

MERIA

THE HIZB AL-TAHRIR IN CENTRAL ASIA: HOW AMERICA MISREADS ISLAMIST THREATS

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The following article examines and analyzes the philosophical underpinnings of the Hizb al-Tahrir in Central Asia. It does so to highlight a larger, more important theoretical and policy point: The United States, in its global war against terror, has improperly defined what constitutes a legitimate Islamist threat. As a result, it mislabels many Islamist groups that do constitute a real security threat to the United States and to democratic regimes in general.

This article focuses on how the United States engages Central Asia with the declared goal of fostering democratic development. The analysis reveals a disturbing reality: an apparent willingness on the part of the United States to overlook and accept domestic repression within the Ferghana Valley states of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Consequently, American engagement, unwittingly helps produce greater Islamic radicalization. More importantly, these radicalized groups, rather than focusing exclusively on their domestic oppressors and local revolution, aim at targets beyond Central Asia.

There has clearly been a boom of radical groups within the Ferghana Valley. Tabligh (Mission), Uzun Sokol (Long Beard), Adolat Uyushmasi (Justice Society), Islam Lashkarlari (Warriors of Islam), Tovba (Repentance), and Nur (Ray of Light) are but a few slowly making headway within the region. For the most part these groups are small and isolated and do not pose an immediate threat to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. This, however, is false relief, as these groups are already open believers in the “clash of civilizations,” which Usama bin Ladin fervently supports.

The Hizb al-Tahrir (HT) is an international movement that is easily the most famous radical Islamist organization operating in Central Asia. By studying the actual beliefs and ideology of HT, this article reveals how

the HT hierarchy publicly proclaims peaceful revolution as a formal agenda while its actual propaganda is likely to produce followers who favor violence instead.¹ HT’s ideology is obsessed not just with the Ferghana regimes but with the United States as the primary target of its animosity.

The United States defines Islamist threats in a way that does not acknowledge an understanding of the danger groups such as HT represent. This is mainly because of a deficient threat definition that focuses first on an ability to foment local revolution and second on the immediate likelihood of a group to commit violence. The long-term planning of September 11, which quietly developed within the mountains of Afghanistan, shows this definition is faulty and must be rewritten to include more subtle, long-term threats that might not necessarily proclaim immediate calls to violence or focus on the overthrow of local regimes. This need is most obvious when examining the beliefs of the Hizb al-Tahrir.

A LITTLE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

HT grew out of various movements in the Middle East in the 1950s but is considered to have been formally founded by Shaykh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani al-Falastini in Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem.² It has been present in Central Asia at least since the early 1990s but made more dramatic headway

with local populations later on in the decade as democratic independence began to transform into repression.³ Its numbers within Central Asia certainly reach the thousands.

HT's claim to fame has been its call for the reestablishment of an Islamic Caliphate that would unite all Muslims regardless of national, regional, tribal, or clan differences. Its propaganda is vehement in its denunciation of the West and rejection of Arab regimes deemed not to be properly honoring Islamic heritage. It claims to support only nonviolent methods but is not against revolutionary struggles conducted by other groups.⁴ In many ways, HT as a group mimics Usama bin Ladin as an individual: Bin Ladin is much more influential as a financial bankroller, organizational planner, and ideological touchstone for terrorist activity than as an actual warrior. He is not the one in the field with weapons attacking targets. HT's "non-violence" should be seen in this light: While at present it cannot be tied directly to physical acts of terror, its monetary, structural, and philosophical support must not be discounted as insignificant.⁵ HT's pledge of nonviolence is most certainly countered by the tacit support it gives to the violence of others.

HT ideology is a marriage of Islamist theology with Marxist-Leninist beliefs.⁶ As a consequence, it has been too easily dismissed by Western governments as totalitarian theocratic propaganda. Yet while their ideology may be dismissed by Americans still secure in democracy's victory with the end of the Cold War, HT's critique of the "democracy" being built in Central Asia with the aid of American engagement does strike a chord there. Consequently, what makes the HT look only like a fringe group to the West is also likely to give it great legitimacy with the people of the Ferghana Valley.

DEMOCRACY—THE FAITHLESS SYSTEM

One of the crucial areas of misinterpretation between people in the West and radical Islamist groups is their general perspective on democracy. It is difficult in the

West to conceive of a mindset wherein democracy is seen with such great disgust as it is by groups such as HT. To it, democracy is brought by Western infidels and has no possible connection to the values of Islam. The democratic system itself is considered wholly antithetical to the world of the Muslim. No aspect of political cooperation or cultural exchange can alter this impression.

