Addressing Terrorist Threats in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan: Winning Hearts and Minds

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ABSTRACT

The radical ideology of Islamist fundamentalists espoused by Osama Bin Laden and his transnational network presents a rising threat to global security, particularly in countries undergoing political, social, and economic transformation. Such weak or failed states with their corrupt political institutions, lack of political freedoms, poor economic conditions, high unemployment, and social dissatisfaction and marginalization are the most vulnerable to radical Islamic movements and may provide fertile ground for sowing the seeds of religious radicalism. In addition, the burgeoning national security threat weak states pose inevitably will have detrimental regional and global implications. Two such examples can be found in

Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan—Muslim countries newly emerging after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Both Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan have undergone Islamic revival after decades of Soviet religious repression and both share a common "starting point" in terms of the existing political, social and economic infrastructure.

The geographical locations of Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan and the potential global repercussions if radicals gain a strong foothold make them ideal for case studies. Azerbaijan is neighbors with radical Islamist Iran and the Dagestan and Chechnya parts of Russian, known for the flourishing ethno-religious radicalism. Uzbekistan borders Afghanistan, another "hotbed" of terrorism. To date, both countries have fallen victim to terrorism, but terrorism of different nature. This paper provides an overview and analysis of the rise of radial Islam; the history and role of Islam in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan; the genesis of violent fundamentalism in Uzbekistan, including the growing terrorist threat from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb-ut Tahrir (HT); the factors deterring the advancement of radical Islamic thinking in Azerbaijan, as well the vulnerability of Azerbaijani society to recruitment by terrorists.

"A guerilla is a fish swimming in the sea of the people."

Mao Tse-tung

INTRODUCTION

One of the key global questions for the twenty-first century is how to stop terrorism, or, at best, how to prevent this pernicious phenomena from emerging and spreading. To deal with this threat, many states involved in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) are crafting strategies and long-term plans, most of which rely on military and law enforcement arsenals. However, terrorism as seen thus far in countries like Northern Ireland, Israel, and Russia among others clearly demonstrates that military force alone is not sufficient to curb terrorist violence. While one can argue that the military aspect of any counter-terrorism strategy ensures the physical demolition of the terrorist infrastructure, such strategy has not been shown to provide long term peace and stability. As long as terrorists are able to adapt to the changing political and social landscape and recruit new members, they will continue to operate, leaving bloodshed and sorrow in their wake.

Winning the hearts and minds of targeted people is essential for achieving success and should be put in the foreground of GWOT. Ultimately, people are the force which keeps a terrorist organization afloat as "groups need new members both to grow in strength and to replenish losses and defections."[i] Any attempt to fight terrorism without winning hearts and minds is futile, even if the battle ground is conquered. In this sense, the overall situation in both Iraq and Afghanistan does not appear optimistic; the acts of religious as well as non-religious motivated terrorism are continuing to tear the countries apart and promising a return to chaos.[ii] Some pundits claim that Iraq has become a "second Afghanistan," referring to the Soviets attempt to conquer Afghanistan in the 1980s and the ensuing increased Islamist militancy and calls for global *jihad*.[iii] In addition, Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan, while dispersing al Qaeda and its leaders and dismantling training bases,[iv] has also contributed to the scattering of al Qaeda cells to approximately 60 countries.[v]

The primary objective of this paper, however, is not al Qaeda itself, but rather the threat stemming from the radical ideology of Islamist fundamentalists espoused by Osama Bin Laden and this transnational network, particularly in countries undergoing political, social, and economic transformation. Such weak or failed states with their corrupt political institutions, lack of political freedoms, poor economic conditions, high unemployment, and social dissatisfaction and marginalization are the most vulnerable to radical Islamic movements and may provide fertile ground for sowing the seeds of religious radicalism. In addition, the burgeoning national security threat weak states pose inevitably will have detrimental regional and global implications. Two such examples can be found in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan—Muslim countries newly emerging after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Both Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan have undergone Islamic revival after decades of Soviet religious repression and both share a common "starting point" in terms of the existing political, social and economic infrastructure. The case studies are significant because of the geographical locations of the countries and the potential global repercussions if radicals gain a strong foothold. Azerbaijan is neighbors with radical Islamist Iran and the Dagestan and Chechnya[vi] parts of Russian, known for the flourishing ethno-religious radicalism. Uzbekistan borders Afghanistan, another "hotbed" of terrorism. To date, both countries have fallen victim to terrorism, but terrorism of different nature.

This paper provides an overview and analysis of: the rise of radial Islam; the history and role of Islam in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan; the genesis of violent fundamentalism in Uzbekistan, including the growing terrorist threat from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb-ut Tahrir (HT); the factors deterring the advancement of radical Islamic thinking in Azerbaijan, as well the vulnerability of Azerbaijani society to recruitment by terrorists.

RISE OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM AND MILITANT ISLAM: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

After the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the issue of religious fundamentalism and radicalism acquired new political significance. Although religious fundamentalism as a political phenomenon is not a novelty,[vii] before September 11 only a small group of experts believed that radical Islam embraced by terrorists had revealed itself as a global threat. Now it is almost universally understood that the ideology of al Qaeda and Bin Laden which has turned Islam into a "terrorist creed preaching global violence"[viii] is aimed not only against the United States and its allies, but also against the governments of Arab and other Muslim states who support so-called infidels.

Islam, *per se*, certainly is not a religion of hatred.[ix] The Qur'an contains an abundance of verses exhorting compassion, mercy, and tolerance, while shunning cruelty, intolerance, injustice, and oppression.[x] However, as in any other world religion, a fundamentalist movement also has emerged from within Islam. Religious fundamentalists are described as "former religious conservatives who chose to separate from their orthodox or traditionalist communities and redefine the sacred community in terms of its disciplined opposition to nonbelievers and "lukewarm" believers."[xi]

Fundamentalism, however, does not necessarily mean violent assertion of religious values. As a movement, fundamentalism begins and remains within the confines of the

religious community.[xii] Fundamentalists in Pakistan, Malaysia, and Turkey, for instance, are not endorsing violence, but rather a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the sayings and actions of the Prophet (*sunna*). Traditional fundamentalists oppose accommodation to changing social conditions and espouse a return to an idealized vision of Islam as practiced at the time of Muhammed and/or the caliphates.[xiii] Yet in its extreme forms fundamentalism can escalate into religious radicalism and extremism where believers seek to change the established order by violent means in accordance with their religious fundamentalist views.[xiv] As the views of fundamentalists become more extreme, their religious activism gradually may exceed the bounds of the religious community, entering new phases of religious radicalism and extremism before evolving further into religiously-motivated terrorism or holy wars (*jihad*[xv]).

The genesis and rise of Islamic activism can be traced back to the period of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. The Muslim Brotherhood opposed the secular tendencies of Islamic nations, advocated a return to the precepts of the Qur'an, rejected Western influences, and sanctioned *jihad*.[xvi] However, despite this resolution, radical Islam did not explode on the scene until the late 1960s. Among the factors that catalyzed the rise of Islamic fundamentalism were internal problems within the Muslim world, such as the Saudis' search for hegemony over the form and content of Islam (the Wahhabite doctrine[xvii]); their willingness to subsidize their followers' efforts with petrodollars; and the competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran[xviii] for religious leadership of the Islamic world.[xix] In addition, certain external factors greatly contributed to the Islamic "boom" and increased the number of Islamic political movements in the 1970s and 1980s.[xx] The use (and abuse) made of religion by the United States and Arab countries in countering leftists threats domestically and regionally,[xxi] the aggressive policy of Israel in the Middle East supported by the United States, and the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict all fanned the growing flames of radicalism. In particular, the burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third sacred place of all Muslims, by Israel in August 1969,[xxii] stirred up feelings of indignation througout the entire Islamic world.

