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## TAJIKISTAN SPECIAL

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# TAJIKISTAN TODAY

MIRZOSHARIF A. JALOLOV

This year the Republic of Tajikistan celebrates its Silver Jubilee of State Independence. Although this independence was a result of peaceful collapse of the former Soviet Union, the first years of independence were not easy for the country. After proclamation of its independence, the Republic of Tajikistan was engulfed in flame of a domestic turmoil, later civil war. The country was in civil war for 5 years. Peace and stability were restored after signing General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan in July 1997.

Establishing peace and ensuring durable stability became possible, thanks to tremendous work by confronting parties and undeniable arduous efforts by the Founder of Peace and National Unity - Leader of the Nation, President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon. Under his visionary leadership country rebuilt itself from devastating consequences of civil war, the economy was recovered to a historically new level.

As an independent country in its first months the country was unanimously recognized by the United Nations. So far more than 150 countries recognized the Republic of Tajikistan and it has established diplomatic relations with 133 countries. The Republic of India is among the first countries, which recognized state independence of the republic of Tajikistan. The country has been actively and consistently pursuing its open door foreign policy, establishing multifaceted foreign relations with all countries based on mutual benefit, becoming member to a number of international and regional organizations, hence developing its multilateral relations. In international arena Tajikistan has become known by its initiatives such as "International Year of Fresh Water 2003", "International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015", "International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013", "Decade for Action: 'Water for sustainable development' (2015-2025)" etc. Prima facie, for Tajikistan – a country

with leading position by its fresh water resources, promoting initiatives related to water may sound odd. However, a deeper insight into the matter reveals the nexus between water and development almost in all aspects of human life.

Development, i.e. sustainable development, requires complex measures and actions from governments and societies. One important component in ensuring sustained development is energy supply which is considered as a task to be fulfilled by the governments. The Republic of Tajikistan in designing its future development has determined three main strategic goals –ensuring energy independence, break in the communication deadlock, and food security – and has been persistently pursuing them. To this end, for the past 25 years, a number of small and medium hydro power plants have been built; regions' power grids were interconnected. New roads, tunnels, bridges have been constructed, and it is worth noting that even in Soviet time different parts of the Republic were isolated from each other in winter time. New border cross points have been opened with the neighbouring countries, in the south with Afghanistan and the east with China. Agriculture sector has been diversified, country has no more mono-crop agriculture – before it was mainly focused on cotton production. However, for the past period more land was allocated to horticulture products and dry fruits –and number of projects on increasing productivity have been implemented.

As already stated, on the dawn of independence Tajikistan experienced a fratricidal war, which caused the country a slump not only in socio-economic spheres but also in defence and military formation. Tajikistan is the only former Soviet Republic which had not inherited any military equipment, weapon or gun from once mighty Soviet Army. Today Tajikistan's own forces protect the borders of the country and stand for its territorial integrity.

After independence, new frontiers have opened in the areas of education, literature, and culture; educational and cultural institutions of the country have established cooperative relations with other countries. New cultural development programs and initiatives have been launched, introducing Tajik culture and literature to the world.

By and large, the country has made astonishing achievements for twenty-five years in all spheres of social, economic, and cultural life. However, there is a wide range of challenges the country is facing and which need a thorough scholarly study.

This special issue of the *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* is devoted



to Tajikistan carrying a number of research and analytical works covering wide range of political, historical, social, economic, cultural, and literary themes. These not only look at the achievements in each subject, but also indicate existing challenges and possible ways and means of solutions.

## REVITALISING INDIA-TAJIKISTAN RELATIONS

K. WARIKOO

India and Tajikistan have shared a geo-cultural affinity and a long tradition of historical contacts that date back to antiquity. Notwithstanding the physical barriers of high Himalayan and Hindu Kush mountain ranges, there existed close socio-economic and cultural ties between the peoples of both countries. These linkages were cemented by the ideological force of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Islam and Sufism; by the influx of Aryans, Sakas, Kushans, Turks, Mughals etc.; by high mobility of statesmen, scholars, spiritualists, artists, craftsman, literati and traders. The movement of people, trade and ideas and the reciprocal cultural influences enriched the horizons of human development and left a deep imprint on the political, economic and social life in the entire region.

