who lambasted the State Department and human rights community for their naiveté and "liberal accommodation to terrorism" in a series of articles in the \textit{Weekly Standard.}\textsuperscript{885}

However, during that year, the human rights proponents received increased rhetorical support from the administration. In 2002, the President began to emphasize the importance of the spread of freedom and democracy for U.S. security. In mid-September he released his National Security Strategy, which declared that the U.S. should use its great strength "to promote a balance of power that favours freedom" and "champion the cause of human dignity and oppose those who resist it". These passages were not given much attention by the media, which was preoccupied with the argument that traditional concepts of deterrence were obsolete and that pre-emption was sometimes a necessary means. The NSS also signalled a military build-up. It declared that it was "time to reaffirm the essential role of American military strength", that it must build and maintain "forces strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States". It was thus no traditional balance of power that the document spoke of. CASC was only mentioned briefly with regard to enhancing energy security.\textsuperscript{886} Out of the limelight, the President’s idealism would spread within the bureaucracy, and it would not take long until it was translated into increased pressure on the states of CASC. This pressure was, though, mild compared to what these states had to endure from their neighbours.

\subsection*{6.3.2 Shift of Attention: Operation Iraqi Freedom}

The purpose of this section is threefold. It explains how the administration’s shift of attention toward Iraq led to increased scrutiny of the Central Asian regimes. It describes how the criticism of the repression on part of the regimes got louder and provides an account of the increasing outside pressure that the regimes were facing.

\textsuperscript{884} "Balancing Military Assistance and Support for Human Rights in Central Asia."
There is an abundance of books written about the run up to the Iraq war. Sometime in early 2002 the administration internalized the idea of regime change, and by the late summer the Pentagon had begun planning for an invasion. At the request of the U.S, the UN approved Resolution 1441 in September 2002. It declared that Iraq was in material breach of prior resolutions and called for new weapons inspections. The administration hoped the UN would legitimize its policy, which, in turn, would make it easier to muster domestic support. In October the Senate approved the use of force by the President by a substantial margin.

Saddam did not concede, which in effect left only the question of international support. In the following months the administration pleaded its case for regime change. The major justification offered was an enunciation of a doctrine of preventive war, which was more aggressive and idealistic than the administration’s previous approach. This can be regarded as the third meaning of ‘the Bush Doctrine’. It led to an intense public debate. Criticism came from many directions: from peace activists to academic realists warning about the dangers of ‘overstretch’.

On March 17 President Bush issued an ultimatum calling on Saddam to abdicate his power. Two days later the U.S. and its allies began the invasion. At the time, Iraq had an exceptional position on the administration’s agenda. The conflict dominated both U.S. and international news. The war effectively stole all of the attention. However, the human rights issue in CASC refused to go away. It is now a cliché to say that the Iraq war divided the

887 The administration would have preferred a second UN resolution that would have given them clear approval for using military force. However, the threat of a veto from France and possible opposition from other states prevented such a resolution. Since few actual records of U.S. decision making on Iraq have yet been made public, any treatment of the case must be considered provisional. For early accounts of the period, see Woodward, (2002); Woodward, (2004); Bob Woodward, State of Denial: Bush at War III (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006); Bob Woodward, The War Within (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008); Ricks, (2006); Franks, (2005); Haass, (2009); Douglas Feith, War and Decision (New York: HarperCollins, 2008); Bush, (2010); Jan Hallenberg and Håkan Karlsson (eds.), The Iraq War: European Perspectives on Politics, Strategy, and Operations (London: Routledge, 2007).

nation, but one effect of the war was that the public’s interest in foreign affairs increased and many of those opposing it became more critical of the administration’s entire approach, particularly its involvement with dictators in the Middle East and, by extension, CASC.

In April 2003, at the University of Montana, Elizabeth Jones had to explain why the U.S. did not withdraw from CASC and put the regimes under sanctions. Later in the year Pauline Jones Luong made the case that a "Middle Easternisation of Central Asia" had taken place, arguing that the defining characteristic of U.S. policy towards both regions was the prioritization of security over democratization. Stephen Schwarz continued to defend U.S. relations in the region. He urged the U.S. to "support the Uzbeks in their internal as well as their external combat" and to "repudiate the blandishments of the human rights industry". However, at the time when these words were published, U.S. interest in CASC was waning and the criticism was increasing. One early indication of this was when a group of Uzbek diplomats visited Washington to inquire whether there was going to be a review of Uzbekistan’s compliance to the Framework and were forced to go home empty handed.

As the administration shifted focus to Iraq, the criticism calling for an acceleration of the pace of reforms was getting stronger, and neighbouring powers increased their pressure on the region. Almost exactly one year after the defeat of the Taliban, Moscow decided to establish an anti-terrorism rapid reaction force in Kant, Kyrgyzstan. It was presented as an initiative under the auspices of the CIS Collective Security Treaty but was interpreted in the region as a Russian attempt to counterbalance U.S. presence. Russia increased its pressure both bilaterally and multilaterally, and it had considerable leverage. Russia was the primary trading partner of the CASC states, and they relied on it for maintenance of and spare parts for almost all of its military equipment. States that supported Russian policies usually received discounts. Uzbekistan, for instance, had to pay the full market price, and, to Putin’s delight, it suspended its membership in GUUAM in 2002.

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892 They really wanted this, hoping it would increase U.S. influence in the cause of reform and possibly lead to more assistance.

893 This was how Karimov perceived the situation, and one Uzbek official described it a "dagger pointed at the Uzbek throat". Daly et al., (2006), p. 31.

894 Karimov had been interested primarily in the security aspects of GUUAM, but the organization had been disorganized, ineffective and too anti-Russia. However, the main catalyst for
Like Russia, China was worried about the U.S. presence. It had a long-term interest in CASC, particularly in Kazakhstan’s Caspian oil fields. Because of their mutual interest, they began a combined effort to push for security arrangements under the auspices of the SCO, as an alternative to those of the U.S. China did not have the same leverage as Russia, but it could offer economic incentives and political support, since it would not criticize the regimes. This made China look very favourable. The U.S. presence was also a thorn in the side of Iran, and a permanent base in the region made it feel even more encircled. To put pressure on the regimes, Iranian leaders often publicly proclaimed that the Central Asians were humiliating themselves by allowing U.S. troops on their territory.

Despite the pressure, Karimov initiated a program of military reform based on western models, and the regular defense consultations continued on the basis of the Framework. During 2003 he also took a stand against SCO, which had begun to lobby its members to adopt a policy aimed at limiting U.S. presence in Central Asia. However, the human rights situation was beginning to catch up with the regime. When the appropriations for FY2003 were signed into law in February 2003, Congress attached a provision that prohibited the administration from granting FSA assistance to Uzbekistan unless the Secretary of State determined and reported that it was making substantial progress in meeting its commitments to human rights and democratic reforms. A month later, the UN rapporteur’s draft report on torture in Uzbekistan was made public, which further impairing the regime’s reputation.

During the spring Karimov bypassed the State Department and sent a personal letter to President Bush requesting more assistance. President Bush reportedly responded negatively to the letter, emphasizing the need for real reforms. This was probably the first major event to cause Karimov seriously to question the relationship. Furthermore, there was no anniversary of the ‘Agreement’ signing. Reformists in Uzbekistan were now losing power, since their conservative opponents could claim with some credibility that the U.S. was only concerned with its immediate goals.

Despite this, Karimov offered Uzbekistan’s unequivocal support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and his declaration on March 7 remained on the

\[\text{this development was probably the increased security cooperation with the U.S. in the aftermath of 9/11.}\]

\[\text{895 The reforms included non-commissioned officers trained by the U.S. Special Operations forces modelled on similar U.S. organizations, acquisition of strategic and tactical command, control and communications (C3) capabilities from U.S. corporations and side-by-side training with U.S. forces in Uzbekistan. Daly et al., (2006), p. 28.}\]

\[\text{896 Daly et al., (2006), p. 84.}\]

\[\text{897 There has been speculation that Karimov somehow thought that the position of the U.S. President mirrored his own. Requesting more money directly from the U.S. President suggests the perception that he could somehow override Congress and do this on his own.}\]
White House website for years. In mid-April 2003 the U.S.-Uzbek JSCC met in Washington. Both sides praised the Framework and expressed their resolve to pursue long-term and comprehensive cooperation in all spheres. The Uzbeks reaffirmed its commitment "to further intensify the democratic transformation of society" and the U.S. its willingness to expand security cooperation. No new treaties were signed, and the event passed without much ado. Karimov was losing ground in the internal battle between reformist and conservatives. However, he did, though, receive some good news. During early summer Secretary Powell reported to Congress that both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan were making progress in their reform efforts, and in June Uzbekistan participated in bilateral defense consultations in Washington.

Iraq was not the only thing that made the U.S. shift its attention. There was also an upcoming Presidential election. President Bush kicked off his campaign on May 1 with a spectacular landing on the deck of USS Abraham Lincoln. On board he announced the end of major fighting in Iraq. Meanwhile, the CASC states faced more external pressure. In the fall they were all shocked by the Rose Revolution that swept away the Shevardnadze regime in Georgia.

After the November parliamentary elections in Georgia, allegations of fraud quickly surfaced. The opposition united, and soon there were massive demonstrations. When Shevardnadze was to open the new session of parliament on November 22, supporters of the opposition parties, led by Mikheil Saakashvili, burst in with roses in their hands and interrupted the ceremony, hence the name of the revolution. Shevardnadze immediately declared a state of emergency, but the military refused to obey orders. The next day he announced his resignation.

The White House responded positively to this event. On the 24th the White House announced that the U.S. welcomed "the dignified and non-violent way that Georgia’s opposition political leaders restored the integrity of the Georgian democracy". On the 26th President Bush spoke with Georgia’s interim President and reaffirmed U.S. support for its sovereignty and democratic reform program. Shevardnadze immediately accused foreign

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898 Karimov’s statement was posted on March 26. It declared that he “unambiguously” supported the position of the U.S. “to resolve the Iraqi problem”, that he believed the U.S. had good grounds for its stance and "radical measures and that OIF was a continuation of the "efforts to break the back of terrorism." In August the Uzbeks decided not to send any troops to Iraq. Daly et al., (2006), p 84.
900 These assessments were met with skepticism by the human rights community.
901 It was on this occasion that the President spoke next to a huge banner that read: 'Mission Accomplished'
NGOs of the coup. Naturally, the leaders of neighbouring states followed this development closely and took his allegations seriously. There was fear and suspicion that foreign NGOs were undermining the political structures in the region, thereby posing an existential threat to the regimes. Most leaders in CASC regarded regime stability and the national interest as the same thing. It was to counter threats to the regime that many had entered into partnerships with the U.S. in the first place. In response, Karimov revoked the accreditation of Open Society Institute in Tashkent. This institute was associated with billionaire George Soros and, along with other NGOs, it had been very active in Georgia.

The high expectations of the Uzbeks on the U.S. were not met. They had made sacrifices but had not received as much assistance as they hoped for. U.S. officials talked about a long-term engagement, but nothing material was codified in any agreements. In order to change this, they sought to negotiate some sort of permanent arrangement for K2. The base was a potential cash cow, and it would send a signal to its neighbours, especially Russia, if the U.S. were there to stay. Requesting confirmation of a long-term commitment on part of the U.S. was also understandable, in light of what had happened in Georgia. The Bush Administration was, however, reluctant to send this signal, and its officials frequently stated that the military presence was linked to the operations in Afghanistan.

In late 2003, Uzbekistan requested that the U.S. consider a new agreement regarding K2. By early 2005, they had presented the State Department with no less than six drafts for a long-term agreement. The U.S. was, though, disinclined to renegotiate, since it had favourable terms in the SOFA, which did not establish any payment mechanisms. The Uzbek’s could not even begin to request reimbursement without facing the accusation of having abrogated the agreements. All of these drafts were acknowledged by Washington, but they were neither accepted nor rejected. In practice, the Uzbeks received no answer at all. The State Department’s view was that Uzbekistan would “come around”, since “the Uzbeks need us [the U.S.] more than we [the U.S.] need them”. This confident posture signalled the belief that the U.S. had a lot of leverage.

Arranging access to numerous bases around the world was part of the Pentagon’s vision for global power projection. The policy was that the U.S. only paid for privately owned airfields, not for military facilities. Meanwhile, Germany had agreed to pay a significant sum for use of the Termez airfield in southern Uzbekistan when it assumed leadership of NATO’s In-

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904 Changing the political structures of these states was an explicit goal a number of NGOs, including USAID.
906 The Kyrgyz President personally profited from this arrangement, since his son-in-law managed the Bishkek airport. Daly et al., (2006), p. 29.
ternational Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in early 2003. In comparison to Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz regime was making a fortune with less risky political commitments by leasing out Manas and parts of the Bishkek civilian airport to the Coalition. Many Uzbeks perceived this as a double standard on the part of the U.S. In context of regional politics, Karimov probably felt that he looked foolish to both his neighbours and his inner circle for being used by the U.S. U.S. presence at K2 did not stimulate the local economy either, and there was disappointment in the Khanabad region. This contributed to strains in the U.S.-Uzbek relationship.

On October 29, 2003, the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia held a hearing that indicated that things had changed. The idea that the anti-terror measures of the Central Asian states were counterproductive had gained in influence, and the notion that the U.S. had significant leverage in the region seemed also to have spread.

Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) immediately set the tone by stating that the "heavy-handed repression" on part of the Central Asian leaders was counterproductive and "sowed the seeds of greater Islamic extremism in the region." She warned that the IMU was on the rise again and implicitly accused the regimes for this development. Furthermore, she quoted one of Lorne Crane’s speeches in which he had pointed out that cooperation was dependent on political reforms and that the U.S. was "uniquely placed to press for regional cooperation and to monitor regional states’ commitment to real improvement of social, economic, and political conditions."

Gary Ackerman (D-NY) continued where Ros-Lehtinen left off. He argued that security was important but that democratization was more important in the long run. He ended his brief statement by declaring that the U.S. "must have a clear and consistent message for all our friends and our partners in the global war on terror. Just because you help the U.S. with al-Qaeda doesn’t mean you get a pass on all of the other hard issues."

Elizabeth Jones also supported the notion that repression was counterproductive, declaring that it was "exactly what creates Islamic extremism, opposite of what the intention is". During her testimony she gave no indication she viewed Russia’s agreement for the Kant Air Base as an attempt to counter U.S. presence. Ariel Cohen, a research fellow at the Heritage

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909 Daly et al., (2006), p. 33. Many Uzbeks hoped that the K2 would become something like a small Ramstein.
911 "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability."
912 "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability."
913 "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability."
Foundation, also argued that the undemocratic and poor governing of the regimes bred extremism. He stressed the importance of public diplomacy in order to win the "war of ideas" and emphasized that unconditional support of unpopular leaders could generate a "Pahlavi effect" that would lead the U.S. to be associated with dictators.  

Cohen also testified that Pentagon officials – off the record – really wanted a long-term presence in Central Asia. There had been no formal request on permanent basing rights, but Cohen argued that both policy makers and officials were suggesting different ways to rationalize current and future presence, such as "protecting energy resources and pipelines; deterring the resurrection of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia; preventing Russian and/or Chinese hegemony; facilitating democratization and market reforms; and using Central Asia as a re-supply depot for possible action in Afghanistan". Central Asia was also thought of "as a launching pad in future operations against Iraq and Iran". This indicated the existence of a perspective on the region that differed from the State Department’s public statements.

Stephen Blank of the Strategic Studies Institute warned that the worst possible outcome for the U.S. in the region was state failure and that terrorism was not the greatest threat, but rather "the complex of authoritarian, repressive, rent-seeking, corrupt criminal governments". He described Russia as "unrelenting" in its hegemonic ambitions and emphasized that ever since Putin came to power, Russia had tried to reassert its position in CASC and even outlined a new doctrine that included the pre-emptive use of force in the region. Regarding the calls to increase pressure on the regimes, Blank criticized the human rights community for lacking patience and failing to realize how difficult it is to alter their behaviour, especially when they had so few incentives to change and had protectors in Russia and China. He concluded that security in the end had to be prioritized. While the U.S "can pressure, cajole, try to persuade, etc., it must first secure those regimes against violence from without before it can persuade the leaders of those states to secure their people, if not themselves, against violence from within." Blank was opposed to cutting, or threatening to cut, assistance. For him, the "only way" to succeed was through strong engagement with credible and sufficient resources to provide both the incentives and the security necessary for enabling reform. A strong engagement would thus not only prevent the regimes from looking to Moscow and constrain them from carry-

914 This refers to U.S. support for the unpopular Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran.
915 "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability."
916 "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability."
917 Bland substantiated this by quoting a statement made by Putin on October 9: "terrorism or threats to Russian diaspora in other states which could include Central Asia and made the claim that Russia had the right to defend the oil installations and gas installations that were built by the Soviet Union because, after all, the Soviet Union built them."
ing out repressive policies, but also check Russian and Chinese designs for the region.\footnote{Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability.}

Martha Brill Olcott, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, contradicted the notion that the U.S. had significant leverage. "We are not spending anywhere near the kind of money in the region that would allow us to apply strong sticks alongside the carrots", she assessed.\footnote{Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability.} She also emphasized that money was not spent with the long term in mind and that there was a lack of coordination. She concurred with the notion that repression of the regimes was counterproductive and was pessimistic regarding the prospects for building democracies in the region.

Fiona Hill was also highly critical: "Repression and persecution exacerbate existing social and political problems, discredit regional governments domestically and internationally, and increase suspicion of official institutions among the general population". In her testimony, she singled out Uzbekistan as the linchpin state and argued that whatever happens there would "really have an impact elsewhere on its neighbors". She then described how Uzbekistan had "set a tone for political backsliding elsewhere in Central Asia" and how the war on terror had "added impetus to government repression". Hill rejected Uzbekistan’s reforms as "cosmetic" and pointed out that it had failed to address the recommendations of UN’s Special Rapporteur on Torture. It was expected that Karimov would condemn torture at the EBRD meeting held in May 2003. Instead, he emphasized the terrorist threat and the strategic partnership with the U.S.\footnote{This incident led to sharp public rebukes from EBRD President Jean Lemierre and Chairman, British Development Minister Clair Short.} "Karimov’s message was clear", Hill declared, "— an alliance with the United States in the war on terrorism means a ‘pass’ on reform, even on such a fundamental issue as torture".\footnote{Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability.}

Like Olcott, Hill underscored the lack of coordination: "Frankly, we don’t really know where we are spending our money and applying the bulk of our energies and to what effect". Hill argued for an analysis of what the U.S. was actually doing and for the creation of a central coordinating mechanism for U.S. agencies and related entities operating in the region. The region has "been lost in the mix of government structures, where it is submerged into Europe and Eurasia and other regional bureaus". Key people at the State Department, the National Security Council and the DoD assigned to deal with it usually have much larger regional portfolios, as she described it.\footnote{This problem was probably exacerbated by the re-organization of the State Department.} Furthermore, with OEF, the DoD took the lead on thinking about Central Asia, and when its attention shifted toward Iraq, sufficient resources and the high-level attention necessary to maintain a focus on the region disappeared, Hill added. She ended by arguing that that there would be no real
success in the war on terror unless there was political change, "especially in countries like Uzbekistan". Therefore, she urged the U.S. to push for reforms.\textsuperscript{923}

It was clear that the tone was changing. Criticism of the regimes was increasing, and calls for the U.S. to exert pressure were getting louder. In general, State Department officials and other representatives of the Government were more positive with regard to the developments in the region and estimated U.S. leverage to be higher, as compared to regional experts and representatives of NGOs. The latter also perceived U.S. policy to be uncoordinated and unbalanced in the direction of security cooperation.

### 6.3.3 Another Nuisance

U.S. criticism and reluctance to commit wholeheartedly to the relationship frustrated Karimov. In addition to this, Gulnara Karimova, Karimov's daughter, was involved in a divorce and custody battle with Mansur Maqsudi, a U.S. citizen with friends in Washington. Maqsudi had been president of the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in Tashkent; the wealthy couple resided in New Jersey. After Maqsudi asked for a divorce, Gulnara left for Uzbekistan with their children, initiating a custody battle that would soon reach the East Coast tabloids.

Maqsudi made a number of embarrassing allegations about the Karimovs, and he hired Richard Zimmer, a well-connected former Congressman (R-NJ), to represent him in the publicity war. Maqsudi claimed that relatives of his in Uzbekistan were being harassed and even jailed. In August 2002, Senator Robert Torricelli wrote to President Karimov to complain about this. The Uzbek regime claimed that Maqsudi owed millions in taxes, had questionable dealings in Iraq and was wanted for questioning. Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA), a leader on the House Armed Services Committee, publicly urged Attorney General John Ashcroft to cooperate with the Uzbeks in this request.\textsuperscript{924}

In September 2003, New Jersey State Superior Court ordered Gulnara Karimov to return to the court's jurisdiction with the children. She refused. Soon after, an international arrest warrant in her name was filed with Interpol. The affair was widely discussed in subcommittee hearings. Numerous State Department officials were involved, and the matter was also brought up in meetings between the U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan and the Uzbek Minister of Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{925}

\textsuperscript{923} "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability."


\textsuperscript{925} This affair was mentioned, for instance, in "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability" and "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia," Hearing Be-
6.3.4 The President’s New Rhetoric and the Forward Strategy of Freedom

During the fall of 2003, President Bush increased his emphasis on democracy and freedom. In early November he outlined his "forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East":

Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. (...) Therefore, the United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East. This strategy requires the same persistence and energy and idealism we have shown before. And it will yield the same results. As in Europe, as in Asia, as in every region of the world, the advance of freedom leads to peace.  

The administration declared that the new policy was going to be "based on core values" and that is was "committed to pursuing freedom and promoting democracy and human rights, through both words and deeds". The vision of transforming the Middle East and making it safe for democracy sent powerful signals to U.S. officials in every branch that were faced with the task of balancing security and human rights.

On January 9, 2004, the State Department announced that Uzbekistan was not making sufficient progress regarding human rights as required under the terms of the CTRP. President Bush used his authority to waive this human rights certification provision. He was quoted in the Washington Post as stating: "Uzbekistan is important to the national security interest of the United States". On February 24, Rumsfeld visited Tashkent again. He praised Uzbekistan’s support and the "excellent military to military relationship" but spent large parts of his press availability answering questions about Iraq. He was, however, asked about the extent to which U.S. assistance to Uzbekistan was linked to human rights. Rumsfeld did not specify but replied that relationships between nations "tend not to be on a single pillar". The rumours about long-term basing had not gone away, and Rumsfeld stated that the U.S. "had no plans to put permanent bases in this part of the world" but was involved in discussions with allies regarding "operating sites". He stated that no final decisions had been made. Throughout, Rumsfeld emphasized the importance of flexibility and described these sites as places where

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the U.S. and coalition countries could "periodically and intermittently have access and support".  

The inherent tensions in U.S. strategy were now becoming quite severe. The administration publicly increased its emphasis on democracy and freedom. At the same time, it wanted to maintain good relations with the Uzbeks and other CASC states. It also had to ease Russian anxieties while simultaneously assuring the Uzbeks of its commitment. This was not an easy balance, and it resulted in mixed messages. The State Department and the DoD had different priorities. In late March, 2004, National Security Advisor Rice publicly remarked "-it’s all related to Afghanistan" with regard to U.S. counterterrorism support to Uzbekistan.  

This surely sent a signal about the real importance of the region to the U.S.  

In late March, 2004, Uzbekistan suffered new terrorist attacks. Bombings and gun-battles in Bukhara and Tashkent left 47 dead, including 33 alleged terrorists. From inside Uzbekistan, the attacks were regarded as a justification for the regime’s security concerns. From outside, critics interpreted them as proof that its repression was fomenting the very terrorism the U.S. was trying to fight. Uzbekistan was thus a counterproductive ally in the U.S. cause. The attacks only briefly brought the country back into the headlines. They did not result in any new support or sympathy, rather the contrary. As an indication of this, the EBRD announced in early April that it would be curtailing lending to the country because of its lack of reform. This was an important shift. Violence in Uzbekistan was now being blamed on the regime.

6.3.5 Abu Ghraib and Shifting Focus

This short section describes how the Abu Ghraib scandal led to increased scrutiny of the human rights practices of the Central Asian states cooperating with the U.S. in the war on terror. It also demonstrates how the pressure on the administration to push the Central Asian states harder on human rights built up.

