

Drug-Infested Ferghana Valley: Target of the Axis of Three Devils

by Ramtanu Maitra

July 14—The Ferghana Valley, which straddles three Central Asian nations—Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan—has become the prime target of the axis of three devils—Britain, Saudi Arabia, and the drug traffickers. These forces made their move during the break-out of organized riots in southern Kyrgyzstan in early June, posing a threat to the newly elected Roza Otunbayeva administration. According to the government in Bishkek, the riots claimed as many as 2,000 lives in an effort by the drug mafia to incite Uzbeks and Kyrgyz against each other.

The riot came to an end within a week, but the threat of violence is very much in the air. Taaahe Drug mafia, boosted by the massive opium production in Afghanistan and a virtually uninterrupted passage of Afghan heroin through the Ferghana Valley to Russia, has joined hands with the Saudi-funded and Britain-centered Wahhabi jihadis of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT), who spawned the terrorist group functioning in the valley, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU attempted in the past to infiltrate Uzbekistan through southern Kyrgyzstan. Their aim was to overthrow President Islam Karimov's regime and establish a supranational theocratic government, known as the Caliphate, in Central Asia. This is also the objective of the HuT and Saudi Arabia, which funds the HuT's "Islamic" activities. The British objective is to start a process of partitioning Kyrgyzstan, setting into motion a long war in the rest of Central Asia that will pose a threat to all sovereign nation-states, including Russia to its north.

In Kyrgyzstan, the drug mafia was helped by the now-ousted Kurmanbek Bakiyev Administration's family members, who control the drug mafia. There are also the pawprints of bankers, business executives, and the entertainment industry, all of whom derive financial benefits from the unaccounted-for stash of cash generated day in and day out by the drug cartel, and, in return, provide these criminal elements the necessary cover.

Drugs in the Valley

Cut up by Bolshevik dictator Josef Stalin into three parts during 1924-36, the Ferghana Valley has the highest density of population in Central Asia. Batken and Osh provinces in Kyrgyzstan together have 34 persons per square kilometer; Jalal-Abad, situated in Kyrgyzstan, has 26 persons. A very large percentage of these are youths (40% in the Kyrgyz Ferghana). The Ferghana Valley holds a very significant portion of the three countries' overall population—27% of Uzbekistan, 31% of Tajikistan, and 51% of the Kyrgyz Republic, with 10 million people living in the valley.

One of the principal factors contributing to the violence in the valley is drug-trafficking and associated criminalization of society. The violence, orchestrated by the HuT and the IMU, began to emerge in the 1990s, as opium production began to soar in Afghanistan, and all three devils set their eyes on the Ferghana Valley as their next target. The Afghan civil war, which followed the Western arming and training of the mujahideen to fight the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, found a stable funding source: Afghan opium. Afghanistan's opium production was 350 tons in 1986, and 4,581 tons by 1999. Following the occupation of Afghanistan by the U.S. and NATO forces, opium production rose to 8,200 tons in 2007. The opium began to flow across the Tajik-Afghan border, and then along the mainly uncontrolled and mountainous Khorog-Osh-Andijan road (the "Opium Highway").

The UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has highlighted the IMU control of heroin and opium in the Ferghana Valley, as well as the supply chains that run through the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan, where border control lacks financial and human resources to monitor this section of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. In recent years, in the city of Osh, organized crime groups have developed trafficking routes through neighboring Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, despite tighter

border measures on the Uzbek side.

Once the drug traffickers had set up their distributors inside Russia, flow of Afghan heroin became almost the only business in the Ferghana Valley. In addition, large-scale unemployment, political instability, and isolation of the Central Asian states created a fertile ground for an increasing number of people to join drug-trafficking activities.

