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**CE ‘FITNA’ CONTINUES: Power Struggle, Schism, and the Killing of CE *Qadi* and Dagestan Amir Seifullah Gubdenskii**

On August 10<sup>th</sup> Nokchicho (Chechnya) Vilaiyat amir ‘Mansur’ Hussein Gakaev, naib of CE amir Umarov Aslambek Vadalov, Arab Al Qa’ida emissary and Arab Jordanian national Abu Anas Muhannad, and amir of Chechnya’s Southwestern Front Tarkhan Gaziev, standing with some 20 other presumed amirs of Chechnya/Nokchicho Vilaiyat behind them, declared in a poor quality video that the mujahedin of the Chechnya/Nokchicho Vilaiyat were renouncing their bayat to CE amir Abu Usman Dokku Umarov and were no longer subordinated to him. An introduction delivered by an unidentified mujahed holding the camera videotaping the statement said that the amirs of

Chechnya/Nokchicho Vilaiyat had convened in a madzhlisul shura to discuss the ongoing situation, implying the recent ruckus over Umarov's recent resignation and quick retraction of his resignation a day later.<sup>1</sup>

The four amirs sat in front of some 20 other mujahedin, presumably the amirs who participated in the shura. The first person to speak before the camera was Nokchicho amir Gakaev, who stated they were issuing this announcement in the name of the Chechen/Nokchicho Vilaiyat mujahedin to all the mujahedin waging jihad in the Caucasus. Gakaev noted Umarov had made "numerous mistakes" which they had tried to bring to his attention and criticized him for resigning his post and then reversing that decision after what he called a madzhlisul shura had adjourned and the amirs had dispersed, saying that if Umarov had to do this then at least he should have brought in a new team. This suggests that perhaps a part of the problem may consist of a dispute between these four Chechen amirs and another group of leading amirs close to Umarov, perhaps Chechens, perhaps the Dagestan and OVKBK amirs, Seifullah Gubdenskii and Asker Dzhappuev, respectively, perhaps others. This could point the way to a possible compromise by way of a return to the status quo either before the appointments of Vadalov and Gakaev or before Umarov's resignation.<sup>2</sup>

Gakaev announced that, therefore, they had come to the conclusion that they had no choice but to retract their bayat to Umarov; an act effective that day, August 10, 2010. He stressed that the Chechen/Nokchicho mujahedin were not leaving from the Caucasus Emirate, and if, "Allah willing", tomorrow or after a month the mujahedin of the other vilaiyats realize their mistake in remaining loyal to Umarov and join the Nokchicho amirs in selecting a new CE amir, then, Gakaev offered, they will be able to go forward together. He told the mujahedin of the other vilaiyats under the CE (the republics of the North Caucasus), all of which at present remain loyal to Umarov, that they were the Chechen mujahedin's "brothers."<sup>3</sup>

For his part, Vadalov introduced himself as naib of the CE, a post he was relieved of by Umarov after the resignation reversal scandal broke out, and then declared he was relieving himself of this authority (*slozhil s sebya polnomochiya*). Muhannad and Gaziev did not speak.<sup>4</sup>

The video statement of the four plus some twenty Chechen amirs marked an official split with the CE's ranks. It remains to be seen whether the four will be able to bring with them all of Chechnya's amirs and mujahedin, attract any of the non-Chechens

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<sup>1</sup> "Ichkeria Info Video: Zayavlenie modzhakhedov Ichkerii ot 10 avgusta 2010," *You Tube*, accessed 15 August 2010, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player_embedded).

<sup>2</sup> "Ichkeria Info Video: Zayavlenie modzhakhedov Ichkerii ot 10 avgusta 2010," *You Tube*, accessed 15 August 2010, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player_embedded).

<sup>3</sup> "Ichkeria Info Video: Zayavlenie modzhakhedov Ichkerii ot 10 avgusta 2010," *You Tube*, accessed 15 August 2010, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player_embedded).

<sup>4</sup> "Ichkeria Info Video: Zayavlenie modzhakhedov Ichkerii ot 10 avgusta 2010," *You Tube*, accessed 15 August 2010, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyUX4zf8tAQ&feature=player_embedded).

to their camp, and perhaps force a CE Madzhlisul Shura to resolve the dispute and Umarov's fate.

In response to the video of the Chechen amirs' rejection of their bayat to Umarov, Dagestani amir and CE qadi Gubdenskii issued an "audio declaration" posted on August 14<sup>th</sup> on the website of CE's Dagestani mujahedin. He appealed to the Caucasus's Muslims to refrain from hasty decisions regarding these events, promising that the issue would be resolved soon in accordance with the Koran and Sunna. Citing first from the Koran and Sunna, Gubdenskii then addressed the Chechen four by name, telling them that even if their criticism of Umarov was correct, they did not have the right, according to Shariah law, "to violate a bayat to the Amir." He challenged them regarding what sections of the Koran or Sunna they had based their step on. Revealing perhaps that the Chechen mujahedin had no qadi, he asked: "Who do you have as Qadi in Nokchicho Vilaiyat?" He asked if Muhannad had influenced them in taking this action, said he did not want to discuss "all of, mildly speaking, Muhannad's violations," and appealed to him and the others to resolve the dispute according to the Koran and Sunna by appearing before the CE's "Supreme Court, where there will be Majlis of Scholars." He added that if Umarov preferred a different place (other than presumably Dagestan) to convene he was ready to go to anywhere in the CE. Referring to their acquaintanceship along with Amir Daud made in winter 2003-04 in the Endirei Forest when Vadalov was amir in Ichshkhei-Yurt, he appealed to Vadalov personally and far more positively than he did to Muhannad: "On that side of the Chechen border they know you as a good Muslim who adheres to the Koran and Sunna. Renew the bayat, having put Allah's religion in first place and relegating all personal offenses to the secondary level, so you become a cause for unity and victory and not for schism and chaos."<sup>5</sup> With this, his second appeal during the schism crisis, Gubdenskii was clearly attempting to play the kind of mediating role that might be expected of a Shariah magistrate; the qadi was nudging matters towards negotiation in order to patch up a schism that could seriously damage the CE.

Signs of support for Umarov continued to come in during the following days from both the Dagestan Vilaiyat and the OVKBK mujahedin. Days after Gubdenskii's appeal, the mujahedin of Makhachkala (aka Shamilkala among the CE) Sector of the Dagestan Vilaiyat reaffirmed their bayat to Umarov in a posting signed by their apparent amir Ibn Abbas.<sup>6</sup> A day later a theological posting from a mujahed named Yakub from Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria (considered part of the OVKBK by the CE) urged Muslims to reject "fitna" (Arabic for 'schism', 'chaos' and 'upheaval') and "muster patience and wait for the decision of the CE Amir and CE Qadi."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Povinuities' Allakhu i ego Poslanniku i ne prepiraites', a ne to Vy upadete dukhom i lishites' sil'," *Jamaat Shariat*, 14 August 2010, 23:47, <http://jamaatshariat.com/ru/-mainmenu-29/14-facty/1118--l-r.html>.

<sup>6</sup> "Mudzhakhedy Shamil'kalinnskogo sektora DF VS IK: 'My verny prisyage Amiru Abu Usmanu!'," *Jamaat Shariat*, 17.08.10 20:59, [www.jamaatshariat.com/-mainmenu-29/14-facty/1128-2010-08-17-20-00-57.html](http://www.jamaatshariat.com/-mainmenu-29/14-facty/1128-2010-08-17-20-00-57.html) and *Kavkaz tsestr*, 18 August 2010, 10:57, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/08/18/74627.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/08/18/74627.shtml).

<sup>7</sup> "O Fitne," *Islamdin.com*, 18.08.2010 13:04, [www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=886:2010-08-18-13-09-20&catid=27:2009-02-09-17-38-17&Itemid=16](http://www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=886:2010-08-18-13-09-20&catid=27:2009-02-09-17-38-17&Itemid=16) and "O Fitne v Imarate Kavkaz," *Kavkaz tsestr*, 19 August 2010, 00:47, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/08/19/74646.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/08/19/74646.shtml).

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> a new *denouement* in the crisis over the schism was reached when the Dagestan Vilaiyat confirmed that CE qadi Gubdenskii had been killed along with his naib Salakhuddin Zakaryaev (the 17-year old son of another Dagestan amir Abdulgufar), a mujahed named Saadullah and his wife by security forces in Gunib, Dagestan. Although this left the CE without a qadi and the Dagestan Viliyat without an amir or naib, the Dagestan mujahedin expressed “pride” in the fact that their amir had died “like a man” in battle during the month of Ramadan, pledged to “continue to destroy infidels and apostates” and warned chillingly: “An even more daring amir will come to take amir Seifullah’s place. There will even more daring operations which will leave you in shock and trembling. There will operations of revenge against you in Moscow. There will be mujahedin operations in Sochi and across Russia and more ‘surprises’ from the horror of which you will blacken.” The posting was signed by Muhammad Sayid from the Press Service of Amir of the DV; Sayid is likely a key Dagestani mujahedin ideologist.<sup>8</sup>

The bravado aside, Gubdenskii’s demise obviously comes at the worst possible time for the CE when it is experiencing an acute crisis of disunity and when Gubdenskii seemed the best hope for a resolution of the schism and the main pillar of amir Umarov’s authority. On the other hand, if Gubdenskii was part of the conflict that sparked the power struggle and resulting schism, then the CE may be able to patch up matters. The fact that both the Chechen four’s statement and Gubdenskii’s statement seemed to leave room for convening to find a compromise suggests that the CE’s unity may still be salvageable. A consensual removal of Umarov from his position of amir is one way out of the crisis, and this perhaps becomes more likely given the removal from the scene of his key supporter, Gubdenskii. However, if some sort of subterfuge involving the Chechen faction helped lead to Gubdenskii’s demise, then the schism will deepen. In short, it remains uncertain whether the leadership schism will permanently damage or substantially affect the highly decentralized CE and its jihad in Russia’s North Caucasus.

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## **FROM THE FERGHANA VALLEY TO WAZIRISTAN AND BEYOND: The Role of Uzbek Islamic Extremists in the Civil Wars of Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan**

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### ***Abstract***

Uzbek proponents of Islamic extremism have played an important role as foreign participants in the civil wars of Tajikistan and Afghanistan and the present conflict between Pakistani Taliban and security forces in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Their close links to international jihadist networks such as the Al-Qaida and, at times, considerable

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<sup>8</sup> “Press-Sluzhba Amira DF: My gordy uchasti nashikh brat’ev, nashi ubityie – v Rayu, vashi – c Adu,” *Jamaat Shariat*, 22 August 2010, 17:53, <http://jamaatshariat.com/-mainmenu-29/14-facty/1152-2010-08-22-17-00-31.html>.

income from sources outside the region have ensured a continued trickle of new recruits ready to carry on militant activities. At present, recruits arrive even from Europe to fight for Uzbek-led organisations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). Being regarded as a persistent and serious terrorist threat in Central Asia and elsewhere, the activities of Uzbek extremists have been central to the retention, and even strengthening, of authoritarianism within the Central Asian state structures, thereby directly preventing these states from acquiring any increased level of democracy and popular legitimacy. This paper examines the activities of Uzbek Islamic extremists since about 1990 and the impact they have had in the countries where they acquired bases and influence. In effect, the role played by Uzbek Islamic extremists is a study in the globalisation of terrorism.

### **The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan—Origins of the Movement**

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), or *O'zbekiston Islomiy Harakati* as it is known locally (*Harakat ul-Islamiyyah* in Arabic),<sup>9</sup> had its origin in the Islamic movement called *Adolat* (“Justice”), a faction of a larger group known as *Islom lashkarlari* (“Islamic Warriors”), which arose in the city of Namangan in the Uzbekistani part of the Ferghana valley in about 1990 as a response to what was perceived as widespread corruption and social injustice exposed by the liberal perestroika era as well as the resurgence in Islamic activities no longer prohibited by the Soviet government. The movement was reportedly founded, or at least inspired, by Abdulkhokim Qori. Supported by men such as Obidkhon Qori Nazarov from Tashkent, and Umarkhon Domla and Davudkhon Qori from Namangan, who also contributed funds from their mosques, the movement grew rapidly.

