

# JIHADI TERRORISM IN CENTRAL ASIA: AN UPDATE

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The areas of the world affected by Jihadi terrorism---indigenous or international---fall into two categories. In the first come areas where the Jihadi terrorism is sustained and continuous and has acquired the nature and momentum of an insurgent movement. Examples would be Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya in Russia, and to some extent Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines. In the second category would come other areas, where the Jihadi terrorism is more sporadic than sustained and is far from acquiring the nature of an insurgent movement. The Central Asian Republics (CARs) would come under the second category.

2. Jihadi terrorism in the CARs has national as well as pan-Islamic dimensions. The national dimension arises from the desire and the determination of the Jihadi elements to free themselves and the people from what they look upon as the suppressive anti-Islam remnants of the days of the communist USSR and set up Islamic States ruled according to the Shari`a. The pan-Islamic dimension relates to their strategic objective of incorporating the Islamic States so created into an Islamic Caliphate encompassing the entire Ummah. Their objective is a regional Caliphate consisting of the five CARs of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan and the Xinjiang region of China forming part of a global Caliphate governing the entire Ummah. Interestingly, they do not look upon Afghanistan as a potential part of the proposed Central Asian regional Caliphate. This can be explained by their deference to Pakistan's strategic objectives in Afghanistan.

3. The Jihadi terrorists of the CARs, like their counterparts in Pakistan, Bangladesh and elsewhere, look upon Western-style liberal democracy as anti-Islam because it treats people as the sovereign. For them, Allah is sovereign and an Islamic State would be ruled according to the wishes of Allah as interpreted by the mullas. They deny that they are against democracy. They say that they are for Islamic democracy, which is different from Western-style liberal democracy. They project the US propagation of a Western-style liberal democracy in the Islamic world as a conspiracy against Islam and the Muslims intended to undermine their faith in their religion.

4. They look upon their jihad in the Central Asian region as the unfinished agenda of the jihad of the 1980s against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, the old slogan of Islam vs. Communism having been replaced in the new jihad by the slogan Islam vs. the apostates. Al Qaeda looks upon the Muslim rulers co-operating with the US as apostates. Similarly, the Jihadi elements of the CARs look upon their rulers co-operating with Russia and the US as apostates. Their principal external adversaries in their jihad are Russia and the US. Interestingly, barring the Uighurs of the Xinjiang region, the Jihadi terrorists in the five CARs do not openly project China in negative colours. This is again attributable to their deference to the sensitivities of Pakistan, which would feel uncomfortable with any Jihadi activities directed against China in view of its dependence on Beijing for its nuclear and missile capabilities.

5. Another defining characteristic of Jihadi terrorism in the Central Asian region is that, like its

counterpart in Afghanistan, it is more a product of the mosques and madrasas of Pakistan than of their own countries. The ideological winds influencing them and driving them to terrorism blew not from West Asia, but from Pakistan across Afghanistan.

6. Who are the Jihadi terrorist dramatis personae in the CARs, who still have the capability for spreading terrorism in the area? Firstly, indigenous organizations, the most motivated of which is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). And secondly, the Pakistani organizations, the most active of which in the CARs are the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM) and the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI). The IMU, the HUM and the HUJI are among the members of Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front (IIF) For Jihad Against the Crusaders and the Jewish People formed in 1998. And thirdly, the Hizbut Tehrir (HT) and its clones, which, while having the same political and religious objectives as Al Qaeda, project themselves as politico-religious organisations, which believe in agitprop methods and not in terrorism.

7. The first signs of Islamic fundamentalism appeared in Uzbekistan in December 1991, when some unemployed Muslim youth seized the Communist Party headquarters in the eastern city of Namangan, to protest against the refusal of the local Mayor to permit the construction of a mosque. The protest was organised by Tohir Abdouhalilovitch Yuldeshev, a 24-year-old college drop-out, who had become a Mulla, and Jumaboi Ahmadzhanovitch Khojaev, a former Soviet paratrooper who had served in Afghanistan and returned from there totally converted to Wahabism.

8. Yuldeshev and Khojaev, who later adopted the alias Juma Namangani, after his hometown, became members of the Uzbekistan branch of the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). Following the IRP's reported refusal to support their demand for the establishment of an Islamic State in Uzbekistan, they formed their own party called the Adolat (Justice) Party, which was banned by President Islam Karimov. They then fled to Tajikistan. While Namangani fought in the local civil war, Yuldeshev went to Chechnya to participate in the jihad there. In 1995, he went to Pakistan, where the Jihadi organisations gave him shelter in Peshawar. From there, he re-named the Adolat Party as the IMU and was allegedly in receipt of funds from the intelligence agencies of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. After Osama bin Laden shifted to Jalalabad from Khartoum in Sudan in 1996, Yuldeshev crossed over into Afghanistan.

9. After the end of the civil war in Tajikistan, Namangani settled down for a while as a road transport operator. He was also allegedly involved in heroin smuggling from Afghanistan. Subsequently, he too crossed over into Afghanistan and joined the IMU and became its leader. The IMU allegedly earns a major part of its revenue from heroin smuggling.

10. After the Taliban captured Kabul in September, 1996, Namangani and Yuldeshev held a press conference at Kabul at which they announced the formation of the IMU with Namangani as the Amir and Yuldeshev as its military commander. In 1998, the IMU joined the International Islamic Front (IIF). bin Laden was reportedly greatly interested in the IMU because he was hoping to use it for getting nuclear material and know-how from Russia and other constituent States of the erstwhile USSR.

11. The IMU's initial goal was described as the overthrow of Uzbek President Islam Karimov

and the establishment of an Islamic State in Uzbekistan. It reportedly changed its name to the Islamic Party of Turkestan (IPT) in June 2001, and called for the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Central Asia consisting of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and China's Xinjiang province. It has been recruiting members from all these areas, including Uighurs from Xinjiang. Initially, its recruits were trained by the Arab instructors of Al Qaeda in the training camps in Afghan territory and after 9/11 by Chechen and Pashtun instructors of the Taliban in the South Waziristan area of Pakistan. Despite its 2001 change of name as IPT, it continues to be known in Uzbekistan as the IMU. The name IPT is not widely known.

12. After the reported death of Namangani in a US air strike in Afghanistan post-9/11, Yuldeshev took over the leadership of the IMU and crossed over with the surviving members of the IMU into South Waziristan in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, where he and his Uzbek/Chechen instructors were reported to have set up a training camp for training Jihadi terrorists. In an operation launched by the Pakistani security forces in South Waziristan in March-April, 2004, to smoke out the remnants of Al Qaeda, Yuldeshev was reported to have been injured, but he managed to escape. His present whereabouts are not known. It is not even known whether he is alive or succumbed to the injuries subsequently.