In the last days of April 2004, the story about prisoner abuse by U.S. soldiers in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq broke. The well-known journalist Seymour Hersh explored these abuses in detail in a series of articles in The New Yorker. The story received massive attention, which most certainly had to do with the fact that a number of disturbing pictures of torture taken by U.S. military prison guards were also published on the magazine’s web-

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931 "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
What was portrayed contrasted sharply with the administration’s rhetoric to "champion the cause of human dignity". Coverage of the scandal was massive, not just in the U.S. This was probably exacerbated by the administration’s rather lackadaisical response. No senior official was held responsible. The President attributed the abuse to "a few American troops who dishonoured our country", and his advisors dismissed it as acts of a "few bad apples". This was seen by many as proof of U.S. unwillingness to live by the very rules it wished to impose on others. Naturally, resentment toward the administration increased among those already critical. The scandal put the question of torture on the media agenda, and U.S. relations with CASC came under closer scrutiny.

On May 21, 2004, the State Department faced questions about the death of a man named Andrei Shelkavenko in an Uzbek jail. Human Rights Watch declared it a case of state sponsored torture. Freedom House contacted the Uzbek Ministry of Internal Affairs which surprisingly agreed to allow an international commission to investigate. Uzbekistan had recently signed a plan to implement the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. A spokesperson for the State Department announced that it expected a swift, transparent and professional investigation and mentioned the Foreign Operations bill that required it to certify that progress was being made on the Framework. The timing of having its reputation blemished even further with a widely publicised case of torture was especially bad for Uzbekistan, considering the upcoming certification decision.

A highly qualified commission was given full access to the evidence. It concluded that Shelkavenko had committed suicide, just as the Uzbeks had declared. This was not accepted by the human rights community, and U.S. newspapers that had publicised the accusations were silent about the findings. The State Department made no official announcement either. This infuriated Uzbeks. They had provided the international community with full access and been proven innocent but had received no restitution.

On June 1, 2004, the U.S. signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the five Central Asian states. U.S. Trade Represen-

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932 The story had by then been delayed two weeks at the request of the DoD. As a source, Hersh used the Taguba report, which was a report of a criminal investigation made by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command that had begun in 2003 when soldiers had been charged with abusing prisoners. Seymour Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," The New Yorker, May, 2004. See also Seymour Hersh, Chain of Command: The Road From 9/11 to Abu Ghraib (New York: Penguin, 2005).
tative Robert Zoellick declared that the U.S. looked forward to strengthening its relationship with the region as a whole.\textsuperscript{937} Two weeks later the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia held a hearing on Uzbekistan. Its title – Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia – indicated that there was no doubt about which state was the most important for the U.S. in the region.\textsuperscript{938}

The Secretary of State’s decision to certify Uzbekistan was just two weeks away, and many believed it would have an important impact on the future of the relationship, since non-certification would cut off U.S. funds. This forced many to confront the strategic dilemma they had so far sought to avoid. The timing of this hearing, therefore, highlighted the differences between various parts of the U.S. government. Overall coordination was clearly a lacking. There was not only division within the State Department, but also between it and the Pentagon. Increasing the stakes further was a letter submitted to the hearing’s record by the U.S-Uzbek Chamber of Commerce warning of the "severe consequences" and the "irreparably harm" that non-certification could inflict on the relationship.\textsuperscript{939} The letter was also sent to Secretary Powell and forwarded to several top level officials, such as Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans as well as high-ranking members of Congress.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen opened the hearing by stating that the political transformation in Uzbekistan was "central to the success of the war against terror and the prolonged stability in Central Asia". Referring to President Bush’s notion of freedom and democracy as antidotes to terrorism, she urged that the U.S. not ignore Uzbekistan’s "egregious" record and that it push harder for reform. She also described the regime’s response to the resent terrorist attacks as "draconian" and counterproductive. At the end of her statement, she declared that the issues revealed a "strategic dilemma facing both governments" and that Uzbekistan’s failure to reform jeopardized the 'strategic partnership'.\textsuperscript{940}

Gary Ackerman emphasized that Uzbekistan had been a strong supporter in the war on terror but also that it represented "a classic example of United States short-term strategic needs trumping our long-term interests". "I do not think anyone can say with a straight face that Uzbekistan has made ‘substantial and continuing progress on these issues’", he declared, with regard to certification.\textsuperscript{941} Dana Rohrabacher, on the other hand, defended Uzbekistan, declaring that it had been "an island of stability in a sea of turmoil" and "a bastion of friendship". He spoke of it as "the front line", underscoring that "without its help the U.S. would not have been successful in

\textsuperscript{937} Office of the United States Trade Representative, "United States and Central Asian Countries Sign Regional Trade and Investment Framework Agreement," June 1, 2004.
\textsuperscript{938} "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
\textsuperscript{939} "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
\textsuperscript{940} "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
\textsuperscript{941} "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
Afghanistan" and urging the U.S. to try "many creative approaches rather than just a sledgehammer-in-the-face approach to a human rights abuser". Rohrabacher called for policies that could change Uzbek human rights practices without creating a "crisis" that would only help U.S. enemies. 542

Lorne Craner testified that Uzbekistan’s human rights record remained poor and that it had "chosen not to implement real reforms". As usual, Craner quoted the President and the Secretary of State and pointed out that the President recently remarked: "America has always been less secure when freedom is in retreat. America is always more secure when freedom is on the march." 543 Lynn Pascoe was far more positive than Craner. He praised the military to military relationship, maintained that K2 had been "absolutely critical" and underscored that Uzbekistan was one of the first countries to finalize an Article 98 agreement. Pascoe argued that there had been some positive developments regarding human rights and declared that it was "unfortunate, in our view, that no national security waiver was included for Uzbekistan in the legislation, which would have allowed us to have a far more nuanced approach to encourage compliance". 544 When Pascoe mentioned the terms ‘we’ and ‘our view’, it is not entirely clear who or what he was referring to. Did he speak for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, for the State Department or for what he believed was best for U.S. interests? Both Craner and Pascoe represented the State Department, but there were clear discrepancies between their assessments and between their implicit recommendations. Judging from Pascoe’s testimony, it was obvious that he did not want to disturb the relationship, despite the lack of progress. This was hardly Craner’s position.

Mira R. Ricardel, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, praised Uzbekistan’s early "unconditional" and "uncompensated" support and described the cooperation as "a genuine strategic partnership". She asserted that the DoD enjoyed "excellent relations" with "all levels, both civilian and military" of the Uzbek government and that the relation between CentCom and the Uzbek forces at K2 was "suberb". Ricardel reported that the westernization of its military was making significant progress and also referred to the Article 98 agreement. 545 She ended by declaring that:

Uzbekistan is valued partner and friend of the United States. Our bilateral defense cooperation and military relations are exceptional and critical to our efforts in the global war on terrorism. The Government of Uzbekistan has committed to westernizing its armed forces and becoming interoperable with the

542 "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
544 "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
545 Ricardel described how the goal of its defense reform was closer integration with NATO and the West through the PFP, adding that the country had begun NATO’s PARP (Planning and Review Process) and IPAP (Individual Partnership Action Plan), demonstrating its readiness to be transparent.
United States and NATO. U.S. security assistance has facilitated these reform goals. The United States-Uzbek relationship is important today and will be so in the future.946

It is safe to say that the DoD treasured its relationship with Uzbekistan.

When Adam Schiff (D-CA) asked about how to balance the long term goal of democracy with the short-term imperative of having cooperation, Craner replied that they had "tried to follow a policy that enables us to pay attention to both" and that they in fact had "been very, very aggressive with governments all over Central Asia" regarding human rights. Zeyno Baran, The Nixon Center, stated that with "Afghanistan no longer in the headlines, Americans have again forgotten about Uzbekistan". He called Uzbekistan "a front-line state" and argued that its stability was "vitaly important" for preventing weapons proliferation and for curbing the narco-trafficking, both of which he perceived as directly pertinent to the war on terror.

According to Baran, the certification decision would have "huge implications" for the relationship. Non-certification would mean alienating one of the few secular Muslim governments that was fully supportive in the war on terror. It would embolden the militant Islamists and reduce U.S. leverage, which in the end would result in a regression of human rights. Many in the region perceived the U.S. as using human rights as a pretext for conducting operations for its own purposes. Non-certification could be interpreted as demonstrating that the U.S. only cares about its own security needs and, with the Taliban gone, Uzbekistan is not important anymore, Baran explained. Russia and China would also welcome it. They would gladly see the U.S. relationships in the region wither away and eagerly fill the resulting vacuum. Conservatives around Karimov would also welcome it, since it would enable Uzbekistan to move closer to Russia. Baran was no stranger to realist reasoning:

From a realist point of view, one can argue that while the Karimov government may not be an ideal partner, we cannot humiliate it politically and then expect it to cooperate with us on issues important to U.S. national security. Uzbekistan is one of the few Muslim countries that want to increase engagement with the U.S. Alienating the Uzbek government and empowering the Islamist opposition would send a negative message to the countries targeted by the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative.947

It was a true dilemma. If the U.S. certified Uzbekistan, the process would lose its meaning. Uzbekistan had not made significant progress, and to certify it would send a signal that security was the only thing of importance to the U.S. It would embolden other Coalition partners to expect that "they too may get a strategic waiver". The U.S. would lose credibility in the Muslim

946 "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
947 "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."
world by supporting yet another repressive regime. And, it would raise questions about the sincerity of the President’s forward strategy of freedom. Mark Schneider, Vice President, International Crisis Group, followed up on this by arguing that the close relationship was "damaging the image of the U.S." in the wider region. He added that Uzbekistan’s repression and misguided economic policies provided a "fertile ground for Islamic extremist recruiters" and that certification would "send the wrong message". The State Department would lose credibility, and the U.S. would be identified as an "uncritical supporter of an increasingly repressive regime". Dana Rohrabacher succinctly summarized the hearing:

So I guess if there are two messages this hearing is sending to the leadership of Uzbekistan it is thank you very much for helping us in the war on radical Islam and terrorism, and number two is just because we appreciate your help there does not mean that we are ignoring human rights abuses and the fact that you need some real progress to show when it comes to human rights and democratization. There it is in a nutshell. That is what we are trying to say.\(^\text{948}\)

The pressure on the administration not to give the region a pass on human rights and democratic reform was building up.

### 6.3.6 The Non-Certification Decision and Mixed Messages

On July 13, the State Department released its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004. It listed Uzbekistan together with Turkmenistan as the most repressive states in CASC.\(^\text{949}\) The report expressed disappointment over Uzbekistan’s "lack of progress on democratic reform" and restrictions on U.S. assistance partner and announced that the Secretary of State could, therefore, not certify the country.\(^\text{950}\) This effectively prohibited the use of certain assistance funds, including both IMET and FMF. According to the press statement, up to $18 million would be cut. This legislation did not have any national security provisions allowing the President to waive the restrictions. Later in July, the 9/11 Commission Report was released. In a section about foreign policy recommendations the following passage can be found:

"Too often, short-term gains in cooperating with the most repressive and brutal regimes were too often outweighed by long-term setbacks to America’s stature and interest."\(^\text{951}\) This was cited in support of the non-certification decision.

\(^{948}\) "Uzbekistan: The Key to Success in Central Asia."


\(^{951}\) The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 393.
The non-certification created a rift between the State Department and the DoD. At the former, many were satisfied with the decision. At the latter, many were upset by the decision to let the human rights issue dominate the strategically important relationship. Both departments had in some way pursued their policies side by side for years. This decision led to them colliding, resulting in even more contradictory signals to the region. On August 12, Richard Myers publicly criticized the non-certification in a meeting with Karimov in Tashkent. Myers described it as a "very shortsighted" tactic of showing U.S. displeasure. It is "never productive" and can "often have the opposite effect that people intend, because you lose any ability to influence at all." The genuine concerns about democracy and human rights "must be weighed against all aspects of the relationship", and "in my view, we shouldn’t let any single issue drive a relationship with any single country". "[I]t doesn’t seem to be good policy to me," Myers declared. Only days before Myers departed for Uzbekistan, he met with Rumsfeld. There are thus strong reasons to believe that the resentment toward the decision was shared by them. In Tashkent Myers also announced that non-proliferation aid would be boosted by $21 million and that fourteen patrol boats worth $2.9 million would be transferred to the country. This was most certainly an attempt to reassure the Uzbeks. It countered the cut of $18 million and was a mixed message *par excellence*. The U.S. government gave with one hand and took away with the other. This event helps explain why local Central Asian leaders often distinguish between the State Department and DoD and hold a great antipathy for the former while liking the latter.

The same day Myers met with Karimov, Vice President Cheney mentioned Uzbekistan as an ally on the campaign trail. The security cooperation continued as if almost nothing had happened. The administration acted in a muted manner regarding the non-certification. On the day of the non-certification, the White House Press Secretary was not asked about it. He was, however, asked about an IRC report that stated that the U.S. was holding terrorist suspects at secret locations around the world.

Craig Murray was not muted, though, and during 2004, he continued to criticize the Karimov regime and UK and U.S. relations with it. He received media attention and quickly became an embarrassment for the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In October, Murray leaked confidential documents to the *Financial Times* and accused Uzbek security forces

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952 Myers exemplified this with how the U.S. lost its "very close relationship with the military leadership in Indonesia", due to "similar circumstances". Jim Garamone, "Myers Meets With Strategic Central Asian Ally," U.S. Department of Defense, August 12, 2004.
953 Garamone, "Myers Meets With Strategic Central Asian Ally."
of torturing prisoners to extract information that, in turn, was handed over to the CIA and the British MI6. Murray was fired shortly thereafter. Since then, he has written extensively about the Uzbek regime. His website is continually updated with stories about what he calls ‘the hypocrisy’ of the UK and the U.S. and includes several confidential documents and letters he sent as Ambassador. Murray basically argues that U.S. policy was focused on "oil, gas and hegemony", that the Uzbek people were being used as "pawns in the New Great Game" and that the U.S. policy of strengthening the Karimov regime was "in fact creating fundamentalism" and was "doomed to fail". Murray quickly became a leading authority among critics of Western policy toward the greater region.

6.4 Conflicting Interests: Tension, Crisis and Beyond

In the following sections I will describe how the administration’s dual interest in democratic reforms and security cooperation, combined with both domestic and external pressure, created a true strategic dilemma for the administration. Even though these sections will focus predominantly on the U.S.-Uzbek relationship, which clearly was the most important for the administration, they will nonetheless relate a broader story of U.S. strategy toward CASC.

6.4.1 The 2004 Election

The Iraq war dominated the 2004 election. Even though the war had to some extent divided the country, the main issue concerned who was best suited to be Commander-in-Chief – John Kerry or George W. Bush. This favored the Republicans, who were more unified than they had been for a long time. The Democrats had the anti-war vote, but that would not take them very far. They had to convince the broader public, which largely supported the war, that their candidate was up for the job. The Democratic convention thus glorified militarism, a theme that was perfectly summed up by their saluting presidential candidate’s opening line: "I’m John Kerry and I’m reporting for duty.""\footnote{Murray also described how he was told by his superiors that intelligence obtained by torture was not illegal and that Article 15 of the UN Convention on Torture only stipulated that intelligence obtained by torture could not be used in legal proceedings. Craig Murray, "Letter Sent to FCO," September 16, 2002; "Murder In Samarkand – Document 6 – Michael Wood memo of 13 March"; "Murder In Samarkand – Document 7 – Telegram of 18 March 2003 headed US Foreign Policy."}
Kerry’s overriding argument was that he, as a Vietnam veteran, was better qualified to direct U.S. armed forces in Iraq and elsewhere. Kerry vowed to "get the job done" and argued that the country needed "a president who has the credibility to bring our allies to our side and share the burden".999 Kerry constantly brought up the necessity for international cooperation and criticized the President for unilateralism. But Kerry did not signal any dramatic change in U.S. strategy and stressed that his top priority was to protect the American people. His proposed changes were more tactical in nature. Despite his effort, President Bush was perceived as more capable of protecting the homeland. Kerry lost, and the Republicans increased their majority in both the Senate and the House.

After his re-election, President Bush had an opportunity to make strategic adjustments. He made some changes, but they were relatively small, such as replacing Secretary Powell with Condoleezza Rice. The President’s rhetoric became even more centered on the spread of freedom and democracy. This was occasionally interpreted as a major shift; in reality, it was not.

6.4.2 Democracy on the March: The Orange Revolution

In late November, the Ukrainian run-off vote between Victor Yushchenko and Victor Yanukovych led to massive protests. Both international and domestic monitors reported that the election had been rigged in favour of Yanukovych. The following days the government was crippled by mass protest, civil disobedience and general strikes, and Kiev’s Independence Square was filled with demonstrators. On December 3, the Ukrainian Supreme Court ruled that a re-vote should be held on December 26. Yushchenko won. All of the legal complaints from the Yanukovych camp were rejected.

During the weeks of the Orange Revolution, the administration was preoccupied with the upcoming election in Iraq in January. Then, on the day of the re-vote, one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history occurred: the Indian Ocean Earthquake/Tsunami. This effectively overshadowed the events in Ukraine. Even though it was not given much attention, the change in Ukraine was received positively by the White House, especially the fact that the re-vote had been declared to be fair and free.

Many have seen a pattern in the Orange Revolution, the Rose Revolution and the ousting of Milosevic in Serbia. They all included extensive grassroot campaigning, intensive student activism and coalition-building within the opposition. There have also been a plethora of reports, theories and speculation regarding outside support from various NGOs, such as In-

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ernational Republican Institute, Freedom House and Open Society Institute. Some of these received funding from the U.S. Government. The State Department has also been mentioned as having provided support for the opposition movements. The regimes in CASC were paying close attention to these events and this exacerbated their suspicion of NGOs.

6.4.3 Toward the U.S.-Uzbek Breaking Point

Throughout 2004, the administration increasingly emphasised freedom and democracy in its public statements. The message of not just making the world safe for democracy, but actually spreading it, culminated in President Bush’s 2nd inauguration speech on January 20, 2005.

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in the world. America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. (...) So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in the world. (...) We will encourage reform in other governments by making clear that success in our relation will require the decent treatment of their own people. America’s belief in human dignity will guide our policies. (...) All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty we will stand with you.960

This was the most sweeping formulation of George W. Bush’s approach to the world. The idea that the fundamental mission of the U.S. abroad is to spread democracy is probably the one that most clearly defines his presidency and can be regarded as the fourth definition of ‘the Bush doctrine’. This emphasis strained the U.S.-CASC relationships. They came to be questioned, not just by the human rights community, but also by members of Congress and Government officials. If U.S. security depended on the success of democracy abroad, why did it support authoritarian regimes in CASC? And was not repression counterproductive and thus working against U.S. interests? These questions were also posed more generally in the public debate on the war on terror and the overall conduct of the administration.

Less than a week after the inauguration, Lleana Ros-Lehtinen, Chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, sponsored a resolution urging the administration to push the Central Asia states harder on human rights. It read:

Expresses the sense of Congress that: (1) the Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan should accelerate de-...

Democratic reforms and fulfill their human rights obligations; (2) the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense should continue to raise at the highest levels with such Governments specific cases of political and religious persecution and urge greater respect for human rights and democratic freedoms; and (3) U.S. assistance to such Governments, made possible by their cooperation in the war in Afghanistan, can be sustained only if there is substantial progress toward meeting such goals.  

This increased the pressure on the administration. Soon, more problems illustrating the contradiction between its rhetoric and actions emerged.

In early March 2005, CBS 60 Minutes reported that the CIA was using secret jets to fly terrorism suspects to countries known for employing harsh interrogation techniques. Later, this practice became known as 'extraordinary rendition'. Uzbekistan featured predominantly in the story. Craig Murray was quoted as describing how prisoners in Uzbekistan were "subject to torture techniques straight out of the Middle Ages: Techniques of drowning and suffocation, rape was used quite commonly, and also immersion of limbs in boiling liquid." The day after its airing Scott McClellan, the White House Press Secretary, was dogged by questions regarding Uzbekistan and the rendition program. McClellan was evasive declaring that he was not going comment on issues related to classified intelligence but stressing that the President has "made it very clear that we do not torture."  

The President was more assertive in his response when the issue was raised with him nine days later. Bush explained that they sought "assurances that nobody will be tortured when we render a person back to their home country" and declared that the U.S. "does not believe in torture". This did not end the story, and the focus on this particular aspect of the U.S.-Uzbek relationship intensified.

6.4.4 The Tulip Revolution

On March 24, 2005, demonstrators took control over the main government building in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. President Akayev fled the country and announced his resignation on Russian television on April 3. The demonstrations had started in connection with the parliamentary elections a few weeks earlier. OSCE observers criticised the election, while CIS observers had been content. Initially, the U.S. was rather soft in its criticism of the election abuse. It did criticise the opposition for seizing the building and urged all sides to resolve their differences through dialogue.

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The revolution sent a shockwave through the region. The Bush Administration, however, approved the change in regime. Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman, State Department, stated that the U.S. would "work to support a peaceful outcome to the political future of Kyrgyzstan, in coordination and cooperation with the international community" and "in a way that reflects the will of the Kyrgyz people". Ereli was immediately faced questions as to whether there had been any discussions regarding the status of the U.S. military base with the new government. Ereli replied that the U.S. had received assurances that there would be no changes regarding the base.\(^{965}\)

There have been reports that U.S. funding and support from both governmental and non-governmental sources partly paved the way for the pro-opposition movement. On March 30, a *New York Times* headline read: "U.S. Helped to Prepare the Way for Kyrgyzstan’s Uprising".\(^{966}\) The authoritarian regimes had for a long time suspected that Western funded NGOs were instigating and supporting revolutionary movements. This, naturally, increased suspicion both of NGOs and of U.S. intentions. The fact that many Americans, particularly neoconservatives, were rejoicing over what they perceived as democracy on the march, likely exacerbated this.

In January, Karimov stated that NGOs had "no future in Uzbekistan" and that some of them went "far beyond their declared charters and aim at certain mercenary goals".\(^{967}\) Mike Stone, the Project Director of Freedom House in Bishkek, confirmed the latter to some extent when he openly declared "mission accomplished" after Akayev left the country.\(^{968}\) It was part of U.S. foreign assistance policy to support various reform movements. Earlier, in 1998, USAID’s Donald Pressley had testified before Congress that its "overall strategy, particularly where authoritarianism still lingers, [was] to support democratic ideals at the grassroots level until they can ultimately reach the upper echelons of these nations, thus making centralized control harder to sustain".\(^{969}\) Stone’s remarks are a perfect example of how many people working with reform projects in the region had a tendency to see themselves as working against the regimes. The U.S. funded organizations that helped pave the way for these revolutions. However, there does not seem to be any evidence that the administration was directly involved in any of these developments or that it actively sought regime change in these countries. Of course, this did not stop the spread of conspiracy theories.

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\(^{967}\) "Uzbek Leader Seeks to Block Influx of Alien Ideologies," EurasiaNet.org, March 2, 2005.


\(^{969}\) "The U.S. Role in the Caucasus and Central Asia."
On May 4, 2005, Ros-Lehtinen chaired a hearing on the implementation of the 9/11 Commission’s recommendations subitled: "Oppressors versus Reformers in the Middle East and Central Asia". The Middle East dominated the discussion, but it did include some statements about Central Asia.

Indicating that the President’s rhetoric had resonated, Ros-Lehtinen began by quoting the freedom theme from his 2005 inaugural address. This set the tone of the hearing. Gary Ackerman followed up and quoted the 9-11 Commission’s observation that: "Too often, short-term gains in cooperating with the most repressive and brutal regimes were too often outweighed by long term setbacks to America’s stature and interest," Michael G. Kozak, Assistant Secretary of the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, followed suit, declaring that the U.S. throughout history often ended up with very repressive governments. Kozak argued that the regimes were drawing the wrong lessons from "the recent striking examples of successful and peaceful democratic change", referring to Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. They are seeing NGOs as undermining them rather than understanding that they are threatened because of their poor governance. Kozak described how local NGOs, including U.S. implementation partners, were being harassed through bureaucratic obstacles and special legal means, threatened with expulsions, denied visas and subjected to hostile prosecutorial investigations. He stated that his bureau "objected strenuously" to such mistreatment and that the U.S. had "especially reminded" the regimes that they had to balance the demands of security with human rights "to ensure long-term stability and prosperity."

J. Scott Carpenter, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, also referred to the President by quoting his speech that outlined the ‘forward strategy for freedom’ and the part of his second inaugural address in which he promised to "persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation: The moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom which is eternally right." Lorne Craner, now President of IRI, then gave rather puzzling testimony. Craner stated that shortly after 9/11 a debate took place within the administration during which it was quickly decided to put the region’s practices on democracy and human rights into focus. Despite this claim, Craner ended his testimony urging that the "[a]dministration in a unified manner needs to continue to engage key members of the government with the message that our relationship cannot be

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971 This is another indication of how the focus on the Middle East and Iraq effectively relegated Central Asia to the background.
972 "9/11 Implementation Act Oversight Part 1."
973 Kozak emphasised how opposition parties repeatedly submitted applications for registration but were constantly denied.
974 "9/11 Implementation Act Oversight Part 1."
based on security concerns alone". If there had been consensus regarding this focus, how is it that the administration was so unsuccessful in signalling this message? Perhaps Craner had not perceived the mixed messages the administration was sending. Craner also mentioned that there was "less unity within the Bush Administration regarding the priority placed upon democratization and human rights" in Central Asia as compared to the unity it displayed on these issues in the Middle East. In Craner’s view, democracy and human rights were much more prioritized in U.S. relationship with the Middle East than in its relationship with Central Asia. This is something to keep in mind when understanding his statements about the administration’s efforts to pursue democracy in Central Asia.