However, the true watershed event after which Islamic radicalism began flowing into the non-Muslim world and became a constituent of international politics was the 1979 Iranian revolution. Prior to the revolution, radicals were only active within national boundaries, targeting primarily their own regimes. Coming into power by way of violent struggle, Ayatollah Khomeini and his radical followers condemned both the United States ("Great Satan") and the Soviet Union ("Lesser Satan") as equally malevolent forces in international politics.[xxiii] The seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran in November 1979, Khomeini's xenophobic rhetoric, the threat of export of Islamic revolution, and increasing religious fanaticism all served to put the Western world on alert with radical Islam.

At the same time, the contours of a clash between Islam and communism began to appear in Afghanistan where Saudi Arabia and the United States backed the *mujahideen*'s armed resistance, or *jihad,*[xxiv] of the Soviet invasion.[xxv] The 1989 Soviet withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan was trumpeted as "a great victory for Islamism"[xxvi] on the wave of which "the victorious *mujahideen* began to export their doctrine of liberating Muslim lands from the clutches of the "infidels" beyond the borders of Afghanistan." At that time, almost no one would have predicted that 12 years later, 22-year old Osama Bin Laden from Saudi Arabia, fighting in Afghanistan, would wage a full-scale holy war, or *jihad*, against the United States and its allies and come to personify Islamic extremism.

Some experts, however, argue that the *mujahideen's* triumph in Afghanistan in early 1990 marked the high point and the beginning of a decline for the Islamist movement. These experts point to the disillusionment of the devout middle class by the radical ideology after the Islamist failures in Sudan and present-day Afghanistan,[xxvii] the neo-liberal intelligentsia and middle class propensity towards more moderate and liberal Islam (such as the reformist school in Iran and Turkey's Fazilet Party), as well as the radical Islamists' inability to reduce "contemporary Muslims to an Islamist mass."[xxviii] Nevertheless, everyday mass-media reports of perpetual terrorist acts not only in rebellious Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in other parts of the world speak in reverse. For example, an abstract from an interview with U.S. military and intelligence officials in late 2002 states:

> Today, two to four al Qaeda and Taliban members per week are captured or killed in Afghanistan, but at the end of the week the Islamists are successful in attracting a dozen more recruits as members, collaborators, supporters, and sympathizers. To put it crudely, the rate of production of Islamists is greater than the rate of their kill or capture.[xxix]

The Islamic militant ideology of Bin Laden and al Qaeda which calls *jihad* against "infidels" a "religious duty for every individual Muslim who can do this, in a country in which he can do this"[xxx] is spreading far beyond the Middle East. The most frightening trend is that the rhetoric has been picked up by terrorist groups who "gravitated to al Qaeda in recent years, where before such linkages did not exist."[xxxi] By recasting Western hegemony as a modern-day religious crusade, Bin Laden has successfully stirred powerful emotions and sentiments which have boosted support for an Islamist *jihad*.[xxxii] Given that *jihad* as a concept is intertwined with the idea of *umma* (the worldwide Islamic community) in the face of adversity, this collective defense is expressed in pan-Islamic unity of the Muslim community.[xxxiii] In addition to the support from the fellow terrorists, "there is popular support for the al Qaeda model of Islam among the politicized and radicalized Muslims."[xxxiv] Even if a majority of Muslims abhor al Qaeda and Bin Laden as terrorists, they support the legitimacy of their bigger cause and consider them as "the defenders of Islam under attack."[xxxv]

Besides resentment vis-à-vis the West, the other factors creating fertile ground for Islamic fundamentalism and increased religious terrorism include the deformation of political institutions, social-economic crises, rampant corruption, high unemployment among the rising youth generation, a decrease in living standards and increase in poverty, along with the oppression of dissidents and opposition. An example of this trend was seen during the Asian economic crisis of 1997-1998. This crisis, which deeply affected the economies of the Muslim secular states of Malaysia and Indonesia (previously the fastest growing economies in the South Asia) as well as the resulting political turmoil, incubated Islamic extremism and presented an opportunity for extremism to take hold and enter the mainstream, whereas before it was on the fringes of the society.[xxxvi] As more and more young people in Indonesia grew dissatisfied with their situations, they came to join the terrorist organization of Jemaah Islamiyah and fueled more violence. The problems experienced by Malaysia and Indonesia serve as warnings to other states that governments must be vigilant on domestic issues and work to foster a good quality of life for all their people. State governments can play a role in reducing terrorism and curtailing its spread with appropriate assistance from the international community.

However, internal strife is only one side of the larger struggle against terrorism. To wage an effective battle against terrorists who use religion as a tool of power requires states to engage in informational and propagandistic warfare in order to de-legitimize this extreme ideology in the eyes of sympathizers as well as those who are ready to kill innocent people and sacrifice their own lives for the cause. As a rule, religious fundamentalists appeal to literal interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith (the traditions of the Prophet) and invoke the letter and not the spirit of the sacred writings. Therefore, the Islamic community itself, namely the spiritual leaders and Muslim scholars, should play an important role in fighting back and reclaiming the spirit of scripture. If moderate Islamists and reformers are not able to win back the hearts and minds of the people and take the initiative, they will lose to the extremists and terrorists.

It is obvious that Islam is currently going through a renewal. Some authors even refer to a kind of "insurgency," taking place today within Islam.[xxxvii] While globalization, technological and communication progress, democracy and liberalization all have affected and will continue to affect Muslim countries, some Islamist religious leaders view these forces as "threats" to traditions and use them to invoke fear within religious circles. Radicals and terrorists have capitalized on these fears to co-op Islam for sinister purposes.

RELIGIOUS RADICALISM AND TERRORISM EXPERIENCE OF UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan represents a classic case study of how radicalism and terrorism can breed in a society. As a result of harsh government policies, such as the application of repressive methods against opposition and religious community-based organizations, the trampling on freedom of expression and thought, as well as its inability to put into practice effective socio-economic reforms, Uzbekistan has become a fertile ground for terrorism. The series of shootings and bombings that swept over the country in March-April 2004 made it quite clear that President Islam Karimov's actions to tackle Islamic extremism have only worsened the situation. The ongoing ferment has become a concern not only for Uzbekistan, but the entire Central Asian region.

