



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTERTERRORIST  
POLICIES IN UZBEKISTAN**

by

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December 2012

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> December 2012	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> The Effectiveness of Counterterrorist Policies in Uzbekistan			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Valdas Dambrauskas				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB Protocol number ____N/A____.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b> A	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b>  This thesis analyzes the effectiveness of Uzbekistan's counterterrorist policies during the period of 1990-2012. It overviews the development of radical Islamism in Uzbekistan and evaluates the remaining terrorist threats. The effectiveness of Uzbekistan's counterterrorist policies is mainly analyzed by comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the both sides: the radical Islamist, especially terrorist, organizations and the Uzbek government. The Uzbek public support—as the main factor determining the effectiveness of the counterterrorist policies in the country—is presented within the originally constructed framework of many factors that cover not only the government's encounter with the radical Islamists and terrorists but also a wider historic, social, and economic situation in Uzbekistan. In addition, Uzbekistan's international counterterrorist cooperation is considered as an important factor for the sustenance of the highly repressive regime of President Islam Karimov. Although this thesis is focused on terrorism in just one country, the short overview of Islamism in the other Central Asian implies the case-specific nature of terrorism in general. This thesis demonstrates that the repressive and indiscriminate counterterrorism policies may remain effective in Uzbekistan even in the long-term due to the unique historic, economic, and social situation in the country and the specific geopolitical situation.				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Authoritarian Regime, Central Asia, Counterterrorist Policies, Effectiveness of Counterterrorist Policies, Hizb ut-Tahrir in Uzbekistan, Indiscriminate Policies, Islamic Jihad Union, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamism in Central Asia, Karimov, Public Opinion in Central Asia, Public Opinion in Uzbekistan, Repressive Policies, Uzbekistan.			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 155	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTERTERRORIST POLICIES IN  
UZBEKISTAN**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(COMBATING-TERRORISM: POLICY & STRATEGY)**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes the effectiveness of Uzbekistan's counterterrorist policies during the period of 1990–2012. It overviews the development of radical Islamism in Uzbekistan and evaluates the remaining terrorist threats. The effectiveness of Uzbekistan's counterterrorist policies is mainly analyzed by comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the both sides: the radical Islamist, especially terrorist, organizations and the Uzbek government. The Uzbek public support—as the main factor determining the effectiveness of the counterterrorist policies in the country—is presented within the originally constructed framework of many factors that cover not only the government's encounter with the radical Islamists and terrorists but also a wider historic, social, and economic situation in Uzbekistan. In addition, Uzbekistan's international counterterrorist cooperation is considered as an important factor for the sustenance of the highly repressive regime of President Islam Karimov. Although this thesis is focused on terrorism in just one country, the short overview of Islamism in the other Central Asian implies the case-specific nature of terrorism in general. This thesis demonstrates that the repressive and indiscriminate counterterrorism policies may remain effective in Uzbekistan even in the long-term due to the unique historic, economic, and social situation in the country and the specific geopolitical situation.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI – Amnesty International

APK – *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party of Turkey)

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CIS – Commonwealth Independent States

COIN – Counter-insurgency

CSTO – Commonwealth Security Treaty Organization

CT – counterterrorist

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

HRW – Human Rights Watch

ICG – International Crisis Group

ICNL – The International Center for Non-for-Profit Law

IGU – Islamic Jihad Group

IJU – Islamic Jihad Union

IMU – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

IRP – Islamic Revival Party

IRPT – Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan

ISAF- International Security Assistance Force (NATO forces in Afghanistan).

IWPR – Institute for War & Peace Reporting

MB – Muslim Brotherhood

MMA – *Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal* (United Action Front party in Pakistan)

NGO – non-governmental organization

NSS – National Security Service (rus. Sluzhba Natsionalnoi Bezopasnosti: SNB)

SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organization

U.S. DoS – U.S. Department of State

UTO – United Tajik Opposition

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Maria Rasmussen, whose highly professional and encouraging approach helped me to not only develop this thesis but also gain deeper understanding about the phenomena of terrorism. I would also like to thank Dr. Ryan Gingeras for his insights and support during this period.

It is difficult for me to overestimate the support and contribution from my family that most of the time lived on the other hemisphere and had to cope with daily routine and challenges without me. I am very grateful to my wife, Vilhelmina, for her endurance and belief in my abilities and my children for being so patient and sensible.

Finally, I would like to thank the whole faculty and staff of the National Security Affairs department for making my studies at Naval Postgraduate School challenging, appealing, and valuable.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

The collapse of the USSR brought to Uzbekistan and to the other Central Asian states not only independence, followed by large socio-economic changes, but also a revival of Islam. The traditional moderate Central Asian Islam<sup>1</sup> was accompanied also by radical interpretations and fundamentalism. The latter came with the various missionaries from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. They got support from the formerly unofficial local clergy. In the 1990s, all of this provided the context for and conditioned the appearance of Islamic terrorism in Uzbekistan. The state considered it as the most dangerous threat and suppressed it by force and strict control of religious affairs. This made Uzbekistan infamous for harsh repressions, continuous violations of human rights, and lack of democracy. Furthermore, the authoritarianism, state-controlled economy, and vast corruption caused the overall decline of public welfare. Although such policies usually fuel public discontent and, consequently, stronger public support for violent opposition, the level of terrorism in Uzbekistan has steadily declined since 1999. The main research question of this thesis, therefore, is: could the counterterrorist (CT) policies in Uzbekistan be evaluated as effective in the long-term?

In order to answer such a question, the strengths and weaknesses of both sides—the radical Islamic organizations<sup>2</sup> and the state—have to be evaluated. Public support, a major factor in the long-term, needs assessment too. Since contemporary Islamic terrorism usually exceeds national borders, the influence of the international environment on Uzbekistan's CT policies must be considered as well. The findings from these three parts of analysis will provide the final conclusions.

---

1. Igor Lipovsky, "The Awakening of Central Asian Islam," *Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 3 (1996): 1–9; Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 143–5.

2. In this paper, expressions such as "Islamic radicalism," "radical Islamists," "Islamist movements," "Islamic fundamentalists," and similar are purposefully used to cover not only Islamic terrorists but also other Islamic organizations, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir that rejects violence and in some Western countries even enjoys legal status. In Uzbekistan, as any other radical Islamic organization, it is considered a terrorist organization and is fully subjected not only to the restrictions on religion but also to the CT policies.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

Due to the harsh nature and broad scope of Uzbekistan's CT policies, their influence on the overall situation in the country and regional security is strong. The centrality of Uzbekistan in the region is determined not only by the most developed infrastructure and central location, which gives a major role in most of the projects of regional development and the NATO's transit to Afghanistan, but also by the largest population and military forces.<sup>3</sup> The unresolved border issues, economic disputes, large ethnic Uzbek minorities in the neighboring countries, and President Islam Karimov's ambitions for regional dominance make regional relations quite tense. The historic and socio-economic similarities make the security of all Central Asian states strongly intertwined and influenced Uzbekistan's ability to counter the threat of Islamic terrorism in the long-term.

Although the steady decrease in terrorist attacks in this country through the last eight years implies that Uzbekistan's CT efforts have been effective, the way these results were achieved and the current international developments cause serious concerns for the future. Due to the repression of Karimov's regime, the Islamic terrorists fled to Afghanistan and later Pakistan but continue attacking Central Asian states. The latter, therefore, gradually emulate Uzbekistan's CT policies. Uzbekistan is infamous for harsh indiscriminate repressions, violations of human rights, widespread corruption, and lack of democracy and rule of law. All these problems raise popular discontent and give the Islamists more opportunities for recruitment. The U.S.-led coalition's intent to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan in 2014 and the possible return of the Taliban into power could increase terrorist activities in Central Asia as well.<sup>4</sup> Then, the latest developments of political Islamism in Northern Africa and the Middle East may encourage the local Islamists for insurgency. The long-term effectiveness of Uzbekistan's CT policies, therefore, becomes crucial for the regional security.

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3. Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook: Uzbekistan."

4. International Crisis Group (ICG), *Talking About Talks: Toward a Political Settlement in Afghanistan*, in Asia Report No.221 (2012): 15.

### C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

There are a number of problems that make this research difficult:

- The absence of commonly accepted methods to evaluate the effectiveness of CT policies and the absence of reliable statistical data make quantitative measurement irrelevant.
- Due to the incomplete and sometimes even contradicting data from various sources it is difficult to draw exhaustive conclusions about the actual terrorist activities. Often existing data lacks reliable evidence and rests on unjustified suspicions. Also the arbitrary labeling as *terrorist* of the attacks related to the clashes among the various local groups for power and economic gains distort the whole picture.
- Due to the absence of political opposition in Uzbekistan and democratic elections it is difficult to evaluate the real popular political preferences.
- Due to the strict censorship, control of the public media, and limitations on the freedom of speech in Uzbekistan, it is difficult to gather reliable information about the governmental activities and the public opinion. The same foreign agencies held public opinion polls in the other Central Asian states as well. Some differences in the results can be explained by the differences by some political and ethnic situations. The similarities can be attributed to the similar historical background and socio-economic challenges. This proves the sufficient reliability of these reports.

And yet, for the reasons mentioned in the second section, Uzbekistan requires evaluation in terms of its effectiveness against Islamic radicalism, especially terrorism, in order to determine its ability to manage the remaining threats. Considering the case-specific nature of the CT campaigns, this thesis presents the argument that repressive CT policies are effective in the short-term and the long-term. The empirical evidence from many CT campaigns in various countries show that brutal repressions can suppress terrorism, but the period till the next wave of terrorism depends on many internal and external conditions in the country. Some Muslim countries (e.g. Turkey and Indonesia) dealt with Islamism in a peaceful and democratic way after the long periods of suppressive anti-Islamic policies. The key strength of Uzbekistan, in that respect, is the largely secular post-Soviet society, but the key challenge remains security situation in Afghanistan.

#### D. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a wide range of literature providing a historical background on the factors that shaped Uzbek nation's mentality and perceptions about Islam and the state. Olivier Roy describes the impact of Soviet rule on the building of Uzbek nation and the independent state building during the first ten years among other nations of Central Asia.<sup>5</sup> The curriculum of public education on the national history still bears a lot of Soviet influence and separates this nation from other Muslim nations (e.g. Arabs, Persians, Turks).<sup>6</sup> According to Vitalyi Naumkin, The atheistic Soviet policy and prevailing secular nationalism in the first years of independence determined that Islam primarily remained as a means of national identity but not a blueprint for state organization.<sup>7</sup> The later works confirmed that "Islamist rhetoric exists in Uzbekistan in an inhospitable cultural milieu"<sup>8</sup> and emphasized that the state's attempt to suppress Islamism is "the most powerful recruiting tool of the Islamists."<sup>9</sup> All these sources also describe the development of the national Communist elites during the Soviet period, their role after the declaration of independence, and their approach towards religion and terrorism.

The analysis of Islamic movements in Uzbekistan requires knowledge about their ideology, developments, and actions. Mark Juergensmeyer gives comprehensive descriptions about the various forms of religious terrorism and the understanding of Islamic *jihad* that provides the ideological foundation of Islamic terrorism around the world, and defines five possible scenarios for the state.<sup>10</sup> He favors the one that requires the state to accept moral and religious values in politics. Considering the nature of the

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5. Olivier Roy. *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*. New York: University Press, 2000.

6. Shoshana Keller, "Story, Time, and Dependent Nationhood in the Uzbek History Curriculum," *Slavic Review* 66, no.2 (2007): 264.

7. Vitalyi Naumkin, "Islam in the States of the Former USSR," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 524 (1992): 131–142.

8. Adeeb Khalid, "A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 4 (2003): 590.

9. Jeremy T. Gunn, "Shaping an Islamic Identity: Religion, Islamism, and the State in Central Asia," *Sociology of Religion* 64, No.3 (2003): 407.

10. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

current state and Ahmed Rashid's book about militant Islam in Central Asia<sup>11</sup>, it is difficult to expect such an outcome in Uzbekistan. Emmanuel Karagiannis clearly demonstrates that the very ideology of the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), allegedly the most popular banned Islamist organization in Uzbekistan, restricts any compromises with the secular state and rejects democracy.<sup>12</sup> In addition, he explains why HT abstains from violence. But Karagiannis doubts the preference for non-violence can be sustained. Although in many Western countries HT is considered a non-violent religious movement and is not listed among terrorist organizations in the terrorism databases (e.g. GTD),<sup>13</sup> in Uzbekistan, it is under the same severe persecution as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). There is some uncertainty in the literature about the IMU's development during the last few years, the inception of the IJU, and their capabilities and intentions.

In 2003 analyzing the IMU, Naumkin<sup>14</sup> doubted this organization could regain power in Uzbekistan after substantial losses and emphasized that unification with HT still would be unlikely. Rashid<sup>15</sup> also considered that the IMU influence on the Uzbek population will be very limited. Later that prediction was confirmed by Richard Weitz.<sup>16</sup> His claim, referring to Eurasia.net,<sup>17</sup> about the IMU's unification with the other Islamic organizations (including the HT), transformation into the Islamic Movement of Central Asia, and later into Jihad Islamic Union was unjustified. This opinion was reasonably argued by Rashid in the very same press-release. Einar Wigen also describes the IJU as a separate from the IMU organization, which hardly justifies the name of "Turkish al-

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11. Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

12. Emmanuel Karagiannis, *Political Islam in Central Asia: The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir* (London: Routledge, 2010).

13. GTD—Global Terrorism Database.

14. Vitaly Naumkin, *Militant Islam in Central Asia: The Case of the Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan*, Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, UC Berkeley (2003).

15. Rashid, *Jihad*, 243.

16. Richard Weitz, *Storm Clouds over Central Asia: Revival of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)? Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27, no.6 (2004): 505–530.

17. "Central Asia: Are Radical Groups Joining Forces?" Eurasianet, October 10, 2002.

Qaida” given by some scholars.<sup>18</sup> Both organizations moved into Afghanistan and Pakistan, encountering local and NATO forces, and changed their initial focus from Central Asia to the much wider international scene through relations with the Haqqani Network and al-Qaeda.<sup>19</sup> Updates of information about these terrorist organizations can be gathered through a wide selection of websites and media portals. However, due to the uncertain information,<sup>20</sup> it is difficult to assess the exact involvement of the IMU or the IJU in the terrorist acts in Uzbekistan.

While the literature of the previous paragraph also gives some information about Uzbekistan’s CT policies, the official national information is very limited. Features of the authoritarian and repressive regime of President Islam Karimov can be noticed in the cases of other repressive states (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, Tunisia, Tajikistan, and others) analyzed in *Why Muslims Rebel* by Mohammed Hafez.<sup>21</sup> This book gives convincing explanations and empirical evidence about causes of popular discontent and terrorism in Muslim societies. These cases will be useful for comparison with Uzbekistan’s fight against Islamic terrorism. The harsh peculiarities of “Karimov’s war”<sup>22</sup> are reflected in many international (e.g. UN, U.S., EU) reports and surveys. Even the previously more liberal religious and CT policies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan tend to converge with the more repressive ones of Uzbekistan.<sup>23</sup> Martha Olcott<sup>24</sup> reasonably

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18. Einar Wigen, *Islamic Jihad Union: al-Qaida’s Key to the Turkic World?* Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI, 2009), 35.

19. David Witter, *Uzbek Militancy in Pakistan’s Tribal Region*, Institute for the Study of War (2011), 12. Andrew R. Feitt, “Countering the IMU in Afghanistan,” *Small Wars Journal* (March 11, 2010): 3.

20. Often several names of suspected perpetrators are provided and sometimes different sources provide different information. E.g. the Global Terrorist Database shows 5 attacks in Central Asia in 2004, while the other source shows 11 (Thomas M. Sanderson, Daniel Kimmage, and David A. Gordon, “From the Ferghana Valley to South Waziristan,” *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (2010): 27–8).

21. Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

22. Human Rights First, *Karimov’s War: Human Rights Defenders and Counterterrorism in Uzbekistan*, by Archana Pyati, ed. Eric Biel, Neil Hicks, and Michael McClintock (2005).

23. Mariya Y. Omelicheva, *Counterterrorism Policies in Central Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

24. Martha B. Olcott, *Central Asia’s Second Chance* (Washington: The Brookings Institution Press, 2005).

asserts that the current authoritarian Central Asian regimes create causes for terrorism by ignoring the needs of local populations and emphasizes a need for the international community to take a regional approach.

Although academic attempts to measure the effectiveness of counterterrorism policies started a few decades ago, this issue still remains challenging and significantly unexplored.<sup>25</sup> Eric van Um and Daniela Pisoiu provided an excellent overview of the academic literature on this issue.<sup>26</sup> Due to the lack of clear definition on the effectiveness of counterterrorism, they categorized all studies in accordance to their orientation to output-effectiveness, outcome-effectiveness, or impact-effectiveness.<sup>27</sup> Most of the literature is focused on the impact-effectiveness and based on quantitative methodologies providing the most understandable and convincing answers expressed in concrete figures (e.g., numbers of terrorist attacks, fatalities and material damage, arrested or killed terrorists). Although generally desired by national leadership and general public, figures provide limited and conditional information and sometimes are even deceptive.<sup>28</sup> The figures and their trends in itself do not provide sufficient information about the reasons for change in terrorist activity, its impact on society, and the complexity of the very phenomenon of terrorism (psychological, social, economic, cultural, etc.),<sup>29</sup> the application of business-like statistical methodologies is questionable, because terrorist attacks are relatively rare (in comparison, for example, with numbers of shoppers in groceries) and “there are no meaningful patterns that show what behavior indicates planning or preparation for terrorism.”<sup>30</sup>

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25. U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Combating Terrorism: The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness*,” by Raphael Perl, CRS Report RL33160, March 12, 2007, 2.

26. Eric van Um and Daniela Pisoiu, *Effective counterterrorism: What have we learned so far?* Economics of Security Working Paper 55 (2011): 3–4.

27. This conceptualization of effectiveness was developed by professor Oran R. Young, Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

28. Daniel Byman, “Measuring the War on Terrorism: A First Appraisal,” *Current History* 102, No.668 (2003): 411; Jeff Jonas and Jim Harper, “Effective Counterterrorism and the Limited Role of Predictive Data Mining,” *Policy Analysis* No.584, CATO Institute (2006).

29. Teun van Dongen, *Break it Down: An Alternative Approach to Measuring Effectiveness in Counterterrorism*, Economics of Security Working Paper 23 (2009), 2–11; CRS, *Combating*, 5–9.

30. Jonas and Harper, “Effective,” 7–8.

In order to determine how specific interventions influenced the outcomes or impact on terrorist activities, a well-structured and articulated CT strategy and programs with clearly defined goals, tasks, and indicators integrated into causality chains must be developed. Due to the general lack of comprehensively described CT policies, the quantitative methodologies are applied just to monitor the impacts of separate, one-type interventions and are tailored to specific contexts in those countries.<sup>31</sup> Despite such complex and costly efforts, the influence from other governmental programs and the unexpected consequences of policy remain largely unknown.<sup>32</sup> The most desirable impact—no terrorist attacks—is still shared by all governments. However, this raises a problem of “measuring the negative”<sup>33</sup> or the probability of the next attack. All those deficiencies seriously limit the application of quantitative methods, especially where the amount of data is too small for statistical analysis, dubious, or kept secret.

Considering the authoritarian nature of the political regime and the strict censorship of public information in Uzbekistan, the application of quantitative methods could be quite limited due to the lack of available data and questions about the reliability of data. The pressure to evaluate effectiveness of CT policies comes from democratic governments that are accountable for expenditures and respective progress. The authoritarian regime of Uzbekistan, most probably, does not have such a need. Its CT policy is not even publicized, except in a chapter in the Karimov’s book<sup>34</sup> and in the respective legislation.

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31. Targeted killings in Daniel Byman, *The Five Front War: The Better Way to Fight Global Jihad* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 116–24; Asaf Zussman and Noam Zussman, “Evaluating the Effectiveness of an Israeli Counterterrorism Policy Using StockMarket Data,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, No. 2 (2006): 193–206; Ceasefires, unemployment rates, and price indexes in Christopher Hewitt, *The Effectiveness of Anti-terrorist Policies* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 38–46.

32. Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (CGCC), *Colloquium on Measuring Effectiveness in Counterterrorism Programming*, Preliminary Meeting Note (2012), 2.

33. CGCC, *Colloquium*, 2.

34. Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 19–29.



There is a wide agreement in the literature about the importance of public support<sup>35</sup> for the state and terrorists. Available studies of public opinion performed by international organizations<sup>36</sup> in Uzbekistan allow us to assess the level of support for the state's actions, threat perceptions, and religious preferences. The inordinately optimistic results provided by the national agency,<sup>37</sup> however, raise some suspicion about their objectivity. The very nature of public opinion and its interpretation, especially in countries so censored as Uzbekistan, make this data more useful for qualitative methods.

Many scholars and practitioners see more value in qualitative methods or mix of both.<sup>38</sup> In practice, however, "most studies deal with individual measures only or with a convenient selection thereof"<sup>39</sup> instead of considering the whole range of state CT and related activities in order to assess the overall outcome- or impact-effectiveness. The evaluation of the latter usually is related to the dynamics of terrorist activities. The evaluation of the former is more complicated and requires assessment of indicators related to capabilities and success factors on both sides: terrorist organizations and state. Indicators like the ability to gather intelligence, the availability of technology, the impact on society, the alliances with other terrorist organizations, and others allow assessing "how close terrorists are to the next quantum jump."<sup>40</sup>

There is variety of different approaches to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of terrorist organizations and states. Crenshaw emphasizes the importance of organizational and instrumental approaches in evaluating the potential of terrorist organizations.<sup>41</sup> The most common indicators of the strength of terrorist organizations are

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35. Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 143; Byman, "Measuring," 413;

36. International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), *Public Opinion in Uzbekistan: 1996*, by Steven Wagner (1997); The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, *What the World Thinks in 2002* (2002); Gallup, *Global Barometer of Hope and Despair for 2012*, Volume 1: Statistical Report.

37. "Ijtimoiy Fikr announces public opinion poll results," Governmental portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan, August 25, 2009.

38. Center on Global CT Cooperation, *Colloquium*, 3.

39. Um and Psoiu, *Effective*, 8.

40. CRS, *Combating*, 7–8.

41. Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 10, No.4 (1987): 13–31.

their ability to recruit new members and spread ideology, the availability of weapons and financial resources, and the effectiveness of communication networks and leadership. For the state's effectiveness, Daniel Byman suggests to assess organization, intelligence, support, and defense.<sup>42</sup> While Isabelle Duyvesten seriously questions the utility of military forces against terrorism,<sup>43</sup> Maria Rasmussen defines the main inefficiencies by analyzing practical applications of military forces against civilian riots and terrorism.<sup>44</sup> On the basis of seven CT case studies, Bruce Hoffman and Jeniffer Morrison-Taw offer a strategic framework consisting of four crucial elements: effective command and coordination structure, wide range of measures "legitimizing" the state's CT actions, coordination within and between intelligence agencies, and international cooperation.<sup>45</sup> They provide a well-supported argumentation for the applicability of that framework in other countries, adjusted according to specific circumstances<sup>46</sup>, and for the value of comparative studies. In summary, the effectiveness of the CT policies in Uzbekistan could be evaluated by applying mainly qualitative methods and comparisons with similar cases as suggested by the scholars above.

## **E. METHODS AND SOURCES**

Due to the lack of common methodology to measure the effectiveness of the CT policies, this thesis will combine several basic analytic methods. The shortage of reliable statistical data about the terrorist capabilities and the activities of Uzbekistan's security organizations require wide application of qualitative methods. The number of terrorist attacks is just one indicator and does not show the real reasons behind the decline and the remaining terrorist threats. The numbers of attacks or attempts and their frequency, the numbers of fatalities and injuries, the numbers of active terrorists and supporters, and the

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42. Byman, "Measuring," 412–3.

43. Isabelle Duyvesteyn, "Great Expectations: The Use of Armed Force to Combat Terrorism," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19, no.3 (2008): 328–51.

44. Maria Rasmussen, *The Military Role in Internal Defense and Security: Some Problems*, Naval Post-graduate School, 1999.

45. Bruce Hoffman and Jeniffer Morrison-Taw, *A Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism*, RAND, National Defence Research Institute (1992), 3–29.

46. Hoffman and Morrison-Taw, *Strategic*, 22.

numbers of imprisoned Islamists partially allows to determine the current potential of the terrorist organizations. The same data also gives some indications about the intensity and success of the governmental actions, information about which otherwise is very limited. The qualitative evaluation of the radical Islamic organizations will be done by analyzing their ideological appeal, the applicability of their strategy, the political impact from their attacks, the level of morale, the organizational features, the ethnic composition, the availability of safe havens, the access to resources, the possession of sophisticated equipment, and the relations with the population. In addition, the comparison with other radical Islamic organizations (e.g. Muslim Brotherhood (MB) or *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP)) that achieved significant political successes in their countries will finalize the possibilities for the Uzbek Islamists to threaten security in Uzbekistan in the future.

The ultimate goal in every fight between states and terrorists is to gain wide popular support.<sup>47</sup> Hence, the case-specific combination of few quantitative and mostly qualitative evaluations will guide the analysis of the popular support. Radical Islamists exploit state's failures in every area of public life by presenting alternative ideologies and attempting to mobilize massive insurgency. Demonstrating resolve and developing ability to attack the state, they recruit new members utilizing popular grievances and feelings of relative deprivation and accumulate resources. Hence, this thesis also considers the nature of political regime and its socio-economic policies that correlate with the CT policies and significantly influence general public support to the official leadership. Finally, the available reports on the public opinion, will give a basis to determine the public perception about the legitimacy of and corresponding support to the state's CT policies.

The analysis of the international environment in respect to Uzbekistan's security and CT policies is another major factor determining Uzbekistan's ability to contain Islamic terrorism with the current CT policies in the future. The overview of Uzbekistan's relations, from the national security perspective, with its closest neighbors and major foreign powers in the region will show their influence on Uzbekistan's CT policies. Due to some important commonalities in the current Uzbek domestic situation

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47. Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends*, 143.

with the other Muslim countries, the additional analysis will examine possibilities for Uzbekistan to follow the Arab Spring scenario or peaceful developments of the political Islamism in other Muslim countries, such as Turkey and Pakistan.

The main sources of information are secondary sources: books and articles. The primary sources consist of the published data, legislation, interviews, surveys, and reports. The web-based media was monitored until November 14, 2012.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW**

This thesis consists of five chapters, three of which present the main areas of analysis for Uzbekistan: development and current potential of the Islamic terrorism; CT policies, their implementation, and related public support; and international CT cooperation. The first, after the introduction, chapter gives a historical overview of Islam in Uzbekistan with the main emphasis on the Soviet period, the development of the Islamic fundamentalist movements, and their encounters with the government. Then four radical Islamic organizations—IMU, IJU, *Akramiyyah*, and HT—are analyzed for their potential to threaten security in Uzbekistan. The next chapter addresses Uzbekistan's CT policies, the CT organization and resources of the state, and the actual implementation of these policies. The short overviews of the political, economic, and social conditions in the country are presented in order to analyze Uzbek public support. The international influence on Uzbekistan's CT policies is analyzed in the fourth chapter. Uzbekistan's cooperation is divided into two parts: relations with the Central Asian states, which experience similar threats, and with the foreign powers that are the most active in this region. This chapter also analyses the possible emulation in Uzbekistan of the Arab Spring scenarios or peaceful achievements of the political Islamism in Turkey and Pakistan. The fifth chapter concludes on the effectiveness of the CT policies in Uzbekistan by using findings from the previous chapters.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN UZBEKISTAN (1990 – 2012)

### A. INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the USSR in 1991 brought Uzbekistan not only to the arena of international relations but also back into the world of Islam. The new Muslim nation with the population close to 26 million raised hopes and fears worldwide. The Middle East and South Asian Muslims hoped that the revival of Islam will integrate Uzbekistan into their community. The West feared that the spurious religious revival, under the influence of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Arab countries, could lead Uzbekistan into a radical opposition to the non-Muslim world.<sup>48</sup> Currently, Uzbekistan is neither an Islamic state nor a liberal democracy either. Although majority of the local population perceive Islam in “profoundly secular”<sup>49</sup> ways, the strongest radical Islamic organizations in the region—the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Central Asian branch of the *Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami* (Party of Islamic Liberation; HT)—originated in Uzbekistan. President Islam Karimov considers Islamic fundamentalism as the most serious threat to the national stability and security.<sup>50</sup> Uzbekistan is infamous not only for its repressive and indiscriminate CT policies but also for the lack of democracy, absence of liberal economic reforms, constraints on religion, and continuous violations of human rights. Its regime justifies such policies by referring to the persistent threat of Islamic fundamentalism and the experience of the Tajik civil war of 1992 - 1997.<sup>51</sup>

The intensity of terrorist activities, however, has no impact on the nature of the Uzbek CT policies. The number of terrorist attacks even in the early 1990s was quite low to justify so strict CT policies. Furthermore, despite the clearly decreasing numbers of terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan during the last eight years (Fig. 1), there are no signs of less suppressive measures or more flexible attitude towards Islamic organizations. In

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48. Khalid, “A Secular,” 573.