13. There are also reports about the presence of many Uzbek women in South Waziristan. Many of them are the wives of local Pashtuns, Chechens and Arabs. It is not known how and when they came there. Some reports, still unconfirmed, allege that in addition to heroin smuggling, the IMU also indulges in human trafficking, particularly of women.

14. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Islamic fundamentalism made its appearance in the Central Asian region through Pakistani organisations such as the Tablighi Jamaat, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM) and the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) and through the Hizbut Tehrir (HT), which came from the UK via Pakistan. This led to anti-Jewish feelings on the one side and anti-Slav feelings on the other. The Pakistani organisations spread the Wahabi ideology, which led to the CARs becoming a hotbed of Jihadi extremist/terrorist activities in pursuit of the objective of an Islamic Caliphate.

15. The deterioration in the economic conditions consequent upon the collapse of the USSR also led to inter-ethnic tensions amongst the Muslims themselves. Even in 1989-1990, before the collapse of the USSR, there was a massacre of Meskhetin Turks in the Fergana Valley area of Uzbekistan. There were frequent instances of anti-Armenian and anti-Jewish violence in Andijan and there were violent clashes between Uzbeks and Kirghiz in the Osh region.

16. As a result of these developments, there was a reported decrease in the Jewish population from about 150,000 in 1989 to about 22,000, of whom about 12,000 were in Uzbekistan, 8,000 in Kazakhstan, 1,500 in Kyrgyzstan and the remaining 500 in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

17. Suspected Jihadi terrorism made its first major appearance in Uzbekistan on February 16, 1999, when there were six car bomb explosions in Tashkent, the capital, killing, according to official accounts, 16 persons and injuring 130 others. The explosions took place near the headquarters of the Council of Ministers where President Islam Karimov was to preside over a

Cabinet meeting, outside a nearby cinema hall, near the office of the Interior Ministry, outside the Traffic Police headquarters and a building owned by the national bank.

18. While no organisation claimed responsibility for the explosions, the Uzbek authorities, including President Karimov himself, projected the explosions as an abortive attempt by Islamic extremist elements to assassinate the President. However, Russian experts, including Dr. Sergei Abashin, an expert on Uzbekistan at the Anthropology and Ethnology Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, while not ruling out the involvement of Islamic extremists, drew attention also to the possibility of the political opponents of Karimov hiring local mafia groups to eliminate the President due to personal and political grudge.

19. There were three explosions outside the US and Israeli embassies and the local Prosecutor's office in Tashkent on July 30, 2004. Two private security guards employed by the Israeli Embassy were killed. An injured police officer, who was on duty outside the US Embassy died subsequently. Seven people were injured outside the Prosecutor's office.

20. The local authorities attributed all the three explosions to suicide bombers. Uzbekistan had been periodically witnessing incidents of violence, including acts of terrorism, by Islamic fundamentalist elements since 1999. There were, however, no acts of suicide terrorism till March-April, 2004, when 42 people were killed in different incidents in Tashkent, Bukhara and other places. The incidents involved the use of explosive devices and attacks with hand-held weapons. For the first time since 1999, the local authorities blamed suicide bombers for some of those incidents and depicted them as Wahabis. According to them, two of the suicide bombers were women.

21. The incidents of July 30, 2004, took place four days after the start of the trial of 15 persons, who had been accused by the local police of involvement in the incidents of March-April, 2004. The Prosecutor's Office, outside which one of the explosions took place, had been handling the prosecution of the case.

22. The explosion outside the US Embassy was attributed to resentment over the use by the US of an airbase in Uzbekistan for its operations against the remnants of Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and over the role allegedly played by the US Special Forces in assisting the Pakistan Army in its operations in South Waziristan. Anger over the continued US occupation of Iraq also seemed to have been one of the factors. The explosion outside the Israeli Embassy was attributed to its alleged suppression of the Palestinians and its alleged assistance to the intelligence and security agencies of Uzbekistan in their operations against the Jihadi terrorist elements. As against this, the terrorist incidents of March-April 2004, were largely motivated by anger over the repressive policies of the Islam Karimov regime and its co-operation with the US in its so-called war against terrorism.

23. There is so far no evidence to show that the alleged suicide bombers of July 30, 2004, might have gone to Tashkent from South Waziristan in Pakistan, where the headquarters of the IMU are presently based. If it is established that they belonged to the IMU, they might have been recruited locally by the local cells and need not have necessarily come from South Waziristan. This would show that despite the strong measures taken by the Karimov regime, secret cells of

the IMU have managed to survive in Uzbek territory and that their motivation and capability for action remain unimpaired.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF HUM AND HUJI OF PAKISTAN**

24. The first evidence of the involvement of Pakistani Jihadi terrorist organisations in spreading Jihadi terrorism in the CARs came from two articles of 1995 under the title "Jihad Worldwide" written by Mr. Kamran Khan, the well-known Pakistani investigative journalist, in the "News", a daily newspaper of Pakistan. In those articles, he quoted an unidentified activist of the Harkat-ul-Ansar (HUA---subsequently renamed as the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen) as saying that trained HUA volunteers were participating in the jihad in the Southern Philippines, the Arakan State of Myanmar, the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) State of India, Tajikistan and Chechnya.

25. After the suicide bomb attack in Karachi on May 8, 2002, which killed 11 French experts working in a submarine project, Mr. Khaled Ahmed, the well-known Pakistani analyst, wrote an article titled "The Biggest Militia We Know Nothing About" in the prestigious "Friday Times" of Lahore. In this article, he stated as follows: "ARY DIGITAL TV's host Dr. Masood, while discussing the May 8 killing of 11 French nationals in Karachi, named one Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami as one of the suspected terrorists involved in the bombing. When the Americans bombed the Taliban and Mulla Umar fled from his stronghold in Kandahar, a Pakistani personality also fled with him. This was Qari Saifullah Akhtar (My comment: arrested in Dubai in 2004 and deported to Pakistan; now in jail in Pakistan), the leader of Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami, Pakistan's biggest jihadi militia headquartered in Kandahar. No one knew the name of the outfit and its leader. A large number of its fighters made their way into Central Asia and Chechnya to escape capture at the hands of the Americans, the rest stole back into Pakistan to establish themselves in Waziristan and Buner. Their military training camp (maskar) in Kotli in Azad Kashmir swelled with new fighters and now the outfit is scouting some areas in the NWFP (North-West Frontier Province) to create a supplementary maskar for jihad in Kashmir. Its 'handlers' (in the Inter-Services Intelligence) have clubbed it together with Harkatul Mujahideen to create Jamiatul Mujahideen in order to cut down the large number of outfits gathered together in Azad Kashmir. It was active in Held Kashmir under the name of Harkatul Jahad Brigade 111.

