

UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE PRESS
Carlisle Barracks, PA
STRENGTH and WISDOM

REASSESSING THE BARRIERS TO ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

Zhulduz Baizakova
Roger N. McDermott

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE
SSI
STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE

The United States Army War College

The United States Army War College educates and develops leaders for service at the strategic level while advancing knowledge in the global application of Landpower.

The purpose of the United States Army War College is to produce graduates who are skilled critical thinkers and complex problem solvers. Concurrently, it is our duty to the U.S. Army to also act as a "think factory" for commanders and civilian leaders at the strategic level worldwide and routinely engage in discourse and debate concerning the role of ground forces in achieving national security objectives.

The Strategic Studies Institute publishes national security and strategic research and analysis to influence policy debate and bridge the gap between military and academia.

The Center for Strategic Leadership and Development contributes to the education of world class senior leaders, develops expert knowledge, and provides solutions to strategic Army issues affecting the national security community.

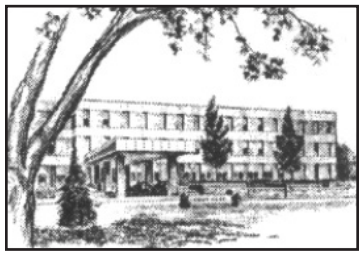
The Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute provides subject matter expertise, technical review, and writing expertise to agencies that develop stability operations concepts and doctrines.

The Senior Leader Development and Resiliency program supports the United States Army War College's lines of effort to educate strategic leaders and provide well-being education and support by developing self-awareness through leader feedback and leader resiliency.

The School of Strategic Landpower develops strategic leaders by providing a strong foundation of wisdom grounded in mastery of the profession of arms, and by serving as a crucible for educating future leaders in the analysis, evaluation, and refinement of professional expertise in war, strategy, operations, national security, resource management, and responsible command.

The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center acquires, conserves, and exhibits historical materials for use to support the U.S. Army, educate an international audience, and honor Soldiers—past and present.

STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE



The Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) is part of the U.S. Army War College and is the strategic-level study agent for issues related to national security and military strategy with emphasis on geostrategic analysis.

The mission of SSI is to use independent analysis to conduct strategic studies that develop policy recommendations on:

- Strategy, planning, and policy for joint and combined employment of military forces;
- Regional strategic appraisals;
- The nature of land warfare;
- Matters affecting the Army's future;
- The concepts, philosophy, and theory of strategy; and,
- Other issues of importance to the leadership of the Army.

Studies produced by civilian and military analysts concern topics having strategic implications for the Army, the Department of Defense, and the larger national security community.

In addition to its studies, SSI publishes special reports on topics of special or immediate interest. These include edited proceedings of conferences and topically oriented roundtables, expanded trip reports, and quick-reaction responses to senior Army leaders.

The Institute provides a valuable analytical capability within the Army to address strategic and other issues in support of Army participation in national security policy formulation.

Strategic Studies Institute
and
U.S. Army War College Press

REASSESSING THE BARRIERS TO ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

Zhulduz Baizakova
Roger N. McDermott

July 2015

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. Authors of Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) and U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Press publications enjoy full academic freedom, provided they do not disclose classified information, jeopardize operations security, or misrepresent official U.S. policy. Such academic freedom empowers them to offer new and sometimes controversial perspectives in the interest of furthering debate on key issues. This report is cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

*****

This publication is subject to Title 17, United States Code, Sections 101 and 105. It is in the public domain and may not be copyrighted.

*****

Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, U.S. Army War College, 47 Ashburn Drive, Carlisle, PA 17013-5010.

*****

All Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) and U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Press publications may be downloaded free of charge from the SSI website. Hard copies of this report may also be obtained free of charge while supplies last by placing an order on the SSI website. SSI publications may be quoted or reprinted in part or in full with permission and appropriate credit given to the U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA. Contact SSI by visiting our website at the following address: *www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil.*

*****

The Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press publishes a monthly email newsletter to update the national security community on the research of our analysts, recent and forthcoming publications, and upcoming conferences sponsored by the Institute. Each newsletter also provides a strategic commentary by one of our research analysts. If you are interested in receiving this newsletter, please subscribe on the SSI website at *www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/newsletter.*

ISBN 1-58487-694-8

FOREWORD

The authors reassess the barriers to Islamic radicalization in the Republic of Kazakhstan. They provide crucial analysis and findings for policymakers seeking to engage with the country, while also presenting important insights into the historical and cultural impediments in the path of radicalizing its youth. Despite the proximity of the Central Asian Republics to Afghanistan and the Global War on Terrorism, unlike its neighbors, Kazakhstan has remained relatively stable and low risk in the face of international terrorism and extremism. This monograph examines some of the reasons as to why this is the case, proving that early judgements offered by commentators concerning Kazakhstan's experience of domestic politically inspired violence in 2011-12, exaggerated the potential threat of growing Islamic radicalization.

For 70 years, Kazakhstan underwent a forceful and externally imposed secularization and was maintained rigidly under Soviet rule, with no official state support for organized religion. Yet, there were mosques functioning in the Soviet era, and the people in its territory maintained their own religious beliefs. However, secularization left its own effects on the religious identity of the Kazakhs, and today the country is opening up to Islam by treading its own path as part of the Muslim community.

This monograph presents one of the most underresearched subjects of modern Kazakhstan: examining attitudes and approaches to Islam. It investigates the historical roots and perspectives of a nomadic lifestyle and how they are being changed and developed on the way toward what many today understand as traditional Islam. One of the main questions the

authors of this monograph pose is what traditional Islam means for modern day Kazakhstan.

Islam in Kazakhstan merges and intertwines pre-Islamic traditions with the rituals of Shamanism and Tengrianism that once existed in the wider steppes where a nomadic lifestyle took hold precluding the people from building stationary worship places. Very few scholars in Kazakhstan are currently undertaking serious research on this subject. Meanwhile, many foreign observers suggest that Central Asian countries are undergoing a thorough and rapid Islamization process. This analysis provides some answers to that assumption. How does Islam in Kazakhstan differ from Islam in Turkey, Qatar, and Malaysia, for example? What makes it so distinctive? Is that particular type or variety of Islam today encouraging young men to travel to Syria and Afghanistan?

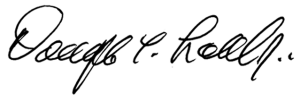
This monograph is a soul-searching account of what Islam means to the general population and how it is perceived; it reveals deep internal development of the post-Soviet society to embrace new ideas and open up to the wider world of global integration and cosmopolitanism. It discusses the specifics of how Islam has transformed, been adopted, modernized, and accepted in the poly-ethnic, poly-cultural and poly-linguistic environment of Kazakhstan. Then, it moves from theory to practice in its empirical implementation, describing how Kazakhstan struggles against its own specific types of terrorism and extremism, and how it continues to pursue this.

Terrorism and extremism are commonly discussed national security issues in Central Asia, frequently tied to developments in Afghanistan or the emerging threat from the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The authors, however, trace the roots of Kazakhstan's

counterterrorist strategy and assess the actual experience of acts of political violence in the country in 2011-12, and how this impacted new means and approaches to mitigating the risks of domestic terrorism. They conclude that those acts of violence, while its perpetrators often claimed inspiration from international Islamic terrorism, were carried out by criminal elements rather than homegrown terrorists. Nevertheless, the experience of these acts of violence, including suicide bombings targeting security forces, was used by the state to recraft measures and policies aimed at reducing the danger of terrorist groups making inroads into the country.

In fact, the fundamental value of this analysis lies in the effort the authors make to avoid looking at these complex issues from a foreign or Euro-Atlantic perspective; they seek to assess these themes from within, offering a more realistic insight into the evolution of religion in Kazakhstan, as well as its related security policies. Therefore, this monograph will be of interest to decisionmakers trying to find ways to deepen and strengthen ties with Kazakhstan and support the country's security, and to scholars investigating post-Soviet transition. Too often, these issues are stove-piped with analysts assessing the various issues in a compartmentalized manner. But here, in this work, drawing upon indigenous sources the authors integrate their analysis of history, religion, political violence, and criminality, and their interconnections to security policy in a user-friendly way. The result speaks for itself and presents readers with a sober and genuine view of the security challenges stemming from radical Islam, in the context of identifying the numerous barriers standing in

the way of tipping growing numbers of the country's youth into transnational radical Islamist movements.



DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
Strategic Studies Institute and
U.S. Army War College Press

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ZHULDUZ BAIZAKOVA is Research affiliate to the Institute for Security and Cooperation Studies of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty, Kazakhstan. She served for 7 years in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including a foreign posting to the United Kingdom. She is currently specializing in security and environmental issues of the Central Asian region. Ms. Baizakova holds an M.Sc. degree in international security and global governance from the Birkbeck College, University of London.

ROGER N. MCDERMOTT has specialized in Russian and Central Asian defense and security studies. He is an Adjunct Fellow of the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC; Affiliated Senior Analyst, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen; and Senior International Fellow, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth.

SUMMARY

Central Asia is one of the most complex and underassessed regions in the world and has been experiencing an exacerbation or activation of radical Islamic movements over the last decade or so. To some extent, extremism has shown its various facets in all Central Asian states.

