CHAPTER 4

CENTRAL ASIA’S SECURITY: IMPLICATION ON INDIAN SECURITY

The Central Asian republics became independent and sovereign having their own head of state. That was the time when the region got prints on the international strategic map. Its strategic importance attracted many neighbouring as well as other powers from the globe. The internal security threat to the region such as ethnic problems, border disputes created political upheaval in the newly created republics.¹ The security agenda of the Central Asian republics has been shifted in present context. Unlike in 1990s, the risk of civil wars, which spread across the borders, is now no longer seen as a Central Asian security concern.² The present security concerns are proliferation of arms, drug trafficking, ethnic conflicts and problem of religious fundamentalism. However, these are the factors that link India’s security directly with the extended neighbourhood.³

The region of Central Asia presents different kinds of challenges for India’s foreign and security policies.⁴ The new situations in the region will pose new threats that affect both India and Central Asian republics.⁵ However, the Central Asia and South Asia are interlinked as the nature of threats in the region is transnational. Any instance of instability in region will also cause

² Wille, Christina, Risks of Security in Central Asia: An Assessment from Small Arms Perspective, Disarmament Forum, UNIDIR, November 2007, p. 33.
⁵ Ibid, p. 76.
instability and insecurity not only in India but also in South Asia. For India, Central Asian republics clearly fit within its broader security horizon.

No doubt, proliferation of arms is a biggest threat to the world over. The infected countries of Central Asia are also a hotbed. The widespread and easily availability of small arms gives any kind of confrontation the potential to disturb regional stability. The militants alter their money earned with the help of drug trafficking into small arms. They exchange drugs for getting the small arms. A report on the survey of the small arms estimated that these were circulated in Central Asia between 0.5 million and 1.5 million. The security forces are the primary holders of small arms in the region.

The United States of America and Pakistan widely spread/distributed the arms in to the region during the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. The Cold war rivalry between USA and former U. S. S. R. also led to aid and abet the Mujahideen providing all kinds of support on men, material and logistics. USA’s Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was the main source which provided financial assistance to the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) to train the Mujahideen cadres and to supply them the arms and the ammunition. The resistance fighters received arms worth US $ 2 billion between 1979 and 1989. However, the ISI used a large portion of US military supplies for its

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10 Ibid, p. 162.
11 A large number of small arms were spread among the militants. They purchase small arms with the money which they earned with drug trade. The civilians also owned small arms in large numbers to protect themselves from the militants. Ibid. p. 164
own purposes.\textsuperscript{16} Although, the Soviet troops withdrew from the region in 1989\textsuperscript{17}, but a large number of weapons left behind were taken by the Mujahideen cadres.

The Tajikistan Civil war started in September 1992 which had seen a large influx of small arms in to the region. During that period, Russia supplied arms to the pro-government forces in Tajikistan.\textsuperscript{18} The opposition group acquired the arms and support from the Afghan based Mujahideen.\textsuperscript{19}

The republic of Kyrgyzstan is considered to be an anomaly in Central Asia as the major portion of arms proliferation comes from the neighbouring country of Tajikistan through the old Silk Road\textsuperscript{*} from Ishkashim through Gorno–Badakshan via Khorog and Murghab to Osh\textsuperscript{**}. The route from central Tajikistan to the Kyrgyz districts of Leilek and Batken and then to Osh and Bishkek\textsuperscript{***} is also being used for the arms influx.\textsuperscript{21} Apart from this, a large numbers of weapons were stolen from the government stockpiles have been reported in both the republics of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.\textsuperscript{22} Approximately 40 kilograms of weapons-useable uranium and plutonium have been stolen from the poorly protected nuclear facilities in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Malik, Salma, Joseph, Mallika. \textit{Small Arms and the Security Debate in South Asia}, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, 2005, p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Joshi, Nirmala, Op. Cit., 2011, p. 73.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Joshi, Nirmala, Op. Cit., November-December 2010, p. 552.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Joshi, Nirmala, Op. Cit., 2011, p. 74.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Makhmudov, Oybek, Op. Cit., 2011, p. 164.
\item *Silk Road or route is significant as due to this the great civilizations like China, India, Iran, Egypt developed and many religions and ideas were passed along. Apart from this, many things such as silk, spices, satin, perfumes, jewels etc. were being traded along the route.
\item **Osh is the second largest city of Kyrgyzstan which is located in the Fergana Valley, the highly disturbed area in Central Asian region.
\item ***Bishkek is the capital city of Kyrgyzstan. It is also the largest city of Kazakhstan.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Even the corrupt officials in Tajikistan, for instance, attempted to sell canisters of plutonium and cesium-137.24

The spread of small weapons has increased harmful activities on the soil of the region, especially when these are supplied by Afghanistan.25 Tajikistan has become a hub of massive arms like – AK-47, AK-74, assault rifles, SVD sniper rifles, AKSU sub-machine guns, RPK, PK machine guns, RPG-2, RPG-7, RPG-18, SPG-7 and SPG-9 anti-tank weapons.26 The 9/11 terrorist attack too gave a boost to the entry of weapons and arms into the Central Asian region.27 Being nearer to homeland the influx of arms in Central Asia can hamper international security paradigm which includes India as well. The easy availability of arms and weapons undercurrents in the extended neighbourhood, can increase national security threat. It is a factor that strengthens the insurgency.28 This will also enhance the activities and movements of Pakistan, Afghan and Central Asian militant organizations.29 The increased flow of weapons may also raise the activities of insurgent groups involved in Kashmir and other parts of India.

Illicit drug trafficking is another facet of terrorism which has become curse for the countries concerned.30 Central Asia was traditionally a drug – producing region. The reason being that due to worst economic conditions, the living standard of the people declined and they turned to growing of opium poppies and other narcotic plants to earn their living.31 Further, the drug trade was fueled by the poverty prevailing in the most neglected regions.32 In some

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24 Ibid, p. 120.
26 Ibid.
27 In order to fight against Taliban in Afghanistan, the U. S. bought its forces to Central Asian region. The forces bought with themselves a large number of arms, weapons and ammunition. Joshi, Nirmala, Op. Cit., 2011, p. 74.
29 Ibid.
31 Ibid, p. 73.
regions, the only way to survive is to take part in the drug trade.\textsuperscript{33} Today the five states in the region are the major sites for the production,\textsuperscript{34} transformation, and consumption of drugs.\textsuperscript{35} There are a large number of people in the region who are willing to risk harsh legal penalties of drug trafficking, because according to them drugs trade is the only option for earning and survival. Women, old people and children are engaged in view of the fact that the law is perceived as being soft towards them.\textsuperscript{36} Most of the time, the drug traffickers are women only who have been taking part in drug trade as they are less likely to come under the suspicion.\textsuperscript{37}

