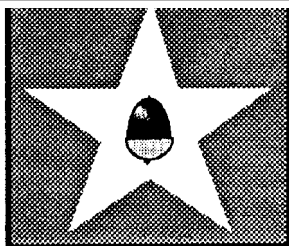


Conflict Studies Research Centre

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Extremism in Uzbekistan

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Islam in Uzbekistan has become politicised and subject to extremism. This article, which Dr Tursunov completed shortly before his death, details the protagonists and their affiliations.

Introduction

The first decade since Uzbekistan's independence has been a period of restoring and developing the main spiritual values of the Uzbek nation. With the achievement of the country's independence, religion as the spiritual core of national consciousness has found its true place in the system of social institutions and values. The titular nation in Uzbekistan has always followed Islam, and predominantly in its Khanifite form. After enduring many deprivations and trials during 70 years of communist dictatorship, since the first days of gaining independence the Muslim religion has regained its primordial right to exist and, at the same time, has embarked along the path of new trials.

The conditions have been created in Uzbekistan to enable citizens to pursue their religious convictions. Whereas during the Soviet period there were 84 mosques in total, there are currently 1854 functioning mosques. Young people may study Islam in depth: in the Tashkent Islamic University, Islamic Institute, approximately 10 medrese [Muslim colleges], etc. The state has created conditions, and provides assistance for, the annual pilgrimage (haj, umra) to Mecca by approximately 5,000-6,000 believers. At the same time, the following non-Islamic religious confessions are officially operating on the territory of Uzbekistan: Russian Orthodox Church, Church of Christians of the Complete Gospel, Church of Evangelical Christian Baptists, Church of Christian Seventh Day Adventists, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Roman Catholic Church, Armenian Gregorian Church, Korean Protestant Churches, Bahai Societies, Jewish Religious Societies, Society of Krishna Consciousness, Church of Jehovah's Witnesses, New Apostolic Church, and the Biblical Society of Uzbekistan.

Notwithstanding that Uzbekistan falls into the category of 'Muslim country', according to the latest opinion poll only 600,000 inhabitants of Uzbekistan regarded themselves as Muslims and stated that they perform all the rites and rituals according to Islam.

The church in Uzbekistan is separate from the state and the activities of religious confessions are governed by legislation. Article 31 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan states: "Freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all. Everyone has the right to profess any religion or none. The compulsory imposition of religious views is not permissible". At the same time, the government of Uzbekistan is making every effort to combat extremism of every kind. Article 31 of the Constitution also states: "It is prohibited for political parties and other similar social organisations to be set

up or to operate which have as their objective a forcible change of the constitutional regime; which oppose the sovereignty, integrity and security of the republic and the constitutional rights and freedoms of its inhabitants; which advocate war, social, national, racial and religious enmity; which infringe on the health and morality of the people; and also militarised associations and political parties organised along national and religious lines. It is prohibited to establish secret societies and associations.” It is on the basis of this article of the constitution that extremist parties were prohibited and their leaders arrested.

The new authorities and new regime have granted Muslim preachers the possibility of conversing with the faithful openly and with dignity; however, as well as the old religious authorities, those missionaries who were forbidden to enter the country during the communist period have also gained this right. The traditional local preachers, having gained the freedom to preach, have discovered that now they are not the only authorities in the Muslim mosques. At the same time missionaries from other Islamic countries arriving in Uzbekistan have come into conflict with the religious principles of local believers which differ significantly from those found in Arab countries, Iran, Pakistan or Turkey. The newly arrived missionaries have not always met with understanding from the Uzbek Muslims.

Apart from doctrinal differences between the faiths, competition between the personalities of the preachers has also played an important role. Within this context there has been confrontation not only between the Uzbeks and the arriving religious figures, but also between the old and young generations within the context of Uzbek spirituality itself.

The contradictions inside Uzbekistan’s Muslim community have developed against the background of significant political and economic processes both inside the country and in international relations. And, as has often happened in history, at a certain stage the religious factor in Uzbekistan started to connect with the political factor. Specifically, certain political forces which were struggling for power with the legitimate government started to make extensive use of religious slogans for their political purposes. By 1993 it was clear that Islam in Uzbekistan had become firmly politicised.

As in many other Asian countries, political extremism took the form of religious extremism. As a result a new category of preachers appeared in the Muslim community of Uzbekistan: preachers of Islamic extremism. In the struggle to win influence over the faithful, these preachers opposed not only the official authorities in Uzbekistan but also those religious leaders who had gained the respect and trust of Uzbek Muslims. With the passage of time the extremist movements of Central Asia have revealed their inhumane face and driven people away from them. As a consequence of this the radical extremist preachers became social outcasts in the local Muslim communities.

This article provides a more detailed analysis of the processes and personalities in the Muslim community of Uzbekistan. Muslim authorities who influence the Uzbek Muslim community from abroad are detailed in the following sections.

The Muslim Authorities of Islamic States

Among the spiritual authorities of the Islamic Conference Organisation countries and certain other states there are a considerable number which have attempted,

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and are attempting, to influence the development of the Muslim faith in Uzbekistan. Into this category fall both the representatives of fundamentalist and religious extremist circles and religious authorities who are friendly to the traditional trend of Islam in Uzbekistan. The spiritual authorities of Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and certain Arab countries have provided great understanding and assistance in the development of traditional Muslim communities in Uzbekistan and government policy with regard to Islam. It was with the direct support of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the mausoleum in honour of Imam al Bukhori was built in Samarkand.

In the period 1992-1998 Uzbekistan became the subject of close attention from primarily Kuwaiti, Pakistani and Turkish religious communities. During this period numerous emissaries visited various large religious centres. They were particularly active in the struggle to win the sympathies of the Muslim communities of Bukhara, Samarkand and Parkent (Tashkent oblast).