The general overviews listing the roots of the Islamic radicalization usually explain it by several combined factors. These complex processes include increasing urbanization, institutional and individual corruption, the growing gap between rich and poor, the inability of the state to provide security, corruption in the law enforcement agencies, poor functioning of the state religious bodies, inefficient power structures, and a limited scope for citizens to influence decisionmaking resulting in lower trust in the authorities, as well as other factors. The authoritarian regimes of Central Asia gave rise to boiling anger and discontent among their populations. For people unable to defend their rights and interests, religion may be viewed as an escape from their minimized existence. However, all those factors described were more or less present much earlier. Even more paradoxically, the extent of the Islamic radicalization taking place at that point did not occur while the Taliban was in power in Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan, being the most stable and safe country in the region, witnessed a series of alleged extremist-terrorist acts since 2011. The number of Islamic activists has grown, particularly in rural areas. As an official response to that, Kazakhstan continues to improve its legislation on combating terrorism and extremism. However, since this experience of domestic "politi-

cal violence" in 2011-12, the country has suffered no major incidents.

This analysis begins by providing an overview of historic roots and identity of "Kazakh Islam," while attempting to explain how it emerged. Then it describes the nature of connection and influence reaching Kazakhstan from neighboring North Caucasus and Afghanistan and how it affects radicalization of the youth. Then main reasons for misleading assumptions are closely examined to identify how Kazakhstan is viewed from the outside world. Separate sections explore the state structures and the role of the state overseeing the issues regarding Islam and its practices. Special attention is drawn upon banned extremist groups, their specifics, and the country's experience of political violence in 2011-12, as well as the state's response to the acts of violence.

REASSESSING THE BARRIERS TO ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

HISTORICAL ROOTS AND IDENTITY OF "KAZAKH ISLAM"

The Islamic religion came to the steppes of Kazakhstan around the 13th to 14th centuries. However, Islam did not embed itself deeply enough to become the overwhelming religion of the Kazakh tribes. The first time the Sharia law was introduced was during the rule of Khan (provincial governor) in 1815. The main missionaries in the Kazakh steppes were Tatar mullahs that tried to convert nomadic people to Islam. The initial functions of mullahs and imams were to teach and enlighten those who wanted to learn voluntarily. It is important to note that Islam was not imposed forcefully. Islam had become an official religion of the medieval Khanates of the Turkic world, but it was never fully accepted with all its dogmas. Attendance at the mosque and five daily prayers remained conditional. Islam took deep roots in big cities and towns among traders and crafters; however, the rest of the population followed both Islam and Tengrianism, sometimes interchangeably.[1]

As Shokan Valikhanov writes, Islam had decoded the Shamanism of the Kazakhs. At the same time, modern Kazakhs worship their ancestors and their spirits in addition to visiting sacred places, which completely contradicts traditional Islamic rules.[2] Islam was popular as an underground movement during Soviet times, and many Kazakhs remained, observing their religious duties behind closed doors. In the Soviet period of the 1920-30s in the Central Asian region, there were 20 times more unregistered mosques and three

to four times more illegal clergy than official statistics showed.[3] Since Kazakhstan gained its independence, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey expressed the biggest interest in providing religious education and funding for the construction of new mosques.[4]

The branch of Islam used in Kazakhstan is the Hanafi Madhhab, which is Sunni. The Hanafi is the largest of four existing schools in Islam (30 percent of Muslims worldwide) and is the most liberal one. Today, 72 percent of Kazakhstan's population are followers of Islam.[5] Other sources claim there are currently 11 million Muslims (out of 16 million), belonging to 24 nationalities.[6]

Kazakh Islam currently presents a mixture of the ancient traditions (Tengrianism, Shamanism) and traditional type of Islam (Sunni). Sometimes Kazakhs combine those two types when performing certain rituals. Nowadays, there is a clear intertwining of the Old (Tengrianism and Shamanistic) beliefs with the traditional ways of Islam. Most Kazakhs would be unable to tell where one ends and the other begins. For example, the belief in Aruak (the spirit of ancestors) coexists with the rules of Islamic burial where women are banned from attending. One of the main features of the so-called Kazakh Islam is that the majority of the Kazakh population have a very fragmentary knowledge of real Islam. Very few people in the country speak Arabic in order to read the Koran in the original language.

Nevertheless, going on the Hadj (a pilgrimage to Mecca) became somewhat fashionable for certain groups of people. For example, as of February 2013, the price of a Hadj for Kazakhs varied from $3,500 to $3,900.[7] The average monthly wage is roughly $700.[8] In other words, middle-class Kazakhs, not to mention

working class, cannot easily afford such a trip, and either have to work hard to save the required amount or borrow it in the form of credit.

Professor Saniya Edelbay from the Department of Philosophy at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, argues that "traditional" Islam was never inherent in Kazakh culture. Kazakh women's traditional dress has nothing in common with how true Islamic women should dress, like covering the arms and face.[9] Furthermore, Rasul Zhumaly, a specialist in oriental studies and lecturer at the Suleyman Demirel University, believes that for the past few years Kazakhstan has been experiencing Islamophobia due to the number of cases involving terrorism.[10]

It is widely assumed that all Kazakhs are automatically Muslims; however, there are Kazakhs belonging to other religions even though the number is low. In the immediate wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, some Kazakhs joined Christian, Buddhist, and other religions.[11] However, there were many who found themselves in an ideological vacuum without being able to identify their religious identity. Nurlan Ayupov writes that Kazakhs being lost and confused as to their identity may revert to their initial roots: Tengrianism. Most Kazakh traditions and rites stem from this tradition. Tengrianism shows the way out of the dead-end where Turks found themselves driven by other world religions, and the rebirth of Tengrianism would lead to a complete change of mentality.[12]

The Kazakh model of Islam had adjusted itself to Tengrianism, merging Islamic and Tengrianism traditions and ideas, which later became known as Turkic Islam or Central Asian Islam or folk Islam.[13] Moreover, Tengrianism can position itself as a cultural and civilizational self-identity factor of Kazakh people and other Turkic nations.

INFLUENCE FROM THE NORTH CAUCASUS AND AFGHANISTAN

On April 15, 2013, Boston had witnessed its first terrorist attack after September 11, 2001 (9/11), perpetrated by two amateurish Chechen brothers, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. Immediate investigation discovered that prior to arriving in the United States, the family lived in Kyrgyzstan for some period, which led to certain speculations about close connections between North Caucasus (NC) and Central Asia (CA). The matter was worsened by the fact that, in the aftermath of the bombings, two Kazakhstani exchange students, Dias Kadyrbayev and Azamat Tazhayakov, were charged with tampering with evidence and obstruction of justice, as well as conspiracy. They threw away the backpack that contained fireworks, the powder that was used to make a bomb, and the laptop belonging to one of the brothers. It was proved that the Kazakhstanis did that on the request of Dzhokhar. In late-July 2014, Azamat Tazhayakov had been found guilty; Dias Kadyrbayev will face his trial in September 2015. Both of them may face up to 25 years, plus a significant amount of fines and deportation.[14]

In spite of this particular set of events, to say that there are strong links between Kazakhstan and North Caucasus is far-fetched. At no point was it suggested that the Kazakh students helped the Chechens out of sympathy for their cause or took any direct part in preparations for the bombings.

One of the initial links between CA and NC started when former Soviet leader Josef Stalin deported Chechen people to the territories of modern day Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1944. There is still

some Chechen diaspora living in Western Kazakhstan, and it was from there (Atyrau) that radical Islamists recruited Kazakhs to fight in the NC. However, today there is no direct connection reported about the insurgency in NC (Dagestan, Ingushetia, etc.) and terrorist acts taking place in Kazakhstan. The ideology, methods, and purposes are entirely different.

Jacob Zenn, an analyst of African and Eurasian affairs for The Jamestown Foundation, Washington DC, suggests that many so-called Kazakhstanis that were captured or killed in the NC were actually from the ethnic Chechen generation that was once deported from Chechnya and who may still hold Kazakh passports and citizenship.[15] There are accounts that Kazakh nationals captured in the NC are ethnic Caucasians (predominantly Chechens) holding Kazakhstani citizenship. Those are actually third or fourth generation Chechens that were deported from the NC by Stalin and became Kazakhstanis.[16]

The current epicenter of the insurgency in the NC is Dagestan, where the presence of a small number of Kazakh fighters was reported between 2009 and 2011. However, that does not prove the case for extensive help or even influence from Kazakhstan. The coordinator of the Center for Security Programs in Astana, Talgat Mamyraymov, notes that the idea of the NC radical influence on CA is widely overestimated. The roots of terrorism for Kazakhstan are located not abroad, but within the country itself; it lies within the domestic social political situation rather than imported extremist Islamist views.

If anything, the ties between CA and NC radicals are mainly formed in Afghanistan. After the drawdown of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

forces in 2014, both CA and NC terrorists might divert their attention to the Central Asian region. But their motives would be far from clear, lacking the drivers present in their Afghanistan campaign against "foreign invaders," and intrinsically linked to long established nexus of crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism.