Democracy is a system created by people who sought to take refuge from... leadership in the name of religion. Thus the foundations of this system are people who do not wish to have any relation to heaven and religion in general.⁷

This is not blatant misinformation. HT accurately describes the historical evolution of democracy as a response to the injustice of European monarchs who sat upon a throne justified by their so-called anointment from God. Yet HT considers this evolution a negative trend for human government.

The word democracy came from the West, meaning self-government of the people by their own laws. This means that the people are the unfettered holders of power. They hold hegemony over power—it can belong to no other body or authority.⁸

For the radical Islamist, it is irrevocably sinful for the people to be beholden to no power besides their own. Radicals interpret this not as political freedom but as the elevation of temporal power to rival the only legitimate source of authority—God.

HT correctly discusses the four core principles of freedom (religion, expression, private property, and individual rights). Once more, HT takes things universally regarded in the West as *proof* of the advanced state of Western civilization and finds instead a logic to undermine and dismiss it. For HT, all of these freedoms came from a secularism embedded within capitalist economic philosophy. This secularism naturally emerged

with the concept of separating religion from the state. HT understands this idea to be so important in the West that it can be argued to be the ideological foundation of Western civilization itself. The problem for HT, however, is that this doctrine isolates religion from the state and thus from the process of adopting laws and forming governmental authority. This leads groups such as HT to two ultimate conclusions about democracy, both of which are wholly foreign to Westerners but nonetheless seem rational and logical to a radical Islamist:

Democracy does not maintain any godly foundation. It is a product purely of the human imagination. It does not have any divine inspiration nor does it seek any connection to the wisdom of the prophets of God.⁹

Democracy's secularism is founded on two ideas—that the people hold hegemony and that the people are the base for all power. Thus the people aspire to be like gods themselves.¹⁰

The will of the majority is not seen as preferable because it is still ultimately founded on sinful, imperfect humanity. The separation of religion from the state is seen as negative because it severs the only real connection humanity has with morality, which can only come from religion. In radical Islam there is a deep-seated belief in the innate evil of humans (not unfamiliar to Christians who respect the concept of original sin). Creating a system, therefore, that *purposefully* tries to disconnect the state legally from religion and that strives to remove religion from decisionmaking power is a system that foolishly elevates humanity to the level of God in the eyes of radical Islamists.

Many Western analysts discuss the problem of Islam and democracy as being one of a divergence between theory and practice. In other words, they think Islamists have a problem with compromised or corrupted democracy, the type often seen in areas such as Central Asia and the Middle East. They

believe that Islamists would have no problem with the principles of democracy taken in theory. The above analysis shows this to be untrue for radical Islamists.

When the empirical reality of democracy around the globe is taken into account, HT only becomes that much more vehemently anti-democratic and anti-American.

Democracy has been established everywhere on a base of lies and deceit, which has brought nothing but poverty and suffering to the entire world.... It should be remembered that the two oldest democracies in the world, the United States and Great Britain, elect heads of states and members of parliament mainly by the will of the capitalists, especially via the major business leaders and industrial monopolies.... Thus it can be said that democracy is not the will of the people, but the will of capitalism.¹¹

HT's analysis of democracy, if used to describe the state of the "democratic" regimes in the Ferghana Valley, is wholly accurate: The Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Tajik regimes *are* elite-dominated crimonocracies that serve only the interests of the few. Moreover, in the ex-Soviet Ferghana Valley, the criticisms embedded within such Marxist-style analysis remain incredibly pertinent. Discussions of corporate monopolies that act in full cooperation with corrupt governments and prey on societies unable to defend themselves ring true in the Valley. In their world, these ideas are not so easily dismissed.

One of the most monstrous plagues humanity has come up with is the idea of personal freedom that led to the intense competition between capitalist states, leading to the discrimination of other peoples contrary to all spiritual, moral, and humanitarian values.... Personal freedom and individualism transformed democratic states into such societies that they have fallen

below the level of perverse and degrading animals.¹²

Unfortunately, this type of ruthless capitalism and cutthroat democracy exists and thrives in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The common people are hopelessly lost in the shuffle, crushed by corrupt systems that offer no merit-based advancement and violent regimes that oppress with impunity. America may very well be sincere in its desire to see repression in the Ferghana states end, but its failure to battle contrary perceptions has been devastating to its image and has compromised its long-term security against terrorism.

