

JIHAD

The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia

AHMED RASHID

A WORLD POLICY INSTITUTE BOOK

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THE RISE OF MILITANT ISLAM
IN CENTRAL ASIA

AHMED RASHID

For more than two thousand years, Central Asia has been a locus of conflict. Great empires of the past fought to control the Silk Route, which ran through the region; more recently, nations have battled over the vast oil reserves that lie beneath it. Now Central Asia presents important strategic opportunities for international security, but also poses new threats because of the swift rise of militant Islamic fundamentalism over the past decade.

Ahmed Rashid, who masterfully explained Afghanistan's Taliban regime in his previous book, here turns his skills as an investigative journalist to the five Central Asian republics adjacent to Afghanistan—Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan—that were part of the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991. Under Soviet rule, Islam was brutally suppressed, and that intolerance has continued with the post-Soviet regimes. Religious repression, political corruption, and the region's extreme poverty have created a fertile climate for militant Islamic fundamentalism. Funded and trained by organizations such as

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