Drug trafficking is rampant in the Central Asian republics, as these are located between the world’s largest provider of heroin i.e. Afghanistan, and the regions of highest consumption, namely Russia and Europe.\textsuperscript{38} Afghan drugs mainly travel along the three routes i.e. via the southern route through Pakistan, the western route through Iran and the northern route through Central Asia.\textsuperscript{39} The republics share a 2,400 km long border with Afghanistan. Over 99 percent of opiates transiting Central Asia are of Afghan origin.\textsuperscript{40} Nearly about one – quarter of the total of Afghanistan heroin and opium for European market is believed to be trafficked through these republics.\textsuperscript{41} Several major drug trafficking routes begin in Afghanistan and enter in to these countries. Then, these routes, further, move north in to Russia, northwest in to Europe and east

\textsuperscript{34} Ved, Mahendra, Silk Road Turns Destructive Drug Route, World Focus, Volume 21, Number 8, Delhi, August 2000, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{36} Ved, Mahendra. OP. Cit., August 2000, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
in to China. Presently, Ferghana Valley is a centre of such activities in the region.\(^{42}\)

Badakshan, Lenninaibad and Zeravshan are the main producers of drugs in Tajikistan, whereas in Kazakhstan, the Zhambyl province and in Kyrgyzstan Chui Valley and areas around the lake Issyk – Kul lake are the big producers. There are many major drug routes starting from Central Asian countries, through which drugs trafficked illegally to the European markets, like in Tajikistan the routes start from Dushanbe via Saryasia, Bukhara, Tashkent in Uzbekistan– Shymkent, Taraz, Almaty, Balkhash, Karaganda, Astana and Kokshetau in Kazakhstan to Petropavlovsk in Russia. Another route passes through Dushanbe via Saryasia & Bukhara in Uzbekistan, Tashavuz in Turkmenistan, Kungrad in Uzbekistan, Beineu, Opornaya, Makat, Atyrau, Ganyushkino in Kazakhstan to Russia. Again, from Dushanbe, it passes through Chorjou and Bekdash in Turkmenistan, Janaozen, Beineu, Opornaya, Makat, Atyrau and Ganyushkino in Kazakhstan to Russia.\(^{43}\)

In Kyrgyzstan, the drug routes originate from Bishkek via Korday, Almaty, Ayaguz, Georgievka, Ust and Kamenogorsk in Kazakhstan to Russia. Another route starts from Bishkek via the cities of Kazakhstan i.e. Almaty, Saryshagan, Balkhash, Karaganda, Astana, Kokshetau, Petropavlovsk to Russia.\(^{44}\) One of the routes passes via Taraz, Shymkent, Kyzylorda, Aktobe, Uralsk from Bishkek to Russia. Drugs trafficked all the way through Chu, Almaty, Semipalatinsk from Bishkek to Novosibirsk in Russia. The drugs routes in Uzbekistan commence from Tashkent by the way of Saryagash, Shymkent, Taraz, Almaty, Taldykurgan, Ayaguz, Georgievka, Ust-Kamenogorski to Russia. Through

\(^{42}\) Ferghana Valley is the main passageway of the Afghanistan’s drug trade due to its mountainous areas, which is connected with three republics i.e. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Many militant groups are operating in the valley which are involved in drug trade. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT) are the two main groups. Anara Tabyshalieva, Policy Recommendations: Some Strategies for Stability, in Mekenkamp, Monique, Tongeren, Paul Van and Veen, Hans Van De, *Searching for Peace in Central And South Asia: An overview of Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Activities*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., Boulder, Colorado, 2003, p. 81.


\(^{44}\) Ibid.
Since 1991, the drug trafficking from Afghanistan’s northern borders through Central Asian states has increased considerably. Nearly 95 tones of drugs are smuggled through the Central Asian region every year. According to the International Narcotics Control Board estimation around 20 percent of the narcotics produced in Afghanistan pass throughout the borders of Central Asia. According to the UN, three-quarters of the global heroin supply

Source: http://www.stratfor.com accessed on 11 June 2012

48 Ibid.
originates in Afghanistan. According to German Interpol Officers, the religious militant groups are responsible for 70 percent of the total amount of drugs transiting through the Central Asian republics. The 80 percent of heroin in Europe and 95 percent in United Kingdom is mainly of Afghanistan origin which is trafficked through these republics.

Turkmenistan shares a border of 744 kilometers with Afghanistan. Nearly 80 tons of heroin enters Turkmenistan each year out of which approximately 30 percent stays within and consumed domestically. Uzbekistan is also considered a main passage route for Afghanistan opiates. But these drugs enter mainly via Tajikistan rather than crossing the direct border. Uzbekistan is better protected along its 450-kilometre border with Afghanistan than is Tajikistan because for Uzbekistan the Amu-Darya river is a natural obstacle. Kazakhstan also provides the drug trafficking routes from Tajikistan. The heroin that passes through Central Asia is primarily aimed for Russian and the European markets. But now days, it is visible that it is expanding towards the Chinese markets as well.

In the globalized world, the area of the illegal drug trade has been expanded. The drug trafficking is not only a law and order problem, but it has wider consequences. It has start affecting the security and stability of the states. The drug traffickers have joined hands with the militants and the corrupt officials.

50 Makhmudov, Oybek, Op. Cit., 2011, p. 165
55 Ibid, p. 164. It is expanding towards China as its Xinjiang Province shares borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through which drug traffickers could access major drug producer countries like Laos, Myanmar, Thailand etc. Apart from this, drug traffickers see China as lucrative market for drug trade.
and elite class people of the state, who, further, encourage the same for the sake of money. Tajikistan is the best example where during civil war, the high officials encouraged the production of drugs in order to acquire huge amount of money. Both the opposition as well as officials of Tajikistan government receives money from the drug trade.

There is a strong link between the illicit drug traders and the insurgents and terrorist organizations in the Central Asian republics. The drug trade for mutual benefits creates a strong nexus between religious militants and organized crime groups in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Currently, they are involved in large scale organized crime to finance their armed struggle. They use money generated through narcotic trade for Islamic extremism in order to destabilize the governments of Central Asian states. This has created the dangerous mix of narco-terrorism in the region.

The links between the international insurgents and the drug trade makes the issue relevant to the international security more broadly. The regional Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is actively involved in illegal drug trade to finance, further, its activities. It is responsible for the 70 percent of the total amount of heroin and opium transiting through the region.

The President of Turkmenistan, Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, during his visit to India in 2010, acknowledged that the terrorism, transnational crime and illicit drug trafficking of narcotic drugs were among main threats to security as

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58 Ibid, p. 166.
60 Ibid.
well as to the sustainable development of countries of the world. The menace of drug trafficking has been spread to such an extent that it has the ability to weaken the political stability and to damage the development process in the states. It is a grim threat to the well being of mankind – especially to the health and safety.