In addition to the increasingly pessimistic tone, the hearing also indicated that the idea that it would take time, perhaps generations, to change the political structures in Central Asia, was beginning to take hold.\(^7\)

6.4.5 Andijan: The Breaking Point

On May 13, the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent informed of an incident in the city of Andijan.\(^7\) Exactly what happened is surrounded by controversy, and there are large discrepancies between different accounts. According to most assessments, violence broke out after a heavily armed group tried to break some prisoners of the national jail in Andijan. Around sixty people were killed by the attackers, and hundreds of prisoners escaped.\(^7\) Outside the prison, a crowd gathered. A couple of hours later, Uzbek security forces fired into that crowd, killing a vast number of people. This was the worst outbreak of violence since Uzbekistan’s independence.

There was little information available at time but plenty of questions. What was the background? Were those imprisoned wrongly or justifiable held? Was the crowd comprised of innocent bystanders or a mix of assailants, escaped prisoners and local supporters? How many casualties were there, and had the Uzbek security forces been trained and equipped by the U.S? Immediately after the events, different actors tried to frame what had happened so as to further their own agendas.\(^7\) This study will not make any definite assessments regarding what really happened. Rather, it presents how

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\(^7\) This was, for instance, articulated in the testimony of Ron Johnson, Senior Vice President, International Development Group, RTI International, who declared "change does not happen overnight". "9/11 Implementation Act Oversight Part 1."

\(^7\) Embassy of the United States, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, "Warden Message: No Entrance or Exit to Andijan Permitted," May 13, 2005.


\(^7\) Craig Murray denounced Akiner’s work and even tried to get her fired from her academic post.
this event was used and interpreted to get a sense of the information and pressure U.S. policymakers were exposed to.

The day of the prison break, Scott McClellan was asked about "the crisis". McClellan replied that the administration was "concerned about the outbreak of violence, particularly by some members of a terrorist organization that were freed", and urged the government and the demonstrators to exercise restraint. Five days later he was asked about it again, since the President had not commented on it. When a reporter notably called Karimov a dictator and accused the administration of "going easy on him" because of Uzbekistan's importance in the war on terror, McClellan declared that the U.S. was disturbed by the event, condemned any indiscriminate use of force against unarmed civilians and urged the Uzbek people to repudiate those that incite violence and the Uzbek Government to grant humanitarian organizations access to the city to help people and gather facts.

Compared to other Western states, the White House was muted in its criticism, and the President remained completely silent. Britain took the lead in applying pressure and requested that humanitarian officials, diplomats and journalists to be granted immediate access to Andijan. Four days after the event, British Foreign Minister Jack Straw flew to Washington to talk to Secretary Rice. He publicly declared that what had taken place was an unjustifiable "clear abuse of human rights". On May 17 the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called for an independent investigation, with the support of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Karimov immediately rejected this.

On May 18, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher stated that large numbers of civilians had been killed by "the indiscriminate use of force by Uzbek forces" and urged that a credible inquiry be launched. He also emphasised that "nothing justified" the violent protests and mentioned U.S. security cooperation with Uzbekistan and the fact the members of IMU had reportedly escaped. During the following days, Boucher emphasised that continued engagement would be the best way to "insist" that Uzbekistan democratize and respect human rights.

There were many different accounts of the scale of the violence. The Uzbek government claimed that 175 in total had died, the New York Times claimed that 325 people in the crowd had been killed and different human rights organizations presented numbers ranging from 800 to 1500. President Kari-

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983 Hizb ut-Tahrir claimed that 7,000 had died. Akiner (2005), Chap. 6; Daly et al., (2006), p. 97.
mov had travelled to Andijan on May 13 to restore order. He succeeded. However, the tactical victory turned into a strategic loss internationally. International criticism was severe. On May 23, the External Relations Council of the EU criticized the "excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Uzbek security forces" and warned that it would "consider further steps" if the regime refused to accept an international inquiry. The OSCE chairman Dimitri Rupel acknowledged that the Uzbeks believed it was dealing with terrorists but stressed that "one side appears to have employed lethal violence in a disproportionate or reckless fashion". The EBRD stated that "the Uzbek violence only confirms the bank’s worst fears". The International Crisis Group declared that "the failed policies of muted criticism – and tacit supports [of the Karimov regime] – must be abandoned". NATO’s Parliamentary Assembly condemned "the disproportionate use of force by Uzbek security forces" and warned that if it did not accept an international inquiry, its membership in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council would be "reconsidered" and NATO country support to its military reconsidered and eventually suspended. Karimov had, however, the support of both China and Russia, which praised his anti-terrorist actions and viewed the incident as a purely internal affair.

Media also increased its coverage of the U.S.-Uzbek relationship. The editorial board of the Financial Times wrote that "if Mr. Karimov survives the crisis with his authoritarian regime intact, undemocratic leaders everywhere will see that brutality pays". The most pressing question was whether the U.S. had trained and equipped the forces responsible for the violence. Several U.S. Senators and various human rights groups urged the administration to look into this and to stop all base negotiations until the Uzbeks had agreed to an international investigation. The incident was also debated in Congress. On May 19, Christopher Smith, co-chair of the Helsinki Commission, denounced the regime for the "most lethal violence" ever launched against protesters by an OSCE member and declared that if the


987 The question of whether UK had helped train the Uzbek security forces was also widely debated.

988 Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), a ranking member of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, which oversees U.S. military aid, was especially vocal in his criticism. He accused the administration of downplaying human rights and argued that U.S. laws that set conditions for assistance were not applied. Ann Scott Tyson and Robin Wright, "Crackdown Muddies U.S.-Uzbek Relations: Washington in Talks on Long-Term Use of Base," Washington Post, June 4, 2005.
unrest spread, the U.S. would be forced to reconsider the 'strategic partnership'. Sam Brownback, on the other hand, argued that it was not "too late [...] to salvage the situation of liberalization for human rights, democracy and the economy." 989

On May 29, Senators John McCain, Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and John Sununu (R-NH) flew to Uzbekistan to meet with representatives of unregistered opposition parties. They were not greeted by any government representatives, who refused to meet with this self-appointed fact-finding mission. At the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent, Senator McCain stated that the incident was "shocking but not unexpected", noted the necessity of "a complete investigation conducted by the OSCE" and declared that the U.S. must make the regime understand that its repression jeopardized the entire relationship. Senator Graham, who had never been to the country before, declared that "[w]ithout the international investigation it'll be very difficult to move forward and have the relationship that we would like to have". Senator Sununu had been optimistic when he visited three years earlier but now declared that the repression had reached unsustainable levels. 990

When Ambassador Jon Purnell was asked about the relationship in light of Karimov’s immediate refusal to accept an international inquiry, he replied that they were in an evaluating mode but that the recent developments would "undoubtedly have real impact on the relationship". Graham remarked that the "refusal says everything I need to know about this government". "And when they are supported by the Russians that makes me even more convinced and the icing on the cake is the Chinese. So this is a trifecta", he added. McCain ended the press conference by declaring that "Congress has a great deal to say about funding for many things and also concerning our military" and that "[w]e along with the executive branch will continue to evaluate our relationship with Uzbekistan in light of recent events". 991

Reflecting the administration’s cautioned and suspensive position, more than two weeks passed before the President made his first remarks about Andijan. The administration did, of course, want to get a fair assessment of what had actually happened. But it is clear that it was caught in a strategic dilemma. President Bush was immediately asked about "the consistency" of a U.S. strategy built on spreading democracy and ending tyranny and why he had not spoken out about the crackdown earlier. In relation to the international criticism, Bush said very little:

989 Nichol, "Unrest in Uzbekistan." Brownback’s statement was perhaps not that surprising considering his earlier statements regarding the U.S.-Uzbek relationship.
990 After the visit, Sununu stated to the Washington Post that he believed that 500–1000 people had been killed in Andijan. Embassy of the United States, Uzbekistan, Tashkent, "Press Conference of Senators McCain, Sununu and Graham," May 29, 2005; Tyson and Wright, "Crackdown Maddies U.S.-Uzbek Relations."
991 "Press Conference of Senators McCain, Sununu and Graham."
In terms of Uzbekistan [...] we’ve called for the International Red Cross to go into the Andijon region to determine what went on, and we expect all our friends, as well as those who aren’t our friends, to honor human rights and protect minority rights. That’s part of a healthy and a peaceful -- peaceful world, will be a world in which governments do respect people’s rights. And we want to know fully what took place there in Uzbekistan, and that’s why we’ve asked the International Red Cross to go in.

Andijon forced even the most ardent supporters of the U.S.-Uzbek relation to reconsider. On May 16, Stephen Schwarz wrote that the violence had more to do with poor governance, repression and the post-Soviet democratization movement than with militant Islam. He referred to the developments in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan and argued that it was "time for the Uzbeks to definitively join the democracy movement and leave the Soviet era, with its bloodshed and lies, behind." Later in the month, Schwartz and Kristol wrote that "the character of the Karimov regime [could] no longer be ignored in deference to the strategic usefulness of Uzbekistan". With the Taliban defeated and the liberation of Iraq, "the nature of the global struggle to which the Bush administration is committed is no longer exclusively focused on the destruction of terrorism". "We are now committed to a democratizing effort that challenges tyranny along with terror as threats to peace and freedom around the world", they argued. The "Uzbek regime that was a part of the solution in 2001 is now, with its bloody suppression of protests, part of the problem", and the U.S. should not let tyrants exploit the threat of terror, they continued. In a reversal, they now criticized the administration’s "tepid" response to Karimov’s brutality and urged the President to lead the international effort to put pressure on Uzbekistan, including using aid and support as leverage:

Washington cannot turn a blind eye to massacres in a country where U.S. troops are based and that receives U.S. assistance. Here as elsewhere, the principle of linkage between a regime’s behavior and relations with the United States must be reestablished. And if not in Uzbekistan, where we have so much leverage, how seriously will others take our promises and our warnings?

Note how Schwartz and Kristol seemed to believe that the U.S. had significant leverage.

On June 7, the Human Rights Watch published its explicitly entitled report on Andijan: Bullets Were Falling Like Rain: The Andijan Massacre. It claimed that the regime had used indiscriminate force against unarmed peo-

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people, killing 300–400 people, and that it was trying to silence witnesses and rewrite history. The report also highlighted what it described as the contradictory character of the U.S. Government and noted that the CIA "reportedly 'rendered' prisoners to the Uzbek security services, even as the State Department has denounced torture by those very same services." It recommended that the U.S. not engage in any further base negotiations until the Uzbeks accepted an independent, international investigation, and if they refused, the U.S. ought to "bring an end to its post-September 11 strategic partnership with Uzbekistan and discontinue its military presence in the country". It also recommended that the U.S. begin exploring alternative basing facilities in the region. Two days later, the European Parliament issued a resolution that "strongly condemn[ed] the excessive, brutal and indiscriminate use of force by the Uzbek security forces". It also called on the U.S. to suspend its basing negotiations.

In early June, the Uzbeks indicated to the UN and the OSCE that they were willing to cooperate. The Uzbeks had established their own international investigative body, which included Russia, China, India, Pakistan and all of the other Central Asian states. Both the U.S. and the EU rebuffed the invitation to send a representative to this body because of its lack of independence. One reason why the Uzbeks were reluctant to set up a commission as demanded by the U.S. and the EU was the lesson they had learned from the Shelkovenko case a year earlier.

Already upset by the U.S. refusal to renegotiate the status of K2, Karimov was now infuriated by the lack of U.S. support. In order to send a signal, he began curtailing certain military flights from K2. This relationship was now in a crisis mode. "Before Andijan it was complicated. After Andijan it’s become very touchy", a senior State Department official told the Washington Post anonymously.

### 6.4.6 Interagency Tension and Colliding Ideas

At the June 2005 NATO summit in Brussels, the U.K. and other European countries pushed to include language in a joint communiqué calling for an

996 Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain."
999 Daly et al., (2006), p. 104f. Ten days after the violence the Uzbek Parliament had decided to create its own independent investigation of the incident.
1000 Conversation with Dr. Frederick Starr. See also Daly et al., (2006).
1001 Landings of the heavy C-17 transport planes and night time flights were suspended.
1002 Tyson and Wright, "Crackdown Muddies U.S.-Uzbek Relations."
independent investigation of the violence in Andijan. During a private meeting between the NATO defense ministers and their Russian counterpart, Secretary Rumsfeld remarked that they all needed to realize that the Uzbek relation had direct implications on NATO’s capability to conduct operations in the region. He noted that substantial amounts of humanitarian aid passed through K2 and warned that any other alternative would be more difficult and more costly.\textsuperscript{1003} The final communiqué only stated that issues of security and stability, including Uzbekistan, had been discussed – nothing else.\textsuperscript{1004}

There had reportedly been a vigorous debate between representatives of the U.S. State Department and the DoD at the summit. The former favored language calling for an investigation, while the latter stressed the importance of K2 and the necessity of preserving good relations. The story about this interagency conflict broke on June 14, and the \textit{Washington Post} featured an article entitled: "U.S. opposed calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings – Officials Feared Losing Air Base Access", "[D]isagreements between Defense and State reflect a continuing rift in the administration over how to handle a breach of human rights that has come under sharp criticism by the State Department, the European Union and some U.S. lawmakers", the article read. Several unnamed officials confirmed the story.\textsuperscript{1005}

At the summit, Mira Ricardel, the Acting Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy, argued that the NATO-Russia communiqué was not the most appropriate context in which to ask for an investigation. In an interview with the \textit{Washington Post}, she later stated that it was "not a question of the policy, which was clear, but whether the venue for that was the best". The article’s other sources, however, claimed that Ricardel was unequivocal in her opposition to the word "investigation".\textsuperscript{1006}

The U.K. had the exact opposite view as that of the DoD and regarded the communiqué as an ideal venue. The Uzbeks valued its links to NATO. A demand from the Defense Ministers would thus carry substantial weight. Ironically, the DoD’s stance placed it roughly in the same position as Russia, even if for different reasons. The critical reaction was instantaneous. The \textit{Christian Science Monitor}’s webpage soon read: "U.S. blocked NATO call for probe of Uzbek Massacre".\textsuperscript{1007} According to the \textit{Washington Post}, Rumsfeld had not been aware of the State Department’s position. Lawrence T. Di Rita, Rumsfeld’s Special Assistant, stated that Rumsfeld "grew to understand" that State had already publicly articulated a position, but it was nothing "he had been involved in". Di Rita downplayed the differences be-

\textsuperscript{1003} Tyson and Wright, "Crackdown Muddies U.S.-Uzbek Relations."
\textsuperscript{1004} “Statement: Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at the level of Ministers of Defence,” NATO HQ, Brussels, June 9, 2005.
\textsuperscript{1006} Smith and Kessler, "U.S. Opposed Calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings."
tween the departments as misunderstandings and declared that if there was any tension, it was between supporting "democracy in Uzbekistan" and "democracy in Afghanistan".1008

The interagency tension escalated. The existence of this split was publicly denied, but officials from both camps were anonymously confirming it in all of the major newspapers. The story was that the quarrel about the communiqué was a continuation of friction that had begun with the decision not to certify Uzbekistan. This study shows that it had begun much earlier with different views of the region. There was also an interagency disagreement about how to address Uzbekistan’s participation in the PFP-program. The State Department proposed a blanket suspension of cooperation whereas the DoD proposed a case-by-case review of cooperative programs. The latter prevailed, and afterwards a senior U.S. official stated to the Washington Post: "It’s like the dilemma we have in the democracy agenda in many places. We have to both press the democracy agenda and still, for example cooperate when we need to on the war on terror".1009

On June 14, Trent Duffy, the White House Deputy Press Secretary, was asked about the tension and whether there had been "some confusion" at DoD about the policy. Duffy stated that there was no such thing, that the administration was "speaking with one voice" and that the DoD wanted the same thing as every other department – an independent international investigation.1010

For years, the advice not to put all the eggs in one basket had gone unheeded. However, after the senatorial visit to Uzbekistan, the stirrings of dissent on Capitol Hill with regard to placing the issue of access to K2 at the centre of U.S. policy increased. Six senators – Lindsey Graham, Mike DeWine, John McCain, John Sununu, Joseph Biden and Patrick Leahy – sent a letter to Rumsfeld and Rice warning them. "[I]n the aftermath of the Andijan massacre, America’s relationship with Uzbekistan cannot remain unchanged". The U.S. "must be careful about being too closely associated with a government that has killed hundreds of demonstrators and refused international calls for a transparent investigation" it continued, urging the administration to start exploring alternative basing arrangements in order to increase flexibility.1011

Despite public claims that U.S. policy was coherent, different language continued to emanate from the two departments. In the middle of June, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack declared: "We are calling for a credible, transparent and independent investigation into the Andijan tragedy." Meanwhile, DoD spokesman Bryan Whitman stated that the U.S. "has

1008 Smith and Kessler, "U.S. Opposed Calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings."
1009 Smith and Kessler, "U.S. Opposed Calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings."
repeatedly urged Uzbekistan to undertake a full and transparent inquiry into the Andijan incident.\textsuperscript{1012} Note the difference.

On June 13, EU’s Foreign Ministers issued an ultimatum giving Uzbekistan until the end of the month to agree to an independent investigation or face sanctions.\textsuperscript{1013} On June 22, Ros-Lehtinen issued a new resolution. It included a long quotation from the President’s second inaugural address and made a number of demands:

1. the government of Uzbekistan should take immediate steps to comply with calls for an independent international inquiry into the violence in Andijon and the prosecution of those individuals responsible for civilian deaths;
2. the government of Uzbekistan should accelerate democratic reforms and fulfill its human rights obligations; and
3. the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense should condition diplomatic engagement with and security assistance to the government of Uzbekistan based on Uzbekistan’s compliance with such steps, ensure that assistance does not benefit the security forces of Uzbekistan implicated in human rights violations, and, and support those individuals, nongovernmental organizations, and media outlets in Uzbekistan working to establish a democratic government.\textsuperscript{1014}

\textbf{6.4.7 The Eviction from K2}

The perception that the U.S. had significant leverage over Uzbekistan was widely held. However, the only real lever was the threat to abandon K2. While the debate about increasing the pressure on Uzbekistan intensified, the forces against U.S. presence in the region became more assertive.

On July 2, Russia and China issued a joint declaration on "World Order in the 21st Century." It underscored the principles of international law and declared that countries "should strictly observe the principles of mutual respect for each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs."\textsuperscript{1015} Even if not explicitly mentioned, it was obvious that U.S. dominance in world affairs was the target. Three days later, the Presidents of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan met at the SCO summit in Astana and signed a declaration requesting that the Coalition set a date for leaving

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1012] Smith and Kessler, "U.S. Opposed Calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings."
\item[1013] "EU Council Conclusion Concerning Uzbekistan," EU External Relations Council Meeting, June 13, 2005.
\item[1014] H. Con. Res. 187, Expressing the sense of Congress concerning Uzbekistan, House of Representatives, 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress, First Session June 22, 2005. See also Expressing the Sense of Congress Concerning Uzbekistan; and Commending the State of Kuwait for Granting Women Certain Important Political Rights; Markup Before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 109\textsuperscript{th} Congress, First Session, June 29, 2005.
\item[1015] "China-Russia Joint Statement on 21st century world order," Moscow, July 1, 2005.
\end{footnotes}
Central Asia. This was the first request of this kind from any party in the region since the U.S. established a force presence there. It read:

We support and shall continue to support the coalition’s efforts in conducting the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan. We note at the present time a positive trend toward stabilization of the internal situation there. Some SCO countries provide infrastructure on their territories for temporary deployment of the forces of coalition countries, as well as military transit by land and air in the interest of the anti-terrorist coalition. Considering that the active [combat] phase of the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan has been completed, the SCO member countries deem necessary that the coalition countries involved should set the final dates for their temporary use of those infrastructure installations and stationing of their troops on SCO member countries’ territories.\footnote{1016}

Russia led this effort, which linked U.S. presence to Afghanistan. Russia now declared that the situation there was improving. Therefore, the Coalition no longer needed bases in the region. This was a policy change. Previously, Afghanistan had been considered a source of threat, and the announcement came at a time when the situation was actually deteriorating. The assessment was framed to fit the new policy.\footnote{1017}

There were no references to the U.S. or its allies in the summit’s concluding document or in the speeches of the six Presidents. Between the lines, the criticism of the U.S. was evident. The Presidents spoke about the "right to independently choose ways of development based on their specific characteristics", "non-interference in internal affairs", "sovereign equality and mutual respect" and non-acceptance of "export of democracy" and "models imposed from the outside".\footnote{1018} Russia and China had so far not been able to get support from the Central Asian states in their effort to limit U.S. presence in the region. The summit demonstrated that now they could. It also indicated that there was a loss of confidence in U.S. ability to effectively support its declared interests in the region. Several events led to the loss of U.S. credibility during 2005. The re-emergence of the Taliban, which to a considerable extent was a result of the drug trade, was one. The revolution in Kyrgyzstan, which was perceived as U.S. inspired, was another. And, its lack of support to Uzbekistan after Andijan was a third. At the summit it, was also decided to extend observer status to India, Pakistan and Iran, a decision that made some realist-influenced observers begin to perceive the SCO as the counterbalancing coalition they, in a way, had been waiting for.

\footnote{1017} Partly contradicting the notion that the situation was improving, the declaration stated that narcotics and its connection to terrorism in Afghanistan was a serious security problem for all of the SCO-members. This was, however, to be tackled through the creation of a SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group, which could be used to challenge the leading role of the U.S. in Afghanistan. Daly et al., (2006), p. 88.
\footnote{1018} Socor, "SCO Asks Washington to set date for Withdrawal of Forces."
The State Department and U.S. Embassies in Central Asia and Russia responded to the declaration by stating that U.S. basing arrangements were bilateral in nature. Richard Myers, in describing what had happened, said that "two very large countries were trying to bully some smaller countries" to imposing time limits on the Coalition presence.

Shortly after the summit, the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a communiqué accusing the U.S. of failing to live up to the terms of the SOFA that governed K2. It stated that the goal of U.S. military presence was to eliminate the Taliban and terrorism threat originating in Afghanistan and declared that the U.S. had not reimbursed Uzbekistan for the cost of guarding and servicing the base, the ecological damage and the inconvenience it caused to the local population.

On July 6, the Kyrgyz Foreign Minister stated that Afghanistan was basically stabilized and concluded that U.S. military presence at the Manas base was no longer necessary. However, the next day the Kyrgyz Acting Deputy Prime Minister stated that any decisions regarding the base were "internal". In Russia hardliners celebrated Moscow’s use of the summit to initiate national demands for a U.S. withdrawal. Yevgeny Primakov, the former Prime Minister, declared: "For the first time, a [diplomatic] formula has been announced that can put an end to the American military presence in Central Asia". More assertive statements came from Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It now used words that had not hitherto been characteristic of Russian declarations, such as 'rolling back' (svernuto).

The U.S.-Uzbek relation was deteriorating rapidly. The U.S. was criticized in Uzbek state-controlled media for its reaction to Andijan, and its presence at K2 was now being portrayed as a liability to the country. Uzbekistan was already curtailing flights from K2. It now declined to participate in a scheduled summer counter-terrorism exercise hosted by CentCom in Virginia. Karimov seemed ambivalent regarding K2, and Uzbek media never called for a U.S. withdrawal. Observers could not be sure whether the Uzbeks were setting the stage for cancelling the lease, or if they were positioning themselves for a renegotiation of the terms.

