
The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir: Deciphering and Combating Radical Islamist Ideology

CONFERENCE REPORT

Zeyno Baran, Editor

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Contributors

ANDREW APOSTOLOU is director of research at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington, DC.

AMB. MURAT BILHAN is chairman of the Turkish Foreign Ministry's Center for Strategic Research.

RUSEN ÇAKIR is a prominent author Turkish Islamic movements and a senior correspondent for the *Vatan Daily* in Turkey.

CEMIL ÇİÇEK is Minister of Justice of Turkey.

ANDREY GRISHIN works at the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law.

MADELEINE GRUEN is a counter-terrorism research analyst focusing on terrorist propaganda on the Internet.

ROHAN GUNARATNA is an associate professor at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

HUSAIN HAQQANI is a visiting fellow scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is a leading journalist and diplomat, and a former advisor to Pakistani prime ministers. He is a syndicated columnist for *The Indian Express*, *Gulf News* and *The Nation* (Pakistan).

MUHIDDIN KABIRI is deputy chairman of the Islamic Party of the Republic of Tajikistan.

ZUKHRIDDIN HUSNIDINOV is State Councilor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and rector of Tashkent University.

TALANT KUSHCHUBEKOV is First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic.

ÜMIT ÖZDAG is chairman of the Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies, Turkey.

REUVEN PAZ is director of the Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM) at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel.

MATEEN SIDDIQUI is vice-president of the Islamic Supreme Council of America.

LEONID SJUKIJAINEN is a senior researcher at the Institute of State and Law at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

RUSTEM SOLIEV is First Secretary at the Embassy of Tajikistan in Turkey.

UDO STEINBACH is director of the German Institute for Middle East Studies in Hamburg, Germany

MICHAEL WHINE is communications director at the Community Service Trust and director of the Group Relations Division of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

AMANZHOL ZHANKULIEV is Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Turkey.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Executive Summary</i>	ix
THE DOCTRINE OF HIZB UT-TAHRIR <i>Mateen Siddiqui</i>	1
UNDERSTANDING HT IDEOLOGY <i>Hussein Haqqani</i>	33
THE RISE AND FALL OF TURKISH HIZB UT-TAHRIR <i>Rusen Cakir</i>	37
THE UZBEK RESPONSE <i>Zukriddin Khusnidinov</i>	40
THE KYRGYZ RESPONSE <i>Talant Kushchubekov</i>	51
THE KAZAKH RESPONSE <i>Amanzhol Zhankuliev</i>	58
THE TAJIK RESPONSE <i>Rustem Soliev</i>	60
STATE FAILURE AND RADICALISM IN CENTRAL ASIA <i>Andrew Apostolou</i>	62
ASSESSING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN CENTRAL ASIA <i>Andrey Grishin</i>	72
HT AND THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL PARTY OF TAJIKISTAN <i>Muhiddin Kabiri</i>	75
THE BATTLE WITHIN <i>Leonid Sjukijainen</i>	82
THE TURKISH EXAMPLE <i>Cemil Cicek</i>	88
HIZB UT-TAHRIR IN OPEN SOCIETIES <i>Michael Whine</i>	99
THE UNIVERSITY OF GLOBAL JIHAD <i>Reuven Paz</i>	110
RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN GERMANY <i>Udo Steinbach</i>	112
DEMOGRAPHICS AND METHODS OF RECRUITMENT <i>Madeleine Gruen</i>	116
LINKS WITH ISLAMIC GROUPS <i>Rohan Gunaratna</i>	124
THE CHALLENGES AHEAD <i>Ümit Özdag</i>	127
TERRORISM AND THE FUTURE OF ISLAM <i>Murat Bilhan</i>	129

Preface

The 19 hijackers who struck America on September 11, 2001 fired the opening salvos in what will prove to be a long and messy war. Like the Cold War, the military challenges are clear enough. They have been demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq and in an untold number of less visible but equally important engagements around the world. Like the Cold War, the foundations of Western civilization are put to the test, imploring us to forsake appeasement and challenge an aggressive and violent ideology. And like the Cold War, there is another, subtler conflict that is equally challenging: the battle for hearts and minds.

Members of al-Qaeda and their violent brethren around the world swim in the vast sea of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims. While this environment gives them both safe-haven and potential recruits, these zealous few are an unrepresentative sliver of a diverse and complex faith. These groups seek not only to kill but to polarize and radicalize. They threaten U.S. national security not only through violence but also by encouraging intolerance and violent hatred, distancing the United States and other predominantly non-Muslim countries from the world's majority of peace-loving Muslims. They aim to monopolize Islam and its interpretation. They advocate the overthrow of pro-American secular regimes and moderate Muslim governments in the hope of establishing Islamic theocracies in their place. They have a global network based on charities, traditional education institutions and mosques. They are able to communicate with ease in spite of their diffuse structure, while their scattered operations are difficult for governments to track and interdict.

Despite their zealotry, they are willing to cooperate with other anti-American groups with whom they share little ideologically. They have impressive financial resources and an ability to communicate with the "silent majority" of Muslims. Through indoctrination and propaganda portraying al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups as freedom fighters, they aim to gradually encourage Muslims to oppose the United States. Over the years it has become clear that al-Qaeda is adept at using a variety of fronts and connections to recruit new members, communicate between cells and execute terrorist attacks. Radical (though nonviolent) Islamist organizations throughout the West and the Muslim world have at times played a key role in such activity.

The Hizb ut-Tahrir political movement may be, in the long term, one of the most dangerous of such organizations. Notionally based in the UK, where it operates openly, HT has built an impressive network of activists in Central Asia and the Middle East. The organization's true base is thought to be in Jordan. It is banned in Russia, Pakistan, Germany and most of the Middle East. Although HT does not use violence, its activists encourage violent jihad. While HT operated carefully before September 11, it has radicalized its language following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is now present in Sunni Arab areas of Iraq encouraging "resistance" to the American-led coalition forces.

A critical challenge for the U.S. and European policy community is to find the right balance between, on the one hand, promoting openness and democracy in Muslim

countries and among their own Muslim minorities, and on the other, keeping these communities safe from radical groups that seek to dominate them.

With this in mind, The Nixon Center organized a workshop to bring together experts to share their views on HT, to help policymakers and officials to better understand its radical Islamist ideology, and to offer recommendations on how to combat its growth. For three main reasons, the conference was held in Ankara, Turkey. First, because HT's goal is to revive the Caliphate (*Khilafat*), which the modern Turkish republic abolished in 1924, Turkey is symbolically important. Second, as the November 2003 bombings in Istanbul clearly demonstrated, Turkey is a frontline state in the war against terror. Third, the Turkish experience with democratic secularism in a Muslim society, along with its history of security cooperation and intelligence sharing with non-Muslim countries, made Turkey an appropriate venue. It was also the most convenient location for participants coming from Central Asia, Russia, the Middle East and Europe.

This conference report includes papers submitted by participants as well as transcribed speeches from those who wished to make on-the-record contributions. It also includes keynote presentations given by Turkish government representatives. While these speeches did not directly address the threat posed by HT, they are important contributions in understanding the overall Turkish approach to the threat of radical Islamist ideology. Given the extensive use of primary and secondary sources by some contributors, we have standardized the transliteration of Arabic words in an effort to assist the reader. This is for the purposes of clarity and consistency only; the meaning of the text has not been changed.

The views contained in the Executive Summary are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Nixon Center or the conference participants, unless otherwise indicated. Based on my analysis of the presentations and reports, I have drawn conclusions and developed a number of recommendations that can be found in the Executive Summary.

I would like to thank several institutions and people who made this report possible. First and foremost, I am grateful to The Nixon Center for supporting this endeavor. I would also like to thank ASAM and The Ethics and Public Policy Center for their valuable contributions. Project assistant Yasemin Sener and intern Tobias Helmstorf helped in pulling the workshop together. Interns Emmet Tuohy and Jarod Krissman transcribed and edited many of the speeches.

Zeyno Baran
Director of International Security
and Energy Programs
The Nixon Center

Executive Summary

The Nixon Center's conference, entitled, "The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir: Deciphering and Combating Radical Islamist Ideology", took place in Turkey over the course of two days. The first day began with the president of the Islamic Supreme Council of America, Karim Tourk (on behalf of his vice president, Mateeen Siddiqui), and Hussein Haqqani of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, discussing HT's structure, theology and ideology. Tourk focused his remarks on HT's anti-Semitic nature, its deviation from the traditional Islamic teachings, its global spread, and the threats posed by splinter groups, mainly al-Muhajiroun. Haqqani addressed HT's differences from other political Islamist parties and demonstrated how HT has borrowed its methodology and its ideology from Marxist-Leninist groups—albeit with an Islamist twist.

The second panel focused on HT's presence and activities in the Middle East and Turkey. HT's founder, Taqi ud-Din an-Nabahani, a Palestinian judge, was initially a member of the Muslim Brotherhood but left to create a transnational movement that aimed to overthrow Muslim governments to establish the Caliphate. HT was established in East Jerusalem (then under Jordanian rule) in 1953. Today HT is active in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine and several Gulf countries. HT is still most active in Jordan, where members have been accused of involvement in attempted coups and assassination plots against the late King Hussein. HT's influence in Egypt is diminished due to the dominance of the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite over half a century of presence in the Middle East, HT has not managed to build a large following among Arab Muslims because it is less vociferous than other groups on the subject of Israel.

As author Rusen Cakir explained, HT has similarly failed in creating a large following in Turkey. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the rich tradition of Islamic literature in Turkey made HT's publications look quite primitive, and there was no need to rely on this foreign "Arab" ideology. Second, Turks are not inclined to give up nationalism in favor of a transnational brotherhood. Third, having abolished the Caliphate in 1924, most Turks have no desire to bring it back. Finally, Turks have managed to integrate their Islamists into the democratic system.

As HT is currently most active in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, the third and fourth panels focused on the reasons for its success in this region and evaluated government responses. The third panel was composed of government representatives from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, all of whom agreed that HT has been successful in part due to the ideological vacuum following the collapse of the Soviet Union; the population's desire to learn about Islam after the end of state atheism; a shortage of local imams, leading to the import of foreign ones; familiarity with Marxist-Leninist propaganda styles; and above all, poor socioeconomic conditions. Because HT is strongest in Uzbekistan—one of the oldest centers of Islam—Zukhriddin Khusnidinov, the Uzbek president's advisor on religious affairs, gave a detailed account of the government's strategy to combat HT on the ideological front. While recognizing the need for a comprehensive strategy including economic and political reforms, Khusnidinov and the remaining three

speakers—Talant Kushchubekov, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic; Amanzhol Zhankuliev, Kazakhstan’s Ambassador to Turkey; and Rustem Soliev, First Secretary of the Tajik Embassy in Turkey—focused primarily on the religious and ideological tools.

During the fourth panel, Andrew Apostolou from the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies discussed how political repression and economic failures have created a ripe environment for HT to succeed in Uzbekistan. Andrey Grishin of Kazakhstan’s International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law argued that HT is indeed a threat because its presence has enabled Central Asian governments to justify their authoritarian policies. In turn, this is leading the region towards religious radicalism. Muhiddin Kabiri, Deputy Chairman of Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan explained that while both his party and HT are Islamic parties, there are fundamental differences that make tactical or strategic cooperation impossible. Leonid Sykiainen of the Russian Academy of Sciences argued that because Islamic extremists rely on the religion itself (especially the Quran and the *hadiths*) to justify terrorism, they have to be defeated through the use of Islamic jurisprudence.

At the first night’s dinner, the keynote speaker was Cemil Cicek, Turkish Minister of Justice. Minister Cicek described how Turkey has synthesized Western thoughts with Turkish and Islamic culture and thus is living proof that Islam is not incompatible with modernity or democracy. Outlining a set of ideas, he expressed hope for Turkey to serve as an example to the broader Middle East region and also to contribute to improved interfaith dialogue.

The second day of the workshop began with a discussion of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s operations in Europe. Udo Steinbach of the German Institute for Middle East Studies discussed the dilemma Germany faces, as an open society, in banning radical organizations, especially those that do not break any laws. Michael Whine of the Community Security Trust explained how HT is mainly recruiting at universities in the UK, which, as noted above, is the nerve center of the organization. He described HT’s clandestine and open operations and concluded that HT’s real threat comes from its long-term subversion.

The sixth panel addressed HT’s funding, the dissemination of its ideology, its recruitment methods and the demographics of its members. Reuven Paz, director of the Project for the Research of Islamist Movements at the Interdisciplinary Center in Israel described HT’s ability to recruit men and women through the Internet, especially chat rooms and discussion boards. Jean François Mayer of the University of Fribourg in Switzerland agreed that the Internet has become an important tool to spread the message. Still, he did not believe it to work as well as leaflets or face-to-face meetings. According to Mayer’s research, HT has the most sophisticated presence in cyberspace, which fits the party’s modern image as well as its defiance of national borders. Counter-terrorism analyst Madeleine Gruen explained how HT is targeting young men in the United States through the Internet and rap music. She attributed HT’s transnational success in part to its ability to adapt its message according to the needs of potential followers in each particular country.

The final part of the workshop focused on international cooperation against radicalism and terrorism. Rohan Gunaratna from Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore asserted that some of the major terrorist organizations' top leadership had formerly been HT members. Several Western government representatives then shared their experiences in dealing with HT as well other radical Islamist movements and terrorist organizations. Countries with more open immigration policies, such as Canada, have come to realize that some of the immigrants had brought with them ideologies that are incompatible with democratic values. Following the 9/11 attacks, there is increased vigilance to keep violent extremists out and neutralize those who are already in. Germany was the first European country to ban HT in January 2003 thanks to its laws allowing the banning of organizations that oppose the "free and democratic foundation of the state." It was determined that HT "advocates the use of violence as a means of achieving political goals and attempts to incite such use of violence." Religious freedom was not an issue, since HT is not considered a religious organization but a political movement.

Key Conclusions

HT is a transnational, radical Islamist political movement that aims to overthrow Western and Muslim governments and restore the Islamic Caliphate. It describes itself as a "political party", yet it is not registered as such anywhere. Its main focus is political agitation, ignoring common Islamic teachings and the spiritual aspects of the religion. Thanks to its secretive nature, the intelligence community still does not know much about how HT is funded.

HT has a three-stage "hearts and minds" strategy that aims to bring about social change for its "peaceful" Islamic revolution. In the first stage, HT's members are to educate people about the movement's history, philosophy and ideology. This educational stage is meant to last about three years. During the second stage, members are encouraged to reach out to the rest of society and establish contacts with the centers of power, particularly by infiltrating military, security and key government institutions. When the movement has reached a certain momentum, the third stage begins, at which time HT calls upon its contacts across society to topple the government peacefully. This stage culminates when the population is willing to accept the establishment of the Caliphate. While HT hopes to complete this stage peacefully, it has not ruled out the use of force if met with resistance.

Hizb ut-Tahrir does not itself engage in terrorist acts, but it also does not repudiate the use of violence to reach its end goal. Moreover, while HT is an officially non-violent movement, its members do participate in violent jihad as individuals, not as representatives of the party. Credible reports indicate that HT members have been involved in coup attempts in Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia and Iraq.

The most significant threat that HT poses is the impact of its ideology in shaping the outlook of the international Muslim community. HT's divisive and hate-filled doctrine includes rabid anti-Semitism, and it is strongly opposed to democracy and capitalism. HT functions as a vanguard party and has already splintered into more

radical groups. For example, one such splinter group, al-Muhajiroun, calls incessantly for the deaths of Britons, Americans and Jews. They also arrange for Muslims to be sent to training camps where they can learn how to use arms and explosives. In short, HT is part of the conveyor belt that produces terrorists.

HT has grown into a truly international political movement. It operates extensively in Germany (though banned), and conducts massive recruiting across Europe. HT's "nerve center" is London, where it produces propaganda leaflets and books that are distributed globally. The movement's philosophical methodology and linguistic foundations have Marxist-Leninist undertones. HT is therefore most effective among people educated with a left-wing background (Europe, the United States, the Arab Middle East, Pakistan and Indonesia), or among those who live in post-Soviet countries (Russia and the states of Central Asia).

Though difficult to confirm, HT membership probably ranges from several hundred to several thousand in each country where the organization operates. HT is run by a centralized and vertical system of cells. While their number is likely to remain small, each member is ideologically trained and therefore can have considerable impact. Moreover, as HT's method calls for the infiltration of key power centers, there is, in the organization's view, no need to become a mass movement.

HT uses the freedoms it is afforded in open society. Western democracies continue to allow the movement to function at the grass-roots level despite its dissemination of anti-Semitic propaganda. The movement's European activists mainly seek to recruit university students and middle-class professionals. HT is also appealing to frustrated youth and immigrant delinquents who have lost faith in the "system" in which they live and who are attracted to HT's rejection of Western values.

HT's main threat in the West is its anti-integration message. If the Muslims who live in Western countries choose not to integrate, and instead seek parallel lives, then there will inevitably be clashes between Muslims and non-Muslims in the long term. This is a particular concern for Europe, which is struggling to assimilate its Muslim citizens and could face serious instability if Muslim communities are ghettoized.

HT's second effective region of operation is Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan, where people are increasingly frustrated with political repression and miserable socioeconomic conditions. Moreover, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Muslims in Central Asia wanted to learn about their religion, and HT filled the vacuum in scholarship and teaching created by seventy years of Soviet atheism.

HT is successful for several reasons. First, it is highly adaptable, tailoring its message and methodology to the populations of specific countries. At the same time, HT's centralized mechanism allows it to communicate unified themes throughout the various countries in which it operates. HT also uses a variety of methods to target audiences in various countries:

- in Europe, conferences and meetings in university campuses, where there is a tendency toward leftist movements;

- in repressive regimes, leaflets in local languages and teachings in private houses;
- in the United States, Internet-based rap music

Recommendations

HT is fast becoming a worldwide phenomenon. As such, it will require the United States and Europe to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with this threat not only within their own countries, but in other regions as well, particularly Central Asia. Therefore, I propose two sets of recommendations for Western countries, the first for addressing HT at home in open societies and the second for countering HT in the fledgling states of Central Asia.

The West:

- **Do not deal with HT from the perspective of religious freedom.** HT is a self-defined political party that, paradoxically, does not participate in political systems; instead, it wants to overthrow them. HT opposes religious freedom, teaching a particular version of Islam to use it as a political tool, not for spiritual enlightenment;
- **Recognize that HT seeks to spread hate-filled, anti-Semitic and anti-constitutional ideas, benefiting from Western “tolerance”.** HT is using the West’s slogans and principles to weaken its fundamental social structures where people of different ethnic, religious and racial background strive to live peacefully with each other. By being tolerant and letting HT spread its message, the West allows intolerance to take root within Muslim communities. New tools are needed, such as legislation against hate crimes and hate propaganda;
- **Learn from the German example.** Germany was able to ban HT in January 2003 by proving that it was an organization that opposed the constitutional order and the free and democratic foundation of the state. The argument was built around HT’s functioning in a highly conspiratorial manner, its advocacy of use of violence as a means of achieving political goals and its attempts to incite such use of violence;
- **Fight HT and other radical Islamist movements at the ideological level.** In the War on Terror, the United States and its allies have so far taken military and law enforcement measures, such as stemming the financial flows to terrorist groups. At the ideological level, the political, social and economic conditions that enable groups like HT to win the “hearts and minds” of the Muslim people need to be directly addressed:
 - The most pressing issue is the need to change the perception that American foreign policy is “unjust.” Justice is the most important concept for most Muslims, to whom democracy means nothing without justice.

- The United States should do more at the highest level to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. As long as this conflict remains, groups like HT will attract followers, because Arab leaders will use resentment of American support for Israel as an excuse to delay reforms.
 - Human rights violations, poverty and unemployment are directly linked to international security. The G-8 countries need to spend more money to help the poorest in Muslim countries. This can alleviate the message that the Western democratic capitalist system is just for the “haves.”
- **Create space for Islamic groups promoting tolerance and interfaith dialogue.** The best way to defeat HT’s Islamic teachings is to allow non-Arabic schools of thought to be introduced to Western Muslims. Until today, Muslims living in the United States and in Europe have learned Islam either from Saudi-backed imams and activists, or groups like HT. Theologians and imams educated in different schools of Islamic thought, such as in Turkey, Central Asia, Indonesia or Malaysia would offer a much more tolerant interpretation of Islam that is highly spiritual and welcomes peaceful coexistence with other religions and cultures.
 - **Properly fund efforts to combat the spread of radical Islamist ideology.** Dealing with transnational organizations, counter-terrorism and intelligence activities, and monitoring financial transactions requires international coordination and is very expensive. The West needs to properly finance these efforts, by devoting, for example, a small percentage of their annual defense budget to confront this new security threat.

Central Asia:

- **Accept the legitimacy of arguments that HT is an anti-constitutional movement and combat it using political and legal, rather than religious arguments.** Central Asian countries should not be told to treat HT as a religious movement. HT calls on its members to conduct illegal and anti-constitutional acts to overthrow their governments, which necessitates legal action against them. HT cares not about religious freedom and tolerance but about fostering political change. Central Asian states need to clearly communicate to its citizens that distributing HT leaflets and participating in HT activities have nothing to do with Islam.

Work with Turkey to communicate the following:

- Islam, democracy and modernity are compatible and complementary;
- As Turkey learned, the use of torture leads to greater extremism; prisons should be well regulated and inmates should be provided with decent living conditions and humane treatment.

- Turkey, through its well-trained imams and theologians, can help provide the epistemological and intellectual basis for classical Islam to flourish in Central Asia.
- **Engage at the highest levels with Central Asian states** to better understand what incentives can be provided for more pro-active reform efforts, similar to those provided to Turkey by the EU in consideration for EU membership. In Turkey it was engagement not disengagement that encouraged reform.

I also propose the following steps for Central Asian governments themselves to deal comprehensively and effectively with the presence of HT:

- **Do not randomly jail or torture HT members.** Such methods often strengthen an HT member's belief in the need to overthrow the government. Moreover, prisons become perfect breeding grounds for HT's radical ideology.
- **Incorporate discussion of indigenous, cultural traditions of Islam into secular education.** In Central Asia, most people join HT to learn about Islam because of the lack of educational alternatives. However, Central Asia's indigenous culture is based on a thousand-year-old tradition of religious tolerance, which may provide the most effective tool for preventing the import of radical Middle Eastern ideology.
- **Create an educated clergy in Central Asia.** Central Asian countries need to resist radical Islam by appealing to a more indigenous, traditional version of Islam that has historically been tolerant and which can only be taught by improving the quality of Islamic learning among the clergy.
- **Open up the political process.** Absent legitimate outlets to express political views and political discontent, politically active people in Central Asia will have no alternative to underground movements like HT.
- **Institute political reforms that allow for the peaceful integration of Islamist groups into the political process.** HT, by the nature of its goals and absolute distaste for nation-state structures, cannot be integrated within the political process. Central Asian governments can, however, reach out to Islamist groups that respect state constitutional statutes, thus empowering the moderate Islamic elements within their borders;
- **Provide a social safety net and economic development for the private sector in Central Asia to help eradicate the roots causes of radicalism.**
- **Employ all available media resources to disseminate positive values and basic levels of religious understanding.** Central Asian states should encourage constant interfaith and intercultural dialogue to dispel dangerous myths and strengthen inter-religious harmony.

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THE DOCTRINE OF HIZB UT-TAHRIR

Mateen Siddiqui

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) was founded in 1952 by a Palestinian named Taqi ud-Din an-Nabahani (1909–1979). Born in Haifa, he received the traditional primary education of the time, after which he attended the prestigious Al-Azhar University and Dar ul-Ulum University in Cairo, Egypt. He returned to Haifa to teach and served as a judge in various courts throughout former Palestine. In 1948 he moved to Beirut and was appointed to the Court of Appeals in Bait ul-Maqdis, Jerusalem. He later taught at the Islamic University in Oman, Jordan. In 1950 an-Nabahani published a book promoting nationalist ideals entitled, *The Treatise of the Arab*. This work reflected the Movement's top priority of establishing the Islamic state in Arab territories and afterwards in non-Arab Islamic territories. After establishing HT, he published several books and organized and addressed rallies throughout Jordan, Syria and Lebanon in an effort to enhance his political profile. Upon his death, an-Nabahani was succeeded by Sheikh Abdul Qadim Zallum, another Palestinian cleric and a former professor at Al-Azhar University.¹ Zallum's leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir lasted fifty years, ending with his death in April 2003.²

Khaled Hassan, one of the founders of the militant Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was also among the founders of Hizb ut-Tahrir, as was Sheikh Asaad Tamimi, Islamic Jihad's spiritual leader.³ The identities of Hizb ut-Tahrir's current leader and senior officers are unknown.

The Influences of Anti-Semitism

From the beginning, an-Nabahani's platform was influenced by the rabid anti-Semitism propagated by Sheikh Hajj Amin Al-Housseini—the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Nazi war collaborator⁴—and by other founding members.⁵ The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism wrote of Sheikh Tamimi:

[T]he scion of a distinguished Hebron family, [Tamimi] was born in 1924 and finished his law studies at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1949. Tamimi began his political activity in the 1950s in the framework of the

Muslim Brotherhood, but later left them because they did not accept the priority of the Palestinian problem. He was then one of the founders of the Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami). . . .

He served in the 1960s as imam of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. He was expelled by Israel to Jordan in 1969 due to his radical sermons at the al-Aqsa mosque. . . .

Sheikh Tamimi wrote in 1984 a book entitled, *The Disappearance of Israel: a Ruling of the Quran*, in which he tries to prove the importance given in the Quran to Palestine and states, "The Jihad in Palestine is bound not only to bring back the Holy Land to Muslim sovereignty, but also to banish all presence of the infidel Jews."⁶

Sheikh Tamimi expressed this principle in the following words: "The Jews have to return to the countries from which they came. We shall not accede to a Jewish state on our land, even if it is only one village."⁷

As a result, the rhetoric of Hizb ut-Tahrir has long been characterized by vicious anti-Semitism and denial of the Holocaust. They frequently carry banners and distribute flyers with hateful messages. The following are typical:

"[The Holocaust is] a tool used by Jews to justify their own hegemony over Muslims in Palestine. Much worse crimes have been committed against Muslims in Chechnya, Kashmir and Palestine."⁸

"The Jews are a people of slander . . . a treacherous people. . . . [T]hey fabricate lies and twist words from their true context."⁹

In May 2000, at a gathering held by a Hizb ut-Tahrir splinter group, one speaker stated,

Our state is a blasphemy according to Jewish law, so that makes you not only cowards, garbage, scum, thieves, I could go on, it also makes you blasphemers as well, according to your own religion. Then again what do we expect from the garbage of humanity, the most gangrenous part of humanity that has always killed its own prophets, betrayed its own people? It's no surprise to any of us that [Jews] constantly lie and cheat in [their] religion. That is why in our religion [Jews] are described as pigs, swine and apes.¹⁰

Iftikhar Ali has been a senior member of Al-Mujahiroun since 1999 and organizes their physical training courses in London, England. In May 2002 he was convicted of incitement to racial hatred for distributing al-

Mujahiroun leaflets that claimed, "The final hour will not come until Muslims fight the Jews and kill them." He reportedly told the arresting officers, "What is written on the paper is true: The Jewish people must die."¹¹

At the Israeli Independence Day celebration at Wembley Conference Centre, North London, a banner read, "Demonstration against 50 years of apartheid, occupation, murder, and racism . . . the pirate state of Israel."¹²

Influences of the Wahhabi Movement

Ironically, the Wahhabi movement, after which Hizb ut-Tahrir is modeled, abolished the very Caliphate that Hizb ut-Tahrir wants to reinstate. In fact, Hizb ut-Tahrir employs the Wahhabi model of how to depose a government and clings to many other heretical beliefs held by Wahhabis.

Of the Wahhabis, the Chief Mufti of Mecca¹³ wrote:

The fighting started between the Wahhabis and the Prince of Mecca, Mawlana Sharif Ghalib Ibn Sa'id who, in 1815, was appointed by the honored Muslim Sultan as his ruling representative over the areas of al-Hijaz. This was during the time of Sultan Salim III, the son of Sultan Mustafa III, the son of Ahmad. Previous to the outbreak of fighting, the Wahhabis began to build power and gain followers in their areas. As their territories expanded, their evil and harm increased. They killed countless numbers of Muslims, legitimated confiscating their money and possessions, and captured their women. The founder of their wicked doctrine was Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhab, who originated from eastern Arabia, from the tribe of Bani Tamim. He lived a long life, about one hundred years

The cruelty of the Wahhabi revolt is well established. Perhaps not surprisingly, Hizb ut-Tahrir uses this in its justification of harming the innocent.¹⁴

Mission, Philosophy and Growth Strategy

Hizb ut-Tahrir is distinguished from other radical Islamic groups in that its objective is to establish world dominance through Islamic rule, which includes an appointed caliph. Many historians consider Hizb ut-Tahrir a faction of the Muslim Brotherhood, a secretive international fundamentalist organization founded in Egypt in 1928. According to Shmuel Bar, "This view derives apparently from the fact that many of its members were people drawn from the ranks of the Brotherhood, who found their original movement too conservative and cooperative with the

regime.”¹⁵ The Movement emphasizes a global return to puritan interpretations of Islamic teachings, which, in their view, promote violence as a means to an end. As they explain in their publication, *Mafahim Asasiyyah*, to achieve their goals, they position themselves politically to lead society in community development and dispute resolution. Initially, Hizb ut-Tahrir set a goal of 13 years to establish the Islamic Caliphate, later extending that timeframe to thirty years.

Based on their heretical interpretations of Islamic law and Islamic teachings, Hizb ut-Tahrir divides the intellectual stages of social change into three levels:

- Intellectual struggle through cultivation of Islamic teachings and principles;
- Intellectual transformation through political and cultural interaction with other political parties and community-based groups;
- Taking the reins of government through a political overthrow by the Islamic nation, with cooperation from political leaders, organizations, tribal chiefs and other power brokers and centers of influence.¹⁶

The leaders of the Movement are “authorized” to command the good and forbid what is detestable based on their heretical interpretations of Islamic law, and they vigorously condemn their opposition for not doing so. In fact, this is the mission of the anticipated Islamic state for which Hizb ut-Tahrir has gone so far as to compile a constitution of 187 articles.¹⁷ Sheikh an-Nabahani has articulated the obstacles to the establishment of the Caliphate as follows:

- The presence of other ideals that invade the Islamic world: as stated in his *Method of Hizb ut-Tahrir*, “There is a struggle against *kufr* [non-believing] states that have domination and influence over the Islamic countries. The challenge against colonialism in all its intellectual, political, economic and military forms involves exposing its plan and revealing its conspiracies to liberate the *umma* [community of believers] and deliver it from [colonialism’s] control”;
- The presence of educational programs based on imperialist principles;
- The admiration of some cultural determinations and viewing of them as an international science;
- Islamic groups within the Islamic world who do not live according to Islamic law (as interpreted by HT);
- The large rift between Muslims and Islamic governments, particularly regarding governance policy and distribution of wealth;

- The formation of democratic, capitalist governments in Islamic territories;
- The broad existence of patriotism, nationalism and socialism in Islamic territories.¹⁸

According to David Zeidan:

Sheikh Nabahani considered Western animosity to Islam as a constant ever since the Crusades. [This animosity] is fueled by a wish for revenge and manifests itself in ‘oppression, humiliation, colonization and exploitation. . . .’ Modern Europe is engaged in a cultural Crusade against Islam. . . . Orientalists and Christian clergy continue to support all anti-Islamic activities in the world, conspiring against Islam, slandering its history, and degrading Muhammad and his Companions.¹⁹

This perception—that Western policy toward Islam is motivated primarily by a long-standing resentment of it—is manifested in HT’s positions on major events throughout the Islamic world. For example, HT supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991, backs the *Front Islamique du Salut* of Algeria and strongly endorses the acts of militants today in opposing the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.

Other Radical Teachings

Great emphasis is placed on political engagement, while spiritual and refined aspects of the religion are ignored. Members are largely preoccupied with controversy in Islamic matters and are praised for their aggressive confrontation of opposing groups. They are continuously exposed to the Movement’s emphasis on behavior modification and are expected to “command the good and forbid the abominable.” The absolute, unequivocal acceptance of the Movement’s dogma is required of all members. As in a military environment, members remain on standby status, awaiting assignments and ready to mobilize as needed. Also, members must continuously affirm the Movement’s top priority, obtaining absolute world dominance. Due to the Movement’s secrecy, isolationism, and inevitable entanglements with law enforcement officials, members are trained never to trust other groups and non-Movement individuals unless the achievement of an objective or completion of a task requires it.