India is more vulnerable to the illicit drug trade as Pakistan is in near proximity to both of the regions. Pakistan is, too, actively participating in the drug trade to international markets. Like Iran, CARs also want checks on trafficking of narcotics from Afghanistan. Afghanistan’s non state actors provide funds for the drug trafficking to the region. If the narcotics trade in Central Asia increases through Afghanistan then it will be easy for both Pakistan and Afghanistan to control the region. A Pakistan – Afghanistan control of the region will make it difficult for India to check the flow of drug traffic to her territory through Kashmir as it is in the close proximity and an easily available market for both the countries.

The creation of Central Asian region also created ethnic problem in these republics as the region has had people with diverse races and cultures. An ethnic heterogeneity and existence of multiple sub – national identities lie in its society. The large numbers of different ethnic minorities include Russians and other European in these republics. However, the Russians living here have neither learnt the local language nor have they adopted local customs and

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65 Mishra, Ranjan, India and Central Asia: From Hiatus to Hopes, World Focus, Volume xxx, Number 8, August 2009, p. 326.
The legacies of co-mingled ethnic groups, and indistinct national identities pose serious problems to stability in the Central Asian republics.\textsuperscript{70} The inter-ethnic hostility in the region has manifested in a number of violent clashes and riots.\textsuperscript{72} There were riots in Farghana in 1989\textsuperscript{73} between Uzbeks and Meshketian Turks\textsuperscript{74}. Meshketian Turks belong to small ethnic group deported from the Caucasus to Uzbekistan by Stalin in 1944.\textsuperscript{75} Most of these residents had to flee the valley back to Russia and other Central Asian countries. Then riots occurred in Novy Uzen in 1989, in Kyrgyzstan’s Osh province in 1990\textsuperscript{77} between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz\textsuperscript{78}, in Tajikistan during the civil war in 1992\textsuperscript{70} and latest was in Kyrgyzstan in 2010\textsuperscript{80}. In Tajikistan the ethnic rivalry led to the eruption of five year bloody civil war. These hostilities highlighted the potential for regional ethnic fighting. Radicalizing ethnic or religious identity could further complicate the situation and further drag the states down the path of chaos and instability.\textsuperscript{81} The rugged mountains in the eastern Tajikistan and that area’s proximity to the Afghan – Pakistan borderlands makes it perfect hiding place for extremists and terrorists elements.\textsuperscript{83}

Three of the Central Asian republics i.e. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan support Northern Alliance because of ethnic considerations.\textsuperscript{81} The Russian view is that “the ethnicity more than Islam is more active competitive

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid
\textsuperscript{72} Patnaik, Ajay, Ethnicity and Nationalism in Central Asia, Rao, V. Nagendra, Alam, Mohammad Monir, Central Asia – Present Challenges and future prospects, Knowledge World Publishers, New Delhi, 2005, p. 67
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid
\textsuperscript{74} Firdous, Tabasum, Op. Cit., 2009, p. 69
\textsuperscript{76} Rao, V. Nagendra., Op., Cit., 2005, p. 67
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid
\textsuperscript{78} Firdous, Tabasum, Op. Cit., 2009, p. 69
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, p. 2.
factor in current phase of Afghanistan civil war. If Afghanistan government discriminates against large ethnic minorities in Afghanistan, it will generate instability in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which in turn would retard economic progress in the region.”

India has a sizeable population of same religious domination as CARs. That’s why ethnic and religious conflicts and tensions would have great bearing on India’s security. Unlike India, Central Asian states can be identifying with any of the identities i.e. religion, ethnic, or linguistic. Eruption of conflict in any of the Central Asian republics will provide Pakistan a great chance to play a bigger role in the region. It could pose a threat to India. Kashmir is more vulnerable to the conflicts and tensions in Central Asia due to its contiguity and exiting militancy. Apart from this, the turmoil in Afghanistan can create problems in Central Asia, which, further, could act as hurdles in India’s future contacts with the Central Asian countries both in long as well short term. After 1991, Russia lost its position to provide security to the Central Asian region. A well known American Specialist on Eurasian Affairs once commented on the impact of the Russian weak position in the region on India. He said, “Russian weakness in Central Asia compounds India’s immediate and long term problems there. In the short term, the chaos in Afghanistan and parts of Central Asia over which Russia might once have exerted a strong restraining influence is now free to spread southwards.”

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Central Asia has become an important region in terms of growing Islamist groups in the recent years. The region has witnessed the mushrooming of the Islamic fundamentalist forces which threaten the internal stability of the region. The first sign of fundamentalism in the region had emerged with the Iranian revolution. The next sign provided by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 when a large number of Uzbeks and Tajiks were sent to Afghanistan to assist the pro-Soviet government. Here they got exposed to the Islamist tendencies. Then tremors of Islamic fundamentalism were being seen during the demise of Soviet Union.

The Central Asian republics have experienced an ideological pull towards Pan-Islamism. The revival of Islamic fundamentalism has appeared due to the region’s geo-political closeness to Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Through many preaching and propaganda of radical Islam, the Islamists wanted to make the whole of Central Asia a supporter of radical Islam. They are striving to come in to power in Central Asia through coercion and outside armed intervention by the Taliban in Afghanistan. The civil strife in Tajikistan and the turbulence in Uzbekistan and the Southern parts of Kyrgyzstan occurred due to the encouragement of Islamists factors.

The most destructive prospective of Islam came into the light when the Islamic fundamentalist forces tried to fill the ideological vacuum after Soviet disunion. US Department of State report on terrorism published in April 2009

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91 Patnaik, Ajay, India – Central Asia Relations: The growing Prospects, World Focus, Volume 24, Number 10-11-12, October 2003, p. 49.
95 Ibid, p. 96.
states that Islamist groups in Central Asia increasingly pose a serious threat. In almost every conflict taken place in Central Asian republics, Islamic militancy played a great role. The chosen vehicles of Islamic fundamentalism are Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Tablighi Jamaat and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (now know as Islamic Movement of Turkestan (IMT) and in India there are number of terrorist Islamic organizations. Farghana valley in Uzbekistan has been providing shelter to the Islamic fundamentalist forces since Soviet dissolution. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan’s (IMU) is considered as a menace to the security of the region. Its activities in Central Asia reflect the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, Its cadres fought with the United Tajik opposition during the civil war (1992-97) in Tajikistan.

There are many reasons for Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asian republics; Central Asian governments used a harsh policy for anyone who is suspected to be sympathizer with the radical Islam. The privatization process benefited only the elite class which had made the region vulnerable to Islamic fundamentalism; There is lack of collective security measures amongst Central Asian republics; the member countries like Russia and China of the coalitions, which are created to deal with religious fundamentalism, terrorism and illicit drug trade, are concerned much about their own interests rather than of Central Asian states. As a result, the needed understanding and cooperation to deal with such threats is missing; and the fundamentalist forces, terrorists and illicit drug trade have formed a nexus.