The level of opiate production in Afghanistan now is twice as high as it was in the whole world a decade ago. In 2010, Afghanistan has taken the lead in hashish production, with the crop estimated at 3,000 tons. According to the UNODC figures, Afghan opium kills up to 100,000 people every year worldwide—more than any other drug. The Afghan opium is consumed by 15 million people, two thirds of whom are heroin addicts, the UNODC report indicates.

The drug-related criminal activities began to spawn violence in the valley in the 1990s, as it became a warehouse of huge caches of arms and armaments. To counter the terrorists who are in league with the drug traffickers, neighboring states brought in a large number of armed security personnel. As a result of some of their actions, violent crime rose, and even disputes over water and land were “settled” by violence.

Beyond that, the drug traffickers have set their eyes on the valley to make it a major drug production center. Bestowed with plentiful water and highly fertile land, the area is already a major producer of hashish and opium. It now produces an estimated 25% more hashish than the rest of the world combined. Within Central Asia, over 4.5 million hectares of hemp is planted in Kazakhstan’s Chuy Valley—an amount capable of producing approximately 6,000 tons of hashish annually. It was estimated in 1997 that 2,000 hectares of opium poppy were planted in Kazakhstan, capable of producing

30 tons of opium annually. Although this is not a great amount, areas in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are considered ideal for widespread cultivation of opium poppy. When Kyrgyzstan was part of the Soviet Union, its Issyk-Kyl Valley supplied 95% of the raw opium for the Soviet pharmaceutical industry. Since then, sporadic anecdotal evidence has emerged suggesting that some heroin production laboratories exist in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—allegations that both governments have officially dismissed.



The Axis of Three Devils: The British Empire, Saudi Arabia, and the narcoterrorists, have moved in on the Ferghana Valley, and aim to make it a major drug-production center, on the model of Afghanistan’s Helmand Province.



Preacher-Terrorists in White Robes...

Drug-trafficking has brought in illicit money, along with the terrorists backed by the British and the Saudis. The most visible and powerful jihadi group operating in the valley is the HuT. The U.S. State Department’s 2008 Country Reports on Terrorism suggest that the membership in Kyrgyzstan in HuT, a group that the State Department says advocates “the establishment of a borderless, theocratic Islamic state throughout the entire Muslim world,” grew from 5,000 in 2006 to 15,000 in 2008. The Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences pointed out as far back as Dec. 31, 2001

that the HuT has, in effect, become the strongest political force in south Kyrgyzstan.

By acting within the constitutional framework that guarantees freedom of expression, the movement has scored points against the authorities, who are perceived to be corrupt. According to the local press, over a third of all young people in the southern Kyrgyz city of Karasu are under the influence of radical religious organizations. The institute said that, according to the information available to the local law enforcement agencies in 2001, over 2,000 members of HuT were being monitored by the police in Kyrgyzstan.

FIGURE 1

The Ferghana Valley in Central Asia



The State Department report on terrorism in 2009 pointed out that the group is gathering strength in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which is also home of an unknown number of HuT members, primarily in the northern part of the country, in the Ferghana Valley, as well as other Islamist groups including al-Qaeda. The report highlighted various U.S.-led counterterrorism initiatives that the government of Tajikistan participated in, but noted that impoverished circumstances in Tajikistan made it difficult to effectively combat terrorism.

A Nixon Center researcher, cited by Maj. Daniel J. Ruder, U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in his monograph “The Long War in Central Asia: Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Caliphate” (2006), disclosed that the HuT’s secret headquarters is thought to be in Jordan, while its key deputies operate a

London-based headquarters to oversee HuT operations in Muslim countries. In addition to providing funds and educational material from its London base office, the HuT manages one of its main websites in London, as well as a publishing house. It receives financial support from wealthy patrons in Saudi Arabia who subscribe to the group’s Wahhabi message.