26. "The leader of Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami, Qari Saifullah Akhtar, was an adviser to Mulla Umar in the Taliban government. His fighters were called 'Punjabi' Taliban and were offered employment, something that other outfits could not get out of Mulla Umar. The outfit had membership among the Taliban too. Three Taliban ministers and 22 judges belonged to the Harkat. In difficult times, the Harkat fighters stood together with Mulla Umar. Approximately 300 of them were killed fighting the Northern Alliance, after which Mulla Umar was pleased to give Harkat the permission to build six more maskars in Kandahar, Kabul and Khost, where the Taliban army and police also received military training. From its base in Afghanistan, Harkat launched its campaigns inside Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Chechnya. But the distance of Qari Saifullah Akhtar from the organisation's Pakistani base did not lead to any rifts. In fact, Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami emerged from the defeat of the Taliban largely intact. In Pakistan Qari Akhtar has asked the 'returnees' to lie low for the time being, while his Pakistani fighters already engaged are busy in jihad as before.

27."The Harkat is the only militia which boasts international linkages. It calls itself 'the second line of defence of all Muslim states' and is active in Arakan in Burma, and Bangladesh, with well organised seminaries in Karachi, and Chechnya, Sinkiang, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The latest trend is to recall Pakistani fighters stationed abroad and encourage the local fighters to take over the operations. Its fund-raising is largely from Pakistan, but an additional source is its activity of selling weapons to other militias. Its acceptance among the Taliban was owed to its early allegiance to a leader of the Afghan war, Maulvi Nabi Muhammadi and his Harkat Inqilab Islami whose fighters became a part of the Taliban forces in large numbers. Nabi Muhammadi was ignored by the ISI in 1980 in favour of Hekmatyar and his Hezb-e-Islami. His outfit suffered in influence inside Afghanistan because he was not supplied with weapons in the same quantity as some of the other seven militias.

28."According to the journal "Al-Irshad" of Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami, published from Islamabad, a Deobandi group led by Maulana Irshad Ahmad was established in 1979. Looking for the right Afghan outfit in exile to join in Peshawar, Maulana Irshad Ahmad adjudged Maulvi Nabi Muhammadi as the true Deobandi and decided to join him in 1980. Harkat Inqilab Islami was set up by Maulana Nasrullah Mansoor Shaheed and was taken over by Nabi Muhammadi after his martyrdom. Eclipsed in Pakistan, Maulana Irshad Ahmad fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets till he was killed in battle in Shirana in 1985. His place was taken by Qari Saifullah Akhtar, which was not liked by some of the Harkat leaders, including Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khaleel who then set up his own Harkatul Mujahideen.

29."According to some sources, Harkatul Mujahideen was a new name given to Harkatul Ansar after it was declared terrorist by the United States. Other sources claim that it was Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami that had earlier merged with Harkatul Ansar. But relations with Fazlur Rehman Khaleel remained good, but when Maulana Masood Azhar separated from Harkatul Mujahideen and set up his own Jaish-e-Muhammad, Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami opposed Jaish in its journal "Sada-e-Mujahid" (May 2000) and hinted that 'you-know-who' had showered Jaish with funds. Jaish was supported by Mufti Shamzai of Banuri (Binori) Mosque of Karachi and was given a brand new maskar in Balakot by the ISI.

30."The sub-militia (of the HUJI) fighting in Kashmir is semi-autonomous and is led by chief commander Muhammad Ilyas Kashmiri. Its training camp is 20 km from Kotli in Azad Kashmir, with a capacity for training 800 warriors, and is run by one Haji Khan. Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami went into Kashmir in 1991 but was at first opposed by the Wahhabi elements there because of its refusal to criticise the grand Deobandi congregation of Tableeghi Jamaat and its quietist posture. But as days passed, its warriors were recognised as 'Afghanis'. It finally had more martyrs in the jihad of Kashmir than any other militia. Its resolve and organisation were recognised when foreigners were seen fighting side by side with its Punjabi warriors.

31."To date, 650 Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami mujahideen have been killed in battle against the Indian army: 190 belonging to both sides of Kashmir, nearly 200 belonging to Punjab, 49 to Sindh, 29 to Balochistan, 70 to Afghanistan, 5 to Turkey, and 49 collectively to Uzbekistan, Bangladesh and the Arab world.

32."Because of its allegiance to the spiritual legacy of Deobandism, Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami did

not attack the Tableeghi Jamaat, which stood it in good stead because it became the only militia whose literature was allowed to be distributed during the congregations of the Tableeghi Jamaat, and those in the Pakistani establishment attending the congregation were greatly impressed by the militia's organisational excellence. It contained more graduates of the seminaries than any other militia, thus emphasising its religious character as envisaged by its founder and by Maulvi Nabi Muhammadi. It kept away from the sectarian conflict unlike Jaish-e-Muhammad but its men were at times put off by the populist Kashmiri Islam and reacted violently to local practices.

33."The leader of Harkat al-Jihad al-Islami in Uzbekistan is Sheikh Muhammad Tahir al-Farooq. So far 27 of its fighters have been killed in battle against the Uzbek president Islam Karimov, as explained in the Islamabad-based journal "Al-Irshad". Starting in 1990, the war against Uzbekistan was bloody and was supported by the Taliban, till in 2001, the commander had to ask the Pakistanis in Uzbekistan to return to base.

34."In Chechnya, the war against the Russians was carried on under the leadership of commander Hidayatullah. Pakistan's Embassy in Moscow once denied that there were any Pakistanis involved in the Chechnyan war, but journal "Al-Irshad" (March 2000) declared from Islamabad that the militia was deeply involved in the training of guerrillas in Chechnya for which purpose commander Hidayatullah was stationed in the region. It estimated that 'dozens' of Pakistani fighters had been martyred fighting against Russian infidels.

35."When the Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami men were seen first in Tajikistan, they were mistaken by some observers as being fighters from Sipah Sahaba, but in fact they were under the command of commander Khalid Irshad Tiwana, helping Juma Namangani and Tahir Yuldashev resist the Uzbek ruling class in the Ferghana Valley. The anti-Uzbek warlords were being sheltered by Mulla Umar in Afghanistan.