The Turkish leaders primarily represented the international Muslim order Naqshbandiyah. Taking into consideration the loyalty of the Uzbek authorities to the teachings of B Naqshband, the emissaries of the Turkish communities of the Naqshbandiyah order are attempting to revive the ishan¹ and murid² traditions in Uzbekistan and thereby secure the influence of the international Naqshband centres over the Muslims of Uzbekistan. This was a particular feature of the visit in 1996 by a group of Turkish spiritual leaders headed by the well-known sheikh of the order, Sayid Abdul Bokiy Husayniil. At the places they visited the guests met servants of the cult, promoted the ideas of the order and called on their audience to become the murids of sheikh Abdul Bokiy. The sheikh appointed the imam of one of the Parkent mosques as his representative for Tashkent oblast – the imam was an active participant in the anti-social events which took place in Tashkent in 1991-1992.

The initiatives of the Turkish religious leaders, who have been developing their activities with the aim of uniting the ideas of a Muslim revival with the ideas of Panturkism, are well known. As far back as November 1994 Bukhara received a visit from Makhmud Usta Osman-oglu, a sheikh of the Naqshbandiyah order well known in Turkey, accompanied by his family and murids. He conducted his conversations with the believers in the spirit of the ideas of Panturkism. The director of the Mir-Arab medrese, K Turmunov, and the imam-khatib of the Bobo Khaus mosque, Khalim Niyazov, were received by Osman-oglu as his murids.

At the end of June 1998 sheikh Makhmudbey Usta Osman-oglu was again in Bukhara, at the head of a group of 30 followers of the Naqshbandiyah order. During the period when they were in Bukhara the sheikh and his murids, through reading the Zikr, attempted to attract the attention of passers-by and pilgrims and to win supporters and revive ishan and murid activities in Bukhara. In his conversations with individuals the sheikh exhorted them to make appeals to expand the circle of Naqshbandiyah supporters in the oblast and gave them a photocopy in Turkish and Arabic, asking them to make 10,000 copies and distribute them among the believers in the oblast.

Another senior Naqshbandiyah leader maintains links with the Muslim communities of Uzbekistan from Pakistan and the US. He is Akhmad Zulfikor Naqshbandi, director of the medrese in Lahore, a Pakistani citizen living in the US. Zulfikor Akhmad is a leader of the supporters of the Naqshbandiyah tendency; he opened the university of the followers of the Naqshbandiyah teachings in New York;

he has major sponsors, including the owner of the Tabani company in Pakistan. He is a sheikh of the Jamiati Islami Tablig order. This organisation has a fund which it uses to send its emissaries to various countries in order to propagate Islam. The members of the organisation follow the khanifite interpretation of Islam and preach the ideology of Sufism.

In early 1993, after arriving from Pakistan, the emissary of Jamiati Islami Tablig, Zulfikor Akhmad, visited the Makhmud-Ishan mosque in Namangan, the Amir medrese in Kokand, and met the spiritual leaders and authorities of the Namangan and Kokand oblasts. Through his preaching he attempted to win supporters from among the local Muslim communities. In early December 1996 Akhmad Zulfikor arrived in Bukhara via Moscow. He visited the burial site of Bakhovuddin Naqshbandiya and met believers from among the Sufis. At the end of the trip he appointed as his khalif for Central Asia a man named Teshakhalifa, an elderly man known among the Muslim believers in Bukhara. Sheikh Akhmad Zulfikor appointed as his representative (khalif) in Bukhara Khalim Niyazov, imam of the Boloi Khauz mosque, and expressed the hope that Sufism would expand rapidly in the homeland of B Naqshbandiyah.

From 29 to 30 September 1998 Akhmad Zulfikor Naqshbandi was again in Bukhara with his five murids. They were: Mohamad Salem, Khodi Nakher Akhmed, Abdul Rakhmet, Aziz Il Rekhman and Aul Rogog Khon, all Pakistani citizens. The main aim of the sheikh's visit to Uzbekistan was to expand the circle of followers of Sufism, to acquire new murids, and to improve the pilgrimage of the seven guides,³ which is observed by adherents of the Naqshbandiyah tendency. They were accompanied on their trip by an emigrant from Khodzhan, Abdullo. In accordance with the sheikh's instructions Abdullo is currently living in Dagestan in order to draw people to Islam.

Subsequently Akhmad Zulfikor Naqshbandi completed a pilgrimage to the tomb of B Naqshbandiyah, Mir Kulol and Khuzh Orif Mokhitobon and left money for fitting out the mosque. Akhmad Zulfikor appointed Mullah Akhmad as guide of the followers of the Naqshbandiyah order. Mullah Akhmad is 75 years old, a native and inhabitant of Surkhandarya oblast. Mullah Akhmad appointed Khalim Niyazov, a former chief engineer at the local astrakhan fur plant as his murid and representative in Bukhara.

During this period there were Pakistani initiatives associated with the revival of the spiritual inheritance of major Central Asian historical personalities of the Muslim world and the holy places of Uzbekistan honoured by believers far beyond the borders of the republic. Starting from the second half of 1995 the representatives of many Islamic organisations in Pakistan paid particularly frequent visits to Bukhara oblast. From July to November 1995 the following visited Bukhara oblast at various times: the mufti of Faisalabad, sheikh Mukhammad Amin; a follower of the Qadiriya tendency, Askhar Ali Sheikh Al-Bukhoriy, member of the Pakistani parliament and chief organiser of the conference of Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir; member of the Assembly of the extremist organisation Ozod Kashmir Sardar Attil Akhmad Khan; and the head of the Kadiriya order, Mukhammad Takhir Ul-Kadri.

The emissaries of Pakistani Muslim spirituality are interested in the role of Islam in the life of the republic, the state of religious education, relations between the believers and the organs of power. They fairly frequently express their readiness to assist in organising religious training in Pakistan for young believers from Bukhara.

