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Civil society, religious freedom, and Islam Karimov: Uzbekistan's struggle for a decent society

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> Kazanistan's system of law does not institute the separation of church and state. Islam is the favored religion, and only Muslims can hold the upper positions of political authority and influence the government's main decisions and policies, including foreign affairs. Yet other religions are tolerated and may be practiced without fear or loss of most civic rights, except those to hold the higher political or judicial offices. … Other religions and associations are encouraged to have a flourishing cultural life of their own and to take part in the civic culture of the wider society.
>
> JOHN RAWLS[1]

Uzbekistan at the crossroads

The political philosopher John Rawls employs the fictitious image of 'Kazanistan' to elucidate a portion of his argument for attaining global peace. Rawls argues for the implementation of an international social contract based on common values and practices between 'liberal societies' and societies that are not liberal but are 'decent societies'. Liberal societies are founded on liberal political values with constitutional democratic governments; decent societies, such as Kazanistan, have compatible values with popular governments that are not democratic. It is not without merit that Rawls' ideal of Kazanistan as a decent society consists of a composite of the most hopeful characteristics of Central Asian societies. Situated at the Eurasian crossroads of Russia, China, Pakistan and Iran, Central Asia is playing an increasingly significant role in world politics and its societies may well play an active role in crafting a new global pact.

Yet without explicitly referring to any particular Central Asian society, Rawls' depiction of Kazanistan eerily evokes both the promise and disappointment of Uzbekistan's struggle to achieve a decent society. Uzbekistan occupies the heart of Central Asia, bordering the countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan as well as Afghanistan, and thus commands major geopolitical prominence. Particularly since the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, the US 'war on terrorism' has been utilizing military bases in Uzbekistan in support of

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its battles with Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters in neighboring Afghanistan, with lessons learned for fighting the Iraq war of 2003. In addition to the military alliance, longer-term interests may well include opportunities for increased trade between the US and Uzbekistan. The new-found military and economic interest in this Central Asian country has in turn directed the attention of observers to the domestic policies of the Uzbek government.

Following the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991, the Central Asian republics formerly within the Soviet Union gained their independence, including the Republic of Uzbekistan. In the process, they also inherited overbearing bureaucratic political systems as well as faltering economies. During the past decade Uzbekistan has attempted to effect a transition from the Soviet model of single-party, authoritarian rule with a command economy toward an ostensibly more liberal-democratic model of a multi-party, representative democracy with a market economy.[2] However, a necessary condition for the success of both state and economy in the liberal-democratic model is the development of an independent and vibrant civil society. Recognizing this necessity, President Islam Karimov, the powerful Uzbek leader, has argued resolutely for the development of civil society in Uzbekistan.

President Karimov has earned praise from US leaders for his efforts in resisting the Taliban-influenced Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and certain other militant Islamic organizations.[3] These organizations advocate the establishment of an Islamic state, while Karimov appears to advocate the creation of a decent society with overtones of Western liberal values. Yet the character of Karimov's resistance has also caught the attention of the US government, as well as human rights organizations throughout the world, as a result of his severe limitations on political opposition and religious expression.[4] The justification and maintenance of this apparent conflict between the promulgation of Western values defending religious freedom and government edicts restricting religious freedom is one of Karimov's greatest challenges, a challenge that, if not overcome, may prevent Uzbekistan from joining the international community of liberal and decent societies.

Is Uzbekistan on the road to a liberal society? Or, under the leadership of Karimov, is it headed toward Rawls' decent society? In particular, is the Uzbek government inclined toward including the concerns of public interest groups and tolerating religious diversity? If so, has it laid a sufficient foundation for a promising transition from the Soviet inheritance toward a liberal society, including encouraging the development of civil society? Or does Uzbekistan disappointedly have more in common with the political absolutism of its past? Today, Uzbekistan finds itself at the theoretical and practical crossroads of the Soviet legacy of authoritarian or absolutist government and the promise of liberal society.

Considering liberal and decent societies

In his advocacy of an international social contract among nations—the Law of Peoples—as a framework for achieving global peace and stability, Rawls refers

to Kazanistan, an Islamic country whose society is not 'liberal' but 'decent'. If it were liberal, Kazanistan's political culture would exhibit a well-developed sense of national identity; its society would operate according to a rationally-based model of political justice, including guarantee of religious, political and civil liberties, as set forth in international agreements regarding the protection of human rights; and it would have a reasonably just constitutional democratic government, with the governing process ultimately under the political control of the electorate.[5] Kazanistan falls short in meeting completely the criteria for a liberal society, particularly with its unwillingness to rely on a rational defense of justice and the absence of democratic government.[6] Yet Kazanistan is decent, nonetheless.

According to Rawls, Kazanistan instead abides entirely by the three criteria of decency.[7] Kazanistan pursues its foreign policy objectives through diplomacy and trade, rather than through military aggression; its domestic polices are based on an Islamic ethical commitment to (not a Western, rational justification for belief in) the common good, including the dispensation of justice, and thus it is also committed to the rule of law; and its legal system secures internationally-recognized standards of human rights for its citizens, including the right to life, property, formal equality and liberty. In particular, the right to liberty includes a sufficient presence in society of liberty of conscience to guarantee freedom of religion.

The common ground between liberal and decent societies, according to Rawls, can be found in their adherence to international standards of human rights and their willingness to consider in public policy-making the interests of diverse groups in society.[8] With regard to human rights, including freedom of religion, the rights are themselves a subset of the rights of citizens of liberal societies and the rights of members of decent societies. In a liberal society, advocacy of religious freedom initially requires separation of church and state to protect both the church and the state.[9] That is, the citizens of the state are protected from the 'persecuting zeal' of any particular religious sect, and members of sects are protected from each other and the state. Kazanistan's preferential option for Islam at the domestic policy level violates this basic commitment and thus it may not be considered a liberal society. Nonetheless, Kazanistan adheres to international standards of human rights, including securing religious freedom and diversity in society, and thus may be considered a decent society.

Since Kazanistan is a decent but not a liberal society, Rawls refers to its political institutional arrangement as a 'decent consultation hierarchy'.[10] That is, while Kazanistan does not have a constitutional democratic government as found in liberal societies, it does nonetheless respect the presence of voluntary associations and religious diversity in an emerging civil society. Furthermore, as with liberal societies, Kazanistan's political hierarchy consults with society's diverse interests in its public policy-making. More over, Kazanistan's decency stems not only from its adherence to the criteria above, but also from its avoidance of the temptation to political corruption.

Rawls recognizes that other societies exist that are neither liberal nor decent,

yet their hierarchical governing systems still respect most human rights. However, these societies do not permit their citizens to contribute to the decision-making process and are, at best, 'benevolent absolutisms'.[11] Consequently, these absolutist societies will face difficulty in finding common ground with liberal and decent societies in the pursuit of an agreement regarding international peace and stability. Similar to Kazanistan, Uzbekistan appears to be attempting to create a decent, if not a liberal, society. However, it must come to terms with its Soviet inheritance and legacy of absolutism.

Legacy of Soviet absolutism

As a social experiment to resolve shortcomings and failures of liberal-democracies, the Soviet Union attempted to overcome the ultimate incompatibility of the dualism between private interest and public good by arguing for the identification of the one with the other. That is, the timeless and universal quest for a just society free from the turmoil of competing interests would be achieved if the objectives of private interests and the common good were identical.[12] Declaring to have discovered the natural laws of social development and thus the ability to explain and solve this riddle of identification, the Soviet Union propounded its Marxist–Leninist ideology. Claiming that it would achieve justice, Marxism–Leninism served as the guiding ethos of political, economic and social arrangements throughout Soviet society. With an ideological alternative to Western theories of liberal-democracy that historically had given legitimacy to social conflict resulting from unbridled and shortsighted competition, the Soviet state was used to politicize and virtually subsume economic activity within it in an effort to achieve social justice.