Heterodox Legal Judgments

Early on, perhaps to distinguish themselves from other Islamic groups, Hizb ut-Tahrir altered rules of jurisprudence that had existed for 14

centuries and published deviated verdicts, all of which were imposed on their members. Among them are:

- The leader of the Muslim state can be a non-Muslim;
- Any patron who lives up to the policies of a disbelieving state and who is an unbeliever may be killed;
- Viewing nude pictures is permissible;
- For one who marries another who cannot lawfully be married, there is a punishment of twenty years in prison.
- The abatement of prayers is permissible for astronauts traveling in space;
- The abatement of prayers and fasting is permissible for inhabitants of the north and south poles.²⁰

Financial and Organizational Support

As is frequently the case with groups like HT, the details of its early development are sketchy. Initially, an-Nabahani was connected with the Muslim Brotherhood. As it spread throughout the Islamic world, promoting the establishment of a Caliphate in Jordan, an-Nabahani attended the lectures and meetings of the Brotherhood's leader, Hasan al-Banna. But an-Nabahani was unconvinced, and it did not take long before he announced the establishment of his own movement, considering the Brotherhood "too soft."²¹

Many influentials appealed to an-Nabahani's call. Professor Sayyid Qutb visited him in Jerusalem in 1953 and invited him to join a unified front, but an-Nabahani insisted on becoming the Movement's leader. An-Nabahani also drew on the organizational principles of Marxism-Leninism, which were quite well known among the middle- and upper-class Arabs in British-mandated Palestine.

Today a great deal of uncertainty continues to surround the financial and operational links between HT and other entities. It is likely that Hizb ut-Tahrir was financed initially by the Saudi-based, radical Islamist Wahhabi movement, although the extent to which that support continues today is unclear.²² At various times, experts have speculated that Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan have collaborated with HT. Indeed, very little is known even within the intelligence community regarding the Movement's financial structure, including the sources and the control of funding,

Hizb ut-Tahrir's Global Spread

Hizb ut-Tahrir established aggressive activity early on in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and afterwards in various other Islamic territories, eventually reaching Europe. It has been established in a number of western European countries, all of which have relatively large populations of immigrants from Muslim countries. HT has also seen considerable success in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia and has appeared in Pakistan, Russia and Indonesia.

Generally speaking, Hizb ut-Tahrir refers to the regional units in which it operates as “committees”, which are divided into sub-committees. Oversight committees manage each sub-committee, all of which answer to the secret leadership.²³ It should be noted, however, that much of HT’s structure is still unknown.

Europe

Anecdotal reports place the Movement’s headquarters in London and in the surrounding cities of Birmingham, Bradford and Sheffield, each of which has large Muslim populations. Some observers believe that European converts to Islam are staffing mid- and senior-level positions and that the converts’ names and identities are used as a cover for actual operatives. However, there is little evidence to support this. The Movement has been very successful in recruiting students, but due to its anti-Semitic views and threats to students of other faiths, it has been banned throughout the United Kingdom.

Hizb ut-Tahrir is known to target frustrated youth who have lost faith in their home country’s “system.” According to local sources, the significant fall in criminality among immigrant youths can be directly attributed to the influence of Hizb ut-Tahrir. As noted in *The Copenhagen Post*:

[O]n the streets of high-crime immigrant areas in Nørrebro, Århus and the notorious Vollsmose district in Odense, [Hizb ut-Tahrir] is receiving more and more support from young immigrant delinquents, attracted by its rejection of Western values and anti-integration message. A Muslim spokesman says, ‘The more those youngsters lose faith in Denmark, the easier it is for them to be attracted to fundamentalist organizations like this.’ And a great number of youths with an ethnic background have lost faith in Denmark.²⁴

Germany was the first Western state, in January of 2003 to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir, because of its incitement of anti-Semitic and Israeli propaganda.²⁵ Interior Minister Otto Schily expressed particular concern over the spread

of propaganda at universities, noting that several of the September 11 plotters studied in Germany. “I will not tolerate organizations here engaging in anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli hate propaganda”, Schily told a news conference.

Central Asia

Since 1990 the Movement has gained a foothold in regions throughout Central Asia. Uzbek officials allege that Hizb ut-Tahrir was introduced in 1995 by a Jordanian named Salahuddin. Observers have reported their success in penetrating the Kyrgyzstan parliament, Kazakhstan media and Uzbek customs offices. HT platform openly states, “The Party started to seek the support of the influential people with two objectives in mind: to continue its *dawa* (proselytizing) without interference, to overthrow governments, establish the Caliphate, and apply Islam.” According to Husain Haqqani:

[Hizb ut-Tahrir] has 5,000–10,000 hard-core members, and many more supporters in former Soviet Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), and is expanding its operations to oil-rich Kazakhstan. Over 10,000 members are active in Pakistan, Syria, Turkey and Indonesia. At least 500 are already behind bars in Uzbekistan alone, and hundreds are in custody in the Middle East.²⁶

As Ariel Cohen has noted:

In the past, members of Hizb ut-Tahrir participated in coups against pro-Western regimes in the Middle East, such as the failed 1968 officers’ coup against King Hussein II of Jordan.²⁷ Despite its authoritarian and highly disciplined cadre, Hizb ut-Tahrir claimed that members who participated in the coup did so in an “individual capacity.” However, more recently, Hizb ut-Tahrir representatives, together with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, coordinated meetings sponsored by al-Qaeda in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

Numerous Middle Eastern countries and Germany, where Hizb ut-Tahrir is establishing links with the neo-Nazis, have taken steps to outlaw its activities. Moreover, the Movement clearly states that [it] also seeks to penetrate state structures and convert government officials and military officers to its creed.²⁸

The Movement has gained a foothold in regions throughout Central Asia since the fall of the Soviet Union, capitalizing on the discontent in the newly independent countries. According to law enforcement figures, Hizb ut-Tahrir membership increased 13 percent in 2003. Its influence reaches

into Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and, most recently, southern Kazakhstan. The sense of danger is felt most keenly by the government of Uzbekistan. Judging by the names of Hizb ut-Tahrir members put on trial throughout Central Asia, membership is dominated by ethnic Uzbeks. Although security officials warn that it has become a fertile ground for al-Qaeda recruitment, Kyrgyzstan imposes perhaps the mildest prison sentences of Hizb ut-Tahrir members, typically ranging no longer than ten years.

The governments of Central Asia have consistently linked Hizb ut-Tahrir with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).²⁹ The IMU, which in recent years has staged armed incursions into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, has already demonstrated that it is prepared to use violence to achieve its goals, which, like Hizb ut-Tahrir, include the creation of an Islamic state. In 2003 the U.S. State Department designated the IMU a foreign terrorist organization.

John Schoeberlein, the director of Harvard University's Central Asia program, describes Hizb ut-Tahrir's goals and appeal in the region:

First of all, it's a political organization primarily. And perhaps, secondarily, a religious one, although it's certainly on their agenda to promote the revival of religion and ultimately to achieve a Caliphate—that is, an Islamic state—across the region. The goal is to work in the underground in opposition to the existing governments and ultimately to eliminate them. It's certainly the most influential, most widely popular political Islamic group in Central Asia.³⁰

Peter Sinnott of Columbia University's School of International Affairs states:

What [Hizb ut-Tahrir and the IMU] are espousing in terms of Islam is more alike than different, and they are espousing, as I understand it, the renewal of an Islamic Caliphate. And I think that this factor, which is similar to what the Taliban and al-Qaeda were very much about, is the factor people are focusing on.³¹

The following excerpt is taken from an interview of Ahmad Rashid in *Asia Source*:

Question: In your book, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, you discuss the increasing appeal of the Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (Hizb ut-Tahrir: the Party of Islamic Liberation) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and argue that they constitute a serious threat to the region. Their adherents derive inspiration from the Taliban and the

extreme Wahhabi doctrine of Saudi Arabia, and were trained in militant *madrassas* in Pakistan. You say, as well, that in Kabul in September 2000, the Taliban, the IMU, the Hizb ut-Tahrir, Chechen separatists, and Bin Laden met and held talks about future cooperation.

Given both the demographics of the region as well as the increasing political repression these groups face in Central Asia, you argue that they are likely to grow in strength and numbers. What should the U.S. and the international community do to prevent this from happening?

Ahmed Rashid: First of all, the campaign in Afghanistan has certainly hit the militant arms of the IMU and the Hizb ut-Tahrir. In other words, the fighters who were in Afghanistan, their source of money, weapons and supplies, as well as the drugs trade, have all been hit very badly. But their networks in Central Asia itself have not been touched at all.

The IMU is re-organizing in Central Asia, as is Hizb ut-Tahrir. Both organizations have a new slogan now, which is basically anti-Americanism. They feel that over the medium and long term, they will be able to mobilize greater popular support because the Americans now have bases in three countries in Central Asia [Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan].

The Americans will be seen to be propping up dictatorial regimes and not pushing them hard enough to carry out economic and social reforms. The danger is still very much that these groups are not going to diminish or disappear in Central Asia; they are going to continue to exist and may in fact grow in strength.³²

Russia

On June 9, 2003 the Russian security service (FSB) reported the arrest of 121 members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Moscow, all foreigners living illegally in Russia.

'These are terrorists who want to overthrow the existing regime by military means', said FSB's top spokesman, Sergei Ignatchenko. Another official said the cell's leader, Kyrgyz national Alisher Musayev, was detained in the raid, during which agents found 100 grams of explosives, three grenades, and 15 Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflets.³³

Pakistan

Although HT operations in Pakistan were officially launched in late 2000, activity increased after the September 2001 attacks on the United States.

Like other chapters, they spread their message by conducting classes, rallies, conferences and seminars. They typically focus their efforts in urban areas, appealing to journalists, teachers, lawyers, religious scholars and other persons of influence. They ignore rural areas because they consider recruitment in such places to be counterproductive to the achievement of their political objectives. The Pakistan chapter is headed by Navid Butt, an electrical engineer who studied at the University of Chicago. The Movement maintained a relationship with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and was eventually encouraged by official agencies to establish a public presence in Pakistan.³⁴

Indonesia

In Indonesia, the Hizb ut-Tahrir branch is currently headed by Ismail Yusanto, who became a member in 1985 at Gajah Mada University in central Java. The Movement was introduced in 1983 by Abdur-Rahman al-Baghdadi, who is of Lebanese descent. What started as an underground campus movement today remains largely campus based and enjoys the freedom of well-attended rallies and meetings without government restrictions, although it has been linked with violent extremist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah, the group responsible for the Bali bombing in October 2002.³⁵

Deviation from Common Islamic Doctrine

The Arabic term *aqidah* can be translated as belief, doctrine or ideology. In Islam, *aqidah* is defined as the beliefs of the majority of Muslims (*Ahl as-Sunna wal-Jama'ah*).³⁶ According to Prophet Muhammad and what is understood from his companions and the generation that proceeded them, *aqidah* is based on the two main sources of Islamic belief, namely, the Quran and the *Hadith*. Prophet Muhammad strongly emphasized the importance of never separating from the beliefs and practices of the majority of Muslims, as cited in these *hadiths*:

Who separates from the majority and scorns the ruler will meet Allah with no honor.³⁷

Allah will never unite this nation on misguidance. Allah's hand is over the majority, so you must follow the greater group [*as-Sawad al-Adham*],³⁸ for the one who deviates is guided to Hell.³⁹

Surely my nation will not unite on misguidance, so if you see a dispute arise, then cling to the greater group.⁴⁰

Two is better than one, three are better than two, and four is better than three. You must cling to the majority, because Allah does not unite my nation except in guidance.⁴¹

Recognizing Allah's favors is thankfulness; to reject them is unbelief. The [united] community is a mercy, and separation from it is tribulation.⁴²

Rejection of Obeying the Existing Authority

Historically, groups with belief systems that contradict or distort the *aqidah* of the majority of Muslims have promulgated extremism and terrorism in Islamic territories, from battles led by the literalist Khawarij movement immediately after Prophet Muhammad's death, to the present day neo-*salafi* movement, which incites terrorism on a global scale.

An-Nabahani wrote in *Method of Hizb ut-Tahrir*:

A struggle against the rulers in the Arab and Muslim countries is conducted by exposing them, taking them to task, acting to change them whenever they have denied the rights of the *umma* or neglected to perform their duty towards it, or ignored any of its affairs whenever they disagreed with the rules of Islam, and acting also to remove their regimes, so as to establish the Islamic rule in its place.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has based its entire platform on the overthrow of current Arab governments, which it considers tyrannical, to realize its vision of an Islamic state, thereby separating itself from the conventional interpretations of Islam. The majority Islamic belief holds that whoever lives under a particular government, be it appointed or elected, must obey the rule of law and live peacefully. Uprising or violence by any movement against the government is completely rejected in Islam. Indeed, it was prohibited by Prophet Muhammad. One who commits violence in this manner will have fallen away from Islam's precepts and reverted to pre-Islamic ways of misguidance. Thus, Islam considers rebellion against the ruler a great iniquity.

The following evidence from Islamic source texts affirms that one must be patient with one's ruler, even if he commits oppression. These *hadiths* refer to the leader of a nation, not the leader of a small group. Therefore, groups that take up violent struggle against their regimes are prohibited in Islam and are, by default, illegal and blameworthy.⁴³

Obey God, obey His prophet, and obey those in authority over you.
(4:59)

Those who oppose Prophet Muhammad after guidance has been made clear to him and they then follow other than the way of the believers, We shall appoint him to that which he himself has turned, and expose him to Hell; what an evil end. (4:155)

Several notable scholars have weighed in on this question. Ibn Nujaym has noted, "It is not permitted for there to be more than one state leader [imam] in a time period. There may be many judges, even in one state, but the leader is one." Al-Bahjouri, meanwhile, stated, "It is an obligation to obey the leader, even if he is not fair or trustworthy, or even if he committed sins or mistakes." And Abu Hanifa declared that the head of the state, the imam, cannot be expelled for being a corrupt person (*fasiq*).⁴⁴

The true course to correct the mistakes of a ruler is stated in the *hadith*, "A most excellent jihad is to speak a word of truth in the presence of a tyrannical ruler." The *hadith* does not mention fighting the ruler, but rather praises the one who corrects the ruler by speech. Armed and violent opposition to a state regime can never be recognized as jihad in the way of Allah, despite the claims of many groups.

Unfortunately, today we see countless individuals and groups who condemn their rulers and governments as apostates or unbelievers thereby legitimizing declarations of jihad against them. Even worse, they terrorize, rob and kill government officers, members of the armed forces and public servants simply because they are easy targets.

In the time of the Prophet after the conquest of Mecca, a companion named Hatib ibn Abi Balta assisted some of the enemy by supporting them extensively and passing them secret information. When questioned as to his motives, Hatib replied,

Oh, Prophet! Do not hasten to give your judgment about me. I was a man closely connected with the Quraish, but I did not belong to this tribe, while the other emigrants with you had their relatives in Mecca who would protect their dependents and property. So I wanted to compensate for my lacking blood relation with them by doing them a favor so that they might protect my dependents. I did this neither because of disbelief [*kufir*] nor apostasy, nor out of preferring disbelief to Islam.

Prophet Muhammad said, "Hatib has told you the truth."

We see here the Prophet, though fully aware of Hatib's actions, never considered him to be outside the fold of Islam, nor did he inflict any

punishment on him. Regarding Hatib and his support of the unbelievers, Allah revealed the following verse:

Oh you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: Would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the prophet and yourselves because you believe in Allah, your Lord? (60:1)

Though the verse reprimands Hatib, showing him to be in the wrong, Allah nevertheless does not remove his faith, yet continues to address him with the honorable title “*Oh you who believe*”, despite his crime. This demonstrates that even if someone assists a regime that does not support Islam, one cannot harm that person.

This contradicts Hizb ut-Tahrir’s assertion that participation in non-Islamic regimes is a form of *shirk* (association of partners with God, the worst of sins in Islam)

What affects the *tawhid* is abdication to other than Allah (swt) exclusively, because abdication is a form of ritual act that is not allowed to be directed to anyone other than Allah (swt), such as abdicating to manmade law or to English law or to *kufir* courts or UN resolutions, or abdicating to any *kufir* or to the saying of any person claiming to be a believer, if they are not referring to the *sharia*.

What affects the *tawhid* is to direct any of the names, attributes or actions of Allah (swt) to another. . . .⁴⁵ For example . . . claiming the right of playing the role of the provider or legislator or to participate with them, such as accepting to be a Lord, MP, PM or ambassador for the *taghoot* or sharing power with the regime or participating in the parliamentary system. All these types of actions are a form of *shirk*. . . .⁴⁶

Rejection of Punishment of the Grave

The majority belief in the punishment of the grave is demonstrated as follows: Imam Ahmad stated, “Punishment of the grave is a true fact; and no one denies it except [he] who is misguided and is misleading others.” Zayd bin Arqam al-Hakim as-Samarqandi stated, “Whoever rejects the punishment of the grave, he is a misguided innovator!” He supported this creed by the verse,

The Fire; they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon. (Surah Ghaafir: 46)

Hizb ut-Tahrir adheres to the doctrine of the Mutazilites,⁴⁷ whose rejection of the punishment in the grave is explained by al-Ashari's *Al-Ibana*: "The Mutazilites disapprove of the intercession of Prophet Muhammad and they deny the punishment of the grave . . . although the companions and the ones that followed them unanimously agreed to it."

A member of al-Mujahiroun, an HT splinter group, declared to the faithful London's Central Mosque: "I encourage all of you to affirm the punishment of the grave, but whoever believes in that, he is sinful."⁴⁸

Rejection of Intercession on the Day of Resurrection

The practice of intercession has deep roots in Islamic tradition.

Abu Hurayrah reported that Prophet Muhammad said, "The happiest of mankind on the Day of Judgment who will receive my intercession [*shafa'ah*] will be the one who said sincerely with heart, 'There is no god, but Allah.'"⁴⁹

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Prophet Muhammad said, 'I am . . . the first to grant intercession.'⁵⁰

As Imam at-Tahawi explains:

And we are certain that Muhammad is His chosen servant, elected prophet and His messenger with whom He is well pleased, and that [Muhammad] is the Seal of the Prophets and the Imam of the God-fearing and the most honored of all Prophets and the Beloved of the Lord of all the worlds.⁵¹

Hizb ut-Tahrir claims—like the Wahhabi movement—that the intercession of a prophet or saint is a form of idol worship that negates one's faith (*iman*). They profess that it is permissible to kill anyone who seeks intercession, equating such persons with animals.⁵²

The one who commits *al-shirk al-akbar* [the sin of polytheism], his blood and wealth is permissible for the Muslims, but the one who commits *al-shirk al-asghar* [the sin of hypocrisy], his wealth and life have sanctity.

For the one who commits *al-shirk al-akbar* has no sanctity, meaning his wife is not his honor anymore, and it is forbidden for her to stay with him, and his children cannot be attributed to him nor inherit from him. The state will seize all of his wealth, and if he dies on that *shirk*, he will not be buried with the Muslims, but he will be buried with the animals.

If someone puts anybody in between himself and Allah as an intercessor . . . he has negated his [faith]. The Prophet said, 'Do not make my grave a stone to worship.' To ask someone who is alive to supplicate, this type of intercession is allowed in his life but not after his death. However, to ask for a guarantee to be admitted to Paradise is not allowed, and if he [the one beseeched] accepts to do so, they are both *kufir*.

This is a verbatim recitation of the Wahhabi belief on intercession.⁵³ However, esteemed classical scholars including as-Subki, al-Qastallani⁵⁴ and Ibn Hajr have ruled that to seek the intercession of the Prophet or any of the prophets, saints or the righteous denotes the means of approaching Allah by their ranks and stations. The one who seeks assistance implores from the One who gives assistance through the one he is using as a means. He is getting help from someone who is closer to Allah than himself. So the helper, in reality, is Allah, and the Prophet (or saint) is the instrument between the one who seeks help and the Helper, who is Allah.⁵⁵

Rejection of Belief in the Prophet's Knowledge of the Unseen

And We granted you [Muhammad] knowledge of what you knew not, and the bounty of Allah for you has been infinite. (4:113)

This is of the tidings of the Unseen which we reveal to you [Muhammad]. You did not know it before this, nor your people. (11:49)

Prophet Muhammad said:

On the Night of the Ascension, my Lord revealed to me three different types of knowledge. He told me not to reveal the first to anyone because none but I can understand this knowledge. He said, 'You may communicate the second science to whom you wish and teach the third to all your nation.'⁵⁶

Of the three branches of knowledge referred to above, none but Prophet Muhammad knows the first, the second is the knowledge of the realm of divine secrets (*al-ma'rifah*), and the third is the knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

According to the doctrine of HT, anyone claiming to know the unseen (*ghaib*) is an idolator (*mushrik*).⁵⁷ This is another assertion shared with the Wahhabis. As Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab's *Kitab ut-Tawhid* amply demonstrates, the Wahhabis confuse matters in suggesting the

one who claims to know the unseen are in fact the ones who practice magic.⁵⁸ According to al-Wahhab:

Al-Baghawi said: 'The seer [*al-arraaf*] who claims to know the unseen depends upon knowledge stolen (by the *jinn*, who overheard it from the lowest heaven) and falsehood and the like; It has been said that he is the same as the fortune-teller [*alkahin*], but the latter is in fact one who claims knowledge of the unseen events of the future. It has also been said that he is one who knows the secrets of the mind.⁵⁹

Abul Abbas Ibn Taimiyyah said, "The seer is a name for the fortune-teller, the astrologer, the thrower of sand, and all those who claim knowledge of these matters by such means."⁶⁰

Rejection of Seeking Blessings

Regarding the permissibility of seeking blessings (*baraka*) from the objects the Prophet touched, Qadi Iyad relates in his *Shifa*:

One must respect the places . . . whose soil contains the body of the Master of Mankind.⁶¹

As the *hafiz* al-Iraqi relates in his *Fath al-muta`al*:

We narrated that the Imam Ahmad sought blessing from drinking the washing water of Imam al-Shafi'i's shirt, and Ibn Taymiyya himself also related it.⁶²

Hizb doctrine also states that it is forbidden to seek blessings from holy people, places, or relics:

For example, by touching a person or rubbing against him or even touching an object like a tree or stone, in order to seek blessings from them, whether they be alive or dead. This even includes the stroking of the Kaabah.⁶³

Forbidding the Marking of Graves

The Prophet placed a rock on top of Uthman ibn Mazun's grave saying: "With it I shall designate the grave of my [milk-]brother and later bury in it whoever dies among my relatives."⁶⁴

Hizb belief prohibits the marking of graves:

Islam commands us to preserve our Tawheed from . . . building monuments above graves and making them shrines or rooms where people come and sit in order to get *baraka*. . . . And no doubt touching that tomb or stroking it, thinking that it will benefit you, is a form of *shirk*.⁶⁵

Rejection of Reliance on Causes

Ibn Ata'illah, explaining the belief of *Ahl as-Sunna* says:

I am tasked with rising in the morning and going out to knock at the door of Allah's sustenance with the means which He has made licit. I am tasked with observing and respecting the causes which He has thus named for me: 'causes'—and so I interact with them. That work in response to Allah's command is part of worship, part of the condition of being Allah Almighty's servant.⁶⁶

One of HT's more extreme interpretations holds that to rely on a cause other than God is a form of polytheism.

What affects the Tawheed is for someone to rely on a means other than Allah (swt), like those who rely on doctors or medicine as a cause of recovery from any sickness, instead of Allah (swt), or those who rely on a job and business as a cause of their provision. . . .⁶⁷

Interestingly, while HT rejects reliance on any cause other than God for one's health or daily bread, they have no qualms about their own self-reliance in establishing their vision of an Islamic state. By their own definition they would seem to be polytheists in thinking that their efforts would bring about an end, rather than letting God establish a state without them.

Al-Mujahiroun: Protege of Hizb ut-Tahrir's Heresy and Violence

The Muhajiroun movement is headed by Syrian born Omar al-Bakri, who was exiled after the failed coup against former Syrian President Hafez al-Assad. Thereafter, he relocated to Saudi Arabia, where he established al-Mujahiroun as a front for Hizb ut-Tahrir. He eventually applied for British citizenship in 1993 in London, where he had conducted numerous extremist rallies and established publishing houses for al-Mujahiroun.

Al-Bakri is known to have ties with other extremist groups such as Hamas and Hizballah, and he claims to be "the eyes of Osama bin Laden." Without question, al-Muhajiroun drinks from the same fountain as the

extremist Wahhabi *salafi* movements of both past and present and is essentially militant in its rhetoric, if not in actual practice.

Al-Mujahiroun represents an amplification of the creed and action derived from Hizb ut-Tahrir's principles. Although their methods are different, both movement's objectives are the same: to establish the Islamic Caliphate and the world domination of Islam. However, in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir, world domination is believed to occur through political machinations, whereas al-Mujahiroun's platform is more militant.

The events of September 11, 2001 have heightened the vigilance of the global law enforcement community. According to the Arabic newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Aswat*, a number of al-Mujahiroun conferences in various locations have been shut down by authorities. Their penchant for violence echoes that of Hizb ut-Tahrir. In their article "USA and the War with Islam", HT states:

Sheikh Osama bin Laden is not just another warrior for present-day Muslims; he is a hero who stands for divine justice and freedom from oppression. Any action against him is seen as action against the global body of Muslims. . . . Oh Muslims, support Sheikh Osama bin Laden and your Islamic movements wherever they may be, whether physically, verbally or financially, in the jihad against the occupiers of Muslims' land.

As recently as January 2004, the following excerpts were taken from al-Mujahiroun's website:

The conference will examine the true *salafiyyah* from the fake ones of the Saudi government and will examine the call and the works of the great Imam, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab. It will also examine how much this call acts as the driving force behind the activities of the greatest of the magnificent contemporary holy warriors and martyrs.⁶⁸

The website al-Mujahiroun boldly asserts:

[T]hose Muslims living abroad, they are not under any covenant with the *kufir* in the West, so it is acceptable for them to attack the non-Muslims in the West whether in retaliation for constant bombing and murder taking place all over the Muslim world at the hands of the non-Muslims, or if it is an offensive attack in order to release the Muslims from the captivity of the *kufir*. For them, attacks such as the September 11 hijackings [are] a viable option in jihad. . . .⁶⁹

Al-Mujahiroun and On-Campus Recruitment

Hizb ut-Tahrir became active in Britain during the early 1980's, particularly in colleges and schools, recruiting students and their associates primarily from Indian ethnicities, reflecting the composition of Muslims in Britain. From the beginning, it has been widely banned by student unions and college authorities. It has proved an embarrassment to other Islamic associations with civil and accommodationist orientations, and it is known to distribute hateful and anti-Semitic messages throughout campuses in Europe and America. Hizb ut-Tahrir was removed from Kingston University's student-organization fair after it tried to distribute racist literature. To avoid detection, the group uses a variety of names, such as "1924 Committee", "Current Affairs Society", or "Khilafah Movement."⁷⁰ *The Education Guardian* reported that al-Mujahiroun utilizes student-organization fairs for recruitment: "the group . . . attracts many A-level students, often as young as 16, who can be sent to military training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan."⁷¹

Where Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Mujahiroun differ in their recruiting is that al-Mujahiroun attacks the more radical college and university-based groups. According al-Bakri, the two groups initially split because Hizb ut-Tahrir was "too soft." He also said that his group intends to organize on university campuses under different names and through existing student societies: "They will not be able to ban peace and humanitarian societies. If they do, it will only backfire. . . . [W]e will use other people."⁷² As far back as 1996, al-Muhajiroun reportedly planned to target Oxford, Cambridge and Durham universities and claimed already to have established a presence at the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) of London University and the London School of Economics.⁷³

Hamburg University in Germany was also a target, as demonstrated by the fact that two September 11 hijackers studied there, while a third completed courses at the University of Bonn.⁷⁴ The university conducted an investigation with the FBI and found seven terrorist suspects in its database, four of whom were currently enrolled. Russian officials have requested that Britain ban certain organizations and indicated that "mercenaries" from the London School of Economics had been recruited to fight with separatists in Chechnya.⁷⁵

There is considerable evidence to suggest that al-Mujahiroun recruits students to train in camps run by Osama bin Laden in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan.⁷⁶ British journalist Jon Ronson spent an entire year interviewing Omar al-Bakri, who took him to a terrorist training camp in Crawley, England.⁷⁷ Three students from Queen Mary and Westfield College in London, reportedly withdrew from their studies in February 2000 to train abroad for military action.⁷⁸ The students were recruited

from the contacts of al-Bakri.⁷⁹ In January, a young British suicide bomber who was associated with al-Mujahiroun blew up an Indian army barracks. He was identified as a pupil studying for his A-levels.⁸⁰

These are only the latest in an increasing number of British Muslim students who have been recruited from campuses by extremist Islamic parties to train abroad and fight in regions like Kosovo, Chechnya and Kashmir. Such recruitment, which has been going on for more than a decade, has attracted a large number of students over the years, some of whom have fought in wars and been killed.⁸¹ Students as young as 16 are known to have been recruited for military training abroad, often without their parents' knowledge. Members of the party who want to go abroad and become *mujaheddin* contact key party figures. They are introduced to individuals in Britain with connections to guerrilla training camps in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

In December 2000, al-Bakri went to Birmingham, England to recruit volunteers. He explained that he had come to recruit people not only to be members in al-Mujahiroun, but also to fight abroad in places such as Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chechnya. He said that in Britain the training camps were only used to get recruits into shape but that volunteers were sent from Britain to military training camps in South Africa, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Kashmir and the United States.⁸²

Al-Bakri admitted that there is a global network of agents—some of whom operate in Britain—with connections to the military camps.⁸³ One particular student from London University admitted,

There are quite a few people in the UK who can arrange for you to go to the camps. The route the recruits take to the military camps from countries like Britain are complicated, full of stops and changes to prevent authorities from tracing them. The majority of spaces are filled by students. Even 16 to 17 year olds skip school to go on training.⁸⁴

The young recruits often lie to their parents, saying they are going on a summer holiday to places like America. But they actually go to training and return to England a few weeks later, so their parents still think they are just back from holiday.⁸⁵ Relatives of Omar Kyam, a student from Crawley, went to Pakistan to search for terrorist training camps after Kyam left his home to travel to Pakistan to train as a terrorist. Kyam's uncle complained,

He and boys like him are being given a rifle and told martyrdom is a good thing and sent on a suicide mission to places like Kashmir. . . . The men responsible for sending them don't care what happens to these boys.

Many families who have lost sons are afraid to speak out because they worry about reprisals against them.⁸⁶

The Movement's threat to universities is not confined to Great Britain. The following reports from *The Copenhagen Post* indicate the danger posed by HT's presence:

When *The Copenhagen Post* visited the [Hizb ut-Tahrir] website this week, it found information displayed saying, 'The Jews are a scurrilous people. They break agreements and they kill [our] prophets and kill the innocents and Allah forbids us to take them as loyal friends.' The site also contained documents alleging a 'global Jewish conspiracy', and asserted that its goal is the 'foundation of an Islamic State' [in Denmark].⁸⁷

[Al-Bakri declared] 'We will overthrow your democratically elected government and replace it with an Islamic state and Islamic law. . . . We know that al-Qaeda is planning attacks in Europe in August, so we will just wait and see what kind of reaction the Danish government makes before announcing our policy.'⁸⁸

In an effort to prevent their children from being recruited, parents have formed groups designed to steer children into other activities, and the Danish justice minister is currently seeking ways to ban the group. Leading immigrant spokesman and Danish MP Naser Khader was quoted in *The Copenhagen Post*: "We have to be aware that the radical anti-society activities of this organization can prove tempting to many of our Danish teenagers. . . ."⁸⁹

Fadi Abdul-Latif, the head of Danish Hizb ut-Tahrir, was given a sixty-day suspended prison sentence in 2003 for distributing anti-Semitic propaganda. Hizb ut-Tahrir continues to post threats on its website calling for the extermination of Jews, prompting immigrant spokesman Mehmet Yükksekaya to challenge Danes to stop avoiding conflict and take up the fight against Islamic fundamentalism.⁹⁰

Hizb ut-Tahrir's and Al-Muhajiroun's Support for Violence

In 1968, Hizb ut-Tahrir attempted *coups d'état* in Jordan and Syria, both of which failed, as did an attempted putsch in Egypt in 1974, said to have been carried out by a disgruntled Palestinian terrorist who had joined HT. Another HT sympathizer is thought to have been a member of the group which assassinated President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in 1981. In 1974, Salih Sirriyyah, a Palestinian member of the party, led the Islamist group that carried out a terrorist operation against the military academy in Cairo.

Coup attempts have also been made in Iraq and in Tunisia, where in 1988 over forty members were tried in secret by a military court. In 1994, ten members of Hizb ut-Tahrir were convicted of plotting to assassinate King Hussein of Jordan, and though ten were sentenced to death, eight of these sentences were subsequently overturned by the appeals court due to lack of evidence. The other two accused were tried in absentia.⁹¹

More recently, terrorism has increasingly been advocated throughout Hizb ut-Tahrir circles. A member in Osh, Kyrgyzstan stated, "It's better to go to Palestine, take a grenade, and blow it up. That's how to act against Jews. . . . I want to become a martyr."⁹² News that Asif Hanif—a suicide bomber who struck in Tel Aviv on April 29, 2003—and his failed fellow-bomber Omar Khan Sharif were British, should have come as no surprise, given their links with al-Mujahiroun.⁹³ In 2000 there was another wave of arrests of HT members and supporters in Jordan and Syria, and members of the party were involved in violent clashes with the Lebanese armed forces in northern Lebanon.⁹⁴ Amer Mirza, an al-Mujahiroun leader, was sentenced to six months imprisonment for petrol bombing a territorial army base in west London, again as a protest against the British military action against Iraq.⁹⁵

Statements in Support of Violence

There is no shortage of endorsements of violence by members of al-Muhajiroun, which, as we have seen, is only one step removed from HT. In 1991 al-Bakri commented, "[Prime Minister John] Major is a legitimate target. If anyone gets the opportunity to assassinate him, I don't think they should save it. It is our Islamic duty and we will celebrate his death."⁹⁶ He was also quoted as saying he would not "condemn the killers."⁹⁷ On June 1998, at the "Rally for Islam" in Trafalgar Square, speaker Avais Khan stated,

The Jewish holocaust was a fabrication and everybody knows that. But the way they kill the Muslims in Palestine, that is the true holocaust; theirs is a fabrication. . . . [T]hey are dirty, cursed people . . . [that] make Hitler look like a saint. . . . [H]ow wicked, how evil these Jews are. . . . [T]hey don't even deserve the death of a dog.