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Sheikh Mukhammad Amin, the mufti of Faisalabad and the author of several religious books in Urdu, Farsi and Arabic, came to Bukhara with his four murids. Citing an agreement with the DUMM,⁴ the sheikh obtained the permission of the local authorities in Bukhara to fit out the tomb of the well-known 13th century Sudzhiy sheikh, Said Mir Kulol. The gravestone of Said Mir Kulol was built over a four-month period. Arriving in November 1995 to celebrate its completion, Mukhammad Amin expressed his intention to build a Mir Kulol mosque in Bukhara in 1996.

The Pakistani head of the Kadiriya order, Mukhammad Takhir Ul-Kadri, also did not scorn the fruits of the efforts made by the Naqshbandiyah preachers. He is the author of approximately 150 books and 800 booklets and lectures on various aspects of Islam. He has lectured and preached in more than 20 countries. He has opened Minkhozh Ul-Koran branches in 50 countries. In 13 countries of Asia, Africa, America Europe and Australia, where Islam is not widespread, he has established Islamic centres. He has expressed his intention of opening a branch of the Minkhozh Ul-Koran Islamic centre in Uzbekistan, organising the training of young believers from the republic of Uzbekistan in his university, and he has conducted talks on these issues with the DUMM leaders, and found support from them. In preaching the ideas of the Kadiriya tendency, Mukhammad Takhir Ul-Kadri stated that the founder of the order, Abd Al-Kadir Al-Jiloni, predicted in the 12th century the coming in 200 years' time of the Naqshbandiyah Sufi tendency; therefore, the followers of the Naqshbandiyah order must closely assimilate the ideas of the Kadiriya tendency.

In July 1996 Bukhara received a visit from the sheikh of the Kadiriya order in Karachi, Said Abdul Kadir, and his 8 murids. The sheikh visited the Bogoutdin complex and seven elders. In so doing the sheikh expressed his readiness to receive students, from among young gifted believers, for training at the Islamic University of Karachi.

Also active in Uzbekistan in the 1990s was Lazhnatul Muslimin Osiye (Committee of Muslims of Asia), with its headquarters in Kuwait. This organisation is trying to open offices in CIS countries with the aim of propagating Islam, financing the construction of mosques and is active in the Russian regions (especially in Bashkortostan and Tatarstan). This organisation financed and housed some of the students from the republic of Uzbekistan sent for training to the Al-Azhar university.

In the final analysis, and notwithstanding their corporate aims, the Naqshbandiyah order and the Sufi movements closely related to it have formed an important tendency for external influence which opposes religious fundamentalism and extremism in Islam. This point has become particularly topical for Uzbekistan as attacks are stepped up by overtly extremist fundamentalist organisations which have set themselves the task of undermining stability in the Central Asian region of the CIS and establishing Islamic states here.

Among the main authorities of the contemporary Islamic world who support constructive links with the Muslim communities of Uzbekistan one could name the following two individuals:

- Odil Fallakh, chairman of the International Islamic Organisation "Bati Zakot", which is based in Kuwait. The Bati Zakot organisation has financed the training of people from the Urgut district of Samarkand oblast in the Al-Azhar Islamic

University in Egypt. During his trips to Uzbekistan he has repeatedly met mufti Mukhammad Sadyk and provided financial assistance to religious figures in Uzbekistan. Odil Fallakh later sent his representative Mukhaysin to Uzbekistan, to look after the receipt and distribution of financial assistance from Kuwait. The DUMM and kaziyat of Tajikistan have also received financial assistance from Kuwait.

- Abdul Aziz Az-Suud Al-Babtin, member of the leadership of the Islamic organisation Babtin. This organisation has financed the training of Uzbek students in the Al-Azkhar Islamic University and paid grants. Abdul Aziz Az-Suud Al-Babtin first arrived in Uzbekistan in 1996. However, as far back as 1992 he personally financed the training of 57 students from the Samarkand, Andizhan, Namangan, Dzhizak and Surkhandarya oblasts of Uzbekistan and from Tashkent.

Religious authorities who are developing fundamentalist ideas and justifying Islamic extremism are operating with regard to Uzbekistan from Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Jordan, Algeria, Syria, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan. They are developing theological tracts and interpretations which form the basis of the ideology of Islamic extremism in Central Asia. They are providing assistance in the ideological processing of Uzbek Islamic fighters in training camps in Turkey, Chechnya, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Foreign emissaries have also actively participated in these events. The religious and political tendency Al-ikhvan al-muslimun (Muslim Brothers) was formed from a number of students from the Near and Middle East who studied in higher educational establishments in Uzbekistan in the late 1970s. They formed the so-called Tashkent Group, lead by M Mdzhali, who was simultaneously the emir of the Muslim Brothers on the territory of the former USSR. The core of the group consisted of Jordanian, Iraqi and Afghan students who undertook active missionary work to attract inhabitants of the republic into their religious structure. The main task of this organisation was to establish a 'caliphate' in Uzbekistan. The tasks which faced the Muslim Brothers organisation, and also the forms, methods and tactics of their work, were very similar to the forms and methods of another organisation, Hizb ut-Takhrir, which also sought to establish an Islamic state in the form of a 'caliphate' on the territory of Uzbekistan. Both organisations are also very similar in that they propagate ideas of fighting against foreign domination and for the establishment of "a just society which conforms to Islamic traditions". In this respect particular emphasis was placed on the youth, as being the most susceptible to fundamentalist aims, which fill an ideological vacuum.

The next extremist organisation is Hezbollah, formed with the participation of the corps of guards of the Islamic revolution of Iran. The armed formations of Hezbollah consist of the Jihad Islomi detachments. At the organisation's 1994 congress, the radical wing emerged as the winner, and it set out to draw the Central Asian republics into its sphere of influence.

