TAJIKISTAN—HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

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TOPOGRAPHY

Tajikistan, known for its rugged and beautiful mountainous terrain, is situated in the south-eastern most part of Central Asia. Bordered on the north and west by the former Soviet republics of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the Tajiks share a southern frontier with Afghanistan and a disputed eastern boundary with China. Tajikistan has an extremely unusual shape along its northern border where a long strip of its territory extends like a finger into Uzbekistan to include part of the fertile Farghana Valley. The smallest of the Central Asian countries, Tajikistan (55,251 square miles) is approximately the size of Wisconsin.

The majestic high peaks of the Pamir Mountains, the "roof of the world," dominate the landscape of the eastern half of Tajikistan. The Pamirs boast the highest point not only in Tajikistan but in the whole of the former Soviet Union. This summit, Communism Peak, stands 24,585 feet high. Other mountain systems, the Pamir-Alay, the Trans-Alay, and the Tian Shan fan out into western Tajikistan. Over 90 percent of the country is mountainous including the autonomous oblast of Badakhsh«n i Këhâ.

Most of the rivers of Tajikistan feed into the drainage system of the ÿmu Darya, whose headwaters arise in the Pamirs. The ÿmu Darya, one of two major rivers of Central Asia, flows westward through Tajikistan until it becomes the boundary between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, eventually emptying into the depleted Aral Sea. The Syr Darya River, the other major Central Asian river, flows through the Farghana Valley in northern Tajikistan The Zeravshan River follows a westward path through central Tajikistan.

The climate of Tajikistan varies greatly. The alpine areas feature wintry temperatures and snow, while the river valleys can be either hot and desert like or moderate and pleasant, depending on altitude and the shifting patterns of wind and weather.

Tajikistan contains rich stores of various minerals, as well as uranium and several other kinds of ore. It is an important exporter of cotton, grown mainly in the Farghana Valley but also in the Gissar Valley where the capital city Dushanbe is located. Grain and fruit are grown in the valleys. Livestock,

especially sheep and cattle, are raised on the hillsides of Tajikistan. The yak is the traditional helper of the farmer or shepherd.

Ethnic and Historical Background

Tajiks, who may be the oldest inhabitants of Central Asia, derive ethnically from an Iranian background. This means that, in contrast to most of the other peoples in the region whose languages come from Turkic roots, spoken Tajik is close to modern Persian. Linguistically, Tajik belongs to the western Iranian group of Indo-European languages. Although several distinct dialects of Tajik exist, the variant spoken amongst the Tajiks of Samarqand and Bukhara (both cities inside the borders of neighbouring Uzbekistan) has provided the foundation for the modern Tajik literary language. Tajik was originally written in the Arabic alphabet, its first works dating from the great Muslim civilisations of Bukhara during the ninth and tenth centuries.

TAJIKS CUSTOMARILY HAVE BEEN VIEWED AS THE SETTLED OR SEDENTARY PEOPLE OF CENTRAL ASIA, AS OPPOSED TO THE NOMADIC OR WANDERING GROUPS. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THE FORERUNNERS OF THE TAJIKS HAVE INHABITED THE AREAS ALONG THE ŸMU DARYA RIVER VALLEY, AS WELL AS SIMILAR AREAS ALONG THE ZERAVSHAN RIVER AND THE SYR DARYA IN THE FARGHANA VALLEY, SINCE THE FIRST OR SECOND MILLENNIUM B. C. THE SEDENTARY TAJIKS WERE THE FARMERS AND CULTIVATORS OF THIS LAND. BY THE TIME THE ARABS ARRIVED IN THESE REGIONS IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURIES A. D., THE MOVEMENT OF TURKIC-SPEAKING NOMADS INTO THE AREA HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO ADD DIVERSITY THE ETHNIC MIXTURE OF PEOPLE. THE S«M«NID DYNASTY THAT ROSE TO POWER IN THE NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES, WITH BUKHARA AS ITS CAPITAL, EMERGED AS A GREAT CENTRE OF ISLAMIC LEARNING. THE TAJIKS ARE AMONG THE LEGITIMATE INHERITORS OF THE ARAB CIVILISATION AND LITERATURE INASMUCH AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TAJIK LANGUAGE DATES FROM THAT TIME.

Later in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, as waves of Mongol invaders began to spread across Central Asia, the prevailing language of the ruling Turkic dynasties became Persian. By the fifteenth century, the settled peoples of Central Asia, while using both the Persian and Turkic languages, came to draw upon a shared cultural heritage. The distinction between specific Tajik or Uzbek nations appears to date from a later period. In fact, all settled people in the region were referred to by the term "Sart" whether they spoke a Persian or Turkic dialect. Sart simply served to distinguish town-dwellers from the more nomadic, generally Turkic, peoples of the area. The bi-lingualism that developed during

that period still prevails among some urban dwellers of present day Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, leading occasionally to rival Tajik and Uzbek claims of ethnic domination in border areas.

From the Islamic civilisation the future Tajiks also inherited the religion of Islam, the dominant religion of Central Asia. Despite the linguistic ties with modern Iran, the Muslim communities of Tajikistan are primarily Sunni, in contrast to the more dominant Shi'ite Muslim presence in Iran. Despite the official state atheism of the Soviet period, virtually all Tajiks, and over 90 percent of the entire population of Tajikistan, have roots in the Islamic tradition. The contemporary revival of Islam in Tajikistan is addressed later in this chapter.

Russian Conquest and Soviet Rule

Russian conquest of the area of Tajikistan dates from the nineteenth century. By 1867, Russian Turkistan, made up of most of the land eventually known as Central Asia, had been established. Many Tajik settlements, however, continued to find protection under the independent Muslim khanates that resisted the Russian advances. The khanate of Bukhara, for example, included Tajik centres within its domain during part of this time. By 1918, in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Red Army had gained control of most of what is now Tajikistan. The newly named Turkistan Republic, direct descendant of Russian Turkistan, was declared in April. Composed of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and other primarily Muslim ethnic groups, it was organised as an autonomous republic within the larger Russian Republic. By the fall of 1920, in spite of occasional outbreaks by local armed Islamic rebel groups, or Basmachi, most remaining resistance to the Bolsheviks had been quelled, and the whole of Central Asia was brought together under Soviet domination.