101 Ibid, p. 98.
In spite of the obvious successful countermeasures against radical groups, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have experienced many insurgent attacks. Most activists come from fundamentalist groups based in the Fergana Valley, the region split between three countries. However, the secular regimes in Central Asia are more vulnerable to extremists’ activities as compared to common masses. The series of bomb blasts in Tashkent in 1999 and 2004, the Batken province in Kyrgyzstan in 2000 and an attempt on the life of President Islam Karimov in 1999 are supposed to be the work of fundamentalist’s forces. It seems difficult to estimate the extent and influence of the radical and fundamental organizations in the region.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb – ut – Tahrir (HuT) and Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) are the prominent radical groups active in Central Asia. Apart from these, a number of other radical Islamic groups like Uzun Sokul, Tabliqh, Adolat Uyushmasi etc. are operating in Central Asia. They share common activities to the most militant form of Islam with their Middle East counterparts. They also receive financial and personnel support from the Arab world.

Tajikistan Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) was more than a purely religious movement; it was also a social and political phenomenon. IRP was established prior to the collapse of Soviet Union in Astrakhan, Russia. It became active in Uzbekistan. It was the leading opposition party in the country (Tajikistan). However, lately, the party became critical of the growing concentration of power. It has taken a straightforward political position against the extensive
corruption and discrimination of President Rakhmanov’s government.115 “The Islamic Renaissance Party is operating at the grassroots level, but has not been able to pose an effective threat to the status quo.”116 In 1993, the government banned Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan.117 It acquires distinction in Tajik civil war as it fought with the United Tajik Front against the existing government.118

IRP was re-legalized in Tajikistan by signing a peace accord with the government in 1998.119 It has also accepted the secular nature of the state and become soft while speaking on political Islam.120 However, the party has failed to deal with the government’s anti-Islamic attitude due to its weaken position.121 Presently, IRP is unique in the Central Asian region as being an Islamist movement; it is participating peacefully in the political life of a secular state.122

Hizb – ut – Tahrir is also known as the Party of Islamic Liberation. The group was founded in Jerusalem in 1952 by a Palestinian scholar, Taqiuddin-an-Nabhani al Falastani.123 It seeks the creation of Islamic state with the original Islamic caliphate124 in Central Asia. It is a radical Islamic political movement that advocates the establishment of a borderless, theoretic Islamic state

115 Ibid.
116 Ibid, p. 177.
121 Ibid.
Throughout the entire Muslim world.\textsuperscript{125} It claims to be a pan-Islamic movement. It has large numbers of the followers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and Chinese traditionally Muslim Province of Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{126} Uzbeks are believed to be its prominent members. They are highly active in the Ferghana valley of Uzbekistan.\textsuperscript{127} However, the harsh policies adopted by the government of the country led to the spill over effect of Hizb-ut-Tahrir and its ideology in the neighbouring countries in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{128}

HuT is active in nearly 40 countries in the world.\textsuperscript{129} The head office of the organisation is located in London.\textsuperscript{130} The organization had also taken full advantage of the political and ideological vacuum which was created by the sudden fall of the Soviet Union. The Socio-economic problems, further, helped it in its development in the region.

The organisation is different and, somehow, unique because of its opposition to the use of violence. It also seeks public support with the use of non-violent methods. It says that it would use violence only when the time is right, for example – at initial stage of a conflict it would not use violence as a mean, but at final stage if the situation turns worst for HUT, then it would not hesitate to use violence.\textsuperscript{131} It has also openly said, “Violence might be necessary in order to overthrow the regimes standing in the way of Caliphate”.\textsuperscript{132} Presently, Hizb-ut-Tahrir continues to operate as a fundamentalist organization which still uses non-violence as a mean and tool in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{133}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[126] Ibid., p. 107.
\item[127] Ibid, p. 102.
\item[132] Ibid.
\item[133] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Tahrir also criticizes the government leaders and officials who act at the will of western outfit.\(^{124}\) It does not accept the views of the democracy, pluralism and capitalism for an Islamic state. It condemned the states which do not reject these kinds of views and not following the true vision of Islam. Although, HuT is not a political party; nor they want to participate in politics and to be the part of any coalition government. It is also against the seizure of power and believes in the shaping of ideas of society which would lead to a change in regime.\(^{135}\)

The leaders of Central Asian republics claim that Hizb-ut-Tahrir has connections with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). After the Tashkent bombing of 1999 and 2004, most of members were arrested.\(^{136}\) Around 7000-8000 members of Hizab – ut – Tahrir are held in prisons across Central Asia.\(^{137}\) The majority of them are in Uzbekistan.\(^{138}\) Presently, it has been banned by the all governments in the Central Asian republics.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (Islamic Movement of Turkestan) is a group of radical militants, also known as Islamic Movement of Turkestan (IMT). It changed its name to Islamic Party of Turkestan in April 2001 and then to Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in May 2001. However, despite the name changes the organization is still known as Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. It was formed in the Namangan region of Uzbekistan in 1992 by Tahir Yuldashev.\(^{139}\) He and his field commander Jumaboy Ahmadjonovich Khojiyev, also known as Juma Namangani,\(^{140}\) were responsible for strengthening and expanding IMU’s base.

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\(^{135}\) Ibid.
\(^{138}\) Ibid.
\(^{140}\) Dwivedi, Ramakant, Op. Cit., 2006, p. 121
However, a period of repression occurred after 1992 and many Islamic militants had to flee to Ferghana Valley.\textsuperscript{41} Juma Namangani fled to Tajikistan. He had, also, taken part in the Tajik Civil War and established a base for IMU’s cadres there. On the other side, Yuldashev traveled to countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia where he established links to other Islamic militant organisations.\textsuperscript{142}

The aim of the organization is to overthrow the existing regime and constitutional system and establishing an Islamic State.\textsuperscript{143} Unlike Hizab – ut – Tahrir, the IMU has also attracted supporters from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.\textsuperscript{144} Mainly Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Chechens and Uighurs are the ones to give their support.\textsuperscript{145}

According to document issued by Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan entitled ‘Lessons for Jihad’, the organization is committed to Jihad in four stages:

- a political stage,
- a military stage,
- an economic stage and
- a stage of struggle against the believer’s profane desires.\textsuperscript{146}

The IMU gets external and internal aid in terms of finances and arms and weapons from Middle East, Pakistan and Central Asia and organizations like Taliban and Al - Qaeda.\textsuperscript{147} It also makes money through drug trafficking.\textsuperscript{148}

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\item \textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Dwivedi, Ramakant, Op. Cit., 2006, p. 123.
\item \textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Tuker, A. Tolga, Op. Cit., 2011, p. 293.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Dwivedi, Ramakant, Op. Cit., 2006, p. 124
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IMU trained Western European Muslims in the camps located in North Waziristan in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{149}