One consequence of the Soviet attempt to overcome the public–private dichotomy was to render irrelevant the *raison d'être* of civil society: the maintenance and fostering of a tension between the contrary and competing values of private interest and public good. Since the claims of private interest and public good had become synonymous according to the Soviet model, the tension between the two dissolved. Without any tension to be maintained through the nurturing of formerly competing sets of values, the need for voluntary associations also gradually disappeared. Any possibility, then, for the development of a vibrant civil society in the Soviet Union withered nearly to extinction as the state early on extended its political reach into virtually all aspects of cultural and social life. More over, this reach was not limited to Russian culture and society; it found its way into nearly every cultural, ethnic and religious subgroup of the diverse republics, including Uzbekistan, within its territorial empire.[13]

For seven decades, nonetheless, the Soviet Union was guided by sophisticated theories that meshed poorly with practical problems. But as the fervor of theoretical righteousness slowly dampened with time, the search for practical solutions to practical problems crept to the fore. Ironically, the last fifty years of Soviet history witnessed the political authorities gradually weaning themselves

away from total state control of social decision-making and toward greater reliance on independent civil society of voluntary associations. Indeed, the greater flow of ideas from and communication with the West as well as an ever more inefficient economy operating alongside an expansion in social welfare programs made it increasingly difficult for the Soviet Union to govern along narrow ideological lines. *Glasnost* and greater reliance on a capable citizenry, as in the West, was seen by the Soviet leadership as a practical step toward maintaining power while resolving its budgetary crises.[14]

Yet just as the door began to open for the reemergence of civil society, including relaxation of restrictions on religious activities begun in the 1980s,[15] the Soviet empire imploded; its attempt to institutionalize its ideal of justice faltered and collapsed after a mere seven decades. The causes of its demise were complex and powerful, domestic and international, the least of which were due to internal theoretical errors. The external and entrenched economic, political and military forces of the liberal-democracies and the domestic errors of Soviet policy judgments ultimately overwhelmed the Soviet Union's fledgling experiment in social justice. The various Soviet republics, including Uzbekistan, were left facing enormous economic and social problems with only their own hierarchical governing structures intact. Thus, while the Soviet Union disappeared, the Soviet system remained.

Forsaking Soviet absolutism

While the newly independent Republic of Uzbekistan inherited a Soviet-style state, the Uzbek leadership has been emboldened to continue the search for practical solutions to economic and social problems. Furthermore, with the discrediting of Marxism–Leninism, the Uzbek government has found itself in need of an alternative theoretical paradigm to guide public policy formation.[16] Announcing its commitment to values common to both liberal and decent societies, the government has publicly affirmed its aspiration to develop a civil society that will share the burden of reviving the economy and solving many of its own social problems. A central piece of putting together the puzzle of a new, economically viable and socially stable Uzbekistan has been the implementation of market reforms and the development of an independent judiciary that will reinforce the principle of rule of law.[17] These two conditions necessary for the development of a civil society—market economy and rule of law—have been addressed in public policy statements and press releases by the government of Uzbekistan.

The development of a new political economy, however, is not merely one of borrowing theoretical parts from other liberal societies and mechanically putting them together, assuming thereby that all will run smoothly. Cultural values and traditions form the ether of national identity within which these parts operate. In the modern world, the development of national identity frequently uses pre-modern sources of community building. In Uzbekistan, the late 20th century witnessed a resurgence and reaffirmation of the importance of medieval Islamic

writings for personal ethical improvement.[18] With independence and a desire to abandon the absolutism of the Soviet Union and replace it with a decent society, Uzbekistan saw the necessity of rejuvenating civil society and traditional religious values.

In fact, nearly a year before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, President Karimov publicly expressed consternation over the Soviet government's animosity toward the institutions and beliefs of traditional Islam: 'I must say that the gravest crisis that has befallen us is not economic but moral. The consequences of the destruction of age-old moral principles for ideological reasons will be far more difficult to overcome than the chaos in the economy'.[19] Karimov's extensive political experience with Soviet absolutism, employment in the manufacturing sector of the Uzbek economy and knowledge of the historic role of Islam in Uzbek history provide the impetus for his political thinking and leadership of contemporary Uzbekistan. An exploration of Karimov's writings on state, economy, civil society and religion, as well as consideration of the implications of certain domestic policies regarding religious freedom, will contribute toward a greater understanding of the promise and possibility of civil society in Uzbekistan.

Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan

Islam Abduganievich Karimov was born on 30 January 1938, in the ancient and historic city of Samarkand in the southeastern part of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (UzSSR).[20] An ethnic Uzbek, Karimov was born into a family of civil servants that provided him with opportunities to pursue higher education while emphasizing the importance of public service. He completed his academic studies at the Central Asian Polytechnic Institute and the Tashkent Institute of National Economy, earning undergraduate degrees as a mechanical engineer and economist, respectively. He now holds a doctorate in economics and has published several scientific articles.

In 1960 Karimov began his working career at the Tashkent Farm Machinery Plant (Tashselmash), where he was employed both as an assistant foreman and later a technologist foreman. From 1961 to 1966 he worked as a leading design engineer at the Chkalov Tashkent Aviation Production Plant, a major manufacturer of cargo planes in the former Soviet Union. In 1966 Karimov was transferred to the State Planning Office of the UzSSR, where he worked for more than 15 years as a senior scientific specialist and later served as the first deputy chairman of the office. In 1983 he was appointed minister of finance of the UzSSR, and in 1986 he became deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and deputy head of government of the UzSSR as well as chairman of the State Planning Office.

Concurrently with his rise through the bureaucracy of the Soviet republic's government, Karimov also rose rapidly in the ranks of the Communist Party of the UzSSR. In 1986 he was appointed first secretary of the Communist Party of the Kashka Darya oblast, a region in southern Uzbekistan that borders

Afghanistan. In June 1989 he became first secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of the UzSSR, and on 24 March 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the UzSSR elected him president.

With the demise of the Soviet Union imminent, in 1990 Karimov became head of the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (the new name for the former Communist Party of the UzSSR). On 31 August 1991, he declared the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan,[21] and called for national elections to fill the seats in the revived *Oliy Majlis* (the Supreme Assembly, Uzbekistan's unicameral parliament that replaced the Supreme Soviet[22]) and to choose the republic's first post-UzSSR president. In a multi-candidate competition and the first nation-wide election for president, Karimov was elected to a five-year term as president on 29 December 1991 (four days after the official dissolution of the Soviet Union), with more than 86% of the vote. On 8 December 1992, the *Oliy Majlis* adopted a new constitution modeled after those of other liberal-democratic governments. On 26 March 1995, in accordance with a national plebiscite, Karimov's period of office was extended to 2000. On 9 January 2000, with only a single token opposition candidate, Karimov was re-elected for another term, which was set to end in 2005. However, on 27 January 2002, in another plebiscite, Uzbek voters extended the presidential term of office from five to seven years, with Karimov projected to leave office in 2007.