However, funded by sources in Saudi Arabia and therefore yet more radicalized by Wahhabism, the movement became led by two young men: the college drop-out and local mullah Tohir Yo'ldosh and the former conscript soldier Jumaboy Hojiyev (later known as Juma Namangani or, at times, Tojiboy). In January 1990, Yo'ldosh renamed the movement *Islom adolati* (“Islamic Justice”) and introduced the taking of an oath of allegiance (*bayah*) by its members, promising to introduce Islamic law in first Namangan, then the rest of Uzbekistan. In the same year, the movement built the first of several mosques and madrasahs. Of the various centres, Yo'ldosh operated out of the Otavalkhon mosque in Namangan. From November 1991 to the spring of 1992, the movement, which primarily consisted of unemployed young men, perhaps as many as five thousand altogether although other reports indicate numbers ranging from three to five hundred active members only, went on to organise protest meetings and occupy government buildings. The movement formed its own vigilante religious police force, the most militant of which became known as *yurishlar* (“conquerors”), which administered summary justice in the streets. Each member was paid a salary from mosque funds as well as taxes imposed on local traders. In April 1991, President Karimov, arriving to talk

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<sup>9</sup> The movement's web site, [www.furqon.com](http://www.furqon.com); International Crisis Group (ICG), *Central Asia: Islamist Mobilisation and Regional Security* (Osh/Brussels: ICG Asia Report 14, 1 March 2001), 4. The present report is an updated and expanded version of the chapters on the IMU and IJU in Michael Fredholm, *Islamic Extremism as a Political Force in Central Asia: A Comparative Study of Central Asian Extremist Movements* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, Asian Cultures and Modernity 12, October 2006).

to the militants, was shouted down. Tohir Yo'ldosh even grabbed the microphone from the president's hands, shouting "No! Now and here, I'm the ruler! You can talk only when I allow you! Now, shut up and listen!" In December 1991, militants occupied the headquarters of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (CPU) in Namangan. Among many demands, they demanded that the government immediately proclaim the establishment of an Islamic state, use Islamic law as the only legal system, cease to orient the country towards Turkey, and introduce separate schools for boys and girls. They also began to refer to themselves as *mujohidlar* (mujahidin). Yo'ldosh assumed the title *bosh amir* ("commander-in-chief"). Branches of Adolat rose across the Ferghana valley, in Andijon, Margilan, Kuva, Farghona, and Osh (in Kyrgyzstan).<sup>10</sup>

Tohir (or Tohirjon) Abduhalilovich Yo'ldosh (also known in Russian as Tahir Yuldashev and in Arabic as Muhammad Tahir Farooq (Farukh in Russian), was born in 1967 in Namangan.<sup>11</sup> His father died when he was five, and he was brought up by his mother, Karomat Asqarova.<sup>12</sup> An early member of the Uzbekistani branch of the All-Union Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), founded in Astrakhan in June 1990, he had grown disillusioned with this party's refusal to demand an Islamic state. Together with other likeminded young Uzbeks, Yo'ldosh formed Adolat as a platform for his demand for an Islamic revolution.<sup>13</sup>

Jumaboy Ahmadjonovich Hojiyev, an ethnic Uzbek born in 1967 in Namangan, graduated from agricultural vocational school before he was drafted into the Soviet army in 1987. He reportedly served as an airborne soldier in Afghanistan during the last phase of the Soviet war there, eventually becoming promoted to sergeant, unless the elite airborne episode too is part of the myth that soon grew around his person. He is said to have become interested in Islam during his term in Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> On the origin of the movement, see Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 93-4; William Fierman, "Political Development in Uzbekistan: Democratization?" Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (eds), *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 360-408, on 382; Bakhtiar Babadzhanov [Babajanov], "Islam in Uzbekistan: From the Struggle for 'Religious Purity' to Political Activism," Boris Rumer (ed), *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 299-330, on 315-16, 328 n.55; Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 137-40; Vitaly V. Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 66-7; Bahtijar Babadzhanov [Babajanov], "Le jihad comme idéologie de l'Autre et de l'Exilé à travers l'étude de documents du Mouvement islamique d'Ouzbekistan," *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 15/16 (2007), 141-66. The words of Yo'ldosh are translated from Babadzhanov, 150.

<sup>11</sup> Yo'ldosh was born on 2 October 1967. Official records, Uzbekistan; Interpol web site, [www.interpol.int](http://www.interpol.int).

<sup>12</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 146. She publicly disowned her son in 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 138-9; Ahmed Rashid, "Heart of Darkness," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 August 1999, 8-12; Ahmed Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1999, 22-35; Ahmed Rashid, "From Deobandism to Batken: Adventures of an Islamic Heritage," CACI Forum Transcription, 13 April 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Orozbek Moldaliev, "An Incongruous War in the Valley of Poison: The Religious Conflict in Southern Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 1, 2000, 11-20; Rashid, "From Deobandism to Batken;" *Washington Post*, 10 November 2001; Rashid, *Jihad*, 137-8. Some

Although the term Wahhabism was unknown among most government leaders at this early stage, it was clear to them that Adolat was beyond their control. Adolat was banned in March 1992, and the Uzbekistani government restored order, dissolving the movement. Several Adolat leaders, including Yo'ldosh and Hojiyev, who now took the name Juma Namangani after his hometown, in 1992 fled to Tajikistan, where they joined the Tajikistani branch of the IRP, which by then was preparing to launch a violent civil war in Tajikistan.<sup>15</sup> There the two young men embarked upon very different careers, although aiming for the same broad goals.

Yo'ldosh began what can only be called a political career. When the civil war moved against the IRPT, he joined the other key IRPT leaders in exile in Afghanistan. He also travelled to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and later to Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and perhaps the Caucasus as well, to make contacts with other radical groups and to request funding from the intelligence services in these countries. Pakistan's Inter-services Intelligence agency (ISI) offered continuous funding and a base in Peshawar. Yo'ldosh remained based there from 1995 to 1998. Yo'ldosh also received funds from various Islamic charities and, according to Russian and Uzbekistani officials, the intelligence services of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. Saudi Arabia contained a large Uzbek diaspora, the ancestors of which had fled there during the 1918-1928 Basmachi revolts against the Soviet power. Being now committed Wahhabis, they eagerly offered their support to Yo'ldosh.<sup>16</sup> The Saudi-trained extremist preacher Abdulahad in Namangan, who had been a disciple of Rahmatullo Qori Alloma, became one of the key supporters of Yo'ldosh.<sup>17</sup> At some point, at the latest 1996, it has been suggested that Yo'ldosh began to refer to his followers as the Islamic Renaissance Party of Uzbekistan.<sup>18</sup>

When Namangani arrived in Qurghonteppa (Kurgan-Tyube), Tajikistan, in 1992, he brought with him some thirty Uzbeks and several Arabs, who had served as emissaries to Adolat from Saudi Islamic charities. These men formed the core of Namangani's force, which within months attracted additional recruits from Uzbekistan, soon totalling some two hundred, as well as additional Arabs out of Afghanistan. Namangani then volunteered the services of his men and himself, as a subordinate commander, to the IRPT-supported United Tajik Opposition (UTO) during the Tajik civil war. The IRPT in its turn attached several Tajiks to Namangani's group and moved the volunteers to a camp in the village of Sangvor in the Tavildara valley, which became Namangani's base after 1993. Namangani, a charismatic leader and tough disciplinarian although somewhat

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report his year of birth as 1968. Other reports indicate that Hojiyev was born in 1967 (Vitaly V. Naumkin, *Militant Islam in Central Asia: The Case of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Working Paper, 2003), 22) or 1969 (Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, 68). He reportedly returned from Afghanistan in 1988, which would seem to suggest the earlier year as his year of birth. Hojiyev was later publicly disowned by his sister Makhbuba Ahmedova and his brother Nasyr Hojiyev (both arrested in 2000). Soon after, so did his mother. Rashid, *Jihad*, 147.

<sup>15</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 140.

<sup>16</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 138-41, 148.

<sup>17</sup> Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, "Uzbekistan: Center of Confrontation Between Traditional and Extremist Islam in Central Asia" (Washington, DC: The Nixon Center, presentation, 16 July 2003).

<sup>18</sup> Babadžanov, "Le jihad comme idéologie," 162 n.1.

erratic, temperamental, and authoritarian, was a useful field commander to the UTO. He also made several valuable friends within the IRPT: Hakim Kalindarov, who led the Tavildara groups together with Namangani, and most importantly, Mirzo Zioyev, the IRPT's army chief of staff from 1996 and thereby Namangani's direct superior. Zioyev was the nephew of Said Abdullo Nuri, then head of the IRPT, and after the civil war became minister of emergency situations in the new coalition government. As for Namangani, he learnt some Tajik and married an Uzbek woman, with whom he got a daughter (in early 2001, Namangani also married a Tajik widow with two sons whose husband, an IRPT member, had been killed in the Tajik civil war and accordingly was regarded as a martyr; Namangani's Uzbek wife and daughter were then in Afghanistan<sup>19</sup>). He also occasionally travelled to Afghanistan to meet the IRPT political leadership.<sup>20</sup>

After the Tajik civil war ended in 1997, Namangani at first refused to accept the end of the jihad against the government. Zioyev finally persuaded him to cease fighting, and Namangani settled his men at his camp in the Tavildara valley. As for himself, he acquired a residence in Hoit, a small village north of Garm in the Karategin valley. He soon appeared to have become heavily involved in the transportation of heroin from Afghanistan to Tajikistan and onwards to Russia and Europe, at times travelling to Afghanistan himself. Namangani also formed a substantial personal military force, mostly Uzbeks but also Arabs, Tajiks, and Chechens. Many of his men were accompanied by their families.<sup>21</sup>

### **Yo'ldosh and Namangani establish the IMU**

In 1997, Yo'ldosh travelled to Hoit to meet his old associate Namangani. Neither was pleased with the end of the jihad. They accordingly agreed to form a new group to continue the jihad against their native country and other states in Central Asia. Some claim that Usamah bin Ladin was the one who urged them to create the group. Be that as it may, it seems clear that Al-Qaida contributed funds to the new movement. Both Yo'ldosh and Namangani certainly favoured Wahhabi Islam and agreed with the anti-Western rhetoric of Usamah bin Ladin. In 1998, Yo'ldosh settled in Afghanistan, in a building offered by the Taliban in Wazir Akbar Khan, the diplomatic quarter of Kabul. He also received a residence in Kandahar. In the summer of 1998, Yo'ldosh and Namangani met in Kabul to formally establish the new group, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the formation of which they announced. Yo'ldosh also pledged to set up an Islamic state. Namangani then returned to Tajikistan. Possibly from among the Wahhabis of Uzbek origin from the Arabian peninsula, they (probably Yo'ldosh) picked Zubayr ibn Abdul Raheem, reputedly a descendant of the Mangit family which formerly ruled Bukhara, as head of the religious leadership of the IMU. The latter on 25 August 1999 issued a declaration of jihad against the governments of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, in which he also proclaimed that foreign tourists coming to Uzbekistan

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<sup>19</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 158.

<sup>20</sup> Moldaliev, "An Incongruous War," 11-20; Rashid, "From Deobandism to Batken;" *Washington Post*, 10 November 2001; Rashid, *Jihad*, 137-8, 141-3. Mirzo Zioyev died in July 2009. After his death, the Tajikistani government accused him and his supporters of narcotics trafficking and the provision of support to the IMU. Two of his sons were sentenced to long prison terms. RFE/RL, 7 July 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 144, 145, 148.

would be attacked. The respective presidential administrations of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan received the declaration of war by fax.<sup>22</sup>

This declaration of jihad deserves to be published in its entirety. It was written in Arabic as follows (a translation will follow below):

{ وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِئْتَةٌ وَتَكُونَ لِلدِّينِ كُلِّهِ قَلْبًا فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ }

يعن أمير الحركة الإسلامية لأوزبكستان (مصدق طاهر فاروق) بدء الجهاد ضد السلطة الغاشمة للقائمة في أوزبكستان المتمثلة في كريموف وزبائية .  
والقيادة إذ تعلن هذا البلاغ لتتبعه وتؤكد على الأمور التالية :  
أولاً: أن هذا الإعلان يأتي بعد موافقة كبار العلماء، وموافقة أجهزة القيادة للحركة الإسلامية .  
ثانياً: أن هذه الموافقة تأتي بناءً على توفر الأدلة الشرعية الدالة على وجوب جهاد هؤلاء الطواغيت وتحرير البلاد والعباد منهم .  
ثالثاً: أن الهدف الأسمى من إعلان الجهاد هو إقامة الدولة الإسلامية وتحكيم الشريعة الإسلامية المعتمدة من القرآن والسنة النبوية الشريفة .  
رابعاً: أن من أهداف إعلان الجهاد أيضاً هو الدفاع عن ديننا الإسلامي في بلادنا مما يتعرض له من انتهاكات، والدفاع عن المسلمين في بلادنا مما يتعرضون له من انتهاك أعراسهم، وسفك دمائهم، واستحلال أموالهم، ومن اغتيال العلماء والمفكرين، والشباب المسلم، واعتقال الكثير منهم وتعذيبهم بشتى أساليب العذاب بدون أي وجه حق، قال تعالى { وَمَا تَقْمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ }، وكذلك إنقاذ المستضعفين وإطلاق سراح حوالي خمسين ألف معتقل من أسر الظالمين، قال تعالى { وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ }، ومن أجل إعادة فتح آلاف المساجد والمدارس الإسلامية التي أغلقتها هذا النظام الظالم .  
خامساً: أن مجاهدي الحركة الإسلامية من ذوي الخبرة في القتال قد أتموا استعداداتهم للقيام بهذا الجهاد المبارك .  
سادساً: أن الحركة الإسلامية تحذر الحكومات المجاورة لأوزبكستان من قيامها بأي دعم أو إسناد لحكومة "طشقند".  
سابعاً: كما تحذر الحركة الإسلامية السياح القادمين إلى هذا البلد وإلا سيئالهم من ضربات المجاهدين .  
ثامناً: أن سبب بدء الجهاد من أرض قرغيزستان هو قيام الحكومة "حكلم بشكوك" باعتقال آلاف من المسلمين الأوزبك الذين هاجروا إلى أرض قرغيزستان ثم تسليمهم إلى زبائية كريموف، قال تعالى { وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ }.  
تاسعاً: أن الحركة الإسلامية متواصل - بمشيئة الله - للجهاد في سبيل الله إلى أن تتحقق جميع أهدافها .  
عاشراً: لا يوجد - مع الأسف - مجاهدون من جنسيات أخرى في صفوفنا حتى الآن .  
حادي عشر: ندعو الحركة الإسلامية حكومة كريموف المتسلطة والحكمة في "طشقند" إلى الاستقالة بدون شروط أو قيود قبل أن تنحل البلاد في دوامة وحرب طاحنة تسبب الدمار للبلاد والقول للعباد، وإلا فهي المسؤولة عن عواقب موافقتها وتصرفاتها .

والله أكبر والعزة للإسلام.  
رئيس الديوان القيادي للحركة الإسلامية لأوزبكستان  
للزبير بن عبد الرحيم  
4 جمادى الأولى 1420 هـ / 25 أغسطس 1999 م .

In the Name of Allah the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful  
A Message from the General Command of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

<sup>22</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 145-8; Zurab Todua, "Kyrgyzstan after Akaev: What Happened and Why, What Next?" *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 3 (33), 2005, 14-22, on 20. There is no firm evidence of the origin of Zubayr ibn Abdul Raheem.

**“And fight them until there is no more fitnah and the religion is all for Allah”**

Al Anfaal : 39

The amir (commander) of the Harakat ul-Islamiyyah (Islamic Movement) of Uzbekistan, Mohammad Tahir Farooq, has announced the start of the Jihad against the tyrannical government of Uzbekistan and the puppet Islam Karimov and his henchmen.