In October 1924, Tajikistan was reorganised and designated an autonomous republic attached to Uzbekistan. Five years later, on 5 October 1929, having received approval from Moscow, it was granted its own status as a full union. The division and redistribution of Tajiks in this new republic was not ideal. Some Tajik settlements, both along the Uzbek-Tajik border and within the most important old historical centres such as Bukhara, Samarqand, and Tashqand remained in Uzbekistan. The population, however, was apparently pacified to the satisfaction of the authorities, although local resistance to the Sovietization of Tajikistan was not entirely stamped out until the late 1930s.

In spite of the national delimitation policy of the Russian authorities, a policy that assigned national groups to particular homelands, large groups of Tajiks still resided

outside the borders of Tajikistan in other newly formed republics. Many Tajiks found themselves in Uzbekistan, a lesser number in Kyrgyzstan and in the other Central Asian republics. There were also more than a million Tajiks living outside the borders of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, in China, and in the area that later became Pakistan.

Within Tajikistan itself, there remained many Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Turks, and other Muslims who should have found themselves and their villages located inside the borders of their own newly established Central Asian republics. Alongside those peoples who had achieved their own republics, many other smaller ethnic groups remained in Tajikistan. The Pamiri people, the Mountain Tajiks, the Yagnobis, the Chagatais (Turkic), and the Harduns constituted the main groups. Almost without exception they are Muslim but have a language or Cultural tradition different from the Tajiks.

After being incorporated into the Soviet Union, the Tajiks were eventually encouraged to develop their own sense of nationhood, albeit without reference to religion. A sense of resentment of Uzbek domination evolved as the Tajiks compared the privileges accorded Uzbeks in the cultural and economic sphere. As a part of this growing sense of Tajik nationhood, the Tajiks also came to appreciate the Persian roots of their language and the implications such a tradition implied in their relationship with the Afghans and the Iranians.

Soviet Leadership

In the twenties, Soviet authorities encouraged native peoples to become active in the Communist Party in order bring effective management and organisation to the young republic. Initial directives from the government announced guidelines for the nationalisation of natural resources, new water and land distribution programs, the emancipation of women, and free education for all citizens. These decrees, however, were not pursued until the rebellious Basmachi movement was wiped out. The pacification process became especially difficult because of the perceived threat both to Islam and to the traditional ways of life that the new decrees represented. Nevertheless, in spite of tremendous difficulties in communication between the Tajiks, who could not speak Russian, and the Russians, who were unable to express themselves in Tajik, local Tajiks eventually came to fill many local Party committees and other administrative posts.

The collectivisation of agriculture was not achieved until the 1930s because of the violent objections of local Tajiks, many of whom now spoke from within the Communist Party itself. The disagreements on collectivisation led to the purging of two local Party leaders, Nasrutullah Maksum and Abdurahim Khojibaev, both ethnic Tajiks. A series of

purges then followed, the most extensive of which occurred in early 1934. As many as ten thousand victims may have perished during that time. The Party lay in ruins, decimated by the excesses of Stalin's paranoid policy. By 1937 a Russian, Dmitrii Protopopov, had been appointed first secretary and many other Russians were brought in to staff lower level positions.

Tajikistan was now and would be for many years under a more direct control from Moscow. Protopopov stayed on as first secretary until 1945. He was followed by a Stalinist Tajik, Boboj«n Gafërov, who held the post from 1945 until 1956. The post-Stalinist era was not notable for outstanding reformers in the office of first secretary. Tursunbai Uljabaev, also a Tajik, was removed for corruption and abuse of power in 1961. Subsequent first secretaries, Jabar Rasulov and RaÁm«n Nabiev, retained the Tajik presence in the office, but did little to reform Party politics.

Contemporary Issues

Standard of Living

Tajikistan is arguably the poorest country in Central Asia. It has the highest birth-rate of any former Soviet republic. Since 1959, the population of Tajikistan has increased by over 3 percent per year, a rate approximately three times higher than the previous Soviet average and higher than that of most other developing nations of the world. Between 1959 and 1979, the population of Tajikistan increased by over 100 percent. This rapid population increase has been reflected in chronic rural overpopulation and consequent high unemployment. Even before the destabilising political events of 1994-99, rural unemployment figures often exceeded 25 percent of the able-bodied work force.

To address the problems of rural overpopulation and poverty, directives were frequently sent from Moscow in the 1980s encouraging the development of labour resources in urban centres. Yet, as local Tajik leaders would occasionally lament, the absence of Soviet state investment in Tajikistan meant that migration to urban centres only had the effect of transferring rural poverty into urban poverty. Soviet state investment in Tajikistan ranked among the lowest per capita for any republic. One result was that, as of the 1989 census, two-thirds of the inhabitants of Tajikistan remained in small, underdeveloped rural villages.

Predictably, efforts to address this relative underdevelopment by anti-nationalist campaigns—Soviet directed and Tajik implemented governmental campaigns to persuade women to have fewer children—failed from the start. Such campaigns, occasionally launched also in Uzbekistan, were invariably seen as anti-national drives directed against

Asians by Moscow. The perception that these were selective, differentiated efforts aimed at Central Asians was fuelled by the reality that in other parts of the Soviet Union, as in European Russia, public policy occasionally was openly pro nationalist.

Alongside the health and welfare needs of a poor population, one of the features of Tajikistan's poverty its weak infrastructure. Because the country is dependent upon water from surrounding mountain streams, dams have been built for water storage. But some of these dams are of uncertain quality having been constructed in an area split by seismic fault lines. In March 1987 a landslide set off by heavy rainfall in the Kulob region led to the collapse of a dam holding back three million cubic meters of water. The ensuing flood killed 36 people, leaving another 500 homeless. Such disasters have raised grave concerns about the status of other public works projects. The largest dam in all of Central Asia, the Nurek, lies just east of the capital Dushanbe.