During this tense time, Congress increased its pressure on the administration, calling for it to make aid conditional on democratization and human rights. In July the House Appropriations Committee pleaded that no FMF be distributed to Uzbekistan. There were also calls for amending the Foreign

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1019 The French took a similar position regarding this question. See Daly et al., (2006), p. 48.
Assistance Act to place further conditions on aid. The proposed bill also restricted arms exports and visas for Uzbek officials involved in human rights abuses. Later that month, Secretary Rumsfeld visited Kyrgyzstan to discuss the possibility of transferring some operations from K2 to Manas. Rumsfeld managed to negotiate an indefinite extension of U.S. use of Manas, but his efforts in Tajikistan were not as successful. The U.S. had used the Ayni airfield for refuelling planes operating in Afghanistan in 2001–2002. Now the Tajiks were dismissing the possibility of granting U.S. access. A month earlier Russia had signalled its intentions to use that airfield. A French contingent was, however, still operating at Dushanbe Airport in Tajikistan. After the visit of the French Defense Minister a few days before Rumsfeld’s, a temporary increase in Coalition forces was negotiated. The assurance that at least some countries would continue to grant the Coalition access highlighted the flexibility of the ‘lily-pad’ approach, and DoD representatives emphasised this when they had the opportunity. What they did not mention was that the rent for Manas had increased substantially. The Kyrgyz knew, of course, that the U.S. did not have many options. Meanwhile, in July the State Department was working with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to evacuate 439 Uzbeks from Kyrgyzstan to Romania. Numerous Uzbeks had fled to Kyrgyzstan after Andijan. According to the Uzbek government, the group included escaped prisoners and suspects in the Andijan investigation. The State Department pressured Kyrgyzstan to evacuate this group in its entirety. Secretary Rice played a prominent role in the effort. On July 28, Romania accepted the Uzbek asylum seekers, and a first group of them was airlifted the very same day. Nicholas Burns, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, asserted to the *New York Times* that the State Department had "energetically supported the effort". This strained U.S.-Uzbek relations even further.

On July 29, the Uzbek Foreign Ministry sent a note to the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent informing it that Uzbekistan was abrogating the agreement permitting the use of K2 and asked the U.S. to vacate the base within 180 days, as stipulated by the SOFA. The note did not include any reasons. It seems Karimov wanted to keep his options open, since he did not announce this ‘eviction notice’ publicly. The fact that the note was delivered by courier and not through the usual mode of delivery through Uzbek officials also implied that the message had lower status. Nonetheless, knowledge of the notice was quickly leaked in the U.S. On July 31 the *New York Times* wrote that the

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1028 Nicholas Burns quoted in Weisman and Shanker, "Uzbeks Order US from Base in Refugee Rift."
U.S. had been evicted and that the issue had been "a test of the Bush administration as it has tried to balance two of its most prized foreign policy goals: democratization and counterterrorism".\textsuperscript{1030}

On August 1, the Uzbek Foreign Ministry publicly protested the airlift, declaring that "[f]oreign forces showed an 'unprecedented pressure'" on the Kyrgyz leadership.\textsuperscript{1031} The U.S. was never singled out, perhaps hinting that the door was still open. That very same day, Tom Casey, the State Department’s spokesperson, was questioned about why it was not the U.S. that took the initiative to close the base, and whether the reaction of the U.S. to Andijan and the refugee affair was the cause of the eviction. Casey replied that human rights and cooperation in the war on terror were not incompatible and stressed that the history of the U.S.-Uzbek relationship was a demonstration of that.\textsuperscript{1032}

On August 2, the State Department insisted upon the evacuation of a second group of refugees and threatened to withhold $22 million of a pre-scheduled tranche of aid. This was probably the trigger that led Karimov to demand publicly that the U.S. vacate K2 the next day. The announcement made a direct link between the U.S. military presence and the situation in Afghanistan. This link made it difficult to reconsider the decision. As an indication of the bad blood in the relationship, a group Uzbek legislators also lashed out at the U.S. and contended that its presence at K2 attracted international terrorism and damaged the environment. They also accused the U.S. of not properly reimbursing Uzbekistan and of fomenting the overthrow of the government.\textsuperscript{1033}

6.4.8 Rationalizations, Realignments and Rethinking

On August 1, the U.S. made an abrupt move to improve relations with Kazakhstan. President Bush sent a letter to President Nazarbayev praising Kazakhstan’s strong support for U.S. efforts to bring democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan and its "impressive economic performance". He stated that its stability and prosperity served as a model for the region and that he viewed it as a "a strategic partner of the United States in Central Asia".\textsuperscript{1034} The letter, which included a proposal to expand the cooperation in combating terrorism, combined with Rumsfeld’s recent trip to Kyrgyzstan, led observers to specu-
late about whether a major realignment of U.S. policy in Central Asia was being playing out in front of them.

The deteriorating relationship with Uzbekistan had not only led to the eviction notice, but many U.S. funded democratization programs and NGO activities were also suspended. In the U.S. many chose to portray the loss of K2 as a decision to put human rights above military considerations. This was certainly the best way to avoid dealing with any criticism. It fit well with U.S. values and with the idea that supporting authoritarian regimes undermined the war against terror and U.S. credibility in the world. This was a rather convenient choice for many politicians, with the consequence that a ‘who lost Uzbekistan’ debate never really took place. In fact, the eviction could be framed as having increased U.S. influence in the region and U.S. moral credibility in the Islamic world.

On August 2 Nicholas Burns stated that the administration had "made a clear choice" to "stand on the side of human rights" and "felt it was very important [to] speak out clearly on behalf of those who were victims of human rights abuses, particularly concerning the Andijon episode". He also said that they knew that they would be asked to vacate K2. Bases in Central Asia were still necessary, according to Burns, and he stressed that the Coalition still had access to bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Burns also stated that the U.S. still had interests in "good relations" and "continued counter-terrorism and military cooperation" with Uzbekistan. Despite Burns’ statements, it is noteworthy that after the U.S. approached Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, human rights organisations began to fear that the U.S. would begin to depreciating human rights in those countries to assure access.

Downplaying the strategic importance of K2 and citing fallback positions became talking points for DoD. On August 1, the DoD’s Chief Spokesman Lawrence Di Rita stated that it was "important to remember" that they had "developed a number of [other] important relations in that part of the world over the past few years". "We always think ahead. We’ll be fine", declared Donald Rumsfeld. Most observers concluded that DoD was putting on a brave face and perceived these statements simply as damage control, especially since they contradicted DoD’s earlier position. Over the years the irreplaceable nature of K2, including how well if fit into the lily pad approach, had been emphasized. There had also been reports that efforts to transform K2 into a long-term facility were already underway during the

106 Col. James Yonts, a Military Spokesman, declared that U.S. “ability to execute combat operations (...) [would] not be hindered” emphasizing that assets would be transferred to other bases Daly et al., (2006), p. 106.
summer of 2004.\footnote{1038} It was clear that the loss of K2 was a blow to the Coalition’s logistical capability. The alternatives were not able to sufficiently replace K2, and there were uncertainties, since both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had endorsed the July SCO statement. From a geopolitical perspective, closure of K2 was the first real success for Russia and China in consolidating their influence in the region and pushing the U.S. back. It is interesting that the major concern in the Congressional Research Service report on the K2 closure was whether the cooler security ties with Uzbekistan would set back the war on terror and other U.S. interests in Central Asia.\footnote{1039}

Moreover, a couple of month earlier a report by the Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the U.S. or the Overseas Basing Commission (OBC) was made public. It stated that the existing bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan had been useful for the OEF and emphasized that K2 served "as a major aerial port of departure to support special ops, intelligence reconnaissance, and surveillance, and tactical and strategic airlift".\footnote{1040} There was no doubt about its importance. The report further stated that a number of geopolitical questions had to be answered before the U.S. commits to seeking new long-term or ‘enduring’ FOS or CSL, such as: would bases (FOSs and CLSs) "incite Muslim populations within the region"?; would they "inflame terrorists groups or cause a migration of terrorist groups into the areas where they would be established"?; would they "draw the U.S. into taking sides on regional disputes that may aggravate relations with neighboring nations"?; and, how would China and Russia react? It also asked the fundamental question that had not yet been sufficiently answered, despite it first being posed almost 15 years earlier: "Exactly what constitutes vital U.S. interests in the area that would require long-term U.S. presence?"\footnote{1041} The OBC stated that it could not make any recommendations until this question was answered, and the final words in the report were a request for clarity regarding U.S. strategy toward CASC:

The nature of these issues call for an interagency review process to ensure critical U.S. national security interests pertaining to energy, shoring up and promoting democratic institutions, and stabilizing the regions are best met with U.S. military forces in the region or through other means. The Commission urges the U.S. Congress to seek answers to these questions not only from the Department of Defense, but other affected agencies before committing

\footnote{1038} Conversations with Frederick Starr. Ariel Cohen’s testimony in late 2003 also indicated that the DoD wanted to do this. See "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability."
\footnote{1039} Nicol, "Uzbekistan’s Closure of the Airbase and Karshi-Khanabad."
\footnote{1041} OBC, "May 2005 report to the President and the U.S. Congress."
funds to establish a long-term military presence and basing locations within the region.1042

This was illustrative of U.S. strategy toward the region. There were still no clear answers to fundamental questions regarding its real importance and how and what to prioritize.

It was, however, clear that the DoD cherished its relationships in the region. In September, it informed Congress of its intentions to reimburse Uzbekistan with $23 million in Coalition support funds for the use of K2 from January 2003 through March 2005. Objecting to this, six Senators — Biden, DeWine, Graham, Leahy, McCain and Sununu — sent a letter to Secretary Rumsfeld arguing that money should only be disbursed when Uzbekistan renewed its anti-terrorism cooperation. They also warned that this quick payout could give the impression that the U.S. "overlooks massacres" and rewards a "dictator" who evicts U.S. forces.1043 A few days later, Uzbekistan hosted a joint military exercise with Russia on its territory. This was the first such exercise since its independence. On September 23, the Tajik President publicly declared that there was no possibility that it would host any U.S. troops. Three days later, Gazprom announced an arrangement regarding Uzbekistan’s gas export. For many observers it was clear that Russia was re-establishing power in the region.

Despite the criticism and tit-for-tat reprisals, the U.S. still had an interest in good relations with Uzbekistan. In late September, an interagency delegation led by Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, visited Tashkent. This was the highest level visit since the relationship began to sour in the aftermath of the Kyrgyz revolution. Just before the visit, State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack stated that discussions about continued access to K2 would be held. He explained that U.S. "strategic interest" and its interest in promoting democracy and human rights "intersect[ed]" and asserted that the U.S. was "not going to sacrifice one for the other".1044

In Tashkent, Fried emphasized the indivisibility of U.S. security and democracy interests and declared this to be the administration’s "fundamental principle of foreign policy". When faced with a question concerning K2, Fried evasively stated that the issue "came up only in passing" and that the purpose of the trip was not to ask Karimov to reconsider but to determine the basis for future cooperation. Many believed that the $23 million that had been appropriated to reimburse the Uzbeks was actually a payment to maintain U.S. access. When a reporter asked if the Uzbeks wanted more, Fried replied that the money was for services rendered and that we "do not pay for

1042 OBC, "May 2005 report to the President and the U.S. Congress."
1043 Nichol, Uzbekistan’s Closure of the Airbase and Karshi-Khanabad.
the right to have a base.\footnote{Daniel Fried, "Press Conference of Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried," Tashkent, Sept 27, 2005.} The trip was unsuccessful. If McCormack’s briefing was correct, some attempt at regaining access to the base was made, but failed. This is also substantiated by the fact that Uzbekistan was immediately put in the cooler after the trip.

On September 29, voices in Congress called for a suspension of the $23 million payment and argued that the U.S. should support the international effort to try President Karimov in the ICC.\footnote{Nichol, Uzbekistan’s Closure of the Airbase and Karshi-Khanabad.} A day later, the EU imposed sanctions against Uzbekistan, including an arms embargo. Shortly thereafter, an amendment to the Defense Appropriations for FY2006 was approved that placed a one-year hold on any payment for services rendered at K2. When introducing the amendment, Senator McCain stated it was a means to censure Uzbekistan for terminating access to K2 while the mission in Afghanistan was "clearly unfinished".\footnote{Nichol, Uzbekistan’s Closure of the Airbase and Karshi-Khanabad.}

Meanwhile, Secretary Rice decided to leave Uzbekistan off of her itinerary for her upcoming visit to the region. On October 7, Daniel Fried stated that this was a "wise decision". He explained that it was important to devote energy to countries "where there is a greater chance in the near term of progress" and that "these decisions are made on the basis of what you think you can achieve". According to Fried, Uzbekistan was not even a "close call".\footnote{Daniel Fried, "Briefing on Secretary Rice’s Upcoming Trip to Central Asia and Afghanistan," October 7, 2005.} When asked about the competition in the region, Fried gave a familiar answer:

We are not -- we do not look at Central Asia as an object in a great game. We do not look at this as a zero sum contest between us, the Russians and Chinese. We have our own interests. Our own interests do overlap significantly with what I believe are Russian interests, that is, we both oppose Islamist extremism and terrorism (...). Whether the Russians regard this as a zero sum game is another matter and you should put the question to them (...). But we do not look at this as a zero sum game.\footnote{Fried, "Briefing on Secretary Rice’s Upcoming Trip to Central Asia and Afghanistan."}

En route to Central Asia, Secretary Rice told reporters that Central Asia was "in transition" and that Uzbekistan "was out of step". She also emphasized the "inextricable link" between democracy and security and declared that the U.S. was not willing to choose between them. She avoided questions about Uzbekistan "moving back into the Russian orbit" and said that the U.S. had "no problem" with Russia’s relations in the region and that the U.S. had "good discussions with the Russians" about it.\footnote{Condoleezza Rice, "Briefing En Route to Shannon, Ireland," October 10, 2005.}
While the last U.S. aircraft and personnel departed from K2 in November, Uzbekistan announced that it was planning to join the Eurasian Economic Community. This would further decrease U.S. influence in the region. Despite the loss of K2, DoD defied Congress and planned to go ahead with the $23 million payment. This was a message that was not directed primarily at Uzbekistan. The "lily-padded" approach was a highly prioritized policy at DoD, and Secretary Rumsfeld was continuously involved in various stages of negotiations on long-term basing agreements with a number of countries. The payment was a signal to others to keep their political resolve by demonstrating that the U.S. followed through on its obligations to its allies.  

On November 14, Russia and Uzbekistan signed a treaty that had all the hallmarks of an alliance. It was described as creating an "alliance-type relationship" and included language such as: "An act of aggression by any state or group of states against one of the parties will be viewed as an act of aggression against both parties". It included provisions that would protect Uzbekistan against threats from non-state actors and could be invoked for preventive and pre-emptive actions. Furthermore, it opened up for a Russian military presence in Uzbekistan and envisioned Russia assisting in modernizing the Uzbek military.

At the signing in Moscow, Karimov remarked that Uzbekistan was in need of cooperation with a powerful country that would ensure its protection. He also declared that the treaty strengthened Russia’s position in Central Asia and that "no-one [would] be able to dispute Russia’s presence in the region". Karimov’s visit was surrounded by rumours of a potential Russian military base in Uzbekistan and major economic deals regarding the exploration and development of Uzbekistan’s oil and gas as well as substantial Russian investments in its manufacturing industries. This was happening while U.S. forces were packing their equipment at K2, dramatically demonstrating the switch of alliances.

On January 19, 2006, a deal was signed between Gazprom and Uzbekistan regarding the development of gas fields located in western Uzbekistan. It stipulated that the gas would reach world markets via Russia and not via any future Caspian pipeline that Kazakhstan might build to Baku. Less than a week later Uzbekistan, formally applied to join the EEC.

6.4.9 Rethinking and Moving Forward

In late summer of 2005, Frederick Starr argued in Foreign Affairs that there was a U.S. "attention deficit" at a time when the wider region was at "a turn-

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1051 It has also been suggested that this payment was a bureaucratic blunder. See Nathan Hodge, "Base Hypocrisy: Why did the U.S. send millions to a dictator who kicked us out?," Slate, December 8, 2005.

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ing point". He warned that while Congress was pushing for reducing assistance to Afghanistan with the argument that the principal objective of getting rid of the Taliban had been accomplished, Central Asian leaders were "beginning to hedge their bets", assuming that U.S. attention would soon shift elsewhere.

Starr argued for a reinvigorated engagement and the creation of a region-wide forum for planning, coordinating and implementing U.S. programs. He also wanted to "redraw the region", arguing that U.S. geographical delineations had impeded the development of a coherent policy, since it had prevented policymakers from recognizing Afghanistan and the five other Central Asian states as "comprising a single region". The State Department grouped the five Central Asian states with Russia and placed Afghanistan in South Asia, while CentCom placed Afghanistan together with the Central Asia. U.S. counternarcotics programs were run by five agencies, with no adequate coordinating mechanism either between them or on a regional level. These and other bureaucratic delineations reduced the ability of the U.S to forge regional success based on the developments in Afghanistan. The lack of a regional vision in terms of including Afghanistan not only led to a mechanical and ineffective allocation of resources, but also "tempted leaders to play on perceived inconsistencies in U.S. policy to gain advantages over their neighbors", Starr argued. As usual, he also underscored the potential gains.1054

The idea of viewing Afghanistan as a link between Central and South Asia and re-drawing the map by integrating it into a single region soon began to influence U.S. policy. On her October visit to Central Asia, Secretary Rice explicitly connected Afghanistan to Central and South Asia:

Afghanistan needs the full partnership of this entire region to overcome the destitution that tyrants, and extremists, and warlords, and civil war have compounded over several decades. A secure and prosperous Afghanistan, which anchors Central Asia and links it to South Asia, is essential to the future.1055

Later in October, Daniel Fried spoke at the House Subcommittee of the Middle East and Central Asia about the need to revitalize the trade links of the ancient Silk Road and "provide Central Asia with greater access to the global economy through both South Asia and Europe".1056

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1054 Starr wrote: With leadership the U.S. could "be the midwife for the rebirth of an entire world region", but with disinterest and passivity Afghanistan could sink backward returning the region to a "field of fierce geopolitical competition". Frederick Starr, "A Partnership for Central Asia," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 84, No. 4 (Jul/Aug 2005).
In February 2006, the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs was created through a restructuring at the State Department. Richard A. Boucher was appointed as its Assistant Secretary. He stated before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "Afghanistan, at the center of this region, can be a bridge that links South and Central Asia, rather than a barrier that divides them [because] South and Central Asia belong together". The idea behind the restructuring was to "foster increased cooperation among the countries of Central Asia and South Asia" and "to build on the Central Asian states’ natural partnership with Afghanistan". When Rice commented upon the planned restructuring, she stated that the former organization "really was an artefact of their having been states of the Soviet Union" and that moving the Central Asia states into the South Asia bureau represented an attempt "to think of this region as one that will need to be integrated". She added that this would "be a very important goal."  

This idea was also reflected in the National Security Strategy published in March 2006. It declared that "South and Central Asia is a region of great importance where American interests and values are engaged as never before", that U.S. "relations with the nations of South Asia [could] serve as a foundation for deeper engagement throughout Central Asia" and that Afghanistan increasingly would "assume its historical role as a land-bridge between South and Central Asia, connecting these two vital regions". Note the word vital. 

Boucher was also the first to testify when the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia held a hearing in May appropriately entitled "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities Part II". At this hearing he described the Central Asian states as "very strategically important" to the U.S. and explained that the restructuring provided "a fresh perspective" on how they "fit into the broader region." Despite him describing Uzbekistan as "sliding backwards", Boucher stated that the U.S. sought a broad relationship based on the Framework. However, immediately after pointing this out, he brought up U.S. calls for an Andijan investigation. Even though he signalled an increased focus on Kazakhstan and spoke of it as a "regional anchor", his testimony in general had a familiar content. The U.S. strategy rested on "three integrated pillars": security cooperation; econ-

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1061 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)," Hearing Before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 109th Congress, Second Session, April 26, 2006.
1062 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)."
nomical and energy interests; and, political and economic reform. These were "mutually reinforcing" but had to be balanced carefully. He said very little, though, about how to do this. Boucher also underscored the value of the FSA, the CTRP and multiple pipelines.1063

When Steve Chabot (R-OH) asked flat out what policy the U.S. had to "prevent Russia and China and especially Iran from seeking to dominate the region", Boucher replied: "I think the first thing is that we do not see it as a competition with Russia and China". He further stated that they were not necessarily against U.S. presence, since it contributed to the stability of the entire region, which was in "all our interests". When SCO was brought up, Boucher stated diplomatically that "we have been rather displeased with some of the positions they have taken". James MacDougall, Deputy Assistant Secretary, DoD, pointed out that the U.S. was following the organization "closely" and hoped it would not take an "anti-Western, anticoalition, anti-US direction".1064 MacDougall also agreed with Boucher’s description of the three pillars, stressing that "no one objective trumps another" and that the effort had to be carefully balanced since "failure in one will undermine the chance of success in another".

In his testimony, MacDougall argued that access was still a necessity, since the strategic airlifts needed to sustain large scale operations in Afghanistan could "not be done without overflight and basing rights". Therefore, the cooperation of the Central Asian states was "critical". MacDougall also stressed the importance of the U.S.-Kyrgyz relationship and reported that they were "working hard to maintain our cooperative arrangements" and were involved in negotiations regarding Manas.1065

It was apparent that the dilemma had not disappeared. Access was still of great, even critical, importance, and the U.S. was still struggling with the problem of having few alternatives. The Kyrgyz negotiators, of course, knew this, and the rent for Manas had increased accordingly. When questions surfaced about the increase and what would happen if the U.S. refused pay and thereby was obligated to leave the base, Boucher answered that the U.S. was willing pay. MacDougall stated that losing Manas "would be significant" for military operations.1066

At the hearing, few had anything positive to say about Uzbekistan. The situation presents "a rather dark and ugly picture", and the country is heading in a "backward direction", declared Elizabeth Dugan, Vice President, IRI. Paula Schriefer, Freedom House, testified that Uzbekistan received the worst possible score on its freedom scale, a score shared by Turkmenistan and only six other countries in the world.1067 Martha Brill Olcott described the opportunities for the U.S. to influence developments in the region as "relatively

1063 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)."
1064 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)."
1065 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)."
1066 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)."
1067 "U.S. Policy in Central Asia: Balancing Priorities (Part II)."
circumscribed". Her assessment was that the U.S. "‘sticks’ [had] been ineffective". She declared straightforwardly that these countries would not develop into any western style democracy "until a new generation, one educated and socialized since the collapse of communism takes power", since the current leadership "share few democratic values" with the U.S.

The idea of the necessity of a generational change to achieve democracy had gained influence in the debates regarding CASC. Olcott also argued that it would be a "mistake to romanticize the prospect of a ‘color revolution’", underscoring that regime change of that kind would "not necessarily produce a democratic outcome”.

All in all, the hearing indicated that the U.S. still had the ambition of shaping the future of these countries, and it refused to acknowledge or play a zero-sum game in the region, in the hope of transcending it.

Uzbekistan’s flirt with Russia was only temporary. In order to pursue its multi-vectored strategy, it soon tried to repair its relationship with the U.S. The country’s reputation in the U.S. was, however, dismal. Policymakers did not want to be associated with it, and no visits were made. There was no real ‘who lost Uzbekistan’ debate. The DoD, which had a real interest in preserving the relationship, had downplayed its importance. The fact that many in the U.S. had framed the loss of K2 as a symbol of U.S. values made it even more difficult to re-establish relations quickly, and there was a reluctance to respond actively to Uzbekistan’s initial overtures.

As an indication of the standing of Central Asia, John McCain and Christopher Smith announced, near the anniversary of Andijan, their intention to reintroduce legislation on democracy in Central Asia entitled: "The Central Asia Democracy And Human Rights Promotion Act". The bill would, among other things, prevent any U.S. funding to Uzbekistan until there was "considerable progress" on human rights and a "credible international investigation" of the violence in Andijan. Smith acknowledged that Central Asia faced a threat but argued that Karimov’s "exclusive reliance on repression", "war against Muslims" and "pervasive torture" only made the situation worse and "probably supplied cadres for radical and terrorist organizations".

McCain, who by that time was regarded as a contender for the GOP nomination in the 2008 presidential election, went further. He described the Karimov regime as "reminiscent of the Stalin era" and undermining U.S. interests in the region. He urged the U.S. to follow and to go beyond the EU’s sanctions policy, which included an arms embargo and a ban on visas for officials responsible for Andijan, as well as to freeze the assets of Uzbek officials, including their families, involved in gross human rights violations. McCain had for a long time argued for a tougher stance toward Russia, and

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he also used the occasion to call upon President Bush not to attend the upcoming July G8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia. It was clear to McCain that Putin was undermining U.S. efforts in the region and "attempt[ed] to somehow reconstitute the old Russian empire."\(^{1069}\)

The sanctions proposal, however, fizzled out much due to the general 'Central Asia fatigue’ that had begun in 2005. The region was no longer of interest, and the administration’s attention was focused elsewhere. In August 2005, hurricane Katrina had mercilessly struck the country, and the situation in Iraq was deteriorating. In 2006 the insurgent violence increased even further, dominating the agenda. In mid-term elections the Democrats won by a landslide, taking over both the Senate and House. The administration was now more constrained than ever before, and the new Congress showed little enthusiasm for any new initiatives in the CASC region.

Even though the relationship was severely damaged, neither the U.S. nor Uzbekistan withdrew from the Framework. It continued to be the basis for the relationship. Then, when out of the limelight and without any high profile announcements or high-level visits, a healing process began.