Radical Islam at its core is *anti-individualist*. In its worldview, capitalism and Western democracy are *only* about individualism. Democracy and Islam are therefore incompatible because democracy is a system of government made for individuals, whereas Islam is a non-individualistic system focused on direct orders of governance from “God.”

A person does not have the right to independently determine the societal system. He must live according to the system defined by Allah.... Even if the entire Umma is finally united it is not within its rights to adopt a law if the said law is against the original precepts first laid out by Allah himself. None of these opinions carry any weight or value. They would not even carry the value of a mosquito’s wings.¹³

Why such hostility to personal freedom? As difficult as it is to accept in the West, such hostility is actually logically consistent with a core religious principle found in *both* Islam and Christianity: If man is born a sinner and doomed to sinful behavior when not spiritually constrained by the precepts of God, then his only salvation on earth is to adhere strictly to “the commands and prohibitions” of the one true authority—God. Western individualism more than anything else appears to the radical

Islamists of HT as the elevation of humanity to a position only God should occupy.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN AGGRESSION

The most influential weapon advancing America’s aggression according to groups such as HT is the use of international sources of mass information. Rather than being a source of enlightenment, it is argued that these sources do nothing but confuse Muslims and lead them to stray from the true form of Islam while constantly accusing them of extremism and terrorism. HT argues that America’s global information machine aims to portray Muslims as an enemy of all the world’s peoples. All of this ultimately serves America’s purposes, as it functions to force Muslims to renounce their true faith and become slaves to capitalism.

Islamic states must pay close attention to American pressure, which has the sole purpose of destroying Islam. America wishes to force the Muslim to believe in capitalism.... Under the leadership of America all of the other capitalist nations strive for [close relations] with her. It should be noted that the very essence of the American way is a refutation of logic.... The American doctrine is stuck between two antithetical thoughts: on the one hand is the idea of the importance of religion and on the other hand is the simultaneous rejection of an almighty Creator and elevation of the human being to sole power and authority.¹⁴

Unfortunately, these diatribes do in some ways describe the political situation in the Ferghana states, accurately portraying life there for moderate and radical Muslims alike. Take note, however, that there are no direct entreaties mentioned by the HT against local presidents Karimov, Bakiev, or Rakhmanov. Instead, America is the focus of their scorn, the central agent in a global conspiracy against the Islamic faith.

Since HT is unlikely to be the direct initiator of terrorist action against the United States, it has been too easily discounted as a serious threat. The Ferghana Valley is in fact optimal as a transnational conduit and wayward haven for various radical groups and individuals. HT's rhetoric in this environment becomes more powerful because it reaches beyond the membership of its own organization

HT also criticizes the United States for its penchant for "compartmentalized religion," in which certain times and places are designated for being truly faithful and other times and other places are for more secular activities. This is a refutation of faith to radical Islamists. Faith must always be priority.

There either is a Creator, who created all people and the world and to whom we are obligated to follow or there is no Creator and therefore there should be no discussion whatsoever of a separation of religion from the state. If there is no Creator, religion should be ignored. It is not acceptable to take a middle path and say that there is a Creator but that His existence does not hold great enough significance or meaning and should therefore occupy a smaller priority in the life and governance of man. Such thoughts simply do not sit in the minds of believing men.¹⁵

Thus, America comes across as not simply causing its own societal degradation, but forcing the degradation of other societies with whom it engages because America is adamant that its vision of the secular-religious balance is superior and must be copied. This was especially apparent within the Ferghana Valley after September 11, when all three states there increased their oppression of Islam while aiding America in its global war against terror and received approval from the United States for phantom development along democratic lines.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

HT's attack against freedom of thought is an entreaty to avoid hypocrisy and remain consistent in the belief that God comes before all else, even personal interest, desire, and freedom. This type of criticism is possible against American society, but it is even more cogent and consequential in the Ferghana Valley: Governments there openly display an absurdity of wealth and luxury while denying basic health and human services to the majority of the population. They do this while officially declaring allegiance to the ideas of freedom, liberty, and prosperity and reaping the benefits of American engagement and foreign aid.