The leadership of the Islamic Movement confirms the following points in the declaration:

1. This declaration comes after agreement by the major ulama and the leadership of the Islamic Movement.
2. This agreement comes based on clear evidence on the obligation of Jihad against the *tawagheet* (infidels) as well as to liberate the land and the people.
3. The primary objective for this declaration of Jihad is the establishment of an Islamic state with the application of the Shar’iah, founded upon the Qur’an and the Noble Prophetic sunnah.
4. Also from amongst the goals of the declaration of jihad is:
  - a. The defence of our religion of Islam in our land against those who oppose Islam.
  - b. The defence of the Muslims in our land from those who humiliate them and spill their blood.
  - c. The defence of the scholars and Muslim youth that are being assassinated, imprisoned and tortured in extreme manners—with no rights given them at all. And the Almighty says:

**“And they had no fault except that they believed in Allah, the All Mighty, Worthy of all praise!”** Al Buruj: 8

- d. Also to secure the release of the weak and oppressed who number some 5,000 in prison, held by the transgressors. The Almighty says:

**“And what is the matter with you that you do not fight in the way of Allah and the weak and oppressed amongst men, women and children”**

An Nisaa: 75

- e. And to re-open the thousands of mosques and Islamic schools that have been closed by the evil government.
5. The Mujahidin of the Islamic Movement, after their experience in warfare, have completed their training and are ready to establish the blessed Jihad.
6. The Islamic Movement warns the Uzbek government in Tashkent from propping up or supporting the fight against the Muslims.
7. The Islamic Movement warns tourists coming to this land that they should keep away, lest they be struck down by the Mujahidin.
8. The reason for the start of the Jihad in Kyrgyzstan is due to the stance of the ruler Askar Akayev of Bishkek, in arresting thousands of Muslim Uzbeks who had migrated as refugees to Kyrgyzstan and were handed over to Karimov’s henchmen.

The Most High says:

**“Verily the oppressors are friends and protectors to one another”**

9. The Islamic Movement shall, by the will of Allah, make Jihad in the cause of Allah to reach all its aims and objectives.
10. It is with regret that Foreign Mujahidin (Al Ansar) as of yet have not entered our ranks.
11. The Islamic Movement invites the ruling government and the Karimov leadership in Tashkent to remove itself from office—unconditionally, before the country enters into a

state of war and destruction of the land and the people. The responsibility for this will lie totally on the shoulders of the government, for which it shall be punished.

Allah is Great and the Honour is for Islam

### **Head of the Religious Leadership of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan**

**Az Zubayr Ibn ‘Abdur Raheem**

4<sup>th</sup> Jumadi Al Awwal 1420 a H

25 August 1999

By the time this declaration of jihad was issued, there is some evidence that the IMU had also attempted, but failed, to set up a centre in Turkmenistan. According to information from the attorney general of Uzbekistan, Yo’ldosh in October 1998 sent two key followers, Zahid Dehkhanov and Bahrom Abdullayev, to Turkmenistan for this purpose. However, the two men were detained and handed over to Uzbekistan.<sup>23</sup> Turkmenistan was then, it should be remembered, anxious to maintain good relations with the Taliban of Afghanistan and their Pakistani sponsors, so Yo’ldosh may conceivably have expected to be able to establish a centre there without trouble from the government.

A series of six car bomb attacks in Uzbekistan’s capital Tashkent had already occurred on 16 February 1999, in what possibly was an attempt on the life of President Karimov. The car bombs killed 16 and injured more than 130 people.<sup>24</sup> In one alleged IMU document from later in the year, the IMU would seem to take responsibility for the attack, although the group denied responsibility in another document.<sup>25</sup> Uzbekistani intelligence accused Yo’ldosh of having organised the attacks from the United Arab Emirates. Uzbekistan consequently applied pressure on Tajikistan to expell Namangani and his men. Namangani, however, in early summer 1999 had left Hoit and moved to his camp in Sangvor in the Tavildara valley, preparing for war. In August 1999 (a date no doubt co-ordinated with the declaration of jihad the same month), he left his Sangvor camp and moved into Kyrgyzstan. Meanwhile, Yo’ldosh dispatched supplies and new recruits provided by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, Pakistan, and various groups in the Arabian peninsula, including the Uzbek diaspora there. Additional funds came from profits in the heroin trade.<sup>26</sup>

In August 1999, Namangani dispatched several small IMU guerrilla groups into Kyrgyzstan towards the Uzbekistani Sukh and the Tajikistani Vorukh enclaves, two regions inside Kyrgyzstan that although physically separated from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan remained part of their territory. On 9 August, a twenty-one-man group

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<sup>23</sup> Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, 80-81.

<sup>24</sup> Neil J. Melvin, *Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 2000), 39, 57; Naumkin, *Militant Islam*, 28-38; Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, 76-87.

<sup>25</sup> Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, 76, 82. Naumkin publishes an abridged translation from Uzbek of the first document, which is signed “The IMU leadership” and concludes that “the government’s continued aggressive policy in relation to the Muslim people may lead to events similar to the explosions in Tashkent.” He also provides a translation of the second document, signed by Yo’ldosh, in which “the IMU declares that there is no link whatsoever between the explosions in Tashkent and the Movement as a whole, nor with a single participant in that Movement.”

<sup>26</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 151-5, 159.

kidnapped the mayor and three officials of a small village west of Osh. The group demanded \$1 million in ransom, supplies, and a helicopter to fly to Afghanistan. On 13 August, the Kyrgyzstani government gave in, granting the guerrillas safe passage back to Tajikistan—and probably a ransom of \$50,000—in exchange for the hostages. This enraged Uzbekistani President Karimov, who retaliated by ordering air raids on the towns of Tavildara and Garm in Tajikistan, where the IMU enjoyed considerable support—an attack vigorously protested against by the Tajikistani government. Other IMU guerrilla groups, approximately 50 to 150 IMU fighters, then moved into the area around Batken in Kyrgyzstan. They briefly occupied three villages and in an amazing coup also kidnapped a major general of the Kyrgyzstani Interior Ministry—the commander of the Interior Forces, no less. On 23 August, the IMU achieved international fame when an IMU group seized seven additional hostages, including four Japanese geologists. In addition, the IMU recruited more men among the local Kyrgyz. The confusion was now considerable, as most observers by then had no idea who the IMU fighters really were, not to mention what they wanted or where they were going. In addition, several Japanese agents and negotiators descended on Kyrgyzstan, a major receiver of Japanese aid, demanding the immediate release of the four geologists. By 4 September, negotiations were somehow opened, apparently through a Pakistani who was a member of the extremist organisation Sipah-e Sahaba (several Pakistanis from the two extremist groups Sipah-e Sahaba and Lashkar-e Jhangvi had by then joined Namangani), although at first without results. The Uzbekistani air force again went into action, this time launching air attacks on the IMU-held villages around Batken and Osh in Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyzstani army launched its own offensive against the guerrillas. This situation continued until 25 October 1999, when the hostages were released, probably in exchange for a ransom of \$2 million to \$6 million (different sources suggest different amounts, probably because some money disappeared on the way to the IMU), paid by Japan to Kyrgyzstani officials, who then handed it (or at least parts of it) over to the IMU. As winter approached, threatening to close the mountain passes through snowfall, the IMU guerrillas prepared to return to Tajikistan.<sup>27</sup>

Under intense pressure from Uzbekistan, senior representatives of the Tajikistani government including Mirzo Zioyev were dispatched to persuade Namangani to leave for Afghanistan. Arriving already before the IMU guerrillas returned, they negotiated with Namangani who soon accepted a Tajikistani government rescue and transportation operation. In the first week of November 1999, some six hundred IMU guerrillas (one-third from Hoit, the rest from Sangvor), together with their families, were flown in Zioyev's ministry of emergency situations transport helicopters from Kyrgyzstan (at least

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<sup>27</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 161-4, 175; Bakhrom Tursunov and Marina Pikulina, *Severe Lessons of Batken* (Camberley, Surrey: Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Conflict Studies Research Centre, 1999). See also International Crisis Group (ICG), *Central Asia: Islamist Mobilisation and Regional Security* (Osh/Brussels: ICG Asia Report 14, 1 March 2001), 7-9; and (although plagued by several errors) International Crisis Group (ICG), *Recent Violence in Central Asia: Causes and Consequences* (Central Asia/Brussels: ICG Central Asia Briefing, 18 October 2000); Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, 89-93. On the Uzbekistani air raids, see also Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia: Common Legacies and Conflicts," Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds), *Central Asian Security: The New International Context* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001), 24-48, on 47 n.31.

the wounded IMU fighters were almost certainly rescued by Zioyev<sup>28</sup>) and Hoit and Sangvor to the Afghanistan border, where they were received by Yo'ldosh and his Taliban protectors. The IMU guerrillas settled down in Mazar-e Sharif, and their dependants were given quarters in an abandoned United Nations refugee camp at Kamsachi (originally set up to house Tajik refugees from Tajikistan), about 15 miles from Mazar-e Sharif, which the IMU had disposed since May 1999. In addition to Mazar-e Sharif, the IMU also opened offices in the residences in Kabul and Kandahar provided by the Taliban to Yo'ldosh.<sup>29</sup> However, having quite independently formed the military wing of the IMU, Namangani became the movement's main military leader, and thereby the most influential IMU leader.

In July 2000, Namangani returned to the Tavildara valley along with several hundred IMU guerrillas. In August, several IMU guerrilla groups, each probably of no greater strength than at most a hundred, but probably more often fifty men, set out in what gave the impression of being a skillfully co-ordinated diversionary offensive in several directions at once. By thus dividing the already poorly co-ordinated enemy forces, Namangani managed to provide security for other IMU groups which probably were smuggling narcotics and weapons into enemy territory. The main fighting group again moved towards Batken, Sukh, and Vorukh in Kyrgyzstan. Another group appears to have remained in Tajikistan, moving through the Zeravshan valley towards Penjikent, where it turned south into the as yet poorly defended Surkhondaryo (Surkhandarya) province of Uzbekistan. There a base was established with some 170 IMU guerrillas, most probably from already established sleeper cells or recent recruits from the local population. Yet another group appears to have gone to Khojand in northern Tajikistan and somehow crossed into Uzbekistan, ultimately taking up positions in the mountains north of Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent. Fighting—and considerable confusion among civilians and government forces—broke out on all three fronts. Namangani had proved himself a master guerrilla leader, able to cause significant mayhem with only a handful of men.<sup>30</sup>

On 12 August 2000, the Batken guerrillas kidnapped first twelve mountaineers of various nationalities, then an additional four specifically American ones. The IMU guerrillas kept the American mountaineers but either abandoned or lost track of the others. The Americans were rescued within days. However, upon their return to the United States, they sold what apparently was a highly embellished account of their heroic struggle against their kidnappers and their escape from the extremists to a major publisher and the movie rights to the tale to Universal Studios. The Clinton administration responded to the media attention (and as noted, the burgeoning Uzbekistani co-operation with the CIA) on 25 September 2000 by declaring the IMU, which it hitherto had barely noticed, a terrorist organisation. By the time the IMU withdrew the surviving guerrillas in late October, and Namangani himself apparently went to Afghanistan, the United States was already flying military supplies and

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<sup>28</sup> Tursunov and Pikulina, *Severe Lessons of Batken*.

<sup>29</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 145, 164-7; Rashid, "Heart of Darkness;" Rashid, "Taliban: Exporting Extremism;" Rashid, "From Deobandism to Batken."

<sup>30</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 167-70. See also ICG, *Central Asia: Islamist Mobilisation*, 7-9; and (although plagued by several errors) ICG, *Recent Violence*. For the narcotics situation, see International Crisis Group (ICG), *Central Asia: Drugs and Conflict* (Osh/Brussels: ICG Asia Report 25, 26 November 2001).

counterinsurgency equipment into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. So did Russia, China, Turkey, France, and Israel.<sup>31</sup>

In late November 2000, Namangani left Afghanistan and returned to Tajikistan with a force of some three hundred guerrillas. Mirzo Zioyev was again dispatched to Tavildara to negotiate Namangani's return to Afghanistan. In January 2001, Namangani and most of his men (a small garrison was left in the Sangvor camp) were again airlifted by Zioyev's government transport helicopters to the Afghan border.<sup>32</sup>

### **IMU Strategy**

Why did the IMU, which wished to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan, for two years in a row instead invade Kyrgyzstan? Two explanations are possible. First, the reason may be found in the geography and in the social situation of the region. The population of Kyrgyzstan includes large numbers of ethnic Uzbeks, and the country, in addition, is located between the areas held by extremists in Tajikistan (the Garm, Jirgatal, and Tavildara districts) and the populous Ferghana valley, shared by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan and one of the suspected targets of the IMU intrusions.<sup>33</sup> Due to the Ferghana valley's large population and its conservative attitudes to Islam, the valley may be the only area in Uzbekistan where Islamic extremists were likely to gain a wide following—and from which they may be able to create an uprising strong enough to make an impact upon the Uzbekistani government.

The Ferghana valley, which saw considerable resistance to Russian forces before their conquest and occupation of the valley in 1876, has a history of violent uprisings. In 1898, peasant unrest in Andijon was used by local religious and secular groups to challenge local administrators as much as Russian control. A new uprising, again partly of a religious character, took place in 1916 in response to the Mobilisation Decree drafting Central Asian men in support of Russia's First World War efforts. This was followed by the 1918-1928 revolt of the Basmachi movement in response to the brutal Soviet suppression of local autonomy. Bloody riots again erupted in June 1989 in the Ferghana valley between ethnic Uzbeks and Meskhetian Turks. The conflict was fundamentally engendered by economic decline. In June 1990, ethnic violence occurred between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the Osh district of Kyrgyzstan's part of the valley. In Osh, a new bout of such ethnic violence followed in June 2010.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 170-73, 258 n.13. For the media attention given to the American hostages, see, e.g., Michael Vig, "The Great Escape: Utah Climber Recalls Six Frightful Days in Kyrgyzstan," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 August 2000. The American mountaineers related their story in Greg Child, *Over the Edge: A True Story of Kidnap and Escape in the Mountains of Central Asia* (London: Judy Piatkus, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 176, 178.