49. Ibid.

50. Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 25–6.

51. Human Rights First, *Karimov's*, 3.

addition, the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan inflicted major losses on the Taliban and al Qaeda that were the main supporters of Uzbek terrorists. On the contrary to such developments, since 1999 the CT policies only became more harsh and indiscriminate. Still, the regional security situation is not yet stable. The purpose of this chapter, hence, is to evaluate the actual threat of the Islamic radicalism to this country.

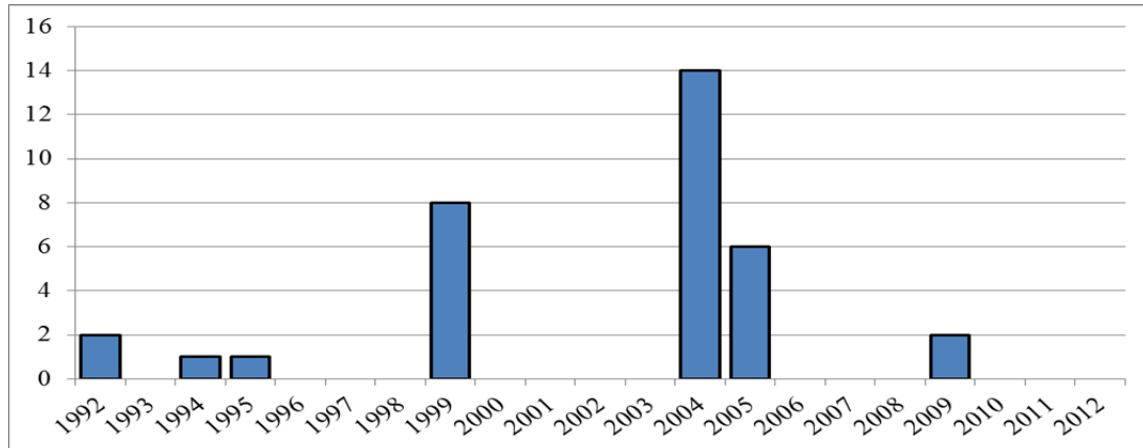


Figure 1. Number of terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan (1990–2012).<sup>52</sup>

The evaluation of the latter threat requires analysis of the reasons for the Islamic radicalization in Uzbekistan and the radical Islamic organizations themselves. Firstly, a history of Islam in Uzbekistan will present not only the roots of the Islamic radicalism and terrorism but also what shaped the current relation between Islam and the modern Uzbek society. The majority of the analysis of the terrorist Islamic organizations is allocated to the IMU. The main reasons for such an imbalance are: the IMU went through the longest and the most dynamic development; the IMU remains the major terrorist organization in the region; consequently, the amount of information about its activities is also the largest one; since, the IJU in many respects emulated the IMU, it is not necessary to provide detailed description on every aspect of the IJU; the short-lived *Akramiyyah* mostly remained invisible and did not leave significant trace. Although the non-violent Uzbek HT is also highly secret, its activities become indirectly visible through the large governmental campaign against this organization. Since this organization is only a branch

<sup>52</sup>. Source: Global Terrorism Database.

of the mature international HT, there is enough literature about its ideology, strategy, and developments. In order to emphasize an important distinction between the terrorist organizations and the non-violent HT, they are analyzed in the separate sections.

## **B. DEVELOPMENT AND RADICALIZATION OF ISLAM IN UZBEKISTAN**

After the Soviet period for the majority of Uzbeks Islam became just a matter of national identity and traditions; however, Islamic fundamentalism in the Fergana Valley ignited Islamic radicalism and terrorism. The moderate Sunni ideology and *Hanafi* school of Islamic law dominated in Central Asia for centuries. The influence from India through religious studies and literature kept the local Islam apart from the more fundamentalist Arab Islam<sup>53</sup> and balanced fundamentalism preached by the official *ulema* (religious scholars).<sup>54</sup> They themselves were influenced by Sufism practiced by the unofficial tribal Sufis.<sup>55</sup> The latter enjoyed wide popular trust and support, because their asceticism, mysticism, pre-Islamic beliefs, and rituals were attractive for the local population due to the flexible application of Islam in everyday life.<sup>56</sup>

The role of the unofficial clergy grew further during the Soviet period when religion was suppressed by the atheistic ideology. The brutal executions, repressions, and physical destruction inflicted enormous losses on the local Islam that became isolated and stagnate. The old religious literature became unreadable due to the orthographic revolutions.<sup>57</sup> In parallel, the Cultural Revolution and Russification through several generations created a new Soviet Uzbek nation. The public education was atheistic and oriented towards the Russian and European cultures.<sup>58</sup> The remaining unofficial clergy represented “the lowest stratum of the clergy who were ignorant of the canons of classical

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53. Roy, *New*, 143–5.

54. *Ibid.*, 143.

55. *Ibid.*, 144.

56. Lipovsky, “Awakening,” 2.

57. In 1928 Arabic alphabet was changed into Latin, in 1940 into Cyrillic, and from 1992 into Latin.

58. Keller, “Story,” 274–6.

Islam but well versed in the aspirations and needs of the simple folk.”<sup>59</sup> They preached Islam secretly, mainly in rural areas, and integrated a number of pre-Islamic beliefs and rituals into the national traditions and festivities. These events often were celebrated with alcohol and songs, gradually also involved high national officials, and became a public secret from the late 1960s.<sup>60</sup> Islam became more of an issue of national identity<sup>61</sup> and resistance to Sovietization than a religious commitment. The majority of Uzbeks got used to practice a simplified version of Islam separately from the otherwise secular public life.

The Soviet manipulation with Islam for own political goals created opportunities for Islamic fundamentalism. In 1930s Stalin eliminated the most intellectual and modern Islamic movement of Jadids that opposed orthodox *ulema* and backed the Communist ideology.<sup>62</sup> The Second World War brought a period of religious tolerance when Soviets needed to bolster people’s morale. They allowed the establishment of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, opening of few mosques, and having some contacts with the Muslim world.<sup>63</sup> The Communist party and KGB, however, closely controlled religious activities and in the late 1950s suppressed them again.<sup>64</sup> From the mid-1960s, a new period of tolerance started due to the Soviet cooperation with Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and other Muslim countries. From the late 1970s, Islam spread intensively due to the deepening crisis of the Communist ideology, influence of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and war in Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup> The attempts of the foreign (U.S., UK, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia) secret services to spread this war into the USSR exposed Uzbeks to the Deobandi-Taliban influence and militant Islam.<sup>66</sup> Soviets feared proliferation of Islamic traditions and ceremonies and started supporting religious

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59. A. Malashenko, *Novy Politichesky Start Islama* (Moscow: Oriens, 1991) quoted in Naumkin, “Islam,” 133.

60. Rasma Karklins, “Islam: How Strong is it in the Soviet Union? Inquiry Based on Oral Interviews with Soviet Germans Repatriated from Central Asia in 1979,” *Cahiers Du Monde Russe Et Soviétique* 21, no.1 (1980): 65–81.

61. Naumkin, “Islam,” 141.

62. Rashid, *Jihad*, 30–1.

63. Khalid, “Secular,” 580.

64. Lipovsky, “Awakening,” 11.

65. Naumkin, “Islam,” 134.

66. Rashid, *Jihad*, 43–5.



activists who opposed traditionalism; however, the latter were cultivating *Wahhabi* fundamentalism.<sup>67</sup> Such ignorant Soviet efforts “did irreparable damage to the local forms of Islam, which have always been a natural counterbalance to fundamentalism.”<sup>68</sup>

Gorbachev’s *perestroika* and *glasnost* unleashed forces of nationalism and liberalization that created favorable conditions for further development of fundamentalism in Uzbekistan. The *Salafi* ideas about restoration of medieval Caliphate existed among the pious Uzbeks for centuries. The unofficial *Salafi* clergy was influenced by *Wahhabi* ideology from Saudi Arabia. The ignorant Soviet struggle against the traditionalist Islam allowed proliferation of the foreign extremist religious literature, such as “Muslim Brotherhood” and works of Muhammad Qutb, Sayyid Qutb, and Abu-l-’Al’a Mawdudi.<sup>69</sup> In the late 1970s, the fundamentalist trend divided the unofficial clergy into two wings. The most radical fundamentalists separated from the traditionally moderate wing. The prominent *Salafi ulema* Muhammadjon Hindustoni broadly named the former as *Wahhabis*<sup>70</sup> due to their ultra-conservative orientation. From the late 1980s, the most dynamic development of the secret fundamentalist groups, activities of foreign Muslim organizations, and public revival of Islam appeared in the Fergana Valley. The high density of population supported intensive social and religious communication that contributed to the traditional religious life style and strong resistance to the Soviet ideology in this area.<sup>71</sup> In the early 1990s, *Salafi* activists established religious organizations like the Islamic Revival Party (IRP) of Uzbekistan, *Islam Lashkarlari*, *Tavba*, and *Adolat*. In Fergana, the latter organized local militia, suppressed criminals, imposed *Sharia* laws on the society, and together with the IRP, *Birlik*, and *Erk*,<sup>72</sup> in 1992, demanded President Islam Karimov to declare an Islamic state in Uzbekistan.<sup>73</sup>

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67. Bakhtiyar Babajanov, *The Fergana Valley: Source or Victim of Islamic Fundamentalism?* Swedish Institute of International Affairs (2000).

68. Ibid., 4.

69. Ibid., 3.

70. Naumkin, *Militant*, 19.

71. Babajanov, *Fergana*, 4.

72. Then *Birlik* and *Erk* were the official nationalist opposition parties propagating *Jadid*’s ideas.

73. Naumkin, *Militant*, 21–4.

This challenge, however, was met with the harsh repressions that pushed the Islamic radicals towards the armed resistance and terrorism. Karimov launched a Soviet style assault by arresting these activists, expelling foreign missionaries, and banning religious parties and groups. He eliminated even the slightest opportunities for opposition in the future by a number of laws restricting religious and political activities, empowering the law enforcement and military, controlling the national media, and neglecting human rights. While most of the Islamic groups disappeared, the remaining ones plunged underground and struggled for survival. The militant radicals fled to Tajikistan and joined the local Islamic opposition in the following civil war. Having no other way to promote their ideology and political goals, they resorted to the armed resistance and terrorism.

## **C. THREAT OF THE ISLAMIC TERRORISM**

### **1. Origins and Ideologies**

Three radical Islamic organizations—the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), and the *Akramiyyah*—resorted to terrorism against Karimov’s regime. The analysis of their origins and ideologies, strategies and developments, organization and resources, and recruitment and popular support will determine their potential to threaten Uzbekistan’s security. All three organizations originated differently but pursued the same ultimate goal to establish an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. Although their ideologies are very similar in terms of calling all Muslims for jihad against the corrupt and infidel Uzbekistan’s regime, their scope varies from the local and gradual struggle in Uzbekistan till global jihad.

The IMU originated from the *Adolat*, hardened during the Tajik civil war, and was established in Afghanistan with the support of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In 1989, Abduhakim Sattimov established the *Adolat* as a voluntary group to provide protection for the local entrepreneurs against racketeers and patroll cities at night.<sup>74</sup> Tahir Yuldashev joined this organization and became its ideologist when the *Adolat* took religious

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74. Bakhtiyar Babajanov, “Джихад как идеология «изгоев» (ghuraba’). По документам и публикациям Исламского Движения Узбекистана,” in *Проекты сотрудничества и интеграции для Центральной Азии: сравнительный анализ, возможности и перспективы*, Kniazev A. A., ed., (Bishkek, 2007), 7.

orientation and was renamed into the *Islam Lashkarlari*.<sup>75</sup> It was one of the first Islamic militant organizations that “had no respect for official Islam, no patience with tradition, and no fear of the political regime.”<sup>76</sup> Although initially this organization enjoyed popular support and expected quick victory over the weak secular state, it was not able to mobilize popular insurgency against Karimov. In 1992, it was defeated by the governmental repressions. The remaining militants fled to Tajikistan and joined the local IRP in the civil war. In 1997, the end of this war caused dispersion of the Uzbek militant group. The main nucleus, headed by Juma Namangani (originally Jumaboi Khojaev), settled in Hoit, run small business, and resorted to drug trafficking.<sup>77</sup> Due to the anti-Islamist purge in Uzbekistan, many Uzbek Islamists fled to Namangani asking for a refuge and pleading to fight Karimov’s regime. The increasing number of Namangani’s followers and Yuldashev’s relations with the Taliban and al Qaeda determined the decision of both leaders to establish the IMU in 1998.<sup>78</sup>

The IJU originated in 2002 in Pakistan by seceding from the IMU. The reason for it was the declining IMU’s focus on Uzbekistan. On the contrary, the IJU, led by Nadzhmiddin Jalolov and Suhail Buranov, was determined to concentrate its activities on Uzbekistan and preferred affiliation with the al Qaeda instead of the Taliban.<sup>79</sup> Initially the new organization was named the Islamic Jihad Group (IJG), but in 2005 it was renamed into the Islamic Jihad Union. The *Akramiyyah* was founded in 1996 in Andijan by a former HT member Akram Yuldashev who organized a network of the local entrepreneurs and loyal employees. The initial goal was to study Islam, support each other, and the local society. Later, he tried to modify the HT’s methods, originated in Arab countries, in order to fit the local mentality and conditions for religious struggle.<sup>80</sup>

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75. Babajanov, “Джихад,” 7–8. Many authors still call this organization by its old name *Adolat*.

76. Rashid, *Jihad*, 139.

77. Ibid., 144–9.

78. Ibid, 147–8.

79. Michael Fedlholm, “From the Ferghana Valley to Waziristan and Beyond,” in *Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report No.22*, Monterey Institute for International Studies (2010): 23.

80. Babajanov, *Fergana*, 5.

The initially simplistic IMU's ideology, based on the struggle to establish Islamic state in Uzbekistan and fight against infidels, matured during the last decade and broadened its focus. In 1999, the goal to establish Islamic state and *sharia* law, as the only acceptable regime to Muslims, was clearly stated in "The Call to Jihad by the IMU."<sup>81</sup> In the same letter, the IMU warned Uzbek government and Karimov to stop repressions and yield power to the Islamic radicals. The call to kill all infidels, Russians, Jews, and Americans also dominated the IMU's ideology. The main feature of the latter—the exaltation of the lesser jihad (fight against unbelievers) and neglect of the greater jihad (inner spiritual struggle for perfection)—was influenced by the culture of violence among the IMU members.<sup>82</sup> Their hostility towards the popular traditionalist Islam, according to Abduwali *qori*, made them *ghuraba* (outcasts) among the Central Asian Muslims.<sup>83</sup> The militants, however, considered such alienation as a sign of the higher status in comparison to the "meek as sheep"<sup>84</sup> populace that must be guided by them. The "Lessons of Jihad"<sup>85</sup> taught new members a perverse worldview that strengthened their hatred and will to fight. The scarce education and absence of political experience of Tahir Yuldashev, the political leader of the IMU, and the violent nature<sup>86</sup> of Juma Namangani, the military leader of the IMU, explain such a simplistic approach.

The initial IMU's focus on Uzbekistan was broadened with the *Salafi* ideology of global jihad due to the close relations with the Taliban and later with the al Qaeda. In return, the IMU got access to the propaganda resources of the latter.<sup>87</sup> Zubayar ibn Abdul Raheem, possibly an ethnic Uzbek from the Arab *Wahhabis*, became the religious leader of the IMU and in 1999 signed the declaration of jihad against the governments of

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81. Rashid, *Jihad*, 247–249.

82. Naumkin, *Militant*, 11–3.

83. Babajanov, "Джихад," 4–6.

84. Naumkin, *Militant*, 51.

85. Martha B. Olcott and Bakhtiyar Babajanov, "The Terrorist Notebooks," *Foreign Policy* 135 (Mar/Apr2003): 19–26.

86. Rashid, *Jihad*, 143.

87. Babajanov, "Джихад," 13;

Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>88</sup> The current IMU's propaganda is versatile and sophisticated.<sup>89</sup> The utilization of foreign languages, especially German, is an attempt to emulate the IJU's success of recruitment abroad.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the *ulema* council developed the religious part of the IMU's ideology, justified jihad and self-victimization, and gave lessons to new members, many of whom later became *shahids* (martyrs).<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, in 2006 Tahir Yuldashev addressed Uzbek nation and strongly criticized the IJU for its suicide bombings and the HT for its peaceful ideology as unacceptable to Uzbek nation.<sup>92</sup> However, his own speech, released in January 2010, shows the repellent utopia of the IMU's ideology and its remoteness from Uzbekistan population's interests:

“Our target is not just to conquer Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, but also the entire world. [The enemies of Islam] have partitioned the world: this is for China, this belongs to Russia, and this part is of the U.S., but as far as we are concerned, we don't recognize those boundaries, we are doing jihad and for us there are no boundaries.”<sup>93</sup>

Despite the disagreements in the focus on Uzbekistan, the IJU's ideology is analogous to the IMU's one. The IJU from the very beginning embraced the al Qaeda's ideology of global jihad and utilized its ideological resources. The strong intention to keep focus on Uzbekistan, however, was compromised due to the unsuccessful attacks in this country in 2004. Furthermore, the continuous fighting against the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan and regional confrontation in Pakistan inevitably led the IJU towards the closer cooperation also with the Taliban. The strong emphasis on the Turkish language in the IJU's propaganda indicates its orientation towards the Turkic speaking populations (mainly in Turkey, Central Asia, Azerbaijan, and Germany) and the Western European languages since “the West plays much greater role in its [IJU's] imagery than it does in

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88. Fedlholm, “From the Ferghana,” 8.

89. Kamoliddin Rabbimov, *Ideology of Uzbek Language Jihadist Movements*, ed. Sukhrobjon Ismoilov, The Expert Working Group, Tashkent (2011): 4, 12; the IMU's website, [www.furqon.com](http://www.furqon.com).

90. Fedlholm, “From the Ferghana,” 22.

91. Babajanov, “Джихад,” 12–6.

92. Fedlholm, “From the Ferghana,” 20.

93. “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan,” in *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, August 16, 2012.

IMU's."<sup>94</sup> In order to create a better image in the West, the IJU even denied its affiliation with the al Qaeda.<sup>95</sup> While such ideology helped recruiting in the West, its remoteness from the Uzbekistan's realities makes it largely alien to the Uzbek population.

The *Akramiyyah's* ideology differed from the IMU/IJU's ideologies not only due to its gradual and less offensive approach but also due to its very limited proliferation. First of all, *Akramiyyah's* ideology was based on the non-violent HT ideology that Akram Yuldashev tried to modify for Uzbekistan. He laid a gradual development for the local Muslims through the stages of suffering and spiritual development to become conscious, to unite, and rise against the unjust and infidel regime.<sup>96</sup> Secondly, the armed fight in his essay and the letter<sup>97</sup> were not expressed openly, as in the IMU/IJU's literature. Nevertheless, the inevitable outcome of such ideology is "jihad in its absolute militaristic meaning."<sup>98</sup> *Akramiyyah's* propaganda did not utilize modern media instruments and mainly circulated within the organization. The local population even doubted the very existence of such organization and ideology and resented over the law enforcement repressions against the respected and decent people as if they were *Wahhabis* or members of the HT.<sup>99</sup> The latter, it seems, had a negative image in the eyes of the local population. Although *Akramiyyah's* social activities earned popular respect to its members, its Islamist ideology had no obvious association with this in the eyes of ordinary people. Despite a variety of media instruments and several languages, the impact from the IMU/IJU's ideologies on Uzbekistan's population remains highly dubious. The lack of democratic or liberal media and literature in Uzbekistan potentially makes the Islamic propaganda more attractive as the only alternative to Karimov's regime. However, the very ideology of global jihad seems hardly appealing to the rather secular Uzbekistan's population. The real impact of this ideology on the public opinion in Uzbekistan and Central Asia will be analyzed in the next chapters.

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94. Wigen, *Islamic*, 31.

95. Fedlholm, "From the Ferghana," 26.

96. Babajanov, *Fergana*, 6.

97. Akram Yuldashev, *Commentary on Surah [As-] Saaf* (March, 2005).

98. Babajanov, *Akramiya: A Brief Summary*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2006).

99 ICG, *Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising*, Asia Briefing No.38 (2005): 3–4.

## 2. Strategies and Developments.

The strategies of the IMU and the IJU evolved in response to the actual developments and external conditions, while the *Akramiyyah* stuck to its initial strategy. Deviation from the initial direction allowed the former two organizations to survive and even strengthen. Although the *Akramiyyah*'s strategy was closely linked with the local population, the decisive governmental crackdown after the insurgency of 2005 put an end to this organization. The militaristic strategy of the IMU evolved during the Tajik civil war and hardened in Afghanistan. The initial *Adolat*'s activities in Fergana Valley were similar to the behavior of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, which also provided protection and social services to the locals in order to gain their support for the future struggle. However, the use of force against the non-compliant people and the local prosecutors indicated violent nature of the *Adolat*.<sup>100</sup> The later fighting and criminal activities<sup>101</sup> in Tajikistan made its strategy even more violent. The "Lessons of Jihad" teach the strategy of guerrilla warfare that through diversions, killings, and propaganda will cripple the economy, scare all foreigners, and gradually destroy the secular state.<sup>102</sup> These lessons teach tactics but also explain how to manipulate the local population, treat foreigners and captives, and become fearless warriors.<sup>103</sup> The "Lessons of Jihad" refer to Islam only as much as it is necessary to ignite hatred and will to fight. The simplistic religious content does not provide any deeper knowledge for the fighters that are supposed to impose Islamic rule by force.

The close ties with the Taliban and al Qaeda further hardened the coercive nature of the IMU's strategy and changed its focus from Uzbekistan into global jihad. The cross border operations during 1998–2000 from safe refuge in Afghanistan proved to be an effective strategy of inciting conflicts between Uzbekistan and its neighbors<sup>104</sup> and made the IMU's presence in the country visible. However, due to the "growing pressure from

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100. Babajanov, "Джихад," 8.

101. Rashid, *Jihad*, 142–4.

102. Babajanov, "Джихад," 19–24.

103. Ibid., 20–26.

104. Rashid, *Jihad*, 154.

Afghan and NATO counterterrorism forces,”<sup>105</sup> the IMU could not focus only on Uzbekistan and had to shift its strategy towards the common goals of the Taliban and al Qaeda. Currently, the IMU hopes “that foreign troops will indeed leave Afghanistan after 2014, and the Afghan government will be unable to crush the IMU, or be willing to take a payoff to tolerate Central Asian terrorists in their midst.”<sup>106</sup>

Despite the similar struggle for survival in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the IJU partially kept its focus on Uzbekistan. Although the IJU kept launching terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan, it also suffered disproportionately high losses. Facing the imminent threat from the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan in 2005, it “had to rethink its strategy of ‘Uzbekistan first.’”<sup>107</sup> From 2007, the IJU fully accepted the Taliban’s and al Qaeda’s priorities that meant fighting for survival in Afghanistan and wait for the NATO’s withdrawal. As a result, the IJU’s strategy naturally converged with the IMU’s and made their cooperation more acceptable for both.

The *Akramiyyah*’s strategy differed from the IMU’s and IJU’s strategies due to its gradualist approach and underground existence in Uzbekistan. Mirroring the HT’s ideology, the *Akramiyyah* had five stages of organization, accumulation of resources, spiritual development, spread of influence, and the “‘genuine Islamization’ of society and ‘natural transition’ of power to the leaders of the group.”<sup>108</sup> In terms of practical activities, this organization was in between the first and second stages, which were invisible to the local population and were far from reaching significant results. The strategic goal was an establishment of a new Islamic state by joining parts of the three countries around the Fergana Valley,<sup>109</sup> but armed fighting was omitted and transition to the next stages were unclear. The further development of this strategy was interrupted by the arrest of Akram Yuldashev in 1999. The armed insurgency on May 12–13, 2005, although carefully organized, was a rather desperate attempt to resist the law enforcement

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105. “Come to Afghanistan and Die,” Strategy Page, April 14, 2012.

106. Ibid.

107. NEFA Foundation. *The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*, by Ronald Sandee. October 14, 2008, 11.

108. Babajanov, “The Fergana,” 6.

109. NEFA Foundation, *The Role of the Akramiya in the May 13, 2005 Unrest in Andijan*, by Ronald Sandee, Center for Eurasian Policy Occasional Research Paper. Series I (Hizb ut-Tahrir), No. 3 (2006): 3.



but not an implementation of the above-described strategy. Such a sporadic deviation from the strategy was fatal for the very existence of the *Akramiyyah* that was not ready to challenge Karimov's regime even locally.

Despite heavy losses, the IMU remains a major terroristic organization in the region and is mainly focused on jihad in Afghanistan and Pakistan. After a very active initial period, the IMU struggled for survival but with the help from other terrorist organizations survived and even expanded its operations. In 1999–2000, the IMU launched a number of guerilla raids to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan from its bases in Tajikistan causing major concerns for the local and foreign governments. The Tashkent bombings in 1999, allegedly an attempt to kill President Karimov, were the most significant attacks and induced a storm of governmental repressions. The IMU's drug trafficking and kidnappings further deteriorated the regional security. Finally, the Central Asian states and Russia with the joint military operations expelled the IMU to Afghanistan in January 2001. The IMU joined the Taliban in the fight against the Northern Alliance but also continued raids to Uzbekistan from the safe refuge. From 2001, however, the heavy losses and the death of Namangani inflicted by the U.S.-led coalition pushed the IMU to Pakistan.<sup>110</sup> As a result, the IMU's activities in Uzbekistan practically stopped. Only in 2010–2011 this organization claimed responsibility for attacks in Tajikistan and allegedly expanded activities into Russia.<sup>111</sup> The total number of the IMU's attacks and inflicted casualties in Uzbekistan remains low and, except for the Tashkent bombings, look more like criminal clashes with the law enforcement.

Around 2002, the influx of foreign recruits and the internal disagreements about the focus on Uzbekistan divided the IMU and resulted in the creation of the IJU.<sup>112</sup> The recovery period (2002–2004) in South Waziristan was short and followed by continuous fighting with Pakistan's forces and hostile tribes. By 2007, the IMU "appeared a spent force, facing hostility of local tribesmen"<sup>113</sup> and part of it moved to the Northern

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110. Witter, *Uzbek*, 2.

111. "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan," *Jane's*.

112. Wigen, *Islamic*, 11–12.

113. ICG, *Talking*, 15.

Afghanistan. In 2009, another part moved to North Waziristan.<sup>114</sup> The death of Tahir Yuldashev in 2009<sup>115</sup> was among the biggest losses in Afghanistan. Due to the questionable identification of killed or captured terrorists by the ISAF and arbitrary accusations by the Central Asian authorities,<sup>116</sup> it is difficult to evaluate the exact harm on the IMU from many ISAF operations.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, due to the alliances with the Taliban, Pakistani Tehrik-e Taliban (TTP), Haqqani Network, and al-Qaeda, it is still active in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>118</sup> In terms of terrorist attacks, the IMU's activities were quite limited (Fig. 2), mostly to Tajikistan, and inflicted losses equal to the victims'.

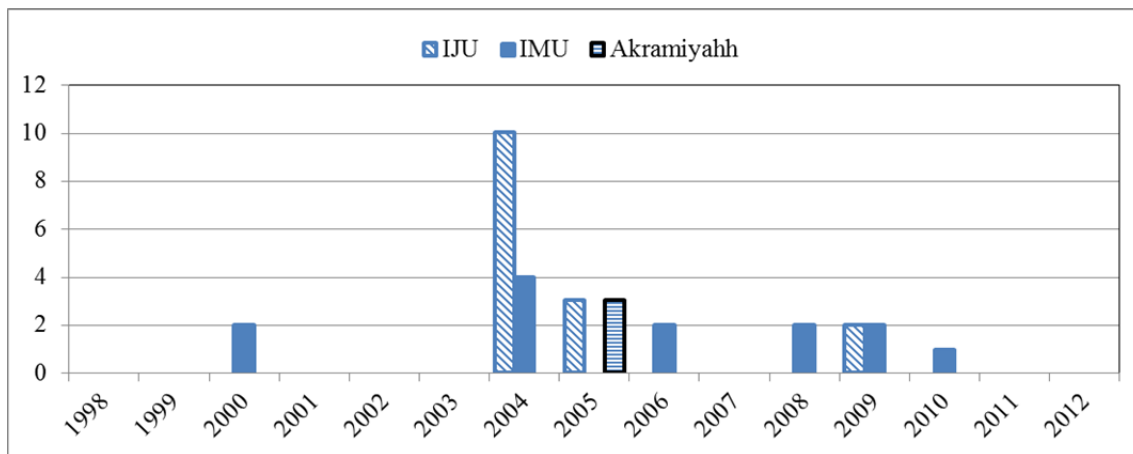


Figure 2. The IMU, IJU, and *Akramiyahh*'s<sup>119</sup> acts in Central Asia (1998–2012).<sup>120</sup>

The unsuccessful IJU's attempts to keep focus on Uzbekistan ended up in fighting for survival in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2004, the first IJU's attacks in Uzbekistan

114. Witter, *Uzbek*, 2–8.

115. Bill Roggio, "Tahir Yuldashev confirmed killed in U.S. strike in South Waziristan," *Long War Journal*, October 4, 2009.