Al-Mujahiroun spokesman Abd al-Rahman Salim declared,

Now that the Americans, the British, and, it is safe to assume, also the French have begun to bomb Muslims in Afghanistan, government buildings here [in Britain], military installations, and No. 10 Downing Street have become legitimate targets. This also means Prime Minister Tony Blair has become a legitimate target. If any Muslim wants to kill him

or get rid of him, I would not shed a tear for him. In the Islamic view, such a man would not be punished for his deeds, but would be praised.⁹⁸

In October of 2000, al-Bakri stated,

The International Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders [IIF] created by Osama bin Laden was actively supporting Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. We collect funds to be able to carry on the struggle, we recruit militiamen, and sometimes we take care of these groups' propaganda requirements in Europe.⁹⁹

More al-Bakri: "In the Ein Al-Hilweh camp, for instance, new *mujaheddin* are being recruited and trained with the aim of opening up another front in Southern Lebanon." He added that the IIF is also "in touch with Hizballah and with Islamic movements such as Usbat al-Ansar, which are determined to fight for the liberation of Jerusalem."¹⁰⁰

Al-Bakri claimed that he recruited 24-year-old Muhammad Bilal to carry out the suicide attack that killed a number of Indian soldiers in Srinagar in December 2000 and that [Bilal's] brothers and cousins were trained by Hizb ut-Tahrir. He claims to have recruited 2,000 young men from all over Britain.¹⁰¹

As reported in *La Repubblica* on August 24, 1998:

After the American missile attack on Afghanistan and the Sudan, his announcement was, 'war has begun.' Our response to the barbaric bombardment against Muslims of Afghanistan and Sudan will be ruthless and violent . . . [and] could happen in any corner of the world. Retaliation for the U.S. attacks will end only when the last American soldier has left Saudi Arabia and the [Persian Gulf], and when the embargo against Iraq is over. . . . We will not give a truce to America.¹⁰²

In a June 2001 article published in the Hizb ut-Tahrir journal, party ideologues claimed that all methods are justified in the struggle against the unbelievers, including murder. They specifically mention that a pilot's diving a plane hit by enemy fire into a crowd of unbelievers without parachuting is a legitimate form of armed struggle.¹⁰³

Hizb ut-Tahrir also demands that Muslims come to the support of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁴ On July 15, 1999, al-Bakri published a letter written to Osama bin Laden on his al-Mujahiroun website, calling on him to act against the West. In response to pressure from the U.S. government, it was removed, but was later read aloud in mosques in North London, Bradford, Sheffield and Leicester. The letter read:

The Islamic Movements have not used the real weapon yet. . . . Oh Osama . . . you and your brothers are now breathing life and dignity into the body of the *umma* .

Our main mission as Muslims is to carry the Islamic message to the entire world. . . . We are an *umma* of jihad and beyond doubt, we have been chosen by Allah to lead the whole world if we hold to his command. . . . The opportunity is here and we must not pass it by. . . . Our Muslim brothers are firm in their jihad so we must not lose time aimlessly and [we must] act now. The *umma* is our *umma*, the war is our war, and the enemy is our enemy, the *mujaheddin* are our brothers, the victory or defeat is our victory or defeat, and the *Khilafah* is our *Khilafah*. Oh Osama. . . . Let us hear the good news from you and your brothers, for a new dawn is near at hand.¹⁰⁵

The Los Angeles Times released a report of a 1998 fax from Bin Laden in Afghanistan to al-Bakri, which stated: "Bring down their airliners. Prevent the safe passage of their ships. Occupy their embassies. Force the closure of their companies and banks."¹⁰⁶ *The Jerusalem Post* quotes al-Bakri as saying:

Clinton is a target of the Jihad, and American forces are a target of the Jihad wherever they are. . . . American people must reconsider their foreign policy, or their children will be sent back to them in coffins. They need to think about the consequences of maintaining forces in Lebanon, the Golan Heights, and the Middle East as a whole. Clinton is responsible and he will pay. . . . [The existence of Israel] is a crime. Israel must be removed. . . .¹⁰⁷

After the September 11 attacks, al-Bakri is reported to have said, "What happened was a direct consequence of the evil foreign policy of the USA. This is the compensation and payback for its own atrocities against Muslims."¹⁰⁸

Shaker Assam, Hizb ut-Tahrir's "representative member" in Germany (who joined the group at age 16) said after he was raided by police: "People who say there is a conflict between *sharia* and Christianity don't understand *sharia*, but people who say there is a conflict between *sharia* and Western democracy are right."¹⁰⁹

Muhammad al-Massari, head of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights, states, "Hizb ut-Tahrir was the mother of most Jihadi groups in Egypt."¹¹⁰ Imran Wahid, British spokesman of Hizb ut-Tahrir, was interviewed on the BBC's *Hardtalk*, and candidly stated:

The legitimate force is the Islamic army of the Islamic Caliphate. Muslims have the right to resist occupation and if that means that they have to undertake such actions [suicide attacks], then we will never condemn that. I condemn terrorism if by terrorism you mean the attacks on innocent civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq and actions of the tyrant rulers of the Muslim world in rounding up the Muslims who call for establishment of Islamic Caliphate. . . . [D]efending the land from foreign occupation is not terrorism. . . .

Britain and the U.S. are occupying Muslim land. We support the right of the people to resist their occupation. I care for the laws of Islam only. . . .

All it takes is one phone call to a general in one of the armies in the Muslim world to realize it's about time he rescued the dignity of Muslim people from the Western colonialists.

Claim to Represent the Muslim Majority

Like the Wahhabis, who justified their rebellion against the state and the slaughter of innocents they deemed as idol-worshippers, Hizb ut-Tahrir's claim to be the only correct Islamic movement is equally preposterous. They base this claim on a *hadith* that in the Last Days there will be 73 sects of Muslims, 72 of which will be sent to Hell, with one being "the saved sect." They claim that this demonstrates that they are the saved sect on true guidance, as they are the minority Islamic group by virtue of their seeking to restore the Islamic Caliphate. Hence, "*Ahl as Sunna wal-Jama'ah* will always be the minority."

The reality is that Hizb ut-Tahrir considers the majority of Muslims to be apostates.¹¹¹ This leads to the radical notion that the Muslim community must be cleansed of polluting elements. In their belief, the end justifies the means, and therefore for Hizb ut-Tahrir, nothing short of a complete overthrow of the existing status quo will suffice. If this involves killing, mayhem and even terrorism, their beliefs allow and promote such actions. It behooves the moderate Muslim nations and peoples to take all necessary precautions to prevent further spread of Hizb ut-Tahrir and its maleficent doctrine. First and foremost in the fight against the Hizb should be efforts to spread the teachings of moderate classical Islam—an Islam that embraces the "other" and which seeks to spread charity, compassion and peace.

¹Ahmed Rashid, "Reviving the Caliphate", *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven: Penguin Books, 2003) 119.

²"Hizb ut-tahrir Announces the Death of Its Ameer", April 29, 2003, <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/english/leaflets/april2903.htm>.

³Excerpt from Hizb ut-Tahrir pamphlet Ariel Cohen, "Hizb ut-Tahrir: An Emerging Threat to U.S. Interests in Central Asia," Heritage Foundation, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1656es.cfm>. Also see Hashem Kassem, "Hizb- ut-Tahrir al Islami (The Islamic Liberation Party)", http://www.eastwestrecord.com/get_articles.asp?articleid=219.

⁴"Who was the Grand Mufti, Haj Muhammed Amin al-Husseini?", http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_mandate_grand_mufti.php. "While in Baghdad, al-Husseini aided the pro-Nazi revolt of 1941. He then spent the rest of World War II as Hitler's special guest in Berlin, advocating the extermination of Jews in radio broadcasts to the Middle East and recruiting Balkan Muslims for the infamous SS 'mountain divisions' that tried to wipe out Jewish communities throughout the region."

⁵Michael R. Fischbach, "Biography of Taqiyy al-Din an-Nabhani", in *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, ed. Phillip Mattar, (New York: Facts on File, 2000). Also available at <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Haifa/ljzim/Story819.html>.

⁶"Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami al-Filastini", International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, http://www.ict.org.il/inter_ter/orgdet.cfm?orgid=28.

⁷Boaz Ganor, "Islamic Jihad: The Imperative for Holy War", *Survey of Arab Affairs*, January 1, 1993.

⁸*BBC News*, October 14, 2000.

⁹Imran Khan, *BBC News*, n.d.

¹⁰Y'aqub Zaki, speaker at an al-Mujahiroun demonstration, Wembley, England, May 7, 2000.

¹¹Leon Symons, "Muslim guilty of stirring anti-Semitic hate", *Jewish Chronicle* (London), April 19, 2002.

¹²Leaflet, Al-Mujahiroun demonstration, April 26, 1998.

¹³Sheikh ul-Islam Ahmad Zayni Dahlan al-Makki ash-Shafi'i.

¹⁴See <http://www.almuhajiroun.com/IslamicTopics/VitalIssues/Jihad.htm>: "At best, [jihad's] legal meaning can be understood as 'using military force, where diplomacy fails, to remove the obstacles the Islamic State faces in carrying its ideology to mankind.'" And according to MEMRI quoting an Egyptian news weekly: "The Islamic movement has the right to sacrifice whoever it sees fit. The rule is that [Muslim] children, women, and the weak should not be a goal except in one situation: if it is difficult to win without sacrificing them."

¹⁵Shmuel Bar, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan*, (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center, 1999).

¹⁶World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), *Religions and Modern Schools of Thought*, (n.p.: 1988) 137.

¹⁷Taqiuddin an-Nabahani *The System of Islam*, (London: Al-Khaliphah Productions, 2002).

¹⁸WAMY, *op. cit.*, 138.

¹⁹David Zeidan, "The Islamic Fundamentalist View of Islam as a Perennial Battle", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 5, no. 4, (2001): 26–53.

²⁰WAMY, *op. cit.*, 139.

²¹Fischbach, *op. cit.*

²²Ahmed Rashid, "Asking for Holy War", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 9, 2000. Also available at http://iicas.org/english/enlibrary/libr_22_11_00_1.htm.

²³WAMY, *op. cit.*, 136.

²⁴"Delinquents Go in for Islam", *Copenhagen Post*, September 14, 2001.

²⁵"Germany Targets Islamic Group in Nation-Wide Raid," *Urdu Times*, November 4, 2003, <http://www.urdutimes.com>.

²⁶Ariel Cohen, prepared statement, Central Asia: Terrorism Religious Freedom and Regional Stability, Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia of the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, 108th Congress, 1st Session, October 29, 2003, citing Husain Haqqani, *The Carnegie Endowment*, May 2003.

²⁷Hashem Kassem, Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami.

²⁸Ariel Cohen, "U.S. Interests in Central Asia", testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, March 17, 1999, www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/Test031799.cfm.

²⁹The IMU is inspired by Wahhabi teachings, and it is an ally of the Afghan Taliban. From bases in Tajikistan and Afghanistan in August 1999 and August 2000, the IMU waged two unsuccessful military incursions into southern Kyrgyzstan, en route to Uzbekistan. Since the U.S. military action against the Taliban, however, IMU forces appear largely to have been destroyed or scattered. In December 2001, reports suggested that its leader, Namangani, had been killed in Afghanistan and his followers had fled to Pakistan or had split into small groups inside Afghanistan. For more detail on the IMU, see International Crisis Group Asia Briefing, "The IMU and the Hizb ut-Tahrir: Implications of the Afghanistan Campaign", January 30, 2002.

³⁰Bruce Pannier, "Central Asia: How Big A Threat Is Hizb ut-Tahrir?", Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, May 2003, <http://www.rferl.org/features/2002/05/30052002155920.asp>.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Ahmed Rashid, interview in *Asia Source*, March 21, 2002.

³³Agence France Presse, "Russia Arrests 121 Members of Muslim Cell", *Dawn Internet News*, June 9, 2003, <http://www.dawn.com/2003/06/10/int10.htm>.

³⁴International Crisis Group interviews with Hizb ut-Tahrir Pakistan members, Islamabad, April 7, 2003.

³⁵International Crisis Group, "Radical Islam In Central Asia: Responding To Hizb at-Tahrir", Asia Report 58, June 30, 2003, 13.

³⁶*Ahl as-Sunna*, "the People of the Sunna"; *wal Jama'ah*, "and the Muslim majority." The overwhelming majority (*as-Sawad al-Aam*) of previous and contemporary scholars, whose verdicts originate from their understanding of the Quran and *Hadith*. Hence, this group is known as "the saved sect" (*al-firqat an-Najiyah*).

³⁷Recorded by al-Imam Ahmad as reported by Hudayfah.

³⁸Al-Hafiz as-Suyuti explains in his commentary about the Greater Group, *as-Sawad al-Aam*: “The congregation of the bulk of those who concurs on the path of the principles on the correct pattern.”

³⁹Recorded in the *Mustadrak* from an-Naysaburi from Ibn Umar.

⁴⁰Recorded by Ibn Majah from Abu Khalf, who heard it from Anas bin Malik.

⁴¹A sound tradition recorded by al-Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* from Abi Dharr.

⁴²A partial report recorded by Imam Ahmad and at-Tabarani from the Companion al-Nu’aym bin Bashir.

⁴³Also, the following *hadiths*:

Prophet Muhammad said, “There will come a time after me when there will be great dispute. You must follow my way (*Sunna*) and the way of the righteous guided Caliphs. My companions are like stars: any of them you follow, you will be guided.”

Auf bin Malik said: “Oh Prophet of Allah, do you recommend that we fight them [corrupt leaders]?” He said, “No, do not fight them as long as they do not prevent you from your prayers. If you see from them something that you dislike, dislike their acts, but do not dislike them, and do not take your hand out from obedience to them.”

Prophet Muhammad said, “The archangel Gabriel came to me and said, ‘Surely your nation will be subjected to trials after you.’ And I asked, ‘From where?’ He said, ‘From the leaders and their followers, by withholding the people’s rights, and when they demand them they are wronged. And the reciters will follow these leaders and they will be seduced.’ I said, ‘How will one be safe from them?’ Gabriel said, ‘Through forbearance and patience. If they are given what is for them, they take it, and if not, they leave it.’”

Prophet Muhammad said, “The best of your leaders are those whom you love and those who love you. And the worst are those whom you despise and those who despise you, and you curse them and they curse you.” It was said, “Oh Messenger of Allah, do we oppose such leaders?” He replied, “No, as long as they establish prayer among you. So when you see from your leaders what you disapprove of, dislike their actions, but don’t withhold your obedience.”

⁴⁴Excerpted from a judicial ruling (*fatwa*) issued by Sheikh Hisham Kabbani, Chairman, Islamic Supreme Council of America; and by Sheikh Seraj Hendricks, Mufti, Cape Town, South Africa.

⁴⁵Although in the Quran itself, God described Prophet Muhammad with certain of God’s Attributes: for example, “*He is most kind and merciful*” (9:128)

⁴⁶Omar al-Bakri, “A Summary of the Unique Tawheed”,

<http://www.muhammadiroun.com>. See also

http://www.almuk.com/obm/books/html/abridged_Tawheed.html.

⁴⁷The Isolationists (Mutazilites) are also known as the Rationalists, which Hizb ut-Tahrir closely resembles in its approach to belief and politics—as with their denial of many sayings of Prophet Muhammad—and their literal understanding of belief and interpretation of the Sunna. The Libertarians (Qadriyah) are a splinter group of the Isolationist.

⁴⁸“The Grave Mistake of the Deniers of the Punishment of the Grave, from *Al-Ibaanah Magazine*”, <http://www.htexposed.com/grave.htm>.

⁴⁹Imam al-Bukhari.

⁵⁰Muslim and Dawud by the way of Abu Hurayrah. *Sahih*.

⁵¹Imam Abu Ja'far at-Tahawi (239–321 C.E.) can be said to represent the creed of both Ash'aris and Maturidis, especially the latter, as he was also following the *hanafi* school of thought. His birthplace in Egypt is home to some of the most outstanding authorities of the Islamic world on *hadith* and jurisprudence. He lived at a time when both the direct and indirect disciples of the Four Imams of law were teaching and practicing. This period was the greatest age of *hadith* and jurisprudence studies, and Imam Tahawi studied with all the living authorities of the day.

⁵²See <http://www.muhammadbinabduhannabi.com/>.

⁵³Cf. Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab *Kitab al-Tawheed*, (n.p, n.d.), chapters 13–15, 20–1 and 23.

⁵⁴*Al-Mawahib al-Laduniyyah*.

⁵⁵One only need look to the example of the companions of Prophet Muhammad, who sought him as an intercession as a means to have Allah fulfil his needs. At-Tabarani and al-Bayhaqi narrated the incident of a man who could not get his need fulfilled by Uthman, who was then the Caliph, and he became frustrated and complained to another companion, Uthman bin Hanif, who advised him: "Go make ablution, then go to the mosque and pray two cycles of prayer, then say, 'Oh Allah, I beseech you and I am turning to our Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy. Oh Muhammad, I am turning to you to by your Lord, to fulfil my need.' Then mention your need." The man did as was advised, and thereafter went to the gate of Uthman, and was ushered to his presence, and his needs were fulfilled.

⁵⁶Taken from Imam Al Qastalani, *Al-Mawahib*.

⁵⁷"What makes you a *Mushrik*?", <http://www.muhammadbinabduhannabi.com/>. See also http://www.almuk.com/obm/Tawheed/Tawheed1/become_mushrik.html.

⁵⁸"Anyone Who Claims that He Knows the *Ghaib* instead of what Allah has Informed Us", 2003, <http://www.muhammadbinabduhannabi.com/>.

⁵⁹Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹A'isha Bewley, trans., *Muhammad the Messenger of Allah: ash-Shifa of Qadi Iyad*, 248.

⁶²Al-Iraqi, *Fath al-Muta'al*.

⁶³Omar al-Bakri, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴Narrated from an unnamed Companion by Abu Dawud and al-Bayhaqi in *al-Kubra* (3:412) with fair chains cf. Ibn Hajar, *Talkhis al-Habir* (2:134); Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj* (2:29). The complete report states that the Prophet asked a man to place a rock on top of Ibn Maz'un's grave; when he was unable to move it, he rolled up his sleeves and helped him and the whiteness of his arms was visible. Ibn Maz'un was the first of the Al-Mujahiroun (emigrants with Prophet Muhammad from Makka to Madina) buried in Baqi' al-Gharqad. Ibrahim, the Prophet's son, was buried next to him.

⁶⁵Omar al-Bakri, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶Ibn Ata' Allah, Hikam, "Foreordained Destiny and the Inefficacy of Material Causes-and-Effects."

⁶⁷Omar al-Bakri, *op. cit.*

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- ⁶⁸2004, <http://www.muhamajiroun.com/>.
- ⁶⁹"Al-Jihad", 2004, <http://www.muhamajiroun.com>. See also <http://www.almuk.com/obm/jihaad.html>.
- ⁷⁰<http://www.esatclear.ie/~dialogueireland/conferences/2002/sharefaith2-part2.htm>
- ⁷¹Lee Elliot Major, "Muslim Student Group Linked to Terrorist Attacks", *Education Guardian* (London), September 19, 2001, <http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/story/0,554652,00.html>.
- ⁷²Lucy Manning, "Hardline Muslims Target Students", *Guardian* (London), October 24, 1996.
- ⁷³*Ibid.*
- ⁷⁴Major, *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶See Michael Whine, "Al-Mujahiroun: The Portal for Britain's Suicide Terrorists", International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, May 21, 2003, <http://www.ict.org.il/articles>.
- ⁷⁷John Ronson, interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, National Public Radio, February 21, 2002.
- ⁷⁸Major, *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁹Abul Taher, "Call to Arms", *Guardian* (London), May 16, 2000.
- ⁸⁰Major, *op. cit.*
- ⁸¹Taher, *op. cit.*
- ⁸²<http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/bmms/sampleissuejan2001.asp>
- ⁸³Taher, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁸⁵Whine, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁶Daniel McGrory, "Family in Fear as Son Joins Terrorists", *Times* (London), January 22, 2000.
- ⁸⁷"'Unconstitutional' Islamic Group Faces Court Action", *Copenhagen Post*, August 2, 2002.
- ⁸⁸"Muslim Extremist Threat to Overthrow Government", *Copenhagen Post*, August 9, 2002.
- ⁸⁹"Kids Join", *Copenhagen Post*, March 7, 2003.
- ⁹⁰*Ibid.*, March 14, 2003.
- ⁹¹"Three Islamists Sentenced to Death for Plotting to Kill King Hussein", *MidEast Mirror* (London), January 17, 1994.
- ⁹²International Crisis Group interview, Osh, Kazakhstan, April 2003.
- ⁹³"Group Celebrates 'Magnificent 19' Hijackers", *WorldNetDaily*, August 23, 2003, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=34223.
- ⁹⁴Reuven Paz, "Palestinian Participation in the Global Islamist Network", Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 14, 2000, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/Policywatch/policywatch2000/453.htm>.
- ⁹⁵"Six Months for Army Base Petrol Bomber", *Jewish Chronicle* (London), March 12, 1999.

⁹⁶ Jason Lewis, "This Man Is Dedicated To The Overthrow Of Western Society. He Takes £200 a Week In Benefits And Is Applying For British Citizenship", *Mail on Sunday* (London), November 12, 1995.

⁹⁷ http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/bmms/sampleissue_jan2001.asp.

⁹⁸ *Al-Hayat Al-Jadidah* (Palestinian Authority), October 10, 2001.

⁹⁹ Milan's *Il Giornale* on October 14, 2000. According to Bakri, during the previous month The IIF had recruited 160 volunteers in Britain and sent them to Jordan, where they awaited opportunities to infiltrate into the West Bank and join the uprising against Israel. Recruits had also been sent in recent months to Lebanon, where they were training in Palestinian refugee camps.

¹⁰⁰ "Middle East Islamism on the Rise", *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, November 2000, http://www.meib.org/articles/0011_me1.htm.

¹⁰¹ Irfan Husain, "The Battle for Hearts and Minds", *Dawn Weekly* (Karachi, Pakistan), January 6, 2001,

<http://www.dawn.com/weekly/mazdak/20010106.htm>.

¹⁰² <http://www.dailystarnews.com/199808/25/n8082513>.

¹⁰³ Ariel Cohen, *op. cit.* Cf. also Kassem, *op. cit.*; and Hizb ut-Tahrir, "America and Britain Declare War Against Islam and the Muslims", October 9, 2001, <http://www.khilafah.com/home/category.php?DocumentID=2428&TagID=3>.

¹⁰⁴ Ariel Cohen *op. cit.* Cf. also Kassem, *op. cit.*; and Hizb ut-Tahrir, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵ www.terrorism.com/_trcctforum5/000004b5.htm.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Braun *et al.*, "Haunted By Years of Missed Warnings", *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 2001.

¹⁰⁷ Aaron Klein, "My Weekend with the Enemy", *Jerusalem Post*, May 30, 2000.

¹⁰⁸ *Today*, BBC Radio 4, September 14, 2001.

¹⁰⁹ John Miller *et al.*, "The New Faces of Islam", *Time International*, December 16, 2002.

¹¹⁰ Muhammad al-Maassari, "A Saudi Oppositionist's View: an Interview with Dr. Muhammad al-Maassari", interview by Maher Abedin, *Terrorism Monitor*, December 4, 2003,

http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=391&&issue_id=2880.

¹¹¹ See <http://www.muhammadiroun.com>. Their explanation of the way of the Prophet is: "Specifically, by *Sunna* we mean the opposite to *Ahl Al Bid'ah*, e.g. Sufis, Murji'a, Ash'aris etc."

2

UNDERSTANDING HT IDEOLOGY

Husain Haqqani

Before discussing Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) in detail, it is first useful to situate the group within the context of the various Islamic radical and political movements. Most such movements have three characteristics or basic beliefs in common.

First, they all believe in the “sovereignty of God”, the notion that the principles of faith or religion are relevant to statecraft, making governance a function in which humans are subordinate to the primacy of God. Unlike other Islamist movements, HT does not adhere to this abstract notion of the sovereignty of God, arguing instead that Islam has a clear and divinely ordained political system. In this system, Islamic law, or *sharia*, is sovereign, not the Islamic community, or *umma*. For HT, the authority of the people is to be exercised through the appointment of a Caliph. HT considers the struggle for the re-creation of the Caliphate to be a religious obligation incumbent upon all Muslims. According to HT, the adoption of divine rules is the exclusive province of the Caliph; he is thus the one who enacts a constitution and various canons of law. There is no room for separation of powers or for a “worldly” parliament.

The second notion that is common to Islamic political movements is an understanding of *jahiliya*, or “ignorance.” Most Muslims believe that, before the Prophet Muhammad came to spread the message of Islam, there existed in Arabia a “state of ignorance.” This ignorance disappeared once the Prophet disseminated the message of Islam. Most radical groups, in order to justify their struggle against current Islamic regimes, claim that every nation or state that is not run according to their interpretations of the principles of Islam is still in a state of *jahiliya*. For such groups, all the means used by the Prophet and his immediate successors must now be reapplied to the illegitimate governments which rule in the name of Islam. In this manner founder an-Nabahani distinguished HT from other Islamist groups by avoiding discussion of *jahiliya* entirely.

The third important notion in the discourse of Islamist movements is *takfir*, the condemnation of a Muslim by another Muslim as an unbeliever (*kafir*).

The distinction drawn in Islam between believers (Muslims) and *kafir* has been extended by Islamists. They label as *kafir* all those who deviate from their interpretations of Islam. Thus, Muslims can fulfill all five obligations of Islam, yet still be *kafir* open to punishment if they do not conform to the radicalist view of Islam. With respect to *takfir*, HT is slightly more moderate than most Islamist movements, since it distinguishes between “unbelieving” (*kufr*) political systems and those individuals subject to them. The latter can still be Muslims, albeit living in a sinful state. Thus, HT can attract these “sinful” Muslims into efforts to replace targeted political systems with the Caliphate.

Most contemporary Islamic political movements began after the Ottoman Caliphate was abolished in 1924. The Muslim Brotherhood emerged in the Middle East in 1928. Then, in 1937, Abul Ala Maududi published his book entitled, *Al-Jihad Fil Islam*, and in 1941 formed the Jamaat-i-Islami, which extensively influenced the South Asian countries, mainly India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. HT, as we have established, emerged in 1953.

In a sense, all of these movements had at various times described themselves as some variation of an Islamic political movement or party. They all acted in the context of declining Muslim power and emphasized the need for political action as a means of reviving Islamic political power.

It is also significant that they all borrowed the methodology, if not the substance, of Marxism. Maududi called Jamaat-i-Islami “the vanguard party” of Islamic revolution. HT talks about “agitation” and “confrontation” to be followed by “revolution.” This is all familiar Marxist-Leninist language, popularized during the era of decolonization. It is not certain, however, that such Soviet-esque characteristics were adopted deliberately. The Islamists may have set out to create an “alternative” to contemporary ideologies of the time and in the process simply inverted Soviet arguments or adopted their methods.

Before 1924, there was nothing resembling a modern political party in the Islamic world. Afterwards, the Islamist parties emerged as a reaction to modernity. The Islamists adopted a modern institution, the political party, in order to compete with or to fight modernity. To counteract Western influences, these groups would use political means and adapt methodologies that were already emerging elsewhere in the world.

In fact, one possible explanation for why HT has been able to find a foothold in Central Asia is that this region was already familiar with the Leninist lexicon. It was the same language that had been spoken in the region for the last 80 or so years. When HT arrived in Central Asia using the same language, it appeared to some people as a continuation of the

previous political system, with Mecca replacing Moscow as the locus of veneration. Therefore, HT recruited members far more easily in Central Asia than elsewhere in the Greater Middle East.

In Pakistan and Indonesia, where HT is now finding some success, many new members come from a quasi-Marxist, left-wing background. The majority are professionals; for example, the most articulate spokesman of Hizb ut-Tahrir is Dr. Imran Wahid, a British citizen of Pakistani origin. Britain's HT members are clearly influenced by growing up among England's assorted leftists, but wanting to be Muslims, they invert the revolutionary concepts to which they are exposed and adopt methodology without necessarily adopting content. In a way, HT's use of Islam as a political movement is totalitarian, because its methodology is revolutionary.

What distinguished HT from the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-i Islami is the emphasis placed on the Caliphate. HT is the only group that links the modern-day troubles of the Islamic world to the collapse of the Ottoman regime in 1924 (In fact, www.1924.org is one of HT's websites; its members are excellent "Internet warriors.") They believe that only the Caliph can declare jihad; thus, the current leadership of HT cannot decide to adopt violent means. Salafists and jihadists have criticized HT for saying that jihad can only be waged by the Islamic state, and that establishing *Khilafah*, rather than jihad, should be a priority.

HT does provide for its members' participation in jihad, but only as individuals and not members of the party. Some HT members from the Middle East fought alongside the *mujaheddin* in Afghanistan. They always made clear that they were not fighting on behalf of HT. This is an important point because it allows HT to continue to maintain that it is not engaged in militancy. Again, this is the kind of hair-splitting that only someone with experience with Marxism-Leninism would be able to appreciate. (I do not know if they have actually fought anywhere except Afghanistan, where I met some associates of HT while I was covering the anti-Soviet war.)

The Caliphate is highly significant for HT, for it believes that Islam has been under attack since the 16th century. The first phase was the period of the "missionaries", who came to the Muslim world with Western traders and businessmen. The second phase was the "cultural influences" resulting from the creation of extraterritorial outposts in the Ottoman Caliphate as well as in South Asia. The third phase was "political colonization", and now, the fourth phase is the stage of imperialism, led by the United States. It is interesting that one of HT's first pronouncements after 9/11 was to declare the current War on Terror to

be the “fourth crusade against Islam.” In other words, we are living in the final attempt by the West to subjugate Islam.

HT proposes a three-stage process for its Islamic revolution. The first is the “culturing stage” in which HT educates the Muslim masses by various means. This can also be described as an “ideological stage.” The second is the “interaction stage” in which HT agitates for revolution by confronting those who oppose it. Finally, the last stage is the actual revolution, in which the *kufur* governments are overthrown and the Caliphate is established.

HT is very particular about the universality of the Caliphate. In fact, HT has splintered over this issue. The Pakistani splinter group called “Tanzim-i Islami” believes that the Caliphate can first be established in Pakistan. Here again is the parallel structure to Marxism: HT speaks of a global revolution, as opposed to revolution in one country.

HT’s four principles of government are worth examining. The first, placing sovereignty with the Caliph and not the people, makes HT very antidemocratic. This is a major difference with the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-i Islami, who are prepared to concede that while ultimate sovereignty belongs to God, it can be exercised by true believers. In HT’s conception, however, there is no role for the people at all. I have occasionally described this as an attempt to create a “dictatorship of the pious”, recalling, of course, the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Second, HT believes authority belongs to the *umma*—the community of believers. Third, there can only be one Caliphate in the Islamic world.

Finally, HT asserts that the Caliphate alone has the right to adopt and enforce the Islamic opinions of the state; any state, even if it is governed by Islamic principles, is not Islamic if it is not a Caliphate. Hence, the partial adaptation of *sharia* in certain states is not acceptable to HT. It is, in some ways, a maximalist movement, uncompromising both in ideology and in methods. Whether this will help or hurt HT’s chances of realizing its goals remains to be seen.

3

THE RISE AND FALL OF TURKISH HIZB UT-TAHRIR

Rusen Cakir

Thirty-seven years ago, in April 1967, a completely new Islamic organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), had thrust itself into the Turkish limelight. A previously unknown underground movement, HT sent an assortment of written works (“HT Presents”, “The Constitution of the Islamic State”, “The Islamic Order” and “The Vital Problem of Muslims”) to journalists, intellectuals and political personalities advocating, inter alia, the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate. The group had also distributed leaflets in different parts of the country.

Security forces moved quickly and soon arrested several Jordanian citizens studying in different Ankara universities as well as a group of Turkish citizens, including an astronomy scholar, Ali Nihat Eskioglu. The subsequent search by security forces for the emir of the *vilayat* of Turkey, Jordanian student Annan Muhammed Ali, and Vice-Emir Ercümend Özkan received wide-spread coverage in the press. During the investigation, HT militants continued to distribute leaflets declaring, “establishing the *Khilafah* is obligatory for all Muslims.” They even sent a booklet entitled “Political Comment” to the then-Minister of Interior Affairs Faruk Sükan. The leaders of HT were arrested in August 1967, and while HT activities continued briefly, the group soon went quiet, and its name was forgotten in Turkey.