<sup>33</sup> Tursunov and Pikulina, *Severe Lessons of Batken*; Jane's Sentinel: Kyrgyzstan, 31 October 2000. See also International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), "The Fergana Valley: A Magnet for Conflict in Central Asia," *IISS Strategic Comments* 6: 6 (July 2000).

<sup>34</sup> Background: Melvin, *Uzbekistan*, 12-16; Alexandre Bennigsen, *The Soviet Union and Muslim Guerrilla Wars, 1920-1981: Lessons for Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 1981), 1 n.1. 1989 riots: Melvin, *Uzbekistan*, 25, 48; Center for Preventive Action (Nancy Lubin and Barnett R. Rubin), *Calming the Ferghana Valley: Development and Dialogue in the Heart of Central Asia* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 1999), 56. See also Shakhobidin Ziiamov,

In Kyrgyzstan, there are also, as noted, two Uzbekistani enclaves that are geographically separated from (indeed unconnected to) Uzbekistan: Sukh and Shah-e Mardon. The Sukh enclave, with a predominantly Tajik population of some 43,000 people, belongs to Uzbekistan. Favourably disposed to the IRPT during the Tajik civil war, many of these Tajiks subsequently transferred their loyalty to the IMU. The fact that there is no land route between the enclave and the Uzbekistani main territory made conditions favourable for the IMU to occupy a piece of Uzbekistani territory—and a territory in which they could expect to win popular support—in a move the Uzbekistani army could not defeat or even react to except by a risky airlift operation. Another similarly located enclave within Kyrgyzstan is the Vorukh enclave, home of a predominantly Tajik population of some 25,000 people. Vorukh, which belongs to Tajikistan, is another hotbed of Islamic extremism and support for the IMU.<sup>35</sup>

However, another explanation for the IMU raids is equally possible. They were perhaps less connected with the Islamic revolution than attempts to maintain transportation routes for narcotics trafficking. There is an increasing flow of narcotics from and through Kyrgyzstan (drugs from Afghanistan but also locally-produced opiates and marijuana from the Ferghana valley), and Osh has become a particularly important way-station.<sup>36</sup> Since the raids certainly were aimed at geographical objectives in the vicinity of known smuggling routes, this explanation cannot be ruled out. When small groups of raiders engaged the security forces in certain districts, the latter—too thinly stretched to maintain continuous control over the border—certainly left a number of other routes unguarded, thus giving the extremists the opportunity to move large shipments of narcotics through the region.<sup>37</sup> In this way, it also became possible to move weapons, ammunition, and military supplies to IMU sleeper cells in Uzbekistan.<sup>38</sup> Whether such movements actually took place seems to be known only to the IMU leadership. However, fuel and ammunition, not to mention wages to fighters, cost large amounts of cash, especially so if the extremists recruited criminals and former soldiers, which appeared to be the case, and not only inexperienced and uneducated volunteers.<sup>39</sup> The extremists needed money and could not rely only on sympathisers abroad. Distinguishing between political and criminal activities and objectives when discussing the extremist movement may in fact be impossible and may indeed be regarded as irrelevant by the movement's leaders themselves insofar as both were directed against infidels.

### **IMU in the War on Terror**

By early 2001, the IMU had bases in Afghanistan as well as Tajikistan. There also seemed to be substantial numbers of clandestine IMU sleeper cells in Uzbekistan. Yo'ldosh had reportedly formed IMU cells in the Ferghana valley and also in

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“On the 1989 Ethnic Conflict in Uzbekistan,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 6, 2000, 134-8. 1990 riots: Melvin, *Uzbekistan*, 26. 2010 riots: see, e.g., *Economist*, 19 June 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 159-160; International Crisis Group (ICG), *Central Asia: Fault Lines in the New Security Map* (Osh/Brussels: ICG Asia Report 20, 4 July 2001), 13.

<sup>36</sup> Jane's Sentinel: Kyrgyzstan, 31 October 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Tursunov and Pikulina, *Severe Lessons of Batken*; Jane's Sentinel: Kyrgyzstan, 31 October 2000. See also IISS, “Central Asia's Narcotics Industry.”

<sup>38</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 167.

<sup>39</sup> Jessica Stern, “Pakistan's Jihad Culture,” *Foreign Affairs* 79: 6 (2000), 115-126, on 122-3.

Surkhondaryo (Surkhandarya), in southeastern Uzbekistan on the border with Tajikistan.<sup>40</sup> It seems more likely, however, that the latter were formed by Namangani during his stay in the area.

In Afghanistan, the base at Kamsachi was commanded by Tal Udeshev, who escaped from Uzbekistan immediately after the bombings in Tashkent in February 1999 and, after a brief stay in Peshawar, Pakistan, moved there with the blessings of the Taliban. His group consisted of three to four hundred people, including perhaps as many as fifty Uighurs from China.<sup>41</sup> It has been suggested that the Taliban sent diplomatically embarrassing recruits such as Uighurs and Chechens to the IMU when they or their sponsor Pakistan were under pressure from respectively China and Russia to cease their support to such groups. Pakistani extremists wanted by the Pakistani security forces were also quietly dispatched to the IMU.<sup>42</sup> There were also bases in Kunduz, and a large IMU contingent (estimated to be 800 strong) since autumn 2000 formed part of the Taliban garrison in Taloqan.<sup>43</sup>

However, the main military leader of the IMU, and thereby the movement's most influential leader, was clearly Namangani. He was reputed not to get along very well with Udeshev.<sup>44</sup> The total strength of the movement is not known, although it has been estimated that the majority of the so-called Arab Afghans then in Central Asia (at the very most, an estimated 2,000 in Afghanistan and another 2,000 in Tajikistan; probably far less on both accounts as these figures no doubt also included dependants) were in fact IMU members, except perhaps 500 to 1,000 Arabs who served directly under Usamah bin Ladin.<sup>45</sup> In the spring of 2001, an eyewitness reported some four hundred men in Namangani's base at Sangvor in the Tavildara valley. The membership of the IMU predominantly consisted of Uzbeks, and Tajiks from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. There were, however, also believed to be many Kyrgyz as well as ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks from Afghanistan, and some Arabs, Pakistanis, Uighurs, Chechens, and even Slavs.<sup>46</sup> Some reports indicate that the IMU used Russian as a common language.<sup>47</sup> Morale was high, and like Al-Qaida's Arabs, few IMU guerrillas ever surrendered, even when cornered by government troops.<sup>48</sup>

Despite this, the IMU can be distinguished from the Arab Afghans since the movement—at least so far—principally fought the neighbouring governments (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan) and thereby formed a native fighting force rather than the global movement espoused by Usamah bin Ladin. It should, however, be noted that many

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<sup>40</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 141.

<sup>41</sup> Rashid, "Heart of Darkness;" Rashid, "Taliban: Exporting Extremism;" Rashid, "From Deobandism to Batken."

<sup>42</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 175-6.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Namangani's Foray Causes Concern Among Central Asian Governments," *Eurasia Insight*, 5 February 2001 ([www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org)).

<sup>44</sup> Moldaliev, "An Incongruous War," 11-20; Rashid, "From Deobandism to Batken."

<sup>45</sup> Michael Fredholm, *Afghanistan and Central Asian Security* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, Asian Cultures and Modernity Research Report 1, March 2002).

<sup>46</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 158; Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism 13, 27 November 2001.

<sup>47</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 174.

<sup>48</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 168, 171.

members of the IMU appeared to originate from Afghanistan and indeed the Arabian peninsula.

The IMU also had a greater propensity for terrorist activities *within* the region than the members of Usamah bin Ladin's network. The IMU was, as noted, accused of perpetrating the car bomb attacks in Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent on 16 February 1999.<sup>49</sup> For this reason, the IMU could be regarded as the key terrorist threat in Central Asia.

As compared to the often eloquently argued global aspirations of the Arab Afghans, presented on the Internet and in various publications, only limited amounts of information specifically from the IMU reached the West up to this time (2001). Nonetheless, the motivation, means, and background of the IMU appeared to be essentially identical to that of the Arab Afghans. Another similarity with the Arab Afghans was that the IMU forged intimate links with the Taliban. Namangani, in return for the patronage of Al-Qaida and the Taliban, not only allowed his forces to protect narcotics being smuggled from Afghanistan into Central Asia but also partly merged his units with the Taliban in the war on the Northern Alliance. Due to the intimate ties with Al-Qaida and the Taliban, the IMU reportedly established contacts with most or all Islamic extremist groups with a presence in Afghanistan. These included the Algerian *Groupe Islamique Armé* ("Armed Islamic Group," GIA) and *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* ("Salafi Group for Call and Combat," GSPC); the Libyan *al-Jamaah al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatila* (better known as the Islamic Fighting Group, IFG); the Pakistani and Kashmiri group *Harakat ul-Mujahidin* ("Movement of Mujahidin"), the Yemeni *Jaish Aden Abin al-Islami* ("Aden-Abyan Islamic Army," AAIA); the Somalian *Al-Itihaad al-Islamiyyah* ("Islamic Alliance," AIAI); and various radical Palestinian, Chechen, and Uighur groups.<sup>50</sup>

It is unlikely that the IMU received much funding from supporters in Uzbekistan. While Islamic charities often collect funds for extremist groups, such collection would be difficult to organise in Uzbekistan due to the strict controls the state has imposed on mosques and religious institutions. There is, however, reason to believe that Islamic charities elsewhere, particularly in Pakistan, supplied the IMU, in the way they also supplied the Taliban and Al-Qaida. The Al-Rashid Trust, for instance, run by Mullah Khail al-Rashid, was accused of smuggling weapons and supplies, disguised as humanitarian aid, to the Taliban and IMU.<sup>51</sup>

The IMU, due to its close association with the Taliban, was known to be armed as any other Taliban unit. In addition, the IMU was reportedly armed with Russian sniper

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<sup>49</sup> Melvin, *Uzbekistan*, 39, 57.

<sup>50</sup> Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism 13, 27 November 2001. On the Libyan IFG, see Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), 142-3. Libya was, in fact, the first country to issue an international warrant for the arrest of Usamah bin Ladin, although other countries did not take the request seriously. By then, British intelligence maintained contacts with certain individuals in the IFG, who were close to Al-Qaida, in order to undermine the Qadhafi regime. Bernard Gérard, "11 septembre 2001: Terrorisme, islamisme et mondialisation," Éric Denécé (ed), *Guerre secrète contre Al-Qaeda* (Paris: Ellipses, 2002), 9-18, on 14; *Intelligence Online* 417 (15 November 2001), 1, 2; *Intelligence Online* 441 (21 November 2002), 2.

<sup>51</sup> *New York Times*, 25 September 2001.

rifles, night vision equipment, grenade launchers, pistols and silencers, some of which were acquired from military units in Central Asia.<sup>52</sup> Although there seems to be beyond doubt that the Pakistani Inter-services Intelligence agency (ISI) supported the IMU, some senior ISI officers believed, or professed to believe, in their contacts with journalists and Western intelligence services, that the IMU instead was under the control of the Russian intelligence or security services. This, they argued, explained the apparent ease with which the IMU crossed Central Asian borders.<sup>53</sup>

The political structure of the IMU remains unknown to outside observers to this day and to some extent probably reflected the divisions within the organisation. Yo'ldosh was chief political leader. Zubayr ibn Abdur Raheem fulfilled the role of head of the religious leadership and also appeared to be the chairman of the supreme council of the IMU. However, the IMU military commander Namangani, who was known in Afghanistan as Juma Hakim<sup>54</sup> and also was one of the Taliban *de facto* defence ministers, until his death in most likely November 2001<sup>55</sup> remained the most influential leader of the organisation. The organisation of the group at the military level was also largely unknown to outside observers. While the IMU boasted brigades formed according to ethnic backgrounds, and did carry out joint operations with Al-Qaida and Taliban forces, most of the activities outside Afghanistan consisted of guerrilla raids and drug running accomplished by small units, typically of around fifteen men, under what appears to have been local commanders.<sup>56</sup>

In mid-2000, a new group allied to the IMU was said to have been formed. This was the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan (IMT). There were also rumours about an Islamic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (IMK). So far, little is known about these groups, if they ever existed.<sup>57</sup> On 20 May 2001, however, it was reported that Namangani a few months earlier had launched a political party under the name of *Hezb-e Islami Turkestan* ("Islamic Party of Turkestan," IPT), as an umbrella organisation of the IMU with the avowed intention to include not only Uzbekistan but also Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Chinese Xinjiang in his movement's area of operations. Namangani appointed himself leader of the party, with Yo'ldosh as his deputy. The IPT was reportedly formed in the Taliban-held Deh-e Dadi town, south of Mazar-e Sharif, which served as Namangani's headquarters among the IMU training camps along the Amu Darya river.<sup>58</sup> Some claimed that not all IMU leaders agreed with the change. These various organisational changes may have indicated factional splits within the organisation.<sup>59</sup>

However, the existence of such splits may now never become known. By late July 2001, IMU guerrillas were again attacking government forces on the Tajikistan-

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<sup>52</sup> Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism 13, 27 November 2001.

<sup>53</sup> See, e.g., Rashid, *Jihad*, 216.

<sup>54</sup> *Dawn* (Pakistan), 21 May 2001.

<sup>55</sup> *Washington Post*, 26 November 2001. On the various contradictory reports on the death of Namangani, see Naumkin, *Militant Islam*, 58-9; Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, 107.

<sup>56</sup> Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism 13, 27 November 2001.

<sup>57</sup> IMT: Jane's Sentinel: Tajikistan, 31 October 2000; IMK: Kiemiddin Sattori, "Tajik Press About the Youth and Islam," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 3 (15), 2002, 126-34, on 131.

<sup>58</sup> *Dawn* (Pakistan), 21 May 2001; Rashid, *Jihad*, 180-81.

