



KAZAKHSTAN

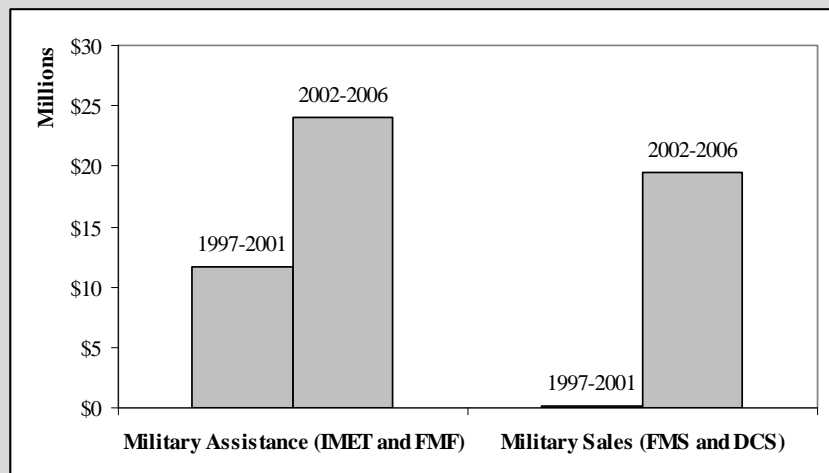
Background

Kazakhstan is an oil-rich Central Asian republic that borders China as well as Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and the Caspian Sea. Incorporated into the Russian Empire in the mid-1800s, Kazakhstan enjoyed a short period of independence after the Bolshevik Revolution. However, the Soviets quickly reasserted control over Central Asia, and Kazakhstan became the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic in 1936. Kazakhstan declared independence from the Soviet Union in December 1991 and elected its first

president – former leader of the Kazakh Communist Party Nursultan Nazarbayev. Nazarbayev has been Kazakhstan’s only president since independence and has expanded the powers of the presidency almost continuously since taking office. In 1993, two years after coming to power in an uncontested presidential election, Nazarbayev introduced a new constitution that broadened the powers of the executive branch. In 1995, Nazarbayev held a constitutional referendum that extended his term until 2000. Nazarbayev called for early presidential elections in January 1999, disqualified the one legitimate opposition candidate on a legal technicality, and pushed a constitutional amendment through parliament extending the presidential term from five to seven years. In December 2005, Nazarbayev was elected to a third term as president with 91 percent of the vote. Although the election was considered an improvement over previous elections, with opposition candidates allowed more freedom to campaign against Nazarbayev, international observers still considered it far from meeting international standards for fairness.

Although opposition political parties are not banned outright, as they are in neighboring Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, opposition candidates are often harassed, are subject to government-imposed limitations on political speech and have less access to media outlets for campaigning purposes. The first parliamentary elections, held in March 1994, were invalidated by Nazarbayev, and the next election cycle saw the vast majority of seats go to candidates from pro-government parties, particularly

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Nazarbayev's Otan party and his daughter Dariga's Asar party. The September 1999 elections were considered Kazakhstan's first true multiparty elections but, in the end, only four members of opposition parties won seats and the election was regarded as far from free and fair. The most recent parliamentary elections, held in September 2004, yielded similar results with Nazarbayev's Otan party maintaining control of parliament.

In its 2006 report on human rights practices, the U.S. State Department notes that the human rights situation in Kazakhstan remains poor, with significant restrictions on many basic human rights. In recent years, the government has imposed new legislation that increased government control over public and private life, including legislation aimed at fighting terrorism and maintaining national security. Members of the security forces continue to use torture as a means of coercing confessions from detainees and the police engage in arbitrary arrest and detention of citizens. These human rights abuses are often selectively used against political opponents of the regime, who are also monitored by the government. The police have also used force against peaceful demonstrators.

The Kazakh constitution allows for executive control of the legislative and judiciary branches of government, as well as local and regional governments. Although the government has increased transparency of certain processes, much governmental activity remains closed to the public and corruption is a serious problem in all branches of government. The government exerts significant control over the media in Kazakhstan. A large portion of broadcasting outlets are owned by the government, which by law can bring civil or criminal charges against journalists who insult the president or address sensitive issues that the government deems could threaten national security. Journalists who speak out against the regime report harassment and even assault and many practice self-censorship. The government imposes restrictions on the freedom of assembly and association, requiring permits for public gatherings while often refusing to grant them. All public organizations, including political parties, are likewise required to register with the government and must meet specific requirements in order to do so.

In the recent past, Kazakhstan has been involved in disputes with China, Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan over issues related to the Caspian seabed boundary, and is currently involved in efforts to demarcate its borders with all of its neighbors. Kazakhstan has a long-standing relationship with China in regards to oil and in 2005, Nazarbayev officially opened an oil pipeline between Kazakhstan and western China. The United States, with which Kazakhstan enjoys friendly relations, has encouraged Kazakhstan to become more involved with projects to improve international access to Caspian Sea oil resources, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. In 2006, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney visited Kazakhstan and Nazarbayev was invited to visit Washington; in spite of these seemingly close ties, the United States is not supporting Kazakhstan's bid for the OSCE chairmanship in 2009, citing the need for deeper democratic reforms.