The Cotton Mono Culture

By the 1980s, Tajikistan came to be the third largest republic of the Soviet Union. Cotton production averaged over 900,000 tons annually. Although that was only about a tenth of the total annual production of cotton (9 million tons) in the former Soviet Union, Tajik cotton is the more desirable "long-staple" variety. Given the limited amount of arable land in Tajikistan, the high production figures for cotton demonstrate that, as in the case of Uzbekistan, a cotton monoculture has developed with marketing ties through Moscow. Tajikistan has become so dependent upon its cotton production that school children and urban workers have been routinely diverted into the fields to assist with harvests. The need for harvest labour, despite unemployment in rural Tajikistan, reflects the under productivity and lack of technology in this predominantly rural country.

Efforts to diversify the Tajik economy have depended upon the development of urban manufacturing and the exploitation of the country's mineral reserves. As is the case elsewhere in Central Asia, Tajikistan has substantial mineral deposits, including uranium. In early 1992, US Secretary of State James Baker visited Dushanbe, seeking assurances that Tajikistan would not provide weapons-grade uranium to any Asian neighbours who might be seeking to develop nuclear capability. Despite promises provided then to the secretary of state, Tajik leaders face the central problem of how best to generate economic growth, encourage foreign investment, and secure international markets.

Ecological and Environmental Issues

The question of water is for Tajikistan, as for other Central Asian countries, a critical issue. The heavy cultivation of water intensive crops such as cotton only makes the problem

of water shortage more acute. The occasionally conflicting interests of economic development and environmental concern have also been a part of the discussion over water in Tajikistan. In one of the first open debates of its kind over water usage, the informal Tajik group ÿshk«r« *(Openness) spearheaded opposition to state plans for the building of a large hydroelectric plant on the river Vakhsh. In a partial concession to environmental concerns, the state announced in 1989 that it would reduce the projected height of the dam by one third.*

While environmental issues have occasionally pawned conflict with industrial and economic development, environmental and energy concerns have also added to ethnic and regional rivalries in Central Asia. During the winters of 1990-91 and 1991-92, Tajikistan was forced to limit its central heating in major urban centres often reducing dramatically the use of electricity in factories as well. In their explanation for the energy crises, Tajik officials blamed Uzbekistan for failing to provide power from its power stations. Such rivalries over energy have thus added fuel to environmental and ethnic conflicts.

Occasionally, environmental issues have required official resolution by Uzbekistan and Tajikistan officials. In the case of a large Tajik aluminium plant near the Uzbek border, complaints by Uzbeks over water and air pollution led in 1991 to formal co-operative resolutions by the deputies of both the Tajik and Uzbek Supreme Soviets (their parliamentary bodies). Under the joint resolutions, the Tajik plant agreed to stop the operation of 100 electrolysis units at the plant during the summer of 1991, despite the fact that aluminium production figures significantly in the Tajik industrialisation effort. Complicating this agreement has been Uzbekistan's demand for 30 million roubles in damages. Such ethnic rivalries make environmental problems all the more crisis prone and difficult to solve.

Ethnic Disputes

Ethnic conflict, including the tensions between transplanted European Slavs and the indigenous Islamic peoples, may be found in each of the Central Asian countries. In the case of Tajikistan, there are two features that make this ethnic rivalry particularly intense. First of all, the majority Tajik nationality does not share with the rest of Central Asia a common Turkic linguistic and racial inheritance. As mentioned earlier, spoken Tajik is a Persian language, markedly different from the Turkic languages spoken by most other people of Central Asia. The result is that, while the Tajiks share a common Islamic religious identity with their Central Asian neighbours, they are less likely to be drawn into

a pan-Turkic alliance, or a greater Turkic confederation such as the Turkistan that existed prior to the creation of the separate Central Asian Soviet republics in the 1920s.

An equally important feature of ethnic rivalry for the Tajiks is that a disproportionately large part of the Tajik population resides outside the present Tajik borders. Over 900,000 Tajiks reside in Uzbekistan and are concentrated in the adjacent Bulchoro oblast, particularly in the ancient cities of Samarqand and Bukhara. Similarly, over three million ethnic Tajiks reside in Afghanistan. As long as the political authority of the Soviet Union prevailed, the diffusion of Tajiks outside Tajikistan did not pose a significant problem. Official Soviet Tajik ideology, as reflected in the publications of Boboj«n Gafërov, (Communist Party first secretary from 1945 to 1956, and subsequent director of the Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies), held that the Russian annexation of Central Asia in the nineteenth century was a progressive development. Gafërov and official Soviet Tajik ideology advocated use of Russian for all Tajiks, including those Tajiks Living in Afghanistan. This ideology had the effect of masking interethnic rivalry, while at the same time offering a defence for such actions as the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in late 1979. As elsewhere, the passing of Soviet imperial power eliminated ideological defences and reopened a series of old ethnic disputes for the Tajik people.

The most serious of these ethnic disputes is with the Uzbeks. Ever beneath the surface, the conflict with Uzbekistan broke out in 1988 when the secretary of the Tajik Writers' Union, La'iq Sher 'Ali, complained of Uzbek intellectual imperialism. Referring to Uzbek writings, Sher 'Ali noted the "national arrogance of several of our Turkic-speaking colleagues."[111] *For Sher 'Ali, the problem was that Uzbek writers were trying to establish ethnic origins by building their own early national history upon writers who, though they may have lived in Bukhara, wrote in Persian (the case of Ibn Sâna or Avicenna, 980-1031). Sher 'Ali complained similarly about Uzbek claims on behalf of what he said were "Persian-Turkic" poets from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries who lived well beyond Uzbek borders in present-day Afghanistan.*

While the ability to voice such resentments openly marked the early stages of intellectual glasnost in Tajikistan, the Soviet Tajik authorities were understandably wary of opening the door too wide. In January 1988, editor Khojaev of the Tajik-language Party newspaper, Komsomoli Tochikiston, was dismissed for publishing articles that, according to

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111 Sher 'Ali is quoted in Annette Bohr, "Secretary of Tajik Writers' Union Voices Resentment," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* [RLRB], 17 March 1988.