Historically, Islam has very deep roots in Central Asian societies. It arrived in the region "at the hands of Arab invaders" at the beginning of the 7th century, and flourished during the 10th through 16th centuries, when, as part of the great Silk Road, "Central Asia had become one of the great centers of Islamic learning and culture."[xxxviii] However, the practice of Islam declined sharply after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, given the Soviets' secularism and total rejection of any religion—Christianity, Islam, or Judaism. The Soviets, particularly under Stalin, launched a full-scale assault on Islamic institutions and practices, "outlawed the Arabic language and script, on which Islamic teaching and Muslim culture were based, in favor of the local vernacular,"[xxxix] and conducted purges of millions of people who threatened the regime, including Islamic clergy members. Nevertheless, Islamic beliefs and practices in everyday life survived. Although the clergy was formally prohibited from proselytizing, during the post-World War II period[xl] the church was legalized.[xli] Therefore, de-politicized Islam managed to remain an important part of daily life and identity in Soviet Central Asia.[xlii]

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Gorbachev's *perestoika* and *glasnost* reforms and the subsequent break-up of the Soviet Union brought about a rapid religious resurgence in

secular Central Asia, and in particular in Uzbekistan. Initially, the Islamic revival was mostly focused on restoring the rights of Muslims to worship freely, but it also was marked by an increasing interest in political Islam.[xliii] For example, according to surveys conducted by the International Crisis Group (ICG) today about 20 percent of Uzbeks want a legal Islamic Party to represent the interests of Muslims.[xliv] Although the vast majority of the population tends to the secular form of government and democratic principles, a small group of radicalized Islamists have emerged who seek an Islamic state.

The origins of Islamic radicalism in Uzbekistan can be traced back to the early 1990s when Wahhabism, financed by Saudi Arabia, discovered new places in the ruins of the Soviet Union and started spreading. Saudi Arabia invested billions of dollars through Islamic charities to teach a puritan version of Islam and to build mosques and religious seminaries (*madrasa*) to propagate Islam and counter the influence of Shi'a Iran in the region. But where initially Wahhabi organizations found only limited popular support, in the ensuing years, poor economic conditions, lack of democratic reforms, and most importantly, repression by the government have pushed people to the extremes[xlv] and fostered a new interest in radicalism.

Still macro-level political opportunities for Islamic movements in Uzbekistan are limited, if not impossible. Despite the fact that the constitution provides for freedom of religion and enshrines the separation of religion and state, the establishment of religious-based political parties is banned. The constitution also states that members of religious groups cannot run for the office of president.[xlvi] Thus, two leading opposition groups which appeared on the political scene in the early 1990s, Birlik (Unity) and Erk (Freedom), were outlawed[xlvii] and their leaders went into exile abroad.[xlviii] The Uzbek government exercises tight control over Islamic bodies through the State Committee for Religious Affairs and mullahs objecting to the government's interpretation of Islam have been harassed and arrested.[xlix] The media has reported the 'disappearance' of three religious leaders[l] among other stories. However, these Soviet-style measures have proved counter-effective and increased social dissatisfaction. Instead of improving the situation, they have played into the hands of radical groups.

As such, Uzbekistan is now facing the threat of terrorism and extremism from two groups advocating radical and militant Islam– the IMU, which has recently renamed itself the Islamic Party of Turkestan (IPT),[li] and HT (the Party of Liberation). In the past, the Uzbek government claimed that HT was a political and religious front for the IMU, but evidence indicates that despite the shared objective of the two groups, for the time being they remain unaffiliated.[lii]

The IMU and HT are fundamentally different organizations. For instance, unlike the home-grown IMU, HT was "imported" to the region from the Middle East, where it emerged from a Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1952.[liii] Unlike most radical Islamic groups, HT seeks to combine Islamic tradition with the technological achievements of modern society. In addition, HT differs from the IMU in focusing more on "intellectual and political methods"[liv] rather than on violent ways of attaining the goals. But the harsh crackdown and mass arrests of HT members has driven both organizations further underground and facilitated their radicalization.

The genesis of the IMU can be traced back to the period immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union when some religious leaders harbored expectations that Islam would find, at last, its place within the political system of independent Uzbekistan. The IMU

emerged out of an Islamic group, the Adolat Social Democratic party, which in late 1991 maintained effective control of the local government in Namangan city in Ferghana Valley, a historic center of Islamic piety. The group acted as a sort of voluntary Muslim militia for the enforcement of basic Islamic values, along with the prevention of crime and corruption in the city. At the outset, the *modus operandi* of the movement was localized and did not go beyond demonstrations and raids on government offices to protest the election to president of Islam Karimov, the previous Communist party leader in Uzbekistan.[lv] However, after the clampdown in early 1992, IMU members dispersed to Tajikistan to fight alongside Tajik Islamists in the civil war. In the mid-1990s, the IMU set up bases in the Karategin Valley of Tajikistan before moving to another base in Khairaton, Afghanistan and forming the core of what later became the new IMU led by Juma Namangani and Tahir Yoldashev.[lvi] The movement showed its survivability, strengthening its organizational structure and filling in the "gap" of the manpower with new recruits, including some from the Taliban forces.

During the years in Afghanistan, the IMU built close ties with the Taliban and al Qaeda. In addition to offering a "save haven," the Taliban provided training facilities and instructions in urban terrorism, bomb making, and assassination. A majority of the IMU recruits in Afghanistan were reported to be trained by al Qaeda's Arab 055 Brigade[lvii] and in August 2001, sources said that the military leader of the IMU, Juma Namangani,[lviii] was appointed deputy commander in chief of the Taliban. In addition, the IMU and the Taliban were linked together in the opium trade. It is estimated that prior to Operation *Enduring Freedom*, the IMU was the Taliban's main drug courier in the north and responsible for smuggling as much as 70 percent of the opium passing through Central Asia.[lix] The IMU's affiliation with the Taliban and al Qaeda also contributed to the expansion of the movement's contacts with "partner" terrorist organizations, such as the Abu Sayyaf Group, Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Harakat ul-Ansar, and other radical Kashmiri groups.[lx]

With the reinforcement of organizational structure, the ambitions and objectives of the IMU and its leaders changed. If initially, the IMU sought only to overthrow President Karimov's regime and replace it with a fundamentalist Muslim government, by 2000 the IMU had broadened its goals to include the establishment of a radical Islamist caliphate in Turkestan—from the Caspian region to Xinjang, China. The IMU is now considered a radical Sunni Islamist group whose leadership has been influenced by the Wahhabi and Deobandi traditions. In 1995, Juma Namangani traveled to Saudi Arabia to undergo religious and intelligence training from Saudi intelligence. According to different sources, the organization currently is made up of anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 fighters. Ultimately, the IMU pulls most of its recruits from the disfranchised and economically discontented younger population. For instance, approximately 59 percent of the unemployed in Uzbekistan are between 16 and 30 years old. The worst figures are for the Ferghana Valley—the place where the IMU emerged—which has an estimated 70 to 80 percent unemployment rate.

In February 1999, the IMU sent a "notifying message" of its return with six simultaneous car bomb explosions in Tashkent, the Uzbek capital, killing 13 people and injuring more than 100. In August 1999, the IMU declared a *jihad* against the Uzbek government and that summer IMU fighters invaded the Batken area in south Kyrgyzstan, aiming to reach Uzbek territory and set off an Islamic revolt.[lxi] In what later became known as the Batken crisis, the group—whose number increased from an original 20 to 1,000 fighters—seized control of four villages and took more than 300 hostages, including one Kyrgyz general and four Japanese geologists.[lxii] The IMU's command of small unit military and infiltration tactics

during the Batken incursions demonstrated that its military capabilities were sometimes superior to those of the regional military forces it was fighting.