Whatever ideas and slogans these organisations may have proclaimed, they have only one aim: to seize power. And they have attempted to execute this aim in the countries of the Central Asian region from the outset, calling on local Muslims to rebel. However, the local Muslim believers, who were accustomed to living according to the canons of the Koran, which teaches peace, mercy and forgiveness, proved unreceptive to the ideas of the extremists. As they had not gained the support of the local population, the extremists switched to the tactics of

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intimidation and sabotage and terrorist acts. The leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan [IMU] are recruiting to their ranks representatives of various nationalities and, in order to communicate with their supporters in the states of the central Asian region, they make active use of women.

Certain influential persons in Turkey are providing financial assistance to the IMU leaders. In particular, the former Turkish prime minister Nazhmidin Erbakan gave US 100,000 to T Yuldashev to carry out terrorist acts in Tashkent. It should be noted that this financial support was provided when Erbakan was prime minister.

In November 1995 Yuldashev and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S A Nuri, travelled to Peshawar, where they met representatives of a number of Islamic organisations, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Turkey. During these meetings the question was discussed of providing ideological and financial assistance to extremists in Tajikistan and to the IMU.

In May 1999, in Iran, Yuldashev met representatives of the Iranian secret services. The outcome of the meeting was that the Iranians transferred a large sum of money to the IMU leader for the purpose of so-called 'Uzbek refugees' living in Tajikistan. In mid-1999 Yuldashev's emissaries travelled from Turkey to Afghanistan, where they delivered US\$2.5 million for the IMU leader.

In accordance with Yuldashev's instructions, 'donations' for the IMU were collected in the countries of the Islamic belt. In the first half of September 1999 extremist-inclined religious organisations in Pakistan collected approximately US\$150,000 which they sent to the IMU. There is an organisation operating in Germany under the name Milliy Gurush (National Outlook). This organisation was set up by Turkish emigrants in Germany under the leadership of the former Turkish prime minister N Erbakan. The headquarters of Milliy Gurush is in Cologne. Milliy Gurush has approximately 700 branches worldwide, including the Central Asian states. Approximately 150 of its representative offices are located in European countries. One of the companies which falls within the Milliy Gurush structure is the Turkish company Ulker, which makes approximately US\$1.5 bn in profits annually.

In 1997, in accordance with Yuldashev's instructions, lists were drawn up of weapons which the IMU needed; these lists were sent to Erbakan. The total cost of the weapons which the Milliy Gurush leadership planned to provide to IMU amounted to hundreds of thousands of US dollars. Erbakan agreed to supply the weapons on condition that the IMU became subordinated to Milliy Gurush and specified a precise time when the 'jihad' against Uzbekistan would start. Yuldashev agreed to Erbakan's conditions. The agreement regarding the delivery of the weapons was signed with Milliy Gurush's secretary, Mukhammad Kuchak, a close connection of M Salikh, who provides him with financial support.

In Kabul, in late July 1999, the Afghan Taliban Movement's minister for the return of refugees, Moulavi Abdulkarib, handed a large sum of money to Yuldashev in the name of Usamah bin Laden to step up the activities of the IMU. Within the context of this assistance Moulavi Abdulkarib became the initiator, together with the IMU leaders, of a plan in which armed bandit groups would penetrate into Uzbekistan via the mountain areas of Kyrgyzstan.

According to information obtained from sources inside the security service of Uzbekistan, a meeting took place fairly recently (30 August 1999) in Karachi (Pakistan) which was attended by representatives of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Kashmir and Chechnya. By way of providing assistance in the so-called 'holy war', the Arab side assigned hundreds of thousands of US dollars for Chechen extremists, Kashmiri formations and the IMU. According to the same information, couriers of Usamah bin Laden, who arrived in Tavildara (Tajikistan) in August 1999, gave representatives of the United Tajik Opposition US\$130,000 to provide assistance to IMU formations located on the territory of the republic of Tajikistan and also to groups of bandits invading Kyrgyzstan. The leader of the Taleban Movement, Mullah Omar, who was maintaining close links with IMU leaders, sent US\$50,000 in mid-1999 as financial support to supporters of the Movement and members of their families living in Afghanistan. In September 1999 a group of fighters headed by an inspector from Saudi Arabia delivered US\$80,000 to Tajikistan from Afghanistan for United Tajik Opposition leaders; part of this amount was destined for IMU fighters. Supporters of Yuldashev have set up a so-called 'Dzhabkha' (Fund), the aim of which is to collect funds from ethnic Uzbeks living in Afghanistan.

In addition to the gamut of extremist-fundamentalist organisations in the strict sense who are conducting anti-constitutional activities in Uzbekistan, there are also groupings of nationalist-separatist movements which are appearing under the slogans of radical Islam. An example of such an organisation is the Nurchilar community, founded by Said Nursi. As the foundation of his teaching he established the principles of social justice, equality, protection of the rights of members of society. Nurchilar's ideas enjoy considerable support among the Kurdish population in Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, and Saudi Arabia. The community has a television channel and several radio stations. During the course of several investigations information was received that the Turkish secret services and various politicised and extremist religious Turkish entities were undertaking practical steps to attract the Uzbek youth into their sphere of influence. In particular, there is no letup in the attempts by members of Nurchilar and Uzbek émigrés to attract students into their ranks who are studying in Turkey. Emissaries of the Nurchilar society are searching for more conspiratorial methods of carrying out their religious and propagandist activities. In June 1999 the Turkish press stated that the Turkish secret services had submitted a report to the Council of National Security which exposes the essence of Nurchilar; whose ultimate objective in Turkey was to overthrow the secular constitutional order and establish a Shariy'ah form of government. At the same time, the legal organs have started to investigate the activities of the current leader of Nurchilar, F Gyulen, who is hiding from the Turkish secret services in the US. Information continues to be received by Uzbek Counter-Intelligence concerning the attempts by activists of the Turkish Nurchilar tendency to restore their positions in Uzbekistan after the closure of a network of Uzbek-Turkish high schools which they initially used as a cover for their activities.