Britain is now HuT’s de facto headquarters for fundraising and grooming recruits, and supports HuT activities throughout the world. The main spokesman for HuT is Dr. Imran Waheed, who led a rally of 8,000 Muslims in London in December 2005, and has been recorded saying, “There can be no possibility of harmonious co-existence between Islam and the West. Ultimately one has to prevail.” Waheed, educated at Birmingham University School of Medicine as a

psychiatrist, is now working for the National Health Service (NHS) at the Queen Elizabeth Psychiatric Hospital in Birmingham, with a special interest in medical training.

Born and bred in Britain, Waheed, during his rally, said, "Fighting in the way of Allah is the only solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is only one solution to the occupation of Muslim lands, one solution to the cries of the widows and the orphans, one solution to avenge the deaths of the elderly and the children. Fight, in the way of Allah, those who fight you! Al-Jihad!"

Hizb ut-Tahrir's strategy for Central Asia is to use the region's extreme poverty, repressive political systems, and perceived social injustices to convince the population that the current political structure must be destroyed, to be followed by a just and fair caliphate, based on Islamic law (Sharia). If successful, the HuT strategy would allow them to eventually overthrow one of the secular Central Asian governments, that of Uzbekistan.

Radio Free Europe reports that "Leaflets from Hizb ut-Tahrir, now found virtually everywhere in Central Asia, call for the overthrow of the Uzbek government, regularly insult President Karimov, and call for the creation of an Islamic caliphate" in Uzbekistan. Experts assert that one reason the HuT is focused on Uzbekistan, is because Uzbeks fill the rank-and-file of the organization. Therefore, as the logic goes, the HuT would direct most of its efforts against Uzbekistan rather than against a country they are less affiliated with. Another reason suggested by those experts is that Uzbekistan has the most formidable military and best-trained police in the region, and poses the greatest obstacle to the HuT achieving their goals. In other words, Uzbekistan is the lead domino in the line of Central Asian states. If it can be knocked down, then others will go. To achieve that end, the Ferghana Valley is the key.

The protracted war in Afghanistan and subsequent responses by the Taliban have further activated the fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. In the coming days, the IMU could launch large-scale incursions in the Ferghana Valley to establish fuel, arms, and ammunition transport routes. HuT may change its non-violent approach and attempt to mobilize supporters for the armed struggle. Unidentified terrorist groups may seek to assassinate the leaders of the three countries, especially if outside troops are allowed to enter their territory.

In Uzbekistan, the epicenter of both the incursions and social unrest is the region around Namangan in the Ferghana Valley. The unrest spawned here over the years may spread later to all three of the country's provinces located in the Ferghana Valley. The authorities may be left with no choice but to wage a war not only against the rebels, but against all believed to be supporting the protests and the actions of the IMU and the HuT. As a result, the general population residing in the areas of the incursions and protests will suffer, and parts of the population could be displaced to the country's interior.

...and Their Gunmen

The gunmen, promoting HuT's goal, are the terrorist members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Founded in the 1990s in Kabul by two Ferghana Valley terrorists, Namangani and Yuldeshev, the IMU works hand-in-glove with the HuT and al-Qaeda. Facing a crackdown in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Yuldashev met with Osama bin Laden, before deciding to move his operations from the Valley to Afghanistan in 1997. The organization is also believed to have received funding from Saudi sources, including some close to Prince Turki al-Faisal, the then-head of Saudi intelligence.

The Ferghana Valley has been the main area for IMU operations. According to security personnel in Uzbekistan, IMU recruits directly from the HuT. Evgenii Novikov pointed out, in his article for the Jamestown Foundation's *Terrorism Monitor* (Vol. 2, No. 22, May 9, 2005), quoting Dr. Rafik Saifulin, that, in the case of Tajikistan, "HuT military structures can develop quickly since the HuT branch in that country has had some contact with the violent Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). It is in Kyrgyzstan that HuT has the greatest potential to develop armed capabilities not least because the party is developing a sophisticated infrastructure in that country."