The international campaign against al Qaeda and the Taliban severely damaged the IMU's infrastructure. The military leader, Juma Namangani, was killed during the U.S. aerial bombardment of Mazar-i-Sharif in November 2001, but the organization's politico-religious leader, Tahir Yoldashev, is presumed to be alive, hiding in the tribal zones of Pakistan. Despite the sharp depletion and demolition of pivotal training bases in Afghanistan, it would be incorrect to suspect that the IMU has faded away. Actually, Uzbek security forces argue that the IMU is now reorganizing and regrouping and may be forming a tactical alliance or merger with HT.[lxiii]

Hizb-ut Tahrir is a banned Islamist group whose aim is to establish an Islamic caliphate using non-violent means. According to the ICG:

> HT promotes a utopian view of political Islam under which social problems such as corruption and poverty would be banished by the application of Islamic law and government. Its public statements tend to be vague on how this will be achieved and do not address the many difficult questions raised by political Islam. Statements are often strongly anti-Western, anti-Semitic, and anti-Shia.

HT is organized in a secretive and hierarchical pyramid structure. Its membership in Uzbekistan ranges from several thousand to more than 15,000 followers, although even a close approximation is impossible to determine given its organizational composition. Recruitment usually takes place on the recommendations of other members. As a rule, members of HT come from the marginalized groups of unemployed and young people. In particular, new members often are attracted by the organization's emphasis on social justice, equality, help to the poor, and other social problems. The organization's main activities to mobilize popular support are through the dissemination of leaflets and tapes as well as through the sponsorship of discussions on issues like the Palestinian conflict and Chechnya.[lxiv] Although HT publicly eschews violence as a form of political struggle, for the last three years it has been showing signs of increasing militancy, especially in regard to the 1,000 U.S. troops now stationed in Khanabad in the southern part of the country.[lxv]

After the March 2004 terrorist acts in Tashkent and Bukhara, which killed 47 people,[lxvi] several Central Asian experts pointed the finger at the IMU as the most likely perpetrators. However, Uzbek official authorities claimed that HT was behind the attacks. Many in the West considered this a lame justification for the Karimov regime to continue applying repressive methods against the organization. In 2003 an estimated 7,000 people were imprisoned on political or religious motivations, the majority of whom were alleged to have links to the radical HT. However, a month after the attacks, a previously unknown organization calling itself the Islamic Jihad Group claimed responsibility for setting off suicide bombings. "The suicide bombers were the first in Uzbek history, and even more shocking to the Uzbeks, most were women."[lxvii] In addition, information has appeared recently in the media about the Mujahedin of Central Asia Group, supposedly linked to the IMU,[lxviii] which might be responsible for the terrorist acts committed between March 29 and April 1, as well as the July 30th explosions that targeted the U.S. and Israeli embassies and the Uzbek Prosecutor-General's Office, killing four Uzbek law-enforcement personnel along

with the three suicide attackers. The details of the noted terrorist attacks, however, remain unclear.

Ultimately, whether these attacks were the manifestation of a new violent radical group, a reorganized IMU or HT, or a newly formed IMU-HT alliance, they present an issue for the Uzbek government, especially the security and law enforcement bodies. What these attacks make sharply clear is that religious radicalism and terrorism in Uzbekistan cannot be eradicated by an "iron fist" policy. Repressing non-violent dissent and ignoring economic and social problems, such as overpopulation and unemployment, only furthers radicalization and terror. Obviously, the government of Uzbekistan is losing the hearts and minds of its people.

AZERBAIJAN'S VULNERABILITY TO TERRORIST THREATS

Azerbaijan, like Uzbekistan, has fallen victim to terrorism. However, the terrorism has not been driven by religious fanaticism, but rather by those who wish to promote the nationalistic and separatist agenda of Armenian aggressors. In total, the Armenian secret service and various Armenian terrorist organizations—with strong financial support from a diaspora—perpetrated 32 terrorist acts taking the lives of more than 2,000 innocent citizens.[lxix] While the Azerbaijan-Armenian conflict is "frozen" at this juncture, if it resumes it could create a more conducive environment for political terrorism. The potential for terrorism inspired by religious beliefs and fundamentalism in Azerbaijan—a Muslim country reemerging to independent statehood as a result of the collapse of the Soviet system—should not be disregarded.

Azerbaijan is among only a few countries in the world (Iran, Iraq, and ethnic minorities in Russia) where a majority of the population still practices the Shi'ite version of Islam. Given the large number of ethnic minorities inhabiting the northern, western and south-eastern parts of Azerbaijan (Lesgins, Kurds, Tatars, Avars and other smaller groups[lxx]), the Sunni branch of Islam, namely its Hanafi school,[lxxi] is also widespread in certain regions and comprises 30 percent of the whole Muslim population. One of the unique traits of Islam in Azerbaijan is that differences between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims traditionally have not been sharply defined;[lxxii] adherents of both sects can and often do pray together in the same mosque, sometimes even led by the same *mullah* performing both prayer rites.[lxxiii]

Religion in present-day Azerbaijan has been molded under unique conditions, including almost a century-long atheist tradition when the country was under Communist totalitarian rule. The history and development of Islam in Azerbaijan during this period intrinsically resembles Uzbekistan's secularization process when religion became privatized and confined to the family.[lxxiv] Notwithstanding the similarity, the survival of Islam in Azerbaijan bore some special features. For example, during the religious and political oppression under Stalin, the tradition of *taqiyya,*[lxxv] allowed apostasy under a threat, took hold in Azerbaijani society.[lxxvi] "The *taqiyya* heritage, along with the ingrained Shia belief that the only true sovereign is the Invisible Imam, and all other power is usurpation, explains the historically limited Azerbaijani attachment to the institutions of state, which, more often than not, have been alien rather than homegrown."[lxxvii]

In addition to the Soviet process of secularization, which led to the general acceptance of a secular political and judicial system as well as a lay system of education, the proximity to Iran and Turkey has had significant impact on the development of Islam in Azerbaijan. Although religiously the Azerbaijanis are "very close to the Iranians in that they profess the same *duodeciman* (Twelver Imam) Shi'ism," culturally and historically they are much closer to Turkey.[lxxviii] Turkism acted as a consolidating ideology, where ethnic factors were prevailing over the religious ones and "Islam was conceived barely as a constituent of Turkic culture."[lxxix] Moreover, the Turkish model of a secular state appeared more congenial to the cosmopolite Azerbaijanis rather than the radical official Iranian ideology which was regarded more as a menace to their way of life. Raoul Motika, a German expert on Islamic studies, explicates why, based on the case of Iranian revolution of 1979-1980, Islam in Azerbaijan could not serve as a mobilizing force against a secular regime. He suggests the following reasons: the completely different structures of Azerbaijani and Iranian society, specifically the non-existence of a comparable clergy independent from the state; the different role religion plays in each country; the bad reputation Iran has acquired in Azerbaijan due to its oppressive policies towards the 25 million-Azerbaijani living in Iran; the strong relationship between the governments of Iran and Armenia (who now occupies 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories); and the lingering effects of several decades of anti-Iranian propaganda by the Soviet media.[lxxx]

Ultimately, the Soviets' secularization, the propensity towards Turkism, local traditions, as well as a multi-ethnic culture "characterized by tolerance and friendship between different communities"[lxxxi] have largely contributed to the elimination of more radical forms of Islam in Azerbaijan. In the post-independence period, a notion of "national Islam" whereby religion would be regarded as a part of national identity started developing in Azerbaijan.[lxxxii] Despite the growing interest in religion, the Azerbaijani society has upheld its historic traditions of secularism without strict observance of prohibitions and requirements and so far has rejected the idea of blending religion with politics or economics.