Freedom of thought in capitalist terms does not stop with the open criticism of government. Freedom of thought [in the West] also includes a permissiveness to immodesty, the rejection of the existence of God, drunkenness, and immoral sexual behavior, all of which only serves the purpose of annihilating Islamic values. A Muslim is not allowed to speak something that is antithetical to Islamic doctrine. This includes all other modern ideologies, such as feminism, nationalism, secularism, capitalism, and socialism, as they are not coincident with Islam.¹⁶

Radical Islamists notice how this game of diplomacy secures ever greater sums of aid from the United States while the Ferghana Valley governments act with violent contempt toward their own peoples and local elites live in lavish opulence. To radical Islamists, however, the source powering this contempt, corruption, and degradation is not Bishkek, Tashkent, or Dushanbe—it is clearly Washington, D.C.

FREEDOM OF ACQUISITION

HT's portrayal of the freedom of acquisition perhaps sounds somewhat familiar to those who have studied American economic history circa the turn of the twentieth century, when barons such as Rockefeller, Morgan, Vanderbilt, and Carnegie dominated American industry and political decisionmaking. It does not, however, accurately portray the American economic market today or the state of the present American industry (the Enron and Abramoff scandals notwithstanding). Therefore, it again becomes dangerously easy for American policymakers and diplomats to dismiss the relevance of HT's argument.

This freedom of capitalist states has only brought enormous suffering... it results in the expansion of criminal activity, the domination of the mafia, drug addiction, egoism, and the ignoring of societal opinion.... In addition, this freedom has collected enormous wealth and riches and concentrated it into the hands of a few well-connected circles. These capitalists do not pay attention to the suffering and pain of the people, to the bloodshed and criminality. They are only concerned with and obsessed by profit.¹⁷

As mentioned before, it is not how accurate the criticism is in reality or how directly HT can connect it to America, it is *how the argument plays against perceived reality in the Ferghana Valley* that determines the long-term danger to the United States. HT's critique has been an accurate reflection of state power and industry in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Thus, while the evidence mounts against local regimes, HT is not losing the opportunity to show whom these states are striving to resemble and to what philosophy they are adhering. It matters little that Americans do not see themselves in such a light.

THE POLITICS OF THE MARKET ECONOMY

HT accuses America of direct involvement in the oppression of the common Muslim citizen. As vicious and powerful as the authoritarian autocrats of the Ferghana Valley may be, to radical Islamists they are nothing more than puppets on the strings of the master puppeteer. America's engagement with said governments made sure of that, as thousands have been jailed and tortured while America has inexplicably and publicly praised the "small progress" made by the local tyrants. This is not seen by groups such as HT as accidental. Rather, it is viewed as an organized effort to wage war against Islam through proxy regimes.

In its open form the market economy brings only suffering to the Muslim. It contradicts Islam and therefore all Muslims are obligated to reject it.... There is no doubt that these initiatives of America are in the first place taken against Muslims. Islam is the one ideology in the world today capable of offering an alternative to capitalism and democracy. It is the one true rival to these godless ideologies.¹⁸

Another criticism slices deep into the heart of America's foreign policy problem in the Ferghana Valley. If there was ever an opportunity for America not to show hypocrisy in its principles, it was in its dealings with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. To this day, none of the three are considered the "front line" in the war against terror by the U.S. government. As such, the United States should have been less inclined to turn a blind eye to the repression and institutionalized discrimination that only succeeds in stoking the fires of radical Islam against America. Unfortunately, America has not followed the letter of its own laws, which say it will denounce partners that help in security but undermine democratic development.

Either America calls all those countries that are passionately committed to the doctrine of Islam terrorists, or it aims to subvert the Muslim community by making it subordinate to marionettes who rule with an iron hand over the people but in the end only answer and obediently listen to the American regime. Islam was moved forward by America as a candidate to replace Communism as its main enemy. Islamic countries simply occupy one of the most important regions of the world in which America wants to push its influence and authority deeper.¹⁹

Radical Islamists do not take the American reform through engagement as anything except a rationalization for oppression. Even worse, it is not so much that America comes to be regarded as hypocritical, but that it comes to be considered anti-Islamic by design, with its ultimate objective to overrun and destroy the Muslim faith. This is the “nonviolent” message HT succeeds in spreading across the Valley.

FUNDAMENTALISM

When considering HT’s take on fundamentalism, it is fascinating how prominent America and the West figure in all of its formulations. The United States regards radical Islamist groups operating in the Ferghana Valley as relatively weak and insular. They are thought to pose a potential threat of one day attempting a regime overthrow at the local level but to pose little international threat.