The Herald report observes that the IMU poses the most potential threat to the stability in the region.\textsuperscript{150} It has been involved in terrorist bombing and clashes with the Uzbek security forces.\textsuperscript{151} The violent activities of organization came in light when a series of car bombs exploded in Tashkent on February 16, 1999 in which 16 people killed and more than 100 persons injured.\textsuperscript{152} Uzbek government held IMU for the same. Another attempt to destabilize Uzbekistan and to create an Islamic state in Ferghana valley by IMU was in August 1999.\textsuperscript{153} The government forces were attacked by the same in July 2001. In the month of November, 2001, Yuldashev took command of the IMU, when anti-Taliban fighters killed Juma Namangani during the United States bombing in Mazar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{154}

On September 19, 2010, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan claimed responsibility for a surprise attack on the Tajik forces in the Rasht Valley, east of Dushanbe in Tajikistan.\textsuperscript{155} The attack killed 25 soldiers and wounded 20 others. Many of the cadres were arrested.\textsuperscript{156} According to US State Department, ‘there were about 300 arrests in the first seven months of 2002 on religious or political grounds, compared with 1500 in any seven month period in 1999 – 2000.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{150} Sreedhar, Islamic Radicalism: Central Asia and Beyond, \textit{World Focus}, Volume 21, Number 8, Delhi, August 2000, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Dwivedi, Ramakant, Op. Cit., 2006, p. 122
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{156} Dwivedi, Ramakant, Op. Cit., 2006, p. 122
On May 29, 2013, IMU along with Taliban launched suicide attack on the
governor’s compound in Panjshir Province in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{158} Although the
attack was a failed attempt but one policeman and seven terrorists died due to
this.\textsuperscript{159} IMU stated that among the six dead terrorists, three were from
Afghanistan, two from Uzbekistan and one was from Kyrgyzstan.\textsuperscript{160}

The Independent Human Rights Organisation of Uzbekistan estimated that in
December 2002, of those 6400 arrested people on religious activism, about
1200 to 1700 are considered Wahhabis, 4200 to 4300 members of Islamic
Movement of Uzbekistan or Hizab-ut-Tahrir, and 600 to 700 are pious Muslims
not belonging to any religious organization.\textsuperscript{161}

When the Tajik government compelled the IMU militants to shift away to
Afghanistan, the militant belonging to Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
became allies of the Taliban militia and Al – Qaeda\textsuperscript{162} and other militant
organizations of Pakistan. However, the harsh treatment adapted by Uzbek
President, Islam Karimov, towards his home-grown militants has failed to
eradicate the IMU. Whereas, during United States led War on Terror, the first
targets for the bombing campaign were the IMU camps which were established
near Kunduz.\textsuperscript{163} Hundreds of IMU fighters died during the war in and around
this area.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{158} IMU Takes the Responsibility for Panjshir Suicide Attack, Central Asia Online, June 3, 2013.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{162} Bakshi, Jyotsna, Geopolitical Imperatives in Kyrgyzstan’s Multi-Vector Foreign Policy,
Shanthanam, K. and Dwivedi, Ramakant, \textit{India – Kyrgyz Relations: Perspectives and Prospects},


The extremists religious groups like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb-ut-Tahrir have a strong presence in the Central Asian republics. These groups are active in the region and periodically create major upheavals. The public support it was getting has diminished due to its violent approaches. The funds generated by the drug trade also could increase its strength. In future, IMU would seem ready to create violent and unstable situations in Central Asian region with the potentially devastating consequences.

A zone of instability lies near Central Asia which includes Afghanistan and the countries of Islamic belt like Pakistan, Turkey and Iran. CARs want stable environment in Afghanistan. President Islam Karimov was not enthusiastic about an extreme Islamic regime in Afghanistan as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are facing a challenge from such religious forces. Only stable government can check the revival of radical Islamic in the region, which, further, might threaten their own regimes. Regarding security issues, Russian President, Vladimir Putin stated during his visit to Uzbekistan on August 6, 2003, “without Russia, it will be impossible to stop the expansion of Islamic fundamentalists on the territory of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.”

The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism raises a new angle to the security of the region. Any success attempts by extremists and fundamentalist outfits to regroup itself within the region will have its fallout for India; and also for the stability in the region. India has also been tackling the same challenge since

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166 Ibid.
169 V. K., India’s Strategic Neighbourhood-Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, in Kumar, Satish, *India’s National Security Annual Review 2005*, Knowledge World, New Delhi, 2005, p. 82.
In the words of Israeli Energy and Water Resource Minister, Uzi Landau, “India itself is suffering from terrorism because of a rough neighbourhood.” According to P. Stobdan, “in the past, religious fundamentalist forces from the Central Asian republics have been seen fighting along with the Jihadis in Kashmir.”

However, the success of fundamentalist in Central Asia would, in all probability, boost up the morale of the fundamentalist forces active in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in India. Kashmir is very much vulnerable to Islamic militancy as the region is in the close proximity. Pakistan will be the first country to be benefited by the same. Apart from this, the increased Islamic militancy could force India to retract its broader ambitions and curtail its rising trade with Central Asia. There is also a fear as declared by the Jamat-e-Islami chief in Pakistan Qazi Hussain Ahmed, in Rawalpindi on February 1992, that “a great Islamic State spreading from Kashmir to Central Asia would emerge after the independence of Kashmir.” It is important for India to ensure that Pakistan could not develop a cozy relation with Muslim population in Central Asian republics.

The India’s Ayni Airbase in Tajikistan is very useful for India from the security point of view. The location of the base is near to the areas where the training

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175 Tutneja, Ashok, Israel wants India to reduce dependence on Iranian Oil, The Tribune, February 25, 2012, p. 11.
176 Stobdan, P., Central Asian and India’s Security, in Strategic Analysis, Volume 28, Number 1, January-March 2004, p. 70.
camps of the Jihadis and other terrorists groups are located. India can, easily, keep an eye on these groups. India has already deployed Indian air force fighter aircrafts at the base. Presently, Russia is negotiating with Tajikistan on the use of Ayni air base. Uzbekistan has refused to cooperate; therefore Russia seeks support from Tajikistan for the Russian and CSTO military activities to strengthen its borders with Afghanistan.

Islam is a factor which Central Asian region has been after the establishment of the empire of nomad Turks. In Central Asia, the present regimes are secular in nature and have taken the help of traditional Islam to legitimize their authoritative rule. The high authorities in Central Asia use traditional Islam and oppose the reformers. Kyrgyzstan’s well known political scientist, Mars Sariyev stated that, “Islam is gradually growing in to society. Clerics at least fear God. The authorities apparently fear nothing”.