the charge, "wittingly or unwittingly aroused aspiration to national exclusivity and parochialism and undermined the basis of traditional friendship between the peoples of neighbouring republics".[112] *By August 1988, however, in debates over the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh before the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, Mikhail Gorbachev specifically referred to the conflicting Tajik-Uzbek claims, fearing a potential domino effect should property be allowed to be transferred from one republic to another. He was referring to the Tajik claim that 20 percent of the Tajik nation that resided in and around the historic city of Samarqand in Uzbekistan had been unfairly excised from the Tajik republic. In short, what was being challenged was the very drawing of the Soviet-designed ethnic boundaries created in 1924. For Moscow, and for Moscow loyalists in Dushanbe, such challenges were potentially dangerous.*

In the case of the Tajik-Uzbek dispute, as in other such disputes throughout the former Soviet Union, the claims function in more than one direction. For just as the Tajiks can speak on behalf of their Tajik compatriots in Uzbekistan, the Uzbeks can cite the situation of over one million Uzbeks living in Tajikistan. These disputes, which continue to produce intense interethnic friction, have since 1988 become the subject of occasional meetings between visiting delegations of Tajik and Uzbek leaders. The issue of the large Tajik aluminium plant near the Uzbekistan border discussed earlier became part of this simmering rivalry.

Just as the Tajiks have been concerned about the fate of their compatriots in Uzbekistan, so have parallel concerns been raised about the Pamiri peoples of Badakhshan i Kuhi. Tajiks claim that the Pamiri numbering 100,000 or more, are, in fact, Tajiks (a claim not unlike that made by the Uzbeks about Tajiks in Uzbekistan. The Pamiris, however, appear to have a language that is separate and distinct from Tajik Persian, deriving from an East Iranian linguistic grouping, while Tajik derives from a West Iranian grouping. While claims continue to be made that the Tajiks are denying the Pamiri people their right to self-determination—indeed the census returns of 1989 lump the Pamirs with the Tajiks—it is difficult to judge the question in the absence of appeals from the Pamiris themselves.

A measure of how disruptive ethnic conflict can be for Tajikistan is the fate of the Russian and Ukrainian population, largely concentrated in the capital city Dushanbe. This transplanted European Slavic population has become increasingly uneasy, not because of overt ethnic hostility from the Tajiks —although such hostility has existed in all the

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[112] Quoted in Bess Brown, "Limits to Glasnost in Tajikistan," *RLRB* 11 April 1988).

newly independent Central Asian states—but rather because of fears that Tajikistan is destined to become an Islamic state. Although these fears may be quite unfounded, the result has been an unprecedented exodus of Slavic and Jewish population from Dushanbe since 1990. Estimates are that the Russian refugee population from Tajikistan alone reached over 50,000 in 1992. The human drama of this large refugee exodus, occurring in other parts of Central Asia as well, carries with it a substantial cost, for the Russian population in Tajikistan is disproportionately represented among the technical, medical, and civil service elite. These European Slavs of Tajikistan like their counterparts in other urban centres of Central Asia, are not easily replaced.

Islam in Tajikistan

The 1980s were marked by a resurgence of Islamic loyalties within the officially atheist Tajik Soviet Republic. The recovery of Islamic religious identity was not unique to Tajikistan As elsewhere, traditional Muslim practices remained strongest in the rural small village setting. The somewhat more surprising presence of unofficial Islamic leadership in large urban centres, however, posed special problems for the state authorities. In 1986, for example, the arrest of an unregistered mullah, 'Abdullah Saidov, in Qũrghonteppa, a large city near the Afghan border, led to public demonstrations in which some local Communist Party members and intellectuals joined. The termination of 'Abdullah Saidov's activities as a mullah may have been related to mystical practices, or to his popularity and the size of his following, or to the strategic location of Qũrghonteppa, near the Soviet-Afghan frontier, or perhaps to some combination of these factors. Nevertheless, the rally of the mullah's supporters seems to have caught the state authorities off-guard.

The spread of such popular religious sentiment, including the presence of Wahh«bâ and other unregistered clerical leaders, led to numerous state directives in 1987 and 1988 seeking to reenergize anti-religious forces. Ironically, at a time when the early signs of glasnost in Moscow included friendly overtures toward the Russian Orthodox church, Tajik officials in Dushanbe, led by Communist Party First Secretary Kakhar Makhkarnov, saw no conflict between support for Gorbachev's glasnost and an intensified crackdown upon unofficial and unauthorised Islamic movements.

By 1988, Tajik newspapers carried open reports of unofficial, underground religious press in the republic. One such press, operating from the print shop of the Dushanbe Pedagogical Institute, had been turning out copies of an Islamic newspaper, Islamiskaia Pravda *(*Islamic Truth*), photocopies of speeches by the Ayatollah Khomeini and*

Pakistani scholar-leader A. A. Mawdëdâ, as well as republications of works of a prominent theorist of Islamic revival, Jam«l al-Dân al-Afgh«nâ.[113]

By 1990, an informal political group with alliances throughout the other Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union, the Islamic Renaissance Party, was firmly established in Tajikistan, despite the efforts of governmental officials to ban it. In December 1990, the Tajik Supreme Soviet outlawed the Islamic party from Tajik territory, specifically forbidding the establishment of informal parties of a religious nature. Kakhar Makhkarnov, by then the Tajik president, steadfastly sought to identify the Islamic Renaissance Party with extremist fundamentalists and Wahh«bâs. The Islamic Renaissance Party in Tajikistan, however, has tended, as elsewhere, to appeal to the intelligentsia, avoiding religious extremes and rather seeking to identify Islam as an integral part of Tajik culture. Because of the appeal of democratic ideals to the Tajik intelligentsia, the Islamic Renaissance Party has also tended to bridge what some see as the potentially conflicting ideals of Islam and democracy. Unlike the pronounced anti-Western and anti modernist perspectives of Islamic fundamentalists and Wahh«bâs, especially with matters involving the rights of women, the Islamic Renaissance Party has tended to be more urban and moderate in its views. By openly charging that the Islamic Renaissance Party frightened the non-Tajik Slavic population into leaving the republic, the Communist leadership may indirectly have advanced the process they sought to limit in their ban of this increasingly popular Islamic movement.

Political Unrest and Civil War

The central political dynamic in Tajikistan, as in other former Soviet republics, is the destabilising process of the dissolution of old Soviet-style, Communist Party leadership. In Tajikistan this process has been advanced by the rise of informal as well as formal political parties. Violence and tragic loss of life have unfortunately accompanied the political transformation.