Although a secular national mentality dominates the country, several Islamic parties, including the Azerbaijan Islamic Party (AIP), the Islamic Progressive Party of Azerbaijan, and the Tovbe (Repentance) society have appeared on the political scene.[lxxxiii] However, none of these parties has enjoyed much popular support or exercised substantial influence over political life. In the late 1990s, the government arrested activists of the AIP on charges of spying for Iran and sentenced some of its members to long-term imprisonment.[lxxxiv] After rethinking the concept and main values of AIP, the remaining members decided to revive AIP under a different name—the Muslim Democratic Party. They put more emphasis on democracy and human rights in the party platform, emerged from isolation and attempted to align with other opposition forces, but the changes split the ranks within the organization. Although the AIP was banned in 2001, it continues to function and, at this juncture, is not seen as posing a serious threat to the secular regime.

The expansion of radical and fundamentalist views, which in many cases have been propagated by the foreign missionaries who poured into Azerbaijan in the early 1990s, also has been deterred by newly implemented government policies for foreign religious groups aimed at limiting their potential influence on society. The 1992 Law on Religion explicitly prohibits the government from interfering in the religious activities of any individual or group, except for cases where the activity of a religious group "threatens public order and stability." The State Committee for Religious Affairs (SCRA), established in 2001, brought the increasing number of foreign missionaries under control and in conformity with legal

norms by mandating the registration of all religious groups functioning in the country.[lxxxv] Since 2001, the number of registered religious communities has dropped from 400 to 168.[lxxxvi] The lack of registration complicates the work of religious organizations because without registration all their finances are considered illegal. In addition, SCRA regulates the production and dissemination of religious literature. Since 2003, the government has intensified censorship and import controls over religious literature for all religious communities.

In 2002, the Azerbaijan intelligence service began penetrating the networks[lxxxvii] set up in the country by the radical Wahhabi and Salafi Islamic groups, such as the HT and those of Shi'ite orientation operating mainly through Hezbollah and Jeyshullah (Army of Allah).[lxxxviii] The emergence of Salafis advocating the most fundamentalist form of Wahhabism first occurred during the end of the first Russian war in Chechnya in 1996 and was part of a wider plan to establish a foothold in the Caucasus.[lxxxix] The Salafi creed of Islam appealed to the Sunni Muslim Lezghi and Avar minorities living in the northern parts of the country, close to the hotspots of Dagestan and Chechnya.

Several factors contributed to the ability of the Wahhabists to put down roots. First, in the early 1990s, the Sadval (Unity) organization, representing local Lezghins seeking an independent Lezghin republic, participated in several violent incidents of ethno-nationalism[xc] and tensions flared. The Sadval organization was neutralized and several of its activists were arrested on charges of engaging in terrorist activities, including the March 1994 explosion in a central metro station that killed 14 people.[xci] Wahhabists filled the political vacuum left by Sadval's knockdown.[xcii] The Wahhabists then capitalized on the high discontent with government policies, the poor economic situation, and corruption among middle-level officials. And finally, the Wahhabist network in neighboring Dagestan played a role in establishing ties and contacts in Azerbaijan.

After the return to hostilities in Chechnya in 2000, Wahhabi proselytizers started inciting the young men, mostly Lezgi and Avar, to fight in Chechnya against the Russians.[xciii] About 100 Azerbaijani nationals received training in the Pankisi Valley of Georgia to fight in Chechnya; approximately 30 of those fighters have since been arrested by Azerbaijani intelligence and law enforcement agencies, but the rest are still active in the Northern Caucasus. The Abu-Bakr Mosque in Baku, the capital, allegedly had been involved in the recruitment process and was closed by authorities in late 2003. However, "the mosque remains open, as the authorities fear unrest and more difficulties if the radical groups are driven underground."[xciv] HT, which had been actively functioning in Uzbekistan, started clandestinely operating in Baku as well. However, almost immediately, the Ministry of National Security stifled the growth of the organization and neutralized it. In 2002, the government sentenced six members of HT to seven years of imprisonment for attempted terrorist activities.[xcv]

Along with Sunni groups, Shia-oriented radical organizations backed by Iran also have a "share" in organizing subversive activity and spreading fundamentalist Islam in Azerbaijan. In 2001, security forces neutralized an indigenous Shi'ite radical group called Jeyshullah that was believed to act as an "Azeri affiliate of Hezbollah."[xcvi] In 2000, the authorities managed to detain most of the members of Jeyshullah and gave prison sentences to its 13 members for plotting terrorist attacks against the United States Embassy in Baku in 1999.

Undoubtedly, the professionalism of state intelligence services and their ability to penetrate the radical and fundamentalist networks which have emerged in the country has helped Azerbaijani authorities to prevent the spread of radical Islam on a national scale as well as curb terrorist activity. Still even as government authorities succeed in damaging the financial and military infrastructure of these radical groups, the government, above all, needs to address the root causes of radicalism be it the rights of minorities, religious freedom, economic conditions, corruption or any other socio-economic problem causing discontent and grievance among the population. In this context, the recent events involving social protests in Nardaran (2002) and the case around the Juma Mosque (2003-present) indicate that Azerbaijan is falling prey to the same mistakes Uzbekistan has made, which have caused a certain part of the Uzbek society to turn to radical means to achieve change. Azerbaijan's leadership hastens to blame almost any civic disturbance or complaints about social-economic issues as a manifestation of radical Islam.

During the Nardaran protests, inhabitants of Nadaran, a small village at the outskirts of Baku with a reputation for being strongly religious, demanded that the government address a number of social and economic concerns, including chronic shortages of gas and electricity.[xcvii] The government responded to these demands by positioning armed security forces around the settlement and cordoning it off. About 15 senior leaders of the community were arrested and transferred to the department within the Ministry of Internal Affairs dealing with terrorism. The AIP participated in the riots as well, and its leader, Alikram Aliyev, was sentenced to six years of imprisonment.[xcviii] This case demonstrates that if the government stays blinds to valid social grievances, an increasing number of people may turn to religious movements willing to exploit social protests. There is no guarantee that similar incidents will not be repeated in other regions.

Tensions between the Juma Mosque and the government arising over property rights at the building where the religious congregation worshiped caused concern that "the authorities' heavy-handed tactics may end up stoking religious radicalism in the Azerbaijani capital."[xcix] Many experts in Azerbaijan believe that the forcible eviction of 30 worshipers from the mosque by police, and the government's persecution of the mosque's imam, Ilgar Ibrahimoglu,[c] on the grounds of espousing radical ideas—a fact which is rejected by a majority of followers—could alienate and potentially radicalize a significant number of believers in Azerbaijan, as well as boost Ibrahimoglu's political and religious influence.[ci] In this case, instead of aggravating the situation, the government should consider a more amicable and compassionate approach to Juma worshippers and perhaps, even allocate an alternative place for the congregation to worship. However, since the beginning of GWOT, the government has shown signs of deviating from its previous successful policy of "a delicate combination of coercion and benevolence"[cii] towards a policy of "sticks only," which is fraught with risk and has the potential of stirring up radical elements.

Azerbaijan is not immune from radicalism. The continuous social, economic, and political problems, including poverty, the uneven distribution of oil wealth, the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, disillusionment with politicians, an undemocratic system, and corruption could quite realistically create fertile soil for radicals and increase the vulnerability of Azerbaijani society to the threat of radicalism. The government must stop turning a blind eye to these problems and using religion for political leverage.[ciii] Otherwise, it could be too late.