The former head of the Centre for Counter-terrorism Programs, and political expert Erlan Karin believes that militants who earlier functioned around the Afghan-Pakistan border are now becoming more active near the Afghan-Tajik border. The Afghan drug trade grew to become an everlasting link between the Talibs, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and other Islamists, including al-Qaeda. Kazakhstan closely borders with Russia's Bashkortostan Province (300 kilometers [km] away), where in Aktobe in October 2011, four Salafists were convicted for police shootings. Bashkortostan Islamists use the Kazakh route for transportation to Afghanistan and Pakistan.[17]

REASONS FOR MISLEADING ASSUMPTIONS

Today international Islamic movements are attracting the youth, predominantly young men. With increasing urbanization, there are mass movements happening from villages to the cities. That, in turn, increases the urban population of the cities and adds a critical mass of young men and women, who, upon arrival, sometimes cannot find a job or are unable to enter any educational establishment. Such groups become automatically exposed to certain religious vulnerabilities, also taking into account that they had no chance to receive any previous religious education. There are, of course, local mosques in the villages; however, the quality of the mullahs preaching there is

in question. Also, some of the prisons in Kazakhstan serve as a perfect recruitment ground for radicalization attempts. One of the radicalization sources stems from imprisoning alleged Salafists that spread their extremist perceptions attracting the disenfranchised youth.[18] Radicals serve terms together with common criminals, and that is something that needs to be amended by the authorities.

The United States believes that Kazakhstan uses the threat of radicalization to deal with the political opposition.[19] It is also assumed that Kazakh law enforcers have low capabilities to distinguish between extremists and criminals.[20] One of the reasons the extremists turn out to be popular in CA is explained by the lack and/or absence of the knowledge about real Islam. It is blamed on the officials and governments for not providing adequate information to the population. According to this view, it is very easy to drive the moderate but inexperienced Muslims toward radicalization.

Officials in all CA states became accustomed to inadvertently blaming foreign governments for their disruptive influence. That in itself reflects the Soviet mentality of the elite when the main responsibility for unpleasant events is directed toward an external force. However, there are facts and figures showing that external forces are at play as well. For example, Kyrgyzstan is too economically weak to fund and sustain the increasing number of new mosques being built all across the country. Some experts believe it is being directly funded by Saudi Arabia and sometimes Turkey.[21]

Another bias concerning the reasons for radicalization in CA from the Russian point of view is the assumption that Central Asian governments are too

weak and decentralized to keep a tight grip on power, which leads their populations to frustration and search for enemies. The extent of such arguments is highly questionable, since each Central Asian country needs to be looked upon and analyzed separately.

Some Russian experts tend to see the roots for Islamism in CA in the poor social economic conditions of the region, driving young people to an alternative lifestyle. In other words, Russians blame Central Asian governments for creating the volatile atmosphere of distrust of the youth in their own authorities. For example, Aleksandr Vavilov from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Russia goes as far as suggesting that one of the main reasons for Islamic radicalization in CA is the weakening and possible loss by the people of the "worldwide culture and civilization" as it is reflected in the Russian language.[22]

Russian sources frequently blame the alleged growing radicalization of the Central Asian region on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the deterioration of their educational and social systems. But the issue looks more complicated than this overly simplified politicized narrative implies. With the elimination of the Iron Curtain, Kazakh people became more open to different kinds of influences and knowledge. The entire Islamic world had been closed to CA countries for more than 70 years, and now the region is fully exposed to whatever ways of Islam the others want to bring and/or impose. Nevertheless, one expert from the Diplomatic Academy claimed that Russia's position in its foreign policy strategy is based on the fact that all former Soviet Republics are under the natural exclusive zone of Russian influence, due to its cultural and historical ties, and especially due to existing in the Russian information space.[23]

Perhaps it is worthwhile to consider that Kazakhstan had turned into such a vulnerable state for Islamic influences precisely because it was previously closed. Now the population is in a state of permanent confusion and disorientation as to what real Islam is and how to pursue it. But before that, Kazakhstan's government and leadership should think about whether the country needs to be guided toward awareness of what constitutes real Islam. That remains a huge open question for government and society.

Kazakhstan's leading expert on Afghanistan, Sultan Akimbekov, suggests the theory that the radicalization movement starts when some forces are directly targeting the existing synergy of the traditional power distribution that is between secular and spiritual authorities. In other words, if some forces plan to modernize the nation and governance structures in a way that damages or inflicts serious changes upon the traditional status quo, there will always be forces opposing it and trying to turn back the process. He argues that it is precisely the case with Afghanistan, when the 1978 April revolution brought forth the National Democratic Party extreme in its aspirations to modernize the backward Afghan society, which, in turn, led to many complications, including the Soviet invasion and prolonged civil war.[24] However, the case cannot be compared with Kazakhstan due to several reasons. Kazakhstan has never been ruled and governed under Sharia law. The distribution of power had a predominantly secular character with mullahs or imams never interfering into the state of political affairs. Moreover, when the Soviet expansion began from 1917 onwards, the changes they introduced to the patriarchal society never took the shape of an armed or extreme opposition from the local masses. The character of the resistance held a different nature and approach.

Modern Kazakhstan's multivector foreign policy requires the country to maintain good balanced relations with everyone including the Muslim countries. Kazakhstan is pursuing those goals. Constitutionally, however, Kazakhstan is a secular state. The present leadership encourages the country to stay secular by introducing restrictive religious legislation and other measures.

On June 29, 2014, the newly emerged Islamic State (IS), formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and by some as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), included Kazakhstan along with other CA states as part of the territory called Khorasan. Unsurprisingly, that caused a negative reaction from both the expert community and from the ordinary population. It is assumed that a number of Kazakhstani militants who first fought in Syria can now also be found among the founders of IS. The exact number of Kazakhstani nationals is unknown. To the question of whether ISIL might present any serious threat to Kazakhstan, most of the interviewed analysts answered negatively but cautiously.[25]

As things stand today, Kazakhstan presents only a small and distant fraction of the grand-scale ISIL plan to unite all sovereign countries considered to be somewhat Muslim. The implementation of such a plan remains to be seen.

STATE STRUCTURES OVERSEEING ISLAM IN KAZAKHSTAN

There are two main governmental bodies in charge of the Islamic religion on a state scale: the Agency on Religious Affairs and the Spiritual Directorate of Kazakhstan Muslims. Today, one can say that the state

strictly controls the religious sphere, some may argue that it is overwhelmingly strict. That also includes the requirement for official registration of any religious entities (organizations, gatherings, unions, etc.), appointing and monitoring imams, registering mosques, and checking religious practices.[26]

In addition, the state attempts to control any kind of religious literature being imported into the country. All these types of measures originate from the Soviet era, and all Central Asian governments follow these measures to one extent or another. For example, Kazakhstan's Agency on Religious Affairs had studied around 2,000 websites, and consequently 950 of them were blocked due to their promotion of violent extremism in 2010.[27]

The Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Kazakhstan is an authoritative institution, not a spiritual one, according to one of the country's experts on Islam, Alma Sultangalieva. She also argues that the religious field should not be monopolized as the government tries to suppress other religious dissidents.[28] This argument can be supported by the multiple cases of the official Muslim clergy incompetence. For example, one of the reasons the youth start following "pure Islam" is the inaccessibility of the official imams to whom they cannot speak. Usually imams are too busy to talk face-to-face, handling other religion-related things like weddings, burials, or other rituals. Sometimes youths also feel too shy to ask questions. Disaffected youth then go to those with whom they can talk and have time to reply to their questions. Unfortunately, those volunteers may not always have good intentions.

There are examples of Russian-speaking Kazakhs visiting mosques and trying to take part in prayers and listening to preaching. Part of the problem, how-

ever, lies in the fact that the preaching is in Kazakh, and there is no available translation. Thus, many of those that speak Russian start addressing "other" sources. According to one visitor, 70 percent of people who regularly attend the mosque are happy to "translate" the preaching, but in a way that suits them.[29] One of the examples of confusion is suggested by the fact that there are contradictions between fatwas issued by the Spiritual Directorate and some of the national traditions that are fixed in the Cultural Heritage state program.

The 9th grade of high school has a subject called "The Basis of Religions," where students are supposedly taught basic information.[30] Among citizens writing their comments to the agency are those who are concerned by the increasing number of the Islamic fanatics wearing long beards and hijabs, particularly in educational institutions such as the Nur Mubarak Egypt University.[31] Many religious fanatics take the words of high level officials, such as Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and twist their meaning. For example, Nazarbayev had said that "Our roots are Turkic, and our religion is Islam."[32] For many ardent followers, such a statement might be enough to assume that the Head of State is encouraging Kazakhs to take up the green banners of Islam.