Another important collaborator in making Ferghana Valley the drug center of Central Asia, is Britain's George Soros, the multi-billionaire currency speculator. Soros, identified in the mainstream media as a philanthropist, spends his ill-gotten money to fund campaigns for euthanasia and to legalize drugs. *EIR* has documented Soros's extensive financial support for nonprofit organizations working for the legalization of drugs, in many articles over the past 15 years.

According to Soros, "The war on drugs is doing

more harm to our society than drug abuse itself,” and since “substance abuse is endemic in most societies ... the war on drugs cannot be won.” (*Washington Post*, Dec. 4, 1996 and Feb. 2, 1997). This is the campaign he carries out using the Open Society Foundation (OSF), Open Society Institute (OSI), Soros Foundation, and the Human Rights Watch, based in New York.

The OSF is extremely active in the Ferghana Valley, although it lost its operational base in Uzbekistan in 2004, when President Karimov kicked out the Open Society Institute. That Karimov was right, was proven within a year when, backed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Freedom House, and with the HuT fighting for them on the front line, Soros successfully carried out the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan. The Tulip Revolution saw the ouster of President Askar Akayev and the ushering-in of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who was already involved with the drug mafia in southern Kyrgyzstan, where his family members, using Bishkek’s authority, later took control of the drug operations.

The Case of Maksim Bakiyev

This brings us to the role of Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s son, Maksim Bakiyev, a handmaiden of the British-Saudi-drug mafia devils. The case of Bakiyev, who was taken in by British authorities upon his arrival in Farnborough, England, on June 14, is a case in point. A duty officer for the Hampshire police force, which covers Farnborough, said the case was being dealt with by the U.K. Border Agency, which is part of the Home Office. Keneshbek Duyichebayev, chief of Kyrgyzstan’s National Security Council, said Bakiyev was seeking asylum in Britain and had flown there in a private aircraft from Latvia.

In London, a spokesman for the British Home Office declined to comment, saying: For data-protection reasons we cannot comment. The mouthpiece of the British establishment, *The Times* of London, reported on June 16, that Bakiyev had already asked for political asylum in Britain. According to the *Times*, Bakiyev, who was arrested June 13 at the request of Interpol, had with him the necessary asylum documents.

At a press conference in Bishkek on June 16, Azimbek Beknazarov, deputy chairman of the Provisional Government of Kyrgyzstan, and coordinator of the Public Ministry and the courts, stated that Bakiyev



Maksim Bakiyev, the son of former Uzbek President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, a handmaiden of the British-Saudi-drug mafia devils, is believed to be living in London, under the protection of the British intelligence services.

would be either extradited or judged in Britain, most likely the latter. England never gives back people who arrive on its territory, Beknazarov pointed out.

Why does Britain want to protect Bakiyev? Bakiyev is being investigated by the interim Kyrgyz government for possible corrupt business practices related to fuel supply contracts he handled for the U.S. airbase there, a key site for military operations in Afghanistan. But most likely that is not why Britain wants to protect him.

Until he got himself a private plane and asylum documents, Bakiyev was believed to be hiding in Latvia, where his alleged business partner and banker Valery Belokon is based. Belokon’s representatives have previously referred to the 33-year-old son of the former Kyrgyz President as a part owner of the Blackpool Football Club. However, Blackpool’s chairman, Karl Oyston, denied that Bakiyev had ever had a stake in the club. I have never met him, and he has no financial interest in the club whatsoever that I know of, said Oyston.

But Oyston’s denial could be a mere ruse. Belokon had a number of business interests in Kyrgyzstan during the reign of Maksim’s father, and is also president of the Blackpool Football Club. He took over the club in 2006, and, according to the club website, has invested a substantial amount of money to buy players, which paid off when the club was promoted to the Premier League in

May. With Belokon, Bakiyev co-owns Maval Aktivi Ltd.