36."Maulana Abdul Quddus heads the Burmese warriors located in Karachi and fighting mostly in Bangladesh on the Arakanese border. Korangi is the base of the Arakanese Muslims who fled Burma to fight the jihad from Pakistan. A large number of Burmese are located inside Korangi and the area is sometimes called mini-Arakan. Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami has opened 30 seminaries for them inside Korangi, there being 18 more in the rest of Karachi. Maulana Abdul Quddus, a Burmese Muslim, while talking to weekly "Zindagi" (25-31 January 1998), revealed that he had run away from Burma via India and took religious training in the Harkat seminaries in Karachi and on its invitation went to Afghanistan, took military training there and fought the jihad from 1982 to 1988. In Korangi, the biggest seminary is Madrasa Khalid bin Walid where 500 Burmese are under training. They were trained in Afghanistan and later made to fight against the Northern Alliance and against the Indian army in Kashmir. The Burmese prefer to stay in Pakistan, and very few have returned to Burma or to Bangladesh. There are reports of their participation in the religious underworld in Karachi.

37."Harkat al-Jahad al-Islami has branch offices in 40 districts and tehsils in Pakistan, including Sargodha, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Khanpur, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Mianwali, Bannu, Kohat, Waziristan, Dera Ismail Khan, Swabi and Peshawar. It also has an office in Islamabad. Funds are collected from these grassroots offices as well as from sources abroad. The militia has accounts in two branches of Allied Bank in Islamabad, which have not been frozen because the

organisation is not under a ban. The authorities have begun the process of reorganisation of jihad by changing names and asking the various outfits to merge. Harkat al-Jihad al-Islami has been asked to merge with Harkatul Mujahideen of Fazlur Rehman Khaleel who had close links with Osama bin Laden. The new name given to this merger is Jamiatul Mujahideen. Jamaat Islami's Hizbul Mujahideen has been made to absorb all the refugee Kashmiri organisations. Jaish and Lashkar-e-Tayba have been clubbed together as Al-Jihad. All the Barelvi organisations, so far located only in Azad Kashmir, have been put together as Al-Barq. Al-Badr and Hizbe Islami have been renamed as Al-Umar Mujahideen, "the article concluded.

## **THE UIGHURS**

38. The year 2004 saw Chinese engineers and other experts working in Afghanistan and Pakistan being targeted by suspected terrorist elements. Uighurs allegedly trained by the IMU were suspected of involvement in the explosion in Gwadar in Balochistan on May 3, 2004, in which three Chinese engineers were killed and in the explosions on July 31, 2004, at the same town in which no casualties were reported.

39. These incidents were followed by the kidnapping of two Chinese engineers working in an irrigation project in South Waziristan by a group of pro-bin Laden Jihadi terrorists in the beginning of October, 2004, and the death of one of them on October 13, 2004, during a rescue operation mounted by the US-trained Special Services Group, the parent Army unit of Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

40. Talking to a group of senior Pakistani newspaper editors after a visit to China in 2003, Musharraf was reported to have stated that he was shocked by the strong language used by the Chinese leaders while talking of the activities of the Uighur Jihadi terrorists from Pakistani territory. Since then, the Pakistan Army and its ISI have mounted special operations to smoke out the Chechens, the Uzbeks and the Uighurs operating from the FATA in co-operation with each other. Apart from killing or capturing a few Uzbek and Chechen terrorists and killing an Uighur terrorist, these operations have not produced any significant results. In the meanwhile, the Hizbut Tehrir, which has a strong presence in Pakistan and the CARs, has started wooing the Uighurs in an attempt to set up sleeper cells in Xinjiang. Amongst the major successes claimed by the Pakistani authorities since March, 2004, were the killing of Hassan Mahsun of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and of Nek Muhammad, a local Pakistani tribal leader, who was allegedly assisting Al Qaeda and the Taliban remnants and causing serious injuries to Yuldeshev.

## **HIZBUT TEHRIR (HT)**

41. The HT was formed in 1953 by Sheikh Taqiuddin an-Nabhani al Falastini, a Judge of the Shariat Appeal Court in Jerusalem. After Nakhbani's death in 1979, Abad al-Qadim Zalum, a Jordanian, took over as its leader. The party's headquarters were moved to London. Its multilanguage website is also reportedly operated from London. The London headquarters used to be headed by Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad, a 42 year-old Syrian, but he is no longer associated with it. One does not know who is its present leader.

42. It has the same objectives as Al Qaeda, namely, introduction of Islamic rule according to the

Sharia in Muslim majority countries and the restoration of an Islamic Caliphate, but projects itself as different from Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is essentially an Arab organisation, with Arabs holding senior positions and exercising command and control. As against this, the HT projects itself as a multi-ethnic Islamic organisation in which membership and senior positions are open to any Muslim, irrespective of his or her ethnic background.

43. Its Aims and Objectives say: " The Party accepts Muslim men and women as its members regardless of whether they are Arab or non-Arab, white or colored, since it is a party for all Muslims. It invites all Muslims to carry Islam and adopt its systems regardless of their nationalities, colors and madhahib (Schools of Thought), as it looks to all of them according to the viewpoint of Islam."

44. Al Qaeda is often accused of working for the Arabisation of Islam in non-Arab countries. The HT seeks to protect itself from such charges. At the same time, it admits that in its work it gave the first priority to the Arab countries and explains it thus: "Although Islam is a universal ideology, its method does not, however, allow one to work for it universally from the beginning. It is necessary, however, to invite to it universally, and make the field of work for it in one country, or a few countries, until it is consolidated there and the Islamic State is established. The whole world is a suitable location for the Islamic da'wah. But since the people in the Muslim countries have already embraced Islam, it is necessary that the da'wah starts there. The Arab countries are the most suitable location to start carrying the da'wah because these countries, which constitute part of the Muslim world, are inhabited by people who speak the Arabic language, which is the language of the Qur'an and hadith, and is an essential part of Islam and a basic element of the Islamic culture. The Hizb began and started to carry the da'wah within some of the Arab countries. It then proceeded to expand the delivery of the da'wah naturally until it began to function in many Arab countries and also in non-Arab Muslim countries as well."