116. Christian Bleuer, *Instability in Tajikistan? The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Afghanistan Factor*, Central Asia Security Policy Brief #7, OSCE Academy (2012): 4; ICG, *Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent Threats*, Asia Report No.205 (2011): 10.

117. E.g. ISAF Joint Command operational reports of January 29, March 8, May 3, 2012.

118. Witter, *Uzbek*, 7–8.

119. The *Akramiyahh*'s activities in Andijan on May 12–13, 2005 are shown as an exception. Internationally it is not listed as a terrorist organization and these events cannot be unconditionally categorized as terrorist attacks but rather as an open armed insurgency.

120. Sources: GTD and Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (June 20, 2012).

ended the five-year break after the Tashkent bombings and for the first time used suicide bombers. In 2005, the IJU together with the *Akramiyyah* took active part in the events of May 12–13, 2005 in Andijan. The IJU's bombings in Tashkent on May 13, most probably, were organized in coordination with the insurgency in Andijan. These events raised strong reactions not only in Central Asia but on the international scale as well. Despite long preparations, these operations were executed poorly and inflicted more losses to the IJU than to the attacked side.<sup>121</sup> Due to the ongoing fighting against the U.S.-led coalition, the number of the IJU's attacks outside Afghanistan stayed low (Fig. 2) during the last decade. In 2007, its operation in Germany also failed<sup>122</sup> and the IJU had to limit its international ambitions. The IJU preferred to “bec[a]me the junior partner in an alliance with the Haqqani network (a fundamentally autonomous wing of the Afghan Taliban [...]) and al Qaida.”<sup>123</sup>

The exact involvement of the IJU or the IMU in the terrorist acts during the period of 2009–2010 is difficult to define. The Central Asian authorities could blame terrorism to hide the organized crime's (e.g., drug and human trafficking, smuggling) fighting against the law enforcement. In addition, both terrorist organizations competed for popularity by claiming responsibility for these attacks. Still, the future of both organizations largely depends on the fight against the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan.

The brief and initially invisible *Akramiyyah's* development culminated in the significant armed insurgency that, it seems, ended the existence of this organization. Until 2005, there was no information about the *Akramiyyah's* activities. In 2004–2005, in aspiration to free imprisoned Akram Yuldashev and 23 other businessmen, this organization started military training in Osh (Kyrgyzstan). The joint planning with and funds from the *Akramiyyah's* cells, the IJU, and Chechen militants in Russia,<sup>124</sup> the

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121. NEFA, *Islamic*, 4–10.

122. Ibid, 27.

123. Guido Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda: The Islamic Jihad Union and the Internationalization of Uzbek Jihadism*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, Naval Postgraduate School (2008), 3.

124. NEFA, *Role*, 3.

financing from the IMU,<sup>125</sup> and the simultaneous IJU's bombing attempt in Tashkent<sup>126</sup> indicate a broader scope of operations than they actually executed in Andijan on May 13, 2005. Such relations show that ideological and strategic differences do not preclude cooperation among the extremist organizations against the common enemy—Karimov's regime. The following brutal repressions fully destroyed the *Akramiyyah* and caused flows of refugees from Uzbekistan.

Despite the turbulent developments and heavy losses, two out of the three Islamic terrorist organizations survived due to the close relations with the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and some other terrorist organizations. The lack of reliable information precludes from defining the exact involvements of the IMU and the IJU in Uzbekistan or other Central Asian states. Currently their activities are focused on operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The resulting convergence of their ideologies and the heavy losses may bring these two organizations to the closer cooperation. The actual capabilities and intentions of the IMU and the IJU to terrorize Uzbekistan, therefore, depend on the political situation in Afghanistan after the planned withdrawal of the U.S.-led coalition in 2014.

### **3. Organization and Resources**

Publicly available knowledge about the organization and available resources of these terrorist organizations is scarce and sometimes even confusing. The information acquired after the arrests of their members quickly becomes outdated and only partially indicates what possibly the current situation is. Since after 2005 there are no indications about the existence of the *Akramiyyah*, its resources will not be analyzed.

The IMU remains a strong force under the Taliban and has wide networks with the other jihadist organizations. From the early 1990s, Namangani mobilized and organized a “well trained, flexible in their tactics, and motivated for the higher cause of Islam”<sup>127</sup> force and “buil[t] up a network of thousands of unarmed ‘sleepers’ in the Fergana Valley and other parts of Central Asia who would rise at a signal or provide his

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125. Ibid.

126. Wigen, *Islamic*, 15.

127. Rashid, *Jihad*, 154.

guerrillas with food and guides needed.”<sup>128</sup> These “permanent guerrilla forces”<sup>129</sup> were able “to launch operations largely on their own initiative.”<sup>130</sup> Their current capabilities after the decade of fight against the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan are unclear. While the high numbers of imprisoned terrorists<sup>131</sup> may imply destruction, the attacks of 2009–2011 in Tajikistan<sup>132</sup> show the opposite. The IMU’s combat experience made it “the most lethal enemy force, with highly developed combat skills”<sup>133</sup> that included “1,500 particularly tough Uzbek fighters.”<sup>134</sup> By 2009, it reached 2,500–4,500 fighters.<sup>135</sup> The current IMU, led by Usman Ghazi,<sup>136</sup> may have a couple thousand fighters of various nationalities. In addition to the cooperation with the Taliban and al Qaeda, it operates within a network of jihadist organizations, such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Philippines-based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the Algeria-based Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA), the Pakistan-based Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), the Chechen separatist groups, and the ethnic Uighur militant Islamists from Xinjiang province of China.<sup>137</sup> While the subordination under *bayaat* (an oath) to the Taliban’s emir Mulla Omar<sup>138</sup> limits freedom of action, the alliance with such a large organization mostly strengthens the IMU and gives good prospects after the NATO’s withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The IJU’s organization is similar to the IMU’s, including the relations with the Taliban and al Qaeda. Utilizing its networks in Western Europe, Turkey, and Caucasus,<sup>139</sup> the IJU became “a promoter of international jihad and facilitator for

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128. Ibid., 154, 158.

129. Rashid, *Jihad*, 182.

130. Richard Weitz, “Storm Clouds over Central Asia: Revival of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)?” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27, no.6 (2004): 521.

131. ICG, *Central Asia: Islamists in Prison*, Asia Briefing No.97, December 15, 2009, 2.

132. ICG, *Tajikistan*, 3–10.

133. Witter, *Uzbek*, 6.

134. Jane Perlez, “Pakistan Aims Offensive at a Militant Stronghold,” *New York Times*, October 19, 2009.

135. Roggio, “IMU confirms leader Tahir Yuldashev killed,” *Long War Journal*, August 16, 2010.

136. Roggio, “IMU announces death of emir, names new leader,” *Long War Journal*, August 4, 2012.

137. “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan,” in *Jane’s*.

138. Rabbimov, *Ideology*, 15–19.

139. Wigen, *Islamic*, 11–12; Fedlholm, “From the Ferghana,” 24–6.

extremist recruits from Turkey and Europe who wish to fight in Afghanistan.”<sup>140</sup> Currently, it may have up to 600 members, including about 200 Uzbeks. The IJU also has the reputation of tough Uzbek fighters and is currently led by Suhayl Buranov.<sup>141</sup>

From its inception, the *Akramiyyah* was organized as a clandestine religious community that was bind together with mutual help, religious ideology, and resistance to Karimov’s regime. Its founder and spiritual leader Akram Yuldashev remains imprisoned from 1999. The *Akramiyyah* comprised trusted owners and workers of small and medium enterprises by organizing into the small *khalka* (cells) of 3–7 persons.<sup>142</sup> Apart from the number of “about 80 armed members,”<sup>143</sup> there is no information about its militant organization during the events in Andijan in 2005.

The main IMU’s and IJU’s resources come from their alliances with the Taliban and al-Qaeda and sustain their capabilities. Since the early 2000s the IMU had high-tech military equipment and enough funds.<sup>144</sup> In addition to the small-arms, both organizations also use heavier weaponry, such as rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), mortars, recoilless rifles, surface-to-air missiles, and explosive materials with the expertise in their employment.<sup>145</sup> Initially the funding was organized by Tahir Yuldashev “from the intelligence agencies of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey and from Islamic charities and organizations in these countries.”<sup>146</sup> Another traditional source of the IMU’s incomes—drug trafficking—may be partially taken over by other criminal groups.<sup>147</sup> In 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists in North Africa created opportunities for al Qaeda to recover, expand recruitment, and to “export weapons to various areas of

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140. Fedlholm, “From the Ferghana,” 27.

141. Witter, *Uzbek*, 2.

142. Babajanov, *Akramiya*, 1.

143. NEFA, *Role*, 3.

144. Lt. Gen. Boris Mylnikov, Head of the CIS Antiterrorist Center, quoted in Rashid, *Jihad*, 166.

145. “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan,” in *Jane’s*; “Emboldened IJU returns to militant action in Uzbekistan,” in *Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor*, June 11, 2009.

146. Rashid, *Jihad*, 141.

147. Sanderson, Kimmage, and Gordon, “From the Ferghana,” 15.

fighting around the world in order to upgrade their affiliates' ability.”<sup>148</sup> The same year, the Taliban and al Qaeda decided to concentrate all resources for a new surge in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>149</sup> The IMU and the IJU still maintain training camps in South and North Waziristan regions of Pakistan respectively. Both organizations have developed their networks for recruitment and financing in the Western Europe, Turkey, and Central Asia.<sup>150</sup> Despite the losses caused by the ISAF,<sup>151</sup> there are no indications that they lack resources to sustain their operations and threaten Uzbekistan in the future.

#### **4. Recruitment and Popular Support**

While the IMU and the IJU have no shortage of new recruits, the lack of relations with Uzbekistan's population makes the actual public support in Uzbekistan unclear. Furthermore, the foreign recruits, while significantly contributing to the growth of these organizations, have no interest to focus on Uzbekistan as well.

The worsening economic conditions, high rates of unemployment, large and growing numbers of young males, repressive and corrupt regime provide both the IMU and the IJU with the 50–130 new recruits per year from Uzbekistan.<sup>152</sup> Similar situations in the other Central Asian states, abuses from the corrupt law enforcement structures, recent practices of extradition, and genocide against Uzbek minorities in Kyrgyzstan force some Muslims to join terrorists in Afghanistan.<sup>153</sup> On the other hand, the ideology of global jihad is less attractive to the wider Uzbek population whose everyday life is dominated by socio-economic problems. This limits the recruitment possibilities in Uzbekistan and forces the IMU and the IJU competing for recruitment with the other jihadist organizations abroad. The alliance with the Taliban further internationalized the

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148. Yoram Schweitzer, “Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates in Light of the Turmoil in the Arab World,” in *One Year of the Arab Spring: Global and Regional Implications*, Yoel Guzansky and Mark A. Heller, eds., (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2012), 34.

149. Kavkaz Center.com “ХОРАСАН. Моджахеда «аль-Каиды», «Талибана» и «Техрик-е-Талибан Пакистан» объединяются для наступления на харбиев весной.” January 5, 2012.

150. Fedlholm, “From the Ferghana,” 22–3.

151. “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan,” in *Jane's*.

152. Rashid, *Jihad*, 147, 163.

153. ICG, *Tajikistan*, i; Rabbimov, *Ideology*, 10–1.

IMU by transferring jihadists from various countries to the latter.<sup>154</sup> Sometimes the lack of secure training camps, however, is limiting the scope of recruitment.<sup>155</sup> Training of the suicide bombers<sup>156</sup> and even children<sup>157</sup> are utilized by the both organizations. In addition to the military training, the IMU and the IJU provide religious indoctrination. The “Lessons of Jihad” teach new recruits not only tactics and fearless warrior’s behavior but also how to manipulate the local population in order to gain their trust and support.<sup>158</sup>

Nevertheless, the public support to the Islamic terrorism in Uzbekistan remains dubious. Although, in the early 1990s, people in the Fergana Valley accepted the *Adolat*’s militants who assured public order in cities and protected against racketeers, they did not believe that Islamic state and *sharia* could solve economic and social problems.<sup>159</sup> The fundamentalist *Wahhabi* or *Salafi* ideologies are largely alien even to the pious Uzbek Muslims and the official clergy, notwithstanding the relatively well-educated and mostly secular urban population. According to dr. Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, the IMU’s affiliation with the Taliban and al Qaeda “gave it a poisonous tone and led to a pledge of jihad [...], ensuring that the movement was repulsive to the Uzbek people it hoped to attract,” because the radical Islamism, accepted with the money and weapons, made the IMU “out of touch with the people at home.”<sup>160</sup> During the Soviet period, Uzbekistan’s population saw how the fundamentalist regimes in Iran and Afghanistan failed to improve life for the ordinary people and even worsened socio-economic conditions. The path of criminal activities, terrorism, ideology of global jihad, and the long relocation to Afghanistan and Pakistan alienated the IMU and IJU from ordinary Uzbeks.

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154. Wigen, *Islamic*, 11.

155. Strategy Page. “Come.”

156. Jonathan Fighel, *Jihad in Uzbekistan: Suicide Bombings Spread to Uzbekistan*, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, March 30, 2004, 1.

157. Wigen, *Islamic*, 20.

158. Babajanov, “Джихад,” 20–26.

159. *Ibid.*, 10.

160. Quoted in C. Chivers, “Uzbek Militants’ Decline Provides Clues to U.S.,” *New York Times*, October 8, 2002.



The uncompromising fighting for utopian religious ideas becomes even less feasible on the background of the democratic processes in the modern Muslim world. While being successful in recruiting Turks, the IJU complained that they were spoiled by the democratic society at home and not suitable as jihadist fighters, who are supposed to execute every order without questioning it.<sup>161</sup> In 2005, the growing number of the IMU members leaving this organization and seeking refuge in Western Europe, signaled about the decreasing popularity of the IMU.<sup>162</sup> The IMU's criticism of the IJU in 2006 indicated also the ongoing competition for popularity in Uzbekistan.<sup>163</sup> However, the worsening domestic situation in Uzbekistan and suitable international environment may create a situation where both terrorist organizations would become the only forces capable and willing to challenge Karimov's regime. On the other hand, the successful advancements to political power of the MB in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine, and Hezbollah in Lebanon are difficult to follow. All those Islamic organizations were living close to the people and provided real support to them by conducting social services and assuring protection against persecution from the state powers. While the similar *Akramiyyah*'s activities in Fergana were highly appreciated by the local population, the latter were largely unaware of the Islamist ideology of this organization. While the MB abandoned violence and chose legal political path in Egypt, the persistent violence of Hamas and Hezbollah were justified in the eyes of their supporters by the need to fight foreign occupants. The IMU and the IJU are fighting abroad, they do not share everyday hardships or give help to ordinary Uzbeks, and they are not ready for political competition. Although the *Akramiyyah* could be considered as similar to the Arab Islamists, the scale of its activities was too limited and the unsuccessful insurgency stopped these in Uzbekistan at all. As a result, the Islamist ideologies do not seem popular in Uzbekistan. Judging from the video footage taken on 13 May 2005, the people's behavior and speeches at the meeting in Andijan, apart from anger, grievances,

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161. Fedlholm, "From the Ferghana," 29.

162. Ibid., 20.

163. Ibid.

and sporadic shouting “*Allah Akbar*,” did not indicate any existence of political goals, unity, determination for actions, and even less the struggle for Islamic state.<sup>164</sup>

## **D. THREAT OF THE NON-VIOLENT ISLAMIC RADICALISM**

### **1. Origins and Ideology**

Although the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) rejects violence and is legal in a number of countries, its branch in Uzbekistan it is persecuted as a terroristic organization. On the other hand, the radical ideology with the ultimate goal to establish Islamic state makes its members potentially supportive of the Islamic terrorism and global jihad. Since its inception half a century ago, the HT spread worldwide and followed the same heterodox ideology. It was founded in 1953 by Palestinian Islamic scholar Taqiuddin an-Nabhani. Currently, the HT is an international Sunni Islamist political organization operating in many countries. In Central Asia, firstly it appeared in Uzbekistan in the early 1990s.

Despite the HT’s vision of peaceful transition of state power, its ideology contains a lot of uncertainties, discrimination, and coercion that would lead to violence. The ultimate goal is the revival of a Caliphate with the elected Caliph who would legitimately declare jihad against the states that oppress Muslims and would spread Islam worldwide.<sup>165</sup> The Islamic state should evolve naturally after the HT has peacefully seized power in a country and imposed sharia.<sup>166</sup> Despite the numerous publications<sup>167</sup> about the functioning of such a state, a lot of economic, financial, and foreign issues remain unclear: they are supposed to develop itself and peculiarities of the modern world are mixed with medieval rules. While for political repressions and religious restrictions the local HT criticizes Karimov’s regime, for socio-economic difficulties it blames democracy.<sup>168</sup> The HT also condemns the local Sufism, traditionalism, and “Hanafi

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164. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, video (the Babur Square, Andijan), May 13, 2005.

165. Hizb ut-Tahrir, *The Methodology of Hizb ut Tahrir for Change* (London: Al-Khilafah Publications, 1999), 28–35.

166. Ibid.

167. E.g. Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, *The Islamic State* (London: Al-Khilafah Publications, 1998).

168. Karagiannis, *Political*, 85, 88–9, 98, 111, 115.

version of Sunni Islam.”<sup>169</sup> It also claims promotion of the modern *Jadids*’ ideas but the latter are not visible in the HT’s literature.<sup>170</sup> A very strong and versatile HT’s propaganda denounces all other religions, politico-economic systems, and ideologies.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, Jews and Shia Muslims eventually must leave Muslim countries.<sup>172</sup> Such ideology cannot be implemented peacefully, because it would discriminate and coerce a lot of people in any country. Though usually called as *Wahhabi* organization, the HT is heterodox for it rejects all other Islamic ideologies and movements as ineffective and mistaken.<sup>173</sup> Despite ideological differences, it is highly possible that the HT members would “not sit idly and allow the security forces to kill [the IMU]”<sup>174</sup> in case of a massive insurgency in Uzbekistan, for they understand the inevitability of war and suffer from brutal repressions themselves. Furthermore, despite the UK’s political tolerance to the non-violent Islamist organizations, the factual evidence demonstrates the relation between the membership in such organizations and Islamic terrorism.<sup>175</sup> Similarly, the former members of the German HT were among the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.<sup>176</sup> These facts indisputably show the real result of the “non-violent” Islamist ideology that fuels extremism and terrorism.

## 2. Strategy and Development

The HT’s strategy and development in Uzbekistan reflects the nature of this organization as a political party with a clear political goal to establish an Islamic state. An-Nabhani utilized Leninist principles and practices about the political struggle and the vanguard role of the party.<sup>177</sup> The Uzbek HT follows the common HT strategy that

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169. Ibid., 60.

170. Rashid, *Jihad*, 122.

171. Hizb-ut-Tahrir, *Methodology*, 28–35.

172. Rashid, *Jihad*, 123.

173. ICG, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Responding to Hizb ut-Tahrir*, Asia Report No.58 (2003): 4.

174. Rashid, *Jihad*, 134.

175. Andrew Gilligan, “Hizb ut Tahrir is not a gateway to terrorism, claims Whitehall report,” *The Telegraph*, October 7, 2012.

176. Institute for the Study of Violent Groups (ISVG), *Hizbut Tahrir: Tactics*.

177. Karagiannis, *Political*, 49–51; ICG, *Radical*, 2.

envisioned three stages: the first stage of culturing that aims at organizing the local party from the convinced and active Muslims; the second stage of interaction that aims to educate and involve Muslim society in the struggle for the Islamic state; and the third stage of establishing the Islamic state and spreading Islam worldwide.<sup>178</sup> The latter clearly calls for a global jihad carried by the Islamic military. Excluding Uzbekistan's armed forces from the extensive criticism on the Uzbekistan's governmental entities, the Uzbek HT targets to ally with the former against the secular regime and has a clear vision about the future Caliphate's armed forces.<sup>179</sup> Currently, the Uzbek HT is between the first and the second stage. Through religious and secular education, proliferation of its ideology, expansion of the secret networks in Uzbekistan and the neighboring countries, spiritual development, and determination for sacrifices the local HT seeks to mobilize Uzbeks into the massive struggle.

So far, the Uzbek HT tolerates the IMU and the IJU because they promote similar ideas and challenge the current regime. In Tajikistan, however, the local official IRP supported governmental repressions against the Tajik HT because saw it as a competitor Islamist movement.<sup>180</sup> The first HT's pamphlets appeared in the Fergana Valley around 1995 and were considered by Uzbekistan's authorities as harmless.<sup>181</sup> However, the further HT's expansion into the other regions and cities provoked a massive governmental crackdown, especially after the *Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious organizations* adopted in May 1998. The local HT members are the main target for Uzbekistan's security services and are treated worst in the prisons.<sup>182</sup> Some HT members, escaping from the brutal repressions, flee to Afghanistan and join terrorists.<sup>183</sup>

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178. Hizb-ut-Tahrir, *Methodology*, 24–5, 32.

179. Karagiannis, *Political*, 115–7.

180. Rashid, *Jihad*, 111.

181. *Ibid.*, 120.

182. Karagiannis, *Political*, 64–5; ICG, *Radical*, 33–4.

183. ICG, *Radical*, 24.

### 3. Organization and Resources

In terms of organization and resources, the HT is a superior Islamic organization in Central Asia. Its decentralized structure consists of numerous *daira* (circle) with 5–7 members among which only the leader has contact with the higher levels.<sup>184</sup> Uzbekistan’s HT has 10,000–15,000 members out of “around 25,000 hard core members and many more sympathizers in Central Asia.”<sup>185</sup> The lowest level consists of poor, often unemployed, and poorly educated people and the “leadership comes from intelligentsia and the educated middle class.”<sup>186</sup> Majority of the members are 20–40 years old. Though repressions and young age of the members may lead to violence, the local HT denies any formal relations with the IMU, Taliban, or al Qaeda and with the “strict internal discipline ... avoid[s] infiltration and maintain[s] ideological purity”<sup>187</sup> to restrain its members from violence. On the other hand, the unity within the Central Asian branches is not steadfast. In 2010, the organizational brake in Kyrgyzstan’s HT was fueled by the accusations of corruption in the leadership and the weariness of some members from governmental persecutions.<sup>188</sup> The same can happen in Uzbekistan’s HT as well.

The international HT network gives to Uzbekistan’s branch not only valuable experience from Arab countries to withstand repressions but also helps this organization with resources. The local HT’s activities, equipment, communication technologies, spread of sophisticated propaganda, and ability to support its followers also indicates sufficiency of available resources.<sup>189</sup> The financial funds are generated from the local members’ donations and foreign support as well.

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184. Rashid, *Jihad*, 119–20.

185. Karagiannis, *Political*, 58, 62.

186. *Ibid.*, 58.

187. ICG, *Radical*, 20.

188. Daniyar Karimov, “Regional Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders accused of corruption,” News Agency 24, Jan 19, 2010.

189. Rashid, *Jihad*, 121; Karagiannis, *Political*, 82.

#### 4. Recruitment and Popular Support

Although the non-violent HT's ideology well-suits to Uzbek mentality and the local HT claims large numbers of recruits, the popular support to this organization in Uzbekistan is not obvious and depends on the region. Uzbekistan's HT is much closer to the local population than the terrorist organizations. Despite the image of intellectual movement, the actual members come from all levels of the Uzbek society.<sup>190</sup> Adjusting for the local people, the HT is also not so strict "toward smoking, listening to music, and interacting with women."<sup>191</sup> Packed with the HT members, Central Asian prisons became a fertile field for recruitment.<sup>192</sup> Uzbekistan's HT also claims having sympathizers in the military, intelligence, high echelons of the state, and "within Karimov's inner circle."<sup>193</sup>

The massive popular support to Uzbekistan's HT, however, is not certain. In the absence of other political opposition, the HT's ideas about justice, morality, welfare, and revival of the glorious past are attractive to the local population that is facing socio-economic difficulties and is longing for the Soviet past with its equality and social security. The repressive and corrupt government also pushes people towards Islamism. However, the *Wahhabi* ideas are alien not only to the majority of Uzbeks but also to the pious Muslims preaching the local moderate Islam. That would bring an inevitable clash with the modern Uzbek society and the official clergy if the HT tried to impose its ideas openly. Moreover, the HT's propaganda often addresses global issues but miss local ones.<sup>194</sup> Even if the non-violent ideology give the local HT potential to follow the MB or Hamas' path, Karimov's regime denies the slightest possibility for it to develop any meaningful public presence and massive popular support. The disappointment of the local HT's members with the people's obedience and passivity is obvious in the need for a major crisis that would "expose everybody, force polarization, and the war will begin."<sup>195</sup>

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190. ICG, *Radical*, 19.

191. Ibid., 60.

192. ICG, *Central Asia: Islamists*, 1.

193. Rashid, *Jihad*, 124.

194. Ibid., 123.

195. Ibid., 134.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

The politico-historic environment in Uzbekistan during the last hundred years shaped the essence of the Uzbek religiosity and the corresponding perception of the Islamism ideas. During the Soviet period, for majority of Uzbeks Islam became just a part of their national identity and traditions that did not interfere with their largely secular life. However, the Soviet religious policies, sporadic revival of Islam, and influence from the foreign Muslim countries caused development of the Islamic radicalism and terrorism.

Despite the brutal repressive CT policies, Karimov's regime did not eliminate Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. The uncompromised governmental repressions forced the Islamists to escape abroad and organize into the IMU and later the IJU. Both organizations are closely related to the Taliban and al Qaeda, but their focus on Uzbekistan did not fully disappear. Although this alliance is also beneficial for the latter, the Uzbek organizations gain significantly more in terms of resources and safe havens. Currently, the IMU and the IJU have a potential and a will to threaten Uzbekistan, but the U.S.-led coalition keeps them focused on fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The coalition's intention to withdraw troops from Afghanistan in 2014, however, may cause a return of the Taliban's regime and create favorable conditions for both Uzbek terrorist organizations to grow and to launch offensive against Karimov's regime. Since the original leaders of the IMU and IJU were killed, the reciprocal disagreements may be also easier to resolve. Furthermore, the commonality of significant losses, ethnic backgrounds, and common subordinations to the Taliban and al Qaeda make their alliance a viable option in the future. The total numbers of their attacks and inflicted casualties in Uzbekistan, however, are rather low and have more features of the armed clashes between drug traffickers and law enforcement than of the global jihad. Although continuous recruitment indicates some appeal of these organizations to Uzbek population, the physical, social, and ideological remoteness of the IMU and the IJU from Uzbek nation may be a major obstacle for gaining wider public support in this country.

Although the allegedly large and growing membership of Uzbekistan's HT indicates its higher attractiveness to the local population, the wide popular support cannot be taken for granted as well. The HT also has advantages in comparison with the

IMU/IJU due to its presence among the people, some resemblance with the Soviet ideology, and rejection of violence.<sup>196</sup> Despite the non-violent HT's ideology, the strategy of the latter would inevitably lead to violence and even a civil war. Although the local HT currently does not present an obvious threat of terrorism or armed insurgency, in the future its radical indoctrination may lead young, active, and desperate people towards Islamic terrorism. They become susceptible for the militant Islamist ideology and escaping from repressions often join the IMU or the IJU. The *Akramiyyah's* insurgency of 2005 in Andijan is a perfect example of the similar evolution by the entire clandestine Islamist organization that claimed non-violent approach. Despite the peaceful HT's ideology, its support to the terrorist organizations is still likely in the case of a massive insurgency in the country.

The current regime in Uzbekistan, so far, did not succeed to fully eliminate the threats of Islamic extremism. To the contrary, the continuous recruitment into the violent and non-violent Islamic organizations indicates the growing popular discontent with the current national authorities. Although the predominant moderate and traditionalist Islamic ideology and the rather secular society are the major obstacles for the proliferation of Islamic extremism in Uzbekistan, the popular preferences and support may change if the existing domestic situation deteriorates. The next chapter, therefore, focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of Uzbekistan's state and the popular support to the latter's fight against the radical Islamism.

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196. Karagiannis, *Political*, 76, 88–96.



### **III. COUNTERTERRORIST POLICIES OF UZBEKISTAN (1990–2012)**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Although uneven through the last two decades and even decreasing, the Islamic terrorism remains the main threat to security and stability in Uzbekistan. Responding to the governmental repressions of 1992, the initial activism of the local Islamist militiamen turned into terrorism. The civil war and criminal activities in Tajikistan developed Uzbek militants into coherent terrorist force fighting for Islamic state in this country. In 1997, the end of this war was a turning point for the Uzbek militant group that eventually became the IMU and shifted its focus on Uzbekistan. The latter shift was marked by the series of Tashkent bombings in 1999 and continuous armed incursions into Uzbekistan's territory until the late 2000. Although the fight in Afghanistan and later Pakistan largely consumed the entire resources of Uzbek terrorists, the IJU several times attempted to keep the focus on Uzbekistan through the series of bombings in 2004 and 2009 and the Andijan insurgency in 2005. The scope and impact of these attacks inflicted new waves of harsh repressions, which still are justified by Karimov's regime as a necessary response to the remaining threat of the Islamic terrorism.