As of December 2012, there were 2,228 mosques functioning in Kazakhstan that were re-registered by the Spiritual Directorate.[33] There are only 10 madrasas functioning under the supervision of the Spiritual Directorate. According to national legislation, there are specially designated places (churches, mosques, and certain shop networks) where ordinary Kazakh citizens are able to obtain religious literature, including translations of the Koran. So unless it is illegally

distributed, one cannot easily acquire even the Koran and other related books. It is a curious fact that in the Doctrine of National Unity of Kazakhstan (approved in April 2010), there is not even a single word mentioning Islam as the leading religion of the population. However, there are provisions in the field of interconfessional relations:

> The unifying principle of religion, prevention of the negative impact of the religious factor on the state of interethnic relations should become an important direction of strengthening national unity. In order to achieve the goal it is necessary to:
> - develop partnership between state and religious associations in order to develop interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding, strengthen the stability in society;
> - provide cooperation and joint work of state bodies and religious associations in addressing such social objectives as strengthening moral societal guidelines; increasing role of the family; combating drug addiction, alcoholism, distribution of the youth crime, and homelessness;
> - use spiritual values of traditional religions to strengthen moral fabric of society, enhancing religious literacy of population;
> - execution of a systematic awareness raising activities with the public, especially with the youth, in order to counter the spread of extremism and radicalism;
> - support nongovernmental organizations, whose activity is aimed at informing the population about pseudo-religious associations and providing psychological, legal, and judicial assistance to victims of these associations.
>
> Due to the stated measures, religion should facilitate enhancement of a correct system of moral values, ideas of tolerance, unity, and harmony in society.[34]

State control has also tightened its grip by arranging the cuts in Kazakh students going abroad to study at theological institutions. In 2011, there were 500 such students. Afterwards, 130 students returned home after local authorities sent the relevant messages to the families. Today no Kazakh student can enroll in any Saudi Arabian institution without the formal approval of the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan. The same scheme would also extend to other potential "suspicious" enrollments in countries such as Turkey, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and others.[35]

BANNED EXTREMIST GROUPS

State-level efforts to counter religious extremism as a possible breeding ground for terrorism are by no means new in Kazakhstan. The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Countering Extremism" (February 18, 2005, No. 31) empowers the Supreme Court with the authority to designate organizations banned as either terrorist or extremist groups. This is set out in Article 8, sections 1-4, and depends on state security bodies furnishing the court with sufficient evidence against any organization for inclusion on such a list. It also recognizes the right to include groups banned by foreign states. Since then, the list of banned organizations has become a matter of public record.[36] However, this simply formalized an already established practice to use the Supreme Court to ban such organizations.

On October 12, 2006, Kazakhstan's Supreme Court approved a revised list of banned terrorist organizations in the country and Prosecutor-General Rashid Tusupbekov released the list. Astana banned the IMU, Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HT), Jamaat of Central Asian Mujahedins, Islamic Party of Eastern Turkestan,

Kurdistan Workers Party, Boz Kurt, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Social Reforms Society (Kuwait), Asbat-an-Asar (Israel), al-Qaeda, Taliban, and the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt).[37] Some of these groups were already banned in the country since 2004, and, indeed, were recognized internationally as terrorist organizations. Critics of the list said that the Muslim Brotherhood and Lashkar-e-Toiba did not operate in Kazakhstan on a level sufficient to justify their inclusion in the list of banned organizations. Saulebek Zhamkenuly, press secretary for the Prosecutor-General's Office, said:

> It does not mean all these organizations are active in Kazakhstan. The decision to ban them is a *preventive measure*. These organizations are considered as terrorist in Russia, the US, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Pakistan.[38]

On November 17, 2006, the Supreme Court added an additional organization to this list; the East Turkestan Liberation Organization.[39] By February 16, 2009, President Nazarbayev had signed into law a ban on 206 items of religious literature.

It is worthwhile to trace briefly Kazakhstan's Supreme Court decisions since it first announced a ban of four organizations on October 15, 2004. By March 2005, that list had grown to 11 organizations before reaching 13 in late-2006. Since then, this list has reached 16, with one group (HT) designated as extremist and the other 15 considered to be terrorist groups. The court of Atyrau on November 25, 2011, added the Soldiers of the Caliphate, and again it is important to understand this as a preventative measure.[40]

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Overall, 3,088 religious organizations representing 17 confessions were re-registered as of October 25, 2012. Although the Law on Religion in October 2011 provoked controversy, it also generated reliable statistics on the breakdown of religious organizations in the country, as shown in Figure 1. However, Western human rights-based critiques of this law actually overlook the fact that it serves as a major legal barrier to further radicalization of the country's youth. This is based on the fact that the law bans religious tracts or religious activity without permission, and restricts it to designated places. In practical terms, someone trying to promote radical Islam cannot distribute their literature openly in the country's shops or in areas where people gather in large numbers. This arguably drives the activity underground where, paradoxically, it is far easier to monitor, though there may be mistakes and underestimation concerning some individuals or groups.[41]

Nonetheless, the phenomenon of political Islam or radical Islamist groups operating within CA is neither new nor particularly dependent upon external influences. Such militant networks were present during the Soviet era such as *Adolat* (Justice), *Tawba* (Repentance), and *Islam Lashkalari* (Warriors of Islam), and scholars have linked their re-emergence in CA with the political reforms initiated in the 1980s.[42] However, the acts of political violence in Kazakhstan in 2011-12 was a new experience for the country. Yet, these events need to be outlined and understood in their context before tracing how the authorities respond and draw conclusions as to the nature of this threat.

No.	Confession/Denomination	As of January 1, 2011	As of October 25, 2012.
1	Islam	2,811	2,229
2	Orthodoxy	304	280
3	Pentecostal Churches	400	189
4	Evangelical Christian-Baptist	364	100
5	Catholicism	118	79
6	Jehovah's Witnesses	70	59
7	Presbyterian Churches	229	55
8	Seventh-Day Adventists	67	42
9	Evangelical Lutheran Church	32	13
10	Methodists	18	11
11	New Apostolic Church	47	8
12	Krishnaism	14	8
13	Bahai	20	6
14	Judaism	26	4
15	Buddism	4	2
16	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)	1	2
17	Mennonites	6	1
	Total	4,531	3,088

Source: *www.din.gov.kz/eng/religioznyeobedineniya/?cid=0&rid=691.*

Figure 1. Religious Organizations Re-registered as of October 25, 2012.

KAZAKHSTAN'S LIMITED EXPERIENCE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE: 2011-12

Despite its closer defense and security cooperation with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) following 9/11 and official claims to have prevented acts of terrorism on its territory, Kazakhstan had not been targeted successfully by international terrorist groups. Reports

on the activities of the Kazakhstani security services in the 1990s and 2000s frequently targeted members of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, while other groups known to be involved in terrorism were less prominent in the reported disruption activities of the state security agencies. This could sometimes prove to be contradictory. In 2004, for instance, the National Security Committee (*Komitet Natsionalnoy Bezopasnosti* or KNB) claimed that they had shut down the Jamaat of Central Asian Mujahedins (JCAM). However, in 2006, the KNB claimed to have disrupted a terrorist plot orchestrated by JCAM members.[43]

Detailed case studies of these incidents are necessary in order to further frame an understanding of the scale of this apparent outburst of violent activity in the country. This must also be analyzed in context: in 22 years of independence, the country has experienced a series of violent incidents over only an 18-month period. As these events unfolded, the authorities were clearly taken by surprise, suggesting that the intelligence services and other security forces had little prior warning or detailed understanding as to the type of activists or perpetrators involved. This can be seen in the first responders at the scene (only later were KNB special forces deployed), as well as in some of the weaknesses in the "groups" involved in their use of violence. In other words, the authorities may have rushed to label many of these incidents as "terrorist," when in fact they could be symptoms of other more credible explanations.

Its first experience of anything remotely resembling a terrorist incident occurred on May 17, 2011, in Aktobe. Rakhimzhan Makhatov, a 25-year-old, detonated a device, killing himself and wounding three others at the entrance of the local headquarters of the

KNB. The suicide bomber had alleged links with an Islamic terrorist group. The incident was described as "an act of revenge (or protest) against the treatment of Islamic extremists in prison." It has been reported that adherents of Wahhabism in Kazakhstan's prisons had been tortured.[44] On May 24, 2011, a car bombing occurred in the capital Astana, targeting a KNB detention facility; the only causalities were the two men inside the vehicle.

Dmitry Kelpler, the owner of the vehicle, and "Ivan Cheremukhin" were both from the Pavlodar Province. According to the local Internal Troops of the Ministry for Internal Affairs (MVD), the latter's passport was stolen, and his real identity was confirmed as Sergei Podkosov, a 34-year-old from the city of Pavlodar.[45] Podkosov had a criminal record, and the authorities disclosed that he had converted to Islam a few years before the attack.[46] No information was released on Kelpler, but the reference to the past criminal record and religion of the second individual held out a potential link to radical Islam. The authorities offered no official link to any known terrorist group. The two unrelated incidents in Aktobe and Astana were linked only by the KNB targets.

As the authorities struggled to come to terms with the country's first experience of suicide bombings, a fresh incident took place in the Aktobe Province between police and six suspects. On June 30, 2011, assailants shot two unarmed police officers in the village of Shubarshy in Aktobe Province. Police named six suspects between the ages of 22-43 (Kuanysh Alimbetov, Akylbek Mambetov, Toktarbek Mambetov, Bektemir Urazov, Miras Karazhanov, and Aybek Dzhumagazin), and offered a reward of $100,000 for information resulting in their capture. On July 2-3,

the MVD launched a special operation to apprehend the suspects deploying *Sunkar* and *Berkut* special forces. The operation failed to detain any suspects and left one officer dead and three soldiers wounded. Shortly afterwards, a KNB *Arlan* special forces unit arrived to join the search. A joint operation was conducted near the village of Kenkiyak close to Shubarshy on July 8, killing nine and capturing two suspects and seizing a number of weapons. One soldier from one of the special forces units died in the operation.[47] The only linkage between these incidents and radical Islam apparently relates to the discovery of radical literature in the trunk of a vehicle belonging to 22-year-old Talgat Shakanov arrested on June 28 for possession of unregistered weapons. This arrest resulted in associates of Shakanov retaliating by shooting the two policemen on June 30. The incidents appear less to do with radical Islam than with criminality, and the motive for the murder of the policemen was clearly revenge. First Deputy Interior Minister Marat Demeuov dismissed the assertion that Islamic radicalism was the cause: "For several years, the criminal group had been stealing oil from a pipeline using religious ideas as a cover." Shakanov's banned literature is the only possible link to radical Islamist ideology.[48]

Atryau, October 31, 2011: A Turning Point?