For the past decade, from 1982 until 1992, leadership of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic has been dominated by two Communist Party first secretaries, RaÁm«n Nabiev (1982-85, 1991-92) and Kakhar Makhkamov (1985-91). While Makhkamov officially embraced the reformist, modernising lead of Moscow's perestroika*, he was unprepared to oversee the dissolution of Soviet power. Despite his occasional admonitions to the bureaucracy, including criticism of the performance of the head of the Tajik KGB,*

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[113] See Bess Brown's report, "Description of Religious *Samizdat* in Tajikistan," *RLRB*, 23 May 1988.

Vladimir Petkel, Makhkamov became a dutiful republican leader in the wider Soviet bureaucracy and Communist Party. His efforts to maximise cotton production increasingly came to be viewed by Tajiks as part of the process of Soviet colonial exploitation, an exploitation made worse by the manner in which it tended to deform the Tajik economy into a cotton mono culture.

February 1990 Riots. In February 1990, the accelerating economic, ethnic, and religious conflicts within the republic triggered an outbreak of violence in Dushanbe that left over twenty dead, hundreds wounded, and untold damages to housing and public buildings. The demonstrations appear to have begun over rumours that Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan were arriving in Dushanbe and would be given housing priority. Because of the demand for apartments in the capital and the reality that Armenians actually were being sent to Tajikistan, there was some substance behind the concerns of those protesting. Ultimately, the demonstrators became menacing, throwing rocks at policemen, engaging in looting and theft, and threatening non-Tajik citizens of the republic.

In an ominous replay of the violence in the Georgian capital of Tibilisi in the spring of 1989, forces from Moscow were brought in to help quell the uprising, and order was restored albeit after tragic loss of life. In the Tajik case, the republican leadership specifically sought such assistance, fearing the demands of the protestors who called for the resignation of all republican leaders and the redirection of profits secured from Tajik cotton production.

In retrospect, the events of February 1990 and the rise of informal political groups prior to, during, and after the uprising marked a turning point in the politics of Tajikistan. The February 1990 uprising galvanised the popularity of the republic's informal political opposition. Among the groups who played a role in the 1990 events were the Rast o khâz *(Renewal), a Tajik popular front group formed in the fall of 1989 with goals similar, if perhaps more modest, to those of the popular fronts in the Baltic and Ukraine. Leaders of* Rast o khâz *were selected by the demonstrators outside Communist Party headquarters to negotiate the protestors' demands. When appeals for calm were ultimately made over television,* Rast o khâz *representatives were among those appearing before viewers.*

The riots of February 1990 also reflected the failure of the republican leadership to satisfy the basic social arid economic needs of the population. Even official Party representatives had to concede that as many as 70,000 inhabitants of Dushanbe were unemployed, and rural underemployment was potentially even more serious. Despite Makhkamov's promises for new public housing projects and better health care, his

dominant message was that of the need to crack down on those opposition groups responsible for the February uprising. Part of the reason for Makhkamov's hard line message was his concern for the mounting emigration of non-Tajiks from Tajikistan. Such out-migration, especially by ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, had already been triggered by the 1989 law declaring Tajik to be the state language of the republic. But the February riots, and the efforts of some fundamentalist Islamic forces to capitalise upon such events for a more general anti foreigner appeal, sped the outflow of thousands of professionals, medical personnel, and skilled urban workers.

Makhkamov's message of political crackdown was curiously balanced by his openly avowed support for the liberal, reformist objectives of Boris Yeltsin in Moscow. On 24 August 1990 the Tajik Supreme Soviet with Makhkarnov's support declared the republican sovereignty of Tajikistan. So as not to escalate further the emigration of non-Tajiks, the sovereignty declaration specifically identified all nationalities as equal in Tajikistan.

FOR THE OPPOSITION, THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE FEBRUARY VENTS WAS MARKED BY EVER MORE OPEN POLITICAL ORGANISATION. IN AUGUST 1990, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF TAJIKISTAN,A PARTY OF LIBERAL INTELLECTUALS, HELD ITS INITIAL CONGRESS. MOREOVER, EVEN THOUGH THE *RAST O KHÂZ* AND ISLAMIC RENAISSANCE PARTIES WERE FORBIDDEN TO ORGANISE IN TAJIKISTAN, THEIR SUPPORT ALSO WAS REINFORCED.

Moscow Coup. Ultimately, the opposition between informal political groups and the Makhkamov government came to a showdown in the wake of the abortive coup d'état in Moscow in August 1991. The effort by hard-line Communist officials to depose Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow had ripple effects throughout all of the Soviet republics. In the case of Tajikistan, this effect was made more dramatic by the apparent support for the coup plotters offered by Makhkamov in the early hours of the Moscow crisis. Despite Makhkarnov's subsequent ban upon Communist Party operations in the government, the Tajik Supreme Soviet faced demands from demonstrators for the resignation of the republic's leadership. On 31 August 1991, the Supreme Soviet accepted the resignation of Makhkamov. Following a month of bitter conflict between the government and opposition forces, elections were called for November 1991, and all parties were allowed open participation in the process. The Tajik Supreme Soviet declared the formal independence of Tajikistan on 9 September 1991.

The November 1991 elections brought little resolution to the political situation in Tajikistan. According to the official election returns, monitored in part by outside

observers, the chair of the Tajik Supreme Soviet and former Communist Party First Secretary Rakhman Nabiev received 58 percent of the votes cast. Davlat Khudonazarov, chair of the local cinema workers' union and candidate of both the Democratic and Islamic parties, received only slightly more than 25 percent of the vote. More than 80 percent of the electorate voted. The results marked a surprising recovery by the Tajik Communist Party, renamed the Tajik Socialist Party. Charges of election fraud, however, haunted the victors. Khudonazarov accused the republic's leadership of falsifying the results and offered photographic evidence to back up his charge of election irregularities.