Yet despite the setbacks, HT continued to maintain a presence in the country. In 1985 and 1986, security forces captured 42 militants distributing booklets entitled, “The Constitution of HT”, in Ankara, Istanbul and Çorum, and four HT members received four-year prison sentences. In February 2000, HT again became the object of a serious security campaign—though accidentally. Police arrested a young Islamist militant who had put an explosive in a government building in Nevsehir, a small city in central Anatolia. This militant, suspected of being a member of (Turkish) Hizballah, had in fact acted independently, though he happened to know the identities of several HT militants. Using information gleaned from his confession, the police arrested 72 people in seven different

cities, 32 of whom were indicted. One month later, the then-emir of Turkey, Ahmet Kiliçkaya, was arrested for membership in HT shortly after he graduated from the University of Amsterdam. In October 2001, the interior ministry arrested more militants and the new emir, Remzi Özer. Then in May 2003, Emir Yılmaz Çelik and 93 others were arrested.

The past three years have witnessed a wave of prosecutions and convictions. In all, 389 suspects have been sent to court and 199 of them have been jailed. In March 2002, 21 members received sentences of between six months and four years. While some HT members have received amnesty under the Reconciliation Act for past violent deeds—originally enacted for PKK militants—their ideology remains unchanged. However, following the reform of the penal code, the courts no longer arrest HT members, since they do not use violence.

Despite the large number of recent arrests, HT is not likely to be re-establishing itself in Turkey. In contrast to the arrests in 1967, each of the dragnets described above was ignored by the mainstream media. During the intervening years, Turkish political life, Turkish believers and Turkish Islamic movements all experienced major changes. HT, in contrast, is structurally resistant to change. It might use the latest technological advances, such as the Internet, or transfer its headquarters to the West, but it still insists on advocating the Islamism of the Cold War and as a result, appears out of fashion.

In 1967, Turkey was governed by the right-wing Justice Party with the support of an overwhelming majority of Turkish conservatives. At the time, there was no independent Islamic movement, legal or illegal; the Justice Party's main platform was anti-communism. The appearance of HT changed the status quo for several reasons. First, HT established for the first time that there was a fundamentalist Islamist threat to the Turkish state. Second, whereas previously communism had been attacked in the name of Islam, now capitalism had become a target. Third, the re-establishment of the Caliphate was of particular relevance to Turkey, given that it was they who abolished it in 1924. Finally, HT originated outside of Turkey, and its leaders were mainly foreigners.¹

One year after the 1967 arrests, the '68 Movement began to dominate intellectual and political life in the world, including Turkey. The Left came briefly to dominate the radical discourse, but here were soon moves to counterbalance this monopoly. The *ülkücü* movement recruited mainly conservative Sunni youth. In 1969, Necmettin Erbakan inaugurated his National View Movement and one year later established the National Order Party, an Islamist party.

Religious life in Turkey has traditionally been controlled by the state through the enormous Diyanet Isleri Bakanligi institution. Furthermore, the state was providing religious education through the Imam Hatip Schools (IHL) and the High Institute of Islam. This constituted an important bulwark against HT's considerable transnational resources, preventing them from influencing or tainting the education of the children of conservative and lower-class families.

Beginning in the 1980s, Islamic mobilization increased, but for several reasons, HT did not experience a revival. First, the Iranian revolution and the Afghan jihad radicalized many young people. They established publishing houses, translated books and created magazines. Some Islamic communities adapted to this process by entering into the media, and in the 1990s they came to own newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations. Second, the number of IHL reached 600, and the proportion of IHL students became 10 percent of all high school students. As a result, a diverse and very effective Islamic intelligentsia developed. Third, the National View movement consolidated political Islamism by establishing the Welfare Party, which appealed to non-conservative masses through a socialist theme, thereby ceasing to be a marginal ideological party and thus crowding out HT. Finally, in 1994 the Welfare Party won elections in major municipalities such as Istanbul and Ankara, and 18 months later came out as the leading party in the general elections. It would govern Turkey for one year.

Throughout all these developments, HT became merely a spectator. It did not publish much and did not create its own popular intellectuals, nor was it able to get involved in Turkish political life. Their "Islamic alternative", so innovative in the 1960's, had become obsolete in comparison to the platforms of other Islamist groups.

In short, HT failed in Turkey because Turkey managed to integrate its Islamists into the democratic system. Moreover, Turkish Islamists produce their own values, intellectuals, leaders and institutions, making it difficult for outside groups to gain a foothold. As such, it is not likely that HT would use terrorist methods in Turkey. They are faced with two choices. They can attempt to modify their semi-legal status to a fully legal one, or they can continue on their current course. In either case, HT will remain a simple and nostalgic intellectual club.

¹ The Nationalists Association in Konya condemned HT as "Arab racists" and an organization of "communists and Zionists." They charged that the "group [had] been infiltrated into Turkey by the communists in order to create some suspicion over pious Muslims."

4

THE UZBEK RESPONSE

Zukhriddin Khusnidinov

The great 12th-century Muslim scholar, Muhammad al-Ghazzaly, labeled religious extremists as “the road muggers who attack people under the pretense of religion.” Today, similar “muggers” are stealing the ideas of the “Caliphate” and “pure Islam” from classical Islam. It would be wise to remember that the main characteristics of the Golden Age of Islam were enlightenment, religious tolerance and acceptance; yet, three of the four caliphs (Umar in 644 C.E., Usman in 656, and Ali in 661) were assassinated by religious extremists. The Holy Quran stained by the blood of Usman is evidence of tragic history.

Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, religious extremism is emerging as a widely employed threat to the stability and security of our societies. Although there have been successes against the religious extremism in Afghanistan, certain extremist groups are trying to establish cells in Central Asia.

The Causes of Extremism in Central Asia

The emergence of extremism in the Central Asian region can be traced to the following causes:

1. The ideological vacuum which existed in the region following the collapse of the Soviet Union;
2. The fact that the Central Asian Muslim Board, which had been formed during Soviet rule, did not react immediately to the changing situation; even with time, its attempts to use new ideas were unsuccessful; the decline in collaboration between religious boards in the newly independent states was a result of this failure;
3. The replacement of the publicly popular clergy with self-declared Islamists and the resulting inaccurate interpretation of classical Islam’s basic tenets;

4. The extensive dissemination of religious extremist publications by international groups seeking to take advantage of the desire for knowledge of Islam among the population;
5. The influx of foreign missionaries of various groups and sects who have tried to mask their geopolitical and mercenary aims with religion;
6. The porous borders in the region that allow extremist movements to finance themselves by the trade in narcotics and arms;
7. The neglect that some states in the region have shown towards the rise of extremism.

In short, these factors have combined with the socio-economic problems inherited from the Soviet era to provide ideal conditions for the inflow of extremist groups and sects to Central Asia.

Mosques which were capable of influencing the hearts and minds of the people began to fill the vacuum left by the retreat of communist ideology. The mushrooming of mosques served as cells for various extremist sects, leading to an increase in Islamic radicalism in the 1990s. Reports indicate that there are 3,313 mosques, twenty *madrassas*, one Islamic institute and 96 primary Islamic courses registered in Tajikistan, a country of 6 million.¹ There are more than 2,500 mosques in Kyrgyzstan, where 3.5 million people—74 percent of the national population of 4.7 million—are Muslims. This number of mosques exceeds the number of secondary schools, of which there are only 2,000.² In Kazakhstan, where religious institutions operate without state registration, there are 5,000 mosques; this is a country in which 9 million people—60 percent of a total population of 15 million—practice Islam.³

It is almost impossible to train imams for such a large number of mosques. Due to the shortage of religious institutions in their countries, many young people went abroad to “institutes” with fundamentalist orientations. Graduates of such institutions then returned to Central Asia and immediately began efforts to discredit and remove from mosques those imams who practiced traditional forms of Islam. As a result, some mosques began to turn into centers for extremist forces that now pose a threat to public security.

Inconsistent policies and attempts to use religion for personal purposes are negatively affecting Central Asia. On the part of governments, there have been demands for scholars not to use *hadiths*, calls for the “appearance of non-traditional Islamic institutions as a symbol of democracy”, and proposals “to establish a unified prayer place for followers of various faiths.” Such calls only strengthen the distrust the

faithful have in the government and prepare the ground for the entrance and spread of alien religious movements in the region.

When Islam arrived in Central Asia the 17th and 18th centuries, the inhabitants of the region had a well-established nomadic culture and lifestyle. Accordingly, Islam could not penetrate very deeply into the daily life and culture of these nations. Since historically, Central Asians have exhibited no strong interest in religious extremism, there exists a mistaken opinion that it has no chance of gaining the support of the ethnic majority in the region. Currently, there is a view in some countries of the region that only Uzbeks are prone to religious extremist ideas. However, such a view is unhelpful, because this addition of ethnicity to the fight against religious extremist ideology may allow groups espousing it to take advantage of disunity and instigate ethnic tension.

Flawed Interpretations of Reality

Information from different international human rights organizations and from some foreign media agencies often neglects official government statistics and relies instead on information supplied by certain types of individuals. They then draw conclusions and generalizations on that basis.

Expressions such as “independent imam” and “independent Muslim”, which are meaningless in religious, political and social contexts, have nevertheless appeared in various reports and publications. The members of extremist groups are dubbed as “fighters for faith”, for “independent Muslims”, and for “victims of the faith.” What do they mean when they speak of “independent Muslims”? From whom are they free? From what are they free? Are they free from God, or from the religion? In fact, the very word “Muslim” means “obeying man.” Islamist extremism does not represent Islam; in contrast, it negates the spiritual and traditional essence of Islam. Extremism is an attempt to sow confrontation and anarchy among Muslims and to confront Muslims with other traditional beliefs.

The Policy of Uzbekistan in the Field of Religion: Results, Issues and Tasks

Uzbekistan is today one of the main centers of Islam, not only regionally, but globally as well. Many foreign analysts admit this high position of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has a critical role in providing stability and security in Central Asia. The current situation requires that our country continue to demonstrate its ability to fill that role.

The policies of the government of Uzbekistan towards groups proclaiming themselves “fighters for faith” are obvious. Islam Karimov, the president of Uzbekistan, said the following during the 7th session of Parliament on December 6, 2001, when antiterrorist operations were at their peak:

If I were asked what we needed to do in the current difficult and perilous situation to defend ourselves and our homeland, to safeguard our nation’s hearts and minds from wicked influence and distractions, I would say that first of all, *we need to safeguard our faith and its purity*. If we today do not safeguard our religion from those who misinterpret it—and we certainly are experiencing this danger—people, especially the youth who have little life experience and insufficient wisdom, may be influenced by these wicked forces tomorrow.⁴ [Emphasis added]

Systematic and consistent political, legal, cultural, spiritual and ideological effort is being put forth in order to prevent the development of extremist religious ideas in Uzbekistan. Independence has turned a new page in the history of the spiritual development of our country. This change is manifested in several ways:

1. The official attitude towards religion has changed, and the aggressive atheism of the Soviet period has disappeared.
2. Genuine freedom of conscience of Uzbekistan’s citizens has been secured. Article 31 of our Constitution stipulates that, “Freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all. Everyone shall have the right to profess or not to profess any religion. Any compulsory imposition of religion shall be impermissible.”⁵
3. The legitimate work of religious institutions is welcomed. The rights and duties of citizens relating to freedom of conscience are clearly stated in the law entitled “Freedom of conscience and religious institutions.”
4. In contrast to religious radicalism, the principles of religious tolerance, mutual respect and mutual understanding have become characteristic of life in our country.
5. National and religious traditions have been reinstated. The Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha holidays are celebrated publicly and freely.⁶
6. From the very first days of our independence, it has been a government policy to restore the invaluable spiritual and cultural legacy of our ancestors. For instance, the jubilee years of scholars such as Imam Bukhari, Bahouddin Naqshband, Najmiddin Kubro,

Imam Termizi, Imam Moturudiy, Burhonuddin Marghiloni and Abduholiq Gijduvaniy were all celebrated.

7. The Muslims of our republic have gained the opportunity to go on pilgrimage and visit holy places. The number of pilgrims was only 1,500 in 1991; in 2004 it increased to 3,800. Since independence, a total of 45,000 pilgrims have performed *Hajj*. Starting in 1994, pilgrims were offered a currency-exchange facility. More than \$47 million has been allocated for this purpose.
8. As of February 2004, the number of religious institutions had increased from 119 in 1990 to 2,153.⁷
9. The work of academic religious institutions has increased and improved. Only two academic religious institutions functioned prior to independence. The number of such institutions has now reached eleven. For the first time, scholarships have been provided to students. A total of only 425 students graduated from religious academic institutions; 153 obtained degrees from the Tashkent Islamic Institute during the period 1975–1990 and 272 from “Mir Arab” *madrassas* during the period 1950–1990. However, since independence, 4,732 students graduated from these institutions.⁸
10. The level of religious knowledge among imams has significantly increased: while in 1997 only 4.7 percent of imams had religious education, this figure reached 82.2 percent in 2004.⁹
11. New achievements in religious study have emerged in Uzbekistan. Unique to Central Asia, Tashkent Islamic University was established under the cabinet of ministers by the initiative of the president of Uzbekistan. Achievements of world religious studies are widely applied, and systematic study of the unique sources of our spiritual heritage has been undertaken. The four volumes of the *hadith* collection of Imam Bukhari, the “Al-Hidayah” of Burhonuddin Marghiloni, the “Sunan at-Termizi” of Imam Termizi, and the “Tanbeh ul-Ghofilin” of Abu Lays Samarkandi were published for the first time in the Uzbek language, while an interpretation of the Holy Quran was published twice. Throughout the curriculum, places for the introductory teaching of religious studies have been established, and corresponding textbooks are now being prepared.
12. A number of decrees and resolutions of the president and the cabinet were adopted in order to implement the above-mentioned improvements. For example, according to the resolution of the cabinet of ministers (Number 364, August 22, 2003), entitled, “On providing

social benefits and privileges to develop spiritual educational activity in the religious sphere”, the following items were enacted:

- An acknowledgement was made of the compliance of the educational standards, curricula and tuition of secular disciplines (along with the ecclesiastical) at Tashkent Islamic Institute and at special Islamic secondary schools with government standards. The diplomas of their graduates were recognized as legal certificates of education, and those in possession of such documents were granted the right to continue their education in public higher educational institutions.
- The religious monuments registered as objects of national cultural heritage were transferred to the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan for usufruct, according to the “Contracts of use and protection” concluded by local inspections for the protection and use of cultural monuments.
- Fees for public utilities (gas, water, electricity and other services) paid by religious organizations were fixed at the household, rather than industrial, rate.
- Funds coming from the monuments and the utilities were earmarked for the maintenance of mosques and *madrassas*, the support of the educational and logistical base of religious academic institutions, the development of modern conditions, and the support of academic staff and *imam-khatibs*.

The decree of the president adopted on September 17, 2003 entitled, “On protection and developments of Imam Bukhari memorial complex, improvement of studying and promotion of the heritage of the scholar” is an important step in this area.

1. Uzbekistan is a multinational and multiconfessional state. That is why religious tolerance is regarded as the main principle for building a democratic society in our republic. One-hundred eighty-seven organizations related to 15 non-Islamic denominations are functioning in peace in the country. Much work in this sphere has been done, and the basis for religious reforms has been prepared in a short period:
 - In 1995 the international Muslim-Christian conference, “Under the Single Sky”, was held in Uzbekistan.
 - In 1996 the 125th anniversary of the Tashkent and Central Asian Eparchial Board of the Russian Orthodox Church and the 100th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran community were celebrated.

- In 1998 the Orthodox religious seminary in Tashkent and the Evangelical seminary in Samarkand started their activities.
 - In 2000 the international conference on “World Religions: On the Road to a Culture of Peace” was held in cooperation with UNESCO.¹⁰
1. Consistent and systematic steps have been taken in order to avoid the spread of religious fundamentalism. It should first be noted that the development of small- and medium-size enterprises, the measures aimed at social protection of the population, and the reforms in the public health, educational and spiritual sectors have ensured not only social stability and step-by-step progress, but have also decreased the number of economically and ideologically impoverished people. In addition:
- The work of various groups attempting to spread extremism among our people was revealed.
 - Numerous articles and books of scientific refutations of the intentions of these sects that tried to use Islam for their mercenary aims were also published.
 - In keeping with the words of the President Karimov—“fight against idea with idea, against illiteracy with enlightenment”—popular religious clergymen in the media have been organized in order to explain the fight against the ideas threatening religious tolerance and the stability of the republic.

The more stable a society is, the healthier its way of thinking will be because there will be fewer individuals vulnerable to the various harmful movements. Nevertheless, it is hard to solve this problem completely. Under the conditions of a market economy, it is natural that we will witness some social marginalization. There will always be those who live in poverty. Therefore, we need to mobilize large-scale assistance for people in need, and we must also highlight the growing role and importance of religion in this regard.

The Activity of the Special Commission

In 2003 the Special Commission was established by order of the president in order to examine the condition of prisoners convicted for crimes committed while members of religious extremist groups. The commission includes professional experts—Islamic scholars, clergymen

and law enforcement officials—as well as representatives of the general public.

The Special Commission held numerous interviews, from April 15 through August 15, 2003, totaling 3,418 prisoners in 21 penitentiary facilities (located in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the regions of Andjian, Bukhara, Navai, Tashkent and Tashkent City) in order to examine their condition and morale, the reasons for which they had committed crimes, and to identify those who had abandoned fundamentalism (to avoid their being released into communities that were still caught in the grip of extremism.) In the interviews, the crimes were explained in detail.

According to the results of the interviews, 1,303 prisoners repented; their documents were then submitted to the Amnesty Commission led by the president. According to the fourth article of the decree of the president on December 1, 2003 entitled, “On Amnesty”, 736 prisoners were set free. Following the decrees of August 22, 2001 and December 5, 2002, 1,500 prisoners who had been convicted of crimes against the constitutional regime (Article 159) were released.

Issues Yet to Be Addressed

The results achieved do not mean that *all* issues were duly addressed. The intricate links among these issues requires a thorough approach:

1. Consistently educating the person of healthy mind and belief and supporting him to use his potential for the stability of the republic and the prosperity of the nation; This means supporting the infrastructural and educational base of the academic religious institutions and improving the educational process by providing modern conditions and by using modern technology;
2. Safeguarding the humane essence of religion; continuing to support the spiritual and educational potential of each religion to the cause of stability, social accord and inter-confessional harmony in our society;
3. Exploring the rich scientific heritage of our ancestors and protecting architectural monuments so that we can safeguard them for the next generation;
4. Supporting social activities of religious personnel, especially *imam-khatibs*, improving their educational level and providing for their welfare;
5. Continuing anti-fundamentalist actions.

Tasks to Be Accomplished

1. Ensuring the engagement of the representatives of the religious organizations, scholars and distinguished individuals in promoting policies of freedom of conscience and an environment of tolerance in the republic;
2. Promoting accord among representatives of different ethnic and religious groups, enhancing the effectiveness and responsiveness of efforts to promote cultural awareness and cross-cultural exposure, and respect for universal human values;
3. Reducing excess luxury in the performance of religious and family rituals and enhancing cooperation with representatives of religious organizations in preventing wastefulness;
4. Disseminating our values and improving religious awareness of the citizens using media resources such as television, radio and press;
5. Rehabilitating prisoners and their family members, reintegrating amnestied inmates into the community and organizing meetings with religious scholars, psychologists, *imam-khatibs*, and community leaders in order to assist in this process;
6. Undertaking charity work in cooperation with municipalities, businesses and institutions; providing support to families in need of financial aid;
7. Introducing on a broad scale relevant religious literature to the public.

The Urgent Issue of International Cooperation

Given globalization, addressing problems of a regional and even domestic nature requires wide-scale cooperation.

1. Regional powers can hardly succeed in preventing religious extremism while religious extremist movements continue to act freely in the democratic countries of the developed world. Unless there is change, there will always be a safe haven in which they can regroup.

2. Naturally, attempts to portray members of religious extremist groups as “victims of belief” in the mass media will provide legitimacy to such groups.
3. The world’s leading countries should espouse an unequivocal position on this issue. This will ensure the full success of the fight against extremist movements.

Visions for the Future

Through the struggle against the external and internal threats that emerged in the ideological vacuum left by the fall of communism, the young government of Uzbekistan has gained invaluable experience, which we have translated into an integrated system.

The government of Uzbekistan has accomplished many difficult tasks, such as the protection of enlightened Islam from its politicized, militant variant, as well as the overall defense of the freedom of belief from aggressive missionary acts of extremist groups.

Thanks to the reforms in the system of religious studies, the balance of religious and secular elements in the curricula of religious academic institutions under the authority of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, and the securing of compliance with national educational standards by such schools, education is an important factor contributing to lasting stability in Uzbekistan.

To close with words from the Holy Quran:

*help one another in virtue and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression. . . . (Moida, Verse 2)*¹¹

We are prepared to apply fully the opportunity that comes from the experience of Uzbekistan to establish an ideological defense in cooperation with neighboring countries and the world community in order to counter the extremist threat.

¹N. Zakirova, “V Tajikistane Nachalis Goneniya na Imamov”, http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/rca/rca_200209_147_1_rus.txt.

²V. Jumataeba, “Problemi Islamizatsiya v Kirgizistane”. *Navigator*, January 10, 2001;

Z. Galieva, "Polikonfessionalniy Kirgizistan: Novie Tendentsii i Problemi", <http://polysphere.freenet.kg/no2/J102.htm>.

³R. Podoprigora, "Religious Liturgy in Kazakhstan: Problems and Perspectives"; V. Ponomaraev, S. Djukayeva. "The Religious Factor in Political Life Kazakhstan (1991–1996)."

⁴Islam Karimov, speech to parliament, December 6, 2001.

⁵Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

⁶Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Number 221, June 20, 1991.

⁷Information Bulletin of the Ministry of Justice, Republic of Uzbekistan, February 1, 2001.

⁸The Educational System of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2003.

⁹Annual report of the committee of religious affairs of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 2003.

¹⁰Z. Khusnidinov and O. Yusupov, "Religion in the Republic of Uzbekistan."

¹¹Muhammad Taqi ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: n.p., 1996).

5

THE KYRGYZ RESPONSE

Talant Kushchubekov

This is an important issue, not only for the young independent states of Central Asia, but for the world community as well.

It is obvious that the end of the Cold War and thus of the bipolar world system has, unfortunately, not promoted general world stability. On the contrary, it has brought about new, nontraditional threats and challenges to international security, notably in the form of numerous regional conflicts.

Currently, international terrorism and religious extremism are among the most keenly felt problems on the world agenda. The global character of these threats, along with their influence both on state policy and on ordinary citizens' daily lives, demonstrates to the entire world community the necessity of elaborating joint approaches to combat them. Indeed, significant steps have been taken so far in this direction within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Organization for Collective Security Treaty, the OSCE, the UN and NATO.

The Batken events of 1999 and 2000 in Kyrgyzstan, the events of 2000 in Uzbekistan, and the wide scope of the war against terrorism in Afghanistan bear more than eloquent witness to the complicated and dangerous regional situation created by the increasing influence of Islamic movements in Central Asia.

The spread of these movements was eased within Central Asia by several factors: internal problems, broken ties between the new states and proximity to the Afghan border. In the 1990s our countries had enacted policies of openness to the outside world, while the adoption of liberal laws created favorable conditions for the development and propagation not only of traditional faiths, but also the new, less-traditional radical religious groups.

According to the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, in 1991 there were 39 mosques and 25 Russian Orthodox parishes in Kyrgyzstan; now, there are 2,000 mosques, 931 of which had

completed registration procedures, 43 Orthodox parishes, and 208 houses of worship of all other traditions (Christian, Buddhist and Jewish).

There have been large increases in both “freshmen” (those who join a religion for the first time) and the proselytized (those who transfer from one religion to another) in all faiths. This took place throughout the entire territory of Kyrgyzstan, particularly in the northern part of the country. Clearly, such a situation fosters intolerance.

State relationships with nontraditional religions and new religious movements are quite important for Kyrgyzstan. Our policy is conducted with reference to the basic rights and freedoms of human beings, particularly freedom of conscience and religion, reaching a balance between the secular nature of a community and its spiritual values.

Meanwhile, there are two issues that reflect present-day conditions and have a direct impact on the stability and security of the state and region: the positive processes of democratization on one side and the spread of religious radicalism on the other. In this context, in addition to promoting of various reforms, the government has also been conducting work on a potential ban on or limit of missionary activity by representatives of foreign religious organizations. The state program for the counteraction of religious extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic for the years 2004–05 has been initiated in order to protect the interests of the people, the community and the state from the negative impact of religious extremism.

According to its constitution, Kyrgyzstan is a secular state, in which religious organizations are separate from the state and equal before the law. No religion can be established as a state religion. Every citizen is guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess any religion or none. Any propaganda that promotes racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic superiority is forbidden. The regulation of relations between the state and its citizens and the determination of the rights of religious organizations are defined by the law, “About freedom of religion and religious organizations”, adopted December 16, 1991. Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic have been given the opportunity to make pilgrimages to holy places—such as Mecca. More than 11,000 Kyrgyz people have made *Hajj* so far. The interference of clergy in the activity of state bodies is not allowed in the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, one cannot create a party on a religious basis, nor can religious organizations hold any political goals or objectives. These bans are in full support of the freedom of conscience, the equality of all parties before the law, and the protection of citizens from discrimination and from infringement of rights and freedoms on a religious basis.

On November 14, 1996, the decree of the president entitled, "About measures on implementation of the rights of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic for the freedom of conscience and religion", was issued. In that document, provisional regulations were adopted on the procedural registration of the following:

- Religious organizations;
- Missions of foreign religious organizations;
- Foreign citizens who come to the Kyrgyz Republic in order to engage in religious activity;
- Religious schools (institutes, *madrassas*, parish schools, Sunday schools and so on);
- Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who go abroad for religious education.

The procedural registration of religious organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic is more liberal in its nature than the procedures that exist in other countries. For instance, in the Kyrgyz Republic the minimum number of members a religious organization must have is ten persons, whereas in Hungary and Uzbekistan it is 100, in the Czech Republic and Austria, 300, and in Turkmenistan, 500.

States have always assumed their own interests to be absolute, while considering religion as merely an instrument of their policies. In this sense, there are no contradictions between policy and religion, because all social factors are mutually interdependent components for the lives of individuals, societies and states. Religious norms and values have a critical impact on the formation of social and political elites. The fact that many representatives of the Kyrgyz national elite had made *Hajj* to Mecca and that the presidents of many newly independent states had taken oaths on the Holy Quran serve as an example of this impact.

With the adoption of a new version of the constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2003, the balance between the constitutional principles of freedom of conscience and equality of all religions before the law on the one hand and the responsibility for ensuring security for individuals and society in the spiritual sphere on the other has become a priority of the government.

Governmental bodies and numerous non-governmental watchdog organizations pay much attention to cases of infringement of human rights in the field of conscience and religion in all Central Asian states, including the Kyrgyz Republic. All of these reports and materials are impartially studied, and proper measures are taken within the law, proceeding on the basis of the specific religious discipline, such as its

possible negative impact on the world outlook and potential destabilization of the political and public situation in the country. Illegal and unjust charges by foreign governments and NGOs, however, are repudiated.

Hizb ut-Tahrir in Kyrgyzstan

The politicization of some religious groups being pursued through outside assistance is a very serious development. These groups use different slogans for the strengthening of their positions and the achievement of their political goals. Every year, the internal stability and further development of the countries in the region are endangered by various radical religious organizations. These groups call for the forcible change of the existing state regimes and the subsequent establishment of Islamic public and legislative norms, that is, *sharia* law. There are several such religious sects that assist illegal paramilitary organizations and try to undermine the state. The most serious threat for the security of the Central Asian region is the activity of two groups: the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT).

HT appeared in Kyrgyzstan as recently as 1996, mainly in the south of the country. Lately, despite the constant, cautious implementation of measures designed to suppress religious extremism and terrorism (with the understanding that strict and repressive measures could only strengthen their popularity), HT has spread in the north of Kyrgyzstan as well.

Nevertheless, in the last year in Issyk-Kul oblast (in northern Kyrgyzstan), twelve criminal cases have been brought against individuals who disseminated ideas of an extremist religious nature. Four-hundred thirty-nine leaflets, 31 brochures, four books and several audio- and videocassettes of an anti-constitutional nature were found and removed from 13 persons (*Vecherniy Bishkek*, February 6, 2004).

Following international experience, in November 2003 the activity of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Organization for the Liberation of Turkistan, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party, and the Islamic Party of Turkistan were banned by the decision of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic. This step was undertaken in accordance with efforts of the international community to combat terrorism. In 2002, thanks to the initiative of several countries including the United States, the UN Security Council added the Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkistan to the list of terrorist organizations. The U.S. State Department had already included the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan on its list of international terrorist organizations, as this group's militants participated in an invasion of Kyrgyzstan in 1999–2000.

Consequences of Radical Islamic Movements for Central Asia

In this respect, one can ask the following question: What might the governments of secular, Muslim-majority Central Asian states do to oppose the impact of extremist organizations in order to minimize the negative consequences of their activities?

The main reasons for the spread of radical religious movements in Central Asia, particularly in the Kyrgyz Republic, are the unstable economic situation, the high rate of unemployment, and the extremely poor quality of life in the rural areas of our country. Kyrgyz youth, thanks to the lingering effects of Soviet atheism, remain poorly educated in religious (not to mention secular) subjects. They are thus the segment of the population most susceptible to such ideas. Given the lack of proper employment conditions, social protection or prospects for the future, they become easy victims of the extremist propaganda expounded by radical organizations that use false yet witty slogans taken out of context from the Holy Quran. This situation is also complicated by the fact that, in many regional mosques, Muslim clergy themselves suffer from an insufficient theological education such that they cannot effectively argue with members of radical organizations.

Given the destabilizing effect of this type of religious doctrine, among the urgent tasks of the government of the Kyrgyz Republic is the increase in effective religious education both among the Muslim clergy and the public as a whole. It is important to stress that the government of the Kyrgyz Republic directly controls the level and quality of education in religious schools and universities, in collaboration with the Kyrgyz clergy and with other states in Central Asia and the Arab world. At the same time, an intra-departmental council consisting of all relevant branches of government is attempting to coordinate government efforts in the religious sphere. This consultative body is charged with identifying the most acute problems and proposing solutions. Its duties also include the coordination of government and civil society efforts to preserve stability and promote ethnic and religious tolerance.

However, in light of the present situation, all these efforts have not immediately produced a desirable effect, partly because the State Commission on Religious Affairs and the Directorate of Muslim Clergy in Kyrgyzstan are facing shortages not only in qualified religious experts, but also in financial support for conducting a public information campaign. In comparison with such organizations as Hizb ut-Tahrir, whose activity is forbidden in our country, the government is far less well financed. In its

propaganda activity, HT uses leaflets, brochures and books printed in Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Uighur and even Russian. From the quality and number of such publications, one can distinctly trace the level of foreign funding flowing to this organization. Under these circumstances, the joint efforts of the entire world community in blocking the financing of HT and of other organizations are of special importance.

Indeed, all activities designed to combat the activity of radical organizations demand a joint approach. It is impossible to struggle with religious extremism if we do not take into account all features and conditions of today's situation in Central Asia. Poverty, unemployment, social inequality, narcotics, illegal migration, organized crime, to name a few, are all root sources that we should eliminate, or at least minimize, if we are to provide for sustainable development. In a speech on July 6, 2000, President Askar Akaev noted that an important reason for the decline in the well-being of the population is the decreasing role of the state during a transitional period and its inability to adapt to changing situations.

[The state] should be able to adapt to sharp political and economic changes. It is known that we inherited from the former [Soviet] Union such a volume of state obligations and infrastructures which we are unable to financially support [ourselves] by our own means.

Taking into account some failures in the realization of our programs, in particular the 1997 "Kyrgyz National Strategy on Sustainable Human Development", the national development programs for the next ten years have been elaborated in cooperation with international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations. The result is the Comprehensive Development Framework of the Kyrgyz Republic (CDF) and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS), called upon to lower the level of poverty, to create a stable environment for harmonious development, covering all social spectra. The basic financial support for such programs comes from such organizations as the IMF, the World Bank, the EBRD, the Asian Bank of Development and others. Now it is possible to ascertain, gradually, that these programs are improving the lives of ordinary people by expanding their opportunities. To take one an example: We have achieved a reduction in the overall poverty level from 44.4 percent in 2002 to 41 percent in 2003. Thus, despite certain difficulties, our country is entering into a phase of social and economic development that can be sustained.

Addressing the basic theme of our conference, it is important to repeat the known formula on the preservation of stability and security: We need a constant dialogue between various cultures and religions in order to foster mutual understanding and interaction. The preservation and

development of peaceful values and the sustainable development of economies depend on this.