The archeological finds in northern India and Tajikistan reveal remarkable parallels in stone and bone tools, pot forms and other artefacts, which suggest a rare intensity of communication across the Himalayas since pre-historic times. Frescoes found in Panjikent and Varakhsha and the discovery of sleeping Buddha in Ajina Tepe, testify to the wide diffusion of Indian culture in the region in ancient times. Geographical proximity, ethno-linguistic affinity and shared history have formed the basis of a special relationship between India and Tajikistan. The incorporation of north-western India and Soghdiana in a single state system under the Kushans, further strengthened the social, economic and political linkages between the two regions. Mutual affinity is determined particularly by the common Indo-Aryan lineage of the Tajik and Indian languages. Even the Tajik President Imamoli Rahmon attaches great importance to the Aryan heritage of the Tajiks being similar to that of Indians. Works of Indian poets Saadi, Amir Khusrao, Bedil, Zebunissa, Ghani Kashmiri and others have had great influence on the Tajik literateurs. Traditions and beliefs of the Tajiks during the period of Avesta bear striking similarity to

that of Indians. Whereas the Tajik language belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of languages, Pamiri languages are reported to have affinities with Sanskrit. Indian classic *Panchtantra* became famous as *Kalila Dimini* in Tajikistan.

The establishment of Islam in Central Asia and its spread to India in medieval times lent new dimension to the existing ties in the region. Influx of Muslim artisans, traders, Syeds and mercenaries from Central Asia reshaped the geopolitical history of India. With the growth of Persian(Tajik) language in India, great works in Persian literature by literary giants were produced .

The incorporation of Central Asia and India in the Russian and British empires respectively and the subsequent Anglo-Russian rivalry in the region restricted the contacts between India and Central Asia. Tsarist Russia sought to use its strategic position in Central Asia to apply pressure on India which was perceived to be a sensitive nerve of the British Empire which when touched would put a brake on the British interference with Russian affairs in Europe. This Russian policy of strategic diversion was countered by the British by adopting a sustained forward policy in the region. During the period of 'Great Game', the importance of Hindu Kush-Karakoram - Pamirs region had become clear to the British as it was the meeting point of the Kashmir frontiers in Gilgit, Hunza and Chitral, the Afghan provinces of Badakhshan and Wakhan, the Russian territory of Kokand and the Sarikol area of Chinese Turkestan. The British strategy geared itself to the task of creating a barrier between Russian and British empires right on the Pamirs, simultaneously extending their effective control over the frontier areas in Gilgit, Hunza, Chitral and Yasin through the Maharaja of Kashmir. The British used Ladakh and adjoining areas in Gilgit, Skardo, Hunza and Chitral as 'frontier listening posts' to monitor the developments in Central Asia throughout the Dogra period.

After India gained independence in 1947, her relations with Central Asia were renewed in the overall spirit of Indo-Soviet relations. When Central Asia had ceased to be an area of interest for the world, India was in constant touch with the people and developments there. During the Soviet period, India enjoyed an edge over its near and distant neighbours, in reaching out to Central Asia, due to friendly Indo-Soviet relations. Central Asia was accessible to Indian leaders/visitors, which was not the case with others. So much so, direct Indo-Central Asian contacts developed in diverse fields-trade, education and culture, science & technology, films etc. in the heyday of friendly Indo-Soviet ties, thereby creating a greater

mutual understanding among the two sides. The movement of trade, ideas and reciprocal cultural influences have left deep imprint on the social life and cultural traditions of this region. Popular usage of Indian spices, tea, medicinal herbs etc. and quest for Indian films and songs in Tajikistan even today reflects the age-old Indian connection. Tajiks proudly claim and value their Aryan ancestry and heritage. A common cultural pattern embracing various forms of expression like astronomy, philosophy, language, literature, folklore, architecture, arts and crafts, calligraphy, textiles, food and dress habits developed in the process of socio-economic interaction between India and Tajikistan. It is this consciousness of historical and cultural association dating back to antiquity and permeating the psyche of the people of the two regions, which provides a firm basis for constructive Indo-Tajik cooperation in diverse sectors of socio-economic development.

On the diplomatic plane, India established state relations with Tajikistan, soon after its independence, and opened diplomatic missions. Exchange of high level political, diplomatic, business and cultural delegations has been taking place between India and Tajikistan regularly. India views Tajikistan as its extended neighbourhood and an area of vital strategic importance. There is convergence of views and interests between Tajikistan and India, on fundamental issues such as; (a) need to maintain social harmony and equilibrium by promoting inter-ethnic harmony and peaceful co-existence; (b) commitment to secularism and democracy and opposition to religious extremism; (c) recognition of threat to regional security and stability from trans-border terrorism, arms and drug trafficking, religious extremism and ethnic-religious secessionism; (d) commitment to the principles of territorial integrity of nation states and inviolability of state borders ;(e) promoting economic, scientific and cultural cooperation and (f) securing a peaceful and tranquil neighbourhood in Afghanistan. This mutual political understanding can and needs to be reinforced through synergy of thought and action between various Indian government agencies, universities and institutions so that the historical and cultural linkages between India and Tajikistan are strengthened and developed into a fund of goodwill, love and harmony at the grassroots level.