In 1992, the initial tolerant and even welcoming government attitude towards the revival of Islam in Uzbekistan was abruptly transformed into "Karimov's war" on Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism. President Islam Karimov was the main architect for such a radical change. The highly autocratic regime allowed his personality and experiences play a decisive role in Uzbekistan's CT policy that remains relatively unchallenged through the last 20 years.

Uzbekistan's CT policy was founded on the lessons that Karimov draw from his memorable encounter with the *Adolat* in Namagan in 1991. First of all, he was shocked by the ability of the local fundamentalists to gain factual power and public support in Namangan. From 1989, the *Adolat* significantly improved public security in the city, protected local entrepreneurs from criminal racketeering, and attempted establishment of the sharia-based public morality. In other words, it was substituting the official

authorities by performing certain governmental functions. The local population largely appreciated these activities that peaked with the public humiliation and beating of the local corrupt procurator.<sup>197</sup> Tahir Yuldashev's blunt declaration to the President in front of the cheering crowds—"Now and here, I am the master! You will talk here but only when I allow you! Now, shut up and listen!"—made Karimov realize the danger these Islamists presented to the official authorities and the need to annihilate them at any cost. Secondly, he understood that the local clergy was not in "control of the Muslim community and that overt efforts to politicize the faithful for electoral gain can backfire."<sup>198</sup> Finally, the realization of the utility of Islam for ruling Uzbek population laid the foundations for Uzbekistan's policy on religion. The centrality of Karimov's personality in shaping the CT policies was also mirrored in the IMU's official communique that declared a jihad against his regime.<sup>199</sup>

This chapter presents the development and actual implementation of Uzbekistan's CT policies during the last two decades and how these affected the direction and content of the popular support for Islamists in this country. Firstly, the analysis of the CT strategy and related legislation demonstrates the highly suppressive and arbitrary foundations for the law enforcement. The following evaluation of the executive powers and their actual practices show the state's capabilities and results in countering the threat of Islamic extremism. The description of the political, social, and economic conditions contributes to the broader picture about the overall situation in Uzbekistan. The analysis of public opinion finalizes the results of Uzbekistan's CT and partially some other policies that have significant impact on the general public support for Uzbekistan's government.

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197. Babajanov, "Джихад," 8.

198. Nancy Lubin and Barnett R. Rubin, *Calming the Ferghana Valley: Development and Dialogue in the Heart of Central Asia*, Report of the Fergana Valley Working Group of the Center for Preventive Action (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 1999), 49.

199. Rashid, *Jihad*, 247–9.

## B. STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION ON COUNTERTERRORISM

### 1. Strategy on Counterterrorism

Uzbekistan's CT strategy can be defined as a total extermination of terrorism and uprooting of Islamic fundamentalism in the country at any cost. It is the state who first resorted to a violent crackdown on the radical Islamist movements in 1992. Although this response immediately triggered the emergence of Islamic terrorism, this strategy was based on the presumption that any easiness on Islamic fundamentalism would inevitably lead to the armed insurgency against the official regime. President Karimov faced the ultimatum-like and utopian requirements:

“We set five conditions which must be fulfilled by the authorities. First, Islam Karimov must come here. Second, he must swear his faithfulness to Islam on the Koran and here and now proclaim an Islamic state. Third, visiting mosques must become compulsory for all Muslims including leaders of the state who must pray together with the people. Fourth, Friday should be announced as a day off and fifth to open religious schools immediately.”<sup>200</sup>

They were developed by the local clergy and announced by Tahir Yuldashev, then one of the aggressive activists from a lower social stratum.<sup>201</sup> Furthermore, at that time Uzbekistan was dominated by the economic chaos and insecurity brought with the breakup of the USSR. Karimov understood that negotiation is not an option and the only way to counter such a threat is harsh suppression. Despite the obvious decrease of terrorist attacks, this approach remains unchanged. In 2009–2010, the jihadists<sup>202</sup> were still declared “the main enemy of the state.”<sup>203</sup> On the other hand, Karimov understood the utility of Islam to manipulate the population.

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200. Oleg Yakubov, *The Pack of Wolves: The Blood Trail of Terror* (Moscow: Veche, 2000) quoted in Rashid, *Jihad*, 255–6.

201. Babajanov, “Джихад,” 10.

202. *Jihadist* is a more recent term used by the Uzbek government as a substitute to *Wahhabist*.

203. Vitaly Ponomarev, *Политические репрессии в Узбекистане в 2009–2010 годах*, Правозащитный центр «Мемориал» (2011), 2.

Uzbekistan's policy on religion rests on a dual foundation: the need to counter radical ideology<sup>204</sup> and the need to utilize religion for the benefit of the current regime. First of all, Karimov had to, at least officially, embrace Islam himself but in a way that would not threaten the foundations of the secular state but would denounce religious extremism. Although in his book Karimov admits that "religion is a reliable companion to human beings, and a natural part of human life," he emphasizes the parallel existence of "secular thinking or a secular way of living."<sup>205</sup> Understanding the necessity "to fill a temporary vacuum"<sup>206</sup> left after the Communist ideology, Karimov used Islam to support Uzbek national identity and deny possibility for any political opposition to employ Islam. He also reinterpreted the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights:<sup>207</sup>

"[It] clearly separates religion as a part of spirituality and culture from an attempt 'to play the religious card' for certain political aims. We support the idea that religion should accomplish its role in introducing the highest spiritual, moral and ethical values, and in forming a part of the historical and cultural heritage among the population. And we will never allow religious slogans [...] in the struggle for power—a pretext for intervention in politics, economy and legislation—because in this we see a serious potential threat to the stability and security of our state."<sup>208</sup>

Hence, his strategy on religion means a thorough control of all religious activities in the country. This includes production and dissemination of religious literature and materials, religious and secular education, registration and licensing of religious organizations and clergy, and harsh sanctions for non-compliance. Warning Uzbek youth about the illegal religious education, Karimov emphasized that "Trying to escape the subordination to authority may result in a personal tragedy."<sup>209</sup> As a result, the governmental approach towards religion represents an essential part in the overall CT strategy.

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204. Byman, "Measuring," 412.

205. Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 20.

206. *Ibid.*, 22.

207. Article 18: Freedom to profess a faith or believe may be limited pursuant to the provisions of the Law to provide social security and safety, public order, health, and to protect the moral and major rights and freedoms of other people.

208. Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 25.

209. Rashid, *Jihad*, 147.

From 1992 on, Karimov set the foundations for the merciless and broad CT strategy. He portrayed religious extremism, largely named as *Wahhabism* and later as jihadism, as the evil danger that scares mankind and, hence, must be decisively eliminated from the civilized world.<sup>210</sup> Stating that, “Such people must be shot in the head. If necessary I will shoot them myself,”<sup>211</sup> he left no hopes for compromises in dealing with religious extremists. Although promising amnesty for repentant terrorists in 1999, the official incitements, in contrary to the Constitution,<sup>212</sup> also threatened to victimize families of the suspected terrorists and further expanded the mandate for law enforcement.<sup>213</sup> The same year, in concert with the other official statements of similar nature, Karimov asserted that he is “prepared to rip off the heads of 200 people, to sacrifice their lives, in order to save peace and calm in the republic.”<sup>214</sup> Such an official rhetoric cleared way for violation of human rights and arbitrary actions of the law enforcement structures and made Uzbekistan infamous for its inhumane CT policies.

Another important part of Uzbekistan’s CT strategy is, despite the highly repressive actual policies, keeping Karimov’s image attractive both to the local population and international partners. He is portrayed as “sincerely desir[ing] democratic reforms and a free press, but that officials in charge of implementing the policies are subverting his goals.”<sup>215</sup> Such propaganda mirrors the Soviet propaganda and is similarly used in the other Central Asian states. Following the strategy on religion, former Communist Karimov embraced Islam, openly followed Islamic traditions, and officially expressed support for a moderate and traditional version of the local Islam.<sup>216</sup>

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210. Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 25.

211. President Islam Karimov, referring to Islamic fundamentalists or terrorists in his speech to Parliament, quoted in Human Rights Watch, *Crackdown in the Farghona Valley: Arbitrary Arrests and Discrimination*, May 1, 1998.

212. Article 64: Parents shall be obliged to [...] care for their children until the latter are of age.

213. Amnesty International (AI), *Uzbekistan: The Rhetoric of Human Rights Protection: Briefing for the United Nations Human Rights Committee*, June 1, 2001, 18.

214. AI, *Document - Uzbekistan: Summary of concerns on torture and ill-treatment: Briefing for the United Nations Committee on Torture*, September 30, 1999, 17.

215. Lubin and Rubin, *Calming*, 98.

216. *Ibid.*, 49, 101.

The threat of terrorism was useful for the current regime on the international arena as an excuse for delaying democratization, economic reforms, and limitations on human rights. Uzbekistan has entered a sufficient number of international agreements the actual implementation of which could establish a socio-political environment respectful of human rights and democracy. In 1995, Uzbekistan acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Optional Protocol to ICCPR (ICCPR-OP1), International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CTOCIDTP). On the other hand, the more specific and strict agreements of similar nature, such as the Optional Protocol to ICESCR (OP-ICESCR), Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW), and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) remain unacceptable to Karimov's regime.<sup>217</sup> On the regional level, Uzbekistan is a member of the Eurasian Group against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (EAG) and of the Convention against Terrorism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). A more detailed analysis of the international part of Uzbekistan's CT policies is presented in the next chapter. The next section analyzes how the repressive CT strategy matches the above-mentioned international commitments in the actual legislation of Uzbekistan.

## **2. National Legislation Related to Counterterrorism**

Uzbekistan's legislation not only fully reflected Karimov's strategy on CT and religion starting from 1992 but also served as a handy tool to maintain a favorable image. The actual role of the bicameral Supreme Assembly or Oliy Majlis (national parliament) is quite minor. Hence, the legislative process never presented difficulties for Karimov in

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217. The International Center for Non-for-Profit Law (ICNL), *NGO Law Monitor: Uzbekistan*, October 19, 2012.

legalizing the CT and religion policies.<sup>218</sup> Despite the need to disguise the actual brutality of intentions, the closer analysis of the laws essentially compromises the official governmental rhetoric about human rights and democracy. While Karimov cannot stop the related foreign criticism, he protected himself inside the country by *The Law on Protecting the Honor and Dignity of the President* that makes criticism on him illegal. The following analysis is focused on the legislation related to Uzbekistan's policies on CT and religion. It starts with the *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan* (1992), continues with the legislation on public associations, religion, and terrorism, and finalizes with the *Criminal Code* (1994).

The *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan* declares adherence to human rights, ideals of democracy and social justice, and rule of law and priority of the international law. Article 11 also sets a "separation of power between the legislative, executive and judicial authorities." Article 18 assures equal rights and freedoms without discrimination by religion and convictions. Article 26 states that "No one may be subject to torture, violence or any other cruel or humiliating treatment." Respect to personal honor and privacy, freedom of thought, speech, and convictions, and freedom of conscience, religion, and associations for all are confirmed in Articles 27, 29, 31, 33, and 34. However, public associations and political parties based on religious principles are forbidden by Article 57. While Article 61 separates religion from the state and points that "the state shall not interfere with the activity of religious associations," Article 67 grants freedom of media and forbids censorship. Articles from 13 to 17 confirm Uzbekistan's adherence to democracy, human rights and freedoms, social justice and legality, and her conformity with "other universally recognized norms of international law." In summary, this Constitution sets foundation for a democratic, secular, and socially just state that considers the human being as the ultimate value and strongly limits religious activities.

Although the legislation related to public associations remains highly restrictive and threatens with harsh sanctions, some later improvements and new drafts seem to present more rights to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In 1991, the *Law on*

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218. U.S. DoS, *Background note: Uzbekistan*, 2012; Rashid, *Jihad*, 81.

*Public Associations* (1991) introduced strict and complex registration procedures, banned activities of unregistered associations, and left wide rights for the governmental bodies to close these associations and confiscate their property. In 2003, some registration responsibilities were transferred from the Ministry of Foreign affairs to the Ministry of Interior and the related re-registration process,<sup>219</sup> which significantly reduced the number of the NGOs, was introduced. However, from 2005 the government started annual financial assistance to NGOs.<sup>220</sup> Although from 2007 the *Law on guarantees of activity of nongovernmental nonprofit organizations* canceled possible confiscation of the NGOs' property and improved some other rights, there still remains "a certain degree of vagueness and ambiguity, which may result in the legislation not being applied in a coherent and uniform manner, which may further open the way for arbitrary administrative decisions to be issued on their basis."<sup>221</sup> The overall legislation on public associations still requires complex and lengthy registration, leaves vague grounds for refusal to register, puts burdensome reporting on activities requirements, and threatens with harsh sanctions in case of non-compliance.<sup>222</sup> There are no indications about fewer requirements in the future as well. Nevertheless, the Presidential resolution "On Measures to support the independent institute for monitoring the formation of civil society"<sup>223</sup> may indicate not only his formal compliance with the criticism from international organizations, NGOs, and foreign governments but also his genuine interest to have better monitoring on the actual implementation of the legislation in Uzbekistan. Moreover, considering the draft laws *On Social Partnership*, *On Public Control*, and *On Activities of Government Entities*,<sup>224</sup> the future for NGOs seems promising in terms of their rights and activities.

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219. Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, *Resolution # 543*, December 11, 2003.

220. ICNL, *NGO*.

221. Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), *Comments on the Draft Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Civil Society Organizations and on the Guaranties of Activity for Non-State Non-Profit Organizations*, December 9, 2005.

222. ICNL, *NGO*.

223. Presidential Resolution No. ПП-1576, *О Мерах по Поддержке Независимого Института Мониторингу Формирования*, July 12, 2011.

224. ICNL, *NGO*.



The *Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations* (1998) strongly limits religious activities and associations in Uzbekistan. It starts from the primacy of the international laws, repeats the Constitutional separation of religion from state, hints to the potential religious threat to the national security, and gives no privileges to the predominant religion of Islam. Restrictions start from Article 5 that forbids creation of political parties based on religion, establishment of any representations of the foreign religious parties, and utilization of religion “for violation of common morality and civil consensus, spread of defamatory and destabilizing interpretations.” However, due to the absence of the definitions of the latter illegal purposes, such restrictions allow an inadequate limitation on freedom of expression and contradict with Article 19 of the ICCPR. Article 7 forbids religion in the system of public education and Article 9 constrains curriculum in religious education entities and forbids private religious teaching. The establishment and activities of religious organizations is heavily burdened with the excessive registration requirements, licensing of religious teachers and schools, and wide mandate for the governmental institutions to control and close them. Article 14 forbids religious clothing in public except for the clergy but does not specify that same clothing. According to Article 19, the local production and distribution of religious literature and materials requires licensing and foreign religious literature and materials are subject to governmental approval. In the same article, production, possession, and distribution of any religious materials “containing ideas of religious extremism, separatism, and fundamentalism” is forbidden. However, the absence of detailed official definitions of the latter ideas leaves a lot of space for arbitrary judgments and punishments by the various governmental agencies, especially assuming the supposedly low level of religious knowledge in these agencies. Furthermore, there are no description of the legal procedures for the inclusion or exclusion of religious organizations, literature, and materials into the category of forbidden and for the corresponding appeals.<sup>225</sup>

*The Law on Combating Terrorism* (2000) is on a qualitatively higher level among the other CT legislation and perhaps indicates a general improvement in Uzbek legislation. This law sets the framework of CT activities in Uzbekistan and abroad. It

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225. Ропомарев, *Политические*, 6.

provides a list of the main notions, organization of the participating governmental institutions, and application of various measures in prevention of, reaction to, and recovery from terrorist acts. The law allows, if needed, the establishment of restrictive public regime in the zone of antiterrorist operation. While Article 3 emphasizes principles of “legality [and] priority of rights, freedoms, and lawful interests of individuals,” it also stresses priority of prevention measures and “inevitability of punishment.”

*The Criminal Code*, in general, states harsh punishments for the violation of the above-described laws but is less hard on violators of human rights. The main articles applicable to terrorism, religion, and associations in this code are:

- 139—Denigration: from 50 minimal monthly wages (mmw) up to six years of imprisonment (yoi);
- 140—Insult: from 50 mmw up to 3 years of correctional labor (yocl);
- 155—Terrorism: 15–20 yoi;
- 158—Offences against President of Republic of Uzbekistan: from 3 yocl up to 20 yoi;
- 159—Attempts to subvert the Constitutional Order of Republic of Uzbekistan: from 250 mmw up to 20 yoi;
- 161—Sabotage: 10–20 yoi;
- 216—Illegal Establishment of Public Associations or Religious Organizations: from 50 mmw up to 5 yoi;
- 216<sup>1</sup>—Inducement to Participate in Operation of Illegal Public Associations or Religious Organizations: from 25 mmw up to 3 yoi;
- 216<sup>2</sup>— Violation of Legislation on Religious Organizations: 50 mmw up to 3 yoi;
- 244—Riots: 10–15 yoi;
- 244<sup>1</sup>—Production and Dissemination of Materials Containing Threat to Public Security and Public Order: from 50 mmw up to 8 yoi;
- 244<sup>2</sup>—Establishment, Direction of or Participation in Religious Extremist, Separatist, Fundamentalist or Other Banned Organizations: 5–20 yoi.

This code translates the already repressive CT strategy into the possibility for arbitrary and disproportional punishments. It contradicts with the ICCPR’s major articles

related to extremism and religious activities.<sup>226</sup> Following the earlier-mentioned vagueness in the CT legislation, this Code also “makes no distinction between direct involvement, indirect complicity and assisting the perpetrator.”<sup>227</sup> Since articles 159 and 244<sup>1</sup> make no distinction between incitements for violent or peaceful call for political changes and definition of “illegal organization” is absent, such legislation factually forbids any expression of dissent with the official policies and preserves the existing regime. Hence, this code can also be applied towards the secular non-violent political opposition. As a result, the CT legislation allows similar punishments for a wide range of violators: from ordinary people discontent with the current situation and simply pious Muslims up to the highly violent and organized terrorists. Yet, Articles 155, 159, and 244<sup>2</sup> foresee the exemption from liability in case of voluntary and timely warning about the illegal activities and collaboration with the law enforcement. Yet, the law is less harsh on law enforcement officials in case of torture. Article 110 does not define torture as in the Convention against Torture and even uses deceptive word: instead of *torture* (*pytka* in Russian) it has *tormenting* (*istiazaniye*). This article provides few general statements with a careful wording but no association with the law enforcement agents. Furthermore, Article 110 gives punishments significantly lower (max 3–5 yoi) than the ones related with intentional serious and medium bodily harms (max 8–10 yoi) described in Articles 104 and 105. Such evasion echoes with the previously-mentioned official rhetoric and opens dangerous avenue for the arbitrary actions and rampage by the CT personnel. The Soviet-like system of the procurators, who exercise both prosecution and investigation functions, “limits the pretrial rights of defendants.”<sup>228</sup> Still, the Uzbek legislation on the organization, functions, responsibilities, and support of the law enforcement entities

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226. UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, December 16, 1966, Treaty Series, vol. 999: 171.

227. Vitaly Ponomarev in interview to IWPR, Mar 25, 2011.

228. U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division (FRD), *A Country Study: Uzbekistan*, by Nancy Lubin in *Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan: Country studies*, ed. Glenn E. Curtis. March 22, 2011.

uniformly repeats the adherence to the principles of legality, equality against the law, respect of human and civil rights and freedoms, humanity, and internationalism.<sup>229</sup>

## **C. COUNTERTERRORIST ORGANIZATION, RESOURCES, AND MEASURES IN UZBEKISTAN**

### **1. Organizational Framework for Counterterrorism**

The organizational framework for CT covers many governmental entities and provides the President with an unrestricted power over it. The National Security Service (NSS) is assigned with the overall coordination and supervision of the CT activities, is given the status of the state committee, and is subordinated to the President.<sup>230</sup> The *Law on Combating of Terrorism* also defines competences of the other institutions participating in the CT area: Ministry of Interior, State Border Guards Committee, State Customs Committee, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry on Emergency Situations. In addition to this rather unified subordination (Fig. 3), after the Andijan events in 2005, Karimov expanded his influence even more by transferring some of the internal troops from the Ministry of Interior to the NSS and by replacing a number of top civilian and military officials with the representatives of his clan.<sup>231</sup>

The President, as head of the National Security Council, can declare a state of war or of emergency and, as Commander in Chief, lead the entire armed forces.<sup>232</sup> Such a setting provides the unity of command over the whole CT organization. The NSS is a national intelligence agency responsible for protection of the national security from foreign and domestic threats and coordination of the other law enforcement agencies.<sup>233</sup> The Ministry of Interior at the national level is responsible for “rooting out the domestic

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229. E.g. Chapter III of the *Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the National Security Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan* (in Russian), November 2, 2012.

230. Article 8 in the *Law on Combating Terrorism* and Article I.3, Annex 1, in Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, *Постановление о Службе Национальной Безопасности Республики Узбекистан* No. 278. November 2, 1991.

231. Rustam Burnashev and Irina Chernykh, “Changes in Uzbekistan’s Military Policy after the Andijan Events,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2007): 71–2.

232. “Uzbekistan: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS*, June 16, 2010.

233. Ibid.

causes of terrorism and fighting corruption [and] at the local level [...] for prosecuting criminal and traffic offenses and maintaining general law and order.”<sup>234</sup>

Despite the constitutional separation of powers, Karimov exercises decisive influence over the highest bodies of the state power. He can dissolve Oliy Majlis, appoint most of the top officials and all judges, and nominate 16 out of 100 senators.<sup>235</sup> Considering the actual usurpation of the state power and the harsh nature of Karimov’s policies on terrorism and religion, the effectiveness of the Ombudsman office at the Oliy Majlis is highly dubious. The Committee on Religious Affairs is responsible and empowered for coordinating the implementation of the policies on religion and is utilizing for that function many state institutions down to the *mahallas* or city block civic organizations.<sup>236</sup>

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234. Ibid.

235. FRD, *A Country Study: Uzbekistan: the Constitution*.

236. Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, *Постановление о Дальнейшем Совершенствовании Деятельности Комитета по Делах Религий при Кабинете Министров Республики Узбекистан*, No. 196, April 23, 2004.

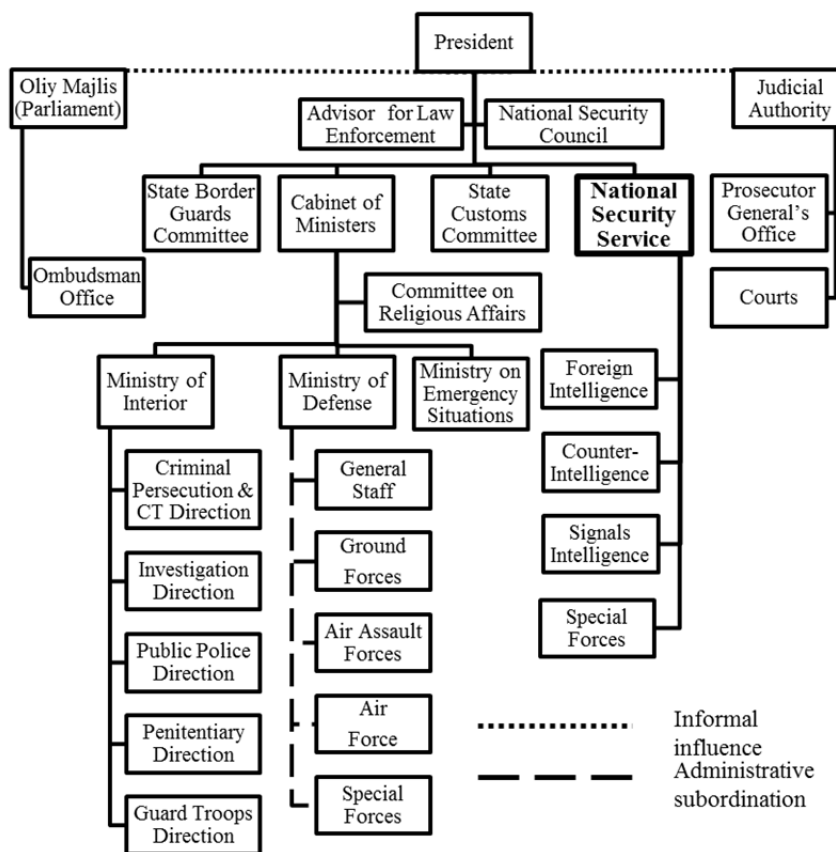


Figure 3. Framework of the counterterrorism organization.<sup>237</sup>

## 2. Counterterrorism Resources

The scarcity of the reliable information about the CT resources limits the detailed analysis; however, the available information and deduction from the known CT activities indicates a relative profusion of these resources. The NSS, as the principle national intelligence agency, is “a key pillar of [...] [Karimov’s] authoritarian regime”<sup>238</sup> not only due to its formal position but also due to its exceptional trust from and loyalty to the President. After the transformation of the former KGB (rus. Komitet Gosudarstvenoiy Bezopasnosti (former Soviet State Security Committee)) in to the NSS (approx. 700

237. Sources: [www.gov.uz](http://www.gov.uz); [www.lex.uz](http://www.lex.uz); [www.legislationonline.org](http://www.legislationonline.org); <https://janes.ihs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Grid.aspx>.

238. “Uzbekistan: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Jane’s*.

personnel),<sup>239</sup> most of the former cadres were retained and consequently relations with the Russian counterparts were sustained for the future cooperation. In terms of troops, the NSS has a “battalion-strength special operations force [...] which has incorporated the elite ‘Scorpion’ special forces company.”<sup>240</sup> The Border Guards consist of 900 personnel, work in close cooperation with the NSS, and together with the latter “form the backbone of Uzbek security community.”<sup>241</sup> Uzbekistan’s Customs is responsible for prevention of illegal transit “of drugs, weapons and politically and religiously undesirable literature”<sup>242</sup> and is also closely related to the NSS. Consequently, these three services are best equipped and provided with infrastructure. The professionalization of the Border Guard force and development of strong Special Forces are high on the governmental list of security priorities.<sup>243</sup> The international cooperation helps Uzbekistan to equip and train security forces. The international exercises mainly involve the SCO countries and have growing military involvement.

Uzbek military forces are the largest in the region and are estimated at around 63,000 of active military, 100,000 reserves, and up to 20,000 paramilitary personnel from the civilian security services. The primary role of the army is to react to the internal threats, such as insurgency and terrorist attacks, especially across the borders. Uzbek army, consisting of 50,000 personnel, for that purpose, has several quick reaction units most suitable for counterinsurgency (COIN) and CT operations: light mountain brigade, air assault brigade, and special forces (rus. *Spetsnaz*) unit. Furthermore, Tashkent keeps “an ongoing military reform program that aims to downsize the army while strengthening the border guards and the special forces.”<sup>244</sup> Despite the relatively large numbers of personnel and aircraft, Uzbek Air Force’s contribution to COIN/CT warfare is limited due to the lack of training and specialized equipment. Nevertheless, they are capable of

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239. “Special Forces: Uzbekistan,” *Jane’s Amphibious and Special Forces*, May 17, 2010.

240. “Uzbekistan: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Jane’s*.

241. *Ibid.*

242. *Ibid.*

243. “Uzbekistan: Armed Forces,” *Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS*, October 15, 2012.

244. “World Armies: Uzbekistan,” *Jane’s World Armies*, September 20, 2012.

providing considerable close air support and transportation for the ground troops. Although, in general, Uzbek military “equipment is not modern, and training, while improving, is neither uniform nor adequate yet for its new mission of territorial security,”<sup>245</sup> the armed forces, so far, have been able to quickly neutralize the IMU/IJU incursions from Afghanistan, Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan territories. The President’s goal is to develop capable forces against the “three key threats [...]: terrorism, religious extremism and drugs-related crime [...] [with possibilities for] pre-emptive strikes and intelligence operations against terrorist groups deployed in neighboring states.”<sup>246</sup> The modernization of the Air Force is also directed to support small-scale ground operations against the possible terrorist incursions from abroad.<sup>247</sup>

Although Uzbekistan’s police is also rather numerous, it is significantly less developed than the other forces. Comprising almost 25,000 personnel distributed throughout the country, it “has been left largely unreformed, under-funded and underequipped.”<sup>248</sup> On the other hand, being closer to the *mahallas* and people, its everyday activities and behavior can potentially make the strongest impact on the popular support to the entire national law enforcement organization. Although information about the penitentiary forces and conditions in prisons is very limited, it is safe assuming that Uzbek penitentiary services face similar lack of resources, training, and equipment as their counterparts in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>249</sup>

The lack of modern equipment and low morale are the main weaknesses of Uzbekistan’s security forces. Currently they are largely equipped with the old design ex-Soviet weapon systems with decreasing reliability and increasing maintenance costs. Uzbekistan is partially solving the major lack of modern equipment (especially for COIN/CT tasks, such as surveillance, command and control, and communications equipment and precise guided ammunition) through the international military cooperation

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245. U.S. DoS, *Background note: Uzbekistan*, January 31, 2012.