Concerning Islam, in my view the essence of the religion was expressed by President George W. Bush in his Ramadan congratulatory remarks on October 25, 2003: "Islam is a religion of peace. Those who follow Muslim beliefs bring a great contribution to our country and to the world." I believe that the United States has fairly underlined the differences between a war on terrorism and a war on religion.

In sum, a true Islam deserves recognition and respect all over the world and deserves to have a chance at development in line with other religions. Upon the initiative of President Askar Akaev, in June of this year Kyrgyzstan will be hosting the International Forum of UNESCO entitled, "Eurasia in the 21st Century: Dialogue of Cultures or Conflict of Civilizations?" Twelve leaders of European states will participate, along with outstanding men of science, religion, and culture. It is our hope that Kyrgyzstan will bring its contribution to the development of mutual understanding between nations by organizing international conferences, inviting politicians, scholars, writers and representatives of different religions.

6

THE KAZAKH RESPONSE

Amanzhol Zhankuliev

The problem of religious terrorism is today of primary importance for the domestic and foreign policies of many countries, including Kazakhstan. The rise of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) in Central Asia over the last five years had been one of the most important—yet least analyzed—phenomena.

As a multinational and multi-religious country, Kazakhstan does not limit the rights of its citizens on religious freedom. Islam as a religion has nothing to do with extremism. The religion's rules and ideals have been harmonious and without any contradictions, as the long history of Islam shows. Islam also blended with the culture of many nations, including Kazakhstan, where currently there are more than 3,000 registered religious unions representing 45 denominations, mainly of Islamic origin. We have more than 1,500 mosques officially registered in our republic.

The leaders of our country are taking clear measures to prevent and eradicate the spread of extremist religious ideas. These activities are not limited to only prohibitive actions, but also include steps to improve the social conditions of our population.

At the same time, our analysis of the situation regarding organizations like HT shows that they make attempts to justify violence in order to achieve their goals. HT was set up in 1953 and proclaimed itself to be a political party that is ideologically connected to Islam. The main objective of the party is a non-violent overthrow of the currently ruling governments. Its followers believe that it is not prohibited to establish the Islamic Caliphate (*Khilafah*) with “weapons in hands.” The well-organized structure of the party enables HT to fulfill the assigned tasks effectively and to increase the number of its followers. In Kazakhstan we have already detained HT members for distributing extremist literature. The fliers were filled with commands to overthrow the official governments and create an Islamic *Khilafah* on the territory of post-Soviet Central Asia. HT literature promotes the distribution of ideas of political Islam and religious extremism, calls for civilian insubordination and provides concrete recommendations on how to achieve the organization's goals.

HT's program states that it is a political party and that

as soon as there is a possibility to dismiss the head of the current government, Muslims will be obliged to stand up and fight. In case there is no possibility to fight against the establishment, it will be necessary to wait, get stronger and ask for help from those who are strong. As soon as there is a possibility, it will be necessary to overthrow the head of the state and his collaborators.

HT's program also says that the membership in HT is not restricted on the basis of age, sex or national origin. The members of the party should be knowledgeable in radical Islam so that the creation of the Islamic state is possible. The followers must perform their duty according to a shroud of extreme secrecy. Those who are enrolled in the party give a pledge of allegiance to the Quran and to Islamic ideas and principles. They pledge that they will never share any information about the party and will fight until the end for the creation of the *Khilafah*.

According to HT members, it is not possible to create the *Khilafah* in Central Asia in the near future. Therefore, they are planning to conduct their activities gradually, starting with the publishing of their literature. Currently their primary goal is to attract religiously "illiterate people by active propaganda and to get young people involved" and to get support from people of different social backgrounds. It is very likely that in the near future, the followers of the party can become *shahida* (suicides), sacrificing themselves for Allah and following jihad whenever they are called.

HT members are trying to create a powerful network in Central Asia where the conditions are ripe: socio-economic instability, poor understanding of Islamic ideas, amenability to religion, relative passivity on the part of official religious authorities or official reticence regarding extremism as well as some new trends in Islam and the absence of legislative basis. Even though they do not appear to be engaged in physical violence and terror at this time, members of HT use other methods of manipulation, including informational to psychological. In this regard they perniciously use freedom of speech to undermine the constitutional protections that protect that very right. Thus, we must be attentive to this threat to our constitutional order at the same time as we are protective of our freedoms.

7

THE TAJIK RESPONSE

Rustem Soliev

The missionaries of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) started to illegally spread their religious literature in Central Asia in the 1980s. In Tajikistan, these materials were written in Tajik, Uzbek and Arabic. They were published in Lebanon. After the Central Asian countries achieved their independence, the stream of literature coming from abroad increased tremendously. Most of this literature was translated from Arabic to Uzbek and Tajik by professionals. The Uzbek language was used because there are more than one million Uzbeks living in Tajikistan.

After the collapse of Soviet Union, the leaders of Hizb ut- Tahrir exploited the population's ignorance about religion. They distributed literature and took advantage of poor economic conditions and desire for religious instruction to attract people. They intended to create followers in Tajikistan in order to use them to form a future structure of Hizb ut-Tahrir. They were able to partially establish some structure in several regions and thus broke Tajikistan's law on political parties.

Analysis of HT shows that it is led by an emir. The emir is selected by the *mazalima* apparatus and the leadership structure, or *qiyadat*. The *qiyadat* consists of two subdivisions: informational and political. Below that is the *mu'tamad*, the regional manager who is the local representative of the emir. The *mu'tamad* is also the chairman of the regional board. The people who provide literature are subordinated to the *mu'tamad* provincial committee. At the third level is the *naqib* which is subordinated to the *mu'tamad*. The *naqib* is the manager of the local division. He implements the decisions made by the above divisions. In the regions they form local subdivisions which are led by four or more *mushrifs*, the managers of the subdivisions, who are subordinated to the *naqib*.

The local division organizes a meeting of *mushrifs* once a month. Under the *naqib* there is a representative of the treasury and of HT literature. The *mushrif* is assigned by the local organ, which forms the link, or *halka*, and consists of up to seven students, or *daris*. Classes in these small study circles are conducted twice a week, for one and a half hours. The HT

teachers have often studied in religious schools; many of them are very intelligent.

The members of HT consider as their main goal the re-establishment of the Caliphate. They reject any democratic structure in society. According to the program of the party, the formation of the Caliphate consists of four stages:

1. *Sakuat*, the use of religion as a cover in order to bring people to the party;
2. Union with the people, infiltration of HT members into government institutions, dissemination of political knowledge, formation of conditions that can win over state structures.
3. Holding meetings and demonstrations to bring down the government.
4. Fighting against the government if it refuses to relinquish control.

HT differs from other Islamic parties—including the Islamic Revival Party, which is registered in Tajikistan—in their desire to bring down the state. Members of HT keep in touch with their representatives in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. They refuse any contacts with representatives of official religious bodies.

HT recruitment efforts benefit from the poor social conditions. As noted above, most of the representatives of the party are educated in religious schools. They attempt to recruit not only students, but also women. In light of HT's goals, it is important that governments take all necessary measures to prevent the activities of the party members.

Since October 1998, 354 members and leaders of HT have been captured in Tajikistan. A large amount of literature has been confiscated. One-hundred twenty-eight cases were opened against HT members, and 116 cases against 185 persons were completed and sent to court. One-hundred eleven cases against 152 people were considered by the court and the necessary accusations were made.

At the same time, the government of Tajikistan has had considerable success in preventing the spread of HT. We clearly understand that we cannot solve the problem using administrative measures alone. We rely on Islam itself to defeat HT, which will in turn require the integration of Islamist groups into our political system.

8

STATE FAILURE AND RADICALISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

Andrew Apostolou

The following paper will focus on Uzbekistan both because it is the most important country in Central Asia and because it contains the largest Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) following. Uzbekistan is also a key state in the war against terrorism, though it has no intrinsic strategic importance; it is poorly located and does not have the vital natural resources of Kazakhstan. Yet Uzbekistan has been attacked by the same terrorists who have attacked the West. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) was behind a series of explosions in Tashkent in February 1999. Part of the Al-Qaeda network, IMU has also received training and financial assistance from the Taliban. In addition, Uzbekistan has been vital to counter-terrorism operations in southwest Asia and serves as a “backup” ally in case the Western position in Pakistan becomes more precarious.

So why does state failure matter?

The nature of the current conflict means that the Cold War technique of turning a blind eye to our allies’ human rights abuses is no longer viable. That Cold War approach is precisely what we are being encouraged to take by the previous speakers representing the Central Asian republics. There is a certain historical irony in the fact that representatives of largely unreformed former Soviet republics are telling the United States, a country that not so long ago was their mortal enemy, to repeat the mistakes of the Cold War.

The Cold War approach was explicitly rejected by President Bush when he said:

Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty.¹

President Bush’s observation is equally relevant to Central Asia. In this war, the hearts and minds of those who could potentially support, endorse

or finance terrorism matter. Public opinion is important, whether one considers this to be a “war of ideals” or a “propaganda war.” Nothing helps the terrorists and their friends more than our failure to practice what we preach. The Central Asian government officials who spoke objected to HT because it challenges their grip on power. The speakers from the UK and Israel were clear that their distaste for HT stems from the fact that the group incites hatred, intolerance and anti-Semitism, which ultimately serve as justifications for terrorism. For Westerners, HT’s views are an attack on our core values. For the Central Asian republics, however, the particulars of HT’s ideology are irrelevant. Only the fact that they oppose the existing regimes is important.

It is worth remembering that radicalism is not just about incitement, but also about receptivity. Too often the impression is given that if only we could stop bad clerics from saying nasty things, then the problem of violent Islamist radicalism, that is, the global jihadist movement, would somehow go away. Such a view is not only naive; it also misunderstands how theological authority works within Islam and the relationship between the terrorists’ ideology and their theology. Islam is not Roman Catholicism. It has no central authority. Even papal encyclicals often do not yield the desired effect. In the decentralized structure of Islam, the issuance of a fatwa against terrorism by a moderate *alim* will neither stop nor discourage political violence. In the same way that papal encyclicals do not always yield their desired effect, a fatwa against terrorism issued by a popular *alim* will do nothing to stop or discourage violence. The terrorists and Islamic radicals are not great theologians. They simply pick and choose that which suits their political views and justifies their use of terrorism.

Third, counter-terrorism includes a broad range of policy options ranging from security to political and economic measures. As U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld wrote in *The New York Times* on September 27, 2001:

This war will not necessarily be one in which we pore over military targets and mass forces to seize those targets. Instead, military force will likely be one of many tools we use to stop individuals, groups and countries that engage in terrorism.

Our response may include firing cruise missiles into military targets somewhere in the world; we are just as likely to engage in electronic combat to track and stop investments moving through offshore banking centers. The uniforms of this conflict will be bankers’ pinstripes and programmers’ grunge just as assuredly as desert camouflage.²

Throughout Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, the problem is that states do not view terrorism strictly within the tightly focused lens of security. Indeed, they tend to regard all political dissent as a security problem. As a result, Uzbekistan has become a grave embarrassment to the counter-terrorism coalition. Its appalling human rights record and crass, Soviet-style approach to dealing with dissent are used by both radical Islamic groups and some human rights organizations as a rod with which to beat our backs. HT's network and its fellow-travelers have seized upon Uzbekistan's track record as the ideal tool with which to discredit our just war against terrorism. Human Rights Watch has taken the same tack. The government of Uzbekistan has handed a propaganda advantage to the extremists. To give but one example of how human rights abuses in Uzbekistan are becoming a political liability for the counter-terrorism coalition, take the opening paragraph from the December 14, 2003 article in the *Mail on Sunday*, a firmly right-wing and normally pro-U.S. British newspaper:

They boil people to death here. They also beat them up in the street, suffocate them, drag them to mental hospitals and forcibly inject them with drugs, ram bottles up their behinds in squalid prisons and plant drugs on them, not to mention all the usual things such as censoring the newspapers and rigging the elections. Of course, there is no shortage of nations where this sort of thing goes on. Human rights organisations complain about it, and we are shocked. But what makes Uzbekistan different is that President Islam Karimov is an ally of the free, democratic West, which fights under such mottos as 'enduring freedom.'³

If there is a threat to Central Asian stability, then it comes from the regimes, not from the radicals. Neither HT (due to its policy against violence) nor the IMU have the ability or the broad public support necessary to overthrow President Islam Karimov. By contrast, the incompetence of the Karimov regime has caused considerable economic problems that have led to social unrest, administrative breakdown and widespread hardship, all of which erode support for the state.

The danger for the counter-terrorism coalition is indeed a double-edged sword: We could simultaneously lose credibility with the populations of Central Asia because of our perceived support for the regimes and lose influence with the regimes due to our unwillingness to ignore the way they treat their populations.

The Root of the Problem

There are two broad categories of state failure in Central Asia: political and economic. Such failures create a favorable context for radicalism, opening the field of political dissent to extremists rather than moderates.

Politically there has been no real break with the communist past in Uzbekistan. Rather, the Karimov regime continued the policies of the era of Sharaf Rashidov, the first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (1959–1982). Rashidov stuffed the local administration with his relatives and cronies, raked in funding for non-existent cotton production, and, in sum, was allowed to treat the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic as his personal fiefdom in return for slavish support for Brezhnev in Moscow. Indeed, for President Karimov, a product of the Rashidov political machine, the Brezhnev-era represents the “good old days”, while that tepid reformer, Mikhail Gorbachev, represented dangerous radicalism. By contrast, democracy took hold in eastern Europe because the electorates had the chance to throw the communists out of office early on, a vital condition for starting political and economic reforms. Although many former communists later returned to power, their grip on the state had been broken and many returned to politics as social democrats. Such a break with the past never occurred in Uzbekistan. Instead, it is run by the same clique that has been in charge since the late 1950s.

Uzbekistan is also corrupt and cronyistic. These are not allegations leveled by disgruntled opposition activists; rather Karimov himself has repeatedly and publicly lambasted his own officials for corruption and for nepotism. This is a government that is, by its own admission, corrupt, and is, by its own admission, incompetent. Some of Karimov's speeches are quite revealing. He flies into a provincial capital, convenes a meeting of the provincial assembly and then, in a televised session, sacks the provincial governor. His addresses are often a long list of the various ills afflicting the province in question, many of which he lays at the door of the outgoing provincial governor. On September 11, 2001, Mr Karimov was in Samarkand, where he sacked governor Erkin Roziyev and replaced him with the man who would later become the most recent prime minister of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev:

I personally declare those engaged in morally foul activities using government authority and the president's name to be my enemies. Harsh measures should be taken against this kind of people so that they will never ever be promoted to senior posts again.

Those present here and young people listening to me now, tell me what I can do for you, how I can help you! Tell me from this rostrum what help you need me to give you and how! I will do everything! Tell me who is in your way, we will remove them all. Being president, I will never let them have things their own way. We will bring them all to light, but all we require of you is to report them to us in good time and stand next to me—together, we will fight them all.⁴

Speaking to the Samarkand provincial assembly on December 17, 2003, Karimov had some interesting comments to make regarding the honesty of his provincial officials:

A person who saves good cadres will save himself. Those sycophantic ones who flatter a leader will betray him. This is the bitterest side of our truth. Do not ever forget this. Gather impartial people around yourself and do not be afraid of people who have their own opinion and are stronger than you, because you will save yourself in this situation.⁵

Commenting on his own government on December 11, 2003, President Karimov said:

The Uzbek government lacks responsibility. I want to announce this at the top of my voice—that the government lacks responsibility. What is lacking? Accepting responsibility and initiating issues [is lacking]. If there is a problem, they should not avoid it but deal with it.⁶

Despite these problems, Uzbekistan is in some ways rather efficient. The repressive organs of state work very well, while those parts that should be delivering services and promoting development do not. Consequently, the state has very successfully defeated its potential opponents by treating all of them as subversives. The only opposition political movements that have survived in Uzbekistan are underground and extreme.

Not only is there no room for legitimate dissent in Uzbekistan, but all initiatives that aim at some form of liberalization, steps often taken under foreign pressure, have turned out to be a disappointment. The Karimov Administration is adept at pseudo-reforms, such as those that secured it a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement from the European Union in 1996.

A recent example of non-reform began with the announcement in May 2002 that censorship had been abolished. The U.S. and British governments, which generally argued for political reform in Uzbekistan, pressured it to start assisting the coalition's counter-terrorism efforts in September 2001. The director of the State Press Committee's Agency for

the Protection of State Secrets, Erkin Kamilov, was removed from his post on May 7, 2002. The following week, censors ceased their habit of vetting official newspapers before publication.

The difficulty with abolishing censorship was that it had not officially existed in independent Uzbekistan. It is a token of the Soviet atmosphere in Uzbek politics that the government can, with a straight face, celebrate and hold up its annulment of a policy that it has always denied having. According to Article 67 of the 1992 Uzbek constitution: "The mass media shall be free and act in accordance with the law. It shall bear responsibility for trustworthiness of information in a prescribed manner. Censorship is impermissible."⁷ Despite the supposed ending of censorship, newspapers were officially warned not to exceed certain unwritten boundaries. Within a few months, journalists and newspapers that dared to take press liberalization seriously were being harassed and, in some cases, imprisoned.⁸

State repression is also highly effective at encouraging the population to disengage from politics. As a result, politics in Uzbekistan is limited, on the one hand, to the former communist elite in Tashkent and the provincial capitals, and, on the other hand, to an active fringe of radicals such as HT, who have some limited support among their extended families and friends. The general population is rather frightened of the government, as it should be. Uzbekistan is a country where the president personally threatens to kill his opponents. Speaking of the leaders of the IMU to parliament on May 1, 1998, Karimov said: "Such people must be shot in the forehead! If necessary, I'll shoot them myself, if you lack the resoluteness!"⁹ The message of this statement requires no explanation. It certainly required none to the people of Uzbekistan.

Repression has worked for the Karimov regime. The notion that repression is not an effective tool of government, that repression causes at least an equal and opposite reaction in the form of radicalization, is wishful thinking and historically unjustified. If it were true, then Stalin would have been overthrown in 1938. It is of course the case that members of some radical groups may grow firmer in their convictions as a result of imprisonment. Many more, however, have changed their behavior. According to official Uzbek government figures, just three out of 400 Islamist prisoners released in 2003 ended up "re-offending."¹⁰ As everybody in Uzbekistan knows, many of the Islamist prisoners who "repent" and seek official forgiveness for their alleged offences have been tortured.¹¹ The statement on December 6, 2002 by Theo van Boven, the UN human rights rapporteur, claiming that torture in Uzbekistan is "systemic", simply confirmed officially what had been known for years.¹²

Economic failures have also contributed to a context that incubates radicalism, although in a far more subtle and less mechanical way than is often believed. Uzbekistan has failed economically on almost every indicator. There has been an absence of meaningful economic liberalization and privatization, and the level of foreign direct investment (FDI) attracted by Uzbekistan is truly pitiful. Whereas Kazakhstan had by mid-2003 received \$16.2 billion in FDI, the total in Uzbekistan was just \$970 million. Put differently, while Kazakhstan has an FDI stock of \$1,087 per capita, in Uzbekistan it is only \$37 per capita.¹³

Uzbekistan still does not have a current-account convertible currency, despite an official announcement on October 15, 2003 that the som was convertible. Two months after the IMF accepted the convertibility plan,¹⁴ it emerged that it had been secretly suspended.¹⁵

The government has systematically diverted resources from the agricultural sector, the country's largest employer and largest exporter, to subsidise industrial development. To do this, the government has paid cotton farmers a fraction of what their output is worth, often handing over to them no more than 20 percent of the final export price earned by the government. The government has had to consolidate the widespread rural poverty inherited from the Soviet era.

While the government has successfully crushed internal dissent, its economic policies have had few mitigating results. Rather, it has created an atmosphere of economic crisis and instability that in the memories of many contrasts with the supposed economic security of the communist era, for years politically idolized by the Karimov regime.

The Uzbek state is therefore a failure that has proven unable to deliver either economic stability or improved economic prospects; rather it has caused lower standards of living. At the same time, the state fails to provide a minimal opportunity for popular political dissent. This is positive for the ruling elite because it allows them to maintain their hold on power. However, the cost of the resulting instability is paid by Uzbekistan's allies and regional partners.

Unsurprisingly, Uzbekistan's efficiently repressive policies create a context within which underground movements and radicalism are the only viable options for any political opposition. Uzbekistan's political exiles have little support and no way to effect policy. Attempts by these groups to engage in dialogue with the regime have led nowhere.

It is, however, false to claim that poverty creates terrorism. Rather, poverty is often used as a pretext for terrorism. Terrorists, like many

radicals, often come from comfortable middle-class backgrounds, and some have extremely wealthy families. If there is any economic factor that in some vague way influences the decision to use terrorism as a political tactic, then it is the loss of privilege and economic decline from a position of relative comfort.¹⁶

Recommendations for the Anti-Terrorist Alliance

Radical groups such as HT are not a threat to the state, even though they count more members than all of the other opposition groups combined. Uzbekistan's political and economic policies make a small number of young, often middle-income Uzbeks receptive to the message of radical groups. HT's simplistic answers and clever slogans are appealing because they are similar to the tone or form of those of the Communist Party. Conversely, the secular and more liberal opposition groups, which are alien to the political experience of many Uzbeks, have neither the support nor ability to survive. What then are the policy options for the counter-terrorism coalition in dealing with groups like HT and unpalatable allies like Uzbekistan?

First, the counter-terrorism coalition needs to clearly dissociate itself from the repressive policies of the Karimov regime. Our leaders and envoys need to be clear that we fully support an independent Uzbekistan that succeeds in its reforms while we, with equal fervor, publicly denounce the Karimov regime's torture, repression and betrayal of freely given international commitments to observe basic norms of human rights. The approach of joining with Uzbekistan to fight terrorism and concurrently join with the people of Uzbekistan to promote democracy is one that British envoys in Tashkent like Craig Murray, Barbara Hay and Paul Bergne have taken. The U.S. State Department's approach of regarding human rights as a bargaining chip, part of a tradeoff that has to be made to secure Uzbekistan's assistance, is both a political and a public relations mistake. Such an approach was taken not only by John Herbst, the recently departed U.S. ambassador, but also by Ambassador Stanley Escudero under the Clinton Administration.

Second, we need to free values that we wish to promote from the taint of regimes such as that of Mr Karimov. We need to ensure that the two admirable aspects of the Turkish experience, the secular tradition and the emancipation of women, are not portrayed by the Islamist enemies of democracy as weapons the West is using against Islam.

Third, we must continue the war against the core terrorist threat, but we must not extend that war directly to groups like HT. That does not mean that the answer to the main question of the conference as to whether the

war against terrorism should be extended to HT is “no.” Rather, the answer is that by striking hard at those directly involved in terrorism, we discourage, dishearten and deter those who may seek to take the place of those terrorists who attack us today. Those directly involved in terrorism ought to have close encounters with United States Air Force, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the British Army.

Beyond al-Qaeda and its affiliates or immediate potential substitutes, such as Hamas or Hizballah, there is a penumbra of organizations like HT that incite hatred, encourage the intolerance that leads to terrorism and help to feed recruits into the jihadist movement. The relationship of al-Qaeda to ideological incubators such as HT is neither as organized nor as structured as some imagine; but it is just as lethal. The analogy often drawn between the struggle against radical Islam and communism is misleading. Communism was a structured, centralized movement. Radical Islam is diffuse, diverse and composed of highly autonomous groups working with almost no coordination towards a common goal and against a common foe. What groups like HT have to understand is that there is a clear and just penalty for crossing the line into the world of violence, of choosing to adopt terrorism as a tactic. By striking at the terrorists with whom HT theologically disagrees but whom it ideologically admires, we can hope to dishearten, discourage and dissuade others from joining them. We may never change their minds. But we may be able to persuade them to change their tactics.

¹George W. Bush, Remarks at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, United States Chamber of Commerce, Washington, DC, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html>.

²Donald H. Rumsfeld, “A New Kind of War”, *New York Times*, September 27, 2001, <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2001/s20010927-secdef.html>.

³Peter Hitchens “The Uzbek Princess, Rigged Elections And Dissidents Boiled Alive—Meet Our New Best Friends . . . Our Writer Visits The West’s Latest Ally, A Country Where Free Speech Is Brutally Suppressed—As Britain’s Own Ambassador Found To His Cost”, *Mail On Sunday* (London), December 14, 2003.

⁴“Uzbek Leader: Corrupt Officials ‘My enemies’”, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, from Uzbek Television first channel, September 11, 2001.

⁵“Uzbek President Visits Home Region, Appoints New Governor”, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, from Uzbek Television first channel, December 17, 2003.

⁶“Uzbek President Not Expecting ‘Noticeable Changes’ In New Government”, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, from Uzbek Radio first program, December 11, 2003

⁷Available at <http://www.umid.uz/Main/Uzbekistan/Constitution/constitution.html>.

⁸The best known case is Ruslan Sharipov. See “Free Uzbek Rights Defender Uslan Shaipov”, <http://hrw.org/campaigns/uzbekistan/sharipov.htm>. See also Alex Lupis and Richard McGill Murphy, “Back in the USSR”, Committee to Protect Journalists, October 2002,

http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2002/uzbek_oct02/uzbek_oct02.html.

⁹“Uzbekistan: President Karimov Says He Will Shoot Islamic Fundamentalists”, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, from Uzbek Radio second program, May 1 1998. President Karimov made these comments in the context of a debate on a new more restrictive law on the registration of religious groups.

¹⁰“Uzbek President Amnesties Some 700 Islamists”, *ITAR-TASS*, February 3, 2004.

¹¹An excellent analysis of the relationship between torture and confessions is Ervand Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

¹²Reuters, “UN Envoy Says Torture ‘Systemic’ in Uzbekistan”, <http://www.uzland.uz/2002/december/07/02.htm>.

¹³Economist Intelligence Unit, “Uzbekistan Country Report”, February 2004; Economist Intelligence Unit, “Kazakhstan Country Report”, March 2004.

¹⁴International Monetary Fund, “The Republic of Uzbekistan Accepts Article VIII Obligations”, Press release No. 03/188, November 11, 2003, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2003/pr03188.htm>.

¹⁵Economist Intelligence Unit, “Uzbekistan Country Report”, February 2004.

¹⁶Andrew Apostolou, “Why They Will Fight On”, *Washington Times*, December 28, 2003, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/op-ed/20031228-104213-6288r.htm>.

9

ASSESSING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

Andrey Grishin

Having inherited equal conditions for building civil society after the fall of the Soviet Union, each Central Asian country embarked on an independent path towards political development. However, in spite of their economic differences, each has been challenged by the same problems. At varying times, real political power was usurped by small groups of people who had occupied high positions during Soviet communist rule. Moreover, all dominant positions were distributed on the basis of family or personal connection to the president. Real democracy, of course, is exemplified by the presence of strong, competent and loyal opposition parties, which enter into peaceful and constructive dialogue with the government. Nothing like this has occurred in the newly formed countries of Central Asia.

Turkmenistan is practically separated from the world by a self-imposed “iron curtain” of cruel totalitarian rule. Uzbekistan, having stopped its economic reforms and having physically destroyed the opposition political party, has transformed into an authoritarian state with an ineffective Soviet-style command economy. The authorities in Tajikistan refused to sit at the bargaining table with the so-called Islamic opposition, pushing the country into a destructive civil war. Kyrgyzstan, which began by instituting democratic reforms and improving its economy with the help of the foreign grants, soon confronted serious economic and political problems. Unlike these states, Kazakhstan’s economy experienced more success, primarily due to its rich natural resources. In this case, the president of Kazakhstan fears losing control over the huge financial resources and consequently has begun “removing” the state’s nascent democratic institutions, reorienting it to mirror the authoritarian style of its neighbors.

Both hidden and evident forms of repression against political opposition slowly lure Central Asia’s populace towards radicalism. Such repression causes opposition parties to depart from the notion of building a multi-party political system in favor of an approach that advocates forcefully

toppling the current autocratic regime. The civil war in Tajikistan serves as an example where the political opposition (a competing clan) clothed its ideas in Islamic rhetoric and instigated hostilities against state authorities. This viewpoint suggests that the unwillingness of authorities to engage in dialogue with the opposition could be considered a real threat to stability for each Central Asian state.

At the same time, Central Asian countries are also threatened by those errors in state management that breed corruption within the government's structure and executive, judicial and legislative organs. Hence organizations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), with ideas of social equality and justice, find additional followers amongst victims of the authorities. It is not surprising that the murders of government officials by extremists (as has happened in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan) received wide public approval.

A further problem concerns the misunderstandings by governments of their national minorities. Governments believe that these minorities—such as the Chechens, the Uigurs and the Kurds—are more inclined towards extremism than other ethnicities. This attitude towards minorities is more dangerous for Central Asian countries than HT. To compound the problem, the Central Asian republics are hostages to the geopolitical games played by more powerful states. For instance, the members of the Uighur organizations in China are considered extremists, and Kazakhstan, under Chinese pressure, has returned Uighur refugees to China. However, the European Union and the United States have pressed the Kazakhs to allow these refugees to remain in Kazakhstan. Similar situations have developed between Kazakhstan and Turkey with respect to the Kurds, as well as between Kazakhstan and Russia with respect to the Chechens. Consistently threatened with human rights abuses and deportation, these refugees channel their anger towards Central Asian states, where they have found either temporary or permanent shelter. It is very important that we find a way of preventing the government from linking extremist acts with national minorities.

The Emergence of HT

Now we can examine the appearance of HT in Central Asia, consider actions of Central Asian states in their attempts to withstand extremism, and the reaction by the international community to the above-mentioned sources of conflicts.

Since much of the international community is striving to defeat terrorism, Central Asian states do not want to be excluded from this process. The fight against terrorism has allowed Central Asian regimes to receive

funding from abroad and to silence political dissenters at home. However, as experience has shown, the world community is not in a hurry to extend the struggle against terrorism to conflicts connected with the suppression of political opposition parties or national minorities. For example, both Turkmenistan's arrest of former foreign minister Boris Shikhmuradov for the "attempted" assassination of President Saparmurat Niyazov, and Kazakhstan's arrest of Russian "extremists" for supposedly plotting to overthrow the government in the northern city of Ust-Kamenogorsk are examples of attempts by governments to marginalize internal political opposition. The perplexity and indifference shown by the international community towards these events and towards the general welfare of Uighurs, Chechens and Kurds has allowed Central Asian countries to target HT in their struggle against extremism and "terrorism." Perhaps the most significant crackdown on opposition groups has occurred in Uzbekistan. In 1999, six car bombs targeting government buildings exploded in Tashkent. Uzbek officials blamed two democratic opposition groups, Erk and Birlik, for the bombings. When Islamic terrorists claimed responsibility for the attacks, Uzbek officials had already accused HT for carrying them out. Uzbekistan again received *carte blanche* for its forcible suppression of political opposition parties and adherents of non-government-sponsored Islam. There are a total of 10,000 political prisoners in Uzbekistan, and the United States remains silent towards these human rights abuses.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are trying to follow the Uzbek path. For their participation in the worldwide struggle against Islamic terrorism, both countries have signaled their intention to pursue HT. The threat of "religious extremism" allows both states to justify toughening legislation aimed at establishing legal opposition towards opposition parties. The use of "hard" judicial measures against HT allows the government to impose the same measures on other opposition groups under the banner "law is one for all." In Kazakhstan an HT leaflet distributor received three years of imprisonment for his calls to establish a Caliphate and his participation in a non-registered organization. Since then, in Kazakhstan, authorities are able to use this legislation against members of opposition political organizations. Some propose changing the constitution to target those organizations that are not registered by depriving them of ways to attain registration.

The presence of HT has presented a way for political leaders to solidify authoritarianism in Central Asia and avoid addressing critics who desire democracy. In that way, HT is a threat to Central Asia—not because they themselves present a danger, but because their presence has been used to justify the authoritarian policies of Central Asian regimes.

10

HT AND THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL PARTY OF TAJIKISTAN

Muhiddin Kabiri

Until recently, the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) was the only political party in the region that could claim to represent political Islam. With the emergence of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), the situation has changed, and an alternative political party of religious doctrine has appeared. HT has been the subject of substantial coverage and analysis, but some aspects of its activities still remain undisclosed or inadequately explored, particularly regarding its relations with other political parties and IRPT in particular.

IRPT's Position towards HT

When Hizb ut-Tahrir first appeared in Tajikistan, neither the IRPT nor the government seemed concerned. But a series of events—notably the arrest of several active members of the IRPT on charges of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir—forced the IRPT to reassess the importance of HT. The leadership of the IRPT perceived that the first cases of arrest were an attempt by local authorities at extortion and that HT was being established by the government as a competitor to the IRPT. They would soon discover, however, that HT's support structure in fact extended beyond Tajikistan's borders.

The government quickly attempted to sideline this new group. In an interview with the newspaper *Najot*, the IRPT chairman, Said Abdulloh Nuri, stated his position towards Hizb ut-Tahrir:

I think this group doesn't have a right to operate in Tajikistan from the point of view of *sharia* as well as the law. There is already a religious party in Tajikistan and thus, there is no need [for] establishing and operating . . . another similar party. If they want, they can carry out political activities through our party only if their activities don't contradict the law and the Charter of our party. From the legal point of view, this group is not registered and doesn't have a right to operate in Tajikistan. We treat it as an illegal party.