The Government of India has taken several steps like establishing full fledged Indian Cultural Centre in Dushanbe. India has also been facilitating the visit and study of few hundred students from Tajikistan at various Indian universities and institutes by providing scholarships under its ITEC

and ICCR programmes. Time has come to review the efficacy of these cultural centres and cultural exchange programmes.

It is high time that all the antiquities, frescoes, manuscripts, inscriptions, artefacts etc. which are lying scattered in Tajikistan either at the sites or in local museums are documented. Indian specialists/ archeologists need to work urgently in close collaboration with their Tajik counterparts, to undertake the hitherto neglected task of identification, location, documentation and dissemination of such a rich and common historico-cultural legacy. Steps also need to be taken to identify and preserve the literary, historical and artistic works. There is need to initiate a concrete programme of identification, documentation, video-filming and preservation of these antiquities, which can otherwise be lost into oblivion.

The Archeological Survey of India needs to step in to help in excavating, conserving and restoring such ancient sites which are presently lying in dilapidated condition, so that the testimony of historical and cultural relationship between India and Tajikistan does not get destroyed through vagaries of nature, time and neglect. These sites and monuments (now in ruins) can easily be restored and developed into important cultural centres after doing the requisite renovations and providing all the facilities of a modern museum.

The process of academic and cultural exchanges between Indian and Tajik centres of learning, universities, institutes etc. needs to be streamlined and institutionalized, so that Indian specialists are able to collaborate with their counterparts in their areas of study/specialization. Another vital area of cultural cooperation is joint production of films, television serials, publication of books, exchange of print and visual materials and regular exchange of artistes.

Though India's trade with Central Asia goes back to the Silk Route days, Central Asian Republics form minuscule proportion of Indian export/ import trade. Annual trade turnover between India and Tajikistan during the year 2014-15 has been a meager 58 million US dollars. As such the huge potential for bilateral trade and economic cooperation needs to be harnessed.

The main obstacles in the trilateral trade are:

- a. Lack of direct overland access
- b. Macroeconomic instability in Central Asia
- c. Inadequate Banking facilities
- d. Strict Visa Regimes and Language barriers

K. WARIKOO

- e. Lack of trade dynamism and entrepreneurship among Indian businessmen.
- f. Absence of direct air connections, customs/tariffs bottlenecks for setting up of joint ventures.

India can substantially raise its level of exports of tea, pharmaceuticals and consumer goods of high and medium quality to Tajikistan. India also needs to focus on trade and investment opportunities in the service sector including banking, insurance, health care, IT software, tourism, education (in English medium). Indian concept of alternative medicine is quite popular. There is enough scope for cooperation with Tajikistan on setting up of joint ventures for pharmaceuticals, IT, exploration and processing of silver, aluminum and uranium.

Tajikistan views Afghanistan and Pakistan as the transit corridor for access to South Asia, as an alternative to existing routes to Russia in the north. Uzbekistan, Iran and Afghanistan are now developing trans-Afghanistan corridor. India needs to secure its interests by securing direct overland access to Afghanistan, Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries, and also to ensure that it has peaceful, tranquil and benign neighborhood. Taking into account the concept of strategic frontiers, India needs to determine the area within which no hostile or potentially hostile focus is to be allowed to exist or develop, so that national security is not threatened. India needs to have a long term and comprehensive strategy, with set objectives and commitment/motivation to achieve the same.