Also of interest is the figure of the religious leader of the Uighur separatists. In his relations with the Uzbek extremists, conducted through Salay Madaminov, he is carefully checking out the climate for possible joint action with IMU forces for the benefit of the Uighur Muslim communities. In late 1997 one of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's richest people, Mukhamadamin Turkistoni, an Uighur by nationality, sent Yuldashev approximately US\$260,000 for the purchase of weapons. At the same time, Turkistoni asked that half of the weapons purchased be sent to the Uighur separatists. The religious and political leaders of Uighur

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separatism are considering an alliance with the Islamists of Central Asia in their struggle against the official authorities in China. They are thus giving limited support to the activities of international Islamic extremism, seeking to preserve the right to independent self-determination after they have achieved their strategic goals. In order to understand the characteristics of the interaction between the Uighur religious extremists and Uzbeks, it is necessary to examine the general picture of the interaction of forces in three states which border on each other: Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and the Uighur Autonomous Region of Sinkiang of the People's Republic of China.

According to the Islamic extremists, the territory of the future 'caliphate' must also include the Turkic-speaking countries, which includes all of Central Asia and the Muslim regions of Russia and China. The installation of vassal Islamic regimes in these would make it possible to control not only the Persian Gulf basin but also the Caspian Sea, which allegedly contains two thirds of the world's oil reserves. Having assumed the role of chief coordinator and sponsor of the activities of Islamic extremists, Usamah bin Laden has started actively to implement this scenario, establishing close contact with the heads of the bandit formations in Chechnya, the radical wing of the IMU and extremist groupings of Uighur separatists. It is known that he supported the plan for the Islamisation of Sinkiang and its secession from the rest of the China by means of jihad and organising sabotage and terrorist acts in large cities in the Uighur Autonomous Region of Sinkiang and throughout China, and also armed attacks on official representatives of China abroad.

The main role in implementing this plan falls to the extremist Uighur separatist movement Islom Diniy Kharakati headed by Khassan Dzhundullokh, a native of the Kashgar region of the Uighur Autonomous Region. He lives in Kabul in the vicinity of the IMU leader Yuldashev. Like the latter, Dzhundullokh has an Afghan diplomatic passport, and can be described as a convinced religious fanatic and supporter of establishing the state of Eastern Turkestan by means of jihad.

The first contacts between the IMU and Dzhundullokh took place in 1997. They were established for a number of reasons, the main one being a mutual wish to come to power through radical means (jihad), using the Islamic religion as cover for their true interests. The truly determining event in this plan was the 1997 meeting held in the house of a true ally of the IMU, the not-known and extremely radically inclined 'democrat', Mukhammad Salikh (Madaminov Salay) in Istanbul. The meeting was attended by IMU leaders Yuldasev, Askarov, Salikh himself and a certain Abduzhalil (the representative of Dzhundullokh in Turkey). This last was charged by his patron to select by election allies from among the Uzbek oppositionists, from whom it was planned to build a strategy for the future actions of the separatist movement abroad. At the talks Uighur separatists agreed mutual solidarity as regards methods for seizing power (jihad), and based on this an agreement on mutual assistance and support was reached.

Salikh was driven to collaborating with Islamic extremists in the form of Yuldashev and Dzhundullokh by an irrepressible craving for power. In turn Yuldashev offered him the post of state president after the coup had taken place in the hope that this would help to attract the so-called 'democratic opposition' to the side of the fighters and ensure recognition of the new regime by Western governments. Accepting Yuldashev's proposal, Salikh hurried to guarantee the support of representatives of radical extremist groupings closely connected with the National Movement Party, better known as the Grey Wolves (Enver Altayli, Ogiz Kunt, Drezh Ali, etc), which became the second ruling party after the parliamentary elections in April 1999.

In Istanbul Salikh became close friends with the Chechen bandit Yandarbiyev and the leader of the democratic wing of Uighur separatism, M A Turkistoni, both kindred spirits of Salikh. At Salikh's request Turkistoni gave US\$260,000 to the IMU. He has also repeatedly provided similar assistance to the leader of the Uighur extremist movement. In his turn, Dzhundullokh, with 6,000 or so trained fighters under his command, elaborated a plan for the armed invasion of Sinkiang by his detachments in order to detach it from China. The plan was discussed in Kabul in late 1997 at a meeting attended by IMU representatives Yuldashev and Askarov and also some of the separatist leaders.

Subsequently, at Yuldashev's suggestion, the question of jihad in the Uighur Autonomous Region of Sinkiang was raised at a routine session of the unofficial Muslim council, the Shura, headed by bin Laden; apart from the IMU leaders and Uighurs, high-ranking Taliban members of Uzbek origin also participated in the session. According to bin Laden, the success of the separatists' military actions in the Uighur Autonomous Region of Sinkiang will become possible if there is a reliable bridgehead, which is what the territory of the Central Asian states must become after Shari'ah administration has been established there. This aim can be achieved on condition that there is an armed seizure of power in Uzbekistan, the key state in the region – and in connection with this it was proposed to Dzhundullokh that he should re-orient his detachments to provide assistance to the IMU. The ideological justification advanced for this union was the thesis that a true Muslim cannot have his own nation and land, which belongs to Allah from the beginning.

Any accountability of Dzhundullokh to the IMU leaders presupposed that all appearances by Usamah bin Laden must be undertaken by him only with the personal consent of Yuldashev in his capacity as the chief coordinator of the separatists' activities. In turn, all the operations of the bandit formations must be coordinated with the leaders of the radical wing of the OTO and S A Nuri, member of the Shura council.

The Uighur-IMU-OTO chain thus formed, the links of which are tightly interlinked with each other, was incorporated into the framework of the scheme elaborated by bin Laden, which envisages the unification of all the extremist organisations of the Muslim world into a World Jihad Front to combat the influence of the US and Israel and support for the worldwide 'Islamic revolution'.