Civil War. In May 1992, President Rakhman Nabiev sought to co-opt the support of regional and nationalist parties by assigning a third of the ministerial posts to their representatives. This Government of National Reconciliation" quickly was challenged by Nabiev's own conservative supporters from the region around Kulob Amidst mutual recriminations, the conservative anti Islamic loyalists from Dushanbe and the Kulob region began to arm themselves, as did their anti communist coalition opponents.

The civil war that followed from late May to December 1992 can be compared to some of the worst fighting in former Yugoslavia (Bosnia- Herzegovina) during the same time period. Supporters of the old communist regime claimed that the opposition, comprising democratic and Islamic coalition—including strong support from the Pamiri region of Badakhsh«n i Këhâ *—was being armed by the Afghan resistance. Both sides claimed that the other was benefiting from materiel provided by Russian forces outside Dushanbe and at the Tajik-Afghan border. In the end as many as 70,000 were killed in the sporadic fighting, as hundreds of thousands became wartime refugees. The cost to the Tajik economy was devastating. European Slavs fled Dushanbe in numbers that have yet to be fully calculated, while Tajik oppositionists fled in the thousands across the Afghan border.*

In September 1992, midway through the fighting, President Nabiev, who would die of natural causes in 1993, was forced by the opposition to resign. The resignation of Nabiev left unclear who was in control of the Tajik government. The democratic and Islamic parties, despite their growing influence, never assumed full authority. In October, pro communist forces loyal to the old regime temporarily seized parts of Dushanbe, but Russian forces deployed in the capital initially kept the communist loyalists from retaking the government by force. By November, however, the pro communist forces operating from their base of strength near Kulob retook Dushanbe and secured the resignation of the interim government.

In the reestablishment of the old regime, the Tajik Supreme Soviet, the parliamentary body still dominated by former Communists, played the central role. They abolished the office of the presidency and granted executive powers to the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Im«m 'Alâ RaÁm«nov. In the months that followed in 1993, the new conservative pro communist Tajik government launched a crackdown on nationalist, democratic, and Islamic parties, outlawing virtually all such opposition and replacing media and other institutional leaders deemed sympathetic to the anti communist forces.

While the RaÁm«nov regime has put its authoritarian stamp upon Dushanbe and most other adjoining regions, considerable residual loyalty to the anti-government Islamic forces remains in outlying regions. This situation is particularly true in the easterly Pamiri lands of Badakhsh«n i Këhâ *but such loyalty also remains beneath the surface in the former centre of oppositionist forces near Qũrghonteppa Deep-seated regional divisions over land and power drove the civil war and continue to be a fundamental source of volatility in contemporary Tajik politics.*

In offsetting these regional divisions the conservative Tajik government has sought to label all outposts of resistance as dangerous pockets of Islamic fundamentalism, a charge that is exaggerated. In the crackdown on opposition groups, the Islamic Renaissance Party and the democratic Rast o khâz *movement have been outlawed along with all other informal parties that operated more or less openly in 1991-92. While seeking to re-establish full-centralised control over Tajikistan, the authoritarian government has at the same time attempted to rebuild its ties with other governments of Central Asia. Many of these newly independent states, such as neighbouring Uzbekistan, welcome the silencing of democratic and Islamic informal groups. For now, the post-civil war reassertion of authoritarian rule in Tajikistan reflects, on a wider scale, the fragility of democratic and popular movements throughout most of Central Asia.*

International Alliances

THE EVENTS IN TAJIKISTAN, AS ELSEWHERE IN CENTRAL ASIA, ARE NOT OCCURRING IN AN INTERNATIONAL VACUUM. WHILE THE UNITED STATES HAS SET UP ITS OWN AMBASSADORIAL STAFF IN DUSHANBE AND FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE BAKER VISITED THE CAPITAL IN EARLY 1992, OTHER REGIONAL POWERS HAVE ALSO COURTED THE TAJIK GOVERNMENT. THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED ITS OWN PRESENCE IN DUSHANBE, EVEN THOUGH THE FUNDAMENTALISM OF IRANIAN SHI'ITE ISLAM HAS MADE ONLY LIMITED HEADWAY IN TAJIKISTAN. THE MODEL OF THE MODERN, SECULAR STATE OF TURKEY, AN ISLAMIC NATION THAT HAS

SEPARATED RELIGION AND THE STATE HAS OCCASIONALLY BEEN RAISED BY TAJIK AND WESTERN LEADERS, AND TURKISH REPRESENTATIVES HAVE VISITED DUSHANBE. MOREOVER, TAJIKISTAN'S CONTINUING MARKET TIES TO RUSSIA OUGHT NOT ENTIRELY TO BE DISCOUNTED, EVEN AS THE TAJIKS SEEK TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THEIR EASTERN NEIGHBOUR, CHINA. FOR TAJIKISTAN, AS FOR THE REST OF CENTRAL ASIA, THE INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUE TO BE PLAYED OUT AMIDST THE ETHNIC AND REGIONAL RIVALRIES OF THIS POOREST OF THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS. AMIDST SUCH RIVALRIES, THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF RUSSIAN TROOPS IN DUSHANBE AND AT CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL BORDERS OFFERS POTENTIAL STABILITY, EVEN AS IT SERVES AS A REMINDER OF THE CONTINUITIES IN TAJIKISTAN BEFORE AND AFTER SOVIET RULE.

THE PERIOD THAT FOLLOWED WAS A SAD STORY OF CIVIL STRIFE AND A COMPLETE BREAK DOWN OF CIVIL SOCIETY. THE PREDICAMENT OF WAR RAVAGED COUNTRY COULD BE ASSESSED FROM THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

Interim Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan. 13 August 1999

"The Secretary-General welcomes the decision by the Supreme Court of Tajikistan taken on 12 August to legalise the political parties belonging to the United Tajik Opposition. The UTO had publicly declared the disbandment of its armed formation on 3 August, and the decision by the Government is another significant step forward in the implementation of the peace agreement in Tajikistan." [114]

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[114] *The complete text of the report is as follows:*

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1240 (1999) of 15 May 1999. It brings up to date developments in Tajikistan and the activities of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) since my last report of 6 May 1999 (S/1999/514).