246. “Uzbekistan: Armed Forces,” *Jane’s*.

247. Sources of the whole paragraph: “Uzbekistan: Armed Forces” and “World Armies: Uzbekistan,” *Jane’s*; “Uzbekistan: Air Force,” *Jane’s World Air Forces*, May 23, 2012; U.S. DoS, *Background*.

248. “Uzbekistan: Security and Foreign Forces,” *Jane’s*.

249. ICG, *Central Asia: Islamists*, 2, 13.



programs. Their scope and content varies in accordance to the dynamics of the international relations:

“Russia will boost supplies of arms and military hardware to Uzbekistan. Russia is currently the only country supplying Tashkent with weapons. Assistance from the U.S. and China will probably take the form of supplies of modern border-surveillance equipment. The U.S. may also provide Tashkent with funding to buy Russian arms. European Union support will consist of advice.”<sup>250</sup>

The main recipients of the modern U.S. equipment until 2005 were the NSS, Border Guards, and Ministry of Interior, but after the Andijan events in 2005 the armed forces, with the increasing focus on COIN/CT operations, also benefited from the international military aid.<sup>251</sup> In addition, there is a realistic expectation in Uzbekistan to receive large amounts of equipment (including also lethal) from the ISAF withdrawal from Afghanistan.<sup>252</sup> For protection of the general population, Uzbekistan also acquires some modern equipment for the public transportation sector.<sup>253</sup> The low morale is a problem among the military and police personnel. This weakness is characteristic to many post-Soviet force structures whose real transformation was delayed for years and was exacerbated by poor pay, decreasing discipline, and lack of material support. Furthermore, Uzbekistan’s police’s situation is worsened by the omnipresent corruption.

While the overall Uzbekistan’s expenditures for security are not publicly available, the information on military expenditures allows making assumptions about the former. The absolute figures of the defense budget were continuously rising and the same dynamic is envisioned at least till 2015. In 2011, the actual expenditures for defense reached \$1.75 billion, which represent 4.85% of GDP, and in 2012 it is planned to reach \$1.9 billion.<sup>254</sup> In addition, the U.S. military aid is growing as well: from \$100,000 in

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250. Bruce Pannier, an RFE/RL correspondent, in interview to IWPR, Oct 11, 2011.

251. “World Armies: Uzbekistan,” *Jane’s*.

252. *Ibid*.

253. Ben Vogel, “Uzbekistan orders Quantum Sniffers,” *Jane’s Airport Review* 2012, December 7, 2011; “Uzbekistan Tightens Transportation Security,” Central Asia Online, February 15, August 12, 2011.

254. “Uzbekistan: Defense Budget,” *Jane’s Defense Budgets*, March 20, 2012.

2011 to \$1.5 million in 2012.<sup>255</sup> However, considering the role of the law enforcement and security services in the CT strategy and supporting Karimov's regime, it is reasonable to assume that their financing is sufficient.

Finally, the wide range of other governmental organizations constitutes, even if less visible, another major component of the CT resources. The 12,000 local *mahalla* committees serve as indispensable source of information on potential extremists, "assign[...] a 'neighborhood guardian,' or 'posbon,' whose job [is] to ensure public order and to maintain a proper moral climate in the neighborhood ... [, and] ... link local society and the lowest levels of the Government and law enforcement."<sup>256</sup> The public education system, government owned or controlled media, and local authorities are employed not only for the CT function but also for the implementation of the state's control on religion.

### **3. Implementation of the Counterterrorism Strategy**

Due to the significant drawbacks of the governmental entities, the actual implementation of the CT strategy made Uzbekistan infamous for its harsh and indiscriminate repression, violation of human rights, and widespread corruption. The first major governmental crack-down on the radical Islamists started in 1992 in Fergana Valley. The official incitements to persecute families of the hiding terrorists were also widely utilized in this region starting with the families of Tahir Yuldashev and Juma Namangani.<sup>257</sup> In 1997, killings of several law enforcement officials in the same region triggered another wave of arrests and imprisonments. In response to the Tashkent bombings of 1999, the governmental repression expanded into the other regions and exploited the earlier-described violent governmental rhetoric to the full extent.<sup>258</sup> Despite the official humane norms in the related legislation, arbitrary arrests, torture, and ill-

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255. "Uzbekistan Achieves U.S. Military Aid Parity with Neighbors," Eurasianet.org, February 13, 2012.

256. "Uzbekistan," globalsecurity.org, November 7, 2011.

257. Rashid, *Jihad*, 146–7.

258. HRW, *Crackdown*.

treatment of suspects became the usual practices of Uzbek law enforcement.<sup>259</sup> From then on, the CT policies only became harsher and involved wider population. Although the Andijan massacre in 2005 caused a wide international resonance and condemnation of Uzbekistan's government by the foreign states and international organizations, the following wave of persecutions by Uzbek law enforcement demonstrated the unshakeable nature of Karimov's CT strategy.<sup>260</sup> Although extraditions of the suspected Uzbek Islamists from the Western countries are often hampered due to the threat of potential torture in Uzbekistan, the same process usually works smoothly among the SCO members.<sup>261</sup> Despite the obviously decreased level of the Islamic terrorism and wide international criticism, Uzbekistan's CT policies not only remain on the same course but are expanding into the other areas of public and individual life.<sup>262</sup>

Uzbekistan's war against terrorism also became widely utilized against every potential threat to Karimov's regime. Right from the early 1990s, the CT policies were applied against religion. Gradually more pious people were turned into the "enemies of the state"<sup>263</sup> and unregulated religious activities equalized to terrorism. Simple possession of unofficial religious material or overt religious discourse was considered as open agitation against the constitutional order. The more pious people are treated as terrorists and even worse than ordinary criminals.<sup>264</sup> Continuous harassment, torture, disappearances, and disproportional criminal persecution are directed against the human rights activists, journalists, secular opposition, and even discontent ordinary citizens.<sup>265</sup>

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259. AI, *Document*.

260. Human Rights First. *Karimov's*, 13–9.

261. "Russia: Stop Extradition to Uzbekistan," HRW, July 17, 2012.

262. U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan, *2011 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Uzbekistan*, May 25, 2012.

263. Acacia Shields, *Creating Enemies of the State: Religious Persecution in Uzbekistan* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2004).

264. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, *USCIRF Annual Report 2012—Countries of Particular Concern: Uzbekistan*, March 20, 2012.

265. HRW, *Human Rights Watch World Report 1995 - Uzbekistan*, January 1, 1995; FRD, *Country Study: Uzbekistan—Opposition Parties*; HRW, *Uzbekistan: Country Summary*, January 2012; U.S. DoS, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 1999: Uzbekistan* (1999); AI, *Amnesty International Report 2012: The State of the World's Human Rights*, (London: Amnesty International, 2012), 361–3.

The arbitrary application of the CT legislation and unrestrained corruption within the law enforcement and security structures significantly worsen the Uzbekistan's situation. Starting from the mid-1990s, Uzbek law enforcement rampaged against any opposition and ignored the international commitments of Uzbekistan.<sup>266</sup> The independent report about Uzbek procurators' and courts' practices of 2009–2010 shows the abundance of arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions, unrestricted interpretation of the vague legislation, systematic tortures, ill-treatment, and persistent violations of the *Code of Criminal Procedure*.<sup>267</sup> In this report, Vitaly Ponomarev, head of the Central Asia program of the Moscow-based Memorial group, emphasized that “all of them [suspects] were charged with the offences of membership of a banned organization, distributing literature that threatens public security, anti-constitutional activity or setting up an illegal religious organization”<sup>268</sup> and often these charges were based not on the concrete actions of these suspects but on the declared or implied goals of those organizations. Despite the limited access to the accusation materials, he rightfully assumes the full absence of the concrete evidence linking the suspects with the IMU or the IJU and concludes that “the [governmental] response is not commensurate with the risks, and is thus unjustifiable; and that repression itself is the major destabilizing factor and poses greater risks to regional security than groups like the IMU do.”<sup>269</sup>

As a result of such a distorted law enforcement system, Uzbekistan's penitentiary system is incapable of dealing with a large number of prisoners. According to Ponomarev, the numbers of political prisoners in Uzbekistan are considerably higher than in the rest of the former Soviet Union put together and blacklists include tens of thousands of the local people, who potentially are the subjects for criminal persecution.<sup>270</sup> Due to the low morale of the governmental personnel and widely spread corruption, the local penitentiary system succumbs under the pressure of imprisoned

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266. AI, *Document*.

267. Ponomarev, *Политические*, 2–3.

268. Ponomarev in interview to IWPR, Mar 25, 2011.

269. Ibid.

270. Ponomarev, *Политические*, 1.

criminals and Islamists, which utilize prisons for the propagation of the radical Islamism. Despite the harshest treatment in the prisons, the Islamists retain their dedication, organize internal networks, and maintain outside relations. The actual influence of the latter gradually becomes even stronger than that of the common criminals who through the *obshchak*<sup>271</sup> and bribing have an informal control over the prisons' administrations.

The omnipresent corruption is a major problem for the entire law enforcement system in Uzbekistan. As in the whole country, which in the latest Corruption Perceptions Index is ranked 177 out of 183 (where the higher number means higher corruption),<sup>272</sup> corruption prosper in the law enforcement system. The local police personnel even resort to blackmailing “known to be devout Muslims and threaten to denounce them as extremists to the security services unless they hand over money, livestock or other property.”<sup>273</sup> Considering the well-known law enforcement practices of torturing and arbitrary judicial institutions, it is not surprising that ordinary people avoid informing law officials about this and try to give away everything in order to save themselves and their families. Other people, facing unbearable persecution, leave the country and sometimes join the IMU or the IJU. Although the shield of secrecy and considerably higher professionalism of the NSS may portray this institution as immune from corruption, the worsening economic conditions and a vast scale of smuggling in Uzbekistan create a very tempting environment not only for the Border Guards and Customs but for the NSS as well.<sup>274</sup> Information about the outcomes of such cases is largely hidden from the population.<sup>275</sup> Furthermore, according to the International Crisis Group, “corruption and poor governance is a trademark of all three of the countries [including Uzbekistan] that border Afghanistan, making for a challenging economic environment in which it is all the more difficult to implement effective counter-terrorism

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271. *Obshchak*—“a many-layered self-help administrative and trading body set up by the prison’s criminal fraternity, with the blessing of major crime figures,” ICG, *Central Asia: Islamists*, 2–3.

272. Transparency International (TI), *Corruption Perceptions Index 2011*.

273. “Uzbekistan: ‘Islamist’ Tag Used to Extort Money,” IWPR, March 13, 2011.

274. “Uzbekistan & Kyrgyzstan: Smugglers Own the Night,” EurasiaNet, August 22, 2012.

275. U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan, *2011 Country Reports*.

measures.”<sup>276</sup> Finally, such behavior of the Uzbek law enforcement becomes a source of grievance and even Islamic radicalization for the abused people.

The level of incompetence of the local governmental institutions is another negative factor related to the effectiveness of Uzbekistan’s CT policies. Following the crackdown on Islamic fundamentalist groups in Fergana valley in the early 1990s,<sup>277</sup> the local governmental entities, under the supervision and guidance from the NSS and the Committee on Religious Affairs, continued persecution of religious people through the whole country. Once again, the two categories of clergy were identified. That situation looked very similar to the Soviet one. The difference, however, was in the religious content of the unofficial religious ideology. Now the unofficial *ulama* propagated pure Islam and were seeking establishment of the Islamic state, while the state and the official clergy supported traditionalism and mix of the national heritage with religion.<sup>278</sup> While Karimov’s regime supports “religious activity through the officially-registered mosques and clerics who are close to the regime and who enjoy some authority among the population [...] [it uses] greater repression of independent Muslims and illegal religious groups, so as to root out domestic ‘enemies.’”<sup>279</sup> As a result, there were imprisoned large numbers of people who were guilty only of unsanctioned studies of Islam, possession of religious materials or membership in the banned organizations and movements, including Hizb ut-Tahrir, Said Nursi, Tabligi Jamaat, non-Islamic minorities, and some other local non-violent religious groups.<sup>280</sup> Such an approach indicates a striking ignorance on the governmental side about the essential differences of religious ideologies. Similar ineffectiveness exists in the fighting against the terrorist financing. Although the respective legislation is in place, the existence of the large black-market allows significant financial flows avoiding the governmental control and Karimov’s regime

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276. ICG, *Talking*, 14–5.

277. Rashid, *Jihad*, 84.

278. Abdumannob Polat, “The Islamic Revival in Uzbekistan: A Threat to Stability?” in *Islam and Central Asia: An Enduring Legacy or An Evolving Threat?* Ed. Roald Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower (Washington: Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000), 43–57.

279. Pannier interview to IWPR, October 11, 2011.

280. Пономарев, *Политические*, 2.

cannot brag about any seizure of terrorist assets.<sup>281</sup> From 2012, Uzbekistan strengthens cooperation with the other member states of the SCO in the field of money laundering and control of the information accessible over the Internet.<sup>282</sup> The latter initiatives represent a desperate governmental attempt to hide from the people any information that could somehow influence the public opinion in Uzbekistan and undermine popular support to Karimov's regime.

## **D. PUBLIC SUPPORT IN UZBEKISTAN**

### **1. Political Situation in Uzbekistan**

The nature of the existing regime, level of democracy, rule of law, and respect to human and civil rights and freedoms are the factors that shape popular perception about the political situation in the country and influence public support to the government. Contrary to the constitution, authoritarian Karimov's rule has actually concentrated all power within the executive branch. As a result, only the President and his apparatus have monopoly on justice in Uzbekistan. While religious opposition is illegal, the secular political opposition is also largely persecuted and dispersed.<sup>283</sup> The democratic parties *Erk* and *Birlik* were persecuted from the early 1990s in the country but continue operating from abroad. Due to the high level of governmental repression, the incitement for massive protests or even insurgency is still futile.<sup>284</sup> This situation confirms the general notion about the compliant and obedient character of Uzbek nation, which continues suffering from violations of human rights and absence of democracy without joining into united opposition. The NSS, as the major pillar of Karimov's regime, is able to produce incriminating material on every political figure or social activist and annihilate them through the harsh machine of the law enforcement.<sup>285</sup> The existing legal political parties, in essence, are supportive of the current regime, do not represent any challenge to the

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281. U.S. DoS, *Country Reports on Terrorism: Uzbekistan*, from 2009 to 2011.

282. "ПАТС ШОС будет бороться с Интернетом," SNGdaily.ru, March 28, 2012.

283. David Wallechinsky, "Dictator of the Month: Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan," AllGov.com, October 24, 2011.

284. Sarah Kendzior, "What Happened in Andijon?" Registan Network, July 24, 2012.

285. "Uzbekistan's power melting pot," *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst 2010*, July 30, 2010.

latter, and have only cosmetic differences in their programs.<sup>286</sup> According to the most foreign countries and all international organizations, the electoral system in Uzbekistan is considered as totally corrupt; hence, Uzbekistan has the lowest rank for freedom and extremely low indicator of voice and accountability.<sup>287</sup> While some indicators of governmental performance—political stability, violence, and government effectiveness—significantly improved from 2005, the others—regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption—remain very low and even worsened further.<sup>288</sup> The improvements can be attributed to the consolidation of Karimov’s regime, annihilation of opposition, and control of information.

The earlier-described unrestricted behavior of Uzbek law enforcement could undermine the popular perception of the legitimacy of the governmental policies against terrorism. There were several major crackdowns on the Islamic and secular opposition in Uzbekistan, but the Andijan events in 2005 can be used as the best example that fully illustrates the governmental approach on popular discontent. First of all, the reason for this insurgency was caused by the arbitrary arrests of the successful local businessmen, which were honored and trusted by the local population, on the charges of clandestine religious terrorist organization. The threatening and largely illegal behavior of the local law enforcement personnel and the corresponding perception of the local people demonstrated the governmental ignorance of religious matters and shocking disregard of the population.<sup>289</sup> The local governmental authorities demonstrated low competence by not handling the raising popular discontent peacefully. The employment of the armed forces, shootings into the crowds of people, following persecutions, and numbers of refugees were caused by a non-proportional and indiscriminate use of force against the general civilian population. Finally, after seven years there was no independent investigation on these events allowed and no officials accused of unlawful behavior.<sup>290</sup>

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286. [www.uzlidep.uz](http://www.uzlidep.uz); [www.uzmtdp.uz](http://www.uzmtdp.uz); [www.xdp.uz](http://www.xdp.uz); [www.adolat.uz](http://www.adolat.uz).

287. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2011: Uzbekistan*; The World Bank Group, *Country Data Report for Uzbekistan, 1996–2011*, 2.

288. The World Bank Group, *Country*, 3–7.

289. ICG, *Uzbekistan: The Andijon*, 2–4.

290. “Uzbekistan: No Justice 7 Years after Andijan Massacre,” HRW, May 11, 2012.



Furthermore, corruption is prevailing in most spheres of the public life and Karimov, with all his power at hand, is not doing much to pull up Uzbekistan from the lowest ranks of the corrupt countries.<sup>291</sup>

The persistent violation of human and civilian rights and freedoms is another characteristic of the current regime that should negatively influence public support to Uzbekistan's government. The violations of human rights are not limited only with the torturing and abuses from the law enforcement and strict control of religion. The freedom of thought and speech is severely limited by the regime as well. The governmental persecution of journalists<sup>292</sup> and editors who try to spread information compromising the official authorities ranges from individual harassments and professional interference to criminal charges and long imprisonments. Although two decades of such policy made the pro-government media outlets dominating in the country and the practice of self-censorship a norm for the local media,<sup>293</sup> the progressive journalists still continue challenging the authorities.<sup>294</sup> Uzbekistan's government limits access to the Internet, refuses translation of the opposing foreign radio (e.g. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Voice of America, and BBC World Service), denies accreditation to foreign journalists and media outlets, and intervenes into the academic freedom and cultural events.<sup>295</sup> The information about the Arab Spring, due to its potential applicability in Central Asia, was also manipulated in the Uzbek official media.<sup>296</sup> Although the IMU's and the IJU's Islamic propaganda was successful in Western Europe and Turkey, the restrictions and

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291. TI, *Corruption*; Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI 2012-Uzbekistan Country Report*, (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012), 7–12.

292. Aleksei Volosevich, "Uzbekistan: No journalist is immune from slander, defamation charges," Fergana INA, February 15, 2011.

293. U.S. DoS, *Background*.

294. "Uzbekistan: The Employees of National Television and Radio Company Sharply Criticized the Management," Fergana INA, August 28, 2010.

295. Bertelsmann Stiftung, *BTI*, 7–8; U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan, *2011 Country Reports*.

296. "Uzbek Mass Media Ignore, Alter ME Events," Fergana NIA, February 8, 2011.

censorship on the public media limited the public access to such information in Uzbekistan. The activists of human and civil rights also experience severe persecution that also involves their families. To counter the persistent international pressure, the regime from time to time releases few imprisoned activists just to imitate improvement but the overall situation is even worsening.<sup>297</sup>

The pro-government media, at the same time, portrays Karimov and his regime as the only guarantors of security and stability in Uzbekistan that is continuously threatened by the internal and external enemies who try to impose different and dangerous thinking. Karimov's intolerance for independent activism, opinion, and resulting criticism is prevailing in the official restrictions on international organizations. Despite the governmental financing of the NGOs and some minor improvements, the actual restrictions on the NGO activities and un-proportional punishment in this country are still prevailing. Uzbekistan's courts continue closing representative offices of the international organizations that dare to criticize the current regime (e.g., the Institution of New Democracies in spring of 2010 and the Human Rights Watch (HRW) in June 2011).<sup>298</sup>

The whole regime's campaign for control of public information indicates a strong fear of the alternative information and fully mirrors with the former Soviet approach on control of people's mind and behavior. Eventually, such a repressive regime and the factual absence of the rule of law may even lead to an armed insurgency:

“Starting from mid-2008, we've seen a growing trend towards politically-motivated criminal cases. [...] The level of repression is now higher than in its previous peak period of 2004 to 2006. [...] The deployment mass repression as a core instrument of state policy has been a major source of instability [...]. Under certain circumstances [...] Uzbekistan is most likely to experience the Libyan scenario rather than the Egyptian one.”<sup>299</sup>

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297. “Uzbekistan: Activist Free but Crackdown Widening,” HRW, April 13, 2012; HRW, *No One Left to Witness*, December 13, 2011; Ponomarev, *Политические*, 3.

298. ICNL, *NGO*.

299. Ponomarev in interview to IWPR, Mar 25, 2011.

## 2. Economic and Social Situation in Uzbekistan

The national economic and social situations are the other two factors that determine the level of people's satisfaction with their life conditions and respectively contribute to the general support to their government. According to the official figures and international assessments on Uzbek economy, the economic situation may look quite good and improving. Due to the large natural resources and favorable export prices, the International Monetary Fund and the Economist Intelligence Unit provided quite favorable prognosis for Uzbekistan's economy with the annual growth of GDP more than 7 per cent in 2011–2013 but also with a high level of inflation ranging from 10 to 20 per cent.<sup>300</sup> The reliability of the official Uzbekistan's data is still questionable when the percentage of unemployment provided by Tashkent is up to 40 times less than that of the international assessments. Such a cheating with the official data is another characteristic of Uzbekistan inherited from the Soviet past and is strongly related to the official propaganda supporting Karimov's regime. Furthermore, the combination of the state-controlled economy, lack of liberal reforms, and omnipresent corruption makes all economic improvement retained only by the loyal and corrupt elites in this country.<sup>301</sup> The growing dissatisfaction with the restrictions on private businesses was one of the main reasons for civilian protests already in 2004–2005.

As a result, despite the favorable economic indicators largely founded on the vast natural resources, the general population is not experiencing economic improvement. The minimal increase of the state budget expenditures by 0.1 per cent for social development and support and healthcare<sup>302</sup> is actually a significant decrease considering the high level of inflation. The real problems of Uzbekistan's economy are visible through the growing unemployment and poverty that in return increases social and ethnic division. While actual unemployment is estimated around 8 per cent and underemployment around 25

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300. International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Uzbekistan: Staff Visit, May 21–25, 2012 Aide Memoire*; Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Country Report: Uzbekistan 2011*, 3,8.

301. U.S. DoS, *Background*.

302. "Revenues of the State Budget of Uzbekistan for 2012 is Expected 20,393.9 Billion Soums," UzReport.Com, Nov 11, 2011.

percent, the latter reaches 62 per cent in the rural areas.<sup>303</sup> The latter figure is especially worrisome considering the generally high percentage of young population in Uzbekistan and the higher religiosity in the rural areas that makes these regions more susceptible to the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism. Approximately 26 per cent of Uzbeks live below the poverty line and the social inequality is growing.<sup>304</sup> As a result, the large numbers of Uzbeks, together with the other Central Asian nations, moved abroad (mainly to Russia) as labor emigrants. The Human Development Index (HDI), which comprises indicators related to public health, education, and living standards in the country, for Uzbekistan is 0.641 and gives the 115 position among the 187 countries.<sup>305</sup> It is higher than these of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and during the last 6 years improved by 5 per cent, but it is much lower than that of Kazakhstan. After the collapse of the USSR, Uzbekistan retained the most developed infrastructure in Central Asia. However, the growing lack of specialists, shortage of funds for maintenance and investment, and unbridled corruption in two decades turned this initial advantage into decay and decline of social services.<sup>306</sup>

Another specific feature of Uzbek socio-economic life is forced or compulsory labor. The latter is also inherited from the USSR where such labor was quite common practice to support the Soviet agricultural sector with the largely free labor force of governmental employees and students. Despite the prohibition of forced or compulsory labor in Uzbek Constitution and other legislation and the official governmental declarations about its intentions to enforce these laws at least in relation to children, the actual situation is not improving. School children, college students, teachers, medical personnel, and many other governmental employees are forced to pick cotton in the field for months and while living in the unsanitary and slavery conditions.<sup>307</sup> While the Western governments, as usually, avoid putting too much pressure on Karimov, more

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303. U.S. DoS, *Background*.

304. Ibid.; UN Development Program (UNDP), *International Human Development Indicators: Uzbekistan*, 2011.

305. UNDP, *Explanatory note on 2011 HDR composite indices: Uzbekistan*.

306. ICG, *Central Asia: Decay and Decline*, Asia Report No.201, February 2, 2011.

307. Many articles in Uznews.net under the heading "Human Rights"; U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan, *2011 Country Reports: Section 7*.

than 100 internationally famous apparel companies responded to the call of the Uzbek civil society activists and declared a boycott for the Uzbek cotton.<sup>308</sup> The ongoing modern slavery in Uzbekistan further undermines the rule of law and makes this population feeling helpless against the Karimov's regime.

Although the huge law enforcement apparatus and its unrestricted practices keep the general level of delinquency low, the level of organized crime remains high and has very negative impact on the overall social situation in Uzbekistan. The existing poor economic conditions, pervasive corruption, and weak rule of law make the criminal path much more attractive to the large young population that suffers from unemployment and unclear prospects for their future. According to the Jane's report of 2010, "in addition to numerous smaller client gangs and allies, there are a handful of large criminal groups involved in the illicit trade of cotton and narcotics."<sup>309</sup> The latter trafficking is related to the geographical position of Uzbekistan, the same as of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, to Afghanistan that remains the main producer of illegal drugs in the region. Apart from worsening the national criminal situation and increasing the numbers of drug abusers, the drug trafficking causes an alarming increase (from 2000 to 2008 the increase was 11-fold) of HIV/AIDS infections.<sup>310</sup> Considering the ongoing decline of social services and the public health care in particular, such trends may have significant impact on the overall social situation in Uzbekistan.

Despite quite problematic economic and social situation in the country, Karimov's regime does not seem really worried and capable of improvement. Since there is no meaningful secular opposition in Uzbekistan, he undermines political Islamism as irrelevant to the solutions of these problems as well. Although admitting "that upheavals of religious fanaticism are not originated only and exclusively by religious contradictions in themselves, but predominantly are originated due to unsolved social, political and economic problems," Karimov firmly states that religion alone "is not able to make any

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308. "Over 100 Powerhouse Apparel Brands and Companies Have Signed the Cotton Pledge," Responsible Sourcing Network, November 1, 2012.

309. "Uzbekistan: Security," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS*, June 23, 2012.

310. "Central Asian countries urged to act now to avert worsening AIDS epidemic," UN Office on Drugs and Crime, January 19, 2011.

recommendations on the settlement of social and economic problems.”<sup>311</sup> He understands that it’s crucial for the regime to increase the living conditions for the ordinary people. On the other hand, it is obvious that the same regime due to the overwhelming corruption is not capable to significantly improve them despite the considerable natural resources.<sup>312</sup> Furthermore, Karimov cannot exploit the Western potential for economic aid due to the lack of improvement of his record on human rights, democracy, economic liberalization, and rule of law. Most probably, Karimov “will therefore give them [people] something—perhaps better welfare policies—so as to defuse social tensions and unhappiness, since he will need to secure people’s trust and support.”<sup>313</sup> According to well-known expert on Central Asia Ahmed Rashid:

“[Karimov] like all the other Central Asian leaders, [...] has become increasingly isolated from the public and from political activity over the years, surrounding himself with openly corrupt sycophants. Like them, he has become increasingly unable to find solutions to his country’s overwhelming problems because he refuses to recognize their sources.”<sup>314</sup>

Such remoteness from the real problems in the society and inability to address the reasons for them properly was characteristic to the Soviet governments that increasingly resorted to force in order to appease the population. In that respect, Karimov is following exactly the same path. The real fight against corruption is also unacceptable, for that would destroy the very foundations of his regime in Uzbekistan. To sustain his rule, Karimov can rely only on the repressive law enforcement organization and the Soviet-style propaganda. The general population, on the other hand, must find its way into the future by critically assessing the current situation and making own judgments based on its own experiences with the national political, economic, and social situation and the uncensored information available.

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311. Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 22.