On October 31, 2011, two bombs exploded in Atyrau, resulting in the death of the bomber and damaging a regional government office as well as an apartment building. The first of these devices was placed in a garbage can near the local government office and resulted in blowing out some of its windows. The second, an apparently bungled effort, was first

reported as a "suicide bombing," damaging the apartment building adjacent to the prosecutor's office.[49] A previously unknown terrorist group *Jund al-Khilafah* (Soldiers of the Caliphate, JK) claimed responsibility for the attacks. The same "group" had earlier released a video to protest a recently passed law on religion. Astana's law on religion on October 13 had banned prayer in state buildings and unregistered religious activity in the country, and required previously registered religious groups to re-register. JK "members," as such, claimed this was only a warning to the government and denied an intended suicide bombing. Yet, the existence of the group has remained a mystery—it may simply disguise a group of disaffected youths, though some sources suggest the group is tied to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas.[50] To date, this is the only incident in Kazakhstan for which this alleged group claimed responsibility, and its dead "members" may in fact be its only real participants. The linkage between the incident and the claims about the existence of the group have never been established, though by late-November 2011, this "group" had been added to an officially banned list.

In fact, some Western analysts appear to take seriously the existence of JK, compared with more sober assessments by Kazakhstani analysts.[51] This is based on claims as to the existence of the group largely rooted in videos posted online from August 2011 to December 2011. This narrative purports that the group "emerged with ties to Afghanistan and Pakistan." It represents an attempt by Kazakh diaspora militants involved in fighting alongside the Taliban to unite under a Central Asian umbrella, but at best with unclear aspirations.[52]

Video evidence used to support such claims is less than convincing. At best, it may represent a number of ethnic Kazakhs who joined the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, but it by no means offers a clear ideology or explains what the "group" may have against the authorities in Astana. The JK video claimed it opposed the Law on Religion that was passed on October 11, 2011, because the law was an attempt to prevent Muslim worship in places of work and other public buildings; professed that it banned the wearing of headscarves; accused the government of allegedly closing mosques; torturing Muslim prisoners in state prisons; and called for the overthrow of President Nazarbayev, following the violence at Zhanaozen where several civilians were killed. The latter actually had nothing to do with extremism or terrorism but resulted from a trade dispute and the over-reaction of security forces to public disorder.[53]

While the court of Atyrau rushed to add this group to the national list of banned extremist organizations by late-November 2011, Kazakhstani analyses of this alleged group has offered a more sober and questioning overview. Former Secretary of Nur Otan, Erlan Karin, also questioned the reality of JK:

> I am skeptical about the existence of so-called organization 'Soldiers of the Caliphate.' This organization has claimed responsibility for a series of terrorist attacks as in our country and in Afghanistan.[54]

French intelligence agencies had dismissed the possibility of the group as a real terrorist organization in one of its own investigations, as Karin adds, "this again suggests that the organization even if it exists, is more involved in PR for their brand, trying to create

a specific request for information on their activities."[55] In Karin's view, it remains too early to describe the events in Kazakhstan in 2011-12 as "terrorism."[56]

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN KAZAKHSTAN

One of the specifics of terrorism in Kazakhstan is that it is mostly the law enforcement agencies (KNB and MVD) that have been targeted.[57] Another interesting feature is that there are no official statements or claims from the alleged terrorists committing crimes in Kazakhstan concerning their goals, interests, and other required information. There is virtually no opportunity for communication or interaction between the authorities and these alleged groups.

Other Kazakh experts note that, mainly in 2011, terrorist acts committed in the country by "unprofessionals" stem from the socio-economic injustice and poverty of the general population. The violence is a demonstration of the protest against the state and official corrupt structures. Mainly Western Kazakhstan is blamed for harboring certain violent extremist ideas, even though the region is considered to be affluent because of its concentration of oil resources. The specific features of Western Kazakhstan are the high unemployment level, huge gap between salaries (between those who are employed at oil sites and other jobs), as well as its geographical closeness to Russia's NC and the Karakalpakstan region of Uzbekistan, that tend to spread fundamentalist ideas.[58] To counteract this, Karin argues that over the past 5-6 years, western and southern, as well as central and northern Kazakhstan have witnessed cases where extremists were detained for spreading extremist/terrorist literature and gathering groups for unlawful activities.[59]

Political Islam in CA is downplayed due to the absence of one centralized leader as well as any single leadership in each country.[60] For example, Kazakh experts claim that small jamaats are scattered across the country, and their number and size of their membership are unknown. They have no center, nor a single Amir, no clear hierarchy or structure, as well as no logistical supply chain, as is the case in Afghanistan and the NC.[61] Karin says that "Kazakh terrorist acts" do not originate from a single organization and seem to be badly planned. No one knows their objectives or what targets they would pursue in the future. He propagates strong analytical work in the area.[62]

Patterns of Violence.

Despite the widespread publicity generated by the attacks and the release of propaganda videos by JK, it is worth noting that this is the only incident clearly attributed to or claimed by this "group." Moreover, the exact nature of the incident points more toward amateurism or inexperienced individuals rather than those functioning within a sub-state group, properly funded and trained for this type of activity; the damage to the target was low grade, suggesting a lack of expertise in the handling of explosives.

Another instance of an individual accidently self-detonating during a bomb making effort occurred in Atyrau on September 5, 2012. Seven days later, police and KNB members tried to arrest a number of suspects believed to be linked to the explosion. Four other suspects were arrested on September 7. In the clash with security forces that followed, five suspects were killed and one wounded, and one member of the security forces was wounded. Additional arrests followed this

operation.[63] On September 14-15, two men attacked and wounded a police post in the Isataya-Mamambeta square in Atyrau. Shortly after this incident, a group of men attacked the local MVD headquarters in Atyrau, throwing Molotov cocktails at the guards. Police and MVD *Berkut* special forces conducted an operation to detain the suspects involved in these incidents on September 21; all four suspects were killed in the operation.[64]

Indeed, this amateur theme carries through other incidents in the 2011-12 narrative of political violence in Kazakhstan. For example, on November 8, 2011, an unidentified assailant shot and killed two policemen as they stopped vehicles during a patrol of the Auezov district of Almaty. Police witnessed the suspect and an accomplice loading suspiciously large items into the trunk of a car. By November 12, police arrested the driver and three others, discovering small arms, automatic weapons, and ammunition at the residence involved; however, there was no reported discovery of Islamic extremist literature.[65] In early-December 2011, in the village of Boralday on the northwest outskirts of Almaty, KNB *Arystan* special forces conducted an operation to apprehend several suspects allegedly involved in the shooting in Almaty on November 8. A weapons cache was discovered, but no religious literature was found.[66]

Incidents in Almaty in July 2012 appeared to follow this pattern. On July 11, an explosion occurred at a house in the village of Tausamaly (in the Almaty outskirts); the bodies of several people (including children) were found inside. A police search of the property reported finding weapons (AKS-74U and a few pistols), bomb making materials, police equipment (radios and traffic batons), as well as police and secu-

rity services uniforms, and, on this occasion, some religious literature. The explosion was thought to have been a bungled attempt at bomb making.[67] On July 30, 2012, MVD *Sunkar* special forces and police conducted an operation in the western part of Almaty to detain several suspects involved in killing two police officers on July 28. The operation led to an apartment building being evacuated and the area sealed off; after several hours the *Sunkar* unit stormed the building, killing six suspects and no other casualties were reported. Small arms, automatics weapons, and a "large amount" of ammunition were discovered, but no extremist publications. The dead suspects were not believed by the authorities to belong to any extremist group, but had all served time in prison for various offences.[68]

On August 17, 2012, a police rapid response unit carried out an operation in the Karasai District (Almaty Province, southwest of Almaty) to arrest a group of criminals reportedly linked to an explosion in Tausamaly on July 11. The building was stormed and nine people inside the house were killed, one of whom was reportedly a child.[69]

However, the KNB came under high-level criticism following such incidents. In July 2012, President Nursultan Nazarbayev called for "concrete measures" to counter extremists and terrorists operating in the country. Nazarbayev castigated the security forces for their "unprofessionalism," and failing to prevent the explosion in the first place: "work is not done properly." Nazarbayev stated that:

> As the president and guarantor of our constitution, I am not satisfied with the work of law enforcement agencies, particularly that of the KNB. The efforts we are making are not efficient enough.[70]

This critique of intelligence and security failure to detect and disrupt the initial incident in the Karasai district in the Almaty region on the previous day led Nazarbayev to castigate the KNB and draw a more general conclusion: "we are acting *post factum* all the time."[71]

While many of these incidents may in fact be linked to criminal activity and bear no correlation to religious extremism or terrorism, there was also another category—the lone crazed gunman. On November 12, 2011, Maksat Kariev killed seven people in a series of attacks across the Taraz in Zhambyl Province (southern Kazakhstan). No connection was discovered between Kariev and extremist literature, though he reportedly had military experience.[72]