The goals in the region were now more modest. The hope of changing the existing regimes had suffered a blow. The idea that a generational change was necessary in order to achieve democracy grew even stronger, and the emphasis was now on long-term opportunities. If the U.S. was unable to change the regimes, it could at least help to create ‘a balance of power that favours freedom’ and lay the groundwork for change. The means for this included encouraging foreign investments, poverty alleviation, assistance in establishing the socioeconomic basis for sustained political reform and preparation for succession and generational change. The last point entailed more focus on training the next generation through academic and professional exchange programs. One of the efforts to rebuild the relationship was the revival of the Trade Infrastructure Framework Agreement (TIFA). This, combined with the restructuring of the State Department, led to some new projects that were beneficial for both parties, since they enabled Uzbek and other Central Asian companies to become more involved in the infrastructural recovery and rebuilding of Afghanistan.

6.5 Analysis

This part consists of an analysis of the George W. Bush Administration’s strategy toward CASC based on the proposed framework. The analysis will begin with an argument about how the changed international environment affected U.S. strategic culture. A section about presidential leadership and domestic politics comes next. This is followed by two sections where I show how the administration related to the paradigms and subcultures and how its

\(^{1069}\) Corwin, "Uzbekistan: U.S. Lawmakers Call for Sanctions."
strategy was shaped by them. Then comes a conclusions section where I explain what the U.S. strategy toward CASC was, including an assessment of its consistency and coherence and how well the framework fared.

6.5.1 The International Environment and U.S. Strategic Culture

The disintegration of the Soviet Union entailed a dramatic shift in the international distribution of power. During the early 1990s, the international environment had been somewhat murky. However, when George W. Bush assumed office, the U.S. was undisputedly the world’s only superpower. The distance between the U.S. and other countries was shrinking, though. China displayed an awe-inspiring economic growth. So did India. The demand for natural resources was quickly accelerating, leading to rising prices. This reinvigorated Russia’s economy. The rivals India and Pakistan had developed nuclear weapons, and the U.S. disregard for state sovereignty during the Clinton presidency probably accelerated this development. The interventions during the 1990s had displayed U.S. predominance in military technology, and George W. Bush campaigned on the issue of modernizing the military, thus further increasing this gap. The U.S. was clearly the state least constrained by the international environment.

The idea that the U.S. had won the Cold War was firmly rooted. The U.S. Cold War strategy of engagement and promotion of democracy and economic openness continued to be highly regarded. The Clinton years did not change this, and the paradigm of liberalism remained dominant. However, the disappearance of the Soviet threat had strengthened the paradigm of non-entanglement, and the pressure to scale down U.S. international commitments increased during the Clinton years. Clinton both fought against and adapted to this pressure. Vice President Al Gore promised to continue to fight, if elected president in 2000. George W. Bush, on the other hand, campaigned on the issue of reducing U.S. international commitments and making a lighter footprint on the world. His campaign clearly focused on domestic issues. However, like most republicans, he catered to the military constituency and promised to keep the U.S. military strong.

It can be argued that the end of the Cold War strengthened the Abstentionists and the Liberal Internationalists and weakened the American Realists and the Assertive Patriots. The disappearance of a threat works of favour of the Abstentionists, and increases in U.S. power work in favour of the ambitious Liberal Internationalists. Without the Soviet Union or other threats – Russia was weak, and terrorism was not perceived as a real threat – the influence of the populist Assertive Patriots over strategy was in decline. The increase in the relative power of the U.S. made the American Realist’s notion of scarcity and the necessity for trade-offs less appealing and thus weakened that subculture. These trends began under George H. W. Bush and were reinforced during the Clinton years.
Even though the U.S. was clearly the world’s most powerful country, its trajectory was changing, and in the late 1990s the power gap was shrinking. This weakened the paradigm of liberalism in relation to the paradigm of non-entanglement. In light of this, the appeal of the George W. Bush campaign promise to narrow the definition of U.S. interests is understandable.

The attack on 9/11 was a dramatic external event. It was the greatest attack on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor. It created a perceptual shock for the foreign policy establishment as well as the American people at large. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, there was a real demand for a reassessment of not only U.S. strategy, but also of fundamental assumptions about international security and how the world works. The window of opportunity was now wide open, both for proposing policy changes and for transforming the state-centric discourse of international relations. Public interest in foreign affairs quite naturally increased, and a lot attention was aimed at what was perceived as new: terrorism, militant Islam and non-state actors.

9/11 had a profound impact on U.S. strategic culture. It altered the relative influence of the different subcultures. The attacks signalled the emergence of a new threat. This dramatically strengthened the influence of the Assertive Patriots, as millions of Americans cried out for revenge. The most symbolic buildings as well as and civilians had been targeted, effectively demonstrating that neither the country nor its citizens were safe. This severely weakened the Abstentionists.

After the attack, the American people rallied around President Bush. His domestic approval rating skyrocketed to over 85 percent. The country received overwhelming international support. Headlines in both France and Italy read: ‘We Are All Americans’. The U.S. was the most powerful state, and now it also commanded the sympathy of hundreds of millions of people around the world. President Bush thus had substantial leeway in formulating a U.S. response to the attacks. However, he was also under enormous pressure to act. U.S. strategic culture had both an enabling and a constraining effect on the choices.

The U.S. received enormous international support for OEF in Afghanistan. The Iraq War and its prelude, however, led to a dramatic decline in support, both domestically and internationally. By committing troops to both Iraq and Afghanistan, the President stretched the military to such an extent that U.S. superiority was diminished. As it was tied down in two theatres, other states began to take advantage of this situation, reminding the U.S. of the pressure of the international environment.

The Iraq war was exhausting. The deteriorating situation there combined with the limited prospects for creating some kind of stable order in Afghanistan led to an increasing number of Americans beginning to lean toward Abstentionism, and the notions of non-entanglement and disengagement experienced a revival.
6.5.2 Presidential Leadership and Domestic Politics

When it comes to determining the relative strength of the paradigms and subcultures, presidential leadership is important. Even though foreign affairs was not a prioritized issue in the 2000 Presidential election, George W. Bush’s ideas about U.S. strategy differed from those of Clinton and Gore. His commitment to narrow U.S. interests and a scaling down of international commitments as well as his promise to keep the military strong and not to relinquish any U.S. sovereignty to international institutions clearly indicated that he sought a U.S. strategy far less influenced by Liberal Internationalism.

George W. Bush was not particularly interested in foreign affairs. His focus was on tax cuts and education reform. However, in order to compensate for his lack of foreign affairs experience, he put together a highly regarded team to guide him. Most of his inner circle consisted of Cold War warriors. It was decided early that if they were going to use force, they were going to act far more assertively than Clinton.

During the period studied, President George W. Bush was not constrained in a way comparable to Clinton. He did not win the popular vote in the 2000 election. However, the Republicans controlled the House and the Senate was evenly split when he assumed office.1070 After 9/11 the constraints on the President diminished, as the American people rallied behind him and the conservatives seized on Islamic terrorism as the new Communism, effectively unifying the divided Republican Party. This gave the administration leeway to deal with the terrorism threat as it saw fit. With little debate, Congress voted on September 14 to give the President stunningly great latitude to retaliate.1071 President Bush soon began restructuring the government. He launched Operation Enduring Freedom with massive public support.

The debate regarding whether to view terrorism as problem of criminality to be dealt with by legal means or as a national security problem to be dealt with by military means had been going on for years. After 9/11, though, President Bush quickly made it clear that the country was at war and that the military would play a significant role in a global war on terror. He also began to refer to himself as a war-time President. This was partly a matter of leadership and partly a matter of accommodation to pressure coming primarily from the Assertive Patriots. In the November 2002 midterm elections, the Republican Party solidified its power, taking over the Senate and expanding its majority in the House. This strengthened the administration’s

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1070 There was a 50–50 split until June, 2001, when Sen. James Jeffords (R-VT) switched to Independent status and announced that he would caucus with the Democrats, giving the Democrats a one-seat advantage.

position. In the 2004 presidential election, George W. Bush won the popular vote, and his party won seats in both chambers.

Neoconservatives had for years promoted a rather unpopular perspective on the U.S. role in the world, which included a strong Liberal Internationalist component. Their focus on security interdependence and argument for a strong, energetic, unconstrained and value-driven America became a "ready-made approach to the world" after 9/11. It immediately gained traction and began indicating a direction forward for the administration and the country.\footnote{Robert Kagan quoted in George Packer, *The Assassin’s Gate: America in Iraq* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2005), p. 38.} George W. Bush was not, and had never been, a neoconservative, but he now began, to some extent, to sound like one. He placed an extraordinary emphasis on security interdependence, rejected the notion that non-entanglement would make the country safe, made clear that the real remedy to the problem of terrorism was democracy and freedom and tried to prepare the American people for a long and costly struggle.

As compared to Clinton, George W. Bush put more effort into shaping the strategic culture and was less accommodating. Both the domestic and the international environments had changed. The President often tried to explain to the American people how 9/11 had shown that the world was not the same anymore. The basic argument was that there was a pre-9/11- and a post-9/11 world and that the rules governing the former no longer applied. The world now operated according to another set of rules. The U.S. had to rethink and adapt.

George W. Bush fought against isolationist tendencies. With his unilateralist turn, he increased the influence of the Assertive Patriots on U.S. strategic culture. He was, though, not successful in changing its overall direction. The high costs and lack of success in Afghanistan and Iraq, with thousands of U.S. casualties and controversies such as the Abu Ghraib scandal, disenchanted many Americans. The idea of narrowing the definition of U.S. interest and scaling back international commitments was probably taken more seriously by elites at the end of the Bush Presidency than at any other time in the post-Cold War era.\footnote{After Vietnam and the Nixon Presidency, many began to re-evaluate Abstentionism, however, the threat of the Soviet Union effectively limited the influence of this subculture.} Madeleine Albright, for instance, remarked that George W. Bush had given democratization a bad name. The paradigm of liberalism remained dominant, but the paradigm of non-entanglement had grown even stronger.

In a dramatic reversal, George W. Bush began his tenure trying to reduce U.S. international ambitions and to make a lighter footprint but wound up speaking about ending tyranny and creating a balance of power that favours freedom. This would probably not have happened if he had had a well thought out view of the world when he took office. There is no evidence that President Bush had any personal interest in CASC, and the administration
lagged behind in appointing people to deal with it. If it had been an important area for the President, this would certainly not have happened.

6.5.3 The George W. Bush Administration and the Paradigm of Liberalism

There can be no doubt that the rhetoric of the George W. Bush Administration displayed a strong connection to the paradigm of liberalism. Almost all lengthier foreign affairs speeches by the President and by representatives of his administration included the core tenets of that paradigm. The virtues of democracy and economic openness were a constant theme. This enabled the administration to gain support for its policies. In many ways, President Bush took Clinton’s democratization agenda and pushed it further when he spoke about transforming the Middle East and ending tyranny.

Ideas from this paradigm were at the base of this vision. It relied heavily on the democratic peace theory, the notion of security interdependence and the notion of ‘power of example’, which logically resembled the domino theory. According to the administration, a democratic Iraq would make the U.S. and the world more secure. It would also serve as a powerful example to the wider Middle East. It would strengthen and embolden democratic forces in neighbouring countries, thus increasing the pressure on authoritarian regimes to reform. The administration not only argued that democracy in Iraq was in the interest of the U.S., but also that the country had a moral responsibility to promote freedom.

The administration shared many of the traits of the paradigm of liberalism. It agreed on most of the core assumptions and had similar goals. The administration did, though, part ways with the paradigm to some extent regarding means. The administration regarded international institutions and cooperation as means to an end, not as ends in themselves. This led it prioritize efficiency above process, and, not surprisingly, its unilateralism was harshly criticized. To put it bluntly, for George H. W. Bush the coalition determined the mission, while for George W. Bush the mission determined the coalition. It is, however, important to recognize that the administration often used arguments derived from the paradigm of liberalism to defend its policy choices: why should the U.S. allow authoritarian regimes or states only motivated by their own narrow self-interest to obstruct a mission to end tyranny and spread democracy?

The war in Iraq and the ‘forward strategy of freedom’ are prime examples of how the George W. Bush Administration was influenced by the paradigm of liberalism. There are, though, numerous other examples of its influence on U.S. strategy toward CASC.
When President Bush assumed office, he did not signal any change in the policies that had been put in place by his predecessors. The goal of integrating the CASC region into the community of liberal market democracies remained. The U.S. had a number of FSA funded programs operating in the region. In February 2002, Tajikistan signed the PFP framework, effectively making all of the eight states of CASC partners. The BTC-pipeline was going to be constructed, and U.S. counterterrorism activities in the region continued, including its covert cooperation with the Northern Alliance.

After the administration’s prompt decision to respond militarily to the attacks on 9/11, bases and over-flight rights became overnight far more important than any other declared goal in the region. It brought the region back in the limelight, and it was in relation to this that many became interested in the region. Strategic decisions had to be made, and as a result the projection of U.S. values, such as democratic reform, was temporarily demoted by the administration. That did not in any way mean that those issues disappeared. Rhetorically, the administration still stood behind the reform work. On September 20, 2001, Lynn Pascoe stated that the U.S. would "be a force for fundamental change" throughout CASC. However, in terms of concrete actions, it prioritized security. This was immediately criticized. There were widespread concerns over how the war and U.S. short-term priority on security would affect the reform work in the region from the very outset of OEF.

The perceived trade-off between security, on the one hand, and human rights and democratic reform, on the other, effectively framed the debate about U.S. strategy toward the region. When military operations in Afghanistan began, the debate about whether the U.S. should push the Central Asian regimes on democratic reforms or should be patient and value their support was already on going. It would intensify in the following years.

The main problem for the administration and Congress was always how to balance its support for democratic and economic reform with the goal of security and stability in the region. This was related to the extremely difficult question of how to conduct a war on terror effectively while simultaneously upholding U.S. values. Questions concerning how the paradigm of liberalism constrains and enables the U.S. are at the core of its war on terror. If it is assumed that U.S. strategy is only guided by security concerns or maximizing power, how do you explain this preoccupation with balancing security and upholding democratic and liberal values?

The paradigm of liberalism clearly had a constraining effect. It seemed to be extremely difficult, not just for the administration, but for members of Congress and bureaucrats as well, even to enter into a discussion about how to prioritize between security interests and support for democratic reform and human rights. To be perceived as downplaying the latter was something everybody seemed desperate to avoid. The default position for almost everybody involved in the policy process, except for a few independent analysts, seemed to be that security and democratic- and economic reform were all
equally important and, in some way, inextricable linked to each other and mutually reinforcing. How they were linked was never really explained in detail. It was, though, almost always accepted. This fit perfectly with Huntington’s notion of the American ‘unity of goodness’.

Almost nobody even approached the question of how to prioritize by making distinctions between the short, intermediate and long term, with the result in that most ended up with the notion that the U.S. should somehow do everything all at once. It seemed to be difficult even to say that the U.S. ought to prioritize security over human rights and democracy in the short term. Given this preference for avoiding distinctions, details and prioritizations, it can be argued that there was no real serious debate about strategy toward CASC.

Moreover, one of the most common argument regarding U.S. strategy toward CASC and the war on terror in general was that there was no conflict between U.S. values and U.S. security interests, since the best means of fighting and resisting terror are democracy, freedom and human rights. This fussy and abstract argument may be true in the long run, but it can hardly be described as good practical advice on how to deal with concrete problems that involve scarcity and the balancing of means and ends in the face of potential conflict. The fact that a substantial number of people stood behind it, or at least did not disagree with it, is a clear indication that the power the paradigm of liberalism was so pervasive that it was difficult to have an open strategy discussion. The debate about CASC, including public declarations about U.S. strategy toward it, strengthens the argument that strategy is only perceived as legitimate in the U.S. to the extent that it promotes liberal goals abroad.

It is important to recognize that it was to a considerable extent the discrepancy between U.S. values and the practices at Abu Ghraib that caused the massive uproar, and not the practices in themselves. Most Americans know that abuse of prisoners is common in many countries. However, they believe that the U.S. is supposed to be better and stand up for certain values. What happened at Abu Ghraib was totally against the essence of Liberal Internationalism, dishonourable for many Assertive Patriots and evidence for Abstentionists that their institutions and soldiers had been corrupted as an effect of an unnecessary military engagement. It was diametrically opposite from how many Americans perceive what their country is all about. In that sense, the description of these practices as un-American is true.

In order to understand the uproar regarding Abu Ghraib, the extraordinary rendition program and the accusations of torture by proxy, one must recognize that culture matters. It also reveals a very important thing about U.S. strategy: the particular culture of the U.S. makes it difficult for the U.S. to fight dirty. There are numerous examples of constraints that are institutionalized, ranging from rules of engagement, codes to minimize civilian casualties bans on torture and assassinations to U.S. adherence to the Hague
and Geneva Conventions. Then there are the risks and costs associated with crossing the line of ‘acceptable behaviour’, which are also set by the culture. Waterboarding, for instance, was not explicitly illegal but nevertheless caused a politically costly uproar. The paradigm constrains certain actions and forces others into secrecy. One can only speculate about how many non-actions its influence has led to. It is important to recognize that it constrains by associating costs with actions. It does not directly prevent actions. The whole point of the secret rendition program is to avoid self-imposed constraints.

Moreover, the idea that repression and fighting dirty is counterproductive resonates well with both Liberal Internationalist and Abstentionist sensitivities. To argue to the contrary is always associated with a certain risk and goes against the idea that all good things go together. This separates the U.S. from many other powers, and it complicated U.S. relations with CASC regimes.

The George W. Bush Administration, and especially the DoD, clearly perceived Uzbekistan as a strategically important country. Access to bases there was described as crucial for the operation in Afghanistan. Despite this, the administration pushed the regime on reform, and some U.S. assistance was conditioned upon progress. The State Department’s certification process is an example of a self-imposed and institutionalized constraint with origins in the paradigm of liberalism.

Early on, the administration was criticized in the media and by members of Congress for its relationship with the regimes. It was criticized for sending the wrong signals and downplaying democratic values and human rights in order to gain access. It was debated whether Uzbekistan was a valuable partner in the war, or if the relationship was counterproductive, since U.S. support of an authoritarian regime would increase the base of potential recruits to terrorist organizations. The repressive nature of the regimes was at the core of this criticism. To be friendly with such regimes comes with a cost in the U.S. This is another way in which the paradigm constrained U.S. strategy.

It is quite telling that perhaps the most efficient way of defending these relationships was to frame the issue as a choice between two evils. The U.S. had to accommodate these regimes in order to fight an even greater evil in Afghanistan. The DoD defended its relationship with Uzbekistan in a similar fashion. When forced to comment on the interagency tension, Lawrence T. Di Rita declared that if indeed there was any tension, it was between supporting "democracy in Uzbekistan" and supporting "democracy in Afghanistan".

Despite the fact that Uzbekistan had been described as strategically important and the DoD clearly perceived K2 as crucial for OEF, nobody stepped up to defend the country after the violence in Andijan. The U.S. could not, like China or Russia, describe this as a purely ‘internal affair’.

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This deep concern with the internal behaviour of a state is an important part of the paradigm of liberalism. It clearly separates the U.S. from other powers. The U.S. did not recognize Uzbekistan’s own investigation of Andijan as legitimate and pushed for an international one. The State Department also went directly against the Karimov regime and worked with the UN to evacuate Uzbek refugees to Romania. The U.S. did not have to take these actions. They damaged the strategic relationship. And, they are difficult to explain without pointing to the paradigm of liberalism.

The paradigm of liberalism is often enabling for American policymakers when it comes to dealing with criticism and adversity. When Karimov decided to evict the U.S. from K2, many chose to portray the development as the result of the U.S. decision to put human rights and democratic values above military considerations. It was even possible to argue that it was a good thing, since support for authoritarian regimes undermined the struggle in the war on terror and U.S. credibility in the world. Resorting to this argument was not just a way of avoiding criticism; it was an opportunity for politicians to look good. It allowed them to take the moral high ground and to stand on principle. The result of this was that a real ‘who lost Uzbekistan’ debate never took place. It can be regarded as another example of how the paradigm of liberalism serves as an obstacle to open debates about strategy.

After Andijan, not many people wanted to visit or to be associated with Uzbekistan. There were initiatives in Congress to place sanctions on the country. Despite U.S. attention having shifted away from the region and Uzbekistan being described as working against U.S. interests, the ambition to integrate CASC, including Uzbekistan, into the community of liberal market democracies remained. Once out the limelight, the U.S. tried to rebuild its relationship with Uzbekistan through a revival of the TIFA. It is difficult to explain why U.S. ambitions in this land locked area persisted without pointing to U.S. culture.

Another example of the influence of this paradigm on the administration was its overall reluctance to view relations in the region in zero sum terms. Instead, it emphasized shared interests, the potential gains of cooperation and the notion that all states in the region, including its neighbours, could be winners.

Finally, it is well known that the U.S. is heavily influenced by the paradigm of liberalism and other countries try to use this to their advantage. That it difficult for the U.S. to fight dirty can be, and often is, used both tactically and strategically. This influence can also be used by states to gain favours and accommodation by appealing to U.S. sensitivities, for instance by making promises to reform, to release political prisoners, etc. Such actions make it easier for U.S. policymakers to associate themselves with the particular state in question. They also provide arguments for supporters of that particular state within the U.S. They can even help U.S. policymakers, including the President, to score political points, since reform promises can be framed so
that the U.S. appears to have had a positive impact. When the Uzbek’s presented their initial draft of the Framework Agreement, its first sections were devoted to democratization. This can, and was, interpreted as just this kind of tactical gesture that helped to legitimize the relationship in the U.S.

6.5.4 George W. Bush and the Paradigm of Non-Entanglement

George W. Bush was strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism, and his rhetoric about ending tyranny was Liberal Internationalist in nature. His rhetoric also fit well with the values of the Assertive Patriots. He showed them that they could count on him to do the right thing when he said: "There is an old poster out West, as I recall, that said, ‘Wanted Dead or Alive’. In July 2003, he exclaimed "bring them on", with regard to the insurgent attacks in Iraq. Such populist statements were primarily aimed at boosting the confidence of the troops, and they clearly fit well with this particular subculture. However, combined with his Liberal Internationalism, the result was both remarkable and ambiguous. One way to understand it is that George W. Bush tapped into both subcultures in order to build support. This worked, to some extent. At the same time, it resulted in an incoherent message.

When studying both public statements and concrete actions, it becomes clear that the George W. Bush Administration was also strongly committed to non-entanglement. Before 9/11, George W. Bush promised to narrow the definition of U.S. interests and to make a lighter footprint on the outside world. He criticized Clinton for replacing U.S. interests with those of the international community and promised to reverse this. He further argued that the U.S. should not engage in humanitarian interventions and that the military should not be used for nation-building. The administration wanted a strong military, but regarded it as a special instrument only to be used in the national interest. It was heavily influenced by the Powell doctrine. Political goals should be limited and clear, the use of force should be likely to be effective and there should be a clear exit strategy. Moreover, when used, the military should have strong support and means and mission should match.

1076 George W. Bush’s approach was often described as Neo-Wilsonian, since it attempted to reconcile different strands of U.S. culture. It has also been described as a marriage of liberalist goals and realist means.
1077 This shift in U.S. policy had more to do with ideas and assumptions about how the world works than with international pressure. It is difficult to argue otherwise, since there were no dramatic changes in the international distribution of power at the time that can account for this shift.
These ideas fit very well with Assertive Patriot ideas and, to some extent, with Abstentionist and American Realist ideas.

After 9/11, a lot of this changed. However, President Bush never asked the American people to change their lives in any significant way. He put very little effort into educating them on U.S. global responsibilities or urging them to become more involved in U.S. international missions. Instead, he pushed tax cuts and urged the public to go on with their daily lives.

The Taliban was ousted on the cheap. Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan relied on massive airpower and about 110 CIA officers and 316 Special Forces personnel. Most fighting on ground was done by the Northern Alliance and Pakistani forces. The operation did not put many Americans in harm’s way and can be described as low cost and low risk. With so few soldiers on the ground, it was also easy to disengage and exit. The administration was reluctant to commit ground forces, and the commitment to CSAR is a clear indication of the influence of this paradigm on U.S. strategy. The CSAR issue illustrates the administration’s fear of casualties and potential hostages. A U.S. hostage would strengthen non-entanglement arguments and potentially decrease domestic support for the engagement. That combat missions in Afghanistan were delayed because of CSAR indicates the great lengths to which the U.S. goes to minimize such risks. CSAR can also be regarded as a semi-institutionalized doctrine.