Additionally, Bakiyev is the sole owner of Who Is Who, a company formerly owned by Belokon, and is also deputy chairman of the board of Kimmels Riga, a joint stock company. Maval Aktivi was registered in Latvia and engaged in implementing large business projects in the Baltics, Bulgaria, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and other countries. Belokon owns the Manas bank in Kyrgyzstan, but also has a part of Aman-bank and is a major stakeholder in the financial empire of Maksim's Asia Universal Bank.

Maksim's business interests also cover the media. He controls the 5th channel, NTS, TRK Pyramid, as well as a cellphone company. Moreover, he reportedly controls virtually all profitable enterprises in Kyrgyzstan: a shell structure owns controlling stakes in Kant Cement and Slate Plant, a plant for the production of silicon crystal, a number of resorts on Lake Issyk-Kul, Champagne Wine Works, and JSC Kyrgyz Railways. Many of these enterprises were captured by raider attacks, when the idle law enforcement offices of the companies were taken over by stormtroopers directed by Maksim. Later, he validated his ownership of the businesses through the courts.

Moreover, on the issue of ownership of the Blackpool Football Club, a report aired on Kyrgyz state television, in October 2009, suggested that Bakiyev was indeed one of the owners of the club, and, in an e-mail communication with the London *Independent*, last November, a public relations professional acting on behalf of Bakiyev referred to him as "one of the owners of Blackpool Football Club in England." It is also said that, like most British football clubs, which pay high sums to their players and raise only a fraction of their revenue from the gate earnings, Blackpool Football Club also depends heavily on "unaccounted for" revenues, which often translate into drug money.

Two examples are the ownership of Chelsea Football Club by the Russian mafioso Roman Abramovich, and fellow mafioso Boris Berezovsky's control over the West Ham Football Club. In addition, Berezovsky's dirty money shows up in Brazilian football as well. At the time (2004-07), Berezovsky was in the middle of the largest corruption scandal in the history of Brazilian football, which involves the Media Sport Investment (MSI) and the Sport Club Corinthians Paulista.

In addition, there is a British interest in all this. It

has been reported that MI6 and the CIA took control in Latvia where, due to the post-Soviet chaos, they put their men in high places within the state. In Latvia, the disillusioned population speaks of the gang of foreigners, described by journalist Rumania Ougartchinska in her last work, *KGB et Cie, Assaut de l'Europe (KGB and Co., Assault on Europe, 2005)*.

An example of that is the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (SAB). The office in charge of defending democracy is headed by Janis Kazocinu, who is actually a general in the British military. Kazocinu was appointed military attaché in Riga during the independence, and then deputy to the chief of staff. He acquired Latvian citizenship only when he was granted the appointment as deputy to the chief of staff.

The President of the Republic of Latvia, Prof. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, plays an essential role in this mechanism. The family of this Canadian, which fled Latvia when the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler fell, was linked to the Nazi agents of NATO's stay-behind networks, through a clandestine association with the Diaspora: the Hawks of Daugava River. Meanwhile, the family of her husband, Imants Freibergs, was linked to the MI6 in Germany at the end of World War II.

On June 23, the London *Times* reported that the ruling Conservative Party has included Latvia's For Fatherland and Freedom Party (LNNK) as one of the 55 members of the European Parliament. LNNK members, the *Times* noted, pay regular homage to Hitler's Waffen SS.

This alliance of the drug mafia, Bakiyev, and the British would not have posed a mortal threat if Kyrgyzstan had built up its institutions. Like all the Central Asian nations, Kyrgyzstan, following its independence, was administered by the apparatchiks of the old Bolshevik regime. These apparatchiks were periodically removed by other apparatchiks through violence because the ruling leader, and his family, continued to loot and pillage the country. One characteristic of these leaders is that they refuse to set up the kind of institutions that would allow normal, democratic functioning of the government in power.

But today this can only happen in the context of a global solution. The current planetary crisis demands an alliance of the world's leading powers—the U.S.A., Russia, China, and India—as the core of a new world system committed to the economic development for all nations, including Central Asia.