

Book Review

by

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Karagiannis, E. (2009). *Political Islam in Central Asia: The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir*. Routledge.

This book generally focuses on the phenomenon of political Islam in post-soviet Central Asia and particularly emphasizes on the activities of Islamist groups in post-Soviet Central Asia that's Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami i.e., (The Islamic Liberation Party). By using social movement perspective, the author of the book, Emmanuel Karagiannis, provides a deep understanding of the ascent of Hizb ut-Tahrir in post-Soviet Central Asia and also clarifies its non-violent approach. Furthermore, the book covers the origins, ideology, political methodology and structure of Hizb ut-Tahrir and its rise within the region from Kazakhstan to China and Russia.

Moreover, the book pays attention to the Tajikistan's civil war which was held between neo-communists and the Islamist led resistance and also emphasizes on the political improvements that occurred after the civil war in Tajikistan. It depicts the rise of radical Islamic gatherings in Uzbekistan because of which the challenges faced by Karimov regime and the ascent and fall of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The book covers the history and the emergence of Hizb ut-Tahrir within the region. It addresses the party's ideology that relies on Islam and its aims to restore the Caliphate so as to join all Muslims in a solitary state. It further explains the party's philosophical stance towards democratic method. The party is against the democratic framework and asserted that it's a kufr system as it isn't based on divine rules. It also explains the party's organizational and recruitment system that consists of head of halqa (mushrif), local leader (Naqib), provincial representative (Mu'tamad), central committee (lajnat al-qiyada), and Amir that is the preeminent pioneer of the party. Furthermore, the book briefly analyzes the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Central Asian countries and also looks at its activities in China, Ukraine and Russia where the party has a marginal presence. The author explains the emergence of Hizb ut-Tahrir within the region by using social mobilization theory (SMT) (resource mobilization theory, framing theory, structural-functional theory and political process theory). After the collapse of USSR, an ideological vacuum was made within the region which has been stuffed by the party. Furthermore, the book claims that the party's ideology clarifies why it stayed peaceful and has stayed against violence under a similar condition in which the IMU has gone to viciousness. The book also emphasizes on the party's future prospects and offers numerous policy suggestions for regional and Western policy makers.

Thus, the book gives an image of the phenomenon of political Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia. It provides a background of Hizb ut-Tahrir including its strategy to restore an Islamic caliphate

in the area. Then, it analyzes the reasons of the emergence of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the region by utilizing social mobilization theory. It likewise pay attention on the party's role and on its activities in Central Asia in which its most active. It additionally focus on the activities of the party in other countries like China, Ukraine, and Russia where it has a negligible nearness. Furthermore, the book also gives policy proposals to the regional and Western policy makers.

This book is best for a beginning student for an in-depth academic study of the region, as it is well organized and everything is clearly explained in it. A student, for conducting research in Central Asia must read this book at it provides a great in-depth understanding of the region and a person will get a lot of information about the region after reading this book.

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About author: The Author is a graduate in International Relations from Bahria University, Islamabad. She has previously worked at various institutions in Pakistan, including the Institute of Rural Management (IRM) and Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). Currently, she is associated with The COPAIR as a Research Assistant. She is interested in writing and looks forward to publishing articles/research papers on global affairs.