312. EIU, *Country*, 5–6.

313. Pannier in interview to IWPR, October 11, 2011.

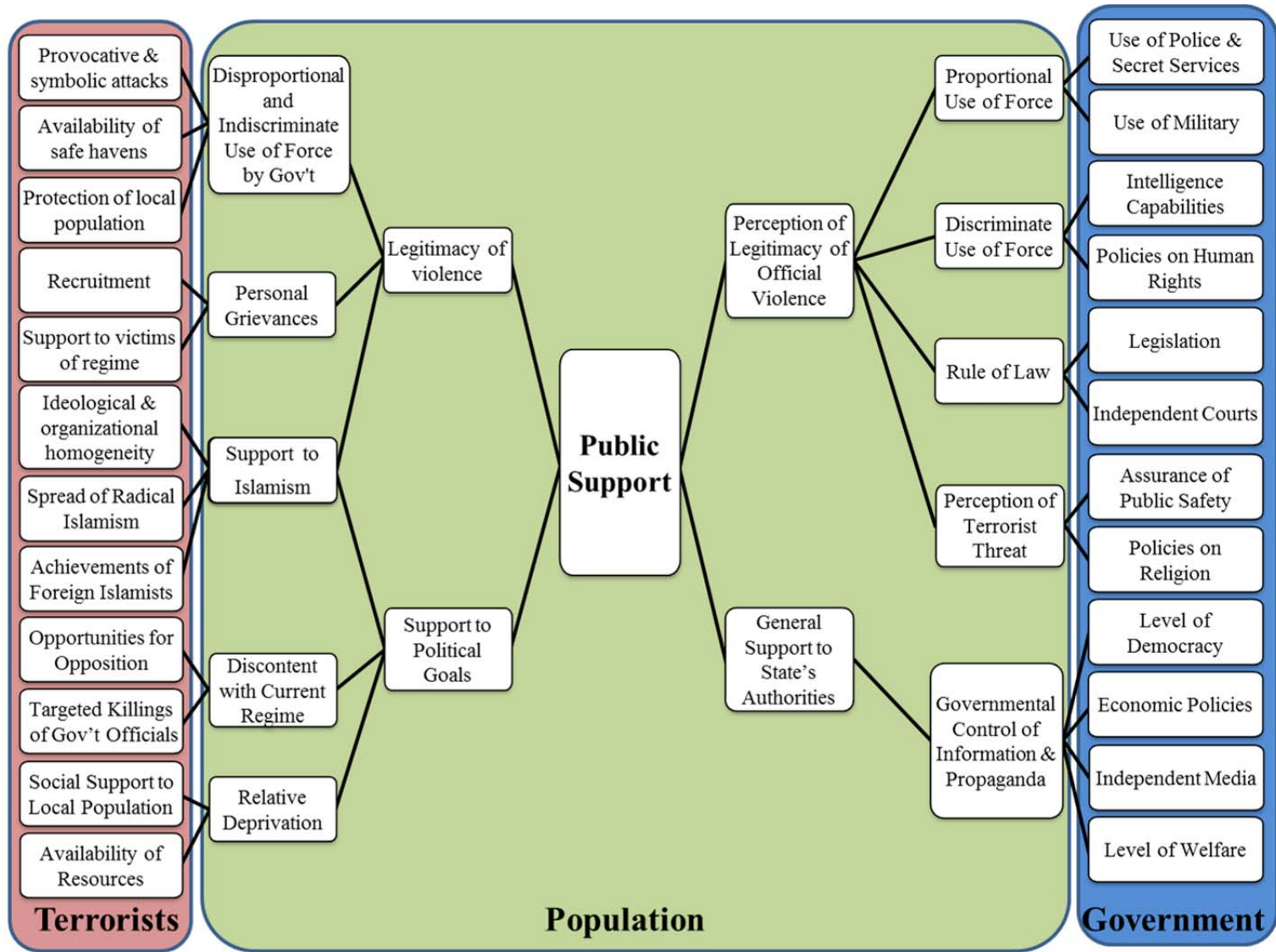
314. Rashid, *Jihad*, 81.

### **3. Analysis of Public Opinion**

Since public opinions about any area of public life or governmental policy is influenced by the other areas and policies, the analysis of public opinion in Uzbekistan has to be well-structured in order to draw conclusions related to the CT policies. Although public opinions often are formed without sufficient knowledge and based on the individual experiences and perceptions, it is the most direct expression of the content and direction of Uzbek public support in the framework of CT (Fig. 4). In respect to the Islamic terrorists, Uzbek public support can be divided into two parts: support of Islamic political goals and legitimacy of violence. While the religiosity of the local population, discontent with the current regime, and personal feelings of relative deprivation could make the political Islamism as an attractive alternative to the current Karimov's regime, the unjust use of force by the government and personal grievances inflicted by the latter can make people supportive of terrorist violence. Terrorists, in general, try to enhance such popular preferences by providing social help and physical protection to the people; make their attacks visible, provocative and targeted against the worst governmental officials; spread their ideology; and recruit the discontent people either into violent groups or a peaceful political opposition. In order to be able to do all that, on the other hand, terrorists must have adequate resources and safe havens, demonstrate ideological and organizational homogeneity, and maintain networks with the similar organizations.

In respect to the government, the popular support consists of the perception of legitimacy of the governmental actions against terrorists and the general support to the governmental policies. Both are quite complex phenomena. Firstly, the legitimacy depends on how proportional and just, in the eyes of the population, is the governmental use of force against terrorists and how it affects that population itself. The proportionality partially depends on how the people assess the terrorist threat towards themselves. Secondly, the rule of law is determined not only within the CT framework but also within the other areas of the public life.

Figure 4. Framework of influence on public opinion on counterterrorism.





If the actual political, economic, and social governmental policies are perceived by the population as just and efficient, the general support to the government is almost granted. On the contrary, if people feel deprived and suppressed, this support is weak. In order to gain the public support, governments should maintain democratic regime, respect human and civil rights and freedoms, maintain favorable economic conditions and social justice, and assure the rule of law.

In respect to the Islamic terrorism, the propagation of moderate Islam is necessary in order to make people immune to the manipulation with the radical Islamic ideas and legitimacy of violence. Unfortunately not all of these complexities are directly addressed in the available polls. Due to the inconsistency and variety of the existing polls of the Uzbek public opinion, their analysis must be carefully interpreted in order to provide consistent and reliable conclusions. In addition, due to the repressive nature of the current political regime in Uzbekistan, the reliability of the polls' results also needs consideration. For example, the 2012 polls conducted by the national agency Ijtimoyi Fikr<sup>315</sup> show that more than 90 per cent of the population are satisfied with the socioeconomic and security situation and 87 per cent see that respect to human rights has increased. While the whole rhetoric in the publications and reports of that agency is full of Soviet style praising of Karimov and his government, there is no access to the full reports and methodologies used in the respective researches.

The widest in scope and details is the poll<sup>316</sup> by Steven Wagner of 1996. It provides a good picture about the situation in Uzbekistan when independence was still a new concept for the people who eagerly expressed their views about the domestic changes. The Pew research<sup>317</sup> of 2002 includes Uzbekistan among the other 44 states and focuses public opinions on more global issues; yet, it includes direct questions about terrorism. The two world polls from Gallup<sup>318</sup> give global overviews (2010 and 2011) on

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315 "21 Год Независимости," Ijtimoyi Fikr, August 28, 2012.

316. IFES, *Public Opinion in Uzbekistan: 1996*.

317. The Pew, *What*.

318. Gallup, *Gallup Global Wellbeing: The Behavioral Economics of GDP Growth*, 2010 and *Global Barometer of Hope and Despair for 2012*.

the question of general wellbeing and hope. On the other hand, they give an opportunity to assess the potential for the general public support to the respective governments and compare with the results in other states. The Gallup's research on views of violence<sup>319</sup> in 2011 indicates the level of public support to the governmental use of force against terrorists and general population. The most up to date public responses to the specific questions about the existing socio-economic conditions are available on the Gallup's website.<sup>320</sup> The similar polls, which are wider discussed in the next chapter, were conducted also in the other Central Asian states. Considering significant political, economic, and social similarities among these countries, the comparison of the results is rather useful in avoiding wrong interpretations and providing sounder basis for conclusions. However, sometimes certain differences in time, scope, and format of these polls make their comparison difficult. Therefore, certain assumptions and interpretation are unavoidable in order to determine the actual public support in Uzbekistan. The following summary of the public support in Uzbekistan is based on the above-mentioned polls and interpreted on the background of the earlier-presented material and on the personal experiences in Uzbekistan in 1988 and in Lithuania during the early post-Soviet period from 1990.

In general, despite the apparent political suppression, economic hardship, social decline, and violation of human rights, the majority of Uzbek population remains supportive to its government. Karimov's regime so far succeeded to impose its views on democracy and strong, even authoritarian when necessary, government on the local population. The Soviet political system was rapidly changed by the national dictatorship and gave no opportunity for the nation to experience real democratic system in practice. Therefore, while most of the respondents largely assessed Uzbekistan as democratic state, the open criticism of government they still considered unacceptable and often preferred just a one-party political system. However, the percentage of such respondents is gradually decreasing and more people tend to realize the limitations of the current

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319. Gallup, *Views of Violence: What Drives Public Acceptance and Rejection of Attacks on Civilians 10 years after 9/11*, 2011.

320. Gallup, *Worldwide Tracking: Countries*, September 10, 2012.

political system. Despite the realization that the local media is controlled by the government, the trust in the public media remains rather high. The significant portion of the latter consists of the Russian media. Furthermore, the most admirable and trustful institution remains the presidential office. The Oliy Majlis is significantly less trusted and, according to the majority opinion, should be subordinated to the President. A strong Western and secular orientation, in contrast to the Islamic, was demonstrated in the popular selections of the models for economic and political developments. In parallel, Uzbeks are very supportive of the U.S. war on terror, foreign policies, and economic activities in Uzbekistan. The American way of life, however, is significantly less appreciated. However, after 15 years the considerable majority of the population prefers rapprochement with Russia even at the expense of the relations with the U.S.<sup>321</sup>

The major sources of discontent and problems for the population remain economic and social conditions, such as personal incomes, growing prices, unemployment, worsening social services, environmental pollution, etc. On the top of the national problems are threat of terrorism and spread of AIDS and other infectious diseases. The Islamic terrorism and suicide bombing in particular is strongly condemned. They are followed by the concerns about growing crime, worsening social and environmental conditions, large corruption, and emigration. Similarly, the governmental policies in the area of public security are seen as insufficient and obstructed by corruption in the law enforcement. Although through the last twenty years the initially high trust in the latter significantly decreased, it still remains rather moderate. The highest scores for public trust hold the military and government, followed by the news media and clergy. Despite some decrease in the satisfaction on the individual conditions, the views on the national general conditions are rated quite high and the general reliance on the government for improvement remains strong. In essence, Uzbekistan's population can be considered as very optimistic both regionally and globally.

In terms of human rights and freedoms, Uzbeks are not much concerned and do not see radical Islamism as a viable political alternative. In the late 1990s, the majority of

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321. Gallup, *Kyrgyzstanis Favor Russia over U.S.*, by Julie Ray, April 13, 2010.

respondents considered that respect to human rights increased after the declaration of independence. Although gradually declining, the popular opinion about the respect to human rights in Uzbekistan is still rather high, considering the actual situation. In respect to religion, many respondents pointed to the increased freedom on religion in comparison with the Soviet period and the limited role of it in the modern world. On the contrary, Uzbekistan's people are somehow supportive to the limitations on human rights and use of force by the government in case of social disturbances or other major threats to the state. Furthermore, they never named repressions of religion or violations of human rights even among the ten most important public concerns, which remain dominated by the economic and social problems.

Such a disparity between the actual conditions in the country and the remaining trust and support to the government can be explained by the Soviet past, repressive regime, and strong pro-governmental control of information. The population compliantly suffers, because it does not have experiences of the really democratic and non-repressive political regime. In comparison with the Baltic republics that also regained independence after the collapse of the USSR, the difference in measuring<sup>322</sup> the level of popular satisfaction and corresponding support to their governments is obvious due to the different political, social, and economic experiences during the last twenty years. Nevertheless, it would be risky to conclude that there is no potential for a massive insurgency in the future. Firstly, the people are used from the Soviet times to keep their real opinion hidden from anybody: be it a stranger, a governmental official, or foreign researcher. The current practices of Uzbek law enforcement did not encourage people to express their opinions openly under any circumstances. The Western representatives cannot eliminate that fear due to the disappointingly appeasing position of the major Western powers towards Karimov. Secondly, the rapidly growing young Uzbek population does not have Soviet habits and despite strict censorship has much wider access to the information from abroad. In addition, the high level of unemployment among them and very limited religious education can make them susceptible to the radical Islamist ideas and violence. Thirdly, the actual regional dislocation of the

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322. Gallup, *Worldwide* and *Gallup Global Wellbeing*.

population in terms of their religiosity, discontent, and activism was not precisely considered. While the 11.3 million population of the Fergana valley, which always was a hotbed of the public discontent and Islamism, represents 40 per cent of the total population, in the polls it represented at most up to 25 per cent of the respondents. The influence of the governmental censorship and propaganda cannot be ignored as well. Therefore, the actual public discontent might be higher and the preferences more radical.

Nevertheless, popular Uzbek views on religion and rejection of the Islamic terrorism clearly indicate that Islamism did not get higher preferences among Uzbekistan's population even after twenty years. The strict control of religious affairs, education, and official propaganda allows Karimov to keep Uzbek population rather secular, patient, and even more supportive than the other Central Asian nations. The failure of his regime to improve economic and social situation in the country, on the other hand, causes growing public discontent. In combination with the harsh and indiscriminate governmental repressions, growing social inequality, and corruption, the situation in Uzbekistan becomes more similar to the North African or Middle Eastern situations that sparked massive insurgencies and brought Islamists into power.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

The harsh and decisive Uzbekistan's strategy towards Islamism keeps Islamic militants in exile and non-violent Islamists suppressed from becoming a force capable to really challenge the current regime. The straightforward and uncompromising CT strategy, supporting exhaustive legislation, strict control of religion, and unity of command over the related governmental entities provides an effective framework for the CT policies. Furthermore, the state has incomparably larger resources—law enforcement, armed forces, secret services, entities controlling religion, public education, media, and propaganda—directed not only for reaction to terrorist activities but also to prevent the very appearance of the Islamic opposition and insurgency in the country.

The actual implementation of the CT policies, however, largely violates human rights, international norms, and even the national legislation. Although the latter provides sufficient basis for the rule of law, respect to human rights, and compliance with the

international commitments of Uzbekistan on legal norms, its vagueness and the official support to the law enforcement's abuses made the actual implementation of the CT and religion policies exceedingly harsher. It involved much wider population and disproportionately high punishments than it was necessary just to contain the threat of terrorism. In general, the religious activities in Uzbekistan are also highly criminalized. In addition, the high level of corruption in the law enforcement structures, as in the all other areas of public life in Uzbekistan, made the related persecution a source for abuse by the corrupt officials and completely undermined the rule of law in the country. Furthermore, Karimov employs the same resources and policies also against every possible political opposition and public discontent in order to keep his regime in power. As a result, rough violations of human and civil rights and freedoms became an everyday reality in Uzbekistan. In the independent assessments, Uzbekistan rates very low in terms of democracy, respect to human and civil rights and freedoms, independent media, and rule of law. Internationally this country is infamous for its autocratic regime, tortures, abuses, and control of public information. From the 48 countries internationally considered as not free, Uzbekistan is among the worst, such as North Korea, Turkmenistan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Equatorial Guinea, Somalia, and Syria.<sup>323</sup>

The economic and social situation in Uzbekistan is worsening despite the large natural resources and existing potential. Due to the favorable international market for natural resources, Uzbekistan's macroeconomic indicators are rather high. However, the prevailing governmental control over the national economy, restrictions on private businesses and pervasive corruption deny the proper distribution of the national incomes to the whole population. Due to the lack of specialists and investments, the decay of the infrastructure and decline of the social services are continuously increasing. The high level of unemployment, especially among the rural young population, and compulsory or forced labor further worsen the social situation and cause growth of the organized crime.

Nevertheless, Uzbek population mostly remains supportive to their government. Despite the political limitations, economic hardship, and social decay that make

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323. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2012: The Arab Uprising and Their Global Repercussions*, by Arch Puddington (2012), 5.

individual life satisfaction level decreasing, the nation considers the overall national situation as satisfactory and trusts the existing regime as being able to improve situation in Uzbekistan. It also remains largely secular and condemns Islamic terrorism. Neither of the previously analyzed Islamist organizations (IMU, IJU, HT) has visible influence on the Uzbek population and cannot expect improvement in the foreseeable future. In the current environment, the formation of capable opposition is unlikely in the short to middle term period. Nevertheless, the worsening domestic situation and inability of the current regime to properly address the reasons of the existing problems and start solving them make Uzbekistan's situation similar to the Arab Spring's preconditions. Another trigger for major disturbances can be the inevitable succession of power after Karimov, when the current corrupt groups within the government (the law enforcement in particular) and regional clans will compete for influence.

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## **IV. INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE ON UZBEKISTAN'S COUNTERTERRORIST POLICIES (1990 – 2012)**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Due to the contemporary proliferation of Islamism and related terrorism in many countries worldwide and the interests of the major foreign powers in the region, Uzbekistan's CT policies not only became a subject for various international reactions, but also themselves made an impact on the neighboring countries. Due to the difference in time, scope, and intensity, the experience of Islamism in the other post-Soviet Central Asian states caused different policies for dealing with this threat. The international nature of Islamism and related terrorism forced these states to interact closer for a common security and stability by exchanging information, experiences, support, and consequently influencing policies for dealing with Islamism among them. Following the ambitions and certain potential for regional dominance,<sup>324</sup> Karimov often intruded his CT policies as the example for the neighbors to follow.

On the broader international arena, Uzbekistan differs from its neighbors by exercising "a proactive and independent foreign policy ... in its relations with ... great powers."<sup>325</sup> Karimov sustains his initial orientation towards the U.S., the EU, Russia, and East and South-East Asia<sup>326</sup> through foreign policies and economic relations<sup>327</sup> but avoids becoming dependent on any of them. The latter strategy may become counterproductive with the recently growing Russian involvement in the region. The relations with the Muslim countries in Northern Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia remain limited.

The most significant developments of Islamism in these regions, however, caused reactions worldwide and could not be totally ignored by Uzbekistan as well. The religious state's political leaderships formed by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt, the

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324. Svante E. Cornell, "Uzbekistan: A Regional Player in Eurasian Geopolitics?" *European Security* 9, no.2 (2000): 125–131.

325. *Ibid.*, 115.

326. Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 183–7.

327. U.S. DoS, *Background*, 9–10.

*Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA) in Pakistan, and the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) in Turkey, after receiving the wide popular mandate, tried to turn their countries into Islamic states. The resulted political changes are seriously considered by the secular political leaders and the opposing Islamists worldwide.

Whatever the state's initial strategy for dealing with Islamism, it develops also through international relations, dynamics of global security, and related international events. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to analyze what was the international influence on the Uzbekistan's CT policies and what was the impact of these policies on the neighboring countries facing the threat of Islamic terrorism. Firstly, this analysis is focused within the nearest, geographically and historically, neighborhood—Central Asia. Due to the most active radical Islamism, the main attention is given to the relations with Tajikistan. In contrast, due to the isolated and neutral nature of Turkmenistan, this part is limited by the scarcity of bilateral relations. The wider international influence is presented through the Uzbekistan's relations with the U.S., Russia, the EU, and China, as the main foreign powers in the region and the evaluation of the possible impact from the recent developments of political Islamism abroad.

## **B. UZBEKISTAN'S CT COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES**

### **1. Uzbekistan's Approach to the Regional CT Cooperation**

The spreading threat of Islamic terrorism in Uzbekistan is used not only for persecution of the expelled terrorists and political Islamic opposition but also exploited for promotion of its dominance and the hardline CT policies throughout the region. Due to the geographical and ethnic differences, the Central Asian states faced threats of radical Islamism different in time and scope. Consequently, their responses varied and also were conditioned by their political and economic capabilities. Similarly, Uzbekistan's approach differed depending on the political, military, and economic strength of each country. It is possible to divide these relations into two categories: the one where Karimov communicated from the position of power and the other where he had to honor partners' interests and strengths. Karimov's behavior with the closest

neighbors, nevertheless, can be characterized as largely aggressive and manipulative, including even double playing his counterparts by negotiating with the Taliban.<sup>328</sup>

Although the ideology of Islamism is quite alien to most of the local populations, the incompetence, corruption, and authoritarian rule of the current political authorities (often since independence still led by former Communists) left the people with no other alternatives. Due to the ability of the well-prepared Islamists to give radical answers to the desperate people, the Central Asian authorities consider the local Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) even more dangerous to the current regimes than Islamic terrorists. The weakest Central Asian states—Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan—from the very beginning of their independence also faced the strongest threat of Islamic terrorism and pressure from Uzbekistan. The similar approach, however, was not feasible in respect to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. And yet, initially the threat of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and later of the HT as well forced the Central Asian states to collaborate against the common threat. Although Uzbekistan in the area of security is a member of many international organizations—Conference for Interaction and Confidence in Asia (CICA), Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), United Nations (UN), Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), NATO Partnership for Peace (NATO PfP), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—he prefers bilateral relations both with the closest neighbors and the foreign regional powers.

## **2. Uzbekistan's CT Cooperation with Tajikistan**

Despite the many commonalities in threat of Islamic terrorism, Uzbekistan's interaction with Tajikistan can be characterized as largely unfriendly and imbalanced in terms of influence on each other. In the USSR, Tajikistan was the most religious Central Asian republic with the linguistic and cultural ties to Iran and Afghanistan. Hence, it was more susceptible than Uzbekistan to the influx of the radical Islamist during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, when the foreign intelligence agencies tried to spread Jihad to the USSR's territory. Later, Tajikistan was more than the other Central Asian states

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328. Rashid, *Jihad*, 151–2.

influenced by the Iranian Islamic revolution and got large support from this country, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey.<sup>329</sup> Tajikistan's geographical position and military weakness conditioned the large flows of drug trafficking<sup>330</sup> and the IMU's activities.

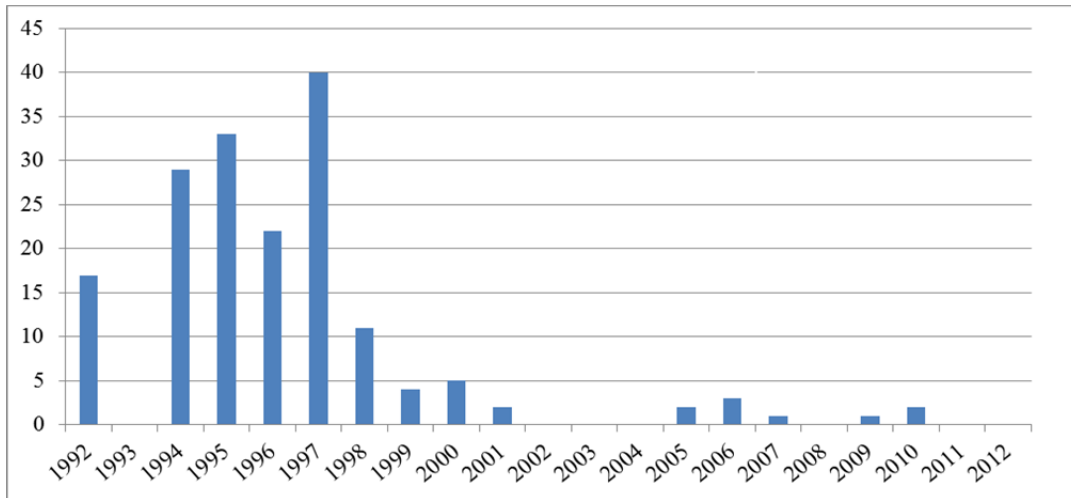


Figure 5. Number of terrorist attacks in Tajikistan (1992–2012).<sup>331</sup>

Although from 1990 Tajikistan was the only Central Asian state with the official Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), the political discrimination of the latter, growing socio-economic problems and clan competitions for influence led to the civil war of 1992–1997. Tajikistan was unable to cope without international military and political support. The IRPT was a major part of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Despite initial popular support, the IRPT could not overcome regional and ethnic divisions to mobilize massive insurgency.<sup>332</sup> Nevertheless, the Tajik authorities had to negotiate with the Islamic opposition, declare amnesty, and allocate them 30% of the governmental positions in order to end this war.<sup>333</sup>

329. Rashid, *Jihad*, 55.

330. ICG, *Tajikistan*, 17–8.

331. Sources: GTD and the U.S. DoS Country Reports on Tajikistan 1999–2011.

332. Rashid, *Jihad*, 107–8.

333. *Ibid.*, 91.

The Uzbekistan's participation in this war allowed Karimov continuing pressure on Tajikistan. During the civil war, Uzbekistan supported the official government with its military by joining the CIS and the UN peacekeeping forces.<sup>334</sup> The primary interest of Karimov was to stop proliferation of this conflict to Uzbekistan and continue persecution of the expelled Uzbek Islamic militants. Despite the viable possibility to annex Khojand from Tajikistan, Karimov did not exploit the sizeable Uzbek minorities in Tajikistan but preferred support for the Tajik government composed of the former Communist elite.<sup>335</sup> The political compromise of 1997 with the IRPT, however, was considered by Karimov as a sign of Tajikistan's weakness and lack of decisiveness in dealing with Islamism. He continued criticizing the Tajik government for its liberalism towards Islamism and demanding harder CT policies and control of borders.<sup>336</sup> The economic and political sanctions, which were often used by Karimov for this purpose, however, contributed to the rise of ethnic insurgence against the Uzbek minority (23%) in Tajikistan.<sup>337</sup> Tajik President Imomali Rahmon gradually strengthened anti-Islamic measures and even made his country equal to Uzbekistan in violations of religious freedom and restrictions on democracy.<sup>338</sup> Although the bombings of 2005–2007 can be considered as the outburst of Islamic terrorism in response to such policies, some experts speculated that these acts could be organized by his government itself to justify continuation of the repressive rule in Tajikistan.<sup>339</sup> The delays with the full implementation of the 1997 agreements, growing attempts to deny Islamist's influence by the Tajik government, and conflicts between clans, however, provoked new armed insurgencies in August 2012.<sup>340</sup>

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334. U.S. DoS, *Background*, 10.

335. Hooman Peimani, *Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009), 168.

336. Rashid, *Jihad*, 151, 177.

337. *Ibid.*, 86, 177.

338. USCIRF, *USCIRF Annual Report 2012*; U.S. DoS, *Background Note: Tajikistan*, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, January 24, 2012, 4.

339. "Tajikistan: Who is Behind the Bomb Blast in Dushanbe?" Eurasianet, November 14, 2007.

340. "Violence in Tajikistan's Badakhshan Province a Legacy of the Civil War," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), July 26, 2012; "Tajikistan: Badakhshan Clashes Risk Sparking Insurgency, Analysts Fear," Eurasianet, July 27, 2012; "Tajikistan: Islamic Party under Pressure," Eurasianet, August 10, 2012; ICG, *Tajikistan*, 15–6.

The bilateral relations between these two countries remain tense and not suitable for exerting influence on each other. Still there are several unresolved issues: territorial and border disputes, the Tajikistan's dependence on the gas import from Uzbekistan, and the drug trafficking and the IMU's activities in the border areas.<sup>341</sup> Uzbekistan exploits the Tajik political, economic, ethnic, and military weaknesses by intrusive and pressing behavior towards its neighbor. Although in the early 2000s Karimov attempted to exploit the expelled Tajik opposition and ethnic Uzbek refugees against the Tajik government,<sup>342</sup> latter he switched to employing economic sanctions (e.g., cut of gas exports in 2006) and even threatening with a war.<sup>343</sup> Tajikistan as a transit country for drug trafficking and Islamic terrorists "is gradually becoming part of the virtual jihad"<sup>344</sup> and a source of insecurity in Central Asia. It cannot influence Uzbekistan in any other way as to cooperate under the latter's leadership. On the other hand, the renewed Russian military and economic commitments in the region allow Tajikistan to ignore Karimov's menace and achieve more equal partnership.

### **3. Uzbekistan's CT Cooperation with Kyrgyzstan**

Due to the political and economic weakness, Kyrgyzstan was dependent on international support and subjected to Uzbekistan's enforcement. The Fergana valley—the furnace of Islamism in Central Asia—was the main area where the interests of all three countries interlaced. One of the IMU leaders, Juma Namangani, skillfully used terroristic attacks among the awkwardly divided borders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan to play off the three governments and make them unable to cooperate.<sup>345</sup> The inability to cooperate also was a major obstacle towards a better border control.<sup>346</sup> In addition, Karimov preferred to talk with its neighbors from the superior position and was largely reluctant to participate in any multilateral organizations.

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341. Peimani, *Conflict*, 168–9.

342. Rashid, *Jihad*, 231–2.

343. "Uzbekistan's President talks tough against Kambarata and Rogun hydroelectric power stations," Fergana INA, September 11, 2012.

344. ICG, *Tajikistan*, i.

345. Rashid, *Jihad*, 154.

346. *Ibid.*, 161.