Subsequently questions of coordinating joint actions were discussed at the general gathering of Uighur separatist organisations which took place at the initiative of the IMU leaders in Almaty in the summer of 1998. The following participated in the meeting: representatives of the democratic wing of separatists (based in Turkey); of Dzhundullokh's movement; of the Uighur diasporas of Pakistan and Uzbekistan; and also Yuldashev's advisers B Abdullayev (sentenced to death for terrorist activities) and Z Askarov. It did not prove possible to reach a general agreement on the prospects for the Uighur movement, but it was decided to plan further actions based on the mutual interests of each of the parties. As regards the areas of work to be undertaken among the Uighurs living and temporarily based in the countries of Central Asia, a view was reached concerning the advisability of using them to provide sponsor assistance and recruiting volunteers for Dzhundullokh's formations deployed in the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

Training of the fighters was conducted in bin Laden's training camps located in Chechnya, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Islamic State of Afghanistan. As a

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rule, almost all the graduates of these establishments undertook trial runs in IMU detachments in Kyrgyzstan and the Taleban Movement in Afghanistan.

Evidence of the active contacts between representatives of the Uighur separatists and the Taleban is the fact that in November 1999 the Uighurs and bandits from the IMU were allocated an extensive area near the Kabul stadium in which to set up their camps. This occurred after it was decided to transfer units of the IMU bandit formations from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan. In addition to Kabul, areas of land were also allocated for members of the IMU and their families in Mazar-e-Sharif where, together with these, Uighur fighters also underwent special training on the eve of the spring 2000 armed campaign against the countries of Central Asia.

In protecting Dzhundulokh's detachments in Afghanistan the leadership of the Taleban Movement was playing a double game with China, the aim of which was to obtain dividends from the development of trade and economic relations in exchange for a promise to hand over separatists - which was subsequently partially carried out. Their position was dictated by the fact that at that time the most fanatical Taleban leaders, possibly under the influence of bin Laden, held the view that Afghanistan had become the world centre of jihad and was obliged to provide protection and support for supporters of this idea.

It should also be noted that bin Laden's scheme, under which the unification of all extremist forces and movements in the cause of establishing a caliphate was supposed to occur, also envisaged sponsoring activities inside the Islamic underground in states selected by him as appropriate subjects for his efforts. The religious and political movement Hizb-ut-Tahrir, widespread in the countries of Central Asia and among Muslim minorities in China, can quite justifiably be regarded as one of the underground movements.

Thus, we are justified in concluding that the extremist wing of Uighur separatism, acting in association the IMU and sponsors of international terrorism, currently represents a serious threat to the security and territorial integrity of China, Uzbekistan and other states of Central Asia.

Within the context of an analysis of the extremist Muslim wing, the question of IMU links with the United Tajik Opposition deserves special attention. There is evidence of long-standing and stable links between the United Tajik Opposition and Islamic extremists who originate from Uzbekistan and are currently under the flag of the IMU.

It is no secret that the fighters and their commanders who proclaimed themselves members of the IMU - including Yuldashev and Khodzhiyev - were active members of the civil war in Tajikistan and never left the Tajik opposition. In Tajikistan they were subordinated to the military command, which was a unified command with the United Tajik Opposition, under the command of the current Tajik minister for emergencies, M Zieyev; they had common sources of funding and material and technical supplies which were received from (among others) those very same foreign sponsors. At the present time, notwithstanding the implementation of the process of peaceful settlement in Tajikistan, these relationships have not changed.

Further evidence of the close links between the IMU and the United Tajik Opposition is the fact that the IMU is receiving financial assistance, munitions and weapons not only through its own channels but also through United Tajik

Opposition sources. During periods when the situation deteriorated sharply and, thanks to serious differences between official Dushanbe and the United Tajik Opposition threatened to turn into open armed confrontation, IMU detachments commanded by Khodzhiyev were prepared, jointly with the United Tajik Opposition, to resume combat against the government forces. The leaders of the Tajik and Uzbek Islamists met repeatedly, held consultations and took joint decisions on general and coordinated tactics for operations in the event that armed conflict in the republic of Tajikistan resumed.

After the decision taken by Tajikistan's Commission for National Reconciliation to disband and disarm illegal armed formations, S A Nuri and such well-known Tajik Islamist field commanders as M Ziyev, Mullah Omar, Dzhunaydullo, Sheykh and Shokh, taking into consideration Khodzhiyev's authority among a substantial portion of his fighters and his participation in combat on the side of the United Tajik Opposition, responded actively to requests from the IMU leaders to switch detachments of the Movement to areas of Tajikistan controlled by the Tajik opposition (Tavildar, Komsomolabad, Saridasht, Tajikabad, Yazgulyam, Khoit), where they were due to be located before the start of the operation to penetrate into the territory of Uzbekistan. In addition, the United Tajik Opposition expressed its willingness to provide a corridor along Tajikistan territory to enable the families of IMU fighters and commanders to withdraw to Afghanistan.

The IMU leaders did not renounce their attempts to exert influence on the United Tajik Opposition leaders with the aim of combining their efforts to step up joint activities against the government forces of Tajikistan and continue the jihad in other Central Asian republics. Towards this end they issued calls aimed at preventing "the mistakes previously made by Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo, who fell under the influence of Western countries and forgot about the true aims of the holy struggle". They proposed to their 'Tajik brothers' that they should not adhere to the views of the UN or other organisations and "having taken up arms, they should carry through what they have started to the final victory". At the same time, the IMU leaders warned their comrades-in-arms to avoid a conflict arising between the Uzbek and Tajik 'mujahidin'.

In May 2000 the IMU leader T Yuldashev was in Iran, and that is when he met representatives of the Iranian secret services. During the meetings questions connected with the activities of the so-called 'Uzbek opposition forces' both inside and outside Uzbekistan were discussed. As a result of the meetings the Iranian side gave Yuldashev a sum of money for the urgent needs of 'Uzbek refugees' located in Tajikistan.