Influenced by the realities of both a post-Soviet Uzbekistan and a post-Soviet world, Karimov has propounded an argument to legitimate his retention of power while guiding Uzbekistan in its social transformation. He has written extensively on the need to develop a democratic state, a free market economy and a civil society that support the political values of liberal societies. Karimov maintains that 'human values, universally recognized norms of genuine democracy, freedom and human rights' are rapidly filling the vacuum left by the delegitimation of Soviet ideology.[23] Indeed, he points out that 'democratic principles and institutions' are already increasingly influencing the conduct of various aspects of social life in Uzbekistan.[24] He rejects adherence to a single ideology, instead advocating the importance of and respect for ideological diversity based on 'principles of morality and humanism'.[25] Karimov has focused his political writings, public pronouncements and policy directives on the following objective: 'We have set a goal to build a powerful democratic law-governed state and a civil society with stable market economy and open foreign policy'.[26] What is central to Karimov's thinking is the interrelatedness of the political and economic spheres as they intersect the sphere of civil society, an interrelatedness that liberal-democracies have long recognized. Indeed, given the commitment to both sets of competing values of private interest and public good as found in the tension flourishing in civil society, the debate among Western liberals and conservatives has essentially focused on how to maintain that tension. Karimov, too, recognizes this problem.

Karimov has only partially jettisoned his predilection nurtured during the Soviet era of searching for a final resolution to the problems posed by the dichotomy between private interest and public good. The context of Uzbek-

istan's independence has forced him to develop a model of political, economic and social development for Uzbekistan based on the political values of liberal society, while retaining the benevolent values of Soviet absolutism. For example, he recognizes that capitalism is oriented toward the personal maximization of profits, while Marxism focuses on social justice.[27] According to Karimov, 'the orthodox concepts of ″capitalist″ and ″socialist″ have actually merged together. Their artificial division serves as an impediment to the social progress of a country on the road of independent development and integration into the world community.'[28]

Yet the merging of the values of private interest found in capitalism and public good found in socialism can only co-exist when placed in tension with each other. The challenge for Karimov, then, has been to effect peacefully the introduction of the tension between values associated with private interest and values associated with the common good, which requires civil society. Indeed, according to his official press office, President Karimov is well on his way to success. The office lauds Karimov as 'the initiator and leader of historic transformations in our country', who has contributed to the development of a model of economic development that is based on the following five principles: 'de-ideologization of the economy, supremacy of laws, step-by-step reform, state regulation during the transition period and strong social policy'.[29] As noted above, a market economy and a commitment to rule of law are necessary conditions for a vibrant civil society. Even so, the character and quality of civil society itself will be influenced by these necessary conditions. An explanation of the two essential principles of Karimov's political thinking—'de-ideologization of the economy' and 'supremacy of laws'—will provide a guide for understanding the peculiar type of Uzbek civil society he envisions and the crucial role of religion in society and the implications of that role for religious freedom itself.

De-ideologization of the economy

Karimov maintains that political and economic policy decisions made during the Soviet era, *perestroika* notwithstanding, were disastrous for Uzbekistan.[30] The politicization of the economy and society by the Soviet state and ideology was based on good intentions that attempted to deal with many pressing issues, such as problems of food production, energy resource development, and ecological degradation;[31] yet, these attempts were economically and socially ruinous. According to Karimov, 'They brought about complete economic disbalance [*sic*], a catastrophic decline of material and financial resources and the increase of external debts. The main thing was that the system of labor motivation was distorted, which resulted in the deformation of the social psychology of the people, engendering a mood of dependency'. Soviet policy-makers were blinded by the allure of a sophisticated if narrowly-focused ideology that distorted their perception of a properly functioning economy. To avoid murky vision and the missteps that follow, Karimov now argues for the need to forego decision-making based on strict adherence to Soviet or any other ideology. The removal of

ideological imperatives serving as a guide to economic decision-making—'the de-ideologization of the economy'—means that 'the vices of the former totalitarian regime are gradually being eliminated. … The dictate of a single ideology has been eliminated.'[32]

The Soviet leaders were correct, nevertheless, that 'the system and structure of the state depend directly on the economic structure of the society'.[33] Indeed, Karimov believes, a strong economic base is a necessary condition for democracy to exist and flourish in state and society. In favor of reliance on market dynamics for greater productivity, Karimov argues that 'market rules have been in play for millennia and they form the basis of the civil code and judicial practice in all civilized countries'.[34] To this end, he argues that economic reforms must be guided by the inevitable influence of the dynamics of market economics throughout the world: 'Historical experience has taught that, despite all differences in economic conditions and living standards of the population in different countries, the market mechanisms match best and prove most efficient under the current stage of development of the world society'.[35] Consequently, Karimov has encouraged Uzbekistan to move toward a market economy by privatizing many of the state-owned and operated enterprises, while at the same time providing incentives and assistance to potential foreign investors to enter into joint ventures with the Uzbek government.[36]

Karimov warns, nevertheless, that the transition to a market economy will be difficult. The collapse and dismantling of the Soviet Union's command economy occurred at a time when there was no significant market infrastructure ready to replace it.[37] However, Karimov eschews the *laissez-faire* approach to economic development, arguing that the free market is primarily a means to an end, a means that contributes to the shaping of new values throughout society:[38] 'Building a market economy is not an end in itself. The final objective of all reforms, be they economic, democratic or political, is the creation of decent conditions of life for man in which he can open up and reveal his labor, creative and spiritual potentialities.'[39] It is crucial, then, as the state orchestrates the shift away from a command economy, to engage in a careful and deliberative, stage-by-stage policy of economic reform toward the objective of a market economy.

In fact, as the state steers the economy in its transition from command to free market economics, Karimov believes that the state itself must undergo transition from its previously active role of controlling and dictating the nature of production and distribution to a passive role of relying on market mechanisms. However, while Uzbekistan is in the transitory period from state ownership to private enterprise, the state must also secure 'the social protection of the population'.[40] The state's presence in the economy will continue to be felt as it regulates market activity to minimize social dislocations and to provide social welfare assistance where needed.[41] According to Karimov, 'We need our own, principally new model of building a socially-oriented free market economy, taking into account the peculiarities of the republic and being in harmony with the past, present and future development of Uzbekistan.'[42] In this way, Karimov

suggests that, inasmuch as the state itself is democratic, the universal values of democracy will also be present throughout the economy: 'Socially-oriented market economies combine fully the features of a free market and social economy in order to merge the efficiency of economic advancement with social guarantees and justice'.[43] Thus, the proposed interplay between state and economy suggests that Uzbekistan is more likely to become a decent society rather than a liberal society.

This recognition of an inherent connection between economic activities and other social values influences Karimov's understanding of the nature of civil society: 'The road selected for Uzbekistan is aimed at the formation of a socially-oriented market economy matching to the full the interests of the republic'.[44] Consequently, Karimov's 'socially-oriented market economy' relies on market mechanisms for greater production and distribution, as they are the best way to respond rapidly to changing economic conditions, both domestically and internationally.[45] However, it also relies on the hierarchical governing mechanisms of the state as 'a guarantor of stability, security and social justice'.