Another indication of the influence of this paradigm was the intense pressure to produce quick results. Almost immediately after OEF had begun, U.S. media evoked the Vietnam War, frequently using the ‘Q’ word – quagmire. The fact that this word stirs up so many emotions and associations in the U.S. demonstrates how culture and historical experience matter. There was widespread fear that the country would become entangled in an unwinnable conflict.

After the Taliban regime had been defeated, the administration showed little interest in nation-building and sought to hand the situation over to the UN. In December 2001, ISAF was created by the UN Security Council to secure Kabul and the surrounding areas. It consisted of troops from over 40 countries, with NATO members providing the core of the force. NATO assumed control over the force in 2003.

In Iraq the administration tried to accomplish very ambitious goals with relatively few troops, and post-war planning seemed to have been almost non-existent. There are many reasons for this. One was the administration’s and the uniformed military’s disdain for nation-building in general. But perhaps more interesting is the notion that if the administration had started planning for dealing with a post-war Iraq, a number of difficult questions concerning costs, timetables, exit strategies, etc. would have been raised.

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1078 This was a letdown for neoconservatives, who clearly hoped for the President to educate and prepare the American citizenry for the work of being ‘a benevolent hegemon’.
Well aware of the influence of this paradigm, the administration knew that such questions would drain support for the war before it even began.\footnote{The administration would also most certainly have been criticized for disregarding the political process in the UN by beginning to plan for a post-war Iraq during the negotiations over resolutions.}

There are numerous examples how the paradigm of non-entanglement influenced the administration’s strategy toward CASC. The OEF in Afghanistan relied to a considerable extent on the Northern Alliance. This relationship was managed partly through U.S. personnel located in the region. It also relied heavily on UAVs for reconnaissance launched from Uzbekistan. The entire strategy can be characterized as low cost and low risk.

It was also important for the administration not to step on Putin’s toes. It disregarded his early attempts at thwarting U.S. access to bases and always described its relationship with Russia in relation to the region in positive terms. Its focus on cooperation in the OEF and disregard of any deeper conflicts of interests can be understood in terms of the administration attempting to avoid becoming entangled in the complex Russia-CASC relationship. This is telling of the depth, or perhaps more accurately shallowness, of U.S. interest in the region.

The development of the Article 98 agreement, which almost every state in the region entered into, was typical of the administration’s reluctance to surrender any sovereignty or freedom of action to international institutions. This policy could find support among Assertive Patriots as well as Abstentionists. Moreover, U.S. aid and assistance to the region were very low. Although, it did increase dramatically to some states during 2002, it remained low, especially considering the level of importance that the U.S., at least verbally, attached to the region. Representatives of the administration, U.S agencies and many others had a tendency to overestimate U.S. leverage. However, fact is that the threat to take away the carrot was not much of a threat at all.

Just as under previous administrations, the broad ambition to integrate these states into the community of liberal market democracies persisted. And, just as before, that goal was followed up with funds that did not even come close to being sufficient. The paradigm of non-entanglement checks and counterbalances the paradigm of liberalism. It is also no secret that the U.S. is influenced by the paradigm of non-entanglement. The CASC states were always suspicious of the sweeping commitments being made by U.S. representatives. When the administration indicated its disinterest in nation-building in Afghanistan, the CASC states immediately began hedging their bets. Their approach seemed to be to try to grab as many U.S. concessions as they could, since they figured it would probably not stay committed. It is also well known that both bin Laden and Saddam Hussein seemed to have taken this cultural influence into account when developing their strategies.
When the administration shifted its attention toward Iraq, CASC did not seem that important anymore. As the human rights criticism increased, there were not many that were interested in defending the relationships. Soon, the behavior of Uzbekistan, the primary U.S. ally in the region, became a problem. Instead of defending the regime, the administration remained for the most part silent. When U.S. forces were evicted from K2 and the relationship crumbled, few seemed upset, and there was no real debate about it. This is to some indication of how highly the relationship was valued. It was not worth the political costs of defending it.

The question of how important the CASC region was, or to what lengths the U.S. should go to gain access to it, was never clearly answered. The region was perhaps not worth engaging or getting entangled in. The administration was not particularly interested in engaging the region, except on issues related to the war on terror. The level of assistance was low. When attention shifted to Iraq, the region slipped even further down on the administration’s agenda. From 2005 on, there was a general Central Asia fatigue. There were not many that seemed interested in initiating new projects or in re-engage seriously in the region.

**6.5.5 Conclusions**

The George W. Bush Administration was strongly committed to both the paradigm of liberalism and the paradigm of non-entanglement. George W. Bush was not particularly interested in foreign affairs. However, it can be argued that after 9/11 he temporarily moved the strategic culture in a more Assertive Patriot direction. He did not really alter the general direction of the strategic culture, though, and the influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement increased during the period studied. There was a clear discrepancy between the administration’s rhetoric and concrete actions. George W. Bush made grand statements about promoting democracy and standing up for liberal values, but his actions were not commensurable with his language. The administration’s outlook can be described as an uneasy blend primarily between Liberal Internationalism and Abstentionism and its strategy toward CASC can described as a blend of cooperative security and primacy.

As expected, there was domestic pressure to scale down on international commitments throughout the 1990s. The public’s interest in foreign affairs was in decline, and its support for multilateralism and various interventions was at best limited. This was to a great extent a result of the disappearance of the Soviet threat. Unlike Clinton, George W. Bush’s proposed strategy was more in line with these tendencies during the 2000 presidential election. He wanted to narrow the definition of U.S. interests.
George W. Bush inherited several operational programs, such as CTRP, FSA and PFP as well as a secret war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The BTC was also scheduled for construction. His initial interest in CASC was low. He was far more focused on domestic issues and management of U.S. great power relationships. The administration did not initiate any new comprehensive policy programs toward the region. At the same time, it not show any signs of scaling back any of the existing programs either. U.S. involvement in the region kept growing incrementally, despite the President’s statements about lighter footsteps. The goal of transforming the states of CASC internally and integrating them into the community of liberal market democracies remained, even though it was far from a prioritized issue.

The fact that very little seemed to change in U.S. strategy toward CASC was not surprising for several reasons. The framework is based on the idea that increases in relative power eventually lead to a more ambitious strategy, and the U.S. had now been the only superpower in the world for almost a decade. It further assumes that the Paradigm of Liberalism is the dominant cultural paradigm in America. Finally, because the U.S. won the Cold War, there was no demand to fundamentally rethink and change the U.S. strategy of engagement and the promotion of democracy and economic openness. In addition, George W. Bush inherited a Liberal Internationalist agenda from George H.W. Bush and Clinton.

The attacks on 9/11 created a perceptual shock. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, there was a real demand for a reassessment of U.S. strategy and its underlying principles. Many observers immediately concluded that the U.S. would respond to the 9/11 attacks by military means. This conclusion did not seem to require any explanation. It was obvious. The administration did in fact begin within days planning military strikes to retaliate against and eliminate this new threat. There is, however, nothing natural or obvious about this response. Other countries have historically responded very differently to terrorist attacks. When Spain suffered 191 killed and 1800 wounded in the Madrid train bombings on March 11, 2004, it reacted in a completely different manner.

What was it that led so many to come instantly to this conclusion? U.S. power alone does not make this response self-evident. However, looking at it through a framework that takes into account both the U.S. position of power and its strategic culture, this particular development make sense and even becomes predictable. One fundamentally important factor for understanding the U.S. response is recognition of the influence of Assertive Patriotism.

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1080 John Lewis Gaddis argues that the natural reaction of the U.S. when attacked is expansion and taking the fight to the enemy. This argument fits well with the framework developed here. John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
It would have been extremely difficult for the President not to respond militarily. The U.S. had suffered the greatest attack on its soil since Pearl Harbor. The attack also signalled the emergence of a new threat, which strengthened the position of the Assertive Patriots in U.S. politics. It is, of course, possible that the U.S. would have responded militarily regardless of the existence of this particular subculture. It would not have been perceived as self-evident, though. Many observers probably took the particular culture of the U.S. into account without theorizing about it. Culture is sometimes so pervasive that it becomes invisible. 1081 The influence of Assertive Patriotism is also important for understanding the lengths the administration was willing to go to retaliate and why it showed this new enemy so little respect.

Far less constrained by the international environment than any other state, the U.S. declared a global war on terror. During the Clinton years, the U.S. had actively sought to spread democracy, pursued a policy of regime change, frequently intervened in other states, and disregarded the principle of state sovereignty. George W. Bush took these policies to a new level with his global war and ambitious plan to transform the Middle East.

Both the ambition and the content of the administration’s strategy can be accounted for by the proposed framework. The idea that increases in relative power eventually lead to more ambitious strategies renders the grand ambition of Bush’s strategy unsurprising. The goals of democratizing Iraq, transforming the Middle East and ending tyranny and the logic behind them are undeniable examples of the influence of the paradigm of liberalism on U.S. strategy. U.S. power and the dominance of the paradigm of liberalism account for a considerable degree of U.S. post 9/11 strategy.

The decision to respond militarily to the attacks on 9/11 brought the region back into the limelight. This time, though, the focus was on Central Asia, in particular Uzbekistan, not on the Caspian energy resources. The fact that access to bases for conducting operations in Afghanistan would overshadow other issues in the region was not surprising. The U.S. had never followed up on its ambitious goals in CASC with significant resources, and

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1081 I do not see how it is possible to explain U.S. strategy after 9/11 by looking only at the international distribution of power, especially its strong Liberal Internationalist component. Furthermore, from a purely power oriented perspective, terrorism is considered to be of limited significance. The attack on 9/11 does not represent any change in the international distribution of power. Therefore, we should not expect any fundamental changes in state’s strategy as a consequence. We would, of course, expect a more aggressive approach to terrorism but not the kind of sweeping changes that the George W. Bush Administration initiated. It could have responded with a much more restrained approach, and it could have chosen a more multilateral approach. It could also have chosen to downplay any Liberal Internationalist ambitions and used the attacks as an excuse to disengage strategically from the Middle East. Many realists argued for these latter options, and many opposed the war in Iraq. The neoclassical perspective can more consistently account for U.S. post-9/11 strategy. 9/11 created a perceptual shock that opened a window of opportunity, and a new strategy that tapped into long standing assumptions as to how the country should counter foreign threats gained traction.
the question of how important the region was had never been given a clear
answer. The concrete actions of the U.S. reveal that it had few real interests
in the region. President Bush had little interest and knowledge about, it and
after 9/11 he placed fighting terrorism on the top of his agenda. Therefore,
this prioritization was not surprising.

What is perhaps more remarkable is how fast criticism of how U.S. op-
erations in Afghanistan would affect the democratic reform work in the re-
gion emerged. The question of how to balance U.S. security interests with its
support for democratic reforms and human rights surfaced almost immedi-
ately. That this question came to frame so much of the debate is a clear indi-
cation of the influence of the paradigm of liberalism.

The President often used language that resonated with the Assertive
Patriots. However, his rhetoric was also highly idealistic in nature and he
frequently spoke of the universal appeal of freedom. The influence of the
paradigm of liberalism clearly had negative effects on the possibility of hav-
ing a serious debate about strategy. The President’s rhetoric exacerbated this.
That democracy, stability, human rights, economic progress and security
were somehow inexorably linked was more a presumption than anything that
should be the subject debate. It seemed to be extremely difficult, not just for
the administration, but also for members of Congress and bureaucrats, to
even enter into a discussion of how to prioritize between them. The U.S.
should somehow do everything at once. The public debates about CASC
confirmed the notion of strategy is only perceived as legitimate in the U.S. to
the extent that is promotes liberal goals. It is noteworthy that independent
experts were almost always more critical in their assessments.

During the Clinton years, the inconsistencies and incoherence in U.S.
strategy toward CASC grew and became more conspicuous. Under George
W. Bush the contradictory elements of U.S. strategy collided in public.
When Bush entered office, the State Department and the DoD were pursuing
their own policies, which resulted in mixed signals to the region. The Presi-
dent did little to sort this out, and the administration lagged behind in ap-
pointing people to deal with CASC. The U.S. criticized the states in the re-
gion for their lack of democracy. At the same time, it kept increasing their
military and security assistance, despite the fact that the human rights situa-
tion was deteriorating.

After 9/11 the gap between the administrations rhetoric and concrete
actions widened, and the mixed signals were amplified. The U.S. needed
bases for conducting operations in Afghanistan, which dramatically elevated
the importance of the region, especially Central Asia and Uzbekistan in par-
ticular. The U.S. increased assistance to the region, most of it going to se-
curity related sectors. The human rights criticism was temporarily drowned out
by voices supporting regimes in order to gain access. The administration did
not seem to take any principled positions if they were associated with poten-
tial costs. The George W. Bush Administration publicly exaggerated the real
importance of the region in relation to U.S. interests. Its representatives

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made promises not to abandon the region, spoke about a long term commitment and made grand and sweeping statements about draining the swamp, transcending great power conflict and integrating the region into the community of liberal democracies. At the same, the administration stated that it was not interested in any nation-building in Afghanistan. When pressed regarding a potential long-term presence, its representatives were evasive and toned down any promises. The U.S. had to balance its interests in the region against how its presence affected its other relationships, especially the U.S.-Russia relationship. Knowing about the influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement on U.S. strategy, leaders in the region never really trusted U.S. promises.

The mixed signals continued as the administration’s attention shifted toward Iraq. However, the tone was changing. The President’s rhetoric became more idealistic, and this resonated within the bureaucracy. As the region’s authoritarianism became more problematic, the State Department began to push harder for reform. The U.S. was moving resources from the region to the Iraq theatre, and levels of assistance that had gone up after 9/11 began to drop. At the same time, the DoD downplayed the criticism and praised cooperation in the region. The mixed messages, public interagency tension and lack of coordination was remarkable, especially since the administration was known for placing emphasis on keeping its public message clear and uniform.

The events in Andijan exacerbated the tension and caught the administration in its self-imposed strategic dilemma. The influence of the paradigm of liberalism made it very difficult to defend Uzbekistan. It would also diametrically contradict the President’s rhetoric. Abstentionists were also highly critical. For them, this was another example of the U.S. supporting a dictatorship. There were also widespread misperceptions of U.S. leverage in the region. When the administration, in the aftermath of Andijan, increased the pressure on Uzbekistan, the Karimov regime evicted the U.S. from K2, its most valued strategic asset in the region. Uncertainty about U.S. interests in the region, mixed messages, lack of coordination and the influence of U.S. strategic culture lie at the heart of this fiasco.

As an indication of the influence of the paradigm of liberalism there was no "who lost Uzbekistan" debate. The talking points quickly became that the U.S. had taken a principled stand and that the relationship was not that important.

All in all, George W. Bush was disinterested in the CASC region, with the exception of gaining access to bases in the region after 9/11. During his years in office, U.S. strategy toward this region was uncoordinated and ambivalent, and the question of its importance was never answered. The administration made grand statements about promoting democracy and standing up for liberal values. However, its actions were not commensurate with its language. This is what the framework with the two countervailing cultural forces predicted: grand statements and sweeping commitments followed by
meagre and insufficient support to actually realise them. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a strategy of 'democracy on the cheap' fits very well with U.S. culture. One effect of this was that U.S. assistance was very limited. When the administration threatened to withdraw its carrots, that was not really much of threat.
7. Conclusions

This study set out to try to answer the questions: What was the U.S. strategy toward Central Asia and Southern Caucasus from 1991 to 2006, and why did it evolve the way it did? Did the U.S. act in a consistent and coherent manner toward the region? If not, why?

U.S. strategy toward CASC is not only a subject on which there are many studies. It is also suitable as a test case for both theoretically and empirically oriented studies of the origins, development and consistency of U.S. strategy, given that the U.S. had no significant contact with the area before the Soviet breakup. In order to answer the research questions, a neoclassical realist framework for U.S. strategy was formulated. There were many reasons for this choice, most importantly that neoclassical realism, with its specific conception of the state, seemed to be a particularly promising point of departure for the study of U.S. strategy. Even though I regard this study’s theoretical contributions as secondary, this choice would allow me to make a small contribution to the understanding of the neoclassical realist research program.

The neoclassical realist critique of the existing literature on strategy is twofold. First, approaches that focus solely on the international distribution of power cannot explain much of the variation in the types of strategies that states actually pursue. Second, approaches that only focus on societal actors downplay the potentially autonomous role of the foreign policy executive in determining the national interest and ignore the constraints imposed on all states by the international environment are also deficient.

For neoclassical realists the state exists as a potentially autonomous actor that is distinct from any societal group. In the foreign policy realm, and even more so in the realm of strategy, the state consists of the foreign policy executive, principally the head of government and key ministers as well as officials charged with the conduct of foreign policy and strategy. The foreign policy executive, the President and his administration in the U.S. case, has privileged access to information about international threats, opportunities and national capabilities. Consequently, it is best positioned to respond to international exigencies that the international environment requires. For this reason, although members of an administration may be drawn from a particular societal coalition, their interests and preferences will differ from those of their cohorts out of government. For neoclassical realists "[c]hoice preferences reflect a distinct raison d’ê et focus".\footnote{Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, (2009), p. 281.} However, depending on the specific domestic political context, society can affect the ease with which state leaders are able to pursue a particular policy and extract or mobilize resources to implement a strategy. In the U.S. the President must frequently
bargain with Congress and various interest groups. Neoclassical realists, therefore, expect policy to deviate from the requirements of the international environment when the state has limited authority to conduct strategy, when there are many domestic veto players in the policy process, when domestic opposition is high or under other domestic political circumstances that impede policy flexibility, such as elite fragmentation.

This particular conception of the state differs from not only Marxist conceptions, in which the state represents the interests of a particular class, but also the pluralist conception, in which the state only reflects the interests of powerful societal actors, and the neorealist conception, in which the an autonomous state responds to the international environment without reference to the domestic environment.

For neoclassical realists, a state’s external actions cannot transcend the constraints of the international environment in the long run. However, in the short and medium term, they do not, in any automatic way, follow from the international distribution of power. In neoclassical realism there is no immediate or perfect transmission belt linking material capabilities to action, and most of its studies attempt to find intervening variables between a state’s external actions and the international distribution of power.

In 2009 Steven Lobell, Norrin Ripsman and Jeffrey Taliaferro published the Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy to theoretically refine neoclassical realism. In their concluding chapter that argued that future neoclassical realist work could "examine how realist arguments about polarity and war, shifts in power, and balancing behavior explain the foreign policy, grand strategy, or military doctrine of a particular leading state such as the United States".

They underscored the uniqueness of the unipolar system and wrote that:

The Soviet Union’s demise and the lack of international constraints on the United States mean that the system sets only broad parameters on its foreign policy. Washington might exploit the situation and opt for unilateralism, interventionism, and expansionism because it can, since there is little risk of the formation of a counterbalancing coalition. Washington might also adopt a more lackadaisical and disengaged global attitude because it can, since there is no threat on the immediate horizon. Given this environment, neoclassical realists might look to executive-legislative competition (especially a reaction to the notion of an “imperial presidency”), the influence of business elites, the advisory process, domestic audiences, strategic culture, or leadership style to speculate on the specific course of action from America’s foreign policy menu.

My neoclassical realist framework of U.S. strategy, which introduces strategic culture as an intervening variable between the international environment and state action, specifically studies U.S. strategy under a condition of unipolarity and addresses many of these questions, some of which will be discussed in this chapter. However, since the primary contribution of this study is empirical, a return to the research questions in order to sum up findings and evaluate the framework is in order, before addressing its theoretical implications. One of the best ways to start the evaluation process is to see how well the expectations fit with the empirical findings. Therefore, this chapter begins with a short recap of the expectations. Then the strategy of each of the three administrations studied will be discussed and compared. After this I will turn to the theoretical implications of the study. The chapter ends with a section about this its contributions, including a discussion about avenues of further research.

7.1 Empirical Findings

Based on the assumption that increases in material power will eventually lead to an expansion in the ambition of a state’s strategy, U.S. engagement in the region were to be expected, since the relative power of the U.S. increased dramatically after the Soviet breakup. Neoclassical realism assumes that the relationship between changes in power and strategy is complex and indirect and does not yield direct effects in terms of state action. In the U.S., policy proposals must pass several domestic hurdles before being implemented. Therefore, the framework does not predict U.S. engagement to be as smooth and rapid as offensive realists might expect.

Several expectations regarding the quality of U.S. engagement were also derived from the framework. One of this study’s main arguments is that U.S. strategic culture functions as an intervening variable between the distribution of power and strategy. The end of the Cold War confirmed the soundness of the U.S. Cold War strategy, and the paradigm of liberalism remained dominant during the period 1991–2006. Because of this continuity and the relative increase of U.S. power post-1989, U.S. strategy toward CASC was expected to be shaped to a considerable extent by the paradigm of liberalism and the subculture of Liberal Internationalism. A U.S. strategy close to that of Cooperative Security was thus expected.

The disappearance of the Soviet threat strengthened the paradigm of non-entanglement and the Abstentionists, and pressure to reduce costs increased. The end of the Cold War thus increased the tension between the two paradigms. U.S. strategy toward CASC was, therefore, expected to be very sensitive to costs. Hence the framework expected the U.S. to put forth ambitious goals and make sweeping declarations about the spread of democracy and the integration of CASC in various international institutions, and then
follow up with meagre resources not commensurate with its officially declared goals.

Because of the tension between the two paradigms, the framework predicted that U.S. strategy toward CASC would be both inconsistent and incoherent and that there would be a clear discrepancy between rhetoric and concrete actions. When there is a lack of presidential leadership, this tendency will likely be exacerbated, and different branches of government will pursue their own agendas, whereas different lobby groups and private interests should exert stronger influence over U.S. strategy.

If all conceivable outcomes are consistent with a theory, then its explanatory power is negligible. The framework is consistent with many outcomes. However, there are also some unexpected outcomes. Inconsistency and incoherence were anticipated under certain conditions, so that the framework would have been severely discredited if the U.S. strategy toward CASC was found to be consistent and coherent. Note that a certain ‘consistency in the inconsistency and incoherence’ was expected. The framework also implied expectations regarding when to expect change in strategy.

Structural realism was also consistent with many outcomes. As argued previously, it is possible to find support for three of the four post-Cold War strategic alternatives from the viewpoint of structural realism. If the U.S. pursued a strategy of Strategic Disengagement, Balance of Power/Selective Engagement or Primacy toward CASC, structural realists could argue that U.S. behaviour was consistent with their theory. The framework predicted that the U.S. would be heavily influenced by the paradigm of liberalism and a strategy close to Cooperative Security. This is important since this is precisely the strategic alternative structural realism would not predict and cannot explain. If the U.S. pursues such a strategy, structural realism has not fared well, whereas the framework has serious problems if U.S. strategy toward CASC only reflects the paradigm of non-entanglement and/or the U.S. pursued a strategy that disregards its values of democracy and freedom.

7.1.1 The Strategy of the George H.W. Bush Administration

Remarkably, the George H.W. Bush Administration was rather weakly committed to both the paradigm of liberalism and the paradigm of non-entanglement. It tried to avoid the Scylla of idealistic Universalism or Charybdis of Isolationism. It was preoccupied by order and often opted for stability before radical change. This, combined with a belief in the necessity of establishing a strong institutional framework for maintaining order and a focus on U.S. business opportunities, suggests that the administration’s outlook was to a great extent American Realist in character.

As expected, the administration was faced with domestic pressures to reduce U.S. international commitments. George H.W. Bush tried to resist
this trend. However, he was not able to move the strategic culture in his preferred direction and, as one may have anticipated, the relative influence of American Realism was in decline during his presidency. Deviations from the strategic culture are associated with costs. George H.W. Bush was punished when he tried to move beyond its constraints. His preoccupation with foreign affairs became a political liability, and his strategic decisions were often criticized for being at odds with U.S. values.

The administration’s strategy toward CASC was shaped by both paradigms and by the subcultures of Liberal Internationalism and American Realism. It can best be described as a blend of Balance of Power/Selective Engagement and Cooperative Security. Rhetorically, it was strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism, but in terms of concrete action it was less principled and selective in its engagements and allowed its strategy toward CASC be dominated by issues and relations outside of the region, such as the situation in Eastern Europe, the relationship with Russia and increased Iranian influence.

The administration set out to create a new world order and initiated programs aimed at democratic and economic reforms in the entire FSU, with the ultimate goal of transforming them internally and integrating them into the community of liberal democracies. Both the ambition and quality of this strategy were to be expected for several reasons. These broad programs mark the beginning of U.S. relations with CASC, and they became the foundation for the relationship. CASC was clearly not prioritized in these comprehensive programs that were targeting the entire FSU and U.S. engagement in the region was small in scale. However, the U.S. engaged CASC, and this is crucial with regard to the framework.