<sup>59</sup> Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism 13, 27 November 2001.

Kyrgyzstan border in the Batken region. Yo'ldosh, who from his base in Afghanistan assumed responsibility for the attacks in the name of the IMU, also announced that what the Uzbekistani army earlier in the summer had claimed to have been military exercises in the Surkhondaryo (Surkhandarya) province in fact had been clashes with IMU guerrillas. Whether the guerrillas had passed through Tajikistan or been recruited from the sleeper cells already in place remained unclear to outsiders, although many observers believe the latter to be most likely.<sup>60</sup> Little else was heard of these skirmishes, before the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States brought further attention to the region. For the Uzbekistani and Kyrgyzstani, and to some extent also Tajikistani, governments, the 11 September terrorist attacks were a godsend. By offering intelligence and other forms of co-operation, as well as the use of bases and air space, they quickly became the beneficiaries of American military aid. When the Northern Alliance swept through Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, the IMU appeared to have been swept aside along with its Taliban sponsors.<sup>61</sup>

Yet, the IMU survived the 2001 War on Terror in Afghanistan. IMU survivors definitely escaped into Pakistan together with Al-Qaida, where they successfully regrouped.<sup>62</sup> The organisation probably also regrouped in Tajikistan, where it could easily go into hiding while reforming after the losses suffered during the war. In Pakistan, the IMU took up positions in South Waziristan, being financed by contributions from Arab countries out of an office in Karachi. Approximately 150 remaining IMU fighters led by Yo'ldosh and his son-in-law and second-in-command, Dilshod Hojiyev, in charge of IMU finances, and Ulugbek Holikov, alias Muhammad Ayub, in charge of IMU's military affairs, went into hiding in Wana, South Waziristan. The IMU remnants also increasingly turned into a family affair, with all three hailing from Namangan. In addition, faced with a split within the organisation (see below), Yo'ldosh had summoned Ilhom Hojiyev, alias Commander Abdurahmon, the cousin (or perhaps nephew) of the late Namangani, from Tajikistan.<sup>63</sup> The defeat of the IMU and the death of Namangani in Afghanistan in 2001 did not, however, signify the end of the movement as a fighting force. Besides, the IMU remained popular among large segments of the religiously inclined part of the Uzbekistani population. The myth of the IMU remained alive and well, and it soon merged with the already existing myths of anti-Russian resistance in Central Asia and the Caucasus. One example will suffice: the word spread in the villages and army garrisons of Central Asia that the advance guard of IMU guerrilla groups consisted of beautiful female snipers armed with sophisticated guns and night vision goggles, equally prominent in seducing as killing enemy soldiers.<sup>64</sup> This myth probably derived from Chechnya, where many Russian soldiers swore that they were confronted by a legendary unit of blonde Latvian (or Estonian, or both) women snipers known as

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<sup>60</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 181-2; Interfax, 11 June 2001.

<sup>61</sup> Fredholm, *Afghanistan*.

<sup>62</sup> Naumkin, *Militant Islam*, 58, 61.

<sup>63</sup> Deutsche Welle, 1 March 2004; RFE/RL *Central Asia Report* 4: 10, 8 March 2004; Baran, *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, 75-6. Little else is known about Ulugbek Holikov, Dilshod Hojiyev, and Ilhom Hojiyev. However, the latter two names turned up again later in connection with the Andijon affair (see below).

<sup>64</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 10.

*belyye kolgotki* (“white tights”)—a unit which allegedly turned up in every post-Soviet war against Russia and its allies.<sup>65</sup>

The connection between the IMU and the well-funded international Wahhabi Islamic movement has also enhanced the group’s popularity. In Uzbekistan, where any form of Islamic opposition is routinely labelled Wahhabism, this very persecution has given the Wahhabis a popular mystique that in fact encourages local Muslims to regard them as the only remaining true Muslims.<sup>66</sup>

Uzbekistan’s demographic development suggests that Islamic extremism will continue to gain converts. Poverty is rising, and unemployment in the Ferghana valley is reportedly as high as 80 per cent. Each year, an additional four hundred thousand young people look for employment, often without finding any. Sixty per cent of the population is under 25 years old, and this percentage is increasing.<sup>67</sup> This may prove a fertile recruiting ground for violent extremist movements.

### **The Surviving IMU Networks in Central Asia**

To the surprise of many, it soon turned out the IMU had survived in Central Asia as well. Details are sketchy, but a few facts can be ascertained. In Uzbekistan, militants believed to have been members of the IMU by mid-2003 still remained in the south, in the Surkhondaryo (Surkhandarya) province, where the IMU had been known to have sleeper cells as late as in 2001.<sup>68</sup>

The IMU had also survived in Kyrgyzstan. Several alleged IMU bombings took place in Kyrgyzstan during 2002 and 2003. In the United States, the State Department issued several warnings, possibly based on American intelligence information, that the IMU might attack American citizens in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>69</sup>

Other alleged IMU incidents took place in Tajikistan. In January and June 2005, explosions occurred near the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Dushanbe, for which Tajikistan accused the IMU of involvement. On 25 January 2006, a small group of militants managed to free a prison inmate from Ghayroghum district of Soghd province in northern Tajikistan, who was accused of links with the IMU, killing the prison director in the process. The group then disappeared by car towards the nearby border with Kyrgyzstan, where they presumably went into hiding. However, there remains some doubt whether the militants in fact belonged to the IMU. Suspicions have also been directed towards another organisation, Bayat (“oath of allegiance”), which had been accused of the murder of a Baptist missionary which took place already on 12 January 2004 and subsequently several arson attacks of homes and shops of sellers of alcohol as

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<sup>65</sup> Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 50.

<sup>66</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 46.

<sup>67</sup> Rashid, *Jihad*, 82.

<sup>68</sup> Esmer Islamov, “Sightings of IMU Militants Reported in Remote Area of Uzbekistan,” *Eurasia Insight*, 9 July 2003 ([www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org)).

<sup>69</sup> Richard Weitz, “Storm Clouds over Central Asia: Revival of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)?” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27: 6 (2004), 505-530, on 512-13.

well as local mosques in Chorkuh, Isfara district. A number of Bayat members were reported once to have been members of the IRPT.<sup>70</sup>

There may also have been a connection between the IMU and the Andijon affair on 13 May 2005.<sup>71</sup> Although there is no evidence that the IMU was directly involved in the events on that day, the Uzbekistani Prosecutor-General's office on 16 September 2005 noted that a certain Ilhom Hojiyev in April 2005 had smuggled up to \$200,000 into Uzbekistan in support of the group involved in the affair.<sup>72</sup> Whether this Ilhom Hojiyev was the relative of the late Namangani who previously had joined Yo'ldosh in Pakistan is unknown, but the Uzbekistani investigators may have thought so, since they also requested Kyrgyzstan to return a certain Dilshod Hojiyev, who had sought asylum there after the Andijon affair. A criminal case was opened against him in Uzbekistan, while several human rights organisations expressed their rage that the Kyrgyzstanis considered handing him and three other named Uzbekistani citizens over to Uzbekistan for criminal charges. Again it is unknown whether this Dilshod Hojiyev was the same man who was the son-in-law and second-in-command of Yo'ldosh, and also the one in charge of IMU finances, or merely an unfortunate bystander who happened to have the same name.<sup>73</sup> Yet, the fact that his name was on the list of four named suspects requested by Uzbekistan certainly indicates that the Uzbekistani investigators thought that he belonged to the IMU.

On 12 May 2006, militants from Tajikistan reputedly associated with the IMU attacked a Tajikistani border post and a Kyrgyzstani customs office, presumably to acquire weapons. Four militants were killed and one captured. Tajikistani law enforcement noted that their captive was a member of the IMU and was on the wanted list. In early 2008, one of the remaining wanted gunmen, alleged IMU activist Abdulhai Yuldashev, was arrested in southern Kyrgyzstan. Three other gunmen remained wanted, two of them Tajikistani citizens and one a Kyrgyzstani.<sup>74</sup> It is difficult to assess whether

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<sup>70</sup> Zafar Abdullaev, "Tajikistan: Concern at New Islamic Group," *IWPR's Reporting Central Asia* 280, 27 April 2004; Zoya Pylenko, "Suspected IMU Member Escapes from Tajik Prison," *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 22 February 2006.

<sup>71</sup> On the events in Andijon, see Shirin Akiner, *Violence in Andijan, 13 May 2005* (London, 7 June 2005). Her report was subsequently published as Shirin Akiner, *Violence in Andijan, 13 May 2005: An Independent Assessment* (Washington, DC & Uppsala: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, July 2005). The media's somewhat one-sided focus on repression in the Central Asian states, in particular in Uzbekistan, has influenced the international community in several ways. First, any information received from Central Asian law enforcement organs will routinely be treated as unsubstantiated, regardless of content. While it has to be said that such information at times is biased and incorrect, it would appear unwise to disregard all information derived from these sources simply because they have received a bad press. Second, the way the situation in Uzbekistan in particular has been framed in the Western media means that Western governments only with great difficulty, or not at all, can refuse asylum to Uzbekistani citizens, even if they are known or suspected terrorists, since there are difficulties in separating *bona fide* refugees escaping from persecution by authoritarian government from terrorists and extremists fleeing from *bona fide* Central Asian counter-terrorism efforts.

<sup>72</sup> Interfax, 20 September 2005.

<sup>73</sup> RFE/RL *Newsline*, 13 June 2005; *IWPR's Reporting Central Asia* 387, 15 June 2005.

<sup>74</sup> *Kommersant*, 13 May 2006; *IWPR's Reporting Central Asia* 448, 19 June 2006; Sanobar Shermatova, "IMU may return into politics only if and when the existing geopolitical parity in

these and several other acts of violence attributed to the IMU in the Central Asian republics were planned acts of terrorism or merely the side effects of continued drug smuggling activities.

In 2006, Yo'ldosh issued statements to the Muslims of Central Asia on three occasions, speaking in Uzbek. Interestingly, he devoted considerable time towards a refutation of the ideology of the Hizb ut-Tahrir. He also denounced the perpetrators of the March and April 2004 suicide bombings in Tashkent and Bukhara, that is, the IJU, severely. He may have felt that he was losing support in his Central Asian core territories due to his long absence and the comparable success of other Islamic groups there. Indeed, in August 2005, dozens of people who claimed to be former IMU members rallied at the Dutch embassy in Tehran to demand refugee status.<sup>75</sup> Yet more Uzbek Muslims contacted other European countries for the same purpose.<sup>76</sup> However, Yo'ldosh also denounced the presidents of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, and vowed vengeance for the Muslims killed in Andijon in 2005,<sup>77</sup> a statement that may support the supposition that the IMU had provided funding there in anticipation of the affair.

### **The IMU in Waziristan**

The IMU also suffered an uneasy existence in Waziristan. Already in June 2002, Pakistani security forces killed six alleged IMU members in South Waziristan and Kohat after they had killed a policeman and an intelligence officer.<sup>78</sup> Further conflicts soon followed. The fighting with Pakistani security forces around Wana in South Waziristan became particularly severe in March 2004, and a general Pakistani offensive followed from late 2003 onwards.<sup>79</sup>

In Afghanistan, the IMU had been protected by the Taliban. In Pakistan, the IMU henceforth fell under the protection of the Mehsuds, a powerful local tribe which dominated South Waziristan. In particular, the IMU became associated with the important Taliban-supporter Baitullah Mehsud, who led large numbers of Pakistani Taliban and soon came into conflict with the Pakistan Army. The IMU henceforth became as closely allied to the Pakistani Taliban as it had been to the Afghan Taliban. Yo'ldosh was reportedly present as a witness to the 2006 peace agreement between the Pakistan Army and the Taliban in South Waziristan. In December 2007, Baitullah

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Central Asia is ruined,” Ferghana.ru, 8 February 2008. The captive was identified as 30-year-old Abdurahim Khojayev from the Syrdarya region of Uzbekistan. His name is a common one, but it is possible that the Kyrgyzstanis, perhaps wrongly, connected him with the already mentioned IMU leader Ilhom Hojiyev, alias Commander Abdurahmon, the relative of the late Namangani.

<sup>75</sup> Ikbaldjon Mirsayitov, “The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan: Development Stages and Its Present State,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 6 (42), 2006, 110-14. The video statements were issued on 10 January, in August, and on 11 September 2006. The IMU maintains a web site in Uzbek, [www.furqon.com](http://www.furqon.com).

<sup>76</sup> In Sweden, e.g., no less than 530 people born in Uzbekistan received asylum in 2005. In comparison, in the period 1994-2001 this number varied between 16 and 32 per year, rising to between 57 and 120 annually in the period 2002-2004. SCB national statistics.

<sup>77</sup> Ferghana.ru, 13 September 2006.

<sup>78</sup> Weitz, “Storm Clouds,” 510.

<sup>79</sup> Mike Redman, “Central Asian Militant Group Remains Active in Pakistan,” *Eurasia Insight*, 24 March 2004 ([www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org)); Daan van der Schriek, “War in Waziristan,” *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 3 November 2004.