At present, the realization of nationality has come out among the people to an extent that it is difficult to promote any pan – Islamic identity in Central Asia. The International Crisis Group (ICG) report on Central Asia: Islam and the State noted down that, “Islam in Contemporary Central Asia is multifaceted and complex phenomenon that is in considerable flux. While the region has historically been an integral part of the broader Muslim world, seven decades of Soviet rule produced many characteristics that it does not share with the rest of the Muslim world.”

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182 Sharma, Rajeev, India’s Ayni Military in Tajikistan is Russia Locked, October 26, 2012, http://indrus.in/articles/2012/10/26/indias_ayni_military_base_in_tajikistan_is_russia-locked_18661.html March 25, 2013
183 Ibid.
185 Ibid.
189 Ibid., p. 101.
Although, the Islam not being homogeneously strong in all parts of Central Asia. But, the re-emergence of Islam can be used as a potential threat by interested powers for destabilizing the region.\footnote{Banerjee, D., Emergence of Central Asia, \textit{Asian Strategic Review 1991-92}, Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi, 1992, p. 311.} They seek to transform the Central Asian region into an Islamic heaven. The chosen vehicles for spreading Islam in the region are militant groups like Hizab – ut – Tahrir, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.\footnote{International Conference on “Cooperative Development in Central Asia: An Indian Perspective” at the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh, March 15 – 17, 2008, p. 2.}

Both India and Central Asia want to stop/check the creation of an Islamic radical belt linked to Pakistan running from the Middle East to eastern China.\footnote{Sharma, B. K., Op. Cit., 2009, p. 107.} Keeping it in mind that the people of Central Asia are Muslims, Pakistan hoped to spread its religious agenda there\footnote{Joshi, Nirmala, Op. Cit., 2011, p. 79.} and sees the region as an arena of natural expansion.\footnote{Ibid, p. 2.} It surfaces a way for major Islamic bloc with Iran, Middle Eastern countries and Turkey.\footnote{Ibid.}

As one of the many countries with large Muslim populations, India shares with the five Central Asian republics a concern over the spillover effects of Muslim radicalism in their territories.\footnote{Firdous, Tabasum, Op. Cit., 2009, p. 17.} Global war on terrorism (a unique formula to enervate Islamist terrorist groups)\footnote{D’Souza, Shanthi Mariet, Global War on Terror: The Long War to Nowhere, in S. D. Muni, \textit{Asian Strategic Survey 2007}, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2008, p. 41.} initiated by NATO and U. S. forces could be dangerous for both India and Central Asia because a decisive push by NATO force in the coming times could trigger an influx of refugees and terrorists elements into both the regions.\footnote{Joshi, Nirmala, Op. Cit., 2011, p. xv} And if America withdraws from the Afghanistan then there is a possibility that Central Asia will risk a revival of Taliban type regimes.\footnote{Stobdan, P., Op. Cit., 2005, p. 242.} It could affect India’s security.\footnote{Stobdan, P., Op. Cit., 2005, p. 242.} Further, if, in future,
the Central Asian Republics become an Islamic entity, then Pakistan may be able to gather more support against India in Islamic and international fora. It may also affect India’s economic interests in the region.201

China is an active player in Central Asia whose influence in the region is increasing day by day. According to former President Jiang Zemin, the friendship between China and CARs has long history. He, further, pointed out, “more than 2000 years ago, the world famous Silk route was not only a road of trade and civilization but a road of friendship and cooperation as well. The ancient path has linked the people of China with the people of each Central Asian country a long time ago.”202 China’s influence in the region is kept on increasing as it is pursuing challenging security policies. China’s new approach has reflected her interests by seeking to reassure neighbours especially Central Asia that they had little to fear and much to gain from rising China.203 Currently, her aim in Central Asian region is not expansionism but to conquer its economy.204 China cannot follow proper its policy to increase influence in Central Asia due to external and regional power’s presence. Former President Jiang Zemin, during his visit to Central Asia in 1996, had described the relations with CARs as: “good neighbours, good fellows and good friends.”205

Apart from this China is the second largest trading partner of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Hence, Central Asia’s increased economic cooperation with China will provide the region additional options for markets, trade routes and technical assistance.206 China also wants developments and stability in the

200 Ibid.
CARs as it is important for her Xinjiang province where a large number of Uighur exist. At present, the influence of Islamic fundamentalism is spreading fast in Xinjiang. Hence, Central Asian republics and China stand together against Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. Although, China has already solved border related issues with Central Asian republics. It has also strengthened its relations with Russia to counter balance western involvement. The improved relations between Russia and China will encourage peaceful relationship between the later and Central Asian republics. Further, to increase its involvement and presence in the region and to increase strategic grip on the Xinjiang province, China has started making huge investment in the region. It has also initiated trade routes to Central Asia across Xinjiang border with new rail and road links with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. China has become an important player in Central Asian region due to the participation of all interested states in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The threat of China – Pakistan and China – Pakistan – Iran nexus has direct implications for India’s security. Many international conjunctures have been made that the terrorists involved in Xinjiang are being trained in Pakistan. Although, being on the front position of the struggle of anti-terrorism, China has strong faith in her long term ally. China’s increasing influence in the region can provide her an opportunity to enter in to India with an access to the

\[207\] Xinjiang is known as Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) or East Turkestan. The region has cultural affinity with the Central Asian republics. It is a home to about one million Kazakhs and smaller numbers of Kyrgyz and Tajiks. It is part of the focal area where the frontier areas of Afghanistan, China, India and Kazakhstan adjoin one another. See Rahul, Ram, Struggle for Central Asia, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1882, p. 8.


\[211\] Ibid., p. 93.


\[213\] Singh, Bhavana, Xinjiang Again: A Legatee of China’s Start Crossed Policies, World Focus, volume xxxii, Number 9, September 2011, p. 566.

\[214\] Ibid.
backdoor of India. 15 This is a matter of grave concern for India. India and China’s trade interests especially related to energy are also likely to clash.

Central Asian region witnessed a great game after 1991, where Russia’s strategic position and influence in the region declined. 216 Its status as a security guarantor for Central Asia also got destabilized as it was apparently not in position to provide further security. 217 The neighbouring countries like Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia considered themselves as natural allies to fill the vacuum created after the exit of the Soviet Union.218 The reason was that the identity and cultural of these countries as an Islamic states is by and large matching to the cultural ethos of the immediate neighbourhood. 219 Then in 2001, during war on terror by the United States, a new Great game for power and influence started, in which both regional and global players seek to establish their foothold in the region quickly. 220 United States encouraged Turkey’s role in the region to reduce Iran as well as Russia influence. 221 At present, environment in the Central Asian region is that of rivalry and competition among the major players. 222

Although Russia is claiming that she has regained the control over the region, but many regional powers are trying and struggling for the same. Keeping this in mind, the proper functioning of CARs is very important for India because the countries like China, Pakistan and Iran are attempting to project themselves into the region. 223 If this happens then this will have an adverse affect to India’s security because there is a possibility that the three some could join hands against India. Apart from this, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are also interested,

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219 Ibid.
which could help China in the same way. Hence, Russia’s influence and stability in Central Asian region can only benefit India due to their long warm relations and friendship.