Furthermore, the IRPT publicly articulated this position not only through statements and interviews, but also took part in carrying out governmental activities aimed at preventing the growth of Hizb ut-Tahrir's influence. For example, in Sogd oblast, the local government (*hukumat*) established propaganda groups that met with people and talked about Hizb ut-Tahrir and the negative consequences of its activities. On the initiative of the local *hukumat*, active members of the IRPT were also included in these groups.

Though largely unsuccessful, the joint work of state structures, official religious bodies and the IRPT in their confrontation with Hizb ut-Tahrir is an important event in itself. It demonstrated that for religious and secular bodies in Tajikistan, there is an incentive for cooperation, and circumstances may force them to develop a dialogue.

The cooperation of the parties and the activities of joint groups did not last long and were limited to Sogd oblast, and government fell back onto the more familiar ground of police action. According to official data, over one hundred people were convicted by the courts for membership in or cooperation with Hizb ut-Tahrir, and several hundred more are under investigation. While it is clear that to some extent the detentions and arrests of members and followers of Hizb ut-Tahrir prevented this group from expanding, this is little more than a temporary fix, and an effective long-term solution is yet to be developed.

However, there are two areas in which the interests of the IRPT diverge from those of the government and instead coincide with those of HT: the violation of human rights and the misuse of official positions. Both of these conditions were apparent during the actions against members of Hizb ut-Tahrir. As was confirmed by independent observers and international organizations, the sentences passed on the members of this party were inconsistent with their crimes and excessively strict. I personally became familiar with the criminal case of one of the active members of the IRPT who was arrested in Tursunzade district and charged with cooperation with Hizb ut-Tahrir. The Tursunzade city court sentenced him to three years imprisonment because Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflets were found at his house. When we noted that we have such leaflets for our personal use at home, the law enforcement officer told us half-jokingly: "be careful or we will arrest you." Naturally, the IRPT has legitimate concerns about such treatment of citizens. Thus, while the IRPT considers the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Tajikistan unacceptable from an ideological and legal point of view, it also believes that the existing methods used by the government are dangerous and unnecessarily

repressive. The IRPT would rather the focus be placed on eliminating the so-called “root causes” of the success of this group.

Differences in Strategic Goals

It is well known that the main strategic goal of Hizb ut-Tahrir is to establish a global Islamic Caliphate. This goal is clearly defined in such books as *Islamic Order, Democracy—A Godless Order*, and *Islamic Society*, which are translated to local languages and distributed among the population. In general, Hizb ut-Tahrir repudiates society and order and sees realization of *sharia* only within the framework of a transnational (or better still, post-national) Caliphate.

Are such goals common with the strategic goals of the IRPT? Do slogans about the establishment of Islamic state or “Islamic society” that the IRPT sometimes proclaimed during the armed insurgency have something in common with the ideas of establishing of the Caliphate? I think not. Above all, an insurgency requires radical slogans that help to mobilize the population for radical action (war, revolt, protest, and so on). When the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) began the insurgency, the IRPT was one of its most important components. The IRPT was able to mobilize its followers due partially to radical ideas and slogans. But slogans about the establishment of the “Islamic republic” were unique to the period of insurgency. After the beginning of the peace process and the commencement of the IRPT’s official activities, these slogans were eliminated from the IRPT’s vocabulary. However, it is necessary to mention that the IRPT had agreed to the establishment of a secular state in Tajikistan and proclaimed the formation of “human, democratic and legal society” as its goal. While it is true that the IRPT leadership has yet to explicitly disavow that it intends to establish an Islamic state, it is obvious that such a declaration from today’s IRPT leaders would be politically shortsighted. On the other hand, the IRPT is different from Hizb ut-Tahrir since it is not a transnational party and it frames its activities only within Tajikistan and the framework of the current constitution.

Democracy, Freedom and Human Rights

The issue of the compatibility of democracy and Islam has been a subject for discussion among Islamic groups as well as analysts (Islamic historians) for a long time. Can they be harmonious, or are we talking about two ideologies that differ completely from each other? Is there a middle ground? The discussions of these issues continue. But the IRPT and Hizb ut-Tahrir have clearly expressed their opinions of this issue, and their positions completely contradict each other.

In Tajikistan, Hizb ut-Tahrir distributed a booklet in Tajik under the name *Demokratia—Nizomi Kufr (Democracy—A Godless Order)*. The name of the book itself reflects its contents. The main idea of the book is that “it is sinful to adopt, implement democratic ideas and urge to establish them.” The author of the book, Abdulkadir Zallum, (one of the chief ideologues of Hizb ut-Tahrir) states that “democracy is a product of the godless West and it has nothing to do with Islam. This order, in general and in particular, contradicts main Islamic ideas in its basis, beginnings and ideas.”¹

This position is also clearly stated in detail in other books (particularly *Islamic Order* and *Islamic Policy*) and in leaflets by Hizb ut-Tahrir. HT ideologues widely use the Koran’s *ayats* and Prophet Muhammad’s *hadiths* to prove their ideas. They are particularly fond of quoting *ayats* and *hadiths* somewhat removed from their contexts. Such interpretation of sources gives Hizb ut-Tahrir the opportunity to present their theories to unprepared readers or listeners as based on the main sources of Islam.

Stating that democracy is like the child of humanity, Hizb ut-Tahrir regards it as a means for achieving absolute power. Thus, humanity wants to liberate itself from the absolute power of the Most High and exceed the bounds of laws set by Him, “but in Islam[ic] policy, [government] is based on *sharia* . . . not community [*umma*]. . . . Neither people, nor parliament, nor anybody else can have legislative right. Only Allah may be a legislator.”² The IRPT still does not have such special work on the issues of democracy and Islam and that is one of the shortcomings of its activities. The advantage of Hizb ut-Tahrir is that unlike the IRPT, they have positions and ideas regarding important and urgent problems of society, and they present them when the time is right.

Nevertheless, in its program documents, statements and interviews, the IRPT tries to show the position of the party on the issue of democracy and its attitude to the future of Tajikistan as well as the links this issue has with Islam. Some think that the use of such terms as “democracy”, “pluralism” and “human freedom” by the IRPT is only a cover, and they are confident that the leadership of the party is using them only to attract the masses. Such conjecture is unfounded, as the IRPT, unlike Hizb ut-Tahrir, believes that the future of Tajikistan must include democratic development.

Naturally, bringing democratic norms into harmony with Islam requires theological inquiry, and that task, above all, falls on the shoulders of all theologians, although Hizb ut-Tahrir tries to prove the opposite. One

possible solution would be to develop a “democratic-Islamic project” with a progressive Islamic movement where not only the IRPT will participate.

Together with the acknowledgement of human rights, the IRPT clearly understands that these values cannot always be harmonized with the traditions of all people, nations and regions. Some of these values may have special significance in different countries, especially in Islamic communities. But with the loss of their native meaning, new values appear. For example, democracy cannot be “Western” or “non-Western.” It either exists or it does not. Such division of democracy on the national or geographical basis is especially convenient for authoritarian and selfish rulers of non-Western countries who attempt to shroud their despotism behind national or cultural exceptionalism. In this regard, the IRPT thinks that democracy may be linked to Islam and Islam itself contributes to the achievement of true democracy from the point of view of its ideology and practical experience.

Hizb ut-Tahrir’s attitude towards freedom and human rights is the main contradiction. HT has a very distinct position regarding this issue: its ideologist Abdulkodir Zallum writes,

speaking about four major freedoms: freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion, freedom of property, freedom of person, it is necessary to say that none of these freedoms are acknowledged by Islam. . . . All these freedoms completely contradict the purposes of Islam.³

The issue of major freedoms is also considered in other publications of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the ideologists of the party maintain that slogans about human freedom and its protection are false. Meanwhile, in *Politics in Islam*, one of HT’s reasons for criticizing communism is “restriction of human freedom by the state.”⁴

Naturally, the IRPT does not agree with this position. The IRPT believes that the main freedoms that are acknowledged today by the international community are in accordance with the ideas and norms of Islam and have no serious contradictions. A recently published book written by Said Abdulloh Nuri and entitled, *Human Rights and Islam*, clearly defines the attitude of Islam towards major human rights based on the Koran and Sunna.

In this regard, the difference between the IRPT and Hizb ut-Tahrir is the attitude of each towards democracy. Although Hizb ut-Tahrir has not yet officially chastised the IRPT for support of a democratic order (for example, in its books or leaflets), conversations with IRPT members (as

well as this author) have made it clear that the position of the IRPT is condemned.

Hizb ut-Tahrir uses this position and others in its propaganda activities against the IRPT. They allege, for example, that the IRPT “betrayed the interests of Islam” and “sold itself to the government” in order to win members away from HT. Such practice was typical in 1999–2000 when the drain of the members of the IRPT to Hizb ut-Tahrir was especially obvious. Recently, however, the shift of members to HT has not only decreased, but former members of the IRPT have begun to desert HT and return to the IRPT.

Differences in Structure and Activities

I think it is needless to dwell on the structure and methods of work of the IRPT as they are well known and comply with the laws of Tajikistan. Naturally, they have certain features in common not only with Hizb ut-Tahrir but other parties operating in the country as well. Still, the differences in structure and activities of the IRPT and Hizb ut-Tahrir are worth mentioning in general.

First, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a transnational group, and its structure and methods of operation are determined from abroad. The peculiarities of the country and region where the branches operate are often not taken into consideration. For example, an HT leaflet distributed on March 27, 2000, (translated into Tajik but obviously written originally in Uzbek) addressed the subject of OPEC and the selling of oil in the global market. These issues are incomprehensible to ordinary Tajiks (or Uzbeks for that matter), and common Tajik citizens do not have any real opportunity to exert pressure (as summoned in the leaflet) on the government in order to change global prices for oil. This suggests that the regional leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir was influenced by someone outside the region to address this topic.

Second, while there are many assumptions regarding the structure of Hizb ut-Tahrir, its structure may roughly be depicted as follows. At the lowest level, the operational cell is called the *halaka*, or group. The members of the *halaka* know only their immediate teammates and leader. Efforts are made so the members of each group have no knowledge of the existence of another group. All relations outside the group are carried out only by the leader. The leaders of such groups form another *halaka* in their turn and that group also has a leader. This method allowed Hizb ut-Tahrir to conduct secret operations in several countries for many years. Tajik officials claim that they have arrested the leaders of HT, but experts believe that the real leader of the group remains unknown—and at large.

Such practice is typical for any group attempting to operate underground. Indeed, the IRPT has in the past resorted to similar methods. But the main difference between the IRPT and Hizb ut-Tahrir in this regard is that the IRPT engaged in this activity during Soviet times while always advocating and participating in legal activities. As the times have changed, so have its procedures.

In contrast, Hizb ut-Tahrir has not changed its structure or operation despite changing realities. HT refuses to acknowledge states and governments of the countries where it operates or to cooperate with official bodies in Central Asian countries. Even if a government expresses its willingness to register HT, active members would reject such an offer or refuse to respond (as has happened in Kyrgyzstan).

Third, an important difference between the IRPT and Hizb ut-Tahrir is the attitude of both parties to governments in the Islamic world. One of the leaflets published by Hizb ut-Tahrir says that it was published in the “province” of Kuwait. To the leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Kuwait, along with all other Muslim countries, is only one of the provinces of the future Caliphate and not an independent state. This contradicts the policy of the IRPT, which regards the protection of the independence and integrity of Tajikistan as one of its most important goals. The relations of Tajikistan with other countries, including Muslim ones, must be based on mutual understanding and equality.

That such serious discrepancies exist between the two parties shows that they have little in common beyond the superficial. One of the parties is underground and illegal, while the other is official and legal; one is transnational, while the other is national; one is conservative and traditional, while the other is open changes and transformations. Thus one can safely draw the conclusion that at present, neither a strategic nor a tactical partnership is possible between the IRPT and Hizb ut-Tahrir, whether on the international or the national level.

¹ *Demokratia—Nizomi Kufr*, 52.

² *Ibid.*, 57.

³ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴ *Politics in Islam*, 8.

11

THE BATTLE WITHIN

Islam's Legal Tradition versus the New Radicalism

Leonid Sjukijainen

When analyzing the modern radical Islamist ideology, it is important to understand that during many centuries of the development of Islam—understood as a complex set of ideas and concepts as well as a system of political institutions based on these theories—quite different and even contradictory views about politics were formulated, and various positions towards state power were put forward. That is why when discussing the radicalization of modern political Islam it is significant that at present the radical Islamist political forces that use Islamic arguments and theories to justify their activities are the most influential. So it is not by chance that the term “political Islam” now refers to just these radical Islamic views and the movements based on them and not any other institutions or ideas related to the Islamic political concept.

To justify terrorism, Islamic extremists quote from the Quran and refer to one passage in particular. It reads:

Fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them. . . . O Prophet, strive hard against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them. (9:5, 73)

Those who support the idea of an uncompromising struggle for Islamic consolidation at all costs are likely also to quote Prophet Muhammad, who allegedly sanctioned the use of violence against unbelievers:

I was called to fight people until they testify that there is no god but the God, and Muhammad is His Apostle, until they start praying and pay zakat. If they do all this I shall protect their lives and property. Otherwise they should be treated according to the laws of Islam, and they will be judged by Supreme Allah.

There is also a popular conception that is used to justify violence against all those who refuse to obey the will of Allah. The following words of the Prophet are interpreted as an instruction:

If [anyone] of you see anything that the *sharia* forbids he should alter it by his own hand. If he is unable to do this with his hand let him stop it with his tongue. If he cannot do this either, let him do this with his heart and this will be the weakest manifestation of his faith.

The terrorists prefer to concentrate on the first part of this passage, which instructs believers to use their hands, that is, violence, to prevent any deviation from the *sharia*.

Finally, the central plank in the terrorist platform involves a rejection of any form of power that diverges from the *sharia*. The terrorists use as their main argument the following Quranic proposition:

O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you. (4:59)

The Islamic radicals translate this as a categorical rejection of any “unfaithful” power. They also quote other *ayats*:

And never will Allah grant to the Unbelievers a way (to triumph) over the Believers. (4:141)

Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the Quran. (25:52)

Significantly, the terrorists refuse to recognize the power not only of unbelievers, but also of those Islamic rulers who have abandoned the *sharia*. To justify their position they quote Prophet Muhammad: “Obedience and submission to the ruler belongs to him by right if he does not order his subjects to sin. If he orders them to sin there is no duty of obedience.”

The Islamic radicals believe that in this latter case any Muslim has the right to oppose a ruler “by hand”, that is, to use force. What is more, they liken the apostate ruler to an unbeliever, whose life is not inviolable; any actions against such a ruler are considered a jihad. It is believed that this treatment is based on a fatwa issued by Ibn Taymiyyah, who treated as infidels the Mongolian conquerors who had adopted Islam but ignored the *sharia*. For this reason he permitted the murder of negligent Muslims and their relatives.

But the postulates quoted above, which serve as an ideological shield for the terrorists, contradict a different interpretation of the *sharia*—one that concentrates on its larger aims rather than on blind obedience to its words. Contrary to what the terrorists profess, jihad is much more than a

war against the unbelievers. Prominent Muslim jurists say that jihad is, first and foremost, a call to follow the road of Allah. It is an effort to achieve self-perfection and to create a genuinely Islamic society based not so much on literal obedience to the *sharia*, but primarily on a creative application of its guiding principles, values and aims. The call to the non-Muslims to follow the will of Allah excludes violence. On this point the Quran says:

Let there be no compulsion in religion. (2:256)

Invite [all] to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. (16:125)

Armed struggle as one of the forms of jihad is allowed for defense only. In other words, a war against non-Muslims cannot be a means of addressing a lack of faith, but rather a means made necessary to fight an aggression. In addition, the word jihad can be applied only to an armed struggle waged to protect Islamic values and to strengthen them.¹ Obviously, the acts of the terrorists do not fit this criterion.

The positions held by the terrorists have nothing in common with the ideas of the most respected Islamic thinkers. For example, the radicals refuse to cooperate with the state and even call on people to fight it with arms in hand. Formally, this corresponds to the *sharia* and is even confirmed by the following words from the Prophet: "The subjects may not obey their ruler who sins."

But a closer examination reveals, in fact, that the greatest Muslim lawyers interpret these words more subtly: They delve deeply into the *sharia* and take into account its entire range of values and priorities. Put simply, they say that even an unfaithful ruler is a boon for Muslims because the Prophet said:

It is only the imam that can give a better life to people, no matter whether the ruler is faithful or unfaithful. If he is unfaithful, his faithful subjects will venerate the Creator until the unfaithful ruler has lived his life.

As for cutting short "unfaithful" policies with open attacks, this is dismissed by the Prophet in the following words: "Those who will see in the actions of their emir something revolting should remain patient and continue obeying him."

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292–1350) commented in this *hadith*:

If the effort to cut short the prohibited inevitably causes grave sins and even greater displeasure of Allah and His Apostle then it cannot be

tolerated. . . . In this way cutting short the authorities' unjust actions by acting against them leads to all sorts of evil and troubles for all times. . . . Those who will give thought to the causes behind the great and small troubles pestering Islam will see that they are a result of the total oblivion of this principle, an unwillingness to tolerate the prohibited that should be uprooted. This leads to even greater harm.²

This warning is directly related to the position taken in Muslim jurisprudence with respect to terrorism. It points out that Allah treats man as superior in a special way to all other creatures of the Creator:

We have honored the sons of Adam. (17:70)

The Quran openly prefers peace to war against the unfaithful:

But if the enemy incline toward peace, you [also] incline toward peace. (8:61)

Allah is always prepared to severely punish robbery and all other actions that spread evil and mischief:

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Apostle, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is execution or crucifixion or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides or exile from the land. (5:33)

Finally, the Muslim lawyers point out that religious fanatics and terrorists sow discord in Muslim souls and that—in contravention of the *sharia*—this does them harm. The Quran says:

And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, bear [on themselves] a calumny and a glaring sin. (33:58)

There is another much-quoted pronouncement of the Prophet, who said: "For each Muslim, blood, honor and property of another Muslim are forbidden." Muhammad also said: "It is forbidden to a Muslim to sow fear among the faithful." The Prophet said the following: "None of you should take up arms against your brother because none of you can know whether his hand is guided by Satan." What is more, the Apostle condemned even those whose glances might spread fear: "Those who cast a frightening glance at a Muslim without a reason will be frightened by Allah on the Day of Judgment." Those modern Muslim lawyers who support this approach agree that the *sharia* condemns terrorism, and legislation in many Islamic countries is based on this principle.³ This is true even of those countries which are frequently reproached for

supporting international terrorists. For example, Saudi Arabia has lived through several terrorist acts that were perpetrated by extremists who appealed to Islam.

The Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was guided by the same considerations when he called the terrorist acts committed in the United States actions contrary to the *sharia* and foreign to Islam. He has pointed out that Islamic principles forbid all from causing injustice or violating laws that relate to others—even if there are reasons for enmity and hatred. The Al-Azhar Academy of Islamic Research supported this position by stating that Islam proceeds from a principle embracing a plurality of cultures, civilizations, legal systems and nations. It also said that, in Islam, jihad aims at the triumph of law, at cutting short evil and establishing justice and security. Armed struggle and violence are allowed in exceptional cases, such as defending the land of one's fathers, halting strife among Muslims and protecting their faith. But even under these circumstances the *sharia* categorically forbids encroachment on the lives of old people, children, women and all those who have not taken up arms against Muslims.

These examples provide convincing evidence that the Islamic ideological heritage contains contradictory trends. Some of them justify extremism and terrorism under the banner of Islam while others are built on moderation, caution and a realization of the *sharia's* major aims. That is why it is important not only to neutralize or limit the radical Islamic forces but to use the positive potential of Islam itself and its political and legal heritage in particular.

One of the important factors of the radicalization of Islam is the emergence of several new Muslim states that declare themselves as secular in character but exercise their activities within non-secular societies and compete with radical Islamic political forces. Unlike other regimes facing the radical Islamic threat—Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kuwait and other Persian Gulf states, like Yemen—these new Islamic states do not have enough experience to know how to use Islam to their benefit. Under these conditions it is necessary to encourage the new Central Asian Muslim states to appeal to Islamic values and use them for their own benefit.

In general, the Islamic regimes and Muslim states always take up a defensive position against the radical political Islam attacking them. Very often they have to choose between combating this threat actively and maintaining political stability. (Pakistan is a good example in this respect.) In any case, it is impossible to resist radical Islam without appealing to Islam itself. It is very important to oppose the radicalization of Islam from

all directions; an Islamic alternative for radical doctrine must play a very active role. The radicalization of Islam threatens not only the West, but also Islam itself. If the contemporary Muslim world together with the other countries and civilizations cannot overcome radical political Islam and join modern civilization with its own values and principles, the future of Islam itself will remain in question.

¹Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Bouti, *Jihad in Islam. How Do We Understand and Carry it Out?*, (in Arabic) (Beirut and Damascus: n.p., 1993).

²Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, "Instruction for Those Who Speak in the Name of the Lord of the Worlds", (in Arabic) Vol. 1, Beirut, (s.a.).

³Jumaa Amin, *The Problem of Terrorism: Analysis and Solution*, (in Arabic) (Cairo: n.p., 1998.)

12

THE TURKISH EXAMPLE

Cemil Cicek

It is an undeniable fact that the socio-economic, socio-political and technological level that the West reached in the 17th century completely changed the equilibrium of the world. During the Ottoman Empire's ascendancy and later stagnation, the West entered the Renaissance period, which would in turn lead to the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Western civilization has since then successfully completed its process of democratization and modernization. Along with their geographical discoveries and great inventions, men like Sir Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton also greatly contributed to this process.

This process led to a transformation from a theological worldview to a humanist understanding that emphasizes continual improvement and considers as truth only that gained from science and reason. As a result of these changes, the West succeeded in making its cultural and conceptual framework the dominant paradigm around the world. In 400 years, the West experienced a number of fundamental transformations. Finally, as thinkers such as Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Thomas Kuhn observed, the West has now begun the last phase of these transformations: from modernism to postmodernism.

While all of these seismic changes were taking place in the Western world, the leader of the Islamic world, the Ottoman Empire, simply could not keep up. Having been defeated in World War I, the entire territory of the empire became vulnerable to the West's invasions. As a result of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference—diplomatic processes emphasizing self-determination, Wilsonian principles, nationalism and religion—many new states rose from the ashes of the fallen empire.

Across the Islamic world, many Muslim scholars such as Cemaleddin Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Resid Riza, Seltut, Mehmed Akif and Muhammad Ikbal have written extensively on why the Islamic world fell behind, and each came up with solutions for reversing the trend. Despite all these efforts, however, the Islamic world has not yet recovered from its backwardness. It became clear that as long as the Islamic world did not

align its own modernity with its own national and global identity, it would not succeed in development and industrialization.

With the end of direct colonialism and the dawn of the Cold War, Marxist-Leninist movements emerged as one possible solution for the Arab world. Especially in Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser, Marxist leaning movements such as the Ba'ath and El-Istirakkiye (Arab socialism) became politicized. In the 1990's, with the fall of Soviet Union, these movements in the Islamic world gradually lost their power and influence.

Given this ideological vacuum, the Islamic world commenced a new search for answers. After the Iranian revolution in 1979, with the momentum of the spreading religious wave, Islamic-based, anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist movements emerged in the Middle East. According to these movements, the only recipe for the salvation of Middle Eastern populations would be Islam.

But soon these groups came to understand that reducing Islam to a political concept would not lead to the necessary solution. As French thinker Oliver Roy noted, political Islam was in crisis. The bankruptcy of political Islam began with Iran's failure to export its Islamic revolution. It was then understood that radical Islam could not resolve the backwardness of Muslims that had existed for centuries. Instead, such ideology was corrupting the existing traditional Islamic structure.

Today, there is one telling fact that embodies the state of the Islamic world: The combined GDP of all Islamic countries does not equal that of Germany. It is sad that the Islamic world is not at a higher level in terms of industrialization, human rights, democracy, justice or development. Only the Republic of Turkey, despite its problems, has made significant progress in modernization and industrialization.

Today, due to the developments and improvements it enjoys, Turkey is on the verge of full European Union membership. It can be said that Turkey—like prominent Islamic philosophers such as Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rusd and Ibn Bacce proposed—was able to effectively synthesize Western thoughts with Turkish and Islamic culture.

One should not belittle Muslims' contribution to the development of the West. Indeed, at a certain level, all nations and societies contributed to Western heritage. Islamic civilization played a crucial role starting the Renaissance and Reformation movements in Europe. European countries had been in close, early contact with Islam through the universities established by Muslims in Andalusia and Sicily, as well as through cultural exchanges following the Crusades and the conquest of Istanbul.

The translated works of Islamic philosophers became the basis of Renaissance thinking.

Moreover, the impact of Islamic philosophers has been so significant that, at the time of Ibn Rusd, it was possible to divide European thinkers into two categories: those who followed him and those who did not. In a reverse of the current situation, European Christian youth of the day would study at universities established by Muslims. In Europe's medical history, the works of Ibn Sina such as *es-Sifa* and *Kanun et-Tib* have been assigned in classes for more than 400 years. At that time, it was the most published book after the Bible. In fact, there is still an Ibn Sina chair at the University of Lyon in France. And the contributions of Farabi, Harezmi, Ibn Heysem, Ibnu'n-Nefs and Ibn Bacce to Western civilization have been recognized by Orientalists such as Maxime Rodinson.

Certainly, we could talk about this matter for hours. However, our aim is not to elaborate on Islam's impact on the West; rather it is to show that the modern Turkish republic with its majority Muslim population can, as in the past, contribute greatly to Western civilization, thanks to its deep historical and social foundations.

Contrary to the perception held by some Western thinkers and strategists, Islam and the Islamic civilization are not incompatible with progress, modernity or the values of democracy. Turkish-Islamic culture does not reject the idea of an open society; on the contrary, it endorses it. As Karl Popper indicates in his famous work *Open Society and its Enemies*, systems that support closed and autocratic models are always removed from the people. As Foucault emphasized, they must base their systems on a shepherd and flock structure. If one examines history objectively, one can only conclude that this kind of social organization never obtained legitimacy in the Turkish-Islamic tradition.

We Turks have no doubt that our solid cultural and historical foundations and experience allow us to contribute to both Western and Middle Eastern countries. It is clear that Christian and Muslim societies that come from the same source (the Abrahamic tradition) and have internalized the Judaic teachings embodied by the Ten Commandments should not be in conflict. For this reason, what matters is not the conflict between religions. What is truly important, as indicated by the Second Vatican Council in 1965, is interfaith dialogue. Today, the need for this kind of dialogue is more critical than ever before.

There is no doubt that Turkey, with its nation, state and society, has been able to adapt itself to a world in constant flux. I believe that this is unique in the Islamic world and is thus a great contribution. Contrary to what

some radical strategists, academics and thinkers believed, Turkey has proven to the world that Islam and democracy, Islam and human rights, Islam and secularism, and Islam and modernity can be compatible.

Today it is noteworthy that many Western thinkers from the United States and elsewhere who work and develop strategies and tactics on Islam and Middle East emphasize Turkey's importance. Indeed, Turkey's developing structure, historical depth and republican experience can serve to exemplify ideas of justice, development, democracy and human rights to the Middle East.

Moreover, due to its rich cultural heritage, geography and close relations with the West, Turkey is the only country that has the political and diplomatic experience to bring together the U.S.-Europe alliance with the Islamic world in an atmosphere built on solid, reasonable relations that are based on mutual trust.

Applying Turkey's Advantages

The problem is how to make that contribution viable. Which strategies and tactics need to be used, and what manner of legitimacy needs to be created to reach the desired goals and enable the necessary transformation?

We believe that Turkey can successfully carry out this mission. Modern Turkey's current condition makes it well suited to this task. But above all, the epistemological and intellectual basis of this "mission" (that is, becoming an example to the Islamic countries on democracy and modernity), needs to be well established.

Clearly, initiatives lacking an epistemological and intellectual basis cannot be effective in the long term. Today in the Islamic world and especially in the Middle East, there are many effective anti-Western organizations and political movements using religious identity and religious motives. These movements that have legitimacy in their countries often do not hesitate to say that Turkey, directly or indirectly, serves Western interests, including those in Middle Eastern natural resources. On the other hand, the Middle East's feudal structure, socio-economic status and conflicted nature are factors that inhibit Turkey from accomplishing this mission.

For all the reasons stated above, Turkey, while setting a positive example for Middle Eastern countries, cannot give the impression that it is doing so at the behest of the United States and other Western countries.

As Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan emphasized in his speech at Jeddah, the Islamic world should provide solutions to their internal problem by fostering internal debate. While Turkey sets an example to Middle Eastern and Islamic countries, it has to scientifically elucidate that in an epistemological sense, democracy, secularism, human rights, justice, development and modernization are compatible with our culture, art, history, traditions, scientific tradition, the teachings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, and the Quran.

As Turkey undertakes this mission, it needs to understand the Islamic world's own renaissance, which took place between the 8th and 11th centuries, where plurality and a conceptual framework based on freedom and tolerance prevailed. It must explain clearly how today's Turkish republic is enriched by its special historic past and humanity's common experience and cultural heritage. In other words, Turkey should be able to explain to Middle Eastern countries the fundamental dynamics essential to increasing development and welfare levels: freedom of thought, freedom of religion and conscience, broad human rights and freedom for entrepreneurial activities and rational-liberal policies. There is no doubt that the only way to make all this happen is to further develop cultural, political and economic relations.

It has to be emphasized that Turkey's relations with Islamic countries are not at the level of its ties to the United States, France, Britain or Germany. We are not fully utilizing our potential to construct better cultural and economic relations within the Islamic world. So what can the Turkish republic do to become a model, especially for the Middle Eastern countries as a democratic, secular, social-justice state that is integrated with the modern world and in doing so, prevent the spread of radicalism and international terrorism, especially that which exploits religious themes.

Here are some suggestions:

1. With the end of the bipolar world order, there are various theses emerging. One of these originated in Francis Fukuyama's seminal article in *The National Interest* entitled, "The End of History." In it, Fukuyama asserted that liberalism can solve all problems and that no counter-ideology is possible. Another thesis is Samuel P. Huntington's famous "Clash of Civilizations." These theories and all those like these are similar to Thomas Kuhn's paradigms, able to explain some things but not others. Moreover, one needs to keep in mind that every paradigm is at the same time a political recommendation. When people are asking questions like "Where is the world is going?", the theories that appeal to the "analytical

mind” are the ones that need to be supported, not those that appeal to group reflexes.

2. Turkey needs to explain to the political leaders of the Middle East in a rational way its experience with democracy and the challenges and the hindrances that may come up along the way. It must become a leader for the region’s transition to democracy.
3. Turkey should further develop cultural ties with the Middle Eastern countries. In particular, the process of taking Middle Eastern students to our universities and schools of divinities needs to be accelerated. This initiative would in the end contribute to a more liberal interpretation of Islam in the Muslim world.
4. Together with the leading thinkers, academics, opinion leaders and community leaders—in other words the civil society of the Middle Eastern countries—issues of Islam’s compatibility with democracy, secularism, human rights, free enterprise, development and modernization and Islam’s incompatibility with such tools and movements such as terrorism, fundamentalism and radicalism need to be demonstrated within the Islamic framework.
5. It should be repeatedly and publicly stated that the problem of underdevelopment of the Islamic World is due to internal, not external, factors.
6. The internalization of democratic values should be encouraged by increasing the cooperation between Middle Eastern countries and Turkey in telecommunications and media.
7. Trade volume needs to be increased, and travel and tourism from the Middle Eastern countries to Turkey should be encouraged.
8. Turkey can contribute to President George W. Bush’s Greater Middle East Initiative by taking on a referee position to mediate between Middle Eastern countries to solve their various diplomatic problems.
9. As Turkey contributes to the Greater Middle East Initiative, it needs to explain that its relations with Israel are not designed to hurt the Arab world nor the Palestinian cause. Moreover, Turkey can mediate between Israel and Palestine and between Israel and Syria.

10. Turkey can organize conferences, seminars and various cultural and scientific meetings to highlight religious fanaticism's corrupting and negative role played in Islamic history. It can also explain to all the Muslims in the world that associating Islam with terrorism and committing terrorist acts in the name of Islam damages Islam.
11. Turkey should be talking openly about the reasons for the Islamic world's backwardness. Underdevelopment stems from the Islamic world's inability to solve its problems and its inability to make progress in terms of modernization, democracy and human rights, not because of capitalism or colonialism.
12. Turkey can explain to the Middle Eastern political and legal authorities the progress it made overall during the early days of the republic and more recently as part of the EU reform package on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We can take graduate and post-graduate students to study our experiences.
13. At the newly founded Justice Academy, Turkey can educate judges and attorneys from the Middle Eastern countries.
14. Turkey can emphasize, as Prime Minister Erdogan often does, the idea of "meeting of civilizations" rather than that of Huntington's "clash of civilizations." We can explain to the Middle Eastern people that the convergence of civilizations is acceptable in Islam and that such a socio-political opening is also legitimate within the international legal context.
15. Turkey can explain to Middle Eastern countries that its reforms concerning local languages (such as Kurdish) do not threaten the country's unity, but rather contribute even more to the unification of state and nation. After all, today the Middle East is a geography of multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multinational structures of varying sizes.
16. Turkey should use its historical experience to explain to Middle Eastern countries how liberal policies in economics, privatization, free trade and free enterprise can bring gains, and how controlling autocratic policies impede economic development.
17. Clearly, due to the Ottoman paranoia, there will be some who will be skeptical about Turkey playing such a role in the Middle East. However, Turkey should remind its allies and the whole world of Atatürk's famous saying—"peace at home, peace abroad"—and

make clear that Middle East-based terrorism is not rooted in Islam. Rather, it is a reaction of the region to being systematically left behind, to the feudal system not being replaced by democracy, to the failure to respect human rights and create rule of law and social justice. Because industrialization and development did not take place, the region suffers from massive unemployment and huge socio-economic distortions, all of which create a ripe ground for terrorism. Moreover, Turkey needs to make clear that its aim is not to revive the Ottoman Empire but to contribute to the prosperity and liberty of Middle Eastern people, and, at a more global level, to world peace.