Mehsud formed the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which he then led from its formation until his death in a CIA drone attack in September 2009. The IMU supported the TTP in its various activities, for instance by sending fighters to Swat when the Mehsud ally Maulana Fazlullah began his militant activities there. The IMU also retained its international networks. So did, for instance, several Uighurs train with the IMU in South Waziristan, before they reportedly returned to China to attack targets in Xinjiang.<sup>80</sup> However, problems soon arose in the relationship between the IMU and local Pashtuns in Waziristan. The exact cause for this largely remains unknown, although it seems likely that the IMU was caught up in internecine rivalry within the local Ahmadzai Wazirs, many of whom were hostile to the Mehsuds.<sup>81</sup> In March 2007, Uzbek extremists and local Pashtun militants clashed in the town of Azam Varsak in South Waziristan, close to the Afghan border. At least 15 people died as a result of the fight, and the IMU was forced to leave its bases in and around Wana, at least for the time being.<sup>82</sup>

In January 2008, Yo'ldosh confirmed his support for Baitullah Mehsud, calling for intensified jihad against the Pakistani security forces.<sup>83</sup> Following Baitullah Mehsud's death in September 2009, Yo'ldosh reiterated his support for the new TTP leader, Hakimullah Mehsud.<sup>84</sup> However, on 26 September 2009, Yo'ldosh was himself mortally wounded in a CIA drone attack in South Waziristan.<sup>85</sup> He reportedly died on 1 October and was replaced as head of the IMU by Usman Jan, the group's until then deputy leader.<sup>86</sup> Usman Jan was in his turn targeted by a CIA drone in January 2010, but he may have survived the attack.<sup>87</sup>

### **The IMU Networks in Europe**

Despite the IMU's operations in Waziristan and apparent activities in the Central Asian republics, the organisation had not neglected the war in Afghanistan, which it continued to fight, either in rivalry or cooperation with another Uzbek group, the IJU (see below, including the section on the continued activities of the IMU and IJU in Afghanistan). The IMU also did not neglect its supporters elsewhere.

It soon became clear that the IMU had at its disposal networks of supporters and activists in Turkey and Europe as well as in Central Asia. In May 2008, French, German, and Dutch security agencies reported that they had detained ten individuals, most of them of Turkish background, on suspicion of running a network to send money to the IMU.

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<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., *Daily Times* (Pakistan), 3 October 2009.

<sup>81</sup> See, e.g., Guido Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda: The Islamic Jihad Union and the Internationalization of Uzbek Jihadism* (Center for Contemporary Conflict, n.d. (July 2008)).

<sup>82</sup> See, e.g., RIA Novosti, 8 March 2007.

<sup>83</sup> See, e.g., Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda*.

<sup>84</sup> Yo'ldosh was, for instance, shown with Hakimullah Mehsud in a video released by the IMU's media wing, Studio Jundullah. NEFA Foundation web site, [www.nefafoundation.org](http://www.nefafoundation.org).

<sup>85</sup> See, e.g., *Daily Times* (Pakistan), 3 October 2009; Jim Nichols, *Central Asia's Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests* (Congressional Research Service Report RL30294, 11 March 2010), 9.

<sup>86</sup> *Hindustan Times*, 3 October 2009. There have been conflicting reports on both the date of the drone attack and on whether Yo'ldosh survived or not. However, the appointment of a new head would seem to confirm his death before this date.

<sup>87</sup> *USA Today*, 17 January 2010; *Dawn*, 18 January 2010.

The network had been led by Irfan Demirtaş, of Turkish and Dutch origin.<sup>88</sup> Although this particular network was broken up, it seems likely that the IMU still enjoys the assistance of support networks in Turkey and Western Europe.

In September 2008, for instance, the IMU posted a German-language propaganda video on the Internet in support of the Afghan Taliban. The IMU asked Muslim men and women to come to join the jihad.<sup>89</sup> This may have been a deliberate attempt to copy the success of the IJU in attracting German-speaking recruits. It may also have been a sign of increased cooperation between the two groups.

### ***The Islamic Jihad Union—The Younger Generation of Uzbek Extremists Comes of Age***

Following the Taliban defeat in Afghanistan and their 2001/2002 rout into Pakistan, the surviving Uzbek extremist leaders within the IMU could not agree on how best to continue the holy war. Some IMU leaders stayed with Yo'ldosh, who hid in South Waziristan and henceforth appeared to concentrate on the war in Afghanistan and local rivalries in Pakistan. Others, led by Najmiddin Jalolov and Suhail Buranov, in presumably early 2002 withdrew to North Waziristan. There, most likely in March 2002, they founded a new group, which somewhat later came to be called the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU; *Islomiy Jihod Ittihodi*, or *Itihaad al-Jihad al-Islami*, perhaps more correctly translated as the Alliance of Islamic Jihad; its original name was *Jamaat al-Jihad al-Islami*, Society of Islamic Jihad, or simply *Jamoat* in Uzbek). Unlike Yo'ldosh, Jalolov and Buranov seem to have been more interested in global jihad of the type waged by Al-Qaida.<sup>90</sup>

Najmiddin Kamolitdinovich Jalolov (born in 1972 in Andijon; alias Abu Yahya Muhammad Fatih, Muhammad Foteh Bukhoriy, and Abdurakhmon; Fatih or Foteh signifies "Conqueror") appears to have been a member of the IMU since at least the late 1990s and perhaps from the outset. He was known to have been trained at Al-Qaida camps, presumably in Afghanistan. Jalolov was sentenced to death by an Uzbekistani court in 2000 for his role in the 1999 Tashkent bombings but was never apprehended. Jalolov now appointed another Uzbek named Suhail Fatilloevich Buranov (born in 1983 in Tashkent; alias Sohail Mansur, alias Abu Huzaifa) his deputy. Buranov was known to have been trained at an Al-Qaida camp in Khost province, Afghanistan. Criminal charges had been filed against him in 2000, which would seem to confirm that he too then belonged to the IMU.<sup>91</sup> However, considering his young age at the time, he is unlikely to have been a founding member.

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<sup>88</sup> Europe1 ([www.europe1.fr](http://www.europe1.fr)), 19 July 2008; AFP, 20 July 2008.

<sup>89</sup> NEFA Foundation web site, [www.nefafoundation.org](http://www.nefafoundation.org); NEFA release date 29 January 2009, original date September 2008.

<sup>90</sup> Europol, *TE-SAT 2008: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report* (The Hague: European Police Office, 2008), 18. The IJU eventually confirmed that the group had been established in 2002. Michail Logvinov, "Islamische Dschihad-Union," *Die Kriminalpolizei*, March 2010; citing an IJU communiqué dated 31 May 2007 ([www.sehadetzamani.com](http://www.sehadetzamani.com)).

<sup>91</sup> Jalolov was born on 1 April 1972, Buranov on 11 October 1983. Details on the various names, aliases, and addresses of the IJU leaders, and criminal charges against them, were published in, among others, United Nations Security Council Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee, SC/9396, 23 April 2008; United States Department of the Treasury, press release hp-1035, 18

The core of the IJU accordingly consisted of former IMU members who had broken away from Yo'ldosh to work more closely with Al-Qaida against its global rather than regional enemies.<sup>92</sup> The IJU had its headquarters and ran training camps in North Waziristan (in Mir Ali), unlike those of the IMU which were located in South Waziristan (around Wana). While the IMU turned towards the Mehsuds for protection, the IJU instead became the junior partner in an alliance with the Haqqani network (a fundamentally autonomous wing of the Afghan Taliban movement based in Miram Shah, the administrative centre of North Waziristan, and named after its leader, Jalaluddin Haqqani) and Al-Qaida.<sup>93</sup> The relationship with Al-Qaida with time became increasingly public. In late January 2008, Abu Laith al-Libi, the Libyan liaison officer between the Al-Qaida leadership and the IJU, was killed in a CIA drone attack in Pakistan. The IJU confirmed his death, referring to him as "our Shaikh."<sup>94</sup> The IJU again acknowledged its relationship with Al-Qaida in a video communiqué on 5 June 2009, showing several IJU commanders with another Libyan Al-Qaida member, Abu Yahya al-Libi.<sup>95</sup>

Even so, it was soon shown that the IJU, first known to outsiders simply as the Islamic Jihad Group, was even more involved in the Central Asian republics than the IMU. Indeed, the IJU, as it became known in 2005 in the American and British lists of banned terrorist organisations, first rose to fame only for a series of plots to use suicide bombers in Uzbekistan.<sup>96</sup> The IJU is generally believed to have been behind the suicide bombings in Tashkent and Bukhara in March and April 2004, in which both male and female suicide bombers were used, and almost certainly conducted the co-ordinated suicide bombing attacks in Tashkent on 30 July 2004 against the American and Israeli embassies and the office of the Uzbekistani Prosecutor General, all for which the IJU claimed responsibility.<sup>97</sup>

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June 2008; Office of Foreign Assets Control, Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons: Financial Institution Letter FIL-60-2008 (Washington, DC: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), 26 June 2008).

<sup>92</sup> In June 2008, an IJU video claimed that one Uzbek IJU member had taken part already in IMU's 1999 attack in Kyrgyzstan, and later had fought in Afghanistan against the Northern Alliance and then against Coalition forces. Nichols, *Central Asia's Security*, 9.

<sup>93</sup> See, e.g., Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda*.

<sup>94</sup> He was probably killed on 29 January 2008 in North Waziristan, according to the Pakistani military. See, e.g., CNN, 31 January 2008; Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda*.

<sup>95</sup> *Der Spiegel* (www.spiegel.de), 5 June 2009.

<sup>96</sup> See, e.g., the presentation to the British Parliament by Home Office Minister Hazel Blears, 13 October 2005. The controversial former British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, commented that the UK had no own intelligence sources but relied on the American communications intercepts of the National Security Agency (NSA) for intelligence on this and other Al-Qaida-connected groups. See his web site, www.craigmurray.co.uk.

<sup>97</sup> Press statement by Richard Boucher, spokesman for the Department of State, Washington, DC, 26 May 2005, upon the inclusion of the group in the list of specially designated global terrorist organisations under Executive Order 13224. For a brief summary of the suicide bombings in March and April 2004, see RFE/RL *Central Asia Report* 4: 14, 7 April 2004; 4: 15, 14 April 2004; 4: 33, 1 September 2004; Artie McConnell, "Tashkent Bombings Signal Rise in Islamist Activities," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, May 2004, 14-17. The group claimed responsibility for the March and April 2004 attacks in a communiqué conveyed by an opponent of the Karimov government in exile, Hazratqul Khudoyberdi, through the web site, www.centrasia.ru, 3 April

In the trials that followed the events and arrests of 2004, the evidence presented indicated that a radical Jamoat group led by one Farkhad Kazabkhayev had been operating in Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand since 2000. The trial proceedings also indicated that others, including overall leader Jalolov based in Waziristan, may have played a role linking this Jamoat with a network that facilitated the movement of small amounts of weapons and men to training camps in Pakistan.<sup>98</sup> There was also an IJU cell in Kazakhstan, headed by Akhmed Biymurzayev (Ahmad Bekmirzayev) and Zhakshybek Biymurzayev. The former died in the attacks in Uzbekistan. The latter had apparently received training in Afghanistan, and had played a significant role in the IMU incursions into the Batken region in 1999 and 2000, which if correct would have made him yet another early IMU member who had changed his allegiance to the IJU, presumably along with Jalolov and Buranov.<sup>99</sup> Several Kazakh members of the cell had been trained in Shymkent in southern Kazakhstan.<sup>100</sup>

On the eve of the Andijon affair on 13 May 2005, the IJU rapidly posted a communiqué on the Internet, in which it expressed its support for any uprising against the Uzbekistani government, declared war on the Karimov government, and called on all Muslims to join in the attack. The statement, which was written in vague terms and signified no particular knowledge of the events in Andijon, was signed by the amir of the IJU, Muhammad Foteh Bukhoriy, that is, Jalolov.<sup>101</sup> The United States and Israeli embassies in Tashkent took the threat from the IJU very seriously. In response to a “specific terrorist threat” the two embassies in early June 2005 withdrew non-essential staff from the country.<sup>102</sup>

### **The IJU Networks in Europe**

The IJU then turned its attention towards Europe. On 4 September 2007, a plot to attack possibly Frankfurt airport and an American air base in Germany was foiled with the arrest of three men, two of them German converts to Islam (Fritz Gelowicz and Daniel Schneider) and the third a Turk (Adem Yilmaz). The group, which became known in the media as the “Sauerland cell,” had trained in Pakistan and had links with the IJU. Later on, a German Turk, Atilla Selek, was arrested as well.<sup>103</sup>

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2004. The group claimed responsibility for the 30 July 2004 attacks in a second communiqué, signed by deputy amir Sayfurrahmon and again conveyed by Hazratqul Khudoyberdi through the web site, [www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru), 31 July 2004.

<sup>98</sup> AP, 27 July 2004; Cerwyn Moore, “Uzbek Terror Networks: Germany, Jamoat and the IJU,” *Terrorism Monitor* 5: 21 (November 2007). Yet another member was mentioned as being called Abu Muhammad.

<sup>99</sup> Naumkin, *Radical Islam*, 117; IWPR’s *Reporting Central Asia* 380, 20 May 2005; Marat Yermukanov, “Kazakh Security Services Trumpet Victory over ‘Al-Qaida Members.’” *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 3 November 2004.

<sup>100</sup> See, e.g., Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda*.

<sup>101</sup> The communiqué was as before conveyed by Hazratqul Khudoyberdi through the web site, [www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru), 13 May 2005.

<sup>102</sup> Reuters, 6 June 2005. On 2 June 2005, the United States Department of State issued a travel warning due to the sudden terrorist threat.

<sup>103</sup> See, e.g., *Economist*, 8 September 2007; *Der Spiegel*, 12 September 2007, 9 October 2007 ([www.spiegel.de](http://www.spiegel.de)). The group was reportedly first identified by the NSA. The operation was later

On 11 September 2007, the IJU posted a communiqué on a Turkish web site which stated that the three men arrested in Germany had planned attacks on the Ramstein air base and the United States and Uzbekistani consulates in Germany.<sup>104</sup> The IJU had by then come to rely on several Turkish-language web sites.<sup>105</sup> In them, the IJU used a Turkish name, İslami Cihad İttihadi (ICI, translated by the group into English as Ittihad Islamic Jihad).

It soon became clear that the “Sauerland cell” formed part of a larger group, consisting of about thirty extremists, mostly ethnic Turks living in Germany but also several converts. Between ten and twenty of them had participated in terrorist training in IJU camps in Pakistan. This was unprecedented, since ethnic Turks in Europe had not earlier been seen to turn to extremism. Now several had been to IJU camps in North Waziristan.<sup>106</sup> Previously, IJU recruits had been sent to commit terrorist acts in Central Asia or to participate in guerrilla warfare in Afghanistan; now the IJU had trained European recruits and dispatched them back to Europe to engage in terrorism there.