Supremacy of laws

While the Uzbek state must not dictate the myriad aspects of economic decision-making as occurred under Soviet absolutism, Karimov recognizes that 'a purely self-regulating market does not exist anywhere' and that it is the state's responsibility in a decent society to control and guide the market.[46] The state must play an active role in attenuating swings and cycles in the economy through price controls, tax and credit benefits, subsidies and other interventionist techniques. Nevertheless, Karimov also recognizes that the actions of the state must be informed by rule of law: 'The supremacy of law is the basic principle of the law-governed state. It presupposes the establishment of the absolute predominance of law in all spheres of life. … Everybody is equal before the law.'[47]

Similar now to the political institutional values of liberal society, Karimov maintains that Uzbekistan must build a 'modern democratic secular state' by moving toward a multi-party system that includes competition in free and open elections for public office.[48] He argues for a government that incorporates separation of powers among its three branches and that is guided by and responsive to democratic principles: 'We have every reason to declare that the Republic of Uzbekistan Constitution meets the most democratic norms and requirements established in the world community'.[49] Indeed, Karimov maintains, 'universal democratic principles' are now enshrined in the new constitution, which is designed to assist the country in developing a civil society guided by and protective of these principles.[50] To this end, Karimov has not only called for popular elections for representatives to the *Oliy Majlis*, but he has encouraged the continuation of local self-governance through neighborhood committees or *mahallas*.[51]

Karimov calls for the democratic participation of Uzbek citizens in the governance of the state: 'It is of paramount importance that political parties and

other movements and organizations perform the functions of democratic institutions linking the citizens and the state'.[52] But to do this, 'the values of democracy throughout society' must be strengthened, including the promotion of participation in non-governmental organizations.[53] The intent, then, of citizen participation in various voluntary and professional organizations found in civil society is to enhance 'citizens' participation in state management'. There exists a strong link between democracy in civil society and a democratic state, according to Karimov; the state's role is to eliminate obstacles impeding the extension of democracy throughout civil society: 'As the chief instrument of reform, the state works in every possible way to lay the groundwork for an enduring democratic civil society'.[54]

In Karimov's political thinking, the necessary conditions for civil society now appear to be in place: a market economy and adherence to the rule of law. Yet, according to Karimov, in addition to protecting private property and enforcing the sanctity of contracts, the law should also reflect 'the popular traditions, customs and moral principles inculcated into the daily life of the population and inherited from their age-old history of inter-personal and inter-ethnic communications and beliefs, which do not run counter to universal human values, rights and freedoms'.[55] Karimov's call for the inculcation of religious values suggests that his thinking leans more toward the development of a decent rather than liberal society.

Civil society and religion

Liberal civil society promotes the importance of freedom of thought, speech and association, not only with regard to politics but also with regard to religious matters.[56] With the understanding that the formal institutions of church and state would not commingle, liberal-democracies have generally relegated ecclesiastical institutions and their religious activities to civil society, along with other voluntary associations. While the religious values found in civil society frequently have an impact on politics, as do other values, liberal-democracies have generally been tolerant of diverse and opposed religions and theologies to the point of, but not including, violent disruption of society itself.[57] Nevertheless, as with many other social issues, a gray area seems to envelop that point of tolerance, thus frequently making it difficult to determine when the mingling of religious beliefs and political activity has become uncivil.

Karimov wrestles with these questions as he proclaims the necessity of religious freedom and encourages 'freedom of conscience and religion' for Uzbekistan: 'Every individual has the right to hold his or her own opinion and beliefs, to perform religious rites and rituals. Religion today as a spiritual force facilitates the process of purification by exposing lies and hypocracy [*sic*] and promoting high moral principles'.[58] Yet Karimov also recognizes non-religious secular thinking as 'parallel with religion, and possessing the same right to exist'. He believes that the interaction between secular and religious thinking will promote 'the richness, variety, and development of the human race'.

The Uzbek state, then, according to Karimov, must not only provide 'social protection' during and after the transition to a market economy, but it must '*ensure the rights and freedoms of citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin, religious beliefs, social status or political convictions*'.[59] In his defense of individual rights, Karimov calls attention to specific articles in the Constitution of Uzbekistan that acknowledge democratic rights, including religious freedom:

> *Article 13.* Democracy in the Republic of Uzbekistan shall rest on the principles common to all mankind, according to which the ultimate value is the human being, his life, freedom, honour, dignity and other inalienable rights. Democratic rights and freedoms shall be protected by the Constitution and the laws.[60]
>
> *Article 31.* Freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all. Everyone shall have the right to profess or not to profess any religion. Any compulsory imposition of religion shall be impermissible.[61]
>
> *Article 61.* Religious organizations and associations shall be separated from the state and equal before law. The state shall not interfere with the activity of religious associations.[62]

The Uzbek constitutional and ostensibly secular state, then, must be tolerant of religion.

Karimov, however, also believes that the state has a special interest in religion beyond that typically found in liberal societies. He argues that religion contains universal norms of behavior that are transmitted from generation to generation; religion is the spiritual dimension of society that influences cultural development. He values the crucial role that religion, especially Islam, plays in assisting individuals to 'overcome the trials of human existence as well as their isolation and alienation from one another'.[63]

Karimov's attention to religion may not be misplaced. The idea of civil society minimally requires a set of shared values, even as a basis for diversity and toleration. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the attempt to create shared values based on Marxism–Leninism formally disappeared, leaving a vacuum to be filled by another ideology or public philosophy. In Uzbekistan, the only existing philosophical framework that commands widespread appeal for an alternative public philosophy is that of Islam. While approximately 80% of Uzbek citizens are only nominally Muslim (Sunni), the past millennium of Islamic theological development has produced many schools of religious thought in Uzbekistan. The major differences appear to have less to do with theological doctrine *per se* than with social ethics. That is, Islamic teachings have steadfastly focused on the moral imperative of the individual to contribute to the welfare of the poor and of the state to correct social injustice; nevertheless, diverse opinions exist on how to fulfill adequately this imperative.[64]

Given that Islamic cultural roots are sufficiently deep and Islamic ethical obligations are inherently political, many observers argue that the presence of Islam in Uzbekistan is crucial to developing a national identity as required by civil society.[65] Karimov recognizes this situation, as well. In their resistance to Soviet ideology, various Uzbek political and religious leaders frequently ap-

pealed to the moral values of the noble traditions contained in their historical literature. In his attempt to make a case for supporting the just, ethical ruler, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov, too, frequently appeals to the past, often referring to and citing Abu Nasr al-Farabi, a 10th century Muslim philosopher and the founder of Muslim political philosophy.[66] Yet in guiding his country's transition from Soviet absolutism, Karimov's acceptance of Islam to guide Uzbek politics and policy-making (similar to that of Rawls' Kazanistan) further demonstrates Uzbekistan's intended progression toward a decent society.

Uzbekistan and the decent society

Throughout Uzbekistan's history, state and religion have generally had an exceptional, symbiotic relationship. To continue and further develop this relationship, Karimov proposes that the state be guided by five principles: respect for believers' religious feelings, recognition of the privacy of religious convictions, equal rights for all religions with no persecution of believers or non-believers, necessity of dialog among all faiths to promote spiritual renewal and moral values, and unacceptability of using religion for destructive purposes.[67] With these five principles, Karimov has broadened the role of the state beyond the mere toleration of religion; as with Kazanistan, the Uzbek state may also involve itself with religion to attain the common good. According to the official annotations of his written works,

> Only organic combination of principles of democratic society common to all mankind such as freedom, free will, subordination of the minority to the majority, election of the state and the accountability to the electorate and others with ethnic, national, religious, social and historical peculiarities can help to build not only democratic, but a just democratic society. That is which [*sic*] the President thinks.[68]

Furthermore, according to Karimov, 'The spirituality we promote … ought to nurture in people's hearts and minds a faith in the future, a love of the motherland, and humanism, courage, tolerance, and fairness'.[69]

Karimov realizes that he is advocating a synthesis of modern liberalism and traditional spiritual values: 'In fact, the traditional Eastern culture that our people have been nurturing for thousands of years, and which we seek to retain, differs a great deal from its Western counterpart'.[70] Unlike the failed attempt of the Soviet era's absolutism guided by Marxism–Leninism but similar to Kazanistan's decent society, Karimov argues that Islamic traditionalism provides the framework necessary to help society resist the fickleness and negative consequences of radical individualism, such as nihilism and egoism, found in Western liberal societies.[71] The nurturing in civil society of Islamic traditionalism's combination of 'a certain inwardness resistant to ephemeral external fashions' as well as 'a certain openness promising great possibilities for future development' will provide the cultural and spiritual basis for the development of Uzbek national identity.