45. It projects itself as a politico-religious movement. It says: "Hizb ut-Tahrir is a political party whose ideology is Islam, so politics is its work and Islam is its ideology. It works within the Ummah and together with her, so that she adopts Islam as her cause and is led to restore the Khilafah and the ruling by what Allah revealed. Hizb ut-Tahrir is a political group and not a priestly one. Nor is it an academic, educational or a charity group. The Islamic thought is the soul of its body, its core and the secret of its life. Its purpose is to revive the Islamic Ummah from the severe decline that it had reached, and to liberate it from the thoughts, systems and laws of Kufr, as well as the domination and influence of the Kufr states. It also aims to restore the Islamic Khilafah State so that the ruling by what Allah revealed returns. The Party, as well, aims at the correct revival of the Ummah through enlightened thought. It also strives to bring her back to her previous might and glory such that she wrests the reins of initiative away from other states and nations, and returns to her rightful place as the first state in the world, as she was in the past, when she governs the world according to the laws of Islam. It also aims to bring back the Islamic guidance for mankind and to lead the Ummah into a struggle with Kufr, its systems and its thoughts so that Islam encapsulates the world."

46. It projects its struggle as directed against "the disbelieving imperialists, to deliver the Ummah from their domination and to liberate her from their influence by uprooting their intellectual, cultural, political, economic and military roots from all of the Muslim countries. The

political struggle also appears in challenging the rulers, revealing their treasons and conspiracies against the Ummah, and by taking them to task and changing them if they denied the rights of the Ummah, or refrained from performing their duties towards her, or ignored any matter of her affairs, or violated the laws of Islam. So all the work of the Party is political, whether it is in office or not. Its work is not educational, as it is not a school, nor is its work concerned with giving sermons and preaching. Rather its work is political."

47. The HT has a three-stage strategy for achieving its objectives. In the first stage, which it claims has already been completed, it concentrated on making individual Muslims all over the world aware of its ideology, message and political programme of action. The goal to be achieved was to create in individual Muslims an Islamic mind-set and Islamic emotions. In the second stage on which it is presently embarked, it concentrates on educating the Ummah as a whole as an entity. In the third stage, it proposes to focus on the achievement of political power in order to pave the way for Islamic rule according to the Sharia all over the Islamic world and the restoration of an Islamic Caliphate.

48. The HT projects itself as an organisation opposed to the use of terrorism or other forms of violence for achieving its objectives. It claims that it wants to achieve its objectives through AGITPROP (agitation-propaganda) techniques. This should not be mistaken to mean that it advises individual Muslims, including its followers, to shun the use of terrorism for promoting the interests of Islam. It sees no contradiction between its opposition to terrorism as an organisation and its followers resorting to Jihadi terrorism in countries where such a dichotomy may be required and justified.

49. To quote the HT: "Whenever the disbelieving enemies attack an Islamic country it becomes compulsory on its Muslim citizens to repel the enemy. The members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in that country are a part of the Muslims and it is obligatory upon them as it is upon other Muslims, in their capacity as Muslims, to fight the enemy and repel them. Whenever there is a Muslim amir who declares jihad to enhance the Word of Allah and mobilises the people to do that, the members of Hizb ut-Tahrir will respond in their capacity as Muslims in the country where the general call to arms was proclaimed."

50. What, in effect, it says is that its members have two obligations. As members of the organisation, they cannot take to violence. As members of the Muslim community, they can take to arms if such a course of action is warranted by circumstances. Thus, in the CARs, the HT, as a universal organisation of Muslims, will not issue a call to its members to take to arms, but if the local leaders of the community issue a call to arms, its members would be free to join in their capacity as individual Muslims and not as HT members.

51. Thus, it would be quite in order for a Muslim to propagate overtly the non-violent ways of the HT and, at the same time, take to terrorism covertly as a member of Al Qaeda or the IIF. The clandestine ways of the HT, about whose leadership not much is known, add to the fears about the real nature of the organisation and its linkages with Al Qaeda and the IIF.

52. Some analysts, particularly in Pakistan, describe the HT as an international Sunni movement, similar to Al Qaeda, but the HT itself says that its message and appeal are addressed to all

Muslims, whether Sunnis or Shias. It wants its movement to be seen as a universal Muslim movement and not as a Sunni one.

### **ACTIVITIES IN CARs**

53. The Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) has been operating in the Central Asian region since 1995, when it was brought to Uzbekistan by some members of the Pakistani Diaspora in the UK. In fact, a HT office was set up in Uzbekistan five years before its appearance in Pakistan itself. Severe government suppression forced its members to move to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

54. Since 2000, the HT has reportedly become the largest fundamentalist organisation in the Central Asian region. It is now trying to spread its activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Xinjiang region of China. It has been banned in all the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Pakistan. The ban has had no effect on its activities and its ability to attract followers. It has a strong presence in the Fergana Valley.

55. The HT concentrates on the penetration of the student community, the armed forces and the security agencies. It has also managed to build up a large following among Muslim medium and small-scale entrepreneurs in the CARs. It advocates an Islamic version of the free market economy in which the private entrepreneurs accept a moral responsibility for the welfare of their employees. The enterprises are expected to serve the cause of the religion and the community. Every member of the HT is required to contribute 10 per cent of his or her earnings to the organisation. Its other sources of funding are not known.

56. In view of its emphasis on propaganda, it tries to invest in printing presses and publishing houses directly or through intermediaries. Two modern underground printing presses of the HT were discovered by the Police at Hudzhand in Tajikistan in 2003. According to Uzbek sources, it has the largest following in Uzbekistan with about 20,000 members, of whom about 7,000 are in prison. The HT of Uzbekistan is led by one Vahid Omran. Its striking progress in recruiting members in Uzbekistan is attributed to the poor economic conditions there and the brutally repressive nature of the local regime.

57. It is a clandestine set-up organised into large number autonomous cells of five members each. Each cell and its members are supposed to know the identity of only their immediate superior and not of others.

58. The HT has not come to notice for its control of any madrasas. It recruits its student members from all educational institutions---religious or secular, government or private owned. It also advises its clerics to avoid attracting attention to themselves. They are discouraged from keeping long beards and advised to trim them and even to dress themselves in Western clothes.

59. Al Qaeda speaks of the right and the religious obligation of the Muslims to acquire and use, if necessary, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but the HT does not---at least openly. But, since the HT has a large number of educated followers in the CARs, which were important centres for research and development in the nuclear and missile fields in the erstwhile USSR, there is a greater possibility of the HT being able to attract to its ranks Muslim scientists of

Central Asia well-versed in nuclear and missile technologies.

60. The IMU has a large proportion of Muslim soldiers of the ex-Soviet Army, who had fought against the Afghan Mujahideen in Afghanistan during the 1980s. They went to Afghanistan as convinced Communists and returned to their homes as converted Jihadis inspired by the example of the Mujahideen. The HT, on the other hand, has a large proportion of post-1991 students, business entrepreneurs and security forces personnel with very little exposure to the jihad of the 1980s.