The fundamentalist characterization focuses largely on Islamic movements, made by Western politicians and analysts who wish to equate Islamic fundamentalism with being a reactionary force, against all scientific and technical progress.... As soon as such a designation is applied then it will lead to numerous cruel and ruthless measures taken against the

offending groups.... Every Muslim who dies fighting enemy forces, who commits the selfless act of martyrdom, is a criminal suicidal psychopath. Muslims must understand that this use of the term fundamentalism is a political tool. The naming of Islamic movements by America as fundamentalist is nothing but the struggle to prevent Islam from returning to prominence and is used by the West in purely strategic terms.²⁰

This concept that groups such as HT pose little to no international threat is both naïve and short-sighted when the group’s own words are read seriously. There seems to be very little within the official doctrine of HT that focuses exclusively on the Ferghana states. More importantly, the threat to the Ferghana regimes is slight not because of the weakness of Islamist radicals, but because of their focus on the bigger prey that they see as more directly responsible for their troubles: the United States.

AMERICA’S ASPIRATION TO ANNIHILATE ISLAM

In a local context so constrained by vicious oppression, it is easy to see conspiracy theories where others see politics as usual. This is no different with HT, which looked on with knowing disdain in February 2004 when President Bush pushed forth a document at the G-8 summit called the “Greater Middle East Project.”²¹ The official program was to encourage world consensus pushing for political reform across the Middle East. It was entitled “Greater,” because it referred to the Middle East as a land mass stretching from Morocco all the way to Pakistan.

The project, hailed in the West as a multilateral effort to promote global freedom, was roundly condemned by radical Islamist groups who saw it as a brazen attempt at neo-colonialism.²² To radical Islamists this was simply an attempt by America to force its will and values ever further down the throat of the Muslim community.

Only the Muslim community, the Umma, is truly able to stand against the world occupation of America's capitalism. America fears the rebirth of Islam on the world stage. Therefore it strives to prevent this reemergence at every turn. It strives to solidify its own authority and interests not only on its own territory but everywhere where human beings live.²³

While most Americans in one way or another sincerely believe in the superiority of democracy and capitalism, HT's astute analysis of the Greater Middle East Project did expose large and embarrassing loopholes that only deepened the animosity and suspicion of radical Islamists toward the West.

It stands to remark that the desired political reform [pushed by America and forced on the G-8] does not include the right of local peoples to choose their own government, exercising their individual right of choice, if the said choice will result in the coming to power of Islam. This kind of change is unacceptable to the non-believer imperial powers, who strive to make sure their puppets remain in power. The purpose of political reform, therefore, is only to make these puppets come more into line with the points of view of the imperial powers.²⁴

As damning as this analysis is, this article confirms how often this criticism seems to ring true for people in the Ferghana Valley and how the real consequences of American engagement there on the ground make it easy for locals to believe it.

A SCHOLARLY MISDIRECTION

The few warnings that have emerged from the scholarly community about radical Islamists in the Valley continue to be overshadowed by analyses that emphasize the

relatively small size of individual groups or lack of military capability among radicals to attack local regimes.

Dr. Stephen Blank framed the problem with Central Asia perfectly:

Virtually every writer on Central Asia has postulated that the combination of ubiquitous misrule, corruption, poverty, and repression there runs the risk of encouraging opposition groups to gravitate toward Islamic parties and movements for want of any other option. The lack of an option is therefore allegedly due to the fact that the regimes there have stifled all other opposition movements. Alternatively this repression and misrule stimulates this gravitation to Islamic parties because only they have the most coherent and resonant message that the population can assimilate in terms it understands and are left by default as the only alternative.²⁵

The legitimacy radical Islamist groups can achieve is not based purely on the oppression of local regimes but is also achieved by how their propaganda, tinged as it is with international conspiracies and quasi-Marxist economic explanations, does indeed come across coherently at the local level.

Some scholars view the problem as insufficient U.S. spending and consider this the primary culprit for the lack of success in democratic development in this area.²⁶ In reality, American foreign aid has significantly increased ever year since September 11. The United States has a problem in making its voice heard along democratic development lines not because it is unwilling to send enough money to Central Asia. The problem is that it does not attempt to make its voice heard on these issues. Instead, issues of security and cooperation in assisting in the global war against terror have taken sole priority.

The consequence of this short-term prioritization is the ease with which the local Ferghana regimes were able to figure out what was most important to the Americans. As long

as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan seemed to be willing helpers in the war against terror, it was unlikely to complain about how the governments behaved at home. The United States did initiate programs to expand political participation and democratic institution-building after September 11. However, by 2003, the funding instead came to focus more on security and military issues.