South Asia is one of the partners of the Central Asian countries. It is also an important region in the international security system. However, the security in South Asian region depends on India and her relation with the countries of neighbourhood. Peace, stability and security in the Central Asian region are of prime importance to India. The factors like menace of illicit drug trafficking, the emergence of religious extremism, terrorism, economic crises, the spread of small arms and China’s growing influence in the region etc., are some of the factors that link India’s security directly with its extended neighbourhood.

Afghanistan is a concern for India which cannot be separated while linking it with Central Asia’s security. It is a part of the Central Asian geopolitical build. There are chances that Central Asia might become part of the deliberately risky neighbourhood dominated by expanded Af-Pak. India fears the same more than anything else. India and Central Asian countries should pool forces to address the problem of Afghanistan. In January 2009, Kazakhstan President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev visited India and met Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. Both the leaders agreed that there is a need for stability, security and economic development of Kyrgyzstan and

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224 Ibid, p. 246.
227 Ibid.
230 Ibid. p. xiv.
Afghanistan. Russia is also willing to cooperate with India, Iran, China and the United States, and even with Pakistan to stabilize the turmoil situation in Afghanistan.

But the newly independent immature republics lack experience as well as expertise to tackle with the problem of terrorism and Islamic extremism. India has been a victim of terrorism since its independence and has been handling it so far within its own territorial units. India is fairly experienced in dealing fundamentalist forces. India’s experience and knowledge will be beneficial for Central Asia as the region itself facing the same problem. The Central Asian republics are also looking towards India for help and guidance in transforming their economies into free market ones. The republics also want to build a new political system which will based on liberal democracy like India and want to ensure social stability by keeping tensions under control. S. M. Krishna, former External Affairs Minister has stated, “Both our countries are strongly opposed to terrorism”. Mr. Nazarbayev and Dr. Manmohan Singh also evinced concern at production and illicit trafficking of narcotics. India has set up joint Working Groups (JWG) to deal with Islamic extremism and counter terrorism with four states of Central Asia i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. These Joint Working Groups provide for

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233 Ibid. p. 107.
234 Ibid. p. 111.
236 Ibid.
better coordination like sharing of experience and information, regular consultations and training facilities to build up paramilitary forces.240

Likewise, Central Asian republics need the support of other countries, especially the neighbouring countries. Therefore, these republics have joined regional organizations which can benefit and contribute to its stability. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Collective Security Treaty Organisation are the main instrumental organizations whose main agenda is to maintain security in the member and participant countries.241 It also addresses the common concerns of both India and Central Asia242. As a Chinese scholar, Zhaunghzi, said, “SCO members share a common border. It is unimaginable for Central Asian countries to develop their economies and maintain domestic stability without support from their neighbours.”243

When Uzbekistan joined SCO as a full member in 2001, the Shanghai Five was labeled as Shanghai Cooperation Organisation244. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was founded on June 15, 2001245. It is an intergovernmental organisation. Earlier it was known as Shanghai Five Organisation, which was started in April 1996246 and was an initiative of China247. The organization has six member countries namely – China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan248. It has India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan as ‘Observers’ members. Mongolia was given the ‘Observer’ status at Summit held at Tashkent (Uzbekistan) in June 17, 2004

240 Ibid
244 Ibid, p. 151.
246 Ibid.
and India, Iran and Pakistan got the ‘Observer’ status at the Summit held in Astana in July 5, 2005. However, the status given to India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan reveals the logical development of this organization. The Declaration by the Heads of the Member States of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation said that “the SCO has been established with a view to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighbourliness.” The decisions in SCO are taken on consensus agreement within informal discussion. The SCO Charter outlines, “the decisions taken by the SCO bodies shall be implemented by the member-states in accordance with the procedures set out in their national legislation.”

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has grown from an organization which settled border disputes to an organization that runs joint military exercises which includes military cooperation, intelligence sharing and counter terrorism. And, it has shifted its attention to the extremism, terrorism and separatism – the “three evil forces” in the member states. According to the former Secretary General, Zhang Deguang, “The SCO is an inter-governmental regional organization of multi-area cooperation which protects security and stability in the region, fights the three evils and promotes developments and prosperity in the region.” The member states decided to cooperate in fighting against the terrorism, illegal arms trade, illicit drug trafficking, religious fundamentalism and the separatism. These states of SCO signed a Convention on Fighting Terrorism, Separatism and Religious Extremism on June 15, 2001. In June 2002, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation signed

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252 Originally known as ‘Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’.
254 Ibid.
256 Ibid.
the “Agreement on a Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS)”260. The RATS started functioning in Tashkent (Uzbekistan)261 and provides both Russia and China with a security presence in Uzbekistan.262 However, RATS mandate take in measures which favour particularly Central Asian countries, Russia and China. It is not determined to curb threats (like terrorist groups) concerning India’s security.263

Earlier Russia was the lone player in Central Asian region, responsible for later’s stability and security. That is the reason that even today it considers itself as the main guarantor.264 China is also concerned about the consistency in the five republics, especially about the threat of Islamic fundamentalism265 as her own Xinjiang province is home to ethnic minority group of Uighurs who have always been struggling for autonomy.266 There are many sympathizers for Uighurs in Central Asian republics which is a deep cause of concern for China.267 However, Uighur problem is a strong encouraging factor behind China’s promotion of SCO mechanism.268 Since now, China has used the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation to facilitate greater exchange between the people of Central Asia and China.269 There is no doubt that Russia and China are competing for supremacy along with other powers in the Central Asian region and China’s growing influence is a matter of concern for India and Russia as well. The SCO provides Russia, China and India a common platform270 in the Central Asian states. In the words of A. A. Kutsenkov, Russian Indologist and Director, Centre for Indian Studies, Institute of Oriental

268 Ibid.
Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, “For Russia as well for India, China is not the choice, but the destiny.” However, it is possible that the SCO platform may become more useful for India, China and Russia, especially in long run, to cooperate closely in their energy dealings.

A secular Shanghai Cooperation Organisation watches India’s interests as the later has considered the same as a potential instrument for promoting regional integration and peace. It has also assumed it as a measure to curb the menace of terrorism. However, Shanghai Five previously criticized India for being a country with nuclear programme.

Ever since SCO has been founded, India has shown her interest to join and participate in the same. Uzbekistan has supported India’s entry in the SCO. Even during Kazakhstan President’s visit to India in February 2002, Nazarbayev appealed for India’s participation in SCO. Her presence in the organization as an Observer is a political and economic channel. As an Observer member in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), India can encourage favorable connections with Central Asian republics. India considers it important as the region has attracted attention of various powers.