Islamic extremist groups operate within Kazakhstan and, although no major acts of terrorism have occurred within the country, Kazakhs are known to have joined regional extremist organizations and participated in bombings in neighboring Uzbekistan. The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), a splinter group of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), is also known to operate in Kazakhstan and is on the U.S. State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. The IMU seeks to overthrow the secular governments of Central Asia and is believed to have ties to al-Qaida. Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), an organization dedicated to spreading radical Sunni ideology, is active in Kazakhstan. Although not designated by the U.S. State Department as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, as HT is not directly linked to any acts of international terrorism, the government of Kazakhstan along with its Central Asian neighbors have banned the organization and have arrested those distributing HT materials for

attempting to incite violence. Kazakhstan participates in multilateral efforts to reign in terrorism as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

U.S. Military Assistance Prior to Sept. 11, 2001

Kazakhstan began receiving U.S. military assistance in fiscal year 1993 (FY 93). Kazakhstan concluded substantial amounts of Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) with the United States during the mid-1990s, but very few Foreign Military Sales (FMS). As part of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, Kazakhstan was supplied with nearly \$9 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds between FY 93 and FY 01 to support modernization of the Kazakh army and enhance interoperability with NATO allies. International Military Education and Training (IMET), which the United States considers particularly important for the Central Asian republics, was provided to Kazakhstan at consistent rates during the 1990s through FY 01.

U.S. Military Assistance Since Sept. 11, 2001

The government of Kazakhstan has been extremely supportive of the U.S.-led war against terrorism. Since Sept. 11, 2001, Kazakhstan has supported both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, allowing extensive U.S. overflight rights at no cost and allowing Almaty International Airport to be used in support of OEF missions. Kazakh engineers have been in Iraq since 2003, assisting coalition forces in ordnance removal and Kazakh representatives have participated in State Department anti-terrorism training courses. Because of this cooperation, and because of its own domestic struggles to eradicate terrorist networks, the U.S. State Department considers Kazakhstan to be a “front-line state” in the “war on terrorism.”

At the same time that Kazakhstan is an outspoken supporter of the U.S. war on terrorism, Kazakhstan maintains diplomatic relations with Cuba, North Korea, Libya, the Palestinian Authority, Sudan, and Iran. However, despite these relations, Kazakhstan has received more than twice the amount of military assistance in the five years since Sept. 11 than it received in the five years prior. Average IMET and FMF appropriations have doubled since FY 02, and FY 07 and 08 budget requests reflect this increased level. Since 2002, the United States has also doubled the amount of joint U.S.-Kazakhstani military exercises held each year.

U.S. arms sales to Kazakhstan have increased markedly – while only \$182,000 in arms were transferred from the United States between FY 97 and FY 01, more than \$19 million was transferred between FY 02 and FY 06. Arms sales to Kazakhstan have included trucks and patrol boats as well as communications equipment. More than \$20 million in arms sales are projected for FY 07 and FY 08.

The United States has provided Kazakhstan with several sources of counterterrorism training and funding. Kazakhstan is a beneficiary of the Regional Defense Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) and received \$200,000 in FY 05, \$175,000 in FY 06, and will receive an additional \$125,000 in FY 07. Since FY 05, Kazakhstan has received funding to expand its counterterrorism capabilities through the Foreign Operations budget’s Anti-Terrorism Assistance program (NADR-ATA), which is part of the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Activities account. Kazakhstan received \$991,000 from this account in FY 06 and is slated to receive \$1 million in FY 08.

U.S. Military Assistance and Sales to Kazakhstan, FY 90 - FY 08					
	IMET	FMF	DCS	FMS	EDA
1990	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a
1991	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a
1992	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	n/a
1993	\$163,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
1994	\$90,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$0
1995	\$97,000	\$0	\$55,000	\$0	\$0
1996	\$388,000	\$0	\$6,559,000	\$0	\$0
1997	\$389,000	\$1,500,000	\$51,000	\$0	\$0
1998	\$587,000	\$2,250,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
1999	\$540,000	\$1,800,000	\$0	\$21,000	\$0
2000	\$567,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$110,000	\$159,283
2001	\$583,000	\$1,896,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
1990-2001	\$3,404,000	\$8,946,000	\$6,668,000	\$131,000	\$159,283
1997-2001	\$2,666,000	\$8,946,000	\$51,000	\$131,000	\$159,283
2002	\$893,000	\$4,750,000	\$0	\$3,035,000	\$0
2003	\$872,000	\$2,900,000	\$0	\$414,000	\$0
2004	\$1,232,000	\$2,980,000	\$14,000	\$1,026,000	\$0
2005	\$997,000	\$4,960,000	\$600,000	\$2,693,000	\$0
2006	\$995,000	\$3,465,000	\$4,102,000	\$7,618,000	\$0
2002-2006	\$4,989,000	\$19,055,000	\$4,716,000	\$14,786,000	\$0
2007	\$1,085,000	\$3,500,000	\$13,133,000	\$6,310,000	\$0
2008	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,308,000	\$0	n/a

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