Karimov's press office proclaims the president's accomplishments with regard

to having 'raised to the level of state policy respectful relations to the spiritual values of our nation, renewal and development of our sacred religion, traditions and customs, the priceless heritage of the people'.[72] Indeed, according to Karimov, it is crucial that the Uzbek people understand the contributions made historically by 'distinguished Uzbek thinkers' to the world's understanding of science, culture and religion that 'helped shape the very course of human knowledge'.[73] He says that 'it is difficult to overestimate the contribution of Uzbek ancestors on the development of Moslem culture'.[74] In fact, Karimov maintains that the religious toleration of the Uzbek state finds its very roots in Moslem or Islamic culture.[75] Consequently, he values highly the role to be played by the 'Islamic factor' in the decent society's domestic and foreign policy:[76] 'Revival of Islamic cultural values that have accumulated over a thousand years of national experience has become an important step along the road of self-determination and realization of the cultural and historical unity of the Uzbek people'.[77]

Limits of religious toleration

Given Uzbekistan's historical and cultural development as influenced by Islam, then, Karimov calls for a synthesis of modern liberal values of religious tolerance and the traditional Islamic values of social welfare. While he advocates the importance of Islam in contributing to the rebirth of an independent, just and progressive Uzbekistan, Karimov also maintains that among the numerous Islamic organizations in Uzbek society, the obtrusive teachings and practices of certain militant groups are undermining that synthesis. According to Karimov, they want to impose 'alien spiritual ideals and values' that will disrupt Uzbek society and ultimately return Uzbekistan to 'medieval obscurantism'.[78] He argues that Islamic militants, calling themselves 'fighters for faith', attempt to justify their political activism by preaching a perverted understanding of Islam. Karimov has condemned both international terrorism and religious extremism and fundamentalism and declared them to be the greatest threats to Uzbek stability and sovereignty.[79]

In addition to public moral exhortations, Karimov also relies on his government's broad interpretation of constitutional power to restrict unauthorized religious activities in the name of constitutional safeguards protecting individual rights:

> *Article 20.* The exercise of rights and freedoms by a citizen shall not encroach on the lawful interests, rights and freedoms of other citizens, the state or society.[80]

To reduce political threats to Karimov's regime, the Uzbek government has banned most opposition political parties, both secular and Islamic, including the *Erk* (Freedom) Democratic Party, the *Birlik* (Unity) Party, the *Adolat* (Justice) Party, and the Islamic Renaissance Party,[81] and to defend the ostensibly secular Uzbek state, the government has banned independent Islamic mosques and organizations. The primary targets of the ban include followers of Wahhabism,

the Army of Islam, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Liberation Party).[82]

These and many other non-state approved, independent Islamic organizations are often characterized as conservative movements advocating fundamentalist teachings at odds with the ethos of toleration and pluralism typically espoused in both liberal and decent societies. *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, for one, declaims the necessity of changing any and all corrupt societies where Muslims live into an Islamic society closer to that of benevolent absolutism:

> [*Hizb ut-Tahrir*] aims to do this by firstly changing the society's existing thoughts to Islamic thoughts so that such thoughts become the public opinion among the people, who are then driven to implement and act upon them. Secondly, the Party works to change the emotions in the society until they become Islamic emotions that accept only that which pleases Allah (swt) and rebel against and detest anything which angers Allah (swt). Finally, the Party works to change the relationships in the society until they become Islamic relationships, which proceed in accordance with the laws and solutions of Islam. These actions which the Party performs are political actions, since they relate to the affairs of the people in accordance with the Shari'ah rules and solutions, and politics in Islam is looking after the affairs of the people, either in opinion or in execution or both, according to the laws and solutions of Islam.[83]

With regard to Uzbekistan, *Hizb ut-Tahrir* criticizes the secular nature of the constitution for embracing 'the separation of religion from state' and contradicting 'the doctrine and ideology of the Qur'an'.[84] Furthermore, it perceives the real intent of the constitution as facilitating the West's growing military presence in Central Asia, which threatens pure Islam: 'This constitution allowed the Jewish Karimov on behalf of Uzbekistan Muslims to sign a deal with the United States and take part in its crusade against Islam and Muslims'. *Hizb ut-Tahrir* supports those who believe it is their 'primary function to protect Islam and fight the enemies of Allah'.[85]

In addition to proselytizing and social activism, many militant organizations in Uzbekistan have also engaged in political assassination and guerrilla warfare. For example, in August 1999, the IMU formally announced 'the Jihad against the tyrannical government of Uzbekistan and the puppet Islam Karimov and his henchmen'.[86] Calling on faithful Muslims to defend fellow believers who have been subjected to imprisonment and torture, the IMU proclaimed that 'the Mujahedeen of the Islamic Movement, after their experience in warfare [in Afghanistan and Tajikistan], have completed their training and are ready to establish the Blessed Jihad'. Indeed, the IMU has been accused by the Uzbek government of insurrection and participation in earlier subversive activities in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, cooperation with the Taliban in Afghanistan and Osama ben Laden's al-Qaeda, and armed attacks on the Uzbek state, including the killing of police officers in the Ferghana Valley in 1997, suicide bombings in Bukhara and Tashkent in April 2004 and the deadly but failed assassination attempt on President Karimov in Tashkent in February 1999.[87]

To curb the influence of Islamic militancy, in 1998 the *Oliy Majlis* enacted the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations to restrict the

activities of virtually all religious denominations, including non-state approved Islamic organizations.[88] Under this law, in addition to outlawing proselytism, all religious organizations must be registered with and approved by the Uzbek government before they may conduct worship activities and religious rituals as well as conduct other social programs. With regard to registered Islamic organizations, the primary target of the legislation, only those imams, mosques, liturgy and publications are permitted that have been approved by the Spiritual Directorate for Muslims (the Muftiate), a government agency with members appointed by the president.

The attempts by the government of President Karimov to deal with problems of Islamic extremism, however, have brought into question the prudence of its use of harsh strictures on religious dissent and thus Karimov's own commitment to individual rights of either liberal or decent society, including religious freedom, and the rule of law. The US Department of State has cited abundant instances in Uzbekistan involving breaches of rule of law, including arbitrary and unlawful deprivation of life; disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment; arbitrary arrest, detention and exile; denial of fair public trial; and arbitrary interference with personal privacy, family and home.[89] International non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, have also documented numerous cases of human rights abuses involving religious beliefs and activities in Uzbekistan.[90]

Thousands of individuals have been arbitrarily arrested, detained under inhumane conditions, kept incommunicado, tortured and frequently killed by Uzbek police and security forces. Individuals publicly accused of various infractions of the law—from conspiracy to overthrow the government to worshipping in unapproved mosques, possessing banned literature, or growing a beard—have been convicted by Uzbek courts in unfair trials, as adjudged by standards found in international agreements to which the Republic of Uzbekistan is a signatory.[91] The use of forced confessions as well as refusal to consider evidence presented by the defense is pandemic, with sentences of punishments frequently disproportionate to the crimes alleged to have been committed. In addition to the hundreds who have died while in custody or been executed after sentencing, it is estimated that 7500 individuals are presently incarcerated for conviction of various crimes related to religious activities.