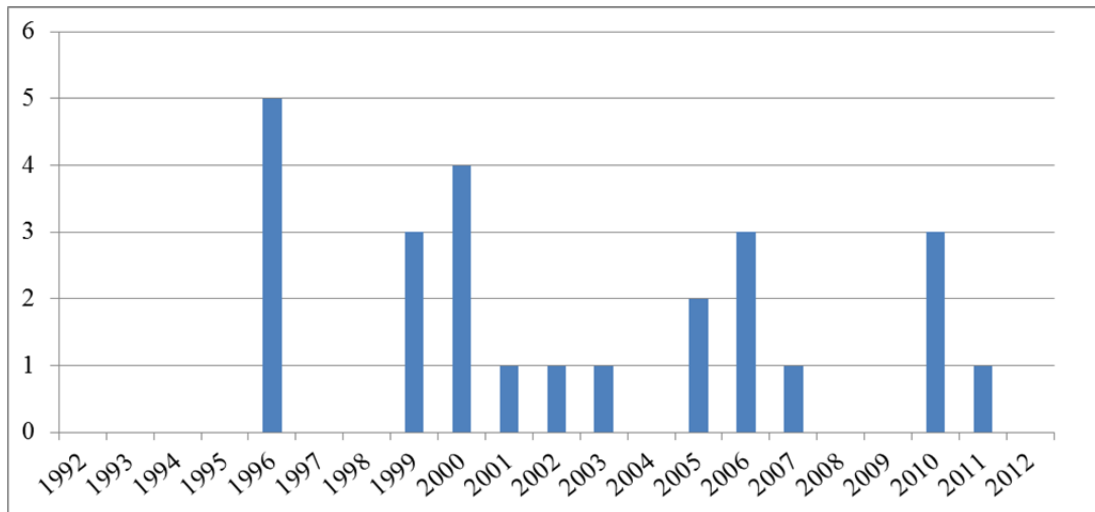


Figure 6. Number of terrorist attacks in Kyrgyzstan (1992–2012).<sup>347</sup>

Kyrgyzstan, similarly as Tajikistan, could not exercise any influence on Uzbekistan but gradually followed its CT policies. Although Kyrgyzstan always has been very active in international CT cooperation, including not only regional neighbors but also wider international participation,<sup>348</sup> its authorities often were criticized by Karimov of being too soft towards Islamic radicals and accused of harboring the IMU's militants.<sup>349</sup> Being the only Central Asian democratic country, which in 2011 held the first peaceful and democratic transfer of power, Kyrgyzstan could not manipulate its national legislation and force structures as easily as Karimov. Nevertheless, the country after 2005 significantly intensified its CT activities.<sup>350</sup> Although the armed clashes in the border area between the drug traffickers (possibly also the IMU) and the security forces from both countries caused many bilateral disagreements and accusations, the CT between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan significantly improved.<sup>351</sup>

The democratic regime of Kyrgyzstan suffered not only from the internal conflicts but also from the domestic and foreign Uzbek pressure. The HT members are primarily

347. Sources: GTD and U.S. DoS Country Reports on Kyrgyzstan 1999–2011.

348. U.S. DoS country reports on terrorism in Kyrgyzstan 1999–2011.

349. Rashid, *Jihad*, 151,

350. U.S. DoS, *Country reports on terrorism 2005: Kyrgyzstan* (2006), 108.

351. Peimani, *Conflict*, 152.

located among the Uzbek minorities in Kyrgyzstan's southern part but also spreading to the northern one.<sup>352</sup> The growing socio-economic problems and violent ethnic conflicts are still persistent. Due to the lack of security, the Uzbek minorities would even welcome the IMU or the IJU as their defenders.<sup>353</sup> The Tajik government's attempts to suppress ethnic clashes with the increasingly harsh anti-Uzbek policies result in growing radicalization that materializes in the increasing recruitment into the HT or even the IMU.<sup>354</sup> Similarly as in Tajikistan, despite the obvious Karimov's ambitions for the regional dominance and the accusations from Kyrgyz authorities, there is no evidence that he support the Uzbek minorities in any substantial manner. Although Uzbekistan did not hesitate even to violate Kyrgyzstan's territorial sovereignty in pursue of the Uzbek terrorists in 1999, the actual behavior of the official Tashkent indicates its strong preference for stability in the region against the possible territorial gains or weakening of the neighboring governments. Still, the economic and military leverages of Uzbekistan have been employed against Kyrgyzstan. The latter, however, currently chose the Russian support to be able to withstand that pressure by accepting the Russian military presence and investments.<sup>355</sup>

#### **4. Uzbekistan's CT Cooperation with Kazakhstan**

Despite the relatively stable economic situation and initially democratic regime, faced with the increasing threat of Islamic terrorism Kazakhstan turned towards the hardening of its CT policies. This country faced the Islamic terrorism a decade later than its neighbors. Some of the terrorist attacks in the early 1990s were attributed to the Chechen rebel groups that were driven by separatism from Russia, often resorted to the criminal rampage, and adopted the ideology of Islamism only in the late 1990s.<sup>356</sup> The other terroristic incidents until 2000 remain without clear suspects. The low religiosity

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352. U.S. DoS, *Country reports on terrorism 2005: Kyrgyzstan*, 108.

353. ICG, *The Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan*, Asia Report No.193 (2010), 23.

354. ICG, *Kyrgyzstan: Widening Ethnic Divisions in the South*, Asia Report No.222 (2012), 12–14.

355. "Kyrgyzstan Hosts Putin to Ink Defense, Energy, Debt Deals," Eurasianet, September 20, 2012.

356. ICG, *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (I), Ethnicity and Conflict*, Report No.220 (2012), 13.



and good socio-economic situation made it look immune<sup>357</sup> to radical Islamism. Furthermore, Karimov could not apply any threat against the strong and stable neighbor. The religious terrorism in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, however, caused the prohibition of religious parties in the Kazakh Constitution of 1995.<sup>358</sup> Although the large Russian-speaking population, close affiliation with Russia, and limited influence of the geographically dispersed ethnic Kazakhs make Kazakhstan less susceptible to Islamism, the authoritarian leadership took the threat of Islamic extremism seriously and its anti-Islamic policies increasingly hardened.

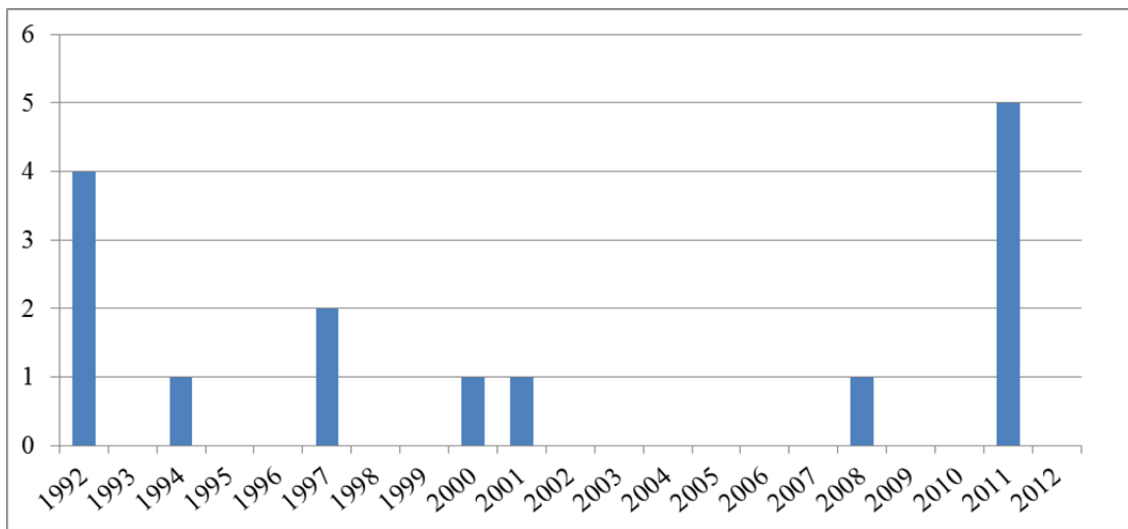


Figure 7. Number of terrorist attacks in Kazakhstan (1992–2012).<sup>359</sup>

Uzbekistan was never able to exercise pressure on Kazakhstan but the latter developed close cooperation and often expressed support to Karimov's policies.<sup>360</sup> Despite being strong enough to ignore the latter's pressure, Kazakhstan's President still was criticized by Karimov for being inadequately soft in respect to Islamic radicals.<sup>361</sup> Nevertheless, even when the Uzbek CT policies forced the influx of the Uzbek refugees,

357. Omelicheva, *Counterterrorism*, 83–4.

358. Karagiannis, *Political*, 31.

359. Sources: GTD and the U.S. DoS Country Reports on Kazakhstan 1999–2011.

360. Omelicheva, *Counterterrorism*, 130–1.

361. Rashid, *Jihad*, 173.

who joined the already numerous Uzbek minorities in Kazakhstan and contributed to the spread of the HT there,<sup>362</sup> the Kazakh authorities never expressed disagreement or condemnation to Uzbekistan. Furthermore, emphasizing the value of the CT cooperation within the SCO, the foreign minister of Kazakhstan proudly announced that a 100 attempts of terrorist acts were precluded only in 2009.<sup>363</sup> Such Kazakhstan's position is similar to Karimov's position towards Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It indicates the solidarity of the former Communists who still share the same Soviet-type values and approaches in domestic and foreign politics.

## **5. Uzbekistan's CT Cooperation with Turkmenistan**

The political nature of Turkmenistan makes international influence on Uzbekistan's CT policies or vice versa highly unlikely. The level of authoritarianism in the Turkmen domestic politics made this state "the most repressive and dictatorial in the region."<sup>364</sup> The cult of personality of President Saparmurad Niyazov was also employed for the spiritual life of Turkmen by enforcing on them a spiritual code of conduct, written by the President, as a substitute for the Bible and the Quran. Yet, the suppressive and dictatorial regime alone cannot explain the almost total absence of Islamic terrorism in Turkmenistan. The main factors that make the situation in this country different are: the predominance of tribalism and ethnic allegiances, plurality and traditionalism of the local Islam, geographical obstacles from Afghanistan, and forced conscription.<sup>365</sup> The assassination attempt on President Niyazov in 2002, however, triggered many harsh CT measures similar to Uzbekistan's. Currently, Turkmenistan remains on the same path: continuously develops CT capabilities, and participates in the related international cooperation.<sup>366</sup> Although President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov removed a number of the eccentric bans and dismantled the cult of personality of his predecessor, there are no

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362. Karagiannis, *Political*, 58–9.

363. "На территории ШОС в 2009 году пресекли 100 попыток терактов," in SNGdaily.ru, October 19, 2010.

364. Rashid, *Jihad*, 73.

365. South Asia Analysis Group, *Turkmenistan: A Central Asian State without Religious Extremism*, by Swati Parashar (September 30, 2004), 2–4.

366. U.S. DoS country reports on terrorism in Turkmenistan 2004–2011.

indications that he is going to make Turkmenistan more democratic and increase respect for human rights. In that respect, it remains similar to Uzbekistan. Furthermore, due to the weak relations and the hard Karimov's stance, there are no favorable conditions for a closer cooperation and influence among these two countries.

## **6. Commonality of Political and Popular Preferences in Central Asia**

The current autocratic and corrupt Central Asian regimes are not willing and able to stop the obvious decay of the socio-economic situation and the rapid deterioration of the infrastructure and social services, the gradual disappearance of which gives new life to radical Islamism. There remains an obvious common interest among these leaders, many of whom share the same Communist background, to avoid color revolutions and support each other from being overthrown by the Islamist, nationalist, liberalist, or any other opposition. Since terrorist activities in the region are diminishing (Fig. 8), the Central Asian regimes are concentrating against the non-violent HT and pro-democratic political opposition that have more potential to gain popular support than militants. The maintenance of the external threat was characteristic to the USSR in keeping its population under the strong propaganda and control. Similarly, for the Central Asian regimes the threat of Islamism, real or inflated, is useful for justifying compromises with human rights, democracy, and liberal economy.

The convergence of the CT policies among the Central Asian states, however, cannot be attributed only to the commonality of personal interests of the regional autocrats, because there is a significant popular support for such policies. The existing studies of the Central Asian population's opinions<sup>367</sup> mostly correspond with the Uzbek ones and give valuable information for deeper understanding about the local milieu in respect to the authoritarian regimes and radical Islamism.

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367. IFES, *Public Opinion in Uzbekistan: 1996*; The Pew, *What*; Gallup, *Global*; IFES, *Public Opinion in Kazakhstan: 1996*, by Craig Charney, 1997; IFES, *Public Opinion in Kyrgyzstan: 1996*, by Hugh W. Olds, Jr., 1997; IFES, "2001 IFES Survey in Kyrgyzstan," by Vladimir Pototskii and Rakesh Sharma, 2002; IFES, *Public Opinion in Tajikistan 2004*, 2004; IFES, *Public Opinion in Tajikistan 2010*, 2010; Gallup, *Worldwide*.

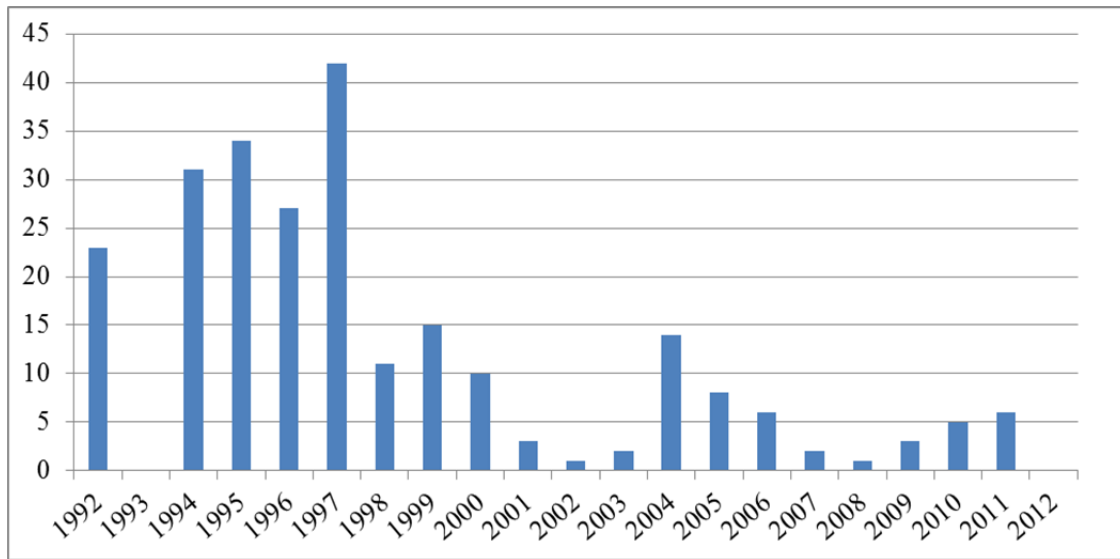


Figure 8. Number of terrorist attacks in Central Asia (1998 – 2012).<sup>368</sup>

Despite the persistent economic hardship, growing social inequality and poverty, dominance of the repressive and corrupt secular leaderships, lack of democracy and liberal economic reforms, and continuous violations of human rights, the Central Asian populations do not see Islamism as a viable alternative to the current regimes but rather as one of the most serious threats to their security. Although Tajiks, Kyrgyzstanis, and Kazakhs are significantly more critical of their governments than Uzbeks, according to the polls of public opinion, among the most important problems they do not see a lack of religious freedom or violation of human rights in their states. Socio-economic problems are on the top in these lists. Another important popular preference—justification of governmental violence—is also rated high and not related to religious affiliation.<sup>369</sup> The general popular support for limiting civil rights or even establishing dictatorship in case of social unrest are high enough for the governments to continue with the hardline strategies against Islamism.

Although the IRPT case may suggest that the threat of radical Islamism could be dealt with a less suppressive approach, the dynamic of the terrorist attacks shows the opposite trend. The potential of the legitimization of the IRPT was not fully exploited by

368. Source: GTD.

369. Gallup, *Views of Violence*.

the Central Asian regimes. Tajikistan represented a different model of dealing with Islamism in a democratic way. Without strong international support that was urged by some international non-governmental organizations (e.g. IFES),<sup>370</sup> however, this country could not spread it through the region and even sustain its democratic direction domestically. The political IRPT's activities, in general, were more beneficial to the secular government than to the Islamists. After few years, this party suffered from decreasing popular support; due to the dissociation from the Taliban, it lost foreign financial support; did not achieve noticable results but was useful by opposing other Islamists (e.g., the HT) that could become serious competitors to the IRPT.<sup>371</sup> One could argue that the Central Asian states in the early 1990s missed an opportunity to significantly lessen the future threat of radical Islamism by refusing legitimization in whole Central Asia<sup>372</sup> of the all-Soviet IRP that was following democratic principles. On the other hand, the numbers and scope of terrorist attacks tend to remain stable or even increase in the countries that initially (roughly till the mid-1990s) were more democratic, mostly liberal on religion, and significantly less repressive against political opposition. Furthermore, Tajikistan suffered most despite the political compromise with the UTO and inclusion of the Islamists in the government. On the contrary, Uzbekistan with the most repressive CT and religious policies has less terrorist attacks.

## **C. WIDER FOREIGN INFLUENCE ON UZBEKISTAN'S CT POLICIES**

### **1. Official and Popular Uzbek Preferences in International Relations**

The official and popular Uzbek preferences in the area of international relations largely remain congruent in their directions and evolution. While the official foreign policy clearly favored orientation towards the Western democracies and Russia, it showed less interest in the South and South-east Asian countries and barely even mentioned other Muslim countries, except for the closest ex-Soviet neighbors.<sup>373</sup>

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370. "IFES Urges Support for Tajikistan on Capitol Hill," IFES, November 2, 2006.

371. Rashid, *Jihad*, 111–3.

372. *Ibid.*, 98.

373. Karimov, *Uzbekistan*, 185–7.

Although Uzbekistan's membership in international organizations was also strongly emphasized<sup>374</sup> and often followed, the regional cooperation was tense and unstable due to the hegemonic Karimov's ambitions and diplomatic practices. While relations with the foreign regional powers he treated with the certain respect, his rough behavior with the representations of international organizations in Uzbekistan, especially non-governmental ones, demonstrated total negligence of international norms, human rights, and democracy. Karimov usually preferred bilateral and opportunistic relations to the multilateral approach. After two decades of his manipulations and occasional major shifts in relations with the foreign regional powers, Uzbekistan is getting closer to Russia and, to some extent, China.

The popular preferences for international relations corresponded with the official ones initially and followed the same direction towards Russia. While in 1996, the Uzbek population strongly favored the U.S. and Germany as models for both political and economic developments, the Muslim countries were at the end of the list with just few percent of admirers.<sup>375</sup> The exceptional among the Muslim countries position of Turkey, which followed right after the U.S. and Germany, could be explained by her politico-economic strength and international role but not association with Islam. Such a popular opinion about the general backwardness of the foreign Muslim countries still echoes with a very blunt and critical view expressed by the Soviet Central Asian refugees:

“Religion is a superstition which keeps people backward. Look at the Arabs and Persians, where religion has gotten them: they are poor and ignorant. To achieve progress, we must not allow religion to interfere, though religion should not be persecuted because it does help some people in facing life.”<sup>376</sup>

Naturally, the Uzbek support to the governmental and the U.S. war on terror contrasts with the popular opinions in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Pakistan, Egypt, and most of the other Muslim countries. The similar public opinion in the other Central Asian states strengthens the homogeneity of the regional approach too. The concurrence

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374. Ibid., 181–5.

375. IFES, *Public Opinion in Uzbekistan: 1996*, 83–4.

376. Pipes, “Muslims,” 149.

between the popular and official preferences in foreign affairs provides a sound foundation for Uzbekistan's international CT cooperation.

The wider international influence on the Uzbekistan's CT policies can be divided into two categories: the direct influence from the foreign powers through a variety of political and economic measures and the indirect one that arises from the major achievements of political Islamism abroad. The internal Uzbekistan's policies, especially those directly related to the domestic stability and security (e.g. CT policies), inevitably became a subject of concern for the foreign regional players who, despite their conflicting economic interests, share the common objective of the secure Central Asia. Similarly to its neighbors, Uzbekistan attracts attention of the foreign powers due to its natural and other resources but also due to its impact on the regional security. The strong Uzbekistan's determination to fight Islamic terrorism inside and outside its borders perfectly corresponds to the global war on terror and security interests of the foreign powers in the region. Karimov's policies related to democracy, human rights, economy, and the rule of law, on the other hand, only worsen Uzbekistan's domestic situation and raise potential for insurgency that can be exploited by Islamic radicals. Considering security situations in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, this can have a devastating effect for the whole region. The U.S., the EU, Russia, and China, therefore, tried to influence Uzbekistan's domestic and international behavior by offering economic, political, or even military assistance through various international organizations and bilateral relations. Due to the more limited capabilities and the unfavorable Uzbekistan's foreign priorities, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and other Muslim states have more difficulties to exercise their interests in this country. While the main foreign regional players remain Russia, the U.S., China, and the EU, the indirect influence from the Muslim countries can be conditioned by the developments of political Islamism in Turkey, Pakistan, and, most recently, in Northern Africa. The results from this indirect foreign influence depend how they are perceived by Uzbekistan's regime, the Uzbek Islamic radicals, and also the above-mentioned foreign powers.

## 2. The U.S. Influence on Uzbekistan's CT Policies

Despite the active U.S. role in the region, the lack of long term interests in the region made its influence in Uzbekistan gradually declining. Although the Central Asian natural resources raised certain economic interests, the war in Afghanistan and strategic interest to limit Russia's role in Central Asia led the U.S. involvement in the region. Karimov's determination to limit the Russian influence in the region also was shared by the U.S. While the U.S. economic aid started from 1993, the assistance to the Uzbek security forces started from the late 1990s and was focused on non-lethal military equipment and training. In 2001 Uzbekistan became the first Central Asian country accepting the U.S. military presence, which gave Islamists additional reasons to condemn the anti-Islamic Karimov's regime.

President Bush's administration, however, heavily underestimated how corrupt was Uzbekistan's government and naively expected that the provision of additional military security and financial aid will make Karimov eager to start democratization and liberalization reforms. The latter, however, interpreted and exploited this support as a shield against domestic and international criticism towards his CT policies and even increased persecution of the Islamic and secular opposition. Furthermore, the U.S. economic and financial aid made little impact on the general Uzbek population's wellbeing but became a source of wealth for his family, the closest partisans, and even organized crime.<sup>377</sup> On the other hand, due to the Pentagon's interests for military basing and transit and the CIA/FBI's interests for cooperation with Uzbek intelligence, the U.S. posture was not always consistent and decisive enough.<sup>378</sup> The latter interests made the repressive and non-discriminate Uzbekistan's CT policies so much conducive to the U.S. military and intelligence that Karimov became completely immune towards any criticism in this area. Still, the U.S. continued criticizing the lack of democracy and violations of human rights, condemned the Andijan massacre in 2005, and stopped the financing of

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377. Nate Cochran, "Cablegate: Uzbek first daughter ran U.S. telco out of town," iTnews, Dec 15, 2012; "U.S. embassy cables: Mafia boss fixes Uzbekistan tenders, embassy told," *The Guardian*, Dec 10, 2012.

378. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 341–3.



military assistance.<sup>379</sup> The following acceptance of the Uzbek political dissidents in the U.S. caused the Karimov's decision to expel the American military from Uzbekistan.<sup>380</sup> The deterioration of the bilateral relations continued until 2009 when the U.S. war in Afghanistan needs once again took over the political interest for promotion of democracy and human rights.<sup>381</sup>

Despite the improved diplomatic relations and the renewed military assistance from 2012,<sup>382</sup> the U.S. influence in Uzbekistan is decreasing. The U.S. reconciliation with the Uzbekistan's domestic and foreign policies for the sake of improved bilateral relations was admitted on many diplomatic occasions.<sup>383</sup> The renewed assistance in security, however, was based only on bilateral relations with the Central Asian states and focused on the protection of the borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan without getting involved in solving deeper threats to the regional security. Although the U.S. still is highly interested to keep its military presence in the region even after the planned withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 and is a valuable source of economic aid, it seems Karimov understood the principle lack of the U.S. long term interests and its reluctance to assure the Uzbekistan's security with a hard military support in case of armed conflicts in the region. While the U.S.' attempts, although in a much modest manner, to promote democratic reforms and respect to human rights continues,<sup>384</sup> it is highly unlikely to reach tangible results under the current regime. If the latter has made no improvements whatsoever in economic policies that force the U.S. companies, which invested in

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379. U.S. DoS country reports on human rights practices and on terrorism in Uzbekistan 1999–2011.

380. Rashid, *Descent*, 345–6.

381. Varun Vira, Erin Fitzgerald, and Brandon Fite, "Competition in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Pakistan," *CSIS* (2012): 35.

382. U.S. DoS, *Background*.

383. "In courting Uzbekistan, the United States stoops too low," Fergana INA, November 9, 2011; "U.S. Ambassador in Uzbekistan George Krol: "We recognize democracy may develop and look differently in Uzbekistan," September 25, 2012; "Uzbekistan USA's strategic partner again," Uznews.net, August 24, 2012.

384. "U.S. continues slow-but-steady line of attack on Uzbek human rights issues," Uznews.net, April 2, 2012; "U.S. experts call for sanctions against Uzbekistan," Uznews.net, April 7, 2012.

Uzbekistan, to consider departing,<sup>385</sup> the possibility of changing the in-humane CT policies is not realistic at all. The U.S. influence is decreasing also due to the renewed Russian activities in Central Asia.

### **3. The European Influence on Uzbekistan's CT Policies**

Although the U.S.-like approach and more limited capabilities, made the European influence on the Uzbekistan's CT policies practically invisible, its regional approach made a significant contribution towards the closer cooperation among the Central Asian states. Although the European relations with Uzbekistan are exercised in two ways—through the EU and bilateral interactions—the lack of clear vision for the whole region and limited military capabilities crippled the European effectiveness in creating security in Central Asia. Due to the problematic nature of the EU as an organization, in terms of unity on foreign and security policy, slow decision making, and scarcity of military capabilities and reluctance to commit them abroad, the bilateral relations often took over. The normative intentions to spread democracy and respect to human rights have been often compromised due to the European energy and security interests. Such a dual stance made the EU look like a “hesitant vicar”<sup>386</sup> in Central Asia.

The EU, however, took a regional approach towards the Central Asian security and promoted regional cooperation through its projects (e.g. BOMCA—Border Management in Central Asia, INOGATE—Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe, TRACECA—Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia).<sup>387</sup> Such a strategy clearly demonstrated the European ability to exercise its soft power<sup>388</sup> in improving security abroad. Although the “Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia” from 2007 improved the articulation of the strategic vision, the following financial and economic

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385. U.S. DoS, *Background*.

386. EUCAM-Security and Development project (EUCAM-SD), *Security and Development Approaches to Central Asia: The EU Compared to China and Russia*, by Sebastien Peyrouse, Jos Boonstra, and Marlene Laruelle, Working Paper 11 (2012), 5.

387. Anja H. Ebnöther, Maj Ernst M. Felberbauer, and Martin Malek, eds., *Facing the Terrorist Challenge—Central Asia's Role in Regional and International Cooperation* (Vienna: Akademiedruckerei Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2005), 14.

388. Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 1–7.

crises from 2008 severely limited the EU's resources for employing in this region.<sup>389</sup> Nevertheless, Uzbekistan remains an active participant of the OSCE's (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) programs related to CT. However, the principle European reluctance<sup>390</sup> and to some extent inability to use military force in solving international issues, the European criticism cannot make any visible influence on the Uzbekistan's CT policies. Sometimes this criticism, however, had dubious foundations (e.g., events in Andijan in 2005)<sup>391</sup> and was definitely repulsive to President Karimov. Despite the initial wave of condemnation on the cruelty of Karimov's regime, in 2009 the EU lifted her embargo on arms sales.<sup>392</sup> In addition to such a negative signal to the Uzbek and international defenders of human rights, European Commission President Emmanuel Barroso welcomed President Karimov in Brussels in 2011. Nevertheless, the dependency of the European leaders on popular votes and the necessity to reach unanimous agreements in the EU decision making are likely the most disappointing features for dictatorial Karimov. He definitely prefers having bilateral relations with the leaders who do not need consulting their populations in making strategic decisions and do not criticize lack of democracy or violations of human rights in dealing with political opposition and terrorism.

#### **4. Russia's Influence on the Uzbekistan's CT Policies**

The commonality of security interests and approaches between Uzbekistan and Russia and the increasing latter's role in Central Asia make Russia more influential on the Karimov's CT policies than any other foreign state. Although the Russian role in Uzbekistan significantly diminished after the USSR's collapse, this country sustains her influence due to the ability to provide hard military security assistance and commonly repressive approach in dealing with opposition and insurgency. While the other foreign

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389. The German Marshall Fund of the U.S. (GMF), *The Impact of the European Debt Crisis on the Partnership with Central Asia*, by Sebastien Peyrouse (2012), 2.

390. European Council, *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, EU External Actions Service (December 2012): 7.

391. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, *Violence in Andijan, 13 May 2005: An Independent Assessment*, by Shirin Akiner, Silk Road Paper (2005), 38.