Some Kazakhstani security specialists believe that at its height, the radical underground in Western Kazakhstan numbered no more than 200, and JK, if it can be established to have existed rather than serving as an amorphous umbrella for the disaffected, may have constituted as little as five members. One analysis puts these extremists in a much wider context:

> Jihadist hiding in Kazakhstan represents the armed fundamentalist network organization, consisting of the Jamaats, poorly interacting with each other, but look to create a single network structure with a clear hierarchy. The purpose of the organization is the overthrow of existing regimes in Central Asia and the establishment of Sharia in the region of the state—the Central Asian Emirate. For example, Islam Tekushev, the Chief Editor of the Caucasus Times argues that armed jihadists of Kazakhstan are part of a wider extremist community whose aim is to establish a Central Asian Imarat, which will include parts of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.[73]

> This structure interacts with terrorist organizations in the Middle East and NC. In the process of its formation, Kazakhstan's underground at the same time draws on the principles of organizations of all these terrorist centers. This is due, first of all, to the geography of Kazakhstan, which was at the crossroads of ancient civilizations of the world; at the intersection of major transport arteries; and the economic, cultural, and ideological relations between East and West.[74]

According to the KNB, law enforcement agencies "failed to prevent 18 out of 53 extremist actions in 2011–2012." The KNB claims that in this period "35 violent actions were averted," and the activities of "42 extremist groups were neutralized." Among the "18 violent extremist actions," seven involved the use of explosives.[75] Reflecting on and assessing the patterns and differences in these incidents of possible "terrorist" acts in Kazakhstan during 2011-12, it is possible to draw the following observations:

- These acts of violence were unconnected to each other and demonstrate no evidence of what might be construed as a coordinated campaign;
- It is unclear whether all of these events constitute terrorism, or stem from criminal activity;
- The targets of these attacks were KNB or government buildings and policemen;
- Only one incident resulted in a "group" claiming responsibility;
- The premature detonation of explosives does not imply a high-level of training on the part of the handlers;
- Many of the suspects in these incidents were later killed by security forces, though police

had tried to talk to suspects before the storming of premises was authorized;[76]
- Although security operations frequently uncovered arms caches, not all cases resulted in finding banned religious publications;
- Motives for these crimes appear to be varied, but are inconsistent with known terrorist models of targeting the wider public;
- Though the security forces frequently suffered casualties during operations, the follow-up presence of special forces units minimized loss of life on the part of security personnel;
- There is no direct link between Islamic militants operating in the North Caucasus, Afghanistan, or elsewhere and these violent incidents in Kazakhstan.

Thus, although Kazakhstan experienced an upsurge in political violence in 2011-12, there appears to be no evidence to either support the idea that a professional and coordinated terrorist problem had emerged within the country or that this was directly linked to the insurgency in the NC. However, in terms of the security response to this new threat, it is clear that after the authorities were taken by surprise, and early operations were reactive and resulted in high rates of fatalities among both suspects and the security forces, a gradual transition occurred toward a softer interdiction-based approach.

In this context, it is also clear that the NC link to these fledgling groups or individuals was taken less seriously than were issues pertaining to Syria or Iraq. For example, on July 21, 2014, the district court in Shymkent, southern Kazakhstan, sentenced four members of an alleged terrorist group with Syrian links. Three of them, (A. Abdubaytov, S. Abdubaytov, and

B. Bayzharkynov), were convicted of participating in the terrorist group's activities or in preparing acts of terrorism, as well as in financing terrorist activities. These were sentenced to 8 to 9 years in prison. The group's fourth member (M. Bekmurzayev) received a 5-year prison sentence for "illegally acquiring, carrying, and storing firearms as a member of the group." The four men were prosecuted for their activities from October 2011 to November 2013, and had also allegedly taken part in the group's activities in Syria.[77]

Indeed, despite the high profile emergence of ISIL in Syria and Iraq, experts in Kazakhstan see no direct threat posed by the very small numbers of the country's citizens allegedly involved. Almaty-based political scientist Rustam Burnashev believes the group poses only a threat within the Middle East, and sees this as mainly related to Syria and Iraq for the foreseeable future.[78] Calls to participate in Jihad, therefore, will draw young disaffected youth to centers of conflict internationally, but while their numbers remain very small in Kazakhstan, the authorities believe the security threat to be low and certainly manageable.

STATE RESPONSES TO TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM, 2011-13

One clear pattern that emerged in the wake of these violent incidents in Kazakhstan in 2011-12 was the avoidance of an over-reaction on the part of the authorities; in other words, this did not result in passing draconian legislation or become an excuse for an indiscriminate crackdown. In this sense, legislation passed in the country dealing with religion, religious extremism, and terrorism must be viewed in a much wider evolutionary context since independence in 1991.

Equally, the adjustments to national legislation in response to these events seem rooted in longer-term strategy and aim to deprive radicals of further easy inroads into radicalizing Kazakhstani youth. The legislative and security response to the violent acts in this period are therefore low key, and by no means represent a knee-jerk response or an attempt by the authorities to apportion blame wrongly.[79]

First, by drafting a revised law on terrorism, signed into law in January 2013, whereby international experience for combating terrorism was taken into consideration, the law emphasizes respect and protection of human rights in the state's efforts to counter terrorism. The bill passed "On amendments and additions to legislative acts on combating terrorism" is a departure from traditional regional approaches to counter terrorism. Instead of placing the burden on the intelligence services and security forces alone, it expands its basis to connect with civil society. It enshrines in law a large-scale outreach, or information campaign, to explain to the Kazakhstani public the following key points: the dangers of terrorism, exposing its various forms and mechanisms, the methods used by terrorists to recruit and disseminate their ideology of political violence, and consequently offers the development of a "civic consciousness," facilitating cooperation between the security forces and citizens to reduce the social basis of support for terrorism. It is this appeal to civil society to help combat terrorism that makes this law unique within CA.[80]

This envisages an information campaign to inform the public about the dangers of terrorism, and includes relevant contact with schools, colleges, and universities, and resulted in launching a website in December 2012 dedicated to promoting awareness of the terror-

ist threat: *www.counter-terror.kz*. The 2013 Law on Terrorism, therefore, marks an important milestone in the country's development by linking counterterrorism to respect for human rights. Moreover, the law allows the government to reach out to and co-opt civil society in an effort to reduce the scope of terrorist organizations, which seek to radicalize Kazakhstani society.[81]

By the fall of 2013, this was emerging more clearly as part of a far-reaching effort to stem the potential rise of domestic radicalism. On October 2, 2013, President Nazarbayev approved a state program on fighting religious extremism and terrorism for the period of 2013–17. Central and local government bodies will implement the program, while the then head of the presidential administration, Karim Masimov, would supervise its progress.

It involves the public in such preventative measures and in modernizing the informational work among "target groups." Its key is raising awareness of the dangers of radical ideology while promoting education and informed discussion. One comment on the decree states:

> The program pays special attention to the attraction of the community to participate in the preventive work and modernization of communications and an awareness-raising campaigning focused on target groups. Most of the preventive measures set forth in the program will be implemented for the first time in Kazakhstan.[82]

These developments were also linked to the growing role of the Spiritual Directorate of Kazakhstan Muslims (SDKM), the main religious body in the country. Reportedly, the SDKM has launched a national program to promote traditional Islam.

According to the country's chief mufti, Yerzhan kazhy Malgazhyuly, the SDKM has formed six special groups to monitor the "religious situation" in the regions. Each group consists of five people: "skilled theologians and imams, who are well aware of the situation in the localities," the mufti said. Malgazhyuly explained that these groups have worked over the past 6 months among "people who need religious enlightenment," including convicts, adding, "Work is also under way among the youth to prevent the spread of destructive movements and to explain the traditional religious values." Indeed, the cleric claims that the campaign to date has persuaded "92 people" to quit the Salafi movement and return to traditional Islam. The groups visited 62 towns, 122 districts, 33 settlements, 200 higher and secondary educational establishments, and 1,500 schools; most are located in the Western region of Kazakhstan—the area most prone to religious extremism.[83]

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Astana's reported initiatives and its references to the counterterrorism and anti-extremism strategy for 2013–17, allow a number of observations about the state's wider security policy. In particular, efforts aimed at avoiding future radicalization of the country's youth focuses on using the law, co-opting the public into the process, improving religious education, and offering warnings about the dangers of radical ideologies. In other words, the security response has matured to include a range of preventative measures aimed at curbing problems in their early stages. Such measures, moreover, also include a public information campaign. One striking feature in these efforts is

the campaign to promote traditional Islam, something the government has largely shied away from backing in the past. Kazakhstan views these campaigns as necessary to avoid the radicalization of its young people over the long term and within the domestic framework; and its policymakers appear to understand that education will play a major prophylactic role in this endeavor.