The IJU networks in Europe were not confined to Germany. In April 2009, Turkish security forces arrested over thirty militant extremists, most of them allegedly IJU members, including the IJU leader in Turkey, Mahmut Kaplan (alias Abu Muhammad).<sup>107</sup> IJU networks may have existed in other countries too, since in May 2008, as noted, French, German, and Dutch security agencies detained several people, most of them of Turkish origin, for suspicion of supporting the IMU.<sup>108</sup> It does not seem too far-fetched to argue that in communities where one Uzbek group would have supporters, another one would most likely find a few of its own.

### **The IJU Media Wings**

The IJU maintained a quite professional media wing, known as Badr at-Tawhid (“Full Moon of Monotheism”). The group also published in German and Turkish with another media outfit, Elif Medya.<sup>109</sup> Both seem to have understood what kind of media strategy goes down well in the West. The media campaign focused on fighting crusaders, which appealed to an extremist Muslim audience, and to fight dictatorships such as those of Central Asia, which appealed to the Western media. The IJU in October 2009 even claimed not to be connected to Al-Qaida, so as to present itself in better light to a Western audience.<sup>110</sup>

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handled by a joint CIA and German task force set up in Berlin. See also Moore, “Uzbek Terror Networks;” Logvinov, “Islamische Dschihad-Union.”

<sup>104</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 12 September 2007 ([www.spiegel.de](http://www.spiegel.de)); IJU communiqué, 11 September 2007 ([www.sehadetvakti.com](http://www.sehadetvakti.com)).

<sup>105</sup> The 11 September 2007 communiqué was posted on [www.sehadetvakti.com](http://www.sehadetvakti.com) (“Time for Martyrdom”), now defunct. The IJU has also posted information on [www.sehadetzamani.com](http://www.sehadetzamani.com) (in Turkish) and the more general jihadist web sites [www.sodiqlar.com](http://www.sodiqlar.com) (in Uzbek) and [www.cihaderi.net](http://www.cihaderi.net) (in Turkish). The first communiqué posted on Turkish web sites seems to be dated April 2007. Logvinov, “Islamische Dschihad-Union.”

<sup>106</sup> See, e.g., Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda*.

<sup>107</sup> *Turkish Weekly*, 21 April 2009 ([www.turkishweekly.net](http://www.turkishweekly.net)).

<sup>108</sup> Europe1 ([www.europe1.fr](http://www.europe1.fr)), 19 July 2008; AFP, 20 July 2008.

<sup>109</sup> See, e.g., the movement’s various web sites.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas M. Sanderson, Daniel Kimmage, and David A. Gordon, *From the Ferghana Valley to South Waziristan: The Evolving Threat of Central Asian Jihadists* (Washington, DC: Center for

Badr at-Tawhid by early 2010 seemed to have some relationship to yet another jihadist web site, tawba.info, allegedly produced by the Jamaat Bulgar group of Russian-speaking Islamic extremists.<sup>111</sup> This was unsurprising, since already in 2007 Andrey Batalov, a Russian convert to Islam, had been arrested in Afghanistan, disguised by a burqa, in a truck loaded with explosives. He admitted to having received some kind of training in presumably an IJU camp in North Waziristan, although he claimed that he had never intended to take part in fighting.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, the IJU made considerable efforts to maintain contacts and recruits in many different countries and among many different ethnic backgrounds. In May 2007, Jalolov in an interview confirmed that the IJU had been in contact and worked on common targets with jihadists from the Caucasus.<sup>113</sup>

### **The IJU and Pakistan**

Despite its apparent focus on Europe and Turkey, the IJU true to its allegiance to Waziristani militants remained engaged in hostilities with Pakistani security forces. In October 2006, three Pakistanis trained and supported by the IJU and its leader Jalolov went so far as to attempt improvised explosive devices (IED) attacks on government targets in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad.<sup>114</sup>

In October 2007, the Pakistan Army launched an offensive against Uzbek fighters in Mir Ali in North Waziristan. The IJU was also active elsewhere in Pakistan. The group claimed to have attacked Pakistani military targets in Swat in late 2007.<sup>115</sup>

Jalolov was killed on 14 September 2009 in North Waziristan in a CIA drone attack. He was replaced as Amir by Abdullah Fatih.<sup>116</sup>

### **The IJU (and IMU?) in the Central Asian Republics**

From 2009, Uzbek terrorism appeared to have returned to its place of birth. On 25-26 May 2009, several attacks took place in Uzbekistan. A police checkpoint was attacked in Khonobod on the border with Kyrgyzstan and bombings occurred in nearby

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Strategic and International Studies, March 2010), 12, citing [www.sehadetzamani.com](http://www.sehadetzamani.com), 22 October 2009.

<sup>111</sup> The group's web site, <http://tawba.info/ru>.

<sup>112</sup> *New York Times*, 30 October 2007. Batalov's case can be found among the secret US military reports covering the war in Afghanistan that in July 2010 were exposed by the Wikileaks web site ([http://wikileaks.org/wiki/Afghan\\_War\\_Diary,\\_2004-2010](http://wikileaks.org/wiki/Afghan_War_Diary,_2004-2010)). See Report Key 759114F2-5F50-4303-B45F-790FEE8B7526, document AFG20070826n804. According to this initial report, Batalov was unknowingly going to be used as a suicide bomber.

<sup>113</sup> NEFA Foundation web site, [www.nefafoundation.org](http://www.nefafoundation.org); NEFA release date, 23 September 2009, original date 31 May 2007.

<sup>114</sup> *Dawn*, 4 November 2006.

<sup>115</sup> IJU communiqué, 19 December 2007 ([www.sehadetvakti.com](http://www.sehadetvakti.com)). See, e.g., Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda*; Ronald Sandee, *The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)* (NEFA Foundation, 14 October 2008), 15.

<sup>116</sup> GEO TV Pakistan ([www.geo.tv](http://www.geo.tv)), 17 September 2009; Bill Roggio, "Two al Qaeda Leaders Reported Killed in North Waziristan Strike," *Long War Journal* ([www.longwarjournal.org](http://www.longwarjournal.org)), 16 September 2009; Badr at-Tawheed communiqué, 27 September 2009 ([www.sehadetzamani.com](http://www.sehadetzamani.com)).

Andijon. The IJU claimed responsibility for the attacks a few days later.<sup>117</sup> In July, the IJU again voiced its support for jihad against Uzbekistan.<sup>118</sup>

On 23 June 2009, Kyrgyzstan claimed to have killed five IMU terrorists in a special operation.<sup>119</sup> On 29 August 2009, a series of shootings took place in Tashkent, in which one alleged IMU member was killed.<sup>120</sup> In early June 2010, Tajikistan too claimed to have killed two IMU members in a special operation.<sup>121</sup>

It is hard to assess the level of involvement, if any, of the IJU or IMU in these events. Both organisations have expressed their participation in and support for jihad against the governments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Both organizations certainly appear to have networks in place in these countries. Since the IJU split from the IMU, there exists the possibility that individuals cooperate with each other, even if they have given their allegiance to separate groups. There is also the possibility that security organs may mistake members of one organisation for that of the other. On the other hand, there is some doubt whether all these incidents were properly attributed by the law enforcement organs of the countries involved. The temptation to label regular violent crime as terrorism may be strong. It may even be that individual IMU and IJU members have turned to regular crime to fund their activities, or even to support themselves. As noted, the IMU once played a substantial role in narcotics trafficking out of Central Asia. The two groups may still be involved in such activities.<sup>122</sup>

### **The IJU's Recruitment in Turkey and Europe and the Concept of Jihad Tourism**

Arguably, the main impact of the IJU has been as a promoter of international jihad and facilitator for extremist recruits from Turkey and Europe who wish to fight in Afghanistan. The memoirs of the German convert and IJU recruit Eric Breininger (who died in action on 28 April 2010<sup>123</sup>) give a vivid description of how new recruits from Turkey and Europe from the mid-2000s onwards reached the IJU training camps in Waziristan. Recruits to Waziristan first travelled by air to Iran (for which they needed a visa, something that caused difficulties for Breininger and his friend, the German-Lebanese Hussayn al-Mallah, although they eventually got 7-day transit visas upon landing in Tehran). Then they would board a domestic flight or bus from Tehran to Bam, from which they continued to Zahedan. There the recruits typically changed their names or adopted *noms de guerre*, apparently due to the fact that there the clandestine part of

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<sup>117</sup> RIA Novosti, 26 May 2009; Deirdre Tynan, "Uzbekistan: Kyrgyz Officials Deny Islamic Militant Raids Originated in Kyrgyzstan," *Eurasia Insight*, 27 May 2009 ([www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org)); *Der Spiegel* ([www.spiegel.de](http://www.spiegel.de)), 5 June 2009. See also Nichols, *Central Asia's Security*, 6.

<sup>118</sup> In a communiqué dated 3 July 2009. Logvinov, "Islamische Dschihad-Union."

<sup>119</sup> Roman Muzalevsky, "Kyrgyz Operation Against IMU Reveals Growing Terrorist Threat," *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 1 July 2009.

<sup>120</sup> Deirdre Tynan, "Uzbekistan: Authorities Link Tashkent Shootout in August to Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan," *Eurasia Insight*, 9 September 2009 ([www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org)).

<sup>121</sup> Interfax, 4 June 2010. The same news report indicated that some 15 suspected members of the IMU were convicted in Tajikistan each year.

<sup>122</sup> For a list of terrorist attacks in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in the period 2004-2009, not all of which can be attributed to the IMU or IJU, see Sanderson, Kimmage, and Gordon, *From the Fergana Valley to South Waziristan*, 27-9.

<sup>123</sup> Abdul Ghaffar El Almani [Eric Breininger], *Mein Weg nach Jannah* (ElifMedya, posted online on 5 May 2010), 106.

their journey began. Having arrived in Zahedan, they would take a taxi to a certain mosque (possibly the large Makki Mosque, reportedly an important centre for IJU logistics<sup>124</sup>), where a contact was waiting. This contact brought them to a safe house inhabited by facilitators (*ansar*), where they would wait a few days until a small group of recruits had shown up. The group would travel together along the apparently usual route, by bus across the Iranian-Pakistani border. Foreign-looking recruits such as Germans would instead travel in a private car to the Iranian-Pakistani border, hiding in burqas while crossing since women were usually not searched. From the border, they would then take one of the waiting Pakistani taxis to a certain hotel, while a native facilitator bought bus tickets and then put them on a bus to presumably Quetta. Foreign-looking recruits would remain in burqas during the ride. Upon arrival, other facilitators would meet them and take them to a safe house, where they finally could get out of their burqas. From there, the final leg of the journey was by car along a mountain road to a house belonging to yet other facilitators, this time of the IJU. Judging from Breininger's memoirs, it is quite possibly that all other facilitators met during the journey were freelancers rather than IJU members, if so presumably part of regular smuggling networks that moved recruits for money (although the IJU may well have been the ultimate broker and financier of the journey). At the IJU safe house, the new recruits would await other recruits, from countries as far apart as Turkey and Tajikistan, after which they went as a group to the training camp.<sup>125</sup>

To hide foreign jihadists in burqas was by then standard operating procedure for both the IJU and IMU. In addition to the already mentioned Breininger and the Russian Batalov, who both hid in burqas, the IMU in a 2008 interview pointed out that a dark-skinned Sudanese too had been successfully smuggled into Pakistan by the same means.<sup>126</sup> The same method was again used in June 2010, when another suspected IJU recruit from Germany was detained in Bannu district, northwestern Pakistan, travelling from Mir Ali to Peshawar with a fake Pakistani passport and a burqa to hide his foreign appearance.<sup>127</sup>

In fact, so many German and German-speaking recruits reached the IJU that Breininger and friends founded the "Deutsche Taliban Mujahideen" ("German Taliban Mujahidin"), in total 6 men, with a certain Abu Ishaq al-Muhajir elected Amir.<sup>128</sup> This was not all, however. Breininger wanted unmarried Muslim girls to travel to their camp, so they all could get married. The girls would also learn to use weapons, "just like the mujahidin." Then the newly-weds, he argued, would raise a new generation of mujahidin who would know Arabic, Turkish, English, Pashto, Urdu, and the mother tongue of the parents, in his case German. The children would learn Islam and temper their bodies through sports and martial arts, and early on learn the use of weapons and military tactics.

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<sup>124</sup> Sandee, *Islamic Jihad Union*, 11. Sandee does not provide a source for this statement, and Breininger never identifies the mosque in his memoirs.

<sup>125</sup> Abdul Ghaffar El Almani [Eric Breininger], *Mein Weg*, 82-85.

<sup>126</sup> NEFA Foundation web site, [www.nefafoundation.org](http://www.nefafoundation.org); NEFA release date 29 January 2009, original date September 2008.

<sup>127</sup> BBC News, 22 June 2010.

<sup>128</sup> Abdul Ghaffar El Almani [Eric Breininger], *Mein Weg*, 102.

This would, he planned, produce a new “generation of terrorists” whose names did not exist in any security service data base.<sup>129</sup>

Indeed, from the mid- to late 2000s a growing number of Islamic extremists from Germany, including converts but many of Turkish or North African descent, travelled to Waziristan. Swedish extremists too joined them, as did several of apparently Kurdish extraction, although their choice of names alone cannot tell whether they were Kurds from Europe, Turkey, Iraq, or Iran. Some commentators even referred to the establishment of a jihadist village of European fighters.<sup>130</sup> The white-faced European recruits had a reputation as dedicated fighters, since for them, unless many with less obviously foreign faces, it took some perseverance to reach Waziristan. Indeed, in July 2008 complaints were voiced in an IJU communiqué that too many new recruits, in particular among Turks, were useless as jihadist fighters, since “they grew up in a democratic society” and therefore were prone to discuss commands rather than accepting and obeying them without questions. Furthermore, many had come to the IJU only to prove to their friends back home that they were more religious than them, or had come to escape social or other secular problems. Many were indeed no more than jihad tourists, who had come to Afghanistan only so that they could tell stirring tales of their exploits when they returned home to friends and family.<sup>131</sup>

### **The IMU and IJU in Afghanistan**

The fact that both the IMU and IJU continued to maintain networks for recruitment and presumably smuggling in the Central Asian republics and in Europe did not mean that they neglected the war in Afghanistan. Both groups continued to support jihadist activities against Afghan security forces and foreign troops there.