It may well be the case, as noted by the US Department of State, that 'the [Uzbek] government does not consider this repression to be directed against religious freedom itself but instead against those who desire to overthrow the secular order'.[92] Nevertheless, are the government's actions compatible with either a liberal or decent civil society?

Civil society?

Karimov's attempt to effect a transition from Soviet absolutism to liberal society has resulted in 'a nontraditional form of authoritarianism in which power resides

as much in the person of the president as in the office'.[93] The Constitution of Uzbekistan and subsequent amendments and legislation have in effect shifted the separated powers of the state (as typically found in constitutional democratic governments) to the executive branch, through the president's control over the personnel composition of the People's Democratic Party that provides most of the candidates for the *Oliy Majlis*, the judiciary, the *hokims* (local governors), and the administrators and councils of the *mahallas*. In contrast with the Communist Party that controlled the Uzbek government during the Soviet era, today the president controls the Uzbek government through appointments to party and state positions with plenary authority to remove appointees.[94] This form of 'presidentialism', as opposed to party control, has resulted in a powerful Uzbek state run by Karimov and other former Communist elites.[95] Thus, while the state has the façade of an electoral regime, it may more accurately be seen as a non-competitive authoritarian regime that has more in common with the consultation hierarchies of decent societies than with the constitutional democratic governments of liberal societies.[96] One unfortunate consequence of this political hierarchy based on *de facto* concentration of powers and operated by elites from the Soviet era is the continued use of violent tactics and intimidation also from that era.

In classical liberal theory the state's role is that of an umpire among competing individual and group interests, striving to avoid violence through the peaceful resolution of conflict.[97] Beyond guaranteeing basic individual rights, including freedom of speech, association and religion, as well as maintaining the peace, the liberal state has little interest. Consequently, virtually all religious teachings and practices, including participation in politics, are tolerated. From the perspective of liberalism, then, Karimov is undermining his own claim of supporting religious freedom and the development of civil society in Uzbekistan.

Despite his public and theoretical support of political liberalism, Karimov nevertheless perceives contemporary liberal society's approach to religious freedom as tolerating narrowly focused, religious organizations advocating extremist causes that threaten social stability and the legitimacy of the state itself. Unable to accept the ruinous outcome of this apparent contradiction, the Uzbek government restricts religious activities for the collective welfare of society. While he wants to encourage society's gravitation toward reliance on the compassionate social character of Islam, Karimov claims that he does not want a narrow religious or political ideology to control public policy in Uzbekistan, as during the Soviet era. He wants to replace the indoctrination of Soviet ideology with the inculcation of liberal political and Islamic ethical values that will provide space in civil society for the free discussion of policy options to achieve the common good.[98] To this end, Uzbekistan as a decent society must foster the development of civil society to encourage the emergence of voluntary associations, including religious sects and to promote respect for individual rights, including religious freedom.

In contrast with liberal society, the decent society does indeed argue that the state has an interest that transcends the necessity of serving merely as an umpire

among competing interests.[99] Shared values must be promulgated and inculcated by the state in civil society, values that include a commitment to individual liberty and religious freedom. In this regard, Karimov frequently refers to Islamic traditionalism to lay a foundation of shared values in Uzbek civil society. Indeed, to resist those militants who are errantly borrowing from the Islamic past to subvert Uzbekistan's attempt to build a decent society, Karimov appeals to the historic contributions of the Uzbek Islamic heritage: 'Reviving the spiritual originality and traditions of Central Asian Islam takes the ground from under the followers of *imported Islam* as well as the *politicization of Islam* and the *Islamization of policy*'.[100]

Similar to the approach of Rawls' Kazanistan and other decent societies, then, Karimov's government has assumed the promulgation of values that would typically be carried out by voluntary associations in civil society under the liberal approach. However, contrary to the ethos of decent societies, the use of violence coupled with disregard for rule of law has resulted in considerable human rights abuses. Indeed, it appears that the Uzbek state has in effect nationalized one version of Islam, thus marginalizing all other interpretations to the point of persecution and ultimately, then, undermining the promise and possibility of civil society itself.[101] That is, while Karimov has promulgated a vision of civil society closer to that of decent societies than that of liberal societies, the actions of Karimov's government may have merely replaced the former political ideology of the Soviet era with a government-approved religious public philosophy, thus avoiding the decent society altogether and maintaining the absolutism he inherited.[102]

Karimov at the crossroads

Individual rights are assumed to exist to protect the individual from the state, while the pursuit of the common good by the state is assumed to be worthwhile and thus justifies restrictions on those rights when they lead to socially destructive behavior. However, one of the most vexing problems of both liberal and decent societies is that of identifying the legitimate boundary between individual rights and the public interest—in this case, between freedom of religion (to protect private interest) and restrictions on freedom of religion (to achieve the common good). Once this boundary has been identified, civil society must maintain a tension between private interest and public good, with the state intervening only to preserve this tension.[103] The concept and significance of civil society, then, must be understood as something distinct from market economy and democratic polity; it is more than a resting stop on the road to the accumulation of wealth or a training camp for good citizenship, although it may serve these purposes, as well. Furthermore, since the consequences of the government's actions reverberate throughout civil society, the character of civil society is partially a function of the common good that the government attempts to achieve.[104]

Government restrictions on religion under President Karimov's administration

consist of considerable reach and use of force by the state into Uzbekistan's nascent civil society, a reach that many observers find troubling with regard to internationally accepted norms of respect for human rights.[105] Regardless of the approach to civil society advocated in Karimov's political thinking, the disturbing human rights record in Uzbekistan suggests that Karimov's attempt to develop a civil society—liberal or decent—is failing.[106] The government itself routinely violates individual rights, including religious freedom, of members of civil society. So, the disregard for individual rights, as well as the skirting of rule of law, the unfulfilled promises of a market economy and the increase in government graft and corruption, undermines prospects for the successful development of Uzbek civil society, far from the ideal model of Rawls' Kazanistan. Ironically, Karimov's obsession with and response to real and perceived threats to Uzbekistan's national security by Islamic militants may ultimately undermine his social experiment in a liberal or decent civil society and freedom of religion in a way that the militants are incapable of achieving on their own.

Notes and references

Several names and titles below, primarily those that refer to Islam Karimov and Uzbekistan, may appear misspelled. However, it should be noted that the official written national language of Uzbekistan is in the process of converting from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. Consequently, various spellings exist for the same name; e.g., the name *Uzbekistan* has the following four spellings: Узбекистан (Russian Cyrillic), Узбекистон (Uzbekistani Cyrillic), Uzbekiston (Uzbekistani Latin) and Uzbekistan (English).