II. Main Developments

2. During the reporting period, the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) made good progress in the implementation of key provisions of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan The parties reached agreement on the proposed amendments to the Constitution, and a decision was taken by the Parliament at its special

session of 30 June to hold a referendum on the amendments on 26 September. On 3 August, UTO officially declared the disbandment of its armed forces, marking the completion of the second stage of the military protocol.

3. Progress on these and other issues was achieved after a prolonged stalemate between the two parties which lasted through the month of May until mid-June. Expressing widespread dissatisfaction within UTO, Mr. Abdullo Nuri, UTO leader and Chairman of the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR), on 5 May addressed a letter to Mr. Jan Kubis my Special Representative, expressing concern over the numerous unresolved problems in the peace process, notably the rejection by President Imam Ali Rahmanov of the proposed constitutional amendments, the failure to grant amnesty to former UTO fighters and supporters, and the slow pace of power-sharing, including the Governments unwillingness to appoint a UTO representative to the defence portfolio.

4. My Special Representative took immediate steps to resolve the crisis, concentrating on the resumption of the dialogue between the two parties. Following the appointment of Mr. Kubis as Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and his departure from Tajikistan in mid-June, this effort was continued by Mr. Paolo Lembo, the Acting Special Representative, and Mr. Yogesh Saksena, the Head of Civil Affairs of UNMOT. The members of the Contact Group of guarantor States and international organizations supported those efforts. As the Government and UTO continued to exchange public accusations, the negative atmosphere resulted in some clashes on the ground between government servicemen and opposition fighters, and among opposition fighters belonging to different groups. The incidents were contained and resolved with the cooperation of the parties.

5. The situation was eased somewhat on 12 May, by a statement of support for the peace process by UTO leaders and field commanders. On 14 May, at a special session of the Parliament, an Amnesty Act was adopted which granted amnesty to over 5,000 UTO fighters who had registered at various assembly areas during 1998 and were subject to investigation by law enforcement bodies for acts committed during the civil war. The new Act complemented the Law on Amnesty adopted in 1997 in accordance with the General Agreement. However, it did not meet one of UTO's demands namely the, amnesty of 93 UTO supporters charged with criminal offences. On 24 May, UTO suspended its participation in the work of CNR. The following day, President Rahmanov met with the Contact Group to present his position, pointing out a number of provisions of the General Agreement which remained unfulfilled by UTO.

6. On 3 June, the Contact Group issued a statement expressing concern over the suspension of the work of CNR. On 7 June, the parties agreed to form a joint working group as a step towards resuming the dialogue and to resolve the outstanding issues between them. The group was also to prepare for a meeting between President Rahmanov and Mr. Nuri. UNMOT was invited to observe the meetings and played an active role in resolving the differences between the two sides.

7. After several days of intense negotiations, on 16 June, the working group reached agreement on a text comprising a list of tasks which were to be implemented and a time-frame for their completion. On 17 June, Mr. Nuri met with President Rahmanov

to discuss the text, which was then signed as a formal protocol. The following day, on 18 June, CNR resumed its work with the full participation of UTO.

8. Following the signing of the 17 June protocol, progress was made on a number of key issues, including the agreement on proposed constitutional amendments and the Parliament's decision to put them to a referendum on 26 September. The proposed changes are to be submitted to the electorate as a whole and include: (a) the establishment of a two-chamber Parliament (article 54); (b) the election of members of the lower chamber on the basis of equal, direct and secret vote (article 49); (c) the election of 75 per cent of the upper chamber by indirect vote through the local parliaments, with the remaining 25 per cent to be appointed by the President (article 49); (d) the establishment of a judicial council which shall participate in appointing and dismissing judges at various levels; (e) a decision to expressly permit the functioning of religion-based political parties (article 28); (f) and the extension of the term of the President from five to seven years with no possibility for re-election (article 65). The President and CNR agreed to maintain the existing system of appointments to chief executives of districts and to address electoral matters in a new electoral law which will be submitted for Parliament's approval in due course, after the referendum.

9. Since the signing of the protocol, 12 members of UTO were appointed to government posts, bringing the total to 33. The Parliament, at its special session on 30 June, approved the elevation of the Committee on Emergency Situations to a full ministry. UTO's candidate for the defence portfolio, its military Chief of Staff and commander of the Tavildara district, was appointed to head the new ministry. This decision removed one of the most contentious issues relating to appointments, and an obstacle to the attestation and integration of opposition fighters in Tavildara and neighbouring Darband (Komsomolobad), which was completed shortly thereafter.

10. The process of allocating local government posts to UTO in accordance with the 3 0 per cent quota was also initiated. President Rahmanov and Mr. Nuri agreed that, as an initial step, executive positions of 22 towns and districts would be allocated to the Opposition. During the course of several meetings devoted to this issue, Mr. Nuri forwarded the names of candidates, and the President has begun the approval process. To date, UTO representatives have been appointed as district chairmen by presidential decree.

11. On the issue of amnesty, a two-member CNR panel was established to review 58 of the 93 cases of UTO supporters currently in prison under criminal charges. A recommendation was made to release 47 of these supporters. This is still pending.

12. At its 30 June session, Parliament also approved the nomination of four UTO members to the Central Commission on Elections and Referendums, in accordance with the 25 per cent quota stipulated in the General Agreement. UTO is seeking the appointment of one of its representatives as Deputy Chairman of the Commission, as well as a 25 per cent representation in local electoral bodies. This is stiff pending. UNMOT has suggested that the Commission consider inviting neutral monitors to observe its proceedings, in order to enhance the body's credibility with the electorate.

13. A two-person team has been tasked by the Chairman of CNR to begin drafting an electoral law. The team is working with a legal expert from OSCE. As planned, a first team of electoral experts from UNMOT and from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights carried out a joint preliminary assessment from 21 to 28 May. From 24 July to 6 August, a second team of United Nations and OSCE experts visited Tajikistan to evaluate conditions pertaining to voter education and information, freedom of expression and equitable access to media, registration of parties and candidates,

and deployment of domestic/party agents to monitor the ballots. That mission has just been completed. A third team is scheduled to travel to Tajikistan in due course, after which a decision is to be taken regarding the involvement of the two organizations in the parliamentary elections. The previously reported dispute between the Tajik Government and UTO over the sequence of elections was resolved, with UTO accepting the holding of presidential elections before parliamentary elections. (President Rahmanov's five-year term expires on 6 November; the term of the current Parliament expires in February 2000.)