While observers are well aware of the repression by local governments, the problem is that the Islamist groups blame this on the United States and its policy of “selective engagement.” Moreover, despite the fact that such groups are unable to overthrow regimes, they are creating a new ideological climate of anti-Americanism that is likely to create tremendous problems—and violent upheavals—in future.

This is especially so in the case of the Hizb al-Tahrir. While HT is not able to mount an armed force against any of the three Ferghana states, it is proselytizing for a future confrontation between the Muslims and the West, especially the United States. It divides the world into believers and non-believers and pushes the idea that non-believers are waging war against Islam that includes not just military operations but also economic, political, cultural, religious, and sexual warfare. In this war, where the West is bent on destroying Islam, there is one obvious main antagonist. It is not Kyrgyzstan, nor is it Tajikistan or Uzbekistan. Without doubt or ambiguity, the main devil for HT is the United States of America.

Consequently, HT may not be the very fuse to light the bomb, but it is certainly providing the atmosphere in which it can be prepared. This is clear in Hizb al-Tahrir’s own call to Muslims:

Today you stand face to face before your ultimate obligation—the defense of your religion and your knowledge. You are the guard over your entire community.... Die for truth and justice! The time has come not to differentiate between life and death. America and the godless West, your

rulers, including the consultants and advisors and businessmen and politicians, they are all in a bottomless pit.... Those who fight for Islam will be a son of Islam and you will find yourself on the one true path! It is demanded of every Muslim who believes in Allah and the Prophet, who believes in the religion given to Muhammad, to stand and find oneself on the true path. There is no alternative to this question as there is no possibility for any Muslim to remain neutral on these issues.²⁷

When analyzing the content and underlying meaning of HT’s ideology it is indisputable that its policy of nonviolence is quite deadly for Americans. It is high time America recognizes this.

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NOTES

¹ HT has written a wealth of material about its organization. Unfortunately, most of it is not translated into English. The author has taken that duty upon himself in this chapter. All quotes and excerpts taken from the Hizb al-Tahrir are translated personally by the author from Russian, Arabic, and at times Uzbek. Any mistakes or misinterpretations, therefore, will have to be his responsibility.

² Ariel Cohen, "Radical Islam and US Interests in Central Asia," Testimony before the Subcommittee on Middle East and Central Asia, Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, October 29, 2003.

³ International Crisis Group, "The IMU and the Hizb ut-Tahrir: Implications of the Afghanistan Campaign," Central Asia Briefing, Osh/Brussels, January 30, 2002.

⁴ Cohen, "Radical Islam and US Interests in Central Asia."

⁵ This is established researching various branch HT websites, where the true extent of the organization's reach, complex organizational structure, and extensive financial revenue streams are made readily apparent. The website <http://www.khilafah.com/kcom/> is excellent for this purpose. (Accessed on October 14, 2006). Some initial Western scholarship also has begun to confirm this supposition. See Dr. Ariel Cohen, "Hisb ut-Tahrir: An Emerging Threat to US Interests in Central Asia," *Backgrounder* #1656, The Heritage Foundation, May 30, 2003, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1656.cfm>.

⁶ Cohen, "Radical Islam and US Interests in Central Asia."

⁷ Direct translation by this author, taken from Hizb al-Tahrir, "Demokratiya Sistema Neveriya," <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/russian/htm/democracy.htm> (accessed on December 12, 2004).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Direct translation by this author, taken from Hizb al-Tahrir, "Opori Amerikanskoi Aggressii," <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/russian/htm/esdarat.htm> (accessed on June 23, 2005).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid (accessed on August 30, 2005).

¹⁷ Ibid (accessed on March 5, 2005).

¹⁸ Ibid (accessed on June 23, 2005).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Direct translation by the author, taken from Hizb al-Tahrir, "Demokratiya Sistema Neveriya" (accessed on February 16, 2005).

²¹ Hizb al-Tahrir, "Otveti na Voprosi," <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/russian/htm/democracy.htm> (accessed on February 4, 2005).

²² Ibid.

²³ Hizb al-Tahrir, "Demokratiya Sistema Neveriya" (accessed on February 16, 2005).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Dr Stephen Blank, appearing before the House of Representatives Committee on Central Asia, 2003, Washington, DC.

²⁶ Drs. Martha Brill Olcott and Fiona Hill, appearing before the House of Representatives Committee on Central Asia, 2003, Washington, DC, 2003.

²⁷ Hizb al-Tahrir, "Otveti na Voprosi."