1. John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp 75–76.
2. For a reasonably comprehensive study of Uzbekistan's transitory period, see Resul Yalcin, *The Rebirth of Uzbekistan: Politics, Economy and Society in the Post-Soviet Era* (Reading, MA: Ithaca Press, 2002).
3. Kathryn McConnell, 'U.S. enjoys new relationship with Uzbekistan, Official Says: State's Jones says U.S. is grateful for country's support', US Department of State, <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/02031307.htm> (accessed 13 March 2002). For a journalistic account of the violence and conflict between the Karimov government and militant Islam, see Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), chs 5–8.
4. Cf. Abdumannob Polat, 'Can Uzbekistan build democracy and civil society?' in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel C. Waugh, eds, *Civil Society in Central Asia* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp 137–144.
5. Rawls, op cit, Ref 1, pp 23–25.
6. As a long-time proponent of liberal-democracy, Rawls prefers a liberal-democratic government; see his classic work John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev ed (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), [originally 1971], as well as John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
7. Rawls, op cit, Ref 1, pp 64–67.
8. Ibid, pp 78–81.
9. Ibid, pp 166–167; cf. pp 149–150.
10. Ibid, pp 76–78.
11. Ibid, p 63.
12. For a classic treatment on problems associated with authoritarian states with command economies, see Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political–Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
13. M. Nazif Shahrani, 'Islam and the political culture of "Scientific Atheism" in Post-Soviet Central Asia', in Michael Bourdeaux, ed, *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp 273–279.
14. S. Frederick Starr, 'Civil Society in Central Asia', in Holt Ruffin and Waugh, op cit, Ref 4, pp 28–29.
15. Michael Bourdeaux, 'Glasnost and the Gospel: the emergence of religious pluralism', in Bourdeaux, op cit, Ref 13, pp 113–117; cf. Marie Broxup, 'Political trends in Soviet Islam after the Afghanistan War',

in Andreas Kappeler et al, eds, in *Muslim Communities* Reemerge*: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics, and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), pp 304–321.

16. Shireen T. Hunter, 'Religion, politics, and security in Central Asia', *SAIS Review*, Vol 21, Summer–Fall 2001, pp 72–73.
17. Starr, op cit, Ref 14, p 32.
18. Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), pp 277–278; cf. Shahram Akbarzadeh, 'Nation-building in Uzbekistan', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 15, March 1996, pp 23–31; and Aleksander Djumaev, 'Nation-building, culture, and problems of ethnocultural identity in Central Asia: the case of Uzbekistan', in Will Kymlicka and Magda Opalski, eds, *Can Liberal Pluralism Be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp 320–344.
19. M. Berger, 'We have to make our own way: a conversation with Islam Karimov, President of Uzbekistan', *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol 43, 1991, p 30.
20. The following biographical information on Islam Karimov is taken primarily from the following sources: Overseas-Post Organization, *Islom Karimov Steers Uzbekistan On Its Own Way* (Nuremberg: Dr. Harnisch Verlags GmbH, 1996), pp 5–19; Press Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, <http://www.press-service.uz/eng/president_eng/president_eng.htm> (accessed 19 May 2002); Encarta Encyclopedia, <http://encarta.msn.com/find/Concise.asp?ti = 0013B000> (accessed 20 October 2001); and the Umid Foundation, <http://www.umid.uz/Main/Uzbekistan/President/president.html> (accessed 1 July 2002).
21. Upon independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan inherited the same territorial borders as the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (UzSSR), including the territory of the Karakalpak Republic. The UzSSR was established by the Soviet Union in 1924, after the short-lived Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Republic (1917–1924) was eventually dismembered into five Soviet socialist republics: Kazakh SSR (Kazakhstan) in 1936, Kirgiz SSR (Kyrgystan) in 1936, Tadzhik SSR (Tajikistan) in 1929, Turkmen SSR (Turkmenistan) in 1927 and UzSSR; see Gregory Gleason, *The Central Asian States: Discovering Independence* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), ch 3. Attempts to assert Russian political control over Central Asia pre-date those of the Soviet Union; see, for example, Allworth, op cit, Ref 18, and Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001).
22. In a referendum held on 27 January 2002, Uzbek voters approved the creation of a bicameral national legislature.
23. Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan: The Road of Independence and Progress* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Uzbekiston, 1992), p 4.
24. Islam Karimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Uzbekiston, 1998), pp 108ff.
25. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, p 16; cf. Taras Kuzio, 'Soviet-era Uzbek elites erase Russia from national identity', EurasiaNet.org, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/culture/articles/eav042002.shtml> (accessed April 20, 2002), and Vladimir Brovkin, 'Fragmentation of authority and privatization of the state', *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol 6, Summer 1998, pp 504–517.
26. Islam Karimov, *The Most Important Tasks of Intensification of Democratic Reforms at the Present Stage* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Uzbekiston, 1996), p 45.
27. Islam Karimov, *Building the Future: Uzbekistan – Its Own Model for Transition to a Market Economy* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Uzbekiston, 1993), p 18.
28. Ibid, p 4.
29. Press Service, 'Biography of I.A. Karimov', <http://www.press-service.uz/eng/president_eng/president_eng.htm> (accessed 19 May 2002).
30. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, pp 36–35; cf. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, pp 8, 11.
31. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, pp 10–11.
32. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, p 4.
33. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, p 39.
34. Ibid, p 60.
35. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, p 37.
36. An example would be the creation of UzDAEWOOauto, a joint venture between the government of Uzbekistan and Daewoo, Inc., an automobile company of Korea, which has built a manufacturing plant in Asaka, Uzbekistan, the first of its kind in Central Asia; see the marketing announcement *UzDAEWOO* (Velviya Ad. AG., 1998).
37. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, pp 12–13. For an early assessment and a more recent depiction of the problems and promise of a market economy in Uzbekistan, see Academy of Sciences of the Republic of

Uzbekistan, *Independent Uzbekistan Today* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Uzbekiston, 1993), and S. Gulyamov, R. Ubaydullaeva and I. Akhmedov, *Independent Uzbekistan* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Mekhnat, 2000), respectively.

38. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, p 39.
39. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, p 65.
40. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, pp 41–42.
41. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, pp 17–18; cf. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, pp 58–59.
42. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, p 6.
43. Ibid, p 41.
44. Ibid, p 23.
45. Ibid, p 45.
46. Ibid, pp 49–51.
47. Ibid, p 64.
48. 'Uzbek Official Says Karimov Fully Committed to Creating Modern Democracy: Q&A with Uzbek Deputy Foreign First Minister Sadyk Savev', EurasiaNet.org, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/qanda/articles/eav031102a.shtml> (accessed 11 March 2002).
49. Karimov, op cit, Ref 26, p 47.
50. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, p 111.
51. These committees encourage local participation in finding solutions to social needs of the community, such as organizing weddings, funerals and birthday celebrations, as well as assisting in arbitrating and resolving personal disputes. For a thorough examination of the nature of the *mahallas*, see Eric W. Sievers, 'Uzbekistan's Mahalla: from Soviet to absolutist residential community associations', *Journal of International and Comparative Law at Chicago–Kent*, Vol 2, 2002, pp 91–158.
52. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, pp 108–109.
53. Ibid, pp 118, 181.
54. Ibid, p 112.
55. Karimov, op cit, Ref 27, p 61.
56. Cf. Brian Tierny, 'Religious rights: a historical perspective', in Noel B. Reynolds and W. Cole Durham, Jr., eds, *Religious Liberty in Western Thought* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), ch 2.
57. Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), ch 2.
58. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, p 18.
59. Ibid, p 14 (emphasis original).
60. *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Uzbekiston, 1992), p 10.
61. Ibid, p 13.
62. Ibid, p 18.
63. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, p 20.
64. Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), p 143; cf. Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 2001), pp 114ff; Ghoncheh Tazmini, 'The Islamic revival in Central Asia: a potent force or a misconception?' *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 20, 2001, 63–83; and Allworth, op cit, Ref 18.
65. See, for example, Reuel Hanks, 'Civil society and identity in Uzbekistan: the emergent role of Islam', in Holt Ruffin and Waugh, op cit, Ref 4, pp 159–163, and Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, 'Independent Uzbekistan: a Muslim community in development', in Bourdeaux, op cit, Ref 13, pp 295–302.
66. See, for example, Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, pp 5, 89, 91, 161–162; cf. Allworth, op cit, Ref 18, pp 20 (on 12 natural qualities essential in a perfect sovereign) and 277; Charles E. Butterworth, 'Political Islam: the origins', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol 524, November 1992, 26–37; and Alfarabi, *The Political Writings: Selected Aphorisms and Other Texts*, trans. and annot. Charles E. Butterworth (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001). Of Turkish origin, although not an ethnic Uzbek, al-Farabi was born in the small village of Wasij in the district of Farab near the confluence of two rivers, the Arys Darya and the Syr Darya, located in present day Uzbekistan. He began his studies in the Uzbek cities of Shash (Tashkent), Samarkand, and Bukhara. Al-Farabi's reputation in the West as an imminent philosopher emerged later with his philosophic writings undertaken while living in Baghdad.
67. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, p 25; cf. Karimov, op cit, Ref 26, p 46.
68. Press Service, 'Annotations to the Collection of Works by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov', <http://www.press-service.uz/eng/knigi_knigi_eng/knigi_eng3.htm> (accessed 15 June 2002), p 6.
69. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, p 114; cf. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, p 8.
70. Ibid.