If Turkey can systematically address all of these issues in the context of Islamic world's internal problems, while taking into consideration the Arab political rationale and social context, there is no reason why Turkey cannot to set an example for Middle Eastern countries.

In today's Middle East, the American invasion of Iraq led to a significant increase in anti-Western, and especially anti-American and anti-Israeli actions. Therefore, the implementation of the Greater Middle East Initiative will not be easy for the United States. Historical experience indicates that top-down, Jacobin-like projects designed to re-engineer societies simply cannot succeed in the long run. Thus, when the United States implements this project, it must be aware of these realities.

In this context, Turkey can point out to the United States that the Middle East cannot be transformed into modernizing democracies by military means. Leading opinion leaders should discuss this project at great length on an academic and political level. If the United States wants the project to be a roadmap to liberty, it has to realize that the majority of the Middle Eastern people must first internalize and accept this project.

This project has to be cleansed of any elements that are not compatible with Middle East's historical and social character and that do not consider the balances of power in the Middle East. I would like to remind American policymakers that if any such project is constructed in such a way as to incite ethnic, cultural, religious, sectarian and geographical differences in the region, it cannot bring freedom and democracy to the Middle East; rather, it will only compound the current chaos.

As for Turkey, we also need to remind the Americans that the success of the Greater Middle East Initiative largely depends on the peaceful solution of the Israel-Palestine and Israel-Syria problems, and that policies that continuously exclude Iran and Syria will make solutions harder.

Moreover, if the United States wants this project to succeed and gain legitimacy in the region, the United States must revise its policies, which appear to be mainly pro-Israel. Also, the United States should proceed with its promised investments in the region and should not be guided by those who perceive all Muslims and Middle Easterners to be potential terrorists.

The United States should also be cautious of the faulty analysis of writers such as Bernard Lewis, claiming that the Middle East's multi-identity Islamic culture produces terrorism. Our Western allies should understand that Islam and its culture and civilization are founded upon justice and peace.

This is Turkey's approach to the Greater Middle East Initiative. If we can in a reasonable way communicate our ideas to our American ally and take the initiative, we believe we can contribute to the project.

Our country does not have a legitimacy problem in the region. It is clear from a historical and social perspective that any project in the Middle East that does not include Turkey cannot succeed. At the same time, I believe that getting all the regional countries interested and reaching a consensus on the key aspects is the *sine qua non* for the success of the project.

Today, terrorism has significantly increased in the Third World and Islamic countries. By definition, terror is a tool used to engineer social or political change by means of fear, suppression and propaganda. Whatever the reason, terrorism cannot be justified or supported. Yet we cannot ignore its existence. It is not a coincidence that terrorism has flourished in countries that are economically and culturally poor, democratically deficient, with massive socio-economic distortion, poverty and no respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Terrorist groups often try to gain legitimacy by using an ideological framework to convince the people that the only way out of poverty and oppression is through armed resistance. It is natural that radical and fundamentalist movements that reduce religion only to a political concept flourish in such an environment. Such movements do not hesitate to use terror; as a result of the fear and horror they unleash, they drag society into authoritarianism. History is replete with such sad examples.

Therefore, the most effective way to deal with terrorism is first to eliminate the negative conditions exploited by terrorist groups. In practice, this means that if we can succeed in dealing with issues such as individualization, freedom, democratization, human rights, development

and prosperity in the Third World and the Muslim world, we will be combating terrorism in the most effective manner.

Indeed, it is impossible for terrorism and radical and fundamentalist movements not to flourish in environments where people are living in poverty and where they are humiliated, unemployed and under pressure, their identities and cultures marginalized. Therefore, we need to strongly emphasize that the most effective way to combat terrorism is to increase the living standards of those living in the Middle East.

It is also important to emphasize that Islam does not allow the killing of innocent people and that no terror acts can be acceptable. Furthermore, such acts do not represent Islam or Muslims. In fact, it needs to be explained that those who conduct terrorism in the name of Islam serve only the enemies of Islam.

It has to be explained to the Middle Eastern and the broader Muslim world that, in keeping with what Islam teaches, we need to fight against terrorists and all those radical movements that are ideologically associated with Islam and therefore damage the image of Muslims. Above all, in the Muslim world people should be able to learn about classical Islam without any pressure and from radical sources.

As the late Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic stated, the purpose of religion is above all to save the human soul and to bring peace and calm to the world; we need to remember that religion belongs to the ethical and socio-psychological realm and not political.

I noted above that terrorist groups and radical movements highlight poverty and misery. This problem cannot be solved just in terms of human rights, liberty and democracy. In fact, we have to question the worth of democracy and liberty in a society where poverty and unemployment prevail. If the economic situation is not improved and the unemployment level is not reduced in the Middle East, the fight with terror and radical movements will prove much more difficult.

In the context of fighting terrorism, the Turkish Ministry of Justice has a new initiative. Due to changes in the nature of terrorist acts and in order to deal effectively with international terrorism, we have established a special committee of experts who will deal with all kinds of acts of terrorism and make sure those who commit them are brought to justice.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that in terms of justice, development, human rights and democracy, Turkey is an effective example to the Muslim world. In order for Turkey to contribute to the

project of bringing democracy and liberty to the Middle East and effectively combat terrorism and radicalism:

- Turkey's effort to become an EU member should be endorsed;
- the issue of Israel-Palestine must be solved;
- The territorial integrity of Iraq should be preserved;
- In the process of producing and implementing projects related to the Middle East, the reality of Iran and Syria should be kept in mind and those two countries should not be excluded.

In order to refute the thesis of the clash of civilizations and to contribute to the convergence of civilizations, I expect your support for Turkey's effort to receive a date from the EU for accession talks to begin at the end of this year.

13

HIZB UT-TAHRIR IN OPEN SOCIETIES

Michael Whine

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) is different from other Islamist groups active in Europe and the United States. It has an appeal, particularly to the intellectual, of a type that transcends the stark appeal of the global jihad movement and its affiliates or other Islamist or revivalist movements.

In a BBC *Newsnight* item on HT in August 2003, a former senior member, Yamin Zakaria, stated:

They had a very profound analysis of why the Islamic world is in such an abysmal state, how it declined and most importantly how we can elevate ourselves from this position, and break free. The group was not allied to any political regime, it was not operating on the basis of personal or financial motivation, it didn't have a sectarian approach. So it had a very open approach. As long as you are a Muslim and are committed to its beliefs and its causes, you are welcome to join the party.¹

It involves itself less in the generalized Islamist campaigns of other groups. Its overriding belief in the resurrection of the Caliphate means that all other struggles and campaigns are generally subordinated. For this it is continuously criticized by other groups.

Its members do not engage in the political processes of the countries in which they live, and this has likewise led to public and private criticism of them, at least in the UK, by other Islamist groups that see it as part of their mission to press Islamist demands. In recent years, groups such as the Muslim Public Affairs Campaign (MPAC), the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Muslim Association of Britain and the Islamic Party of Britain have voiced such criticism.²

The influences of the late Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini, and the postwar leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood on HT's founders ensures that its worldview is Manichean and premised partly on conspiracy theory. All world events are seen through a prism in which the "unbelievers" are out to destroy Islam. Like them, HT holds that there is a

line of continuity between historical and contemporary events with no allowance for the vagaries of history or circumstance.

HT's Goals

Its leaders and members continually stress that HT is a “political party whose politics is Islam” and that it seeks to create a dialogue with the West on capitalism and its ills and to present Islam as an ideological alternative. The aim of the party, however, is to work only through the Islamic world in order to bring it back to the Islamic way of life that flourished under the Caliphate. It is not democratic: The resurrected Caliphate would be led by a non-hereditary absolute leader whose appointment would be based on his knowledge of Islam and his leadership powers. It is also evangelical and seeks converts. Some of its prominent leaders in Europe have been converts, such as Canadian Jamal Harwood. It continuously states that it disavows violence and that it considers the armed struggle to be forbidden by the *sharia*, but it uses the language of violent jihad. Its leaders admit to contacts with the Taliban but deny any contact with al-Qaeda, and indeed have publicly rejected al-Qaeda’s use of force.³

There is clearly a lack of consistency: It believes that when it has achieved critical mass in any theater in which it is operating, it will have to overthrow the state by means of a coup. Generally, states do not roll over and submit, so violence must figure somewhere in its strategy, but it is generally left unexplored.

HT is opportunistic and believes in vanguardism. On a range of issues it has been the first to profess concern and has taken the lead in campaigning. But more frequently than not, it has then dropped out of the campaign and left the issues to others. In other words, it has raised Muslim concerns and public consciousness and created a potential recruitment pool. It subordinates and ignores general Islamist concerns unless they represent a direct challenge to HT or aid its opportunism.

HT’s leaders state that the model for its mode of operation in the West is that of Prophet Muhammad’s seizure of Mecca. There he sought to influence a small proportion of the citizens so that when he launched his assault he had a cadre of helpers.

HT believes that it has to build cadres while engaging society in what it calls intellectual and political debate. By a collective interaction with society, it aims to create awareness of HT ideology, moving on to a consolidation of progress by soliciting the support of strategically powerful

groups in society (with the help of those it has penetrated). Only then is it ready to implement Islam through the resurrection of the Caliphate.

In Britain it appears to have gone through three distinct phases in its evolution. It came to public notice with its call to hijack airplanes containing Israelis and Jews and then embarked on a series of public confrontations, under the founding leadership of the Syrian expatriate and former Syrian Brotherhood member, Omar Bakri Fostock, known as Omar al-Bakri Muhammad, and another Syrian expatriate, Farid Kassim. These included well-publicized large-scale conferences at Wembley Conference Centre and Trafalgar Square. It has sought to coerce moderate Muslim students into joining and has intimidated Sikh, Hindu and Jewish students. Ultimately this brought it publicity and considerable notoriety and eventually led to its banning by the National Union of Students and by those universities where it was active. The Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (now called Universities UK), the umbrella body for universities in Britain, was eventually persuaded to issue a guidance booklet to universities in which it condemned religious extremism and coercion.⁴

The publicity and notoriety were enhanced by the screening of Jon Ronson's television documentary, "The Tottenham Ayatollah", which showed al-Bakri to be a buffoon and one who was held in low esteem by other Islamist leaders as a consequence of his bragging and because he had invited a camera crew to a clandestine meeting of Islamist leaders in Britain.⁵ Some of them were later to emerge as jihadist recruiters. All this led in the end to the dismissal of al-Bakri, who left to found al-Muhajiroun with Saudi expatriate Muhammad al-Massari. This followed the visit to London of a special envoy sent by the HT leadership in Jordan. Al-Massari took with him the majority of the members.

He was replaced by Fuad Husayn in February 1996, and HT thereafter embarked on a period of semi-clandestine recruitment and growth, not emerging back into the limelight until the campaign in 2002 against the government of Uzbekistan and for Farhad Uzmanov, a HT activist allegedly murdered by the Uzbek regime. In early 2003 it began its campaign against war against Iraq. The focus of the HT protestors was not on supporting Iraq, or against the war in general, but on criticism of the Arab states for assisting the United States.⁶

The third period has been under the leadership of Dr. Imran Waheed, a Birmingham-based psychiatrist, Dr. Abdul Wahid, and others. HT now operates at two levels: clandestinely, recruiting mostly among students, and to a small extent on the street (though not to the extent seen in the past); and through its communications modes, such as its web-based

journal *Khilafah* and its communiqués. It has also, but only during the past 18 months or so, returned to street activity, in the form of pickets and demonstrations.

Much like the clandestine Marxist-Leninist groups on which it is partly modeled, HT exercises strict centralized command and control, which is manifest through its system of recruitment and communications. It operates in the manner of a cult. Now that it is barred from many mosques, its main vehicle for recruitment is through Islamic or Study Circles. These meet at members' homes or community centers and generally involve five or so aspirant members meeting regularly under the supervision of an experienced member. An indoctrination period usually lasts for up to two years, at which point the member is accepted into the organization.

Although its members are secretive, HT leaders deny this. Senior members' and correspondents' email addresses are listed in *Khilafah*, and Waheed and other leaders actively seek media interviews.

In the *Newsnight* item mentioned above, a student active in the Islamic society at Kingston University talked about an HT activist, Rizwan Khaliq, who was not a student at the university. Khaliq nevertheless visited the campus almost daily to recruit students. The interviewer asked the former head of the Islamic society what their relationship was, and he answered that it is one of tolerance: neither interfered with the other. When asked why he did not denounce Khaliq to the university authorities, knowing that HT is banned, he responded that they would not inform on a fellow Muslim to "unbelievers."

The university authorities issued a statement that they had no knowledge of Khaliq's activities. "There is evidence that there are other Khaliq's attempting to recruit in other universities clandestinely and where moderate Muslim students see no need to speak out or are either unwilling or frightened of informing."⁷

Where it does venture out into the open, for example to book rooms or to hold meetings, it frequently uses false names. Examples have been: the Islamic Society, the Islamic Front, the International Islamic Front, the Islamic Forum Against Communism, Al-Khilafah Publications, the Young Liberating Party, Asian Youth (Waltham Forest), the 1924 Committee, the Muslim Media Forum (University College London), Muslim Current Affairs Society (Leeds University), the New World Society (Nottingham and Sheffield universities).

HT uses the Internet for promotion of its ideology, and email and face-to-face meetings for command and control. Communiqués and press releases published by the group are all published in the same format and with the same type of wording. The Danish police investigation into an affiliate in their country noted that the Danish website was not only being hosted from London, but that it was being run from London and that it was registered to the HT mailing address in London which is that of the British affiliate.

All the communiqués are published from London. Thus, for example, press releases published in June and July 2003 by the Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sudanese and British affiliates were all in the same format, style and layout. The first three dealt with the suppression of HT affiliates in those countries.⁸ Communiqués published last June by the Turkish affiliate and on behalf of the Russian affiliate following arrests of HT members in these countries are again in the same format and style.⁹ In November 2002 the German authorities, who had long had HT members under surveillance, raided 25 buildings across the country but made no arrests. Interestingly, the Interior Minister Otto Schily, noted that they had not been able to find recognizable organizational structures. He stated: “We have to assume that essentially they have their organizational base abroad.”¹⁰ That said, there is no question that the command and control center is located in the UK, even if the international leadership is elsewhere.

Initially, HT sought to recruit only among students. Its leaflets were first distributed in the UK—this being their first introduction to Europe, to the best of our knowledge—at Imperial College, London University. That may have been a deliberate strategic target for the group, or it may just have been a reflection of where its membership was located. Imperial College is one of the foremost institutes for scientific learning in Britain, on par, for example, with Cambridge. It then spread to Queen Mary College and thereafter to Birmingham, both located in areas with large Muslim populations. HT then embarked on a campaign of recruiting students in other universities and Muslim youth on the streets, and its members appeared to spend much of their time leafleting.

In an interesting posting to an Islamist discussion group in September 2003, reproduced by MPAC-UK, an anonymous correspondent writes on “Why I left Hizb ut-Tahrir.” He stated: “All I seemed to be doing was pamphleteering and daubing walls with posters and memorizing the odd *ayat* of the Quran to pull out on unsuspecting Muslims to prove my point” In a note of cynicism he concluded that:

If you don't want the establishment of the Islamic state then the best way is to join up with one of these two groups. . . . In closing, I am thankful to HT for at least awakening me to my *deen* even though they did very little to nurture it. I have had a few friends 'burn out' from HT and go back completely to their *jahiliya* [ignorance] state, and this can be blamed on no one else but HT who will be questioned on That Day.

They came to public notice in April 1988 when they inserted a leaflet inside copies of the Arabic language journal *Al-Fajr*, which at that time was distributed freely outside the Central London Mosque. The leaflet, in English, was entitled, "The Islamic Rule on Hijacking Aeroplanes", and was written by the then leader Abdul Qadim Zallum. In it he claimed that the hijacking of planes was forbidden in Islamic law unless the plane contained Israelis or Jews, in which case there was an obligation to hijack the plane and kill the Jews.¹¹

Other leaflets followed and were given out on the streets or on university campuses. They included one entitled, "the only place is the battlefield between the Muslims and the Jews", and another, "Peace with Israel—a crime against Islam."

It has been their publicly stated policy on Hindus, Sikhs and particularly Jews that as much as anything else has brought them criticism and into conflict with law enforcement. In January 1994, two HT members were arrested for distributing one of the leaflets described above. The leaflet advertised a meeting to be held at University College London and was referred to the attorney general on the grounds that it incited hatred and was illegal. The attorney general, whose consent is required for prosecutions under the law against incitement, declined to prosecute, but the university authorities cancelled the meeting. It took place, however, at another college of London University, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) where the HT speaker stated: "Let's be open about this—the Quran does not mention Zionists, it mentions Jews. They are our enemy and *insha'allah* [with the help of Allah] we will finish them."

In January 2001 the German authorities also banned HT on the basis that it was "active in universities with anti-Semitic slogans and was inciting hatred against Jews and had called for the destruction of the state of Israel", under legislation that allows for the proscription of foreign-based extremist groups. Interestingly, Interior Minister Schily also stated that HT in Germany had sought contact with the far Right and that leading neo-Nazis had attended an HT meeting held by the group at the Technical University in Berlin in October 2002.¹² There are other examples of meetings between HT and the far Right, but this is not the norm. It was also noted that the German leader Shaker Assem had lectured at the

Islamic study group founded by Mohamed Atta at the Technical University in Hamburg during the summer of 2001.¹³ In November 2002, members' homes were again raided, causing the group to issue a denial that it was seeking violence but noting that the ban would not stop its activities.

In 2002, Danish HT produced a "hit list" of 15 to twenty leading members of Denmark's Jewish community. In November 2002, Fadi Abdel Latif, the leader of the Danish branch, was convicted of incitement to racial hatred and sentenced to sixty days in prison after the group circulated a leaflet urging people to "Kill them, kill the Jews wherever you find them." The group was subsequently banned.¹⁴ The Dutch government is also now said to be considering a ban.¹⁵

Last November the German police arrested a group of North Africans linked to European-based terror cells. One of those arrested, Abderazek Mahdjoub (alias Mahjub Abderrazak), was picked up in Hamburg and is allegedly linked to the Ansar al-Islam network. He reportedly told his interrogators that there had been a meeting of European HT leaders in Poland. There they had made the decision to completely change and to build a new organization that concerns itself "with the national territory and with the international territory, but we need highly trained people at every level." It is alleged that he stated that HT has

Albanians, Swiss, British. . . . It is enough that they be of a high cultural level. In Germany we have interpreters and interpreters that translate books; we have also in communications, also in Austria; the important thing is that their faith in Islam be sincere.

When questioned about the situation in Germany, Mahdjoub replied:

I cannot complain. There are ten of us; we are taking an interest in Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Turkey and Egypt, Italy and France, but the nerve center is still London. . . . Sheikh Adlen has given a great deal of money; as I told you this plan has no need of any further comments or words.¹⁶

Unlike the violent jihadist groups, HT does not now recruit on the streets or in the prisons. It is worth noting that an attempt to recruit among Birmingham street gangs involved in the local drugs and prostitution scene failed due, it was thought, to the recruits inability to properly comprehend and promote the intellectual ideology.¹⁷ A way to assess in which direction an Islamist group may be moving is to look at its recruitment policies. HT went someway down al-Qaeda's road of recruiting the disenchanting from the streets but has now reverted to recruiting in the universities.

Looking at the backgrounds of its leaders and known members, one can see that HT is not a populist movement like the Brotherhood or other Islamist movements. It is elitist and its clear strategy since the accession of Waheed to the leadership has been to recruit among elites. In fact, its message can only appeal to elites, and that is why it tended to fail when it tried to recruit on the streets.

A high proportion of its declared membership is medical doctors or other professionals. The line up of speakers at a recent public event, the sixth national conference held in Birmingham in August 2003, under the banner of "British or Muslim?" included: Dr. Abdul Salaam a married dentist in general practice from Chicago and former follower of Elijah Mohammed and Malcolm X who left their successor Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam 15 years ago; Waleed Gubbara a sales and marketing director married with two children; Taji Mustafa, an IT engineer who is married with three children and who was a co-founder of a major independent Islamic day school; Kamal Abu Zahra an Arabic translator with graduate and post-graduate degrees who is married with three children; Shaban ul-Haqq, an IT project manager with graduate and post-graduate degrees in computing.¹⁸ By advertising the professional and family backgrounds of the speakers, it is clear that they are aiming to attract similar people: mature professionals with families.

The meeting held at the prestigious National Indoor Arena in Birmingham would have been expensive to book and likewise suggests that they are focussed on a different class of potential recruits and members than previously. The local press reports that the meeting attracted 7,000 participants and that Imran Waheed and the main speaker, Abdul Salaam, used the opportunity to "dissuade Muslims from taking up arms against Israel", arguing that that they do not advocate the "indiscriminate killing of Jews", but rather the seizure of power through peaceful means. However, a senior member of the group Sajjad Khan also stated that "there needs to be an international Islamic army, from Muslim states, across the world, to take back the state of Israel and even go into Iraq to wrest control of the region from the U.S."¹⁹

To appeal to established people, HT now also promotes a more progressive line on family issues than other Islamists and one which is designed to appeal to educated elites. They are, for instance, against arranged and intra-family marriages.

Their literature differs markedly from that produced during the time of Omar al-Bakri Muhammad. It is high quality and sometimes expensively produced literature, published in full color. The regular web-based journal

Khilafah is well designed with high resolution scanned images. This is intended to be attractive to the class of prospective converts they seek. However, the move towards more web-based publishing also avoids involvement with the external world and thus potential exposure.

That HT is subversive is obvious: The strategy and activities are aimed at influencing and subverting society and leading elements within it. In the UK at least, it appears to have aimed for the professional classes, although these are the only members who are declared. It is not yet known what other areas of society they may have infiltrated, but as their message is so different from other Islamist groups, it is unlikely that they will have made much progress.

HT and Terrorism

Despite their use of jihadist terminology and the fact that they play a part in radicalizing Muslim youth, there is no evidence that HT is involved in or encourages terrorism in western Europe or that it is moving towards terrorism. There have been no reports that members have joined or become involved in al-Qaeda or the global jihad movement. HT members are not thought to have joined the Taliban, nor is it believed that any are being held by the United States at Guantanamo Bay. Likewise, HT is not mentioned in connection with al-Tawhid or Ansar al-Islam, nor any of the other Wahhabi or *salafi* terror groups.

However, members did go to Bosnia during the mid-1990's, and indeed Ahmed Sheikh Omar is thought to have been an HT member when he went to Bosnia with the Convoy of Mercy. But any terrorist recruitment appears to have been done there or in Afghanistan, rather than in the UK.

In Germany it has been banned because it is anti-Semitic and because it represents a subversive threat to democracy and the German constitution. Laws enacted since 9/11 allow for the proscription of those groups that threaten the integrity of the state. It was banned in Denmark because it published a document which threatened the country's Jewish leadership, and the same appears to be the case in Holland. British law does not allow for the banning of subversive organizations, only those that aid or abet terrorism, so a ban is unlikely.

HT's views are so extreme that it is unlikely that it will ever achieve mass popularity, and they will continue to be criticized by other Muslim groups, even those that are Islamist. In a totalitarian society, where there is no political opposition, HT will seek to occupy the vacuum. It will thereby be seen as both subversive and possibly terrorist. However it seems unlikely, on the evidence, that it would engage in terrorism, and there is no

credible evidence that this has been the case in Uzbekistan or Egypt. In reality, HT represents a long-term threat of subversion. It is a gradualist ideology, and although it has generally failed to confront the reality of its ultimate aim, that of the violent overthrow of the established order, its elitist recruitment policies are unlikely to allow it to achieve its mission.

¹“Hizb ut-Tahrir”, *Newsnight*, BBC News, August 27, 2003.

²See for example, “The Hand of Hizb in the UK writes to MPAC”, email from politics@mpacuk.org, January 17 2003; M. Amir Ali, “American Elections and Hizb ut-Tahrir”, *MSA News*, November 2, 2000; and Yamin Zakaria and Muhammad al-Massari, “How to Stop the War Decisively (Answering Hizb ut-Tahrir)”, *Revival*, February 7, 2003, <http://www.therevival.co.uk>.

³“Iraq’s Sunni Muslim Group Confirms Taliban Contacts, Denies Al-Qaeda Links”, (in Arabic), *Al-Hayat* (London), in BBC Monitoring, February 7, 2004.

⁴“Extremism and Intolerance on Campus”, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, July 1998.

⁵“The Tottenham Ayatollah”, Channel 4 TV, April 8, 1997.

⁶“Rulers of Muslims Stand up to the West—Support the Muslims of Iraq, Close Your Waterways, Airspace and Ground Bases”, March 15, 2003.

⁷Naveed Butt, “To suppress Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Stance on Kashmir, its Member has been Abducted”, June 22, 2003, http://www.1924.org/press_releases/index.php?id=558_0_8_0.m.

⁸See for example: Ali Sa’eed Ali (Abul-Hasan), “Press Release—Arrests”, July 9, 2003, www.1924.org/press_releases/index.php?id=586_0_8_0_C; Mohiuddin Ahmed, “Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh Condemns the Arrest of Two of Its Activists”, June 20, 2003, http://www.1924.org/press_releases/index.php?id=548_0_8_C; “Sharon’s visit to Britain”, July 15, 2003, www.1924.org/political_analysis/index.php?id=606_0_22_0_C.

⁹O Muslims in Turkey!, Communiqué, uploaded June 11, 2003; Communiqué from Hizb ut-Tahrir, uploaded June 22, 2003, www.khilafah.com/home/lographics/category.php?DocumentID=7584&TagID=, downloaded June 23, 2003

¹⁰Geir Moulson, “Germany Bans Islamic Group Accused of Anti-Semitism”, *Associated Press*, January 15, 2003.

¹¹“The Islamic Rule in Hijacking Aeroplanes”, April 8, 1988, insert with *Al-Fajr*, No. 12, April 1988.

¹²Peter Finn, “Germany Bans Islamic Group”, *Washington Post*, January 10, 2003; Geir Moulson, *op. cit.*

¹³Peter Finn, *op. cit.*

¹⁴“Danish Muslim Jailed”, *Jewish Chronicle* (London), November 8, 2002.

¹⁵Private sources.

¹⁶Private sources.

¹⁷Conversation with West Midlands Police, October 30, 1996.

¹⁸“British or Muslim?”, (conference schedule, national conference organized by HT, August 22, 2003)

http://www.conference.1924.org/images/posters/Inside_v.3.jpg.

¹⁹Emma Pinch, “Muslim Leader’s Mission of Peace”, *Birmingham Post* (United Kingdom), August 25, 2003.

14

THE UNIVERSITY OF GLOBAL JIHAD

Reuven Paz

Throughout the last two years, most of my work has focused on Internet sites, predominantly on al-Qaeda and other affiliated groups of global jihad. I believe that the legions of foreign Muslims were recruited not by Hizb ut-Tahrir, but by the effect of the Internet itself. I must mention here two British citizens of Pakistani origin, who came to Israel in August to carry out suicide attacks. One of them succeeded. They were clearly influenced by radical Islamic websites. Similarly, recently, an American soldier in the state of Washington was arrested for supplying information (albeit of an open-source nature) to an al-Qaeda website. Through this website, al-Qaeda has created a virtual intelligence service. They employ fluent English speakers in order to easily and effectively gather information from American sources.

Even without the complicity of Westerners, al-Qaeda is still able to acquire incredibly detailed intelligence from the Internet. For example, I was shocked to see the ease with which I could access information about the deployment of American, British and Italian forces in Iraq. Additionally, global jihad groups have transcribed detailed instructions for bomb-making from Saudi and Egyptian military manuals, so that even the smallest would-be terrorist group has the information necessary to carry out destructive attacks.

It would be unfair to say that the West is not reacting to the danger of these Internet sites. The Americans and the Saudis close more and more each day, yet they continually reappear with new addresses. Even if all such sites were permanently closed, however, terrorist groups would still derive enormous value from the Internet. Chat rooms and discussion boards together present an ideal forum in which these groups can manage internal discussions and recruit new members.

Of course, on such sites one can find all sorts of rubbish exhibiting an extraordinarily low level of knowledge of Islam. Many youngsters involved in global jihad were never truly educated in the religion. Thus, especially in the case of HT, they rely on the educated leaders of the group, who are

themselves technical, not religious, graduates, such as doctors, engineers and the like.

As for the appeal of Islam to hard-science graduates, it is perhaps due to the fact that such individuals, particularly in Palestine, where HT was founded, are avant-garde elite in all aspects of society, not just science but also religion and government. They tend to view contemptuously the less-educated military officers who rule many Arab states.

The last thing of which we should become more aware is the growing presence of Islamist feminism on the Internet. The number of women and girls who visit and create these websites is constantly increasing. By way of the anonymous cloak of the Internet, many of these females (who come from very traditionalist societies) are able to express themselves and to take part in the virtual jihad on a level equal to that of males. They are reminded that they too can become effective participants in a global struggle. Although they cannot become imams or preachers, these women, especially those living in the West, can feel a sense of belonging to the Muslim world through the Internet.

15

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN GERMANY

Udo Steinbach

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) is a marginal organization in Germany. Though it is extremely small, with not more than 150 registered members, it was banned by the German government in January 2003. It finds itself on the fringes of Germany society, as there are few among the Muslims in Germany (except for one Turkish organization which I shall come to) who dream of establishing the Caliphate.

This organization is said to be part of the “fundamentalist” scene in Germany, although such a charge is problematic. HT undertakes no militant activity, and this creates a dilemma. On the one hand, one feels the pressure to do something, especially after September 11; on the other hand, there is the freedom of religion and opinion, which is a basic right. Thus, one has to justify banning such an organization. Many in Germany protested the ban after it was announced because such justification was not immediately apparent.

It is important here to place HT within the fundamentalist scene in Germany, where there are two basic categories of Islamic organization. First are the “offspring” groups, directly spun off from those in the Middle East. Certainly Hizb ut-Tahrir is part of this first group. As we have seen, it was founded in either Palestine or Jordan and has its operations center in the Middle East. Other groups include branches of Hamas, various Egyptian groups, the Algerian *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), and last but not least, al-Qaeda, which planned at least part of the September 11 attacks in Hamburg. The second category is comprised of the migrant groups, whose members have characteristically been foreigners. Increasingly, however, they are German citizens. One such group is the Milli Görüs.

The groups in both categories have one thing in common: strong links to outside issues and organizations. The typical agenda has hardly anything to do with Germany, focusing instead on issues in Turkey and the Arab World.¹ The most prominent secular organization to focus on Turkey was

the PKK. It was eventually banned due not to its terrorism in Turkey, but to its violence on German streets beginning in Fall 1993. However, no other Islamic organization has resorted to violence in Germany.

The German authorities long assumed that the country would not be the target of violent groups, as Germany itself is relatively removed from the conflict zones in the Middle East. This assumption held for a considerable period, as Germany took no strong positions on any of the conflicts in the region. However, for historical reasons, Germany has maintained a strong relationship with Israel and enjoys an equally solid relationship with the United States. Thus, the risk remains that installations and targets in Germany that are associated with Israel, the United States or even Great Britain might be targeted. A declaration from al-Qaeda, as broadcast by Al-Jazeera, placed Germany within the list of countries against which al-Qaeda was fighting.

Returning to HT, it is important to note that, until it was banned, few in Germany knew that it had any activity whatsoever within the country. Its program seems to be so strange that, when it was first remarked upon, the prevailing view was that it was considerably isolated from the broader Islamic community. It even seemed alienated from another group that claims to be establishing the Caliphate, the Federation of Islamic Groups and Communities (ICCB).²

The ban came as quite a surprise to most observers. There was pressure from the Algerian government to ban some groups, such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the FIS. This is a dilemma that Germany has long faced, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s concerning the PKK. The Turkish government continuously applied diplomatic pressure in support of a ban, but the German government refused until 1993, when the PKK began committing acts of violence on German streets. Remarkably enough, the Turkish government also began pressuring for the ban of other movements which were generally labeled *irtica*, “reactionary”, or “religious”, among them Milli Görüs.³

As I note above, the second category of organizations is that of migrant groups, two of which come to mind: the ICCB and Milli Görüs. The ICCB created a problem for a long time and was clearly aimed at toppling the constitutional order in Turkey. It is essentially a family enterprise. The founder of this organization, Cemalettin Kaplan, declared himself Caliph, earning the derisory nickname the “Caliph of Cologne.” With an organization consisting of 2,500 people, he went on to engage in educational and other activities. The authorities eventually came to the conclusion that the ICCB’s deeds were unconstitutional. Cemalettin Kaplan died, and his son Metin Kaplan, declared himself successor. This caused

problems for the organization, as some denied the son's claim, wanting to lead the organization themselves. In the end, Metin hired an assassin to eliminate rival claimants, a crime for which he was convicted. Yet after he had served his sentence, the government wanted to expel him from Germany, but the court found that he would not receive a fair trial in Turkey and declined to extradite.