Pakistan has been consistent in its policy of blocking the overland Central Asia-Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor to India for import of Central Asian resources and export of Indian goods. The experience shows, that Pakistan did not grant India any transit access to send even its humanitarian assistance in the form of wheat and other commodities to Afghanistan. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement, which was finalized on 19 July 2010 in the presence of US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, while allowing Afghan trucks to carry goods to the Wagah border for onward dispatch to India, does not allow these trucks to carry back Indian goods to Afghanistan. In return, Afghanistan has allowed Pakistani trucks to go through Afghanistan to Central Asia, Iran and Turkey. Earlier, Afghan trucks were allowed to carry goods only to the Pak-Afghan border at Torkham. Pakistan's Information Minister, Qamar Zaman Kaira, clarified that "according to the agreement approved by

Pakistan's cabinet, Afghan goods will be allowed to transit through Pakistan in sealed containers having tracking devices." Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani during his maiden state visit to India in April 2015 urged Pakistan to allow Afghan trucks to cross over to Indian checkpoint at Attari, less than a kilometer away from Wagah. Ghani asked Pakistan to "accept the 'national treatment' clause agreed to in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) which gives both countries equal access upto its national boundaries". He went on to say that "if we are not given equal transit access, then we will not provide equal transit access to Central Asia." Needless to mention, India offers a huge traditional market for Afghan fresh and dry fruits, which remains untapped to the detriment of the Afghan and Tajik economy, as the Afghan trucks have to return empty from Wagah due to bar on them for carrying back Indian goods. Though India has recently allowed duty-free market access to Afghanistan, it has been denied transit access through Pakistan to Afghanistan and onwards to Tajikistan. Both Indian and Tajik official and public circles believe that the two countries can benefit enormously by opening of this overland trade and transit corridor. Both sides need to secure the right of transit of goods through Pakistan, Afghanistan and Afghanistan to Tajikistan and vice versa. Once this is achieved, Tajikistan can both import and export goods through Afghanistan and Pakistan, thereby reducing its dependence on China. The Central Asian Republics, being cautious and wary of dominating influence of the powerful neighbours like Russia and China, and the current regimes in Central Asia getting irritated at times by the US manoeuvres and initiatives in the name of promoting democracy and human rights, look towards India as a friend and partner, which does not have any political or territorial ambitions in the region. India is also expected to play a balancing role in the big power games in Central Asia.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN  
TAJIKISTAN AND INDIA  
*PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS*

KH. UMAROV

Trade and economic cooperation between India and Tajikistan started in 1999s after the collapse of Soviet Union and transformation of Tajikistan from the Soviet republic to sovereign state. After the recognition of independence of Tajikistan by India in 1991, 38 agreements and other documents regulating mutual relationship, were signed between the two countries.

India and Indians are viewed with high respect in Tajikistan as India is believed to be the closest friend of Tajikistan. In the difficult times of post-Soviet period, India helped Tajikistan in overcoming serious problems in political, economic and social spheres. However, the relationship between the two countries has developed more successfully in political sphere than in economic one, the reason being both objective and subjective. Political differences between India and Pakistan and long drawn conflict in Afghanistan hamper the usage of the direct and shortest land corridor. The Mumbai-Bandar Abbas-Turkmenabad- Termez- Dushanbe route is too expensive and unreliable. Transportation of cargo from East Europe and Middle East to Tajikistan is much more cheaper than from India to Tajikistan. Besides, there are several administrative and technical barriers attached to this route. Trade between India and Tajikistan which started mainly between private sectors, was beset with the problem of the security of foreign traders and investors.

Fortunately, political situation improved in Tajikistan after the signing of Agreement for peace and understanding, which created favorable conditions for expansion of trade and economic cooperation with other countries. As regards the trade relations between India and Tajikistan,



there are many unused possibilities particularly with regard to cooperation between private sector of both countries in construction of houses, building infrastructure including power stations, transport corridors, tunnels, full gallops and mining for extraction of ferrous and non ferrous metals, development of air traffic and pipelines, transportation of ores etc. However, the negative trends need to be overcome as there are considerable fluctuations in the volume of services from year to year, which means lack of sustainability.

India can help Tajikistan reduce its economic dependence upon China. There is need for the permanent presence of Confederation of Indian Industry in Tajikistan. Large scale services of Indian corporate sector for rehabilitation of Tajik industry will help this country to increase the competitive capacity of its manufacturing sector and overcome aggressive competition from Chinese companies by utilizing innovative technologies and schemes. This will strengthen the economic independence of Tajikistan. So India-Tajikistan economic relationship should concentrate on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of services in regard to services of industry and other real sectors of economy. Such cooperation must be the framework of utilization of consumption under developed programmes - "Improvement of import substitute productions and Improvement of export oriented productions".

Indian companies can participate in the restoration of factories whose products were highly in demand and popular in the domestic market of Tajikistan. Clothes sewing and knitwear factories, shoe factories and tanneries, furniture production, building material plants, production of beverages and juices, different kinds of paper from waste, poultry breeding complexes, are some of the branches which need total replacement of the obsolete equipments and introduction of innovative technologies. It may be noted that level of obsolete equipment in the industry of Tajikistan ranges between 65 to 90 percent.