It is difficult to assess the consistency and coherence of the administration’s strategy, since there were few direct interactions between the U.S. and region. The administration never publicly enunciated any specific strategy toward CASC and admitted that it had not really given the region much thought. Its focus was clearly aimed elsewhere, and there was little bureaucratic coordination. The State Department had its own map of the region, the DoD another, and it was not designated as an AOR in the military command structure. The spread of the idea that tiny Kyrgyzstan could somehow function as an example for the region was an indication of the general lack of interest and knowledge about the region. These lackings also meant that there was relatively little domestic pressure on the administration to act with regard to CASC, with two exceptions: Armenia and nuclear weapons. With no overarching strategy toward the region, aside from programs directed at the entire FSU, Kazakhstan quickly became the region’s most important state for the administration due to its nuclear arsenal and vast energy resources.

Even though the administration never had a declared strategy toward CASC, there was a clear discrepancy between the administration’s rhetoric and concrete actions. It made grand statements about transforming and inte-
grating the FSU. Those statements were followed up with meagre funds and insufficient assistance to realise them. CASC in particular was found at the bottom of the list of recipients of U.S. assistance to the FSU, with the exception of Armenia. This exception also exacerbated the inconsistency. With the lack of clear strategy and presidential leadership, the relative success of the Armenian lobby is not surprising.

Most of the administration’s strategic decisions regarding CASC fit best with the strategic alternatives Balance of Power/Selective Engagement and Cooperative Security. This supports the conclusion that the administration was heavily influenced by American realism. Its focus on the U.S. relationships with Russia and Eastern Europe over CASC, its prioritization of Kazakhstan with regards to CASC and its fear of increased Iranian influence in the wider region point to a strategy of Balance of Power/Selective Engagement. The broad scope and ambition of the FSA, the cooperative nature of the CTRP, the humanitarian relief initiative Operation Provide Hope, and the decision to update and reinvigorate NATO point to a strategy of Cooperative Security.

It is important to recognize that the administration from the very outset staked out a principled position in its relationships with the states of CASC with regards to their commitment to democratic reforms and human rights. It is equally important to recognize that it often abandoned these positions when they became associated with certain costs. The policy reversal regarding establishing diplomatic relations and open embassies in the region due to fear of increased Iranian influence is an excellent example of this. This small event reveals a lot about both the influence of the paradigm of liberalism and the American Realism of the administration.

The paradigm of non-entanglement also influenced the administration, at least partly. As discussed above, CASC was not prioritized, and the limited engagement there was focused on Kazakhstan. One should also keep in mind, however, all of the things that the administration did not do, despite opportunities. Moreover, by looking at the administration’s concrete actions, it becomes clear that it acted almost as if it considered CASC to be part of a Russian sphere of influence. It sought to avoid agitating Russia or putting negotiations over issues it considered as more important at risk by engaging heavily in CASC. The administration publicly endorsed the efforts of various energy companies in the region but did not commit any serious resources to help them.

The decision to support Turkish influence in CASC perfectly balanced and fit with the two paradigms. It also fit well with American Realism. It addressed nearly all of the U.S. goals in the region. It allowed the administration to make grand and sweeping statements about transforming the CASC states without drawing criticism, since it would be cheap and involve little direct U.S. engagement. A strategy of promoting ‘democracy on the cheap’ fits very well with U.S. strategic culture. When it comes to U.S. post-Cold War strategic choices, the latter is arguably the path of least resistance.
The administration’s strategy does not run contrary to the expectations derived from the framework. The one strategic alternative that is difficult to derive from structural realism is Cooperative Security, and the administration’s strategy can at least to some extent be described in those terms. This is a problem for structural realism. How do you explain the administration’s rhetoric and goals of spreading democracy and market reforms as well as assistance, even if meagre, without referring to the specific culture? The administration’s policy to reform NATO is also somewhat of a puzzle for structural realists.

It is nonetheless possible to make the case that the administration was pursuing a strategy of Selective Engagement/Balance of Power and used a rhetorical fitting with the paradigm of liberalism to accommodate domestic pressure. U.S. assistance to the region was meagre, and the administration clearly prioritized great power relations. The administration was sensitive to Russia’s interests in CASC and did not want Iran to move into the power vacuum. The administration also had a tendency to abandon its principled position when it became associated with certain costs. The idea of supporting Turkish influence in the region can also be perceived as a cheap way of achieving strategic goals that does not necessarily have anything to do with U.S. strategic culture.

The framework can provide a more detailed explanation of the George H.W. Bush Administration’s strategy toward CASC. Structural realism also seems to hold up rather well, but only if you disregard the fact that the U.S. engaged in the remote land locked region in the first place. This result is not very surprising, since the administration foremost was first and foremost American Realist in nature, and a strategy heavily inspired by American Realism will naturally have many similarities with structural realist expectations.

### 7.1.2 The Strategy of the Clinton Administration

The Clinton Administration was strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism, although, it was also rather strongly committed to the paradigm of non-entanglement. President Clinton was from the beginning not particularly interested in foreign affairs. His main focus was on reviving the U.S. economy. However, Clinton perceived the U.S. economy as inexorably connected with the outside world and was preoccupied with ideas about interdependence and globalization. The administration perceived the world’s main problems as complex in character and impossible to solve unilaterally. Finding new forms of cooperation, including sustaining and strengthening the institutional framework for maintaining order, and making sure that the U.S. remained economically competitive were, therefore, prioritized. The administration’s outlook was to a great extent Liberal Internationalist in nature.
Traditional threats and ideas about the balance of power seemed less important to it, as compared to its predecessor.

As expected, Clinton was under pressure to reduce international commitments. He fought off this pressure to some extent, but he did not really change the strategic culture. Rather, he adapted to it. Clinton had a weak mandate after the 1992 election, as he had promised to focus on the domestic economy, and he was inexperienced in foreign affairs and, therefore, seen as a risk averter.

The administration’s strategy toward CASC was shaped both paradigms and in particular the subcultures of Liberal Internationalism and Abstentionism. It can best be described as a blend of Balance of Power/Selective Engagement and Cooperative Security. Rhetorically, the administration was very strongly committed to the Paradigm of Liberalism. Much of what it was arguing fit the subculture of Liberal Internationalism and the strategic alternative of Cooperative Security. The administration sought a strategic partnership with Russia, renounced balance of power politics and zero sum notions of international relations and declared that it was possible to transcend the ‘Great Game’. In terms of concrete action, however, it was less principled and selective in its engagements and allowed its strategy toward CASC to be heavily influenced by issues and relations outside of the region, such as Eastern Europe, the relationship with Russia, and the containment of Iran.

Clinton inherited and retained a number of policies that affected CASC. The FSA and the CTRP were by far the largest programs. The CASC states were included in these programs but were not given priority. The administration did not change this during its first years in office and never formulated anything close to what can be regarded as a coherent approach to CASC, even though it publicly declared a very ambitious strategy toward the region. It wanted to transform all of the states of the FSU internally and integrate them into the community of liberal market democracies. Both the ambition and contents of this strategy fits the framework for several reasons. The framework assumes that increases in relative power eventually lead to a more ambitious strategy, and during the Clinton years U.S. power was rising.

Programs in CASC associated with and funded by the FSA and the CTRP grew incrementally without any real coordination during the Clinton Presidency. The administration’s policy of NATO-expansion, including the PFP-program, had similar features. The states of CASC were invited to join the PFP, but the administration’s focus was on security and consolidating democracy and reform in Eastern Europe. The PFP was constructed to balance European demands for NATO membership with Russia’s fear of an expanded NATO. There were no real plans for CASC, not many seem to have thought systematically about the region. Increased U.S. engagement in CASC followed as the states of the region enthusiastically joined. Without a clear policy, both mixed signals and confusion followed.
Democratic reforms in Eastern Europe and preservation of stability in Russia were far more important to the administration than CASC. With little interest or overarching principles to guide his strategy toward the region, Clinton catered to important domestic constituencies and put Liberal Internationalist values in the foreground, though backed with only meagre funds. With this in mind, it was not surprising that the administration became involved in pipeline politics when the region’s energy resources became apparent and various interests began pushing for U.S. engagement.

The fact that U.S. engagement in CASC became more assertive after Russia’s dismal performance in the Chechen War is an important observation with regards to the framework. After the end of the Cold War, there were uncertainties with regard to Russia’s power. The war demonstrated that Russia was no longer a great power, and this helped the reality of the dramatic power changes that came about with the end of the Cold War to sink in. The war changed U.S. perceptions of Russia’s power. It lost some of its respect for Russia’s military capabilities and ceased to perceive it as an adversary with which the U.S. had to nurture good relations at any cost. This is a clear example of an event that helped make policymakers aware of the cumulative effects of gradual changes in long term-power trends.

Given the administration’s approach to CASC, it is not surprising that energy resources quickly overshadowed other issues in the region. Like its predecessor, the Clinton Administration initially staked out principled positions and then abandoned them when they became associated with costs. As the estimates of the region’s energy resources grew, it was clear that the administration did not want the U.S. to be left out. The story of how the U.S. came to support the BTC-project illustrates how U.S. strategic culture both constrained and enabled policymakers. It also lends credence to Huntington’s notion of the unity of goodness. Against the backdrop of Clinton’s globalization rhetoric and the bootstrap and East-West frame, the BTC seemed to address almost all of the U.S. goals in the region. It fit the paradigm of liberalism almost perfectly. Both Liberal Internationalists and American Realists could get behind the project, since it would further the democratic and economic development of the CASC states and strengthen their independence and sovereignty, thereby inhibiting Russia’s imperial impulses and providing the U.S. and its allies access to the region’s resources through a route not controlled by Russia or Iran or passing through the Hormuz Strait. Since U.S. involvement in BTC was limited, it was not particularly controversial from an Abstentionist point of view.

With regard to the consistency and coherence of the administration’s strategy, there was a clear and growing discrepancy between rhetoric and concrete action. The administration made grand statements about promoting democracy and standing up for liberal values, but its actions were not commensurable with its language. The administration began to perceive the region through the frames created in support of the BTC. The states of CASC
were generally referred to as `the other NIS` during the George H.W. Bush Presidency. This reflected to some extent their importance and place in the administration’s thinking. During the mid to late 1990, the term Caspian was frequently used. This was most certainly a result of the widely publicized, supposed riches of the Caspian Sea. Other goals, such as democratic reform and human rights, became subordinate to the goal of developing the region’s energy resources. The Silk Road Act, which was primarily created to increase U.S. investments in the region’s energy, exempted the states of the region from certain provisions of the FSA and in fact made the case that the U.S. had to be ready to patiently accept the authoritarianism of the region, at least in the short term.

There was also a clear lack of coordination of U.S. strategy toward CASC. The administration could never really provide a clear answer regarding the region’s importance. Its representatives often gave vague or even confused answers to basic policy questions. They also had a tendency to exaggerate its importance. It was described as very important, and on some occasions even vital, but the administration’s actions clearly begged the difference. The administration’s interest in the region was generally low, with the exception of the BTC-project. The effect of investing both political and economic capital in the development of the region’s energy resources, while only allocating meagre funds to democratic reform, was to send a signal to the region about what was really important to the U.S., one that contradicted its rhetoric.

The lack of coordination was also apparent with regards to the PFP, NATO expansion and U.S. policy toward Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan began to receive more attention in the mid-1990s and almost from the very beginning the State Department and the DoD perceived the state differently and began sending different messages. As an indication of the region’s growing importance, both Southern Caucasus and Central Asia were designated as AOR’s under different Commands in the late 1990s. However, there was still no unity concerning how to refer to the region, or regions, and there were still many different maps.

When the administration elevated terrorism on its agenda after the attacks on U.S. embassies in 1998, the inconsistency and incoherence increased. The administration publicly criticized the states of the region for their poor human rights records and lack of progress on democratic reforms. However, it covertedly, increased military- and intelligence cooperation with and assistance to many states in the region, particularly Uzbekistan. The increases were, however, in no way commensurate with the threats the CINC of CentCom perceived in the region, which is another indication of the administration’s overall interest in the region. The possibility that these increases might undermine longer term U.S. interests was not an issue that seemed to preoccupy the administration, despite the fact that various ambassadors and intelligence and military officials tried to raise the question. This resulted in short-term security goals, such as increasing intelligence cooper-
tion to learn more about the whereabouts of bin Laden and potential terrorist camps, effectively trumping declared long-term goals in the region. The administration consistently refused to acknowledge, at least publicly, that there were any problems with its approach. In speeches no differentiations were made between the short, medium and long term. Nor were there any discussions of the necessity of prioritizing between certain goods. Instead, representatives of the administration argued, just as they did about globalization, that stability, security and democratic and economic reform were all linked and somehow mutually reinforcing.

There was a reluctance to say anything that could be interpreted as contradicting the paradigm of liberalism, and few dared to question the ‘unity goodness’ and enter into a serious debate about strategic choices. This was expected. It also strengthens the idea that the notion that strategy only seems to be a legitimate pursuit as long as it focuses on promoting liberal goals. In speeches, representatives of the administration made grand statements about transcending great power conflict and sweeping commitments to transform and integrate these states in the liberal order. These words were then followed up by concrete action, but with meagre funds and insufficient assistance and support to realise the declared goals. It publicly criticized the states in the region for their lack of democracy but never seemed to take any principled positions if they were associated with costs, such as potential lack of access. A ‘democracy on the cheap’ strategy fit very well with U.S. culture, and, when it came to U.S. post-Cold War strategic choices, it was arguably the path of least resistance. During the eight years of the Clinton Administration, the strategy toward CASC seldom deviated from this path.

The Clinton Administration’s strategy did not contradict the expectations derived from the framework. The one strategic alternative that is hard to derive from structural realism is Cooperative Security. The administration’s strategy can at least partially be described in those terms. This is a problem for structural realism. How do you explain the administration’s rhetoric and goals of spreading democracy and market reforms as well as its assistance, even if meagre, without referring to the specific culture?

It is, however, possible to make the case that the administration was pursuing a strategy of Selective Engagement/Balance of Power and used a rhetoric fitting the paradigm of liberalism to accommodate domestic pressure. U.S. assistance to the region was meagre, and the administration prioritized its great power relations. It was sensitive to Russia’s interests. It did not want Iran to move into the power vacuum. And, it was aware of the economic interests of other powers in the region. When the administration’s principled positions became associated with certain costs, they were easily compromised. The idea of supporting Turkish influence in the region can also be perceived as an inexpensive way of achieving strategic goals that do not necessarily have anything to do with U.S. strategic culture. U.S. support
for the BTC-project can also be understood as a selective engagement to geopolitically weaken Russia and Iran.

Even though the framework can provide a more detailed explanation for the Clinton Administration’s strategy toward CASC, structural realism seems to hold up rather well, at least if you disregard its rhetoric and the fact that the U.S. engaged in the region in the first place.

7.1.3 The Strategy of the George W. Bush Administration

Contrary to the administration of his father, the George W. Bush Administration was strongly committed both to the paradigm of liberalism and the paradigm of non-entanglement. George W. Bush was inexperienced in foreign affairs, and it was not something that he initially prioritized. His focus was on tax cuts and education reform. As expected, Bush was under pressure to reduce international commitments. However, unlike his two predecessors, he signalled that he would to some extent accommodate it. He would make ‘a lighter footprint’ abroad, narrow the definition of the national interest and increase U.S. freedom of action. This was not particularly surprising. The influence of the paradigm of non-entanglement was on the rise after the end of the Cold War, U.S. power was no longer growing and the U.S. seemed to have few real adversaries. The framework also assumes that strategic adjustments are likely after the election of a new president.

The attacks of 9/11 created a perceptual chock and put the administration under severe pressure to respond. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, there was a genuine demand for a reassessment of U.S. strategy. The attacks changed the administration’s perception of the international environment. It adjusted its earlier position on U.S. strategy and declared a global war on terrorism. The administration’s decision to respond by military means was not surprising, since the emergence of new threats increases the influence of the Assertive Patriots.

The administration’s strategy toward CASC was shaped by both paradigms and by the subcultures of Liberal Internationalism and Assertive Patriotism. It can best be described as a blend of Cooperative Security and Primacy. The administration was rhetorically very strongly committed to the paradigm of liberalism. Much of what it was arguing fit the subculture of Liberal Internationalism and the strategic alternative of Cooperative Security. However, its rhetoric was also Assertive Patriot in nature, which led some observers to describe the administration as Neo-Wilsonian. In terms of concrete action, the administration was far less principled, and the war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan quickly became the administration’s top priority in the wider region.

George W. Bush inherited several active foreign policy programs, such as the CTRP, FSA, PFP and a secret war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The BTC-pipeline was also scheduled for construction. The
administration’s interest in CASC was initially very low. It lagged behind in appointing people to deal with it and did not address the mixed messages the U.S. was sending. It did not initiate any new comprehensive policy programs. Nor did it show any signs of seeking to eliminate existing programs. The ambitious goal of transforming the states is CASC internally and integrating them into the community of liberal market democracies persisted, even though it was far from being a prioritized issue.

That the war on terrorism and access to bases in the region for conducting operations in Afghanistan would overshadow other issues in the region was not surprising. This prioritization would exacerbate previously existing inconsistencies and incoherence in U.S. strategy. It also meant that CASC was brought back into the limelight. This time, though, U.S. focus was on Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan, not on the Caspian energy resources.

In its pursuit of access, the administration publicly exaggerated the region’s real importance to U.S. interests. Its representatives made promises not to abandon the region, spoke about long term commitments and made grand and sweeping statements about transcending great power conflict and integrating it into the community of liberal democracies. At the same, the administration declared that it was not interested in nation building in Afghanistan and, when pressed on the question of a potential long-term presence, its representatives played down the same promises. It was clear that the administration was balancing its interests in the region against how its presence affected other relationships, especially U.S.-Russia ties. The State Department continued to publicly criticise the states in the region for their lack of reform as U.S. security assistance reached new levels, and the DoD celebrated the cooperation it received in the region.

It is quite remarkable how quickly concerns arose over how U.S. operations in Afghanistan would affect the democratic reform work in the region. As an indication of the influence of the paradigm of liberalism, the question of how to balance U.S. security interests with its support for democratic reforms and human rights dominated the strategy debate about the region. Despite this, very little was said about how to actually accomplish such goals. There was a reluctance to say anything that could be interpreted as contradicting the paradigm of liberalism, and there were few who dared to question the ‘unity goodness’ or enter into a serious debate about prioritizations and strategic choices. Both representatives of the administration and members of Congress always ended up taking the position that stability, security and democratic and economic reform were all somehow linked, probably mutually reinforcing, and should be addressed simultaneously. This, combined with the fact that virtually no one defended Uzbekistan after Andijan and that there was no ‘who lost Uzbekistan’ debate after U.S. eviction from K2, strengthens the notion of strategy as a legitimate pursuit only when promoting liberal goals.
As the administration’s attention shifted toward Iraq and the President’s increasingly Liberal Internationalist rhetoric resonated within the bureaucracy, the incoherence and inconsistency was aggravated. The administration had never really answered the question of how important the region was to U.S. interest. Soon the competing interests of the DoD and the State Department collided publicly, as the latter began to push harder for reform. When the State Department decided not to certify Uzbekistan and restricted some of the assistance to the country, the DoD increased its assistance to compensate for the loss. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also publicly criticized non-certification. The mixed messages, public interagency tension and lack of coordination was remarkable, especially since the administration was known for putting an emphasis on keeping its public message clear and uniform.

The events in Andijan exacerbated the tension and caught the administration in its self-imposed strategic dilemma. The influence of the paradigm of liberalism made it very difficult to defend Uzbekistan. It would also diametrically contradict the President’s rhetoric. There were widespread misperceptions of U.S. leverage, and when the administration, in the aftermath of Andijan, increased the pressure on Uzbekistan, the Karimov regime evicted the U.S. from K2, its most valued strategic asset in the region. As a further indication of the influence of the paradigm of liberalism the talking points quickly became that the U.S. had taken a principled stand and that neither the relationship nor K2 was as important as U.S values.

From the autumn of 2001, the George W. Bush Administration was predominantly interested in CASC in the context of the war on terror. Access to bases from which to conduct military operation in Afghanistan overshadowed other issues. Its strategy toward CASC was uncoordinated and ambivalent. Its short-sightedness also made it dependent on Uzbekistan. The administration made grand statements about promoting democracy and standing up for liberal values, but its actions were not commensurable with its language. One effect of this was that U.S. assistance was very low, and when the administration threatened to withdraw its carrots, this was not really much of threat. As mentioned throughout the study, a strategy of ‘democracy on the cheap’ fits U.S. culture very well.

The George W. Bush Administration’s strategy does not contradict the expectations derived from the framework. The one strategic alternative that is hard to derive from structural realism is Cooperative Security, and the administration’s strategy can at least to some extent be described in those terms. This is a problem for structural realism. How do you explain its rhetoric, strong belief in security interdependence, goal of spreading democracy and freedom as well as its assistance, even though meagre, without referring to the specific culture?

One can make the argument that the administration was pursuing a strategy of Selective Engagement/Balance of Power or a strategy of Primacy and used a rhetoric that fit with the paradigm of liberalism to accommodate
domestic pressure and legitimize its policies. U.S. assistance to the region was meagre, and the administration prioritized great power relations. It was sensitive to Russia’s interests in the region, and the designation of ETIM as a terrorist organization was a clear favour to China. It also had a tendency to minimize Russia’s and China’s attempts to push the U.S. out of the region and preferred to talk about common, rather than conflicting, interest with regard to the region. It is possible to make the case that the administration did this because it did not perceive any real interest in the region, except for access to bases from which to conduct a swift war in Afghanistan. Its quick shift in focus from Afghanistan to Iraq can also be used to support this notion.

The Administration’s strategy can partly be described as primacist. It assumed an offensive posture, initiated a military buildup, perceived security as highly interdependent and often emphasized threats. It also sought to loosen the constraints on U.S. freedom of action and had a tendency to regard what is good for the U.S. as good for the world. In addition, it disregarded rules and norms. The effort to negotiate Article 98 agreements and the covert rendition program, including harsh interrogation methods, can also be used to support the notion that the administration was in fact pursuing a strategy that was very different from what its rhetoric suggested.

It is also true that the administration had a tendency to abandon principled positions when they became associated with costs. But this was just a tendency. The self-imposed strategic dilemma was real, and the administration did in fact pursue human rights and democratic values to such an extent that it got evicted from its most valued strategic asset in the region. And here is where this argument falls short. If the administration was pursuing purely a strategy of Selective Engagement/Balance of Power or Primacy, it would not have acted in that way. Structural realism, therefore, has a serious problem with regard to the George W. Bush Administration’s strategy toward CASC. It cannot account for the administration’s adherence to liberalist values in both words and concrete action. This only holds up if you disregard its rhetoric and some of its most important actions. The framework can clearly provide a more detailed explanation of the George W. Bush administration’s strategy toward CASC.


When comparing the three administrations, it is clear that there were both differences and similarities between them. The similarities, however, stand out, and there is a great deal of continuity in U.S. strategy, even though the focus of the different administrations shifted over the years. The differences can be regarded as small variations on the same theme.

All three administrations set out almost identical goals in relation to the region. They wanted to transform the states of CASC internally and integrate
them into the community of liberal democracies. Their rhetoric was also to a large extent Liberal Internationalist in nature, and they all placed democracy in the forefront. It is clear that none of the administrations perceived the CASC region as truly important to U.S. interests. The fact that the question regarding the region’s importance never received a clear answer is indicative of this, and it is safe to say that their strategies toward CASC were dominated by issues and relations outside of the region.

At times when the administrations did not perceive a direct interest in the region, they chose to place values in the forefront. Adherence to the paradigm of liberalism can, therefore, be regarded as the default position of all three Presidents. This is not surprising, since this paradigm remained the dominant one throughout the period studied. However, as soon as a specific interest was perceived, they had a tendency to abandon their principled positions if these became associated with costs. Their strategies can also be characterized as rather short-sighted.

The George H.W. Bush Administration admitted that it had not given the region much thought and treated it almost like it was part of a Russian sphere of influence. To engage heavily in Russia’s backyard and potentially upset negotiations regarding the future of Eastern Europe was a non-starter for the administration, and the interest in containing Iran made it reverse its principled position regarding the commitment of the states to democratic reforms. Under George H.W. Bush, Kazakhstan received most attention, due to its nuclear arsenal and vast energy resources. The fact that Armenia received a proportionally high amount of aid had clearly more to do with the existence of a large Armenian constituency than with strategic considerations.

The Clinton Administration also admitted that it had not given CASC much attention. It clearly prioritized the U.S.-Russia relationship, even if it stepped up U.S. engagement after the first Chechen War. It let the exploration of energy resources overshadow other issues in the region. It nevertheless considered containing Iran more important than the economic development of CASC. When terrorism was forced up on the agenda, the administration increased security assistance with little regard for how this might be interpreted or how it would affect other programs operating in the region. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia and, later, Uzbekistan received more attention during Clinton’s presidency due to pipeline politics, and security cooperation and terrorism in the case Uzbekistan.