Milli Görüs presents an interesting case. This is an organization that has some 30,000 members in Germany and in one way or another may be considered a family enterprise of the Erbakan family. Mehmet Erbakan, who is the nephew of Necmettin Erbakan (former Turkish prime minister and founder of various banned political parties in Turkey) is its current leader. While at one time it may have contributed to the struggle to establish an Islamic order in Turkey, its current focus is Germany, where it is organizing the Turkish Muslim community as a closed community, parallel to the majority non-Muslim society.

They have also established schools and have organized athletic and recreational activities. Thus it has been the most comprehensive effort of any Islamic organization in Germany to establish a parallel society. Of course, they are trying to make all possible use of the protections that German law offers to Christian community organizations, though they have not yet succeeded. They have substantial financial resources, remitting funds to Turkey (to support, for example, the election campaigns of Necmettin Erbakan), though Milli Görüs has never been linked to militant activities. Nevertheless, the government's listing of Milli Görüs in the annual publication related to unconstitutional activities classifies Milli Görüs as "non-constitutional", as "striving to change the constitutional order in Germany", and as "striving to change the constitutional order in Turkey, a friendly state." Milli Görüs has denied these charges.

It became clear, though, that Milli Görüs had no connection with militant organizations (especially those related in any way to al-Qaeda). In the end, the new Islamic Turkish government will force Milli Görüs and the German government both to face new problems. In recent years, there has been a trend within Milli Görüs towards more democratic behavior. This process may accelerate now that Erbakan and allies in Turkey are no longer playing a role in Milli Görüs. Thus, the group will be less concentrated on changing the situation in Turkey and more focused on the status of Muslims in Germany.

Of course, a ban may be difficult to effect. Such a move would push the organization entirely out of the mainstream, in this case taking a substantial portion of German society along with it. The challenge will be

for the German government to determine whether the cure is worse than the disease.

¹The exception to this is Milli Görüş, whose agenda includes the issue of the position of Muslims in German society.

² While the aim of this group is to establish the Caliphate in Turkey, its strategy is to fight the secular government in Turkey, rather than to find allies in all countries.

³Ironically, the current AK government in Turkey is *irtica*. It will be interesting to see how the change in government affects Turkish policy.

16

DEMOGRAPHICS AND METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

Madeleine Gruen

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) is actively seeking to expand their support base in the United States. This essay will examine several of their methods, including the exploitation of the interest in rap music and the Internet of their young target demographic. While HT has been versatile in their tactics to manipulate troubled Muslim populations in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, their methods in the United States show an evolution in their strategy that confirms a calculating and predatory trend. This essay will also present an assessment of the efficacy of HT's endeavors in the United States.

HT's approach to recruitment in the United States follows the patterns established by white ethno-nationalist groups, which have been successfully attracting recruits by exploiting interests in the Internet, computer games and music.¹ In the West, both political Islamist groups and white ethno-nationalists focus their efforts on young men between the approximate ages of 16 and 22. They have carefully studied the interests of this demographic and have found that much of their time is spent online in chat groups, game-related sites and music-related sites where they can either download music or chat about a particular band. Most of their online activities revolve around interaction with others who share similar interests.

Historically, prominent white ethno-nationalist groups, such as the National Alliance, recruited at punk and heavy metal concerts. Eventually, groups began to sponsor their own "white power" bands whose fan bases are most often cultivated online through sophisticated websites that offer downloads of songs and band-related paraphernalia. The robust online propaganda campaigns developed by these groups are a primary reason why their following is larger today than it has been in decades.

Why do white ethno-nationalist and political Islamist groups troll for members online? In the West, HT has focused its recruitment efforts on college-age Muslims.² Like other extreme political organizations, HT

attempted to reach this demographic online. The following statistics show why groups choose to follow this strategy:

- According to Nielsen Net ratings, in 2002–2003 the number of web-surfers in their late teens and early twenties increased by 13 percent, bringing the total number of web-surfers in the United States in this age range to 10.5 million.
- The average amount of time spent online for males in this age group was approximately 32 hours per month, which is 17 percent more than any other age demographic.³
- Pew Internet and American Life reports that older Internet users are more likely than younger users to get health information and seek material at government websites, while younger users spend their time online using instant messaging, playing games and downloading music—the very interests most exploited by white supremacist groups.⁴

One of the most notorious tactics employed by white supremacist groups is the creation of decoy or “honey pot” sites that are designed to expose unsuspecting students to group ideology. To take advantage of the fact that 70 percent of American school-aged children and young adults do research for school papers online, groups develop sites devoted to popular topics for essay assignments.⁵ For example, students assigned to write a paper on Martin Luther King, Jr. are likely to find martinlutherking.org on a search engine. The site, which is sponsored by white supremacist Don Black, appears legitimate on superficial inspection but upon closer inspection of the material, it is clear that the site is meant to manipulate students to parrot slanderous untruths about the civil rights leader in their research papers.

The Internet as a Means to Indoctrinate: Reasons for Success

White ethno-nationalist groups discovered early in the Internet revolution that all aspects of a propaganda campaign that can be applied in the physical world can also be applied through the Internet. One of the most potent elements of a propaganda campaign is the use of testimonials, which, according to the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, are endorsements of an idea, individual or cause that come from a prominent person within a community.⁶ A similar concept is called the “bandwagon”, whereby endorsements come from a community of peers. The desired effect is that when a critical mass of one’s peers endorse a concept, the more acceptable it becomes.

Message boards are created in order to establish a community for common interests. The worldview of participants can be subtly massaged by bandwagon-type testimonials and testimonials from influential individuals that are posted to these boards. Another important aspect of a message board is that it creates a sense of community that may not exist for an individual in the physical world. The relief of alienation is a primary reason why certain people join irregular political organizations, and the communities found on boards often justify and give direction to people's sense of injustice.⁷

Soldiers of Allah/Muslim Studio

The theory that political Islamist groups also seek to expose students to their ideology through deceit tactics on the Internet is supported by entering, "Allah" into a search engine. The ninth-most popular site on a Yahoo! search is www.soldiersofallah.com—the site of a young Muslim rap group from Canoga Park, California, formerly known as Soldiers of Allah (SOA).⁸ Initially, visitors to the site would most likely not realize the band's affiliation with HT. It was only after visitors were "hooked" into the band's fan community that they would begin to see the name Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Until the site was closed in February 2003, the SOA homepage featured an animated image of a young man waving the Hizb ut-Tahrir flag. The site design was professional in appearance, although very few of the links from the home page led to additional pages. Most likely, this design was intended to steer visitors to view the information that SOA wanted to have viewed rather than distract them with superfluous material. Only two links off the home page led to additional information: the link to a page featuring song lyrics and a link to the registration page of their Yahoo! chat group.

The SOA song lyrics promote HT's ideology. Song lyrics are meant to be memorized and repeated as a way to learn group doctrines, just as children are taught songs to learn basic school subjects. Music files of SOA songs can be found on mainstream music websites. Political groups such as HT intend for music to be listened to as a passive form of "studying" ideologies.

The following are excerpts from two songs composed by SOA:

"Staring into Kafir's Eyes"

*How many more
of our sisters do they have to rape!*

*How many more
of our brothers must they slaughter by hate!
Don't you know we have suffered too long without an Islamic State!
How much more can you take?*

"Sleeping Giant"

*Governments who claim
They implementing Islam
like who??!
Like Taliban, Iran and Sudan.
All 52
So called Muslim nations
Oppressing the masses
in the name of Islam
They are digging our graves
while we are a sleep
over a billion
But oohh so weak
We need to rise up
And get back on our feet*

While the songs present HT's doctrines, they do not emphasize the non-violent aspect of group ideology, which raises the concern that the lyrics could incite an unstable individual to commit violence.

The SOA chat group revealed itself to be a forum for indoctrination into HT. The messages were dominated by bandwagon-type testimonials from young Muslims advocating HT, mostly from Southeast Asia, South Asia, North America and the UK. They wrote about the importance of HT's work to raise awareness of the need for an Islamic state. They shared their personal reasons why they decided to join HT and why they encouraged others to do the same. Members of the SOA band, whom the subscribers to the chat group ostensibly looked up to, posted full texts of HT leaflets. They also circulated new song lyrics that reinforced HT's radical ideology. Other than the HT movement and the restoration of the *Khilafah*, little else was discussed by the group.

Posts to the Yahoo! chat group indicated that there were more rap groups in the United States that were associated with HT. An-Nasr Productions (ANP), located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, markets itself as the "Islamic carriers of *dawa* using the tool of hip-hip to convey the message of al-Islam!" ANP's website revealed that the band had sponsored a youth group called Muslim Youth Network (MYN). One MYN event that took place in Southern California was a youth retreat for Muslim boys and girls age 14 and older. The retreat, entitled, "Islam: Method for Change or Change of Method", took place over the three days before Christmas 2000.

Another rap group, called Arab Legion, is also located in the Los Angeles area. Its site, www.arablegion.net, is similar to SOA's in that there are very few pages of material. The two functional links off the home page lead to the group's lyrics page and to their fan message board, where visitors interact directly with HT members and with others who are contemplating group ideology. Many posts to the Arab Legion message board include links to www.1924.org, an official HT site designed to appeal to the college-age demographic. Compared to other HT websites, www.1924.org has more sophisticated graphics, is more colorful and features photos of the young members who manage the site. The photos show prospective recruits that the group is populated by real people with whom they can identify.

Prospects for Success

HT's online recruitment and indoctrination campaign may not work. While white ethno-nationalist groups such as the National Alliance have had considerable success recruiting males within the primary target demographic through websites that feature popular music, there are indications that HT may not be finding the same success despite their intensive campaign.

Unlike other aspects of an HT recruitment campaign, such as leafleting, the efficacy of online campaigns can be measured. The data concludes that HT's tactic of using music as a lure has not been successful. These findings may also show that studies of the habits of Internet users do not accurately reflect the habits of young Muslim users. The numbers show that there is not a high volume of traffic to HT sites. To contrast, the traffic ranking of Islamcity.com, a radical political Islamist site, ranks at 8,194, well into the top 10,000 of websites overall.⁹

A second indicator that HT's online campaign has not raised much interest is the total number of registrants for their online forums and chat groups. By the time it dissolved in February 2003, SOA's Yahoo! discussion group had 1,000 registrants. That month, they renamed themselves Muslim Studio and launched www.muslimstudio.com, which turned into a chat board within three months.¹⁰ The chat board is an integral element of a propaganda campaign because it takes less time and money to maintain than a traditional website, and it also serves the primary purpose of indoctrinating. However, in February 2004 the Muslim Studio chat board had 1,113 registrants; only 113 more than they had one year earlier. This demonstrates a failure to draw new users to the board, and may indicate an overall lack of interest in the band.

Another reason for the de-emphasis of a web-based campaign is that unlike most political Islamic groups, HT seeks to attract females as well as males. Research has shown that women are usually attracted to a movement for tactile reasons rather than for ideological ones; they are more responsive to face-to-face recruitment so that interpersonal relationships can develop.¹¹ Also, on average, females do not spend as much time online as do males.¹² Thus, political groups seeking female membership will not emphasize Internet-based tactics.

Alternative Methods of Recruiting

While it is always worth maintaining websites, they do not seem to be the most effective way of drawing attention. If the online campaign is not popular and if it does not work well for attracting female adherents, then what is HT doing to attract supporters in the United States?

As described earlier in this essay, the members of An-Nasr Productions sponsored Muslim Youth Network (MYN), a name likely chosen to sound like the legitimate organization Muslim Youth of North America.¹³ The MYN no longer appears to be active, but links from the ANP website indicate that it sponsored a youth retreat in Walnut, California, which is in the Los Angeles area. This sponsorship of a community group for Muslim youth mirrors HT's recruitment tactics in other parts of the world where HT sponsors community centers within Muslim populations that do not have many alternatives. The concentration of HT music groups and community activity in Southern California may have to do with the fact that the highest concentration of Muslims in the United States is in California,¹⁴ and the lowest concentration of mosques in the United States is in the West.¹⁵ This set of circumstances makes California's Muslim population a fertile one for exploitation by irregular political Islamist groups with damaging missions.

The Arab Legion's website features a video of the band giving a concert at a University of California campus. Posts to chat boards suggest that all of the HT rap bands have appeared at college campuses. It is likely that campus administrators do not pay much attention to the bands invited by student groups. It is also unlikely that ideology spread in this manner would attract the scrutiny of administrators. Thus, concerts are an effective way of engendering further exposure to group ideology. Fans will continue to attend concerts, they will seek face-to-face contact with band members, they will buy CDs, and they will visit fan websites.

Conclusions

HT's versatile and multipronged approach to recruitment in the United States demonstrates why the organization has achieved an enormous transnational presence where other similar groups have not. One reason why other groups with similar goals seem unable to amass the same degree of international support is that HT adapts its message to appeal to the desires of the populations it is trying to impress. In Central Asia, where post-Soviet independence spawned people's desires to return to their Islamic roots, HT attracted adherents by misleading them into believing that they would receive religious instruction.¹⁶ In Europe, where Muslim populations often feel marginalized, HT has positioned itself as a political advocate. For example, during the controversy over the banning of the *hijab* in French schools, HT made its primary mission organizing protests against the ban.

In United States, as in Europe, HT appears interested in university-educated young people. However, their hook is not as intellectual as it is in other parts of the world. The ideology presented in song lyrics is not as complex as it is when presented on official websites or in group publications. In the United States, it seems they are casting a wider net and will sort through the fish later on.

It can be argued that HT might not be catching on in the United States the way it has in other parts of the world because there are not comparable levels of poverty, marginalization, or political unrest. Despite their waning efforts online and through concerts, it is clear that HT will continue to make efforts in the United States. A February 29, 2004 post to the Muslim Studio message board announced the termination of the band. However, former band members vowed a continued commitment to the *dawa*.¹⁷ Already a new board game called "The Muslim Challenge" is in the works—another innovative method of indoctrination.

¹Madeleine, Gruen, "White-Ethnonationalist and Political-Islamist Presence on the Internet and Solutions for Change", *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment, Readings and Interpretations*, eds. Col. Russ Howard and Maj. Reid Sawyer, rev. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003).

²"The Reality of the Sect Hizb ut-Tahrir", <http://www.htexposed.com/htexpose.doc>.

³Nielsen Net Rating report, February 2003.

⁴Pew Internet & American Life, "America's Online Pursuits: The Changing Picture of Who's Online and What They Do", December 22, 2003.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Institute of Propaganda Analysis, *Propaganda Analysis*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938).

⁷Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁸Search with these results last conducted in February 2004. For current website, go to <http://www.nasrproductions.i-p.com>.

⁹February 2004, <http://www.alexa.com>.

¹⁰In February 2003, Soldiers of Allah changed their name to Muslim Studio because they felt that the title Soldiers of Allah should only be applied to the *mujaheddin*.

¹¹Kathleen M. Blee, *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

¹²Pew Internet & American Life, *op. cit.*

¹³Karim Tourk (observation at the conference "Deciphering and Combating Radical Islamist Ideology: Should the War Against Terrorism be Extended to Hizb ut-Tahrir", Ankara, Turkey, February 21, 2004.)

¹⁴Fareed H. Numan, "The Muslim Population in the United States", (Washington, DC: American Muslim Council, 1990). Numan's study concluded that 20 percent of the American Muslim population resided in California, making it the highest concentration of Muslims in the United States.

¹⁵Ihsan Bagby, Paul M. Pearl and Bryan T. Froehle, "The Mosque in America: A National Portrait", (Washington, DC: Council on American-Islamic Relations, April 26, 2001). Study indicates that there was a 25 percent increase in the number of mosques in the United States between 1994 and 2000. There was a 94 percent increase in service attendance.

¹⁶Zukhriddin M. Khusnidinov, (presentation at the conference "Deciphering and Combating Radical Islamist Ideology: Should the War Against Terrorism be Extended to Hizb ut-Tahrir?", Ankara, Turkey, February 21, 2004.)

¹⁷On February 29th, 2004, Muslim Studio's administrator "Ali" announced that the band would not be producing any more albums because band members were getting married and having children and therefore could not devote the time. However, all members were still committed to the *dawa*, and would be working to promote HT's concepts in other ways, such as the creation of a new board game called "The Muslim Challenge" (<http://www.trustislam.com/muslimchallenge.jpg>). The message board will also continue, but can now be found at <http://www.trustislam.com>.

17

LINKS WITH ISLAMIST GROUPS: IDEOLOGY AND OPERATIONS

Rohan Gunaratna

The first point I would like to make is to identify some of the key members of the al-Qaeda organization who formally belong to the HT organization. If I ask for the most well-known al-Qaeda leader who is active today in the international scene, the answer should be Khalid Sheikh Muhammad. And after the capture of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, we have seen the emergence of a number of regional leaders. In Southeast Asia, the key player was a man named Hambali, also known as Isamuddin Riduan. Today, the key player of al-Qaeda in the Levant is a man named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian and a member of Jordanian HT. If one looks at the al-Qaeda organization in Iraq, it is operating through an associate group called Ansar al-Islam. Ansar al-Islam grew out of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan, an organization that was formed immediately after Saddam Hussein carried out the Halabja attacks. I examined 251 videotapes that were recovered from Osama bin Laden's personal archive in Afghanistan. Out of this collection, two videos came from the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan, which show that this movement clearly evolved into the Ansar al-Islam. Of this group, again, al-Zarqawi is the key player; he also holds a crucial position in the al-Tawhid organization. The other leaders of the al-Tawhid organization in Germany were former members of HT. If you also look at some of the leaders in London, of the al-Mujahiroun organization, many were previously members of HT, including Omar al-Bakri. So you can see that the upper echelons of organizations of key interest to us, operating at a violent, extremist, radical level, consist of former members of HT.

In Afghanistan, al-Zarqawi was in the camp at Herat, and he moved across Iran into Kurdistan soon after the coalition began to attack Afghanistan in 2001. He brought 200 people with him, some of whom, members of HT, had become close allies of al-Zarqawi. This is but one example of the radicalization of HT contributing to the growth of these other dangerous groups.

Let me quickly go back to the origins of al-Qaeda. It was founded in 1988, at which time was written a seminal document—translated by some of those present in today’s audience—the founding charter, or Al-Qaeda Al-Sulbah. This charter was written by Abdullah Azzam, and what we are seeing is that al-Qaeda in its early stage did not engage directly in violence. Its main goal was to support the disparate campaigns that were occurring in Algeria, Chechnya, Kashmir and Mindanao. Additionally, it wanted to support nascent movements in Egypt and Jordan that were trying to create an Islamic state. So al-Qaeda began as a support organization and only gradually developed the ability to conduct strike operations of its own.

Osama bin Laden himself clearly explained the three phases of al-Qaeda. The first is to create Islamic states. The second is to attack Western targets, because as Bin Laden explained, the attempt to create Islamic states in the Middle East became very expensive. As a result of such failed attempts, members were arrested, along with their mothers, grandmothers and daughters too. They were humiliated, and their property was seized. Bin Laden declared that it was pointless to fight the corrupt Islamic regimes and their rulers. “We will instead attack the poisonous snake’s head, the United States, which is shielding and corrupting these Muslim rulers”, he said. This was the principal trajectory of al-Qaeda attacks, starting in August 1998 with the East Africa bombings, the attack on the USS *Cole* in 2000 and of course the events of September 11, al-Qaeda’s watershed operation. Today we are seeing the third phase, in which there has not been an attack by al-Qaeda in North America, Western Europe or Australia, the white countries of the world. Why?

First, the absence of attacks in the West is due to unprecedented intelligence and security cooperation. Prior to 9/11, less than 5 percent of intelligence was shared between enforcement agencies. Today, intelligence sharing is much improved, especially among Western, Middle Eastern and Asian countries. The second factor is heightened public vigilance. As long as this exists, it will be very difficult for terrorists. For example, what prevented Richard Reid, the would-be shoe bomber, from carrying out his plan was the alertness of his fellow passengers. The third is that the West has changed its model for fighting terrorism. Before, Westerners followed the “fisherman” model: waiting to strike back. Today, they are hunters.

So as long as this heightened cooperation, awareness and willingness to strike back continues, the West will not be attacked. But America’s allies and its friends will be attacked in Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus, where HT continues to operate. The region where we have

recently established a center for the study of terrorism (in Singapore), has just seen the discovery of HT cells. These cells closely cooperated with others in Malaysia and in the United Kingdom. HT organizations in the Philippines also link with counterparts in Britain.

Indeed, after the recent crackdown on HT in Jordan, the organization regrouped in three areas: Britain, Germany and Central Asia. Such resilience has been a continuous factor throughout the evolution of this organization. Of course, al-Qaeda has been able to recruit from a multitude of groups while itself remaining quite small: Interrogation reports of al-Qaeda detainees indicate that the group's total strength is between 3,000 and 4,000. However, since al-Qaeda was given permission by the Taliban to run training camps in Afghanistan after 1998, its footprint became larger. We have seen al-Qaeda training 70,000 members from forty different groups from around the world, ranging from the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front), to Abu Sayyaf, Lashkar Jumdula, and Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia, two groups in Myanmar, a group in Malaysia called the KMM, al-Ansar Mujaheddin in Chechnya, Ansar al-Islam in Iraq, the GSPC in Algeria and the Libyan Islamic Fighters Group.

Al-Qaeda brought all of these groups together under one umbrella called the World Islamic Front for Waging Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders, created in February of 1998. Only a few of the signatories of this framework were publicized. Now a number of organizations are taking up the mandate of al-Qaeda, even though al-Qaeda itself is extremely weak. Today, al-Qaeda strength is under 500. But in its place we have seen Jemaah Islamiyah carrying out the Bali attack. We have seen a group in Yemen attacking the French supertanker *Limburg*. We have seen the al-Qaeda leader al-Harun working with groups in Somalia to mount the attacks against Israel in Mombasa.

After October 2001, there has been a dispersal and diffusion of al-Qaeda members from their core in Afghanistan and Pakistan, into these lawless zones of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus.

18

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Ümit Özdamar

While it is true that we have a series of “problems” in Turkey that pose threats to our constitutional order, HT is not among them. I met with several leading personalities from HT’s Turkish branch and was friends with Ercümed Özkan, former vice-emir of HT in Turkey. I even invited him to one of my PhD courses to deliver a lecture about political Islam in Turkey. But as Reuven Paz has pointed out, the intellectual level of Hizb ut-Tahrir literature is far from being mature. It is very low in quality indeed, and has no chance to receive serious support from the conservative strata of Turkish society. Although HT has increased its activities worldwide in the last several years, the organization still does not pose any threat to Turkey.

On the other hand, it concerns me that HT is becoming more and more active in Central Asia. It is actively recruiting young men and gathering support from different groups in society. I thus believe that we should concentrate more on HT activities in the region. To HT leaders, Central Asia is a productive, fruitful and very convenient place for rapid expansion. In the period following Soviet collapse, Central Asian countries had neither enough experience nor the means to tackle radical Islamic movements. However, that is now changing. Islamic radicalism still does not compete well within Muslim countries in the region. That was, in fact, how HT was dissolved and isolated in a number of Muslim countries, including Turkey: through tough and traditional competition. We are also faced with the dilemma of determining the amount of pressure to apply to Islamic movements. Too much pressure can serve to unify them against their common enemy, secular regimes.

As one of the writers very rightfully stressed, it has been a major problem for the intellectuals of Muslim societies all over the world to answer the following types of questions: What to do? What should be done to make Muslims better educated, progressive and wealthy again? From the times of Cemaleddin Afgani to Iqbal, and from Gaspirali to Seyyit Kutup, several answers have been produced. One answer, representing a nationalist approach, was the Kemalist Revolution in Turkey; another answer is provided by radical movements like Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Throughout this conference report we have analyzed a wide range of approaches to answering HT's challenge. We heard from representatives both of governments and human rights groups. We have examined the cyber-politics of radical Islamic movements and field research. We have developed a very colorful (and, I should confess, ambitious) program. I believe that our modest conference will help scholars of political Islam better understand Hizb ut-Tahrir.

19

TERRORISM AND THE FUTURE OF ISLAM

Amb. Murat Bilhan

I am heartened by the sincere intellectual effort that is being devoted to the understanding of radicalism, violence and terrorism. This issue is one that lends itself easily to gross and inaccurate generalizations. I therefore commend the effort by The Nixon Center, the Ethics and Public Policy Center and ASAM, which have brought together such a distinguished collection of participants who can address these issues with authority.

I wish to share with you my perspective on the non-military aspects of the fight against terrorism. Given that the specific topic of Hizb ut-Tahrir was covered by the many experts in this symposium, I will instead address to the nature and purposes of terror as an illegitimate, blatantly inhumane employment of violence for political purposes.

First, the fact remains that much of the dominant scholarship concentrating on the analysis of Islamic societies, particularly on the role of Islam in the creation of radical groups, is of Western origin. It is important that this imbalance be overcome as much as possible, so that this field of study can benefit from scholars who come from Islamic societies. This conference is a good example of measures that can be taken to remedy this academic shortcoming.

Second, the search for ways to deal with the factors that help give rise to terrorism cannot be disconnected from efforts to understand violence *per se*. Consequently, the study of terrorism needs to be supported by multidisciplinary approaches, particularly those focusing on the psychological and socio-economic contexts of terrorism. Moreover, notwithstanding the inhumanity of its methods, terrorism should not be treated merely as a pathological expression. It should be subject to rational analysis. Terror organizations use strategies which are, first and foremost, designed to achieve political ends. We therefore cannot afford to treat terrorism as a mere psychological abnormality and thus shy away from our responsibility to fully combat it.

Third, terrorism has the potential to be utilized as a strategy by people of different ideologies, systems of belief, and ethnic or religious groups. Indeed, this has been the case in mankind's recent history. Islamic fundamentalism is only one source of terrorist activity. Violent fundamentalism has existed among adherents to different beliefs and ideologies, including the three great monotheistic religions. The question thus arises: What are the catalytic factors that trigger fundamentalist movements to resort to violence? The relevance of this question also points to the difficulty of trying to deal with terrorism by simplistically associating it with a specific region, society or religion.

As a way to follow up on the last question I raised, let me turn now to my view of the larger problems that prevail in the countries to the east of Turkey: underdevelopment, instability, conflict and terrorism—and how we can start to overcome these predicaments.

The good news is that there is a growing recognition within the broader Middle East that change is necessary and desirable. In our contacts with countries in the region, whether bilateral or multilateral (such as at the Organization of the Islamic Conference, or OIC) we are openly emphasizing the need to address the issues that constrain the region's political, economic and social development. We gladly observe that we are not alone in calling for change. The OIC, for instance, is an important organization in which this discussion is gaining ground. However, we need to be patient and supportive.

With the pressures of globalization mounting, especially in societies which have yet to come to terms with this inescapable process, Muslim countries must take full advantage of their intellectual wealth in trying to find their own solutions to their problems. As we explain to our Islamic counterparts, this human potential can best be tapped when freedom, tolerance and mutual respect come together in a democratic environment in which human rights are protected and the rule of law and good governance gain strength. In the same vein, we are pointing to the fact that transparency, accountability and gender equality contribute to the common good and thus make regimes stronger in the long run.

Radicalism will probably always exist within the social cosmos. Yet as societal groups start breathing the air of democracy, they gradually become shareholders and eventually protectors of a free system of government. It is important to facilitate the mechanisms that will eventually result not only in economic benefits, but also in political and social enhancements to the lives of the populations as a whole. Participatory and non-discriminatory structures enhance democratic socialization and create a sense of ownership of and responsibility

towards a political system. In such an environment, economic activity becomes more rational and public services become more efficient. This is not an easy task, for it is also related to state-society relations. Yet change is possible and change will come, albeit gradually varying speeds. Turkey has been following such a path with success.

Turkey's democratization has been a self-imposed process. In other words, it is the result of the free choice of the Turkish society. I do not claim, of course, that Turkey's experience is a model that can be implemented identically in other Muslim countries. However, the essence of the Turkish experience can serve as a source of inspiration. Muslim countries have first to count on themselves to find solutions to their own problems. It is for each country to determine for itself precisely what is to be done, as well as how it is to be accomplished. The time to make decisions has come. Muslim societies cannot solve their problems by blaming outside forces. It is true that external factors have had an adverse effect on these societies, but that is another topic of discussion.

One basic element of my argument is that Islam and modernization are not competing concepts. But there are people in both the West and the Middle East who are deceived by this fallacy. Intellectuals, politicians and public opinion makers in all societies must assume responsibility for preventing such a misunderstanding. The Turkish experience in political, economic and social development demonstrates that it is perfectly possible to enjoy societal advances in all fields without eliminating the important role of Islam in people's lives.

Turkey has also benefited significantly from its historical relationship with the West. An interactive and mutually rewarding relationship with other societies has been a major tenet of Turkish political culture that does not *a priori* assume an anti-Western attitude. The Muslim identity of Turkey's population has not prevented it from enjoying deep and meaningful interaction with the West in general and Europe in particular. Nor has it prevented Turkey from becoming an effective member of European institutions and organizations. The successful conclusion of Turkey's accession process to the European Union will represent a higher degree of integration and harmonization of a Muslim society with the peoples of Europe on the basis of commonly shared universal and democratic values. The opening of accession negotiations with Brussels, which will hopefully occur by early next year, will send a strong message. This will also demonstrate that inclusiveness can prevail over exclusivity, strengthening the European case for the universal applicability of the values it advocates.

Yet even for Turkey it has been at times difficult to deal with the ambivalent and prejudicial approach that often has characterized the attitude of the West. It is understandably difficult for many Muslim societies today to cast aside the prevailing mistrust of the West. Therefore, a move to remedy this lack of confidence is a precondition for forging cooperation that can bring about meaningful and sincere exchange. Even if not intended, the body language which Westerners exhibit in their dealings with those whom they see as non-Western all too frequently reflects prejudicial attitudes and double standards. These do not go unnoticed among the elites or the masses in non-Western societies. The developed world needs to recognize that political, economic and social opportunities they take for granted in their own societies are also needed in other societies. As we raise this issue in contacts with our Western partners, we are encouraged to see that this weakness is increasingly being recognized. Failure to build confidence between the two sides will detract from international efforts to help solve problems in the region.

Encouraging change in the Greater Middle East and beyond requires a realistic and enlightened approach. Turkey envisions a more democratic, free and peaceful Middle East to be brought about by a gradual, non-coercive collective effort. In the same vein, a widened local ownership of such an effort will improve its prospects for success. This will also mitigate resistance that will surely arise if a perception of "imposition from outside" is created.

Our wishes for the Middle East and the Muslim world at large are, in a sense, a reflection of the need to close the gap between the developed and developing world, both in economic and political terms, as a means to support world peace. To attain this long-term goal, the first steps taken must include a mechanism for a better understanding and dialogue between civilizations.

I believe that we should all increase cross-cultural skills, consider diversity as an asset and develop a sense of empathy. If we make it possible for societies to understand each other better, we will be able to weaken the plots of radical groups which use existing prejudices and deceptive generalizations for their political aims.

Two of Turkey's comparative advantages in assisting in the development of the Middle East are its cultural familiarity with the region and the lessons learned from the problems encountered with its own process of modernization. Besides its possible contributions to the political and security sphere, Turkey also has relevant experience in issues of family relations, gender equality (particularly the role of women in rural

societies), mass education, socio-economic development, regional development programs and so on. Turkey feels a responsibility to assist those in our regional and cultural neighborhood. This is also what our national interest requires—a prosperous and peaceful region. We offer our help with openness, and I believe that our intention is being well received.

A way forward could be to try to forge multilateral frameworks in the region, and at the same time, benefit from the support that may come from the international community. Turkey is aware that the region lacks experience in cooperative arrangements. But, especially in its relations with the West, Turkey is quite experienced in comprehensive collective schemes in the economic, political and security realms. We know that when common interests are recognized and political will is shown, enhanced cooperation becomes feasible and desirable.

As a partner of major Western institutions, Turkey is aware that there is a sincere intention to assist our part of the world. Countries in the region must be ready to do their share as well. Turkey is determined to play a constructive role in building synergy directed to this end. The stakes are too high for us to become complacent. We need to stand firm in action against terrorism and urgently address regional problems. The cost of failure will be borne by future generations. We cannot escape this responsibility.

I would like to conclude by extending my gratitude once again to the organizers and the participants of this symposium. The careful consideration of questions which have relevance to terrorism through such enlightened discussions constitutes one of the primary building blocks for a better understanding between Muslim and non-Islamic societies.