61. It is remarkable that within 10 years of its emergence in the CARs, the HT has made disquieting strides in the area, particularly in Uzbekistan. Apart from the poor economic conditions and the repressive policies of the Governments of the region, this is also attributable to the fact that the Islamic faith and loyalty to the religion have always been important motivating factors in the Fergana Valley area right from the days of the first Andijan uprising of the Muslims against the Tsar's army in 1898.

62. The post-1991 resurgence of Islamic yearnings in Uzbekistan and its neighbors was first noticed and exploited not by local religious leaders, but by those who came from outside, mainly from Pakistan. In the Caucasus region (Chechnya and Dagestan), it was the indigenous Muslims, who started the Muslim rights movement and took to Jihadi terrorism and foreign Jihadis subsequently joined them. But, in the CARs, it is the foreign Jihadis, who started the movement, which subsequently attracted the locals in large numbers.

63. There are two other organisations in Uzbekistan, which have come to notice for their Jihadi activities---the so-called Akramia group and the Hizb an-Nustra (the Party of Victory). Some Uzbek analysts describe them as dissident groups of the HT, consisting of members who left the HT because of its policy of not resorting to Jihadi terrorism.

64. After independent Uzbekistan came into existence in 1991, the authorities followed a liberal policy towards Islam. They permitted the re-opening of many mosques, which had been closed down by the Soviet Government before 1991, and the construction of new mosques in Andijan and the local Muslims to go on pilgrimage to their Holy Land in Saudi Arabia. There was a mushrooming of new mosques funded by Saudi money. But after the emergence of the HT in 1995, they reversed this policy.

65. Since 1998, the anger of the Muslims of the Fergana Valley has been aggravated by the refusal of the authorities to give permission for the construction of new mosques in Andijan. The authorities even converted the main mosque in the town into an art museum and another into a centre for the welfare of women and children.

66. In 1998, the Government of President Karimov passed a new law requiring all existing mosques to re-register. Fresh registration was refused to a large number of mosques. Out of about 2,200 mosques in Andijan, only 42 were re-registered and the remaining were forced to close down on the ground that they had been started unauthorisedly. In Namangan, another town in the Fergana Valley, only 240 of the 1,000 mosques were re-registered and the remaining were forced to close down. When the Muslims started praying in the streets in response to the call of

the HT, the police arrested them and accused them of being Wahhabis.

67. In 1995, Abduvali Mirzoev, a prominent imam who was Andijan's best-known Islamic leader, was arrested and allegedly sent to a labor camp. The HT followers alleged that he had been illegally kidnapped by the Uzbek security service while he was on his way to the airport to catch a flight to Moscow. Since then, the HT has been observing every year the anniversary of the day of his arrest as a day of protest in Andijan.

68. In a pamphlet, the HT said: "Sheikh Abduvali Qori made a great contribution to the growth of Islam in Uzbekistan. Thanks to God, the number of Muslims unbelievably increased in Uzbekistan due to his efforts and lectures. He schooled a lot of students and educated the people on the teachings of Islam. His vast Islamic knowledge won him a reputation both at home and abroad as a great Muslim scholar. The Government of Uzbekistan, which is fiercely fighting against Islam, has become increasingly alarmed by this situation and therefore attempted several plots against Sheikh Abduvali Qori.

69."One of the Government plots against Sheikh Abduvali Qori involved a terrible arson. As a result, his house and property were completely destroyed. The people who witnessed this tragedy remember that the Sheikh cried about his books, which he had collected all his life and treasured a lot. It is a disgusting fact that the Uzbekistan Government uses ransom, abduction and other kinds of terror against Muslim scholars instead of honoring them. But, all of these inhuman acts of terror failed to stop and prevent him from continuing to educate the people on Islam.

70."The incredibly increasing popularity of the Sheikh among the people both at home and abroad indeed frightened President Karimov and his entourage. After it failed to find a single reason to arrest him, the Government resorted to abducting the Sheikh Abduvali Qori. Afraid of causing unrest among the Muslims who loved the Sheikh Abduvali Qori more than their own fathers, the Government used its NSS (National Security Service) officers to commit this crime covertly.

71."On August 29, 1995, the Government of Uzbekistan abducted the Sheikh Abduvali Qori and his accompanying student, Ramazon Matkarimov, in Tashkent Airport when they were boarding to fly to a World Islamic Symposium that was to be held in Moscow."

72.The repression of the followers of the HT and the IMU intensified after February 1999, when 16 people were killed in explosions in the capital Tashkent for which the authorities blamed Islamic extremists. Thousands of suspected members of these organisations were arrested. Many continue to be in detention without trial.

73. The only madrasa in Andijan founded in 1990 by Adiljon-Haji Abdusalamov, a respected religious leader, was ordered to be closed down in 1998 on the ground that its management had violated laws relating to public health. He was arrested and jailed for two years. Thereafter, the Government has not permitted the opening of any school for religious instruction.

74. In a statement issued on June 17, 2003, Dr. Imran Waheed of the HT based in London, who allegedly co-ordinates the activities of the HT in Uzbekistan, said: " Tens of thousands of Uzbek

Muslims have been unlawfully arrested, thousands have been tortured and dozens have been killed in extra-judicial executions. Uzbek Muslim women have been threatened with gang rape during interrogation. Muslims in prison report that they have been subjected to continuous and cruel battery, repeated anal rape and the insertion of metal bars in the anus, incarceration in basement cells in conditions intolerable for any human being and the injecting of HIV infected blood for adhering to their Islamic prayer rituals and refusing to seek clemency from President Karimov.

75."The most recent example of this onslaught is that of Orif Eshonov, a 38-year-old member of the non-violent Islamic political party Hizb ut-Tahrir and father of four young children, who was detained by the Uzbek security services in Karshi in early May. After being held incommunicado he was brutally killed in custody on May 15 His body had heavy bruising to the arms, shoulders, upper chest, legs and soles of the feet. There were open wounds to one arm and his back. Several ribs had been broken and needles had been inserted under his fingernails.

76."The campaign against independent Muslims continues with the blessing of the US Government and the silence of European governments – last year Uzbekistan received \$500 million in US aid and in a May 14 document the US State Department reported that Uzbekistan is making “substantial and continuing progress” in meeting human rights and democracy commitments. While Bush and Blair fete Karimov for his allegiance in the ‘war on terror’, tens of thousands of Muslims continue to languish in the dark and dingy dungeons of Uzbekistan.

77. “America’s ally, Karimov, has waged an intense and relentless campaign against Muslims in Uzbekistan. Muslims will never bow down their heads before this arrogant, tyrant ruler – the increased oppression will be an incentive to further intensify the work for the removal of such tyrants”.