On 3 January 2008, the IJU claimed to have attacked British troops in Paktika province, Afghanistan. On 3 March, the IJU announced on a Turkish web site that a second-generation Turk living in Germany had carried out a suicide attack on American and Afghan troops in the same province. In April, this was followed by a video call for jihad by Eric Breininger, the German convert then in an IJU camp in Waziristan.<sup>132</sup> Then the IJU claimed responsibility for two other suicide attacks (on 31 May and 4 June) in Jalalabad city and Khost province, respectively, the first on an American convoy and the second on a military post.<sup>133</sup> In the same year, the IJU also claimed responsibility for several additional attacks in Paktika and Paktia provinces.<sup>134</sup> There was then no longer

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<sup>129</sup> Abdul Ghaffar El Almani [Eric Breininger], *Mein Weg*, 103-104. The implication of this, and his choice of languages, is that he also foresaw attacks in Germany itself.

<sup>130</sup> *Daily Telegraph* ([www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)), 25 September 2009.

<sup>131</sup> Logvinov, “Islamische Dschihad-Union;” citing an IJU communiqué dated 23 July 2008 ([www.sehadetzamani.com](http://www.sehadetzamani.com)).

<sup>132</sup> IJU communiqué, 3 March 2008. The suicide bomber, Cüneyt Çiftçi, had lived in Germany until April 2007. *Der Spiegel* ([www.spiegel.de](http://www.spiegel.de)), 15 March 2009; Logvinov, “Islamische Dschihad-Union.” See also, e.g., Steinberg, *A Turkish al-Qaeda*; Sandee, *Islamic Jihad Union*, 15.

<sup>133</sup> IJU communiqués, 1 June 2008, 5 June 2008 (<http://sodiqlar.narod.ru>). Judging from the chosen names of the suicide bombers, Said Kurdi and Abu Muslim Kurdi, they were presumably of Kurdish origin. The Jalalabad attack killed a U.S. Marine. NPR ([www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)), 31 May 2008.

<sup>134</sup> Sandee, *Islamic Jihad Union*, 16-17; based on IJU communiqués.

any question of whether the IJU had begun to participate in the war in Afghanistan, at least in the named provinces, which formed part of the region traditionally dominated by the group's protector in Waziristan, the Haqqani network.<sup>135</sup> However, from 2009, if not before, the IJU was also active in Kunduz province, further to the north. On 12 May 2009, two IJU operatives were arrested there.<sup>136</sup>

This was a new development, since the IJU had not previously been known to fight in northern Afghanistan. However, later in the year, it seems that the IMU too had moved combat teams there. By October and November 2009, several reports mentioned that IMU fighters (usually only referred to as "Uzbeks and Chechens") had been killed in Kunduz, fighting German and Afghan troops.<sup>137</sup> Whether the attribution by the security forces of these "Uzbeks and Chechens" to the IMU was correct remains unknown and should not be taken for granted, even though the IMU had a long history of fighting in Afghanistan.<sup>138</sup> Be that as it may, in December 2009 further details from the north followed. The Afghan National Security Directorate's press service stated that four IMU fighters led by Hafiz Nurillah, a resident of Faryab province, had been arrested.<sup>139</sup> If correct, this would indicate that the IMU by then had acquired local roots in northern Afghanistan. In January 2010, reports suggested that armed groups comprising Chechens, Uzbeks, and Tajiks had moved into positions in Ghowr-Teppa, Kunduz province. Whether they belonged to the IMU or IJU was unknown; yet, the participation of Tajiks, and their identification as such by Afghan security forces, again suggested that networks that included local militants as well and not only foreign fighters may have been formed.<sup>140</sup> By February 2010, IMU fighters were reported in Jowzjan province too.<sup>141</sup> By April 2010, IMU fighters were noted in Baghlan province as well as in Kunduz province.<sup>142</sup> In Baghlan province, the government forces had in May 2010 not yet gained

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<sup>135</sup> Thomas Ruttig, "Loya Paktia's Insurgency: The Haqqani Network as an Autonomous Entity," Antonio Giustozzi, *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 57-88.

<sup>136</sup> Kunduz Executive Summary, 15 September 2009 (Program for Culture & Conflict Studies).

<sup>137</sup> See, e.g., Afghan Islamic Press news agency (Peshawar), 11 October 2009; Reuters, 20 October 2009; Pajhwok Afghan News (Kabul), 5 November 2009.

<sup>138</sup> Doubts on whether the Afghan security forces in fact could correctly identify what they customarily referred to as "Uzbeks and Chechens" were also expressed by foreign intelligence officers in Afghanistan, for instance among the secret US military reports exposed by the Wikileaks web site. See Report Key EDD3627E-B5D4-417E-B0B6-CBEDA3B8F08F, document AFG20071009n1041. According to this report, "PRT CO spoke with ANP 6 today regarding his comments in an open source report on the 5 OCT air strike in Sarobi. In the source, ANP 6 stated that 16 Uzbek fighters were killed and one was captured; however, this conflicted with TF Eagles own assessment of the fighters and the BDA. ANP 6 received his intelligence from the Sarobi Chief of Police, and it seems likely that the COP and the locals assumed the fighters were Uzbeks only because they did not speak Pashto. TF Eagle identified the fighters as Turkish based off of SIGINT and the 1 captured EWIA."

<sup>139</sup> Arzu TV (Mazar-e Sharif), 3 December 2009.

<sup>140</sup> Avesta (Dushanbe), 22 January 2010, citing the governor of Kunduz province. The Tajiks may of course have come from Tajikistan.

<sup>141</sup> Shamshad TV (Kabul), 10 February 2010, citing the governor of Jowzjan province.

<sup>142</sup> Arzu TV (Mazar-e Sharif), 15 April 2010, citing General Gholam Sakhi, deputy commander of Shahin Military Corps No 209 in northern Afghanistan.

control over the Ahmadzai area of Dahan-e Ghowri District, where Pakistani, Chechen, Uzbek, and other foreign fighters were reported as being part of the resistance.<sup>143</sup> By June 2010, IMU fighters were reported even in the hitherto fairly calm Balkh province.<sup>144</sup>

### ***Concluding Remarks***

This brief history of the IMU and IJU shows that the two groups changed considerably in character on several occasions during the two decades in which their members have engaged in violence. Yet, many of their goals, tactics, and means of finance remained the same. The IMU and IJU accordingly remain a source of violence and instability in their many and varied areas of operations. Although the eyes of the world are focused on Afghanistan and Pakistan, it will not be enough to ensure stability there (in itself a difficult task). Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and to some extent Uzbekistan remain fragile states with militant networks closely connected to those south of their borders.

Uzbek extremists have played major roles in civil conflicts, such as in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and in transnational narcotics smuggling. In civil conflicts, they have indeed played the role of a foreign legion. They have also encouraged further radicalization as far as away as in Turkey, Russia, and Europe. The existence of IJU and IMU bases in Waziristan has encouraged jihad tourism from Europe and Turkey to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The IMU and IJU have been rivals for funds and recruits; however, now all original leaders are dead. It is likely that the causes of rivalry between the IMU and IJU will have died with them. The survivors will probably cooperate or even merge, since their networks already seem to overlap in many places and some of their members very possibly already collaborate on an individual basis. Any increased level of cooperation will probably be seen first in Afghanistan.

The IMU and IJU have been a catalyst for terror and instability. Their propensity for violence should not be ignored, nor their effect in pushing state structures into excessive repression in the name of combating terrorism. Indeed, the activities of Uzbek extremists have been central to the retention, and even strengthening, of authoritarianism within the Central Asian state structures, thereby directly preventing these states from acquiring any increased level of democracy and popular legitimacy. Although neither the IMU or IJU ever stood a chance of assuming power in Uzbekistan, their negative impact on state development there has been considerable.

### **Postscript**

On 17 August 2010, the IMU finally confirmed the death of Tohir Yo'ldosh, on its web site <http://furqon.com>, and announced that he had been replaced as Amir by Usmon Odil (Usman Adil).

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<sup>143</sup> Afghan Islamic Press news agency (Peshawar), 17 May 2010, citing Morad Ali Morad, commander of Shahin Military Corps No 209.

<sup>144</sup> Arzu TV (Mazar-e Sharif), 22 June 2010, citing General Abdol Rauf Taj, commander of the Balkh provincial police.

## **ISLAM, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE**

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### **Religious Favoritism and Repression in Kyrgyzstan**

Kyrgyzstan state propaganda has created and continues to create popular hostility towards non-Muslims, while recent legislation to tackle religious extremism is a pretext for repressing Evangelicals and other religious minorities. To reverse this situation, Kyrgyzstan's new authorities employ inclusive rhetoric and curb anti-Westernism.

With the birth of Kyrgyz independence, the former Soviet authorities promised to maintain a democratic course. In the years since, however, anti-evangelical propaganda from some Islamic leaders has been consistently prevalent in the Kyrgyz state media and supported by the former regime of Kurmanbek Bakiev. This nurtured negative attitudes among ordinary citizens towards so-called "sects," the term by which Kyrgyz leaders label Evangelicals and other religious minorities. In addition, the government started to restrict freedoms under the banner of a struggle against religious extremism by issuing and revising existing religious laws. These new restrictive laws often allowed for targeting of peaceful religious activity and communities.

This resulted in growing criticism of the Bakiev government for backtracking on political freedoms. According to a recent report of the U.S. State Department's Commission on Religious Freedom, Kyrgyzstan has generally respected religious freedom, but there is pro-Islamic favoritism, evidenced by government harassment and refusal to register some Christian churches. These findings were published prior to the adoption of a new, even more restrictive law that now awaits the President's signature.

The new law has appeared in the context of attacks by Islamic groups on the government in southern Kyrgyzstan, but the law itself targets Evangelicals. Despite the fact that "religious communities and human rights defenders have frequently complained about the secrecy surrounding the various proposed texts of the Law, and the absence of meaningful public consultation," as reported by religious freedom advocates Forum 18, no serious political action by the Evangelicals themselves or international organizations has been initiated. Therefore, the law has successfully passed two stages of voting in the Kyrgyz Parliament, in spite of the fact that it openly breaches Kyrgyzstan's international human rights commitments.

Under the influence of continuing propaganda against converts, Muslims in southern Kyrgyzstan attempted several times to attack converts in their churches and their homes. In June 2006, *humanrights.kz* reported that "officials of the State's Committee on Religious Affairs showed Zhakipov (a Kyrgyz Pastor) a letter signed by 500 Muslims from Jalal-Abad, demanding that the authorities close the church since its members are preaching among Muslims." According to one U.S. news agency, "Muslim militants warned believers that continued prayer and worship services will result in their homes being torched. Rights watchers have suggested that secret police and authorities are also involved in intimidating Christians and other religious minorities."

The state's interference in the religious life of Kyrgyz citizens and harassment of non-Muslim religious leaders have increased during the last five years. For example, the head of a Protestant seminary was expelled from Kyrgyzstan for refusing the demands of

the secret police “to show them confidential files on individual students.” According to some Central Asian Muslims, changing of faith has to be punished and proselytes are seen as having lost their national identity. In addition, ex-Soviet Kyrgyz officials tend to interpret freedom of religion and proselytism in their own way. The Director of the State's Agency for Religious Affairs considers the changing of faith as “abnormal” and has complained about the “illegal” activity of “various destructive, totalitarian groups, and reactionary sects.”

In spite of the repression of basic human freedoms, the World Bank, U.N. and the A.D.B. continue feeding the Kyrgyz regime with billions of dollars of financial support. According to interviews I have conducted among Kyrgyz, many resent this approach for helping fund growing anti-western sentiment among the Kyrgyz, which saddles the younger generation with prejudices and debt: “We didn't ask these organizations for financial support, maybe they are in deal with our corrupted authorities,” said a university worker whom I interviewed recently and whose monthly salary was still about \$50. One older woman complained: “If they had not received so much money from the world organizations, they wouldn't have gotten into power and now be persecuting various believers. Indeed, in the very beginning, when they were poor, many people had more freedom of choice and the repressive authorities had no power to restrict them from learning the Truth on their own.”

The current attitude towards religious pluralism must be confronted by public figures within Kyrgyzstan. Local Kyrgyz leaders need to substitute the current totalitarian metaphors of nation building – “one language, one nationality, one religion” - for a more inclusive model of “unity in diversity.” In a similar effort, Islamic leaders (as well as Russian Orthodox Church leaders) must learn to respect the rights of other religious proselytizers and bring an end to the public blackmail of non-Muslims. The state policy of favoring one true religion used by Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian states plays into the hands of Islamists and jihadists, whose ideology proposes a similar, if more radical version of this approach and who pose a continuing threat to the entire region.

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### **ABOUT IIPER**

Islam, Islamism and politics in Eurasia report (IIPER) is a project of the Monterey Terrorism and Research and Education Program (MonTREP) at the Monterey Institute for International Studies (MIIS), Monterey, California. It focuses on all politically-relevant issues involving or bearing on Islam and ethnic Muslim communities in Russia and Eurasia writ large. All issues of IIPER can be found at [www.miis.edu/academics/researchcenters/terrorism/research/Hahn/IIPER](http://www.miis.edu/academics/researchcenters/terrorism/research/Hahn/IIPER).

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IIPER welcomes submissions of 1,500-6,000 words on any aspect of Islamic politics in Eurasia and financial contributions to support the project. For related inquiries or to request to be included on IIPER's mailing list, please contact [gordon.hahn@miis.edu](mailto:gordon.hahn@miis.edu) or [gordon-hahn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gordon-hahn@sbcglobal.net).

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