India is, still, not a permanent member of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. China is also facing pressure from Pakistan who also wants membership in SCO. Regardless of all these factors, India wants stability in the Central Asian

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274 Ibid.
277 Ibid. p. 333.
It has been active in cooperation efforts in various fields with the republics as it considers SCO as a major combat against extremist and fundamentalist forces. Former Minister of External Affair, Mr. Natwar Singh has stated when he attended the SCO Summit held at Astana in 2005, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is one of the first major international organizations to take concrete steps in the war against terrorism much before the events of September 11, 2001 and focused the attention of international community on the need for all countries to cooperate and pool their resources in the war against terrorism, extremism and intolerance”. India has a great experience in dealing with nation building and if it is being offered with a full membership in SCO, it will be useful to the members’ states of SCO.

The Collective Security Treaty Organisation is another important mechanism which is actively operating in Central Asian region. It is a security related organization established in April 2003 at Dushanbe in Tajikistan. It was formed under the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The treaty was earlier known as Collective Treaty Organisation which was signed on May 15, 1992. In October, 2002 the Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization was signed by Heads of all Member States and in 2003, it came into force. Its member’s countries are the Republics of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the Russian Federation.

CSTO’s presence in the Central Asian region is meant for defending the region’s long term interests. The aim of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation is greater defence cooperation among the member countries. As

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283 Ibid.
285 Ibid. p. 233.
286 Earlier Uzbekistan was also a member of the CSTO. But, it withdrew from the CSTO on June 28, 2012.
Article 3 of the treaty states, “The purpose of the organization is to strengthen international peace as well as international and regional security and stability and to ensure the collective defense of the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the member states, in attainment of which the member States shall give priority to political measures”.

The Collective Security Treaty Organisation has its own Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), which is an anti-terrorist centre located at Bishkek. The President of Kyrgyzstan highlighted the importance of RDF by explaining it that, “...a bastion of security in Central Asia. The member countries have both a reliable shield and an avenging sword”. Russia is actively involved in the RDF. The RDF collects data regarding the local terrorists and organizations. It has also military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

CSTO pledges to fight terrorism and extremism. At present, the organisation is anxious about the production and trafficking of the drugs. It is its mission to stop the same by all possible means and by cooperating with the members states. Article 8 in the Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation deals with the same problem of production of narcotics and drug trafficking. It says, “The member States shall coordinate and harmonize their efforts in combating international terrorism and extremism, the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and arms, organized transnational crime, illegal

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288 See Annexure III
migration and other threats to the security of the member States”. Russia is trying to use a common strategy in Central Asia to fight these threats.294

For the effectiveness of Collective Security Treaty Organisation, the Uzbek membership is most important295 as it is the worst affected country by Islamic fundamentalism.296 The republic had left the organization in 1999 and rejoined it in 2006.297 However, Uzbekistan again suspended its membership from Collective Security Treaty Organisation on June 28, 2012.298

The suicide attacks and bomb explosions in the Central Asian republics has proved that the security system in the region is deficient to deal with terrorist and extremists.299 The failure of the treaty to interfere in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, to prevent the ethnic violence, has demonstrated the collapse of the existing regional security organizations in Central Asia.300 The Collective Security Treaty Organisation will only be successful to meet its desired goals if Central Asian republics place aside their mutual problems.301 They should take measures to control the expansion of drug trade, extremism, terrorism and other criminal activities.

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures (CICA) in Asia has proposed by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev at 47th UN General Assembly session302. He put forward the initiative for organizing the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in

294 Ibid. p. 333.
300 Ibid, p. 22.
302 Gubaidullina, M. Sh., Conceptual Foundations of Kazakhstan’s Foreign Policy, Shanthanam, K., Baizakova, Kuralay and Dwivedi, Ramakant, India – Kazakhstan Perspectives, Anamaya Publishers, New Delhi, 2007 p. 198.
Asia in October 1992. He considered CICA as an answer to Europe’s Conference on Security and Cooperation by Asia. The idea of CICA got support from a number of Asian countries. It primarily focuses on the cooperation and confidence building measures among the participatory states. President Nazarbayev, during second CICA Summit stated that, “CICA is a forum of high international level which gives weightage to the efforts of member states in solving key issue of security not only in the Central Asian region but globally”. It also envisages itself as a forum for dialogue, discussion and adoption of decisions and measures on the basis of consent. It sees certain elements as threats to security and also looking for ways to eradicate these. The membership of CICA includes Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Its Observer members are – Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, USA, Ukraine, Japan.

The first Summit of CICA was held in June 2002. In this summit a Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations was adopted. The text of this declaration proclaimed, “we would like to stress that elimination of terrorism is the common aim of all cultures and civilizations”.

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309 Ibid.
312 Ibid, p. 75.
313 Ibid, p. 103.
CICA has 18 countries as its members; India is one of the members.\textsuperscript{314} India’s participation in CICA is a political channel of interaction.\textsuperscript{315} Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had represented India in the First CICA summit at Alma Ata in Kazakhstan, held in June 2002.\textsuperscript{316} He attaches great importance to CICA. India also considers the CICA as a significant mechanism for strengthening stability and security in Asia.\textsuperscript{317}

In order to eliminate multiple threats to security, like terrorism, separatists, illicit drug trafficking and arms trade etc., CICA will have to take necessary actions for the implementation of measures aiming at enhancing cooperation and creating an environment for peace, confidence and friendship. However, it could emerge as a forum for resolving regional disputes over borders, use of resources and drug trafficking.\textsuperscript{318}

The Central Asian Republics themselves have not been very successful in promoting regional cooperation.\textsuperscript{319} The security situation in the region is tremendously fickle. Ant turmoil in the region can have severe implications on India’s security as both, India and Central Asian republics share common security related problems.\textsuperscript{320} No doubt, the region has no common borders with India and poses no military threat to it. However, both the countries are near to hostile neighbours of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Expansion of Islamic fundamentalism could prove to be a danger for India and Central Asia as these
organizations are supported by the foreign agencies and provide them life by giving them appropriate assistance. 321 China is another factor which could be a great threat to India’s interests in the Central Asian republics. By creating a nexus with Pakistan, China could pose a potential danger to India’s security. Drug trafficking and arms trade are also threat to the security of India and Central Asian region. Russia’s ongoing influence in the region is a necessity as it will work as a safeguard for the maintenance of India’s security. Russia’s presence can also affect the Chinese influence in Central Asia. Maintaining security and stability in the Central Asian region depends on various factors. India can help Central Asian republics in fighting terrorism by joining joint working groups to counter terrorism which needs regular meetings, intelligence sharing and effective mechanism. India can also provide arms and weapons to the paramilitary forces in Central Asia. India should also actively participate in the regional organizations in which Central Asian countries are members. With deep understanding cooperation and mutual aid India and Central Asian republics can solve mutual threats to their national security.

321 Ibid. p. 130.