78. Since 2003, the HT had organised a series of demonstrations by women in Andijan to protest against the continued detention and alleged torture of their relatives by the local authorities and since February, 2005, it had been organising protests against the detention and trial of 23 Muslim businessmen. It was this protest movement, which triggered off the violent uprising of May 13, 2005.

79. The uprising was preceded by a raid by supporters of the HT on a local prison in which the authorities had detained the group of 23 Muslim businessmen whom they had arrested on June 23, 2004, and accused of belonging to an Islamic extremist organisation called the Akramia group. The raiders were reported to have forcibly got the so-called Akramia group members released.

80. On coming to know of their release, a large number of the local residents came out in the streets and captured a number of Government buildings. The Uzbek security forces, after heavy fighting, managed to free the buildings from the control of the supporters of the so-called Akramia group and the HT.

81. The arrested Muslim businessmen, whose trial started at Alatankul on the outskirts of Andijan in February, 2005, had formed an Islamic mutual fund to help poor Muslims and to

undertake charity work with its earnings. The authorities suspected it of being a front organisation of the HT, a charge which was vehemently denied by the businessmen. They contended that they had no links with the HT and that their objective was purely philanthropic with no political agenda.

82. Despite this, the authorities filed a charge-sheet against them under Articles 242 (setting up a criminal organisation), 159 (undermining the constitutional basis of the Republic of Uzbekistan), 244-1 (preparing or distributing documents that contain a threat to public safety) and 244-2 (setting up, leading, and participating in extremist religious organisations) of the Criminal Code.

83. The names of the arrested businessmen are: Rasuljon Ajikhalilov, Abdumajit Ibragimov, Abdulboki Ibragimov, Tursunbek Nazarov, Makhammadshokir Artikov, Odil Makhsdaliyev, Dadakhon Nodirov, Shamsitdin Atamatov, Ortikboy Akbarov, Rasul Akbarov, Shavkat Shokirov, Abdurauf Khamidov, Muzaffar Kodirov, Mukhammadaziz Mamdiyev, Nasibillo Maksudov, Adkhamjon Babojonov, Khakimjon Zakirov, Gulomjon Nadirov, Musojon Mirzaboyev, Dilshchodbek Mamadiyev, Abdulvosid Igamov, Shokurjon Shakirov, and Ravshanbek Mazimjonov.

84. Bakhrom Shakirov, father of Shokurjon Shakirov, said in an interview on February 18, 2005: " The detainees are not members of any underground organisation. They are devout believers and entrepreneurs. They set up a mutual benefit fund and tried to help one another in commercial matters, following Islamic teachings. They used the money in the mutual benefit fund to carry out charitable work and regularly transferred money to children's homes and schools. A broad-based social welfare scheme was set up at the companies run by the detained businessmen. Staff at the companies received material help when they married (staff were often even provided with an apartment) and when they were ill the employer paid in full for all the medicines and sick leave. Any employee at the company knew quite well that if anything went wrong the company management and his colleagues would always come to his aid. The Islamic businessmen worked out a genuine minimum subsistence wage in Andijan (which was several times higher than the official minimum wage) and agreed to pay staff a wage that was higher than this figure. It's true that Muslim prayers were read out at these Islamic companies, but this was a voluntary matter. They didn't demand that workers should be believers, but people at these companies gradually came to understand the truth of Islam. These Islamic companies gradually became famous throughout Andijan, and the local media regularly carried positive reports about the charitable activities of the businessmen who are now under arrest. Even now, while the businessmen are in prison, local television is showing glowing reports about their charitable work. It is the popularity of these Islamic companies among the population that has provoked the authorities' harsh response. The state has begun to see these businessmen as ideological competitors, because their activity has truly demonstrated the superiority of Islamic economics."

85. The authorities described the arrested businessmen as belonging to the Akramia group meaning that they were the followers of Akram Yuldashev, in jail after having been convicted on a charge of terrorism. In 1992, Akram Yuldashev, then a 29-year-old maths teacher of Andijan, published a pamphlet titled "Yimonga Yul" (Path to faith) on what he projected as the superiority of Islamic moral values. This brought him many supporters and his pamphlet was widely read. In 1998, the authorities arrested him on a charge of possessing narcotics and he was jailed for 30

months. However, he was prematurely released in December 1998. At the time of his arrest, he was working in a furniture company owned by the Shakirov family. He was again arrested in February 1999 following explosions in Tashkent, accused of participating in acts of terrorism and sentenced to 17 years in jail. The charge-sheet filed against him described him as the head of the Akramia, whose objective, it was alleged, was to convert Uzbekistan into an Islamic State ruled according to the Shari`a.

86. The wife of Yuldashev, in an interview, denied that her husband had any links with the HT or the IMU and accused the authorities of falsely projecting him as the Osama bin Laden of Uzbekistan.

87. The speculation in Andijan was that the so-called Akramia group was either a front organisation of the HT or had been formed by dissidents from the HT, who were dissatisfied with its policy of not resorting to terrorism. The members of the group denied that they called themselves the Akramia group. They said they belonged to a biradari (Brotherhood) group without any political agenda. According to them, their only objective was to propagate the true values of Islam, make the Muslims better Muslims and help poor Muslims.

88. Two reports relating to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are indicative of the kind of nervousness caused in the local governments by the activities of the local Muslim clerics and how the attempts of the governments of the region to project religious leaders not supporting the policies of the Governments as extremists and terrorists were providing oxygen to the extremists.

89. The first case relates to Nasrullah ibn Ibadullah, an ethnic Uzbek, who enjoyed the patronage of the Soviet authorities before 1991 and served as a judge (kazi) in a religious court of Turkmenistan. When Turkmenistan became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union, he became the newly independent country's chief mufti. He continued in that post till 2003, when he fell foul of President Saparmurat Niyazov, reportedly following his refusal to order religious clerics in charge of prayers in the local mosques to use during their religious sermons the "Rukhnama", a spiritual guide for his people written in 2001 by Niyazov. In January, 2003, Ibadullah was sacked by Niyazov, arrested and sentenced to 22 years in jail. While the details of the exact charges against him are not known, it was widely believed that his sacking and imprisonment were due to Niyazov's suspicion of Uzbeks holding religious posts, his opposition to the use of the "Rukhnama" in the mosques under his control and his action in 2002 in writing a book of his own on the teachings of Islam.