Approximately 150 Uzbek citizens are currently receiving training in Tajikistan. In addition, Tajik fighters are detaining citizens of Uzbekistan who intend to leave the training camps and return home and forcibly returning them to the camps.

There is a difference of opinion among the field commanders of the Tajik opposition concerning the activities of the IMU. There is dissatisfaction at the fact that the United Tajik Opposition is supporting the IMU. Thus the IMU commanders are observing rules of strict secrecy. Some IMU field commanders have conducted a series of meetings with M Ziyev, at which the measures being implemented by the IMU fighters were discussed, as was also the possibility of individual close associates of M Ziyev participating in them.

The euphoria caused by the successful actions of his fighters in encounters with units and subunits of Kyrgyzstan's "power structures", the hostage-taking of local and foreign citizens and of servicemen of the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan, the active moral and material support from the United Tajik Opposition – all encouraged the IMU leader Yuldashev, calling himself Abdul Fattakh Kakhramonzad, to make an appeal to all IMU mujahidin located on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. In this appeal, which was disseminated on 25 August 2000 in the foreign mass media, he delivered ultimatums to the governments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan concerning the inadmissibility of a "pro-Western aggressive policy against the people" and the need immediately to free all "unjustly condemned brothers".

Outsiders in the Muslim Community in Uzbekistan

Among the preachers who have been rejected by the Uzbek Muslim community were many who have been mentioned in previous sections of this article. The main factors which made the ideas and activities of the Muslim preachers unacceptable to the communities of Uzbekistan are the following:

1. The alien nature of the calls and slogans to the national and spiritual values of the Uzbeks.
2. The restrictions imposed on the free business activity of believers in Uzbekistan.
3. Incitement to anti-government activities.

For the Muslims of Uzbekistan the most alien doctrinal views are the ideas of Muslim postmodernism.

If we now consider specific trends and individuals we should make a reservation concerning such people as Tokhir Yuldashev, whom we have discussed in great detail in the previous section because not only do they preach the influence of foreign extremism in Uzbekistan but are themselves active abroad. Can they be placed in the outsider category in the Muslim environment of Uzbekistan? Undoubtedly – yes. They cannot be integrated into the life of the peaceful Muslim communities of Uzbekistan. They are forced to oppose not only the Uzbek authorities but also traditional Uzbek Muslims. They are attempting to overthrow those values of Uzbek Muslim communities which are dear to the majority of the population of Uzbekistan. In their struggle they are forced to rely on mercenaries or to find patronage from authorities who are alien to the values of the Uzbek people. At the same time it is important to note that these people – although they are the most odious and have become widely known for their cruelty and radicalism – are far from constituting a complete list of Islamic radicals in Uzbekistan.

Currents in the Contemporary Muslim World of Uzbekistan Which Have Not Become Widespread

The religious and political organisation Hizb-ut-Tahrir (Liberation Party):

The "Islamic Liberation Party" known to us under the shortened name Hizb-ut-Tahrir, was founded in 1953 by a Muslim theologian, sheikh Takhiitdin Nabakhoniy, in Jerusalem. The main aim of the organisation's founders and ideologists is the revival of an Islamic state in the form of a "Caliphate" ("Succession").

The religious and political party Khizbun-nusrat (Party of Assistance):

The founder and ideological leader of this religious and political party is Mirzazhanov Sharipzhon Atoevich, born in 1952. A feature of this party is its more conspiratorial nature. Not having its own literature, training in Khizbun-nusrat is based on the book *Islom Nizomi*, takes 6 months and in no way differs from the training in Hizb-ut-Tahrir; an oath is taken after training. The new party's methods are distinguished by their more aggressive and more covert nature. Its members are also obliged to give money to the organisation's communal fund. Maximum attention is paid to the conspiratorial aspect, therefore they do not carry out propaganda work among the simple population but instead try to recruit people who have already been checked. This most often means followers of other religious organisations, people who one way or another have been punished for religious extremist activities (escaped from place of incarceration or received a conditional sentence, amnestied, etc). They recruited Hizb-ut-Tahrir members who are afraid of criminal liability and exposure in connection with the distribution of leaflets or open propagandising of their ideas among the population, as is the practice in Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

The religious extremist current "Wahhabism":

"Wahhabism", in its capacity as one of the radical trends in Islam, was inspired by the British secret services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the late 18th century in order to cause internal division. It was based on the teachings of Mukhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab (1703-1787) concerning "taukhid" monotheism ("Allah is the sole source of creation and only he is worthy of worship by people") and pursued the aim of "the return of Muslims to the canons of original Islam", ie a call to Sunni believers to fight for the preservation of the religious ideals which existed during the time of the prophet Muhammad and the first four righteous caliphs. An important place was assigned to the idea of 'jihad' against polytheists and Muslims who had "deviated" from the principles of early Islam. Characteristic of early wahhabism are extreme fanaticism in questions of faith and extremism in conducting the fight against one's political opponents.

At the present time wahhabism is also the main state ideology of Saudi Arabia and there are followers in the United Arab Emirates, the countries of the Persian Gulf and a number of Asian and African states. At the same time, the main ideological centre for the propagation of wahhabism is the Centre of Fatwas, Propaganda and Guidance, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Centre possesses large financial resources which are used to achieve the main objective of the wahhabites: to attract the coming generation to religion and educate them in the spirit of Islamic radicalism. The missionary activities of the wahhabites are funded by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Religious Endowments and the organisation "AlBukhus, wal irshod, wal ifsho", which possesses large financial resources, thereby enabling it to act as a sponsor for the propagators of wahhabi ideas throughout the world.

A characteristic feature of wahhabism is the switch in emphasis from religious ethics to political ideology. In the view of its supporters religion must be not only the personal concern of people but also the main structure of society. In connection with this they issue calls for active and forcible measures in the name of ensuring that "true" Muslims come to power, and this constitutes the essence of the activities of the extremist wing of Muslim spirituality.