CONCLUSION

Today the issue of religious fundamentalism is high on the counter-terrorism agenda. Addressing the crucial issue of ideology and a de-legitimization of the fundamentalist views which justify the killing of innocents should be a key part of the overall strategy to suppress the scourge of terrorism.

The rise of Islamic activism throughout the world was triggered by several factors and events, such as the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, aggressive Israeli policies in the Middle East, the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Afghani *mujahideen*'s victory over the Soviets in late 1980s, as well as Saudi Arabia's search for hegemony, its promotion of the Wahhabite doctrine of Islam, and its competition with Iran for religious leadership in the Islamic world. The global terrorist network of al Qaeda has been actively using radical and militant Islam to motivate terrorist actions, unify its members, and link its organization to the communities for which they purports to fight.[civ] The most dangerous trend is that Islamic militant ideology also has been picked up by terrorist groups who previously did not use religion to maintain their cohesion. These terrorist groups are very effective at capitalizing on the lack of political, economic and social opportunity structures, the lack of stability and security, high unemployment, poor economic situations, human rights abuses, and other factors inherent in weak and failed states to instill radicalism in the society.

Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan have emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union as Muslim countries. Both are characterized by relatively weak state institutions, corruption, developing economies, a revival of Islam, and insecurity and instability as a result of regional conflicts such as that between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Chechen conflict, military campaigns in Afghanistan, and the civil war in Tajikistan. All of these factors make Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan vulnerable to the expansion of radical views, which in the worst case scenarios can lead to religiously-motivated terrorism. A vicious circle of violence is already underway in Uzbekistan with terrorist acts perpetrated by the IMU. As a result of changes in the political, economic and social environment of Uzbekistan, the IMU also has evolved in its structure, strategy and ideology from a political movement to a terrorist organization, affiliated with the Taliban and al Qaeda. Despite great damage to the infrastructure of the organization caused by the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan, there is evidence that the organization still survives and is experiencing a structural mutation. In contrast to Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan has not witnessed wide-scale radicalization of the population, but rather small groups of ethnic minorities who have been successfully neutralized by the security service.

Among the key distinguishing factors as to why radicalism has taken hold in Uzbekistan but not Azerbaijan are the:

- increasingly repressive policies of the Uzbek government toward religious groups and dissidents;
- lack of political opportunity for social movements to achieve change by legal means;
- failure of Uzbekistan intelligence agencies to effectively penetrate groups advocating fundamentalist views;

- failure of the Uzbek government to conduct economic and social reforms, improve living conditions, fight poverty, and end unemployment and corruption;

- geographic proximity of Uzbekistan to Afghanistan which served as a "save haven" as well as a main training base and "business place" of the IMU, along with loosely protected borders that provide free passage between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan;

- cultural differences between Azerbaijani and Uzbek society. Historically, Azerbaijan has always been an ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse place, linking trade routes between the East and the West;

- geographic proximity of Azerbaijan to Iran whose example of a radical Islamic state has been completely rejected by Azerbaijani society;

- differences in approaches to political Islam in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. Religion in Azerbaijan is regarded as a part of national identity, rather than a political ideology.

In conclusion, victory over religious fundamentalism and radicalism requires an integrated approach implemented on multiple levels and involving many actors: first, the international community can provide financial aid to weak and failed states, those most vulnerable to radicalism and terrorism, while also addressing the role of Saudi Arabia and Iran in "exporting" via petrodollars a pure vision of Islam to other countries; second, the Muslim world, in particular theology scholars and moderate clergy, could work to provide correct interpretations of the Qur'an, discrediting and delegitimizing terrorist ideology; and finally, each country, must take measures to eliminate the roots of terrorism and radicalism by stopping the disfranchisement and disillusionment brought about by poverty, corruption, human rights abuses, unemployment, social injustice and other economic and social hardships. Only when these issues are addressed can one talk about winning the hearts and minds of people in order to win the war on terrorism.

FOOTNOTES

[i] Cragin, Kim and Sara Daly, 2004. *The Dynamic Terrorist Threat: An Assessment of Group Motivations and Capabilities in a Changing World,* RAND Corporation 34. <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1782/MR1782.pdf>

[ii] The U.S. occupation of Iraq faced armed resistance not only from religious fundamentalists and radicals, but also secular Baathists and dissatisfied Iraqis.

[iii] Gerges, Fawaz, 2003. "Understanding Iraq' resistance," *Christian Science Monitor*, 11.

[iv] It is believed that Bin Laden established about 40 training camps in Afghanistan. The estimates of how many trained at these camps range widely from 15,000 to a high of 70,000. Approximately, 6,000 became foot-soldiers in the "international brigade" that fought alongside the Taliban against the U.S and Northern Alliance forces in late 2001. Zachary Abuza, 2002. "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24, no. 3: 430.

[v] Wilkinson, Paul, 2003. "A European Viewpoint on Terrorism," Report to the Trilateral Commission "Addressing the New International Terrorism: Prevention, Intervention and Multilateral Cooperation," Annual Meeting, 15.

[vi] Although Azerbaijan does not have a physical border with Chechnya, the terrorist threat emanating from Chechnya cannot but aggravate the regional security in the Caucasus.

[vii] The term "fundamentalist" was first used in 1920 by Curtis Lee Laws in the Northern Baptist periodical, *Watchman – Examiner*, who described himself and a group of conservative evangelical Protestants as militants willing to do "battle royal" to preserve the "fundamentals" of the Christian faith from the evolutionists and biblical critics infecting mainline seminaries and colleges. Almond, Gabriel and Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, 2003. *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World,* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2.

[viii] McInerney, Thomas and Paul Valley, 2004. *Endgame: The Blueprint for Victory in the War on Terror* Washington: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 35.

[ix] Islam means "submission" or "surrender" to the will of the one God, Allah. Linguistically, the word "Islam" is derived from the word "*salam,*" which means primarily "peace" and in a secondary sense, "*surrender*." Thus, the full connotation of "Islam" is "the perfect peace that comes when one's life is surrendered to God." <http://web.carroll.edu/msmillie/philomed/islam.htm>

[x] Ibrahim Khalil, Mohamad, 2004. "Islam and the Challenges of Modernity," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 1, 98.

[xi] Almond, 10.

[xii] Juravskiy, Alexandr, 2003. "Religiozniy ekstremizm s konflikte interpretatsiy," (in Russian) *Religiya v svetskom obshestve,* <http://www.religare.ru/print7157.htm>.

[xiii] Walker, Edward, 2001. "Roots of Rage: Militant Islam in Central Asia," paper presented at "Central Asia and Russia: Responses to the 'War on Terrorism'," a panel discussion held at the University of California, Berkeley, 2. <http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~bsp/caucasus/articles/walker_2001-1029.pdf >

[xiv] Ibid.

[xv] *Jihad* derives from the Arabic root of "striving;" therefore, a better translation would be "striving in the cause of God."