90. The second case relates to Alo Eshonkhujaev, a 28-year-old graduate of a Tashkent religious school, who was to have become on April 1, 2004, the imam of the central mosque in Margelan, a town in Uzbekistan's Fergana Valley. The day before he was to take over his religious post, he was arrested on a charge of complicity in bombings in Tashkent, accused of possessing illegal arms and ammunition, tried and sentenced to six years in jail. Foreign human rights activists and members of Uzbekistan's Muslim community were not convinced of the validity of the charges against him. They projected the case against him as another instance of the manner in which the Karimov Government tries to suppress religious clerics, considered more faithful to their religion than to the ruling dispensation, by having them falsely implicated in cases of terrorism. Such instances, instead of helping to counter terrorism, are actually providing further fuel to it and

adding to the support enjoyed by organisations such as the HT.

## **IMU'S LINKAGES WITH JIHADI EXTREMISTS IN TAJIKISTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN**

91. During the civil war in Tajikistan (1992-1996), Uzbek extremists fought in the units of the United Tajik Opposition. Juma Namangani acted as an aide to Mirzo Ziev, a Tajik extremist commander, who later on became Tajikistan's Minister for Emergency Situations after a ceasefire was negotiated in Tajikistan and a coalition government established. Even after the ceasefire, the IMU continued its clandestine activities in Tajikistan and reportedly operated two training camps in a mountainous area in Tajikistan called Karategin. In the summer of 1999, some members of the IMU launched an armed attack from Karategin in an attempt to break into Uzbekistan through the territory of Kyrgyzstan. They wanted to "liberate" the Fergana valley and establish an Islamic state there. Their attempt failed. The Uzbek security forces forced them to withdraw into Tajikistan. A repeat of their attempt the next year also failed. In May, 2002, the Uzbek authorities arrested several terrorists who had allegedly planted and detonated bombs in a market place in Bishkek and in a bank in Osh in Kyrgyzstan.

92. On May 1, 1998, an explosion in a taxi in the city of Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan killed two and injured twelve others. The next year, Kyrgyz security services arrested five individuals in connection with the attack. According to the local authorities, three of them were Chinese Uighurs who had been trained in Chechnya. In 2000, Kazakh security services raided an apartment in Almaty that was used as a safe-house by Uighur separatists from China's Xinjiang Region. The occupants of the apartment resisted arrest and were killed in a shootout. The same year, the chairman of the Ittipak Uighur cultural association in Kyrgyzstan, Negmat Bazakov, was assassinated in Bishkek after he refused to contribute money to the separatists of Xinjiang. According to Kalyk Imankulov, of Kyrgyzstan's National Security Service, Uighur separatists were acting in tandem with the IMU under the name of the Islamic Movement of Central Asia.

## **THE PRESENT GROUND SITUATION**

93. The main threats to the stability of the CARs in general and to Uzbekistan in particular arise from three sources: first, the remnants of the IMU; second, the growing following of the HT in the entire region; and third, large sections of the people, angered by what they consider as the repressive policies of the local Governments and their exploitation of the fears of extremism and terrorism to continue their repressive rule.

94. It has to be underlined that the situation in the Central Asian region as a whole is not comparable to that in Chechnya and Afghanistan, which are viewed by sections of local Muslims as under foreign occupation-----by the Russians in Chechnya and by the US and NATO in Afghanistan. Jihadi terrorism in Chechnya and Afghanistan has a patriotic as well as a religious dimension.

95. Jihadi terrorism in the CARs has a purely religious dimension. It is seen as a struggle against their own leaders, who are trying to suppress them, and not against foreign occupying forces. Long years of communist rule drove the religious faith of the people underground, but could not

suppress and eradicate it. The success of the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet troops in the 1980s demonstrated the power and influence of Islam in motivating people to make sacrifices to defend their religion.

96. The collapse of the USSR has led to a resurgence of Islam in the CARs. The newly-born Islam has assumed an increasingly political color. The ruling dispensations in the countries of the region see in political Islam a threat to their power. No liberal political movement has been allowed to come up to confront democratically in town halls and other public fora the policies of the remnants of the Communist era, who continue to hold sway. The result: The mosques have become not only places of worship, but also places of confrontation with the authorities.

97. The resulting alienation of growing sections of the people has been sought to be exploited by the IIF of bin Laden through organisations such as the IMU, the HUM and the HUJI as well as by the HT. The IIF feels that it would not be in a position to make headway in the CARs unless and until the US-led coalition is forced to withdraw from Afghanistan and the Taliban's rule is restored there. Their present focus of attention is, therefore, Afghanistan. The IMU leadership and command and control, presently based in South Waziristan, is concentrating its attention on training a fresh crop of Jihadi terrorists for fighting against the US-led coalition in Afghanistan.

98. The HT, which does not as yet have any Afghan agenda despite reports of its involvement in the anti-US demonstrations last year following allegations of the desecration of the Holy Koran by American guards in the Guantanamo Bay detention centre in Cuba, has stepped up its activities in the CARs, where it finds a fertile soil for experimenting with its ideas of achieving political power through religious mobilisation. The HT looks upon itself as presently engaged in the third and last phase of its struggle in the CARs.

99. In dealing with the IIF and the HT, the Governments of the CARs are committing the same mistakes as the West in dealing with Al Qaeda and in Iraq and Russia in Chechnya and Dagestan---namely, an over-reliance on military methods to deal with terrorism and an inability to understand religion as a motivating force and to counter the new political ideology coming out of mosques.

100. Terrorism---ethnic, religious or ideological---cannot be dealt with through purely military methods, through organisations such as the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation or through joint military exercises of the victim States or through Churchillian rhetoric. It can be only dealt with through better and more democratic governance, better policing, a greater sensitivity and attention to the people's legitimate grievances, a greater understanding of the role of religion as a motivating force and a more nuanced operational approach with the use of well-calibrated force where necessary and avoidance of force, where possible.

101. Such an intelligent approach is nowhere visible in the Central Asian region. They will continue to bleed in the absence of a change in their approach to counter-terrorism, but there are no indicators that the bleeding could become life-threatening.

102. The situation in the CARs should be a matter of common concern to India, China, the US and Russia. Firstly, because of the cross-border linkages with the Taliban, Al Qaeda, the

Pakistani Jihadi terrorist organisations and the Uighur extremists on the one side and with the Chechens on the other. Secondly, because of the danger of the Fergana Valley becoming one day a new hub of international Jihadi terrorism. Thirdly, because of the dangers of the penetration of the extremist elements into the scientific community of the region and tapping expertise in their attempts to develop a WMD capability. And fourthly, because of the location of vast energy resources in the region and the dangers of the terrorists one day acquiring control of them.

103. It is important for these four countries to get together, exchange ideas on the situation in the region and work towards a common approach. The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation is not the answer to the threats posed by terrorism in this region.

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