71. Ibid, pp 114–115.
72. Press Service, op cit, Ref 29.
73. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, p 161.
74. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, p 2.
75. Karimov, *Uzbekistan Today* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: InfoCentre OPRUz, 2000), p 7; on the historic tolerance by Islam of other monotheistic religions, particularly of Judaism and Christianity, see Armstrong, op cit, Ref 64, pp 135, 151–152.
76. Karimov, op cit, Ref 23, p 10.
77. Karimov, op cit, Ref 75, p 6.
78. Karimov, op cit, Ref 24, p 16.
79. Press Service, op cit, Ref 68, pp 5, 12, 13, 16, 22; cf. Karimov's earlier discussion of the problem of religious terrorism in Central Asia in Overseas-Post Organization, op cit, Ref 20, pp 5–55, and Islam Karimov, 'Conference address', in *Peace, Stability, Cooperation: International Conference 'Central Asia – A Nuclear Weapons Free Zone'* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Information Agency 'Jahon': 1997), pp 26–34.
80. *Constitution*, op cit, Ref 60, p 12.
81. Olivier Roy, '*Qibla* and the Government House: the Islamist networks', *SAIS Review*, Vol 21, Summer–Fall 2001, p 57.
82. See, for example, ibid, pp 53–63; on the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, see <http://cns.miis.edu/research/wtc01/imu.htm>, and on *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, see <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org>.
83. *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, 'Hizb ut-Tahrir's Work', <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org> (accessed 1 August 2002), p 2.
84. *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, 'The constitution of Uzbekistan is the law of disbelief and falsehood', <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org> (accessed 1 August 2002), p 1.
85. *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, 'And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out (2:191)', <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org> (accessed 1 August 2002), p 2.
86. 'The call to *jihad* by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan', in Rashid, op cit, Ref 3, App, pp 247–248.
87. According to one account, the assassins appear to have had ties to Osama ben Laden and other Central Asian terrorist groups; see Oleg Yakubov, *The Pack of Wolves: The Blood Trail of Terror* (Moscow: Veche Publishers, 2000).
88. Cf. Diloram Ibrahim, *The Islamization of Central Asia: A Case Study of Uzbekistan* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1993), pp 26–27.
89. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 'Country reports on human rights practices—2001: Uzbekistan' (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State. Released 4 March 2002), pp 2–22, <http://www.state.gov/gdrl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8366.htm>.
90. See, for example, Human Rights Watch, 'World report 2001: Uzbekistan', <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/europe/uzbekistan.html> (accessed 9 November 2001); and Amnesty International, 'Annual Report 2001: Uzbekistan', <http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2001.nsf/webeurcountries/UZBEKISTAN?OpenDocument> (accessed 9 November 2001).
91. Amnesty International, 'Uzbekistan: the rhetoric of human rights protection: briefing for the United Nations Human Rights Committee', <http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/index/EUR620062001ENGLISH/$File/EUR6200601.pdf> (accessed June 2001).
92. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 'Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 1999: Uzbekistan' (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State. Released 9 September 1999), p 6, <http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/irf/irf_rpt/1999/irf_uzbekist99.html> (accessed 9 November 2001).
93. Gerald M. Easter, 'Preference for presidentialism: postcommunist regime change in Russia and the NIS', *World Politics*, Vol 49, 1997, p 209.
94. Ibid, pp 199–201.
95. Polat, op cit, Ref 4, p 138.
96. Cf. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, 'Elections without democracy: the rise of competitive authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 13, April 2002, pp 54–55.
97. See, for example, Jeffrey Reiman, 'Liberalism and its critics', in C.F. Delaney, ed, *The Liberalism–Communitarianism Debate*(Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), pp 19–37, and Terry Hardin, 'Private and public roles in civil society', in Michael Walzer, ed, *Toward a Global Civil Society* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1998), pp 29–34.
98. For a critical look at Karimov's new ideology, see Andrew F. March, 'The use and abuse of history: "national ideology" as transcendent object in Islam Karimov's "Ideology of National Independence",' *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 21, December 2001, pp 371–384.
99. Cf. William Galston, 'Progressive politics and communitarian culture', in Walzer, op cit, Ref 97, pp 107–111, and David Miller, 'Communitarianism: left, right and center', in Dan Avnon and Avner de-Shalit, eds, *Liberalism and Its Practice* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp 170–183.

100. Karimov, op cit, Ref 75, p 7 (emphases added).
101. Polat, op cit, Ref 4, pp 142–143.
102. The author conducted a series of interviews in Tashkent, February 2003, and Bukhara and Samarqand, July 2003, with several former students who had studied and worked in the USA and are now government employees and other professionals. When convinced they were out of earshot of the Uzbek government's secret police, they passionately voiced their cynicism toward Karimov's regime and expressed a deep sense of hopelessness of prospects for either a liberal or decent society in Uzbekistan.
103. On various approaches to the concept of civil society, see Benjamin R. Barber, 'Clansmen, consumers, and citizens: three takes on civil society', in Robert K. Fullinwider, ed, *Civil Society, Democracy, and Civic Renewal* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), pp 9–29; Jean Cohen, 'Interpreting the notion of civil society', in Walzer, op cit, Ref 97, pp 35–40; and Robert Fine, 'Civil Society Theory, Enlightenment and Critique', in Robert Fine and Shirin Rai, eds, *Civil Society: Democratic Perspectives* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp 7–28.
104. See, for example, Michael Walzer, 'The concept of civil society', in Walzer, op cit, Ref 97, pp 7–27; and Bhikhu Parekh, 'Balancing unity and diversity in multicultural societies', in Avnon and de-Shalit, op cit, Ref 99, pp 106–124.
105. See, for example, Abdullahi An-Na'im, 'Human rights and Islamic identity in France and Uzbekistan: mediation of the local and the global', *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol 22, 2000, pp 906–941.
106. Cf. Polat, op cit, Ref 4, pp 137–139.