[xvi] The organization's motto is as follows: "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope." Nowadays, the Muslim Brotherhood has its branches in approximately 70 countries. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood>

[xvii] Wahhabism is a fundamentalist movement of the Sunni form of Islam, known also as an extreme form of Salafi Islam which viewed the first three generations of Muslims, who are the Prophet Muhammad's Companions, and the two generation after them as perfect examples of how Islam should be lived and practiced. Wahhabits use explanations of the Qur'an and Hadiths from the writings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) ("Book of Monotheism") and works of scholars before him such as Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328). The ideology of Wahhabism facilitated the consolidation of Arabia as a nation state and these days it is an official religion in Saudi Arabia.

[xviii] Notably, as Menahem Milson refers to the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, "for the Saudi regime, however, the prestige earned by the Islamic Revolution in Iran posed a problem. After all, it was the House of Saud, the Defender of the Two Holy Places (Mecca and Medina), that should rightfully be the guardian of the true Islam—that is, Sunni Islam in accordance with the Wahhabi doctrine." Menahem Milson, "Reform vs. Islamism in the Arab World Today," *MEMRI Publication*, September 15, 2004, 12, <http://www.ocnus.net/cgi-bin/exec/view.cgi?archive=53&num=13937>.

[xix] Bunglawala, Shenaz, 2002. "Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam, Ethics and International Affairs," *Ethics and International Affairs* 16, no.2: 155.

[xx] For example, in the 1980s a religious element grew in the Palestinian resistance movement with support from Iran. In 1982 the center of gravity of Shi'ite Hezbollah shifted to Lebanon. Hezbollah, in its turn, also "supplements" the Palestinian fraction of Islamic Jihad. In 1987, the Islamic Resistance Movement, more commonly known as Hamas, came on the scene.

[xxi] Bunglawala.

[xxii] Namatov, Nurlan. "Religiozniy extremism v Tsentralnoy Azii," (in Russian) *Tsentralnaya Aziya i Kavkaz,* 11, available at <http://www.ca-c.org/datarus/namatov.shtml>.

[xxiii] "Concept of Neither East nor West," U.S. Library of Congress, < http://countrystudies.us/iran/101.htm>.

[xxiv] Some 35,000 Muslim radicals from 40 Islamic countries joined Afghanistan's fight between 1982 and 1992. More than 100,000 foreign Muslim radicals were directly influenced by the Afghan jihad. Ahmed Rashid, 1999. "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs* 78, issue 6, November/December: 31.
Malashenko, Aleksey, 2003. "Dva Lika Islamskogo Radikalizma" (in Russian), <www.olo.ru/news/politic/5235.html>.

[xxvi] Milson, 15.

[xxvii] Bunglawala, 156.

[xxviii] Kepel, Gilles, 2002. *Jihad: The Trial of Political Islam.* Harvard University Press: 373.

[xxix] Howard, Russell and Reid Sawyer, 2003. *Defeating Terrorism: Shaping a New Security Environment.* McGraw-Hill: 22.

[xxx] "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders," World Islamic Front Statement, February 23, 1998, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>.

[xxxi] Haqqani, Husain, 2004. "Al Qaeda's Global Factory," *The Indian Express,* April 12, 1. <http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/2004-04-12-haqqani-india-express.asp?from=pubdate>.

[xxxii] "Unless they take up the jihad, it will be an inescapable and inevitable catastrophe . . . which will turn [Muslims] into slaves in the hands of God's basest creatures, Jews and worshippers of the cross." As quoted in "Letter from Kandahar," *Associated Press*, March 16, 1998.

[xxxiii] Esposito, John, 2003. *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*. Oxford University Press: 5.

[xxxiv] Howard, 22.

[xxxv] Vlahos, Michael, 2002. "Terror's Mask: Insurgency within Islam," a paper of the Joint Warfare Analysis Department of APL, John Hopkins University. 26, available at: <http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file_archive/040429/50b2e2a45cf24e5cd381ca9033eace97/Terror%20s%20Mask%20%20Insurgency%20within%20Islam%20-%20Michael%20Vlahos%20(JHU-APL%20May%202002).pdf >

[xxxvi] Abuza, 433.

[xxxvii] Vlahos, Michael, 2002. *Terror's Mask: The Insurgency within Islam*. John Hopkins University Press, and Grant Highland, 2003. *New Century, Old Problems: The Global Insurgency within Islam and the Nature of the War on Terror*. Naval War College.

[xxxviii] Walker, 3.

[xxxix] Hill, Fiona, 2004. "Reflections on Private and Political Islam. Is There an Islamist Threat from Eastern Europe and Eurasia?" Georgetown University, 6. <http://www.brook.edu/views/op-ed/hillf/20040415.pdf>.

[xl] Comparative tolerance towards religion in a wartime period is explained by the fears in the Communist echelons that resentful Muslims were more likely than other Soviet citizens to switch over to the German side. Tadeusz Swietochowski, 2002. "Azerbaijan: Hidden Faces of Islam," *World Policy Journal* 19, no. 3, Fall, 72.

[xli] For example, there have been established four Religious Boards in Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Dagestan and Bashkortostan. It is worth mentioning, however, that religion in the Soviet Union was overseen by the Spiritual Boards and the Communist Party. Walker, 4.

[xlii] Ibid.

[xliii] "Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement," International Crisis Group (ICG), Asia Report no. 72, December 22, 2003, 1, <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=2432&l=1>

[xliv] In other Central Asian republics, such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, statistics show respectively, 16 and 17.5 percent of the population preferences.

[xlv] ICG Asian Report no. 72, 1.

[xlvi] Wei, Wu. "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Terrorism," 13, available at: <http://www.empereur.com/Islam/whyterror.html>.

[xlvii] Later on, the Adolat (Justice) Social Democratic Party and the National Revival Democratic Party were outlawed.

[xlviii] Wei, 13.

[xlix] Interestingly, not only Islamic movements, but also Protestant Christian Churches have been prohibited from conducting missionary activities and harassed if they try to win converts among the Muslim population. Some harassment of Jews and Russian Orthodox Christians also has been reported. Thus, a judge ordered the burning of 211 copies of a Baptist magazine confiscated by customs officials. Police detained 10 Baptist women overnight on the accusation of Wahhabism. Lawrence A. Uzzell, "In Uzbekistan, Religion is Victim of War on Terror," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 6, 2003, 1.

[l] "Internal Affairs/Uzbekistan," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment-Russia and the CIS*, March 10, 2004, 12.

[li] Hereinafter in the text, the movement will be referred to as the IMU.

[lii] "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, August 8, 2003, 1.

[liii] "General Overview/Russia and the CIS," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment-Russia and the CIS*, January 16, 2003, 4.

[liv] Web-site of Hizb ut-Tahrir organization <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/> .

[lv] In particular, one of the demands of demonstrators in Namangan was the declaration of Islam as the state religion. "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, 1.

[lvi] "Internal Affairs/Uzbekistan," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment-Russia and the CIS*, 12. Both Juma Namangani and Tahir Yoldashev are Uzbek nationals who were expelled from Uzbekistan in the early 1990s for being Islamist extremists. See Fiona Hill, "Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability," testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, July 23, 2003, <http://www.brook.edu/views/testimony/hillf/20030723.htm>.

[lvii] "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, 4.

[lviii] In the past, Namangani served as a Soviet paratrooper in Afghanistan in 1987.

[lix] Mutschke, Ralf, 2000. "Threat Posed by the Convergence of Organized Crime, Drug Trafficking, and Terrorism," testimony before the House Subcommittee on Crime, December 13, <http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/judiciary/hju68324.000/hju68324_0f.htm>.