The George W. Bush Administration gave the region little attention and lagged behind in appointing people to deal with it. It initially allowed access to bases to conduct military operations in Afghanistan overshadow other issues in the region. The War on Terror, OEF in Afghanistan and later OIF dominated the administration’s strategy toward CASC. Uzbekistan received most of the administration’s attention due to its infrastructure and lines of communication to support major operations in Afghanistan. The George W. Bush Administration did in fact maintain it its principled stand on human
rights and democratic reforms, despite a strong criticism. This makes it stand out to some extent from the other two administrations. In the end, it did not sweep the violence in Andijan under the rug, and as a consequence the U.S. was evicted from K2. It is, of course, impossible to know how the other two administrations would have acted under similar circumstances. They never faced comparable situations in CASC. It is possible to make the argument that the administration did not really care about human rights or liberal principles but simply made a calculation that the domestic political costs of defending the Karimov regime after Andijan outweighed the strategic benefits of K2. Yet, what the administration or the President really believed is beyond the scope of this study. The main point is that certain decisions are associated with certain costs, and going against the strategic culture is costly. The strategic culture influences and shapes actions, but it does not prevent them. President George W. Bush could have defended the Karimov regime, but he chose not to.

There was a lack of coordination throughout the entire period studied. Interagency tension seemed to increase as the U.S. became more engaged in the region. Basic strategic questions regarding the region were left unanswered. Not even the question regarding the region’s importance received a clear answer. During the George H.W. Bush years little was said regarding CASC outside the context of the entire FSU, and there was no real debate to speak of regarding U.S. strategy toward CASC. The Clinton Administration and George W. Bush Administration publicly declared a strategy toward CASC, and there was a growing debate about the region. However, as demonstrated above, this debate was severely constrained. It seemed to be very difficult, not just for representatives of the administrations, but also for members of Congress and bureaucrats, to even enter into a discussion on how to prioritize between different interests. To be perceived as downplaying human rights and democracy was something everybody seemed desperate to avoid. Moreover, in speeches, the administrations seldom made any differentiations between the short, medium and long term, and there were hardly any serious discussions on the necessity to prioritize between certain goods. The default position for almost everybody engaged in the debate, except for a few independent analysts, seemed to be that stability, security and democratic and economic reform were all equally important and probably mutually reinforcing. How they were specifically linked was never explained, and the administrations did not acknowledge, at least publicly, that there were any problems with their approach. In other words, there were few that seemed to question the assumption of the unity of goodness.

There were also clear discrepancies between the officially declared strategy and the concrete actions of all three administrations. They set up very ambitious goals, but their actions were not commensurable with their language. None of the administrations engaged heavily in the region, and assistance was very low considering the rhetoric. This is what the framework with the two countervailing cultural forces expected: grand statements and
sweeping commitments followed by meagre and insufficient support to actually realise them. As emphasized throughout this study, a strategy of ‘democracy on the cheap’ fits U.S. strategic culture very well. With all of these similarities, it is possible to argue that there was clear continuity and consistency to the inconsistencies and incoherencies of U.S. strategy toward CASC. The framework also helps explain why this is the case.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

Before I address the theoretical implications of this study, I want to reiterate that I regard the empirical work and the detailed historical narrative of U.S. strategy toward CASC the main contribution of this study. From the outset the theoretical ambition was secondary. If it had been the other way around, the research design had been very different and the study’s case selection had also been problematic. The case selection in this study was not guided by any considerations of most-likely or least-likely cases, which is probably the best way to go about finding suitable cases for theory testing. The framework has thus not really been put to a hard test. It is important to keep this in mind regarding its generalizability.

When I set out with this study, my theoretical ambition was to be able show convincingly that U.S. strategic culture functioned as an intervening variable between the international distribution of power and U.S. strategy. There is always the risk of confirmation bias, which can possibly result in an overstatement of the causal weight of my hypothesis of interest and a disregard for alternative explanations. However, my conclusion is that U.S. strategic culture had a powerful impact on U.S. strategy toward CASC in terms of an intervening variable.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the conclusions of this study should be regarded as provisional. There is always the possibility that important information is missing due to the classified nature of strategic decisions and that new important data will emerge with the declassification of government documents that could confirm or disconfirm this study’s findings. In that chapter I also made the point that even if it is not possible to exclude all but one explanation for a case, it may be possible to exclude at least some explanations and thereby to draw inferences that are useful for theory-building or policymaking. I believe this study clearly excludes some explanations, such as the notion that U.S. strategy toward CASC was solely driven by considerations of power.

In Chapter Two I made the case that structural realism can be consistent with many strategies toward CACS – Strategic Disengagement, Balance of Power/Selective Engagement and Primacy. One strategy that cannot be derived from structural realism is a strategy heavily influenced by liberal values. This study shows that U.S. strategy toward CASC during the period studied was heavily influenced by the paradigm of liberalism and had a lot in
common with Cooperative Security, especially with regards to the administrations’ officially declared strategy. Structural realist theories that refer only to international pressures cannot, by themselves, explain U.S. strategy toward CASC without reference to some intervening variable, such as strategic culture. Of course, such theories can explain a certain amount of variance in U.S. strategy, but they leave out crucial aspects of each outcome. Therefore, they are ultimately dissatisfying as explanatory models for U.S. strategy toward CASC. However, by adding the independent influence of strategic culture, understood as a filter, we do begin to have a more adequate explanation of U.S. strategy.

It is important to note that strategic culture cannot be a substitute for structural realist theories. That is not what is being argued. The international environment is real and has a significant impact on outcomes. What I mean by real is the belief that the pressure of the international environment constrains states and is not something that is entirely subjective. This belief separates neoclassical realism from constructivism. However, the international environment is filtered through perceptions and cultural beliefs. The argument for an increased focus on strategic culture is, therefore, clearly intended to supplement neoclassical realism’s concern with power, not supplant it. That being said, neoclassical realism continues to be an ‘environment based theory’, and the international distribution of power is still considered to be primary.

This study derives its main assumptions from changes in the international distribution of power. By analyzing changes in the distribution of power, structural realism often provides a compelling explanation of U.S. strategy over the long term. However, with respect to shorter time spans, timing and the precise nature of strategic adjustments, such as U.S. strategy toward CASC during 1991 to 2006, it is inadequate as an explanatory model. I believe the framework presented in this study provides a more convincing explanation for short-term changes in U.S. strategy. However, the international environment is still regarded as the single most important long-term cause behind changes. It is, though, not sufficient to explain more precise changes. Therefore, strategic culture should be brought in and understood as a filtering cause that shapes the options for policymakers. This filtering renders certain strategic options unacceptable or inappropriate for cultural reasons, while others may be put forward for the same reason, in spite of international pressures to the contrary.

One critique that can be raised against this study is its limitation with regard to demonstrating how the strategic culture functions as an intervening variable between power and state strategy. This limitation is primarily a consequence of its theoretical ambitions being secondary. The cases were not selected for this particular purpose. To truly examine and demonstrate how strategic culture functions as an intervening variable, a case selection guided by changes in power would have been preferable. Cases that span over a
longer time period would perhaps also have been more suitable. Furthermore, if this were the primary purpose of the study, it is not certain that the U.S. would be the only or even the preferable subject.

In this study U.S. power is fairly constant, with no dramatic changes throughout the entire period studied. The cases are, therefore, rather unsuitable for this particular purpose. However, this study can be regarded as a case of U.S. post-Cold War strategy, and if it were to be complemented with other cases, such as U.S. strategy after the two world wars, I am certain it would be possible to make a more convincing demonstration.

This study is limited in its capacity to demonstrate how strategic culture functions as an intervening variable between power and state strategy, but it does offer several important observations it this regard. They become more evident if you conceive of the entire study as a case of U.S. post-Cold War strategy. The fact that the U.S. engaged CASC in the first place and set the ambitious goal of integrating it into the community of liberal democracies is a crucially important observation. The Clinton Administration’s increased engagement after Russia’s performance in the Chechen War and the fact that the George W. Bush Administration initially sought to accommodate the pressures to scale down U.S. international commitments are also two important observations.

One very important theoretical finding of this study is that U.S. strategic culture had a powerful impact on U.S. strategy toward CASC, independent of international pressures. There are numerous examples of this. The George W. Bush Administration’s decision not to support the Karimov regime after Andijan clearly seems to have had more to with the domestic costs of such a decision than with anything else. Clinton’s fear of breaking the assassination ban with regard to bin Laden is similar in this regard. The fact that the strategic culture is somewhat institutionalized is important to keep in mind. The institutionalization adds to the cost of certain actions. For instance, the State Department’s certification process was a nuisance for the George W. Bush Administration, and the decision not to certify Uzbekistan resulted in mixed signals being sent to the country.

The recurrence of certain ideas and assumptions regarding strategy within the U.S. also points to the continuing existence of a nationally distinct strategic culture. As demonstrated, there were striking similarities between the three administrations studied. That the George W. Bush Administration fell back on classical liberal ideas in search of a way of understanding and responding to 9/11 can hardly be a coincidence.

The limited ability to demonstrate how the international environment affected U.S. strategy and the independent impact of U.S. strategic culture raises important questions about the applicability of neoclassical realism and the relative importance of environmental or systemic versus domestic and individual level variables, especially since the neoclassical realists assert the primacy of the international system. Benjamin Fordham has suggested that
the utility of neoclassical realism as an approach to foreign policy varies depending on the clarity of the systemic imperatives states face.\textsuperscript{1085} When the international system is murky and uninformative about opportunities and constraints, the importance of unit-level factors in determining the national interest and the appropriate strategies to pursue increases. Under such conditions, domestic actors have greater influence and can help define the state’s strategic goals, rather than just shape the response to the constraints set by the international environment. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, the international environment was difficult to read, and it took a while for most U.S. policymakers to truly recognize the unipolar quality of the post-Cold War era. However, both conditions increase the relative importance of domestic variables, since most realists agree that unipolarity made the U.S. less constrained by the international environment than ever. This partly explains the difficulty in demonstrating the impact of the international environment on U.S. strategy and the relatively strong influence of domestic variables. This reasoning suggests that this study was not an easy case for neoclassical realism and that its applicability for the study of U.S. strategy might potentially be higher in a different international environment.

In terms of other findings, it seems as if presidential leadership was very important in shaping U.S. strategy toward CASC. If George H.W. Bush had not pushed for the broad Freedom Support Act, it would probably have taken longer for the U.S. to engage the region. The one issue Clinton really was interested in quickly became the focal point of U.S. engagement. In a similar way, George W. Bush’s emphasis on access to bases for OEF came to dominate U.S. strategy after 9/11. If the presidents had displayed more interest in the region, U.S. strategy would probably have been better coordinated with less confusion, inconsistency and incoherence as a result.

In the introduction I argued that studies of U.S. strategy using highly aggregate and abstract concepts and analytical frameworks often describe U.S. actions as rather coherent and rational and as being the result of a grand strategy. This study offers another picture. It is clear that U.S. strategy toward CASC during the period studied was inconsistent and incoherent, even though there was a consistency to the inconsistency and incoherence. U.S. strategy was more the result of the interplay of several variables, such as international pressure, strategic culture, presidential leadership and domestic politics, than of a well thought out plan.

Walter Russell Mead has written that U.S. foreign policy rests on a balance of contrasting, competing voices and values – “it is a symphony, or tries to be, rather than a solo”.\textsuperscript{1086} During the Cold War, elite consensus and broad coalitions made U.S. strategy sound like a symphony. All the different

sections of the orchestra knew which piece they were playing. Audiences, both domestic and around the world, could hear the melody clearly. When it comes to U.S. strategy toward CASC, the conductor was busy elsewhere. Different sections of the orchestra were not really sure of the melody or what the conductor wanted to hear, and there was conflicting guidance. They began to play different melodies, and the audience was not really sure which section, if any, played the right piece or what to listen to. And soon the orchestra started to produce sound more like a cacophony than a symphony.

It is possible that U.S. strategy toward the region will look more rational and consistent in the long-term. This is probably more a consequence of the inclination of many scholars to search for, or assume, rationality more than anything else. This less aggregated study, focusing on a rather short time span, clearly shows that U.S. strategy is not created by a Metternich, i.e. a single great master. For many, this is obvious, but this critique is not aimed at them. The main targets are those that do not properly acknowledge the pressures that constrain those involved in the process of strategy making.

Domestic political competition and pressure from Congress also played a role in shaping U.S. strategy toward CASC. With the Congress having little knowledge and interest in the region, the Armenian lobby succeeded in getting Congress to pass Section 907. This legislation had a profound effect on U.S. relationship with the states of Southern Caucasus. As U.S. interest grew, Congress put pressure on the President both to engage the region and to push for democratic reform and human rights. Both the CTRP and Silk Road Act were initiated in Congress.

The relative weight of these various factors – international pressure, strategic culture, domestic politics and presidential leadership – varies between the different administrations. However, it seems apparent that no moncausal theory can sufficiently explain U.S. strategy toward CASC. The framework should to be further specified, especially regarding domestic politics.

It is of crucial importance to recognize that the paradigm of liberalism separates the U.S. from most other states, including great powers such as Russia and China. Samuel Huntington wrote that American nationalism “has been an idealistic nationalism, justified, not by the assertion of the superiority of the American people over other peoples, but by the assertion of the superiority of American ideals over other ideals”. Soviet strategy could be whatever the Politburo decided it was, provided it was in the momentary self-interest. American strategy, however, is judged by the criteria of universal principles. This constrains the U.S. in ways that other states are not, and it partly explains why it seems so difficult to have an open discussion about strategy in the U.S. It is fascinating how exceptionally non-realist the U.S. declared strategy toward CASC was, especially under Clinton and George W. Bush. The fact that liberalist values came to influence and even

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dominate the strategy toward what many considered the region’s core state is an important observation. So is the refusal to play ‘the great game’ on part of the administrations and the seemingly widespread belief that transcending great power conflict in the region was possible.

The notion that U.S. strategic culture sometimes has a negative effect on U.S. strategy is widespread, especially among realists. The paradigm of liberalism with its universal claims, predisposes policymakers to be ambitious and to make grand statements. Whether this is a good or a bad thing is beyond the scope of this study. However, it sets a very high bar for what constitutes strategic success. All three administrations made grand statements, and they all faced a dilemma when they were forced to choose between security interests and supporting democratic reform. This dilemma is to a considerable degree self-imposed, and there are numerous examples of how the influence of U.S. strategic culture complicated U.S. relations with the CASC states.

The countervailing forces of the paradigm of liberalism and the paradigm of non-entanglement produce a tendency to make grand and sweeping statements and then provide insufficient resources to realize stated goals. This can be regarded as a negative effect. This study should nevertheless not be understood as an argument that U.S. strategic culture is harmful to U.S. interests. It may have a positive effect in the long-term or via the goodwill that it generates in some parts of the world. There are an abundance of books and studies on how the paradigm of liberalism has had a positive effect on U.S. strategy and the world. There are far fewer arguments that the paradigm of non-entanglement has had a similarly positive effect, but it can, for instance, be argued that the existence of this paradigm can make the U.S. seem less threatening to other states. It can also help the U.S. to scale back commitments and harness its strength in trying times. This is something that ought to be investigated more thoroughly. Furthermore, the combination of these two paradigms, including the subcultures, may in the short-term make U.S. strategy seem inconsistent, incoherent and inefficient. However, it can be argued that this particular combination serves the U.S. well in the long-term.1088

Naturally, all of the assumptions confirmed in this study should evidently be tested against cases likely to provide contradicting evidence.

7.2.1 Contributions and Avenues for Further Research

This study’s contributions are both empirical and theoretical in character. As emphasized from the outset, the U.S. relationship with CASC is a subject on which there are not many studies. Producing more knowledge about this

1088 This is one of Walter Russell Mead’s main arguments, when writing about U.S. strategic culture as a ‘Special Providence’.
topic is thus highly relevant. This study is probably the most detailed tracing of the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC hitherto available. A vast empirical material has been gathered and analysed in this endeavour, and I regard this as the study’s primary contribution.

In addition to making an empirical contribution to the literature on U.S. strategy toward CASC, this study also fills gaps in the literature on the U.S. war on terror and adds to the literature on U.S. post-Cold War strategy. The study covers U.S. strategy for 15 years over three separate presidential administrations, and as a result of how it is structured, with the different administrations treated as separate cases, it also makes a contribution to the literature on the strategy of different presidential administrations. I would further argue that the empirical findings, combined with the outlining of the framework for U.S. strategy, also makes a contribution to the literature on U.S. strategy in general.

Even though the study’s theoretical ambitions are secondary to the empirical analysis of U.S. strategy toward CASC, it still makes some theoretical contributions. It can be argued that the framework outlined for answering the research question is not particularly sophisticated. However, I believe that thinking about U.S. strategy in terms of the two countervailing forces along with the subcultures is a substantial improvement over many other frameworks. It will take one further than if only thinking about this in terms of realism versus liberalism, or hawks versus doves, and it can serve as a powerful tool for analysing U.S. strategy and make comparisons. The framework is also somewhat open ended and, with minor adjustments, can be used to analyse a single speech or a specific case, as well as the strategy of an entire administration or long term trends in U.S. strategy. It can also potentially provide the basis for making forecasts regarding the future trajectory of U.S. strategy.

The framework, with its focus on strategic culture as an intervening variable, can also be regarded as a contribution to the ongoing effort to bridge the gap between realist, constructivist and cultural theories. The study contributes to the neoclassical realist research program and the effort at reversing the bifurcation of the study of international politics into International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis.

In Chapter Three I argued that the detailed tracing of the evolution of U.S. strategy was particularly advantageous in the heuristic identification of new variables and hypothesis. The study has resulted in a number of findings that open up several avenues for further research.

Bureaucratic politics seems to have been an important variable in the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC. One the most important points that Terry Deibel makes in *Foreign Affairs Strategy* involves the fundamental importance of coordinating the U.S. government. Without proper coordination of the various departments and agencies, these entities can be counted on to have their own agendas, with negative effects on strategy as a conse-
The difficulty and fundamental importance of coordination led Brent Scowcroft to remark that “the hallmark of a successful administration is the extent to which its strategic concept can integrate the government”.1090

As demonstrated, coordination was lacking throughout the entire period studied. It is clear that the State Department and the DoD had different perspectives on the region and that various agencies ‘freelanced’ and formulated their own policies. Much of U.S. strategy was thus formulated by lower level administrators and bureaucrats. The fact that many U.S. programs grew as the years went by, thereby increasing the overall engagement of the U.S. in the region, seems to be more the result of the incremental growth of bureaucracies than a skillfully thought out plan by people at the pinnacle of power. The fact that President Clinton and George W. Bush inherited several programs operating in the region can probably account for some of the continuity of U.S. strategy toward the region, since changing or cutting programs takes effort and usually meets with bureaucratic resistance.

Interagency tension, incremental growth of various programs, lack of knowledge and information, inconsistencies, incoherence, waste of resources and perhaps, above all, overall lack of coordination in U.S. strategy toward CASC demonstrates that studies from a bureaucratic politics perspective would definitively add to the history of U.S. engagement in CASC.1091 This study shows that much interesting work can be done in that area and that U.S. strategy toward the CASC offers interesting empirical material for bureaucratic politics oriented scholars.

Presidential leadership, or lack thereof, played an important role in the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC. The lack of coordination seems to be clearly related to the lack of leadership. A factor that most certainly affected both was the lack of knowledge and thinking about the region. This brings Randall Schweller’s term ‘elite consensus’ to the fore. In Chapter Two I argued that when there is little or ambiguous information available to actors, one would expect there to be less unity over strategic choices and policy preferences. And, when there is little or no consensus, the political costs of decisive and bold government action increases dramatically. As demonstrated, there was a clear lack of knowledge about the region, and there seemed to have been no consensus regarding its proper place in a larger strategic context. The question regarding the region’s importance never received a clear answer, and there was, for instance, a strong difference of opinion as to whether the Uzbek regime was a bulwark against terrorism or was fomenting it. The cost for the George W. Bush Administration of supporting

1091 Frederick Starr has used the term “program-nitis” to describe how the U.S. constantly initiated new programs and initiatives toward the region without any proper coordination or strategy.
the Karimov regime after the violence in Andijan was very high for a number of reasons. However, if there had been an elite consensus regarding, let us say, the crucial importance of Uzbekistan in the war on terror, this would probably not have been as costly. This, in turn, might have affected the administration’s calculation and ultimately its decision.

There is an elite consensus regarding Saudi Arabia, U.S. Presidents have for decades made it clear that the U.S. relationship with the Saudi Kingdom is vital. Even though the scarcity of oil strengthens American Realist reasoning, elite consensus seems to be an important variable that can, under certain circumstances, negate the imperative of U.S. strategic culture. This variable needs to be further specified and incorporated into the framework, especially when used to study U.S. strategy toward other regions or states.

I did not systematically examine the causal impact of shifting sectional or sectoral interests in the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC. The economic interest approach is a very common one in international relations. It seems entirely plausible that the existence of various economic interests might explain much of the evolution of U.S. strategy toward CASC. The fact that hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Americans of Armenian decent reside in the U.S. seems to have played an important role, especially early on. Oil and gas interests were also clearly involved in shaping the U.S. strategy. It would be very interesting to see how far such an approach can go, in relation to the framework developed in this study.

This study has shown that many states in CASC were aware of U.S. strategic culture. They were not only suspicious of sweeping statements and the staying power of the U.S. but also hedged against it. They also exploited U.S. strategic culture both strategically and tactically. By promising reform and using language that fit the paradigm of liberalism they could curry favours. It is also known that enemies of the U.S., such as Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, considered factors that fit the paradigm of non-entanglement – U.S. sensitivity to costs, especially human casualties, when strategizing. A study of how other states and actors perceive and use U.S. strategic culture would be very interesting both in itself and as a complement to further studies of U.S. strategic culture.

Another question that points in the direction of potential future research is to what extent the framework presented in this study is applicable to other states. Of course, there is no reason to assume that U.S. domestic political patterns are similar to those of other countries. However, the basic idea that international pressures interact with nationally specific cultures can and ought to be examined with relation to other states. It is perfectly plausible that this tension between international pressure and national strategic culture exist in other countries as well. Russia, with its historically complex relationship with Europe and other neighbours, combined with its experience of dramatic shifts in power, would be very interesting to study with the help of this framework.
The framework can be criticized for relying on a rather static view of U.S. strategic culture. Over time, strategic culture may change under the pressure of the international environment. However, U.S. strategic culture does not seem to be easily washed away. To the lament of many realists, the two paradigms seem extraordinary resilient, and the U.S. has never really been socialized into the practices of realpolitik. However, when discussing the extent to which the framework is applicable to other countries, this question is very important, since the strategic culture of other states may be far more variable.

I mentioned above that the relative weights of international pressure, strategic culture, domestic politics and presidential leadership varies between the different administrations and that the framework needs to be further specified with regards to this. It would be particularly interesting to analyse more thoroughly how domestic political pressure shapes U.S. strategy, especially because the end of the Cold War probably increased their relative impact on strategy. Several potentially interesting variables have already been mentioned, but there are more. For a number of reasons, party polarization is on the rise in the U.S. This makes an investigation of the extent to which partisan competition influences strategy even more important. The U.S. is also turning more into a class society, and social cohesion is in decline. In Unanswered Threats Randall Schweller argues that social cohesion affects the ability of states to balance threats. Schweller does not study the U.S. with regard to this variable. Therefore, a study of how social cohesion affects U.S. strategy would seem very interesting.

Finally, neoclassical realism should be tested against other bodies of theory. Its scope conditions also need to be further investigated. As long as the U.S. remains the world’s only superpower, domestic variables will have a relatively strong influence on U.S. strategy. As the international environment develops in a multipolar direction, this may change. However, following the framework developed in this study, any change in the international environment will be filtered through U.S. strategic culture. For this reason, it is highly unlikely that the U.S. will adopt anything resembling a pure balance of power strategy, due to its poor fit with U.S. strategic culture. If U.S. power were for some reason to decrease significantly, the U.S. would likely return to a strategy resembling that of the interwar era, when the paradigm of non-entanglement was dominant. However, there is little reason to believe that the U.S. will adopt a strategy of Strategic Disengagement any time soon, given its high share of relative power. Cultural and constructivist theories tell us that the American people will reject pure balance of power strategies. Realism, on the other hand, contends that the country will reject isolation-

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ism, since no great power would voluntarily give up its position. The tension between the two paradigms will probably persist for the foreseeable future. The U.S. will probably continue to set ambitious goals and make sweeping commitments and then provide insufficient support and resources to actually realise them. The high bar of success set by the paradigm of liberalism will continue to lead to widespread disappointment, when the President and the foreign policy elite are unable to live up to the expectations.
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