In addition to this, the modern leaders of wahhabism set themselves the following main tasks:

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- Eradicating national traditions and customs from the consciousness of people;
- Prohibiting the pursuit of music and the fine arts;
- Implementing strict measures with regard to believers who do not observe the main requirements of Shari'ah: prayers five times per day, fasting, etc;
- Compulsory observance by women of the requirements of the Shari'ah;
- Prohibiting visits to cemeteries and so-called 'holy places';
- When necessary, removing young people from their parents in order to set them on the true path;
- To declare as unbelievers all those who do not observe the main requirements of the Shari'ah, independently of the social position they occupy;
- To declare the founder of the Khanafite trend of Islam, Imam Abzam, an unbeliever;
- To ensure the strict control of religious establishments by the wahhabites.

The first information concerning the appearance of "wahhabism" on the territory of the Fergana Valley (Andizhan, Kokand, Margilan, Osh) – whose population was traditionally religious – was obtained in the mid-1970s. Members of wahhabite groups started to try to politicise Islam and change the existing state structure in Uzbekistan in order to establish an Islamic state on the territory of the republic. As a result of these anti-constitutional activities, in a number of regions of the republic the Islamic extremists have succeeded in establishing a deeply conspiratorial network of its supporters, encompassing Tashkent and Tashkent oblast, the Kokand area, the Osh and Dzhalsalabad oblasts of the republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Leninabad oblast of the republic of Tajikistan, and the republic of Kazakhstan.

The religious extremist sect Akromiylar:

In the history of the development of Islam, an "akromiylar" sect or trend has never existed as such. The sect was formed as an organised entity seven years ago. In its essence and tactics the sect is similar to the Hizb-ut-Takhrir religious and political organisation, whose ultimate aim is also to establish a theocratic state by force in Uzbekistan.

The first cells of the religious entity of the followers of the tendency appeared in the Andizhan oblast (the name is provisional and is based on the name of the founder and leader of the religious sect, Yuldashev Akrom from Andizhan). The leader of the movement, a follower of the Hizb-ut-Takhrir tendency (in Andizhan oblast followers of this tendency are known as Iymonchilar or Khalifatchilar), was actively engaged in theology and, based on the theories of Takiitdin Nabakhoniy (a well-known theologian whose works form the foundations of Hizb-ut-Takhrir), he elaborated the doctrine of this sect (the 12 lessons of Iymong iyul) which quickly spread among the believer element of the youth in Andizhan.

At the present stage the akromiylar task is to achieve its objective, if only in one oblast, ie to establish control over the activities the local authorities. Their main tactic at present is the task of propagandising their ideas in order to win members. Based on its tactical aims, in current conditions akromiylar is propagandising a simplified approach to religion, and tolerates the possibility of earning money by any means possible and certain deviations in observing the canons of Islam. According to akromiylar doctrine, it is permitted to consume spirits, smoke cigarettes, and conclude a "muwakkat nikokh" (temporary marriage, strictly forbidden under Shari'ah law).

Akromiylar activities should take place in several stages:

- The first – “sirli” (underground): involves the selection of members of the “cells”, and their studies and education in religious fanaticism, radicalism and extremism;
- The second – “moddiy” (material): bringing the material base up to strength in order to expand the ranks of the organisation, at the same time “akromiylar” directs its efforts at providing material support for new members of the movement, and finds them work, after which each must pay one fifth of his income as “baytulmol” into the common pot;
- The third – “manawiy” (spiritual): striving for further unity among members of the movement, spiritual unification, strengthening the structure;
- The fourth – “uzwiyl maydon” (legalisation): embarking on the scene of social and political activities by introducing its members into state and social structures and advancing them to positions of responsibility. In this way the network is being developed and expanded, as is its sphere of influence;
- The fifth – “okhirat”: the final stage, in which the total Islamisation of society takes place and the ultimate objective (coming to power) is achieved.

The organisational structure of the tendency “zhamoal” was formed in 1996-1997. As a rule, new members were received into it who had undergone training in the khalks (groups of 3-12 people who have become “birodars” after undergoing the appropriate religious training). Subsequently each member of a cell had to form his own group.

All property and other material and financial assets of the zhamoal were the property of members of the akromiylar tendency. There was a single bank, and via the zhamoal stores, each member was provided with food products and other material assistance which were produced by the birodars in the farms and small enterprises of the zhamoal. The zhamoal resources were accumulated by means of birodar contributions to the value of 20% of weekly income. In addition, one-fifth of the zhamoal income was distributed on a non-returnable basis to poor families (unconnected with the sect), which helped to increase the authority of the akromiylar and increase its ranks from among these families.

Each member of the organisation brought his spouse and other close relatives into the zhamoal; they were compulsorily trained in the khalks and, after taking examinations, became birodars themselves. At the same time, the women were taught separately and became women-birodars. Cases have been recorded of birodars giving away their children to childless families who were members of the sect. According to established practice, the birodars had to marry only other birodars.

As can be seen from the facts cited above, all radical Islamic sects in Uzbekistan are fundamentalist in nature. They all have, from the very outset, a professionally organised conspiratorial structure based on a single model. They all impose strict conditions on their members aimed at irreconcilability and subversive activities. Finally, they all set themselves the objective of overthrowing the secular state. Notwithstanding the efforts made by the Uzbek authorities, Uzbekistan remains a target for extremists and radicals.

ENDNOTES

¹ Ishan: Muslim religious leader. LSVS.

² Murid: a disciple. LSVS.

³ Pir: a Persian word meaning 'spiritual guide and teacher' [JTLS glossary]. Alternatively, the Russian word 'pir' means 'feast'. LSVS.

⁴ Here and elsewhere: 'DUMM' is the "spiritual authority of the Mavarennahr Muslim" (Maverannahr is the ancient name of this region).

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