[lx] "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)," *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, 3.

[lxi] Polat, Abdumannob and Nickolai Butkevich, 2002. "Unraveling the Mystery of the Tashkent Bombings: Theories and Implications," *Demokratizatsiya* 8, issue 4, Fall: 542.

[lxii] Although the IMU demanded the release of thousands of Muslims held prisoner in Uzbekistan, the crisis ended with the IMU receiving from the Kyrgyz authorities a large ransom and free passage to Tajikistan. There is also information that the IMU benefited from the estimated 2 million U.S. dollars in ransom money in exchange for four Japanese hostages. Rohan Gunaratna, 2002. *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*. New York: Berkley Books. 227.

[lxiii] "Central Asia: Radical Islam is a Low-Grade Threat," *OxResearch,* June 02, 2003, 2. See also "The IMU and the Hizb-ut-Tahrir: Implications of the Afghanistan Campaign," International Crisis Group (ICG), Asia Briefing Paper, January 30, 2002, <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=1760&I%2B1>.

[lxiv] "The IMU and the Hizb-ut-Tahrir: Implications of the Afghanistan Campaign," 7.

[lxv] "Current Developments and Recent Operations," *Jane's World Armies*, October 17, 2003, 2.

[lxvi] This number includes 33 terrorists who died as a result of an accidental explosion of a covert bomb factory run by the underground terrorist network. The other 10 people were police officers and four bystanders.

[lxvii] Burton, Douglas, 2004. "Violence Shatters Uzbek's Security," *Insight in the News* 20, no. 10, April 27-May 10: 35.

[lxviii] Kimmage, Daniel, 2004. "Analysis: Kazakh Breakthrough on Uzbek Terror Case," *Country Watch,* November 15, <http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_wire.asp?vCOUNTRY=184&UID=1295018>.

[lxix] This number comprises terrorist acts committed before and after the military phase of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. For more information with regard to Armenian terrorism see U.N. documents A/C.6/51/5 and A/C.6/50/4, <http://ods.un.org/ods/>.

[lxx] For more detailed information about ethnic minorities living in Azerbaijan see Askerov, Gorkhmaz, 2001. "Ethnic Minorities in Azerbaijan," in Charles du Vinage, ed., *Promoting Tolerance on Local and Regional Level in Central, South Eastern and Eastern Europe,* reports on the Promoting Tolerance Seminar in Zagreb and Dubrovnik/Croatia, May 16-20,<http://admin.fnst.universum.de/uploads/487/newpublajc01.pdf >.

[lxxi] Hanafi is one of the four schools (*madhabs*) of *fiqh*, or religious law within Sunni Islam. It is considered to be the school most open to modern ideas. Hanafi is the largest of the four schools; it is followed by approximately 30 percent of Muslims world-wide, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanafi>.

[lxxii] U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, *International Religious Freedom Report 2003* (Washington, DC, 2003), sec. Azerbaijan, 1, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24344.htm>.

[lxxiii] There is such a mosque called "Goy Masjid" (Blue Mosque) in Baku city. Raoul Motika, "Islam in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 115 (July-September 2001):115.

[lxxiv] Swietochowski, 72.

[lxxv] *Taqiyya*, or not showing their faith openly by means of pretense, dissimulation, or concealment, is a special type of lying which is used by Shi'a Muslims. Historically, the Shiites have been in the minority and have been persecuted by Sunni Muslims who considered them heretics. As a result, the idea of *taqiyya* emerged. In other words, if a Shi'a Muslim's life is in danger, he may lie as long as he holds true to Ali (the first imam after Muhammad died) in his heart. <http://answering-islam.org.uk/Index/T/taqiya.html>

[lxxvi] Swietochowski, 72.

[lxxvii] Kohlberg, Etan, 1995. "Tagiyya in Shi'I Theology and Religion," in Hans G. Kippenberg and Guy G. Stroumsa, ed., *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions*. New York: E.J. Brill, 345-60, quoted in Swietochowski, 75.

[lxxviii] Peuch, Jean-Christophe, 2004. "Authorities in Azerbaijan Strive to Keep Islam under Control," RFE/RL, June 25, 1. <http://www.payvand.com/news/04/jun/1157.html>.

[lxxix] Malashenko, Aleksey, 2000. "Azerbaijan: between Islam and Turkism," Transcaspian Project, Moscow Carnegie Center, October 3, 1.

[lxxx] Motika, 113.

[lxxxi] "Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?" International Crisis Group (ICG), Europe Report no. 156, May 13, 2004, 22, <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=2752&l=1>.

[lxxxii] Swietochowski, 74.

[lxxxiii] Malashenko, 1.

[lxxxiv] The court also charged that the AIP had sent students to Iran for instruction in both religion and subversion. Reuters, April 14 1997, and "Monitor: A Daily Briefing on the Post-Soviet States," Jamestown Foundation, April 17, 1997, 7, quoted in Dennis Pluchinsky, "Terrorism in the Former Soviet Union: A Primer, A Puzzle, A Prognosis," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 21 (1998): 141.

[lxxxv] The SCPA estimates that 2,000 religious groups are now in operation, many of which have not gone through the registration yet.

[lxxxvi] U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, *Azerbaijan: Religious Freedom Conditions Worsening,* press-release, August 23, 2004, <http://www.uscirf.gov/prPages/pr0242.php3?SID=03a0bb9cd05a6afdce17d683c4de453a >.

[lxxxvii] There are also some moderate Islamic movements functioning in Azerbaijan, mostly Turkish groups with secular orientation, such as the Turkish Nurcus movements of Yeni Asia, followers of Osman Nuri Topbas, Fetullah Gullen movement.

[lxxxviii] ICG Europe Report no. 156, 24.

[lxxxix] ICG Europe Report no. 156, 25.

[xc] Lezghins are an ethnic minority divided between northern Azerbaijan and Dagestan (Russia).

[xci] Pluchinsky, 136. According to the available information, the members of Sadval were actively collaborating with the Armenian intelligence services in this case. For more information on Sadval see: http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=3&issue_id=174&article_id=2052 .

[xcii] ICG Europe Report no. 156, 25.

[xciii] Ibid.

[xciv] Ibid.

[xcv] U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002* (Washington, DC, 2003), sec. Eurasia Overview, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/20113.pdf>.

[xcvi] ICG Europe Report no. 156, 25.

[xcvii] ICG Europe Report no. 156, 23.

[xcviii] Amnesty International Report 2004, sec. Azerbaijan, <http://web.amnesty.org/report2004/aze-summary-eng>.

[xcix] Abbasov, Shahin and Ilham Rzayev, 2004. "Mosque Controversy Deepens in Azerbaijan following Police Use of Force," *Eurasianet,* July 6, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/eav070604.shtml>.

[c] Ibrahimoglu served as the head of the Azerbaijani branch of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA), a non-sectarian group based in Washington, DC. He also was the coordinator of a local NGO called The Center for Protection of Freedom of Religion (DEVAMM).

[ci] At present, Ibrahimoglu is on probation after having been convicted of encouraging rioting that followed Azerbaijan's disputed presidential election in October 2003. Abbasov, 1.

[cii] Peuch, 3.

[ciii] "Azerbaijan: Discontent Could Fuel Islamic radicalism; Azerbaijan: Political Islam," *OxResearch,* February 14, 2003, 3.

[civ] Cragin, 30.