Clearly, given its unexpected experience of the series of violent acts in 2011-12 including suicide bombings, the state structures in Kazakhstan have gone through a learning period. It is striking that, since these events, the country has experienced no similar incidents. This could imply that the movement or its triggers have simply burned out, but it is more likely that the absence of such outbreaks of violence is rooted in a number of factors ranging from legal approaches to improved standards of surveillance, detection, and disruption. This is borne out by reference to a case prosecuted in the criminal court in Atyrau Region in September 2013. The court successfully prosecuted nine Salifists on grounds of promoting terrorism, inciting acts of political violence, conspiring to commit terrorist acts, and involvement in arms supplies and production; these individuals received prison sentences ranging from 6 to 14 years.[84] But while a learning curve was involved in improving state responses to the existence of such individuals or groups, there were also, as this article argues, a number of much deeper impediments to the radicalization of Kazakhstani youth.

Nonetheless, risks remain as Kazakhstan's younger generation who were born in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse are now over 20 years old. Furthermore, they experienced an ideological

vacuum, together with increasingly poor quality education and all pervasive corruption which might entail some unexpected results for the authorities in the future. For example, there are 12 percent to 15 percent unemployed and 2.5 million to 2.7 million self-employed in Kazakhstan, which could become a potential nourishing ground for extremists.[85]

- Islam, as it is perceived in the Middle East/Arab countries, has not embedded itself in Kazakhstan, either in the pre-Soviet Union era or the present day.
- Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey each have clear interests in establishing their own Islamic traditions and integrating the Kazakhstani population deeper into Ummah. They fund the construction of mosques; finance students to study Islam in their countries; and in some cases, dispatch their preachers to preach in Kazakh mosques. Due to their constant presence and regular funding, it is possible that certain portions of the Kazakhstani population may become influenced by these countries on how they perceive a traditional Muslim, which would contradict the normal lifestyle of an average Kazakhstani citizen. The United States should closely observe and monitor the activities of these countries, both in Kazakhstan and within other Central Asian countries, with regards to further religious infiltration.
- It is important to understand that the Kazakhstani population in general cannot read the Koran in Arabic, and the preaching in Mosques occur either in the Russian or Kazakh languages, which leaves scope for a degree of manipulation and misreading by interested parties.

- The Hadj, as well as fasting, has become fashionable among the population, many of whom may not fully understand its religious and spiritual meaning. Thus, one should be careful to avoid comparing Kazakhstani pilgrims in Mecca to those from Kuwait or Oman, for example.
- There is a certain degree of Islamic revival taking place within a specific strata of the population, mainly the youth. Thus, Kazakhstan's population is becoming more Islamicized but not radicalized, and the distinction should always be kept in mind.
- Kazakhstan's experience of domestic public violence in 2011-12 is unlikely to represent a manifestation of domestic or internationally orchestrated acts of terrorism, but the security forces' response reveals institutional weaknesses which can be corrected on the basis of tailoring specific U.S. security assistance programs to address these issues.
- Kazakhstan has no durable and long standing links with NC Islamists; most of these assumptions are merely based upon geographical proximity of the latter to Western Kazakhstan. Another important point: when Russia claims that Kazakhstanis are among NC terrorists, they are usually ethnic Chechens, Dagestanis, or Ingush who managed to obtain Kazakhstani passports.
- An important weakness in the security response to many of these acts of public violence relates to first responders. That is to say, when the initial incidents occurred and the police and other units arrived on the scene, these sustained the bulk of the authorities' casualties.

Once specialist and other elite units were deployed the suspects/perpetrators were quickly eliminated. However, these units are not typically subordinated to the defense ministry, but function under the KNB or the interior ministry. As a result, U.S. security assistance needs to be matched to the needs of the end user and avoid assuming that a military response in Kazakhstan to a domestic incident is restricted to defense ministry forces or its elite units.

- First responders in Kazakhstan in a suspected act of terrorism or public violence caused by criminal groups need better training and access to fire support and coordination with other ministries; such gaps in the U.S. training and assistance offered to Kazakhstan must be addressed if this is to be easily remedied in the future. In practical terms, this involves the United States sharing its experience on how its own counterterrorist responses operate, with the central point being that specialists need to be involved at the outset, with local police playing only a supporting role.
- Prisons can serve as recruitment grounds for Islamic militants in Kazakhstan; thus the United States should consider offering assistance and training to address this, if such experience is requested by the Kazakh government.
- Since 9/11, Kazakhstan, among other states in CS, has proved to be a reliable partner in the War on Terror and a keen supporter of operations in Afghanistan. In light of the advances and security threats posed in the Middle East and elsewhere by ISIS and the reported involvement of Central Asian fighters including

those from Kazakhstan, it will be even more important to continue such security cooperation. Yet, this has to extend into deepening bilateral intelligence cooperation and offering access to training and development programs geared toward enhancing and fostering the domestic intelligence and threat assessment capabilities of Kazakhstan.

- At the heart of further developing U.S. security cooperation with Kazakhstan, based not only on the findings of this monograph, there needs to be a greater effort to build a common security language to reach an agreement of how "terrorism" should be defined in order to better support local capacities.
- The radicalization of Kazakhstani youth, with growing numbers joining ISIS, the Taliban, and other Islamic terrorist organizations, is currently extremely sensitive for the government and the leadership of the country, and will probably remain so in the future. The authorities provide little, if no, information to the population concerning the ongoing involvement of Kazakhstani fighters in Iraq and Syria. Consequently, publicly available information is scarce. When holding discussions with their Kazakhstani counterparts, U.S. officials should handle such conversations with great caution and vigilance. At this stage, it is highly unlikely that Astana will be willing to share serious information concerning Kazakhstani fighters with its foreign partners.

This analysis has sought to assess soberly Kazakhstan's evolving security environment in the context of concerns over Islamic radicalization, and has highlighted a number of the barriers in the path of those seeking recruits and to make headway in destabilizing the country.

As this analysis demonstrates, the level of security risk in Kazakhstan stemming from Islamic radicalization is mitigated by a large number of historical, cultural, and recent legislative factors. These include the fact that Kazakh identity has not been principally shaped by Islam, which is reflected in the constitutional status as a secular country; the level of understanding traditional Islam in the country is open to question; Kazakh Muslims are mainly unable to read in Arabic; anyone pursuing a level of genuine interest in Islam will stand out in Kazakh society as its customs, traditions, and family values do not assimilate these theological precepts into daily life; imams teach in the Kazakh language which compels Russian language speakers to depend on assistance; legislation on religion and extremism more clearly sets the barriers, rendering the work of radicals easier to target, assess, or limit; the population distrusts the official clergy; and, finally, the instances of public violence in Kazakhstan in 2011-12 were more likely to be linked to local criminality than to international or domestically inspired terrorism. Indeed, the claims made by the criminal culprits perpetrating such violent crimes, namely that they found inspiration in international terrorist movements, only served as a veneer for their own grievances; these sporadic acts of violence therefore had little to do with Kazakhstan experiencing a wave of genuine terrorist acts.

ENDNOTES

1. Nurlan Ayupov, as an open worldview, Almaty, Kazakhistan, 2012.

2. Kanat Nurov, "Kazakhstan: National Ideas and Traditions," *Vox populi*, Almaty, Kazakhistan, 2011.

3. Nazira Nurtazina, "Fight with the Islam," Almaty, Kazakhistan, 2008, p. 29.

4. Evgenii Pastukhov, "What Radical Islamists Want?" *TsentrAsii*, July-August 2012, pp. 16-35.

5. "Top Kazakh Muslim Cleric Raps Tough Religion Law," London, UK: Thomson Reuters Foundation, September 30, 2011, available from *www.trust.org/item/?map=top-kazakh-muslim-cleric-raps-tough-religion-law*.

6. See *www.kazakhstan.orexca.com/rus/religions_kazakhstan.shtml*.

7. Agency of Religious Affairs, Almaty, Kazakhstan, available from *blogs.egov.kz/ru/blogs/lama_sharif_k/questions/*.

8. See *mojazarplata.kz/main/kz-news/v-kazahstane-srednjaja-zarplata-v-marte-2013-uvelichilasq-na-10-122-tenge*.

9. Dr. Saniya Edelbay, "Traditional Kazakh Culture and Islam," *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Vol. 3, No. 11, June 2012.

10. See *tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/ekspert-islamofobiya-v-kazahstane-eto-ne-boyazn-islama-202165*.

11. Pastukhov, pp. 16-35.

12. Ayupov.

13. *Ibid*.

14. See *www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/07/21/jury-resumes-deliberations-trial-azamat-tazhayakov-friend-boston-marathon-bombing-suspect-dzhokhar-tsarnaev/6H1OxaskP38B3v15ryzvPJ/story.html*.

15. Jacob Zenn, "Kazakhstan Struggles to Contain Salafist-Inspired Terrorism," *European Dialogue*, available from *eurodialogue.org/Kazakhstan-Struggles-to-Contain-Salafist-Inspired-Terrorism*.

16. Interviews with Kazakh small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), Almaty, Kazakhistan, September 2013.

17. Zenn, "Kazakhstan Struggles to Contain Salafist-Inspired Terrorism."

18. Dr. Saniya Edelbay, "The Islamic Situation in Kazakhstan," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 2, No. 21, November 2012.

19. Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview*, May 30, 2013, available from *www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209983.htm*.

20. *Ibid*.

21. Interviews with SMEs, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, May 2013.

22. Anastasia Mitrofanova, "Radical Islam in Central Asia and Russia's interests," *Observer*, No. 12, 2008, pp. 83-90, available from *www.observer.materik.ru/observer/N12_2008/083_090.pdf*.

