



# CACI Forum: Toward “Enlightened Islam”? Religion and the Secular State in Uzbekistan

June 7, 2018

**Related Categories:** Democracy and Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Islamic Extremism; Terrorism; Caucasus; Central Asia

**Related Expert:** Svante E. Cornell

On June 7, AFPC's CACI held a forum entitled "Toward 'Enlightened Islam?': Religion and the Secular State in Uzbekistan." CACI Chairman Frederick Starr served as the moderator for the event and Svante E. Cornell, CACI Director, served as key speaker. The forum focused on the societal issues facing a Muslim Uzbekistan in maintaining a secular government. Uzbekistan has remained staunchly secular and taken a firm stand against extremist movements since independence. In recent years, however, Uzbekistan's policies have shifted from a defensive to a more proactive approach. The recent surge of reforms has affected the religious area as well. Uzbekistan has taken major steps toward the promotion of what President Shavkat Mirziyoyev terms “Enlightened Islam” at home and on the world stage.

This Forum is part of CACI's ongoing research on the relationship between politics and religion in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and coincides with the release of the Silk Road Paper “Religion and the Secular State in Uzbekistan”, by Svante E. Cornell and Jacob Zenn.