14. The public declaration by UTO on the disbandment of its armed forces on 3 August was endorsed by CNR in a resolution adopted the same day. The declaration opened the way for the legalization of UTO political parties banned by the Government following the civil conflict in 1993. The Chairman of the CNR Military Sub commission reported that 2,400 former opposition fighters had decided to return to civilian life while 4,275 are currently in the process of reintegration into the government power structures.
15. During the reporting period, job creation projects for former UTO fighters were launched in six districts in the Karategin valley, namely Darband (Komsomolobad), Tavildara, Garm, Tajikabad, Hoit and Jirgatal. They are being implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services. The projects, which were developed in close consultation with the0 local communities, involve mainly the rehabilitation of public facilities and infrastructure. They will provide work for about 700 former fighters, 50 war widows and 170 specialists for an average period of five months. Agreement has also been reached on work plans that would double these figures. The further expansion of the projects into other areas is foreseen. The current phase of the work is funded by grants from Norway and the United States of America, through the United Nations Development Programme. Pledges have also been received from Canada and the European Commission.
16. The humanitarian situation remained precarious during the reporting period, with large segments of the population receiving some form of assistance. Humanitarian needs remained greatest in Karategin valley, Leninabad Province and Gorno-Badakshan Province. Despite the importance of humanitarian operations in contributing to peace and stability, donor response to the 1999 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal remained disappointing, with only 40 per cent of requirements pledged. In late July, a mid-year review of the 1999 Appeal was submitted to donors. The review identified 10 priority projects totalling US$ 13,510,348 which required urgent funding to ensure basic humanitarian coverage until the end of 1999.

17. The Contact Group remained actively involved in the peace process, holding joint sessions with CNR as well as several extraordinary sessions to monitor developments and assist the parties in resolving stalemates. The Group issued a number of press releases to publicize its views. In early August, Uzbekistan resumed its participation in the Contact Group for the first time since November 1998, when it had recalled its charge d' affaires from Dushanbe on grounds of security.

18. UNMOT reopened its field office in Khorog on I June, and in Khujand on 21 June. It continued to observe stringent security measures both in Dushanbe and in the field.

III. Observations

19. There has been significant progress in the implementation of the General Agreement by the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition. Major obstacles which had held the process

This peace agreement was not without its blemishes. It had its costs and compromises. The Islamic parties were allowed to participate in the body politics of the country and a certain representation in the offices of the government were promised to them while they conceded to allow the term of the president to be extended to seven years instead of five.

Im«m 'Alâ RaÁm«nov was scheduled to be ratified Tajikistan's President for the next seven years. The 1100 years of the S«m«nid dynasty were commemorated just two weeks before a referendum which allowed extension in the presidential term from five to seven years. From 9th September to 9th November, the state media dubbed the celebrations as crowning of the first presidential term of RaÁm«nov the peacemaker and saviour following the footsteps of Ism«'âl S«m«nâ. Almost daily the state owned Tajikistan Television aired carefully clips from the interviews of the participants of the S«m«nid conference specifically lauding the leadership of the incumbent ruler under whom the nation has finally found peace and harmony.

Certainly arranging for an endorsement from a broad shade of foreign academicians, scholars and historians contribute to boost the leader's image. Of course bringing, lodging, boarding, entertaining all those foreign guests, decorating the city, renovation and face uplift of places to be visited by the guests required huge resources from the cash strapped economy. All of which could be justified convincingly for being spent for a noble cause.

The celebrations also had a root in the Soviet past. Every five years the Soviet leaders had a practising of heralding their achievements made in all aspects of life to boast during the October Revolution Anniversary and as a

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back for more than one year were removed. UTO's formal declaration concerning the disbandment of its armed forces opens the way for the legalisation of UTO political parties and their full participation in the political process. It is now time for the Government and UTO to broaden the dialogue to other parties and groups so as to encompass the full spectrum of Tajik society.

20. Tajikistan is facing three important ballots: the referendum on constitutional amendments on 26 September, and presidential and parliamentary elections by 6 November 1999 and February 2000, respectively. The United Nations and OSCE have agreed on a joint approach to the parliamentary elections and are in close touch concerning the modalities of their cooperation. The involvement of the United Nations in that election will be dependent entirely on voluntary contributions, and I will be approaching Governments with concrete proposals on this subject.

21. Finally, I should like to thank Mr. Jan Kubis for his active and dedicated efforts as my Special Representative, and for the important contribution he has made to the work of the Organisation in Tajikistan.

countdown to the All Soviet Congress of the USSR Communist Party. With the party disbanded and Lenin's statute removed from the central square, there has been a search going in most post-Soviet republics to replace past icons with some other more popular figures to muster people's sympathy and to create a new cause to get the people rallying around it. This created the need to re-write history and find heroes who provide a historical context and content for the new state ideology.

Additionally, there is also a need to find an approval from historical sources that there has been a time when the Tajik writ ran over a wide territory and the now segregated regions of Sarnarqand and Bukhara in fact were the cultural and political seats of ethnically pure Tajik leaders as compared to others of Turkic, Iranian or Afghan origin. Living with a neighbour larger in size, bigger in population, stronger in military and weapon terms and asserting its historical identity over the smaller weaker neighbours compelled the leaders of other Central Asian republics to find some pedestals where they can stand and appear tall enough. That is why, if the S«m«nid phenomenon got warm acceptance and popularity it also indirectly endorsed the historical fact that cities like Samarqand and Bukhara are not Uzbek just because the Uzbek and Tajik Communist leaders agreed between themselves in 1924 to segregate these cities from the Tajikistan's territory and place them under Uzbek jurisdiction.

In the mean time, Russian Premier was scheduled to visit Tajikistan on November 16th despite the security crisis in Chechenia. Vladimir Putin was due to personally participate in the ceremony where Im«m 'Alâ RaÁm«nov was to take oath for his second presidential term to last till November 2006. This announcement came just days after a US state department spokesman voiced serious doubts about the free fair and impartial nature of the way the elections were organised and conducted in Tajikistan.

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