23. *Ibid*.

24. Akimbekov Sultan, *Afghan Knot and Central Asia's Security Issues*, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2003.

25. See *sayasat.org/articles/953-kazahstan-na-puti-v-horasan*.

26. Maria Elisabeth Louw, *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, Abington, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2007.

27. *Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview*, available from *www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209983.htm*.

28. See *zonakz.net/articles/40574*.

29. See *blogs.egov.kz/ru/blogs/lama_sharif_k/questions/214256*.

30. See *blogs.egov.kz/ru/blogs/lama_sharif_k/questions/178822*.

31. See *blogs.egov.kz/ru/blogs/lama_sharif_k/questions/201390*.

32. See b*logs.egov.kz/ru/blogs/lama_sharif_k/questions/178822*.

33. Agency of Religious Affairs, available from *blogs.egov.kz/ru/blogs/lama_sharif_k/questions/175812*.

34. The Doctrine of National Unity of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan, April 2010.

35. Nearly 400 Kazakh students study at Arab religious universities, *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, June 17, Astana, available from *www.interfax.kz/?lang=eng&int_id=expert_opinions&news_id=1575*.

36. "Bulletin of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan," 2005, No. 5, p. 3; *Kazakhstan Today*, February 26, 2005.

37. "Kazakhstan Updates List Of Banned Terrorist Groups," *RFE/RL*, October 12, 2006.

38. Authors' emphasis; the decision to include a certain group or groups on the list can be merely preventative. See *stop-sekta.kz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72:2010-05-31-09-23-03&catid=52:2010-05-31-09-11-57&Itemid=76*.

39. *Ibid*.; "Kazakhstan: Government Moves to Add Hizb Ut-Tahrir to List of Terror Groups," *RFE/RL*, March 18, 2005; "Uyghur Group Added to Kazakh Terror List," *RFE/RL*, November 17, 2006.

40. See *www.saryarka.astana.kz/ru/node/42548*; *www.din.gov.kz/rus/religioznye_obedineniya/?cid=0&rid=596*.

41. See *www.din.gov.kz/eng/religioznyeobedineniya/?cid=0&rid=691*.

42. Vitaly N. Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005, p. 61.

43. "Kazakhs Reportedly Break Up Terrorist Group," *RFE/RL*, December 27, 2006; Daniel Kimmage, "Analysis: Kazakh Breakthrough on Uzbek Terror Case," *RFE/RL*, November 15, 2004.

44. See *www.inform.kz/rus/article/2380570*; *www.whitekat.ru/countryday/2408-trevojnoe-utro.html*; *megapolis.kz/art/Eto_ne_terakti_a_publichniy_suitsid_popitka_virazit_protest*.

45. See *tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/188653; tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/189432/*.

46. See *www.np.kz/index.php?newsid=9132*.

47. See *tengrinews.kz/crime/191836; tengrinews.kz/crime/191942*.

48. See *www.time.kz/index.php?module=news&newsid=22632*.

49. See *www.azh.kz/news/view/7677;www.azh.kz/news/view/7678*.

50. "Islamist Group Threatens Kazakhstan over Religion Law," Reuters, October 26, 2011, available from *af.reuters.com/article/egyptNews/idAFL5E7LQ06P20111026?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0;www.time.kz/index.php?module=news&newsid=24290*.

51. Jacob Zenn, "On the Eve of 2014: Islam in Central Asia," *Current Trends*, June 2013, available from *www.currenttrends.org/research/detail/on-the-eve-of-2014-islamism-in-central-asia*.

52. *Ibid*.

53. Minbar Media, "Commenting on the Recent Speech From President Nazarbayev," November 16, 2011; Statement of Jund al-Khilafa regarding the events of Zhanaozen, "Overthrow the Tyrant," December 18, 2011, available from *www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBy0CBFKyxA*; "Message from the Mujahideen of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev Regime to Murtadskomu," October 26, 2011, available from *www.dailymotion.com/video/xly24k_*

yyyyyyyyy-yyyyyyyyyy-yyyyyyyyyy_news#from=embediframe; Jund al-Khilafah, "Yusef al-Faransi as I Knew Him, Penned by 'Abu Qaqa al-Andalusi'," *Flashpoint Partners*, available from *azelin.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/abc5ab-al-qaqc481-al-andalusc4ab-22yc5ab-suf-al-fransc4ab-mue1b8a5ammad-mirc481e1b8a5-merah-as-i-knew-him22-en.pdf*.

54. See *www.regnum.ru/news/1524082.html # ixzz2hEPeKP00*.

55. *Ibid*.

56. See *www.zakon.kz/4457462-erlan-karin-v-borbe-s-jekstremizmom.html*.

57. Marat Shibutov and Vyacheslav Abramov, "Terrorism in Kazakhstan: 2011-2012," Security 2013: Trends, Risks and Scenarios Round Table, Almaty, Kazakhstan: Institute of Political Solutions, November 27, 2012.

58. See *www.caucasustimes.com/article.asp?id=21146*.

59. See *abai.kz/content/erlan-karin-politolog-nam-neobkhodimo-eshche-bolshe-podderzhat-pravookhranitelnye-organy-i-e*.

60. Alexey Malashenko, "Islam i politika v gosudarstvah Tsentralnoi Asiii" ("Islam and Politics in Central Asian Countries"), *Central Asia and Caucasus*, No. 5, 1999.

61. See *www.caucasustimes.com/article.asp?id=21146*.

62. See *www.regnum.ru/news/1575804.html*.

63. See *www.respublika-kz.info/news/doslovno/25260/*; *megapolis.kz/art/Strelba_v_Kulsari*; *www.azh.kz/ru/news/view/11620*.

64. See *www.azh.kz/ru/news/view/11756; www.azh.kz/ru/news/view/11760.*

65. See *www.caravan.kz/article/37979*.

66. The unit used grenades and sniper fire to eliminate all five men inside the house. Two members of the Arystan

unit were killed during the operation. See *www.time.kz/index.php?module=news&newsid=24849*; *tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/203042/*.

67. See *www.respublika-kz.info/news/doslovno/23910/*; *megapolis.kz/art/Formennoe_bezobrazie-2012_07_22*.

68. See *www.respublika-kz.info/news/doslovno/24264/*; *www.respublika-kz.info/news/doslovno/24319*; *megapolis.kz/art/Formennoe_bezobrazie-2012_07_22*.

69. See *megapolis.kz/art/Genprokuratura_narushila_molchanie*; Kazinform, available from August 17, 2012, *www.inform.kz/rus/article/2487720*.

70. See *Interfax*, February 6, 2013.

71. *Ibid*.

72. This began at a hunting store, with an employee and a bystander shot and killed. Later Kariev shot two members of the Zhambyl KNB who were pursuing him. Shortly afterwards, he shot and killed two policemen. Kariev then fired a shot from a rocket-propelled grenade launcher through the window of a KNB building, and shot and wounded two more policemen, before being wrestled to the ground by another as he tried to throw a grenade. The ensuing explosion killed both men. "*Tengri News*, November 13, 2011, available from *tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/201415/*.

73. *Ibid*.

74. See *www.caucasustimes.com/article.asp?id=21146*.

75. See *Interfax*, February 6, 2013.

76. See *www.ia-centr.ru/expert/14050/*.

77. "Kazakhstan Jails Syria-Linked 'Terrorist Group'," *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, July 21, 2014.

78. See *sayasat.org/articles/953-kazahstan-na-puti-v-horasan*, July 4, 2014; *www.altyn-orda.kz/chem-obernetsya-dlya-kazaxstana-konflikt-v-sirii/*, September 4, 2013; *www.altyn-orda.kz/boevik-prizval-k-dzhixadu-v-sirii-na-kazaxskom-yazyke/*, July 18, 2013.

79. In November 2012, Amanbek Mukashev, Senior Fellow of the National Center for Culture and Religions with the Religious Affairs Agency, publicly opposed banning the radical Islamist Salafiyya movement in Kazakhstan, saying there was no need for an official ban since its members would most likely avoid seeking registration. "There are only about 20 Salafi mosques left in Kazakhstan, but the followers of the teaching also attend other mosques." In his view, the best way to combat this and other manifestations of radical Islam is to raise awareness of traditional Islam. "Ban on Salafiyya Movement in Kazakhstan Unreasonable: Expert," *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, November 8, 2012.

80. See *www.zakon.kz/4532801-kazakhstan-vedet-aktivnuju-borbu-protiv.html*.

81. See *www.counter-terror.kz*.

82. See *Tengri News*, October 2, 2013.

83. See *Interfax*, October 2, 2013.

84. "Members of Banned Islamic Group Get Long Prison Terms in Kazakh West," *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, September 10, 2013.

85. See *zonakz.net/articles/40574*.

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE

Major General William E. Rapp
Commandant

*****

STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
and
U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE PRESS

Director
Professor Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr.

Director of Research
Dr. Steven K. Metz

Authors
Ms. Zhulduz Baizakova
Mr. Roger N. McDermott

Editor for Production
Dr. James G. Pierce

Publications Assistant
Ms. Rita A. Rummel

*****

Composition
Mrs. Jennifer E. Nevil





FOR THIS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS, VISIT US AT
http://www.carlisle.army.mil/

ISBN 1-58487-694-8







This Publication



SSI Website



USAWC Website