392. "Uzbekistan: EU Fails Human Rights Victims," HRW, October 27, 2009.

powers became regional players from 1991, Russia played a major role in the region for centuries. Due to the above-mentioned Uzbekistan's sensitivity for becoming dependent, the hegemonic Russian ambitions better materialized in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan who remain dependent on the Russian military presence and economic cooperation. The cultural and historic affiliation (Chapter II. B) with Russia, significant Russian minorities, and activity of the Russian media, in comparison with the other foreign media,<sup>393</sup> make all the Central Asian states highly susceptible to the Russian influence even after the two decades of their independence. The commonality of the Russian language in the region is one of the strongest factors towards the closer cooperation as well. The obvious convergence of the Central Asian strategies on Islamism with the Russian ones can be also explained by the theory of reference group, geographical proximity, and common Soviet past.<sup>394</sup>

Despite the manipulative Karimov's relations with the U.S. and Russia, the latter gets upper hand among the other foreign regional powers in Uzbekistan. Considering the well-known competition for international influence between the U.S. and Russia, Karimov exploited the relations with these countries to sustain his regime and increase Uzbekistan's security. While, relying on the active U.S. appearance in the region, in 1999 Uzbekistan withdrew from the Russian-led CIS Collective Security Treaty, during the deterioration of the relations with the U.S., in 2006 Uzbekistan rejoined the Russian-led CSTO and concluded the bilateral anti-terrorist treaty.<sup>395</sup> Being concerned about the planned U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, Karimov again demonstrated the self-reliance by once again withdrawing from the CSTO<sup>396</sup> but simultaneously approached Russia as the ally against Islamic terrorism.<sup>397</sup> Considering the general reluctance of the Russian ruling elite to get too much involved in the security problems in

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393. IFES, *Public Opinion in Uzbekistan: 1996*, 63; IFES, *Public Opinion in Kazakhstan: 1996*, 65–6; IFES, *Public Opinion in Kyrgyzstan: 1996*, 48–50; IFES, *Public Opinion in Tajikistan: 1996*, 38–9; IFES, *2001 IFES Survey in Kyrgyzstan*, 12–6; IFES, *Public Opinion in Tajikistan 2004*, 43; IFES, *Public Opinion in Tajikistan 2010*, 44.

394. Omelicheva, *Counterterrorism*, 135–7.

395. Peimani, *Conflict*, 207–8.

396. "Uzbekistan quits Russia-led CSTO military bloc," RT, June 28, 2012.

397. "Uzbekistan, Russia alarmed over developments in Afghanistan," Uznews.net, June 06, 2012.

Central Asia,<sup>398</sup> however, Uzbekistan still cannot be sure of the Russia's commitments in the long term. In order to appease the Russian concerns about the future U.S. military basing, which was discussed with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State,<sup>399</sup> after two weeks Karimov declared Uzbekistan's neutrality that "prohibits any foreign military bases on its territory."<sup>400</sup> Even if such swinging in foreign affairs may look as demonstration of the complete independence, it also may indicate a paranoia of the ageing dictator who suspects everybody and becomes unpredictable.

The ability to provide hard military security by Russia that "seems to be the only power that has both the means to react to crisis and a sense of responsibility to engage"<sup>401</sup> makes this regional player the most valuable for Karimov and the most influential in Uzbekistan. Karimov avoided the Russian military help to fight Islamists in Uzbekistan but relied on the Russian troops in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan during the IMU's campaigns of 1999–2001.<sup>402</sup> The way Russia handled insurgencies in the Caucasus also corresponded with the hardline Karimov's war against Islamism. Russian military aid always was a significant source for developing the Uzbek security forces and "Russia is currently the only country supplying Tashkent with weapons."<sup>403</sup> The CT cooperation with Russia is beneficial for both sides who also utilize it in their merciless fight against any opposition.<sup>404</sup> Although the Russian leadership has no intention to change the current Uzbekistan's CT policies, which completely correspond with the Russian security interests and her own approach towards terrorism, the overall socio-economic situation in Uzbekistan raise concerns and official incitements for democratic reforms even from Russia that cannot boast about democracy herself.<sup>405</sup>

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398. EUCAM-SD, *Security*, 7.

399. "Uzbekistan USA's strategic partner again," Uznews.net, Aug 24, 2012.

400. "Uzbekistan announces neutrality, quits all military unions," Gazeta.ru, Aug 30, 2012.

401. EUCAM-SD, *Security*, 5.

402. Rashid, *Jihad*, 233–6.

403. "Afghan Troop Withdrawal Poses Risks to Uzbekistan," IWPR, Oct 11, 2011.

404. Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, "Russia's Very Secret Services," World Policy Institute, 2011; "Russia: Stop Extradition to Uzbekistan," HRW, July 17, 2012.

405. "Странам Центральной Азии нужны реформы, чтобы избежать повторения событий в Северной Африке," Gazeta kz., April 13, 2011.

## 5. China's Influence on Uzbekistan's CT Policies

Despite the abundance of capabilities of increasing influence, China's cooperation with Uzbekistan is minimal. China has economic interests in Central Asian natural resources and the long-term political interests for friendly relations with the Muslim world (e.g. Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia), but her main geopolitical ambitions are focused on the Pacific, South East Asia, and Europe. The status of the largest Central Asian trading partner gives China plenty of opportunities to expand her influence in this region; however, the strategic interest in Central Asia is primarily driven by the domestic security issue with the separatist Uighur minorities.<sup>406</sup> They live in the Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang province and constitute nine million Turkic-speaking Muslims relating themselves to the Uighur minorities in the Central Asian states.<sup>407</sup> The latter, according to Chinese security interests, have to contain the regional threats of Islamic terrorism and the Islamists ideas about the Caliphate of Turkestan from escalating and proliferating into Xinjiang province. Due to the understandable doubts about the actual Central Asian capabilities to do so, China accepts the hegemonic role of Russia and supports it through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Considering the general Chinese reluctance to participate in multilateral organizations, her conservative participation in the SCO demonstrates the seriousness of her security concerns but also the avoidance of deeper commitments. The members of this organization reached an agreement on the main "goal of forging a common struggle against the so-called 'three evils' ... of fundamentalism, extremism, and secessionism"<sup>408</sup> and held joint military exercises, such as a 2007 exercise to "[defeat] a terrorist organization or [reverse] a Color Revolution-style mass uprising."<sup>409</sup> However, the limited membership and absence of permanent structures and standby military units, indicate the minimalistic Chinese approach that is satisfied only by the common

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406. EUCAM-SD, *Security*, 10–1.

407. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., "Uighurs."

408. EUCAM-SD, *Security*, 12.

409. Gene Germanovich quoted in Andrew Scheineson, *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, Council on Foreign Relations, March 24, 2009.

understanding and framework for cooperation. The reluctance for a military involvement in the region was also demonstrated by the neutrality of the SCO during the political and ethnic crisis in Kyrgyzstan in 2010. Due to the geographical and ethnic factors, the cooperation with Uzbekistan is even less important to China than with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Nevertheless, Tashkent hosts the SCO's Regional Antiterrorism Center Secretariat (RATS) and from 2011 adheres to the Convention of the SCO Cooperation against Terrorism. Due to the hardline own domestic policies and Uzbekistan's role in the region, China had expressed her support of Karimov's CT policies and willingness for cooperation (after the Andijan massacre in 2005)<sup>410</sup> and had no intention to influence them, as far as they contain the security threats from escalating.

## **6. Influence of the foreign political Islamism on Uzbekistan's CT Policies**

The most significant developments of political Islamism in Northern Africa, Turkey, and Pakistan presented practical attempts to merge democracy and Islamism in the previously secular states and need to be analyzed in order to determine what impact they can have on Uzbekistan's CT policies. The achievements of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the *Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal* (MMA) in Pakistan, and the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) represent the full spectrum of variations, concerning their approach and time, in the integration of Islamism and the Western democratic principles despite the essential differences in the ultimate goals between the latter. Although Islamic constitutionalism accepts and follows the most important aspects of democracy—"the source and purpose of law; constraints on state power; public participation in politics; and protection of basic civil and political rights"<sup>411</sup>—there are two essential differences from the Western concept of democracy. First of all, while the latter considers state as suppressive institution and, therefore, limits its power in respect to the people, the Islamic constitutionalists give the Islamic state a task of transforming current society into an Islamic one by employing all available powers and imposing Islamic values and laws.<sup>412</sup>

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410. Rashid, *Descent*, 345

411. Bruce K. Rutherford, "What Do Egypt's Islamists Want? Moderate Islam and the Rise of Islamic Constitutionalism," *Middle East Journal* 60, No.4 (2006): 709.

412. Rutherford, "What," 728–30.

Secondly, in Islamic constitutionalism “the individual is not the center of the political and legal universe. Rather, the focus is on building a pious community.”<sup>413</sup> Although these contradictions raise doubts about the compatibility of Islamism and democracy, the modern Islamism in Turkey, Pakistan, and Egypt show not only their feasibility but also encourage Islamists in other countries.

All three cases have similar and different features that have to be considered before making analogies with Uzbekistan’s situation. In all three cases, Islamists experienced highly repressive periods and outburst of Islamic terrorism but survived and assumed more civilized political way. They cautiously started propagation of Islam within the various levels of the local societies, in-directly challenged the secular regimes by providing certain social services for the lowest classes, gradually developed into official political parties, and came into power via democratic elections by opposing repressive, dictatorial, and corrupt secular regimes. The popular insurgency of Egypt, however, is considerably less likely due the earlier-described Uzbek public support to their national authorities. While Pakistan’s case shares geographical proximity and to some extent the ethnic composition, the conflicted and repressive approach<sup>414</sup> of the Pakistani Islamists seems also unacceptable to the large majority of Uzbekistan’s population. Finally, the still ongoing fighting between the Pakistani government and the Taliban demonstrate that the strong political representation of Islamists does not guarantee safe and secure situation in the state. The popular and official preferences in international relations also weaken the analogy of Egypt and Pakistan with Uzbekistan. The same factor, however, makes the Turkish model quite feasible. The gradual and cautious Islamization of the previously highly secular Turkish society<sup>415</sup> gives additional support for the analogy with Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the economic European crisis and its reluctance to accept relatively well politically, economically, and socially performing

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413. Ibid., 731.

414. Juris Pupcenoks, “Democratic Islamization in Pakistan and Turkey: Lessons for the post-Arab Spring Muslim Countries,” *Middle East Journal* 66, No.2 (2012): 273–6.

415. Pupcenoks, “Democratic,” 281–2.



Turkey, make the Turkish model attractive to the Uzbek population whose disappointment in the Western democracies was presented earlier.<sup>416</sup>

And yet, due to the hard suppressions, there is no Islamic group that would be ready to follow the Turkish AKP's example in Uzbekistan. Even the favorable situation of the al-Qaeda and its support to the Uzbek terrorists cannot significantly increase their potential to emulate the Arab spring in Uzbekistan.<sup>417</sup> The militant IMU and IJU, as it was discussed earlier, due to their violent philosophy and irrelevant experiences in Afghanistan and Pakistan, they are not prepared to assume a role of the politically mature party. They cannot rely on the popular support due to their ideological and geographical remoteness for twenty years. The Central Asian HT is significantly superior to the militant groups in terms of its intellectual basis and popular perception, but it is illegal and cannot develop its cadres to assume official positions. Its rejection of political way and democracy denies any possibility to follow the examples of the above-mentioned Muslim countries. Considering that the MB and the other radical Islamists dropped the same restrictions when favorable political situation occurred, the similar change cannot be excluded in Uzbekistan. On the other hand, the HT in the same Northern African states under the same circumstances did not accepted democratic process and remained outside of the national politics. Nevertheless, the internal splinter in the local HT may produce a radical Islamic organization determined for a democratic competition but it would need many years to develop for such a path.

There are some political opposition forces outside Uzbekistan but their potential for the promotion of Islamism is dubious. Currently only the IRPT in Tajikistan has an official status of political party that could potentially undertake the role of the MMA, AKP, or MB. However, its current situation and public support do not indicate significant potential to do this effectively. The more promising potential has the Uzbek opposition in exile. They seriously consider the recent experiences of the Arab Spring and prepare for

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416. GMF, *The Impact*, 3.

417. Schweitzer, "Al-Qaeda," 34.

the change of the regime. Their political platform and the draft constitution<sup>418</sup> indicate a much higher level of political maturity and, hence, potential in the future. Some discrepancies concerning the state and religion, however, can be noticed between the often references to Quran in these documents and the statements of the leaders. The opposition, led by Muhammad Salih, envisions the violent, although reluctantly, overturn of the Karimov's regime, works with the Uzbek youth that tend to join the IMU or the IJU in order to change their radical Islamic intentions, and sees the future of Uzbekistan as a secular and democratic state.<sup>419</sup>

The striking similarities of the current political, social, and economic conditions cannot be ignored by the Uzbek regime. Karimov understands that any acceptance of Islamists in the national politics will open them opportunities to grow and become such a force. That is why he does not accept any international influence on his anti-Islamist strategy, except those that can strengthen his power in Uzbekistan. Therefore, the local HT and the exiled Uzbek opposition are considered as the main threat and are persecuted with every possible measure. In order to control access to the foreign information, Uzbek authorities tightened control over the Internet.<sup>420</sup> In comparison with the Egyptian, Turkish, and Pakistani cases, the Uzbekistan's regime to some extent can rely on the Russian or even Chinese intervention, depending on the scale of crisis and its potential impact on the security of these regional powers.

Despite the many parallels with the most significant developments of Islamism abroad during the last decade, their repetition in Uzbekistan is still unlikely. The secular nature of the Uzbek population, the level of repression, the immaturity of the Islamic opposition, and the capabilities of the current regime seem sufficient to contain the existing public discontent.

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418. Erk, *Political Platform of "ERK" Democratic Party of Uzbekistan*, July 4, 2007 and *Конституция (Основной закон) республики Узбекистан (проект)*.

419. Vitaliy Volkov, "Мухаммад САЛИХ: В Узбекистане нет ни одной ветви власти, которая бы верила в стабильность режима," *Новая Газета Казахстан*, March 7, 2012.

420. "Uzbek authorities fear spread of Arab Spring and tighten control of Internet use by youth," *Fergana INA*, May 30, 2012.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS**

The other Central Asian states had no visible influence on Uzbekistan's CT policies. In contrary, the latter policies became an example for emulation in these states. Karimov's regime pushed the radical Islamists into the neighboring countries and continued their persecution there. The other Central Asian countries which initially were more liberal and democratic can not contain the threat of Islamic terrorism as Uzbekistan does. The Uzbekistan's incitements to follow its CT policies seem fruitful, for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan gradually hardened their positions towards Islamism. During the last decade, the growing threat of the Islamism and the increasing regional cooperation caused the convergence of the national CT policies towards the more suppressive approach. Despite the similar national interests, the mistrust among the Central Asian leaders still hampers cooperation and needs backing by the foreign powers.

The final outcome of the wider foreign influence on the Uzbekistan's CT policies is also supportive of Karimov's regime. Due to the lack of strategic vision for the regional security in Central Asia and the limited interests of the Western foreign regional powers there, the wider international influence on the Uzbekistan's CT policies remains insignificant. The Western criticism on the Uzbekistan's CT policies was not supported by the actual sanctions but was often compromised due to the other political and economic interests of these powers. Such a dubious Western stance was fully exploited by Russia and China to expand their influence. Although the regional strategy of China seems the most cohesive among the other foreign players, in conjunction with it, the Russian behavior in Central Asia also demonstrates a growing influence and long term involvement. The recent developments of the political Islam are considered by the Uzbek government and its opposition, but the specific conditions in this country make the emulation of such processes unlikely as far as the current regime is in power.

Due to the rigidity and manipulative nature of the Karimov's practices in foreign affairs and the lack of strategic vision for the whole Central Asian region among the foreign regional powers, the international influence on the Uzbekistan's CT policies remains either insignificant, or largely supportive. Due to the converging anti-Islamist

strategies among the other Central Asian states, Uzbekistan maintains its ambitions for the regional dominance and has no need to soften the grip on Islamists. While the Western influence is limited due to the prevalence of economic interests, different philosophies, and the lack of commitment for a hard military support, the Eastern, especially Russian, influence becomes more acceptable to authoritarian Karimov. This tendency is growing stronger on the background of the planned withdrawal of the U.S.-led coalition from Afghanistan in 2014.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the repressive CT policies in Uzbekistan and the extensive international empirical evidence about the counter-productiveness of such policies, the rather stable current Uzbekistan's regime contains the threat of the Islamic terrorism and power for twenty years. Such an outcome, however, cannot be attributed only to the autocratic rule and repressive politics of President Islam Karimov. There are several factors—resources and organization of the state, containment of the terrorist threat, the residual Soviet mentality of the local population, and geopolitical situation—that all together allow the survival of such a repressive regime.

The large state resources and strong centralization of power allows Uzbekistan's CT policies to remain highly repressive and ignorant of human rights. The Uzbek government followed the most effective approach against the threat of terrorism:

To have an impact, a strategy must be coherent, organized, and reflected in the state's institutions. ... In addition to building institutional support, leaders must also help shape public opinion to ensure popular support for counterterrorism in general and the strategy in particular. Political leaders must also give counterterrorism appropriate priority, making concessions on other objectives as necessary.<sup>421</sup>

From the first encounter with the religious radicals in 1991, Karimov's regime cracked down on them with a wave of arrests and persecution and expelled most of them from the country. Later, the terrorist attacks in 1999, 2004, 2005, and 2009 caused the new waves of the governmental violence and only strengthened the same approach. In parallel, the uncompromising policy on religion was applied to assure that the popular religion in Uzbekistan remains dominated by the traditionalist moderate Islam, fully controlled by the state, and separated from politics. The state's resources—law enforcement, armed forces, governmental administration, education, government-controlled media, finance, and international support—in comparison to those of the terrorist and the non-violent Islamist organizations, are immense and highly centralized in the hierarchical structure up to the President. However, the official incitement for governmental violence and covert

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421. Byman, "Measuring," 413.

compromises with the rule of law provided the national law enforcement with the freedom for arbitrary actions. In conjunction with the widespread corruption, such a governmental “mandate” developed into the unrestricted rampage by the law enforcement entities. The actual implementation of the CT policies, hence, made Uzbekistan internationally infamous for its indiscriminate use of force and harsh violations of human rights. As a result, disappearances of people, torture, arbitrary persecution, corrupted courts, victimization of innocent people, huge numbers of prisoners, and political refugees became persistent features of Uzbekistan. The same machine of repressions and governmental propaganda is also employed against any other political opposition in Uzbekistan. Therefore, Karimov’s regime considers such a price acceptable for the current containment of the Islamic terrorism.

The timely and decisive reaction to the rise of radical Islamism in combination with the war in Afghanistan allowed Uzbekistan’s government to suppress the threat of terrorism. The latter remains contained for the last two decades. The strongest radical Islamist groups originated in this country in the late 1980s and quickly developed with the wave of Islamic revival in the country. However, they overestimated their own strength and openly challenged Karimov’s regime without actually mobilizing massive support. As a result, most of them fled to Tajikistan, later embraced ideology of global jihad and continued operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) represent the latter groups and fight against the U.S.-led coalition for survival in alliance with the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other jihadist organizations. Due to this fight and the increasingly harder repression of Karimov’s regime, the terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan from 2000 gradually decrease and from 2009 there is no reliable evidence about any activities of the IMU or the IJU in this country. Nevertheless, there are no indications that both organizations are not able or willing to launch new attacks in Uzbekistan in the future. This threat would significantly increase if the planned withdrawal of the NATO forces from 2014 would allow the Taliban to regain its power in Afghanistan.

The Hizb ut-Tahrir remains the only known secret religious organization in Uzbekistan and claims having tens of thousands of members and followers in Central

Asia. Despite its non-violent approach, the propagation of the radical Islamist ideology indirectly induces some desperate people also for violent actions. However, this organization does not have any visible public presence through social support to the local population or any acts of resistance to the current political regime, such as done by the Egyptian Islamists. The state's policy on religion also plays a major role through the total control of religion, uncompromising persecution of unsanctioned religious activities, secular education, and propagation of traditionalist Islam. Hence, the Islamist ideologies, both non-violent or jihadist, are not appealing to the overwhelming majority of the local population. On the contrary, Uzbeks reject religious and ethnic hatred, condemn terrorism, and favor a secular state. This makes the massive popular support to the Islamists, as the main factor for success of the latter in the long-term, highly unlikely in Uzbekistan.

The mentality of Uzbekistan's population allows not only repressive CT policies to be implemented in the country but also the autocratic Karimov's regime to remain in power for twenty years. The dominance of the traditionally moderate Islam makes the extremist ideology of global jihad alien to the local population. In addition, the religious practices though the Soviet period crystalized the popular perception about the necessity to separate religion from the state and practice Islam without interference with the essentially secular lifestyle. Despite the dynamic revival of Islam from the late 1980s, Uzbekistan's population still is largely secular and does not consider Islamism as a viable alternative to the secular regime. Hence, the repression of religious extremism and strict control of religion is widely considered as normal thing by the people of this country. The popular preferences for models of political and economic development are clearly oriented towards the developed countries with secular regimes. Karimov's regime understands the utility of such popular preferences for the CT policies and also rests on them maintaining its rule in Uzbekistan. Another major element for the stability of Karimov's regime is considerable natural resources. The favorable conditions of the international market for these resources allows Uzbekistan to some extent compensate the awkward economic policies, provide at least minimal social services to the population, and finance the entire security and defense forces, which loyalty and capabilities are

critical for the protection of the current regime. The historic, political, economic, social, ethnic, and cultural Russian influence from the Soviet period is still largely maintained through the contemporary relations and Russian media in particular. This is a strong factor keeping the residual Soviet mentality among the Uzbek population up to this day. Such a mentality strongly contributes to the persistent Uzbek trust in their government, tolerance to the violations of human and civil rights and freedoms, legitimacy of the governmental violence, and patience with the individual socio-economic hardship. The popular discontent caused by the latter, however, is gradually increasing. The ignorance of the public interests, inability to recognize and solve the existing problems, and omnipresent corruption of the government are becoming more obvious to the people and crystalizing into the most potential threat to the current regime. Eventually this may lead to the Libyan insurgency scenario. Then the currently contained Islamist terrorism could resurface in Uzbekistan and proliferate through the whole region.

The fundamental prominence of the socio-economic conditions to the security and stability in Uzbekistan is confirmed by the corresponding situations in the other Central Asian states. The above-described influence of the residual Soviet mentality on the popular support to Islamism, perception on the governmental violence, tolerance of the violations of human and civil rights and freedoms, and patience with the individual hardship is largely present in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Due to the less repressive governments there, however, the popular discontent with the national governments is more visible and is growing faster. The role of economic conditions is clearly confirmed by the interrelation between the situation of national economy and domestic security in the country. While Kazakhstan with the strongest economy in the region enjoys the best security situation, Kyrgyzstan has experience of major political crises and Tajikistan with the weakest economy went through the civil war and from time to time faces armed ethnic-religious conflicts. The most democratic regime, religious tolerance, and inclusion of Islamists in the government from 1997 in the latter did not preclude these conflicts. On the contrary, the security situation in Tajikistan remains the worst among the other Central Asian states. Furthermore, all three states are gradually emulating the CT policies of Uzbekistan who at least in comparison with Tajikistan and



Kyrgyzstan looks much more stable and secure. The international cooperation against terrorism is also growing among these and other powers in the region.

The contemporary geopolitical situation in the region contributes to the perceived effectiveness of Uzbekistan's CT policies. Despite the wide international criticism on the harsh and indiscriminate repression, violations of human rights, and absence of democracy, the current geopolitical situation remains favorable for Karimov's regime. In that respect, the ongoing war in Afghanistan is the most prominent international factor. Firstly, it keeps the IMU and the IJU unable to focus on Uzbekistan and makes Uzbekistan's CT policies look effective. Secondly, it assures the high interest of the Western powers, especially the U.S., to maintain good relations with Karimov. Finally, it forces the Western powers to understand that the lasting political stability and security in Uzbekistan is a key factor in regional security, especially after the planned NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan. Hence, the criticism on the harsh repressions and lack of democracy in this country is largely compromised and even turns into military and economic assistance.

Western attitudes to Karimov are also related to the large natural resources and significant labor force and market potential of Uzbekistan. While the EU's economic assistance significantly contributes to the regional cohesion and security, its incitements to democratize Uzbekistan are fully ignored by Karimov's regime that respects only authoritarian and forceful approach. The latter preference conditioned the growing cooperation within the SCO, where all member states share the same regional security interests, favor uncompromising repression against terrorism, and can help each other with military and security forces. In that context, the latest rapprochement with Russia has the highest potential. Despite some official Russian warnings about the need to ease the repressive Uzbekistan's policies to avoid the repetition of the Arab Spring scenario in Central Asia, Russian economic and military assistance becomes a strong factor supporting Karimov's regime. In response to the international criticism, the latter gradually takes some modest steps towards a more democratic society and less repressive rule. However, the deeply rooted corruption in the highest power echelons and the personal reluctance of Karimov to admit own mistakes makes him incapable of essential

political, economic, and social improvement in Uzbekistan. So far, the whole country is a hostage to Karimov's fear of losing power.

None of these factors can be considered as the most or the least important. The current outcome—the continuation of the repressive CT policies and stability of the autocratic regime—rests on all of them more or less equally. They are strongly interrelated among themselves as well. The natural resources keep economy running, repressive forces maintained, and the current regime in power; the threat of terrorism and the war in Afghanistan keeps the foreign powers engaged in the region and cooperative with Karimov; he rests on the corrupt domestic relations, the Western tolerance, the Eastern cooperation, and the submissive mentality of the local population; the latter is disillusioned by the Western approach, supportive to the rapprochement with Russia, afraid of showing its discontent, and appeased by the leftovers from the corrupt government that exploits the national natural resources. All these relations form circular dependencies. That is why elimination or essential transformation of any of these factors can destroy the whole equilibrium.

In that respect, there are three factors with a potential for change in the future. Firstly, the political stability and security situation in Afghanistan after 2014 will have the major influence on the regional security. The existing possibility for the Taliban's return to power may give strong impulse to the revival of the radical Islamism and terrorism in Uzbekistan and the neighboring countries. In such a case, the repressive Uzbekistan's CT policies would become counter-productive. On the other hand, such a scenario would be unacceptable not only to the Central Asian states but also to the foreign powers in the region. Hence, Uzbekistan's government would try to "turn the evolving situation to their own advantage. Tashkent will start crying out that it's on the front line of the war against international terrorism, and it will keep on repeating this until it gets the assistance it wants."<sup>422</sup> Among the foreign powers, Russia and China could be the most active in taking preventive actions to protect Central Asia and themselves from such dangerous developments and contain the threat of terrorism at the tolerable level.

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422. Pannier in interview to IWPR, October 11, 2011.

Secondly, despite the prevailing popular reconciliation with the current regime, the massive civil insurgency cannot be fully excluded. However, the radical Islamist ideology would be the least important motive. The relative economic deprivation, social decay, violation of human and civil rights and freedoms, and the lack of democracy would dominate the popular motivation to topple the current regime. The existing Uzbek political opposition, which already foresee, hope, and prepare for such an outcome,<sup>423</sup> would attempt to head such a movement despite the lack of resources and robust organization in Uzbekistan. Since the repressive CT practices were employed against any political opposition and public discontent, the popular grievances caused by the arbitrary actions and corruption of the law enforcement would definitely strengthen the popular determination to mobilize. Although the currently suppressed Islamic radicals and terrorists would also attempt to exploit any civil disturbance, their ability to head a massive popular movement and to gain the state power would still be very dubious.

Thirdly—the transition of power in Uzbekistan after Karimov—may be another trigger to instability. It would be significantly less dependent on the foreign influence. On the other hand, the apparent weakness of the political opposition in exile may preclude the essential change in Uzbekistan’s political system. Even more the radical Islamists, due to their ideological and physical remoteness from the local population, would not be able to turn Uzbekistan into Islamic state. The well-planned and peaceful transition of the state power within the existing political and security elite seems more likely. The possible intention of the latter to relax the current repressive approach, however, remains unclear. It would depend on the evolution of the all above-discussed factors that currently sustain Karimov’s regime.

In summary, the evaluation of the effectiveness of Uzbekistan’s CT policies has to be done in the context of the domestic conditions and geopolitical environment. The timely and uncompromising CT policies allowed the Uzbek government to contain the

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423. Erk, *Political Platform of “ERK” Democratic Party of Uzbekistan*. July 4, 2007 and *Конституция (Основной закон) республики Узбекистан (проект)*; Vitaliy Volkov, “Мухаммад САЛИХ: В Узбекистане нет ни одной ветви власти, которая бы верила в стабильность режима,” *Новая Газета Казахстан*. March 7, 2012.

threat of terrorism at the tolerable level. Despite the related atrocities committed by the current regime—not only against the terrorists, but also against pious Muslims, political opposition, and simply discontent and innocent people—the local population does not see this as a major concern or motive for insurgency. Despite the revival of Islam, majority of Uzbekistan’s population is rather secular and does not see political Islamism as a viable alternative to the secular regime. Even when the brutality of the CT and religious policies in Uzbekistan cannot be unconditionally considered as the best solution against the Islamic terrorism, the more liberal governmental policies in the neighboring countries do not seem providing a remedy against it either. Moreover, the geopolitical environment seems to remain more favorable for a secure region than democratic and respectful of human rights. Using only a cold and rational calculation, it would be unfair to consider Uzbekistan’s CT policies as ineffective in the long-term.

However, due to the lack of reliable data and the worsening domestic political, economic, and social conditions in Uzbekistan, the effectiveness of the CT policies may be seriously challenged. The relatively rare, largely fragmented, and mostly small in scope terrorist attacks in Central Asia do not provide sufficient empirical basis for decisive conclusions. Moreover, the current domestic and international equilibrium of stability and security is still vulnerable to significant changes in any of the four above-discussed factors. In case of the Libyan-like collapse, the repressive CT policies would become very much counter-productive.

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