Practically India produces advanced equipment for all the above mentioned industries. Besides, the market cost of technological equipments in India is much cheaper than in the market of developed countries. Also Indian equipment is more adaptive to local conditions. This is very important for Tajikistan, where climatic, social, psychological and other conditions are not different from those of India. Both countries can collaborate effectively in the development of different agricultural products in Tajikistan. It is, therefore, necessary to undertake joint projects for rehabilitation of seed breeding in agriculture. Development of seed

breeding, on the basis of advances of green revolution in India, surely will be one of the best contributory factors of increasing yield in agriculture and horticulture. Indian experience in more favourable conditions of agriculture in Tajikistan can contribute to obtain per hectare of irrigated land upto 5 to 5.5 tons of wheat, 7 to 8 tons of rice, 9 to 11 tons of maize, 3.5 to 4 tons of raw cotton, 6 to 7 tons of tobacco, 60 to 70 tons of tomato, 50 to 60 tons of potato, 45 to 55 tons of sugarbeat, 120 to 150 tons of watermelon, 100 to 120 tons of melon and pumpkin, up to 7 tons of lucerne etc. That means Tajikistan will solve its food problem besides being self sufficient in the supply of livestock by means of green fodder.

One of the most effective joint projects between India and Tajikistan could be the restoration of large poultry and cattle breeding farm companies. India has outstanding achievements in this direction and Indian specialists and institutions can collaborate with Tajikistan to work for increasing the livestock productivity. There is possibility of export of high productive buffaloes form India to Tajikistan and assistance of Indian specialists can help in the adaptation of these animals in the conditions of Canada and other countries.

For Tajikistan it is also important to learn from Indian experience the development of different types of tourism. Tajikistan has big potential of development of mountainous and other variety of tourism but it is handicapped by lack of experienced specialists and tourist infrastructure. Tajikistan needs highly qualified consultants. First step in this direction would be to organize the visit of experts of Tourist Corporation of India to Tajikistan for estimation of the real potential of tourism and also to develop tourism. This measure will serve as a starting point of cooperation between India and Tajikistan. For successful development of tourism particularly in mountainous areas, it is necessary to establish infrastructure - restaurants, camping sites, motels, fuel stations, automobile service stations etc.

Private sector of India has sufficient experience in finance for participation in the development of tourism infrastructure in Tajikistan. The most problematic area in economic relationship between India and Tajikistan is the low level of trade and its being subject to extremely high transport cost. It is not possible to transport fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, fish and processed products which entails high expenditure. This is one of the most important reason for low level of trade between the two countries.

Boosting of trade between the two countries depends upon the

improvement of political relationship between India and Pakistan. It is necessary to resolve the issue of transport corridors crossing Pakistan from Attari (Wagah) to Peshawar and Khyber pass. Attari border post has recently been expanded and its coverage capacity has increased by nearly 5 times. Next step should be to permit the regular functioning of above named transport corridor through Pakistan territory for transportation of goods between India, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. In case of opening of this corridor, heavy trucks (15-25 tons) will cover all the way from Amritsar to Dushanbe within 25 hours as compared to average time of 20 days for 20 ton container between Mumbai to Dushanbe. Establishment of India-Pakistan-Afghanistan-Central Asia transport corridor will reduce the cost of transportation by 5 to 15 times. In this case Tajikistan can increase its list of goods which can be exported to India including fresh fruits, grapes, dried fruits etc. Tajikistan can use this possibility for intensive export of high quality Central Asian aromatic sweet melons to India. Opening of this transport corridor will also boost drastic structural changes in trade between India and Tajikistan. The international transport corridor Dushanbe- Khujand – Salang – Kabul - Jalalbad – Peshawar-Amritsar – Delhi will change the geography of delivery of most important goods from abroad. In this case the main demand of Tajikistan for wheat, wheat flour, sugar, rice etc. will be satisfied by starting regular and sustainable trade with Indian companies. Structure of trade between Tajikistan and India is far from being rational. For example, among the countries supplying tea, India is absent. Indian tea has been delivered to Tajikistan through Emirates, Iran or Russia. Up to now no Indian suppliers of tea have established permanent links with Tajik companies.

Tajik consumers have very huge demand for clothes and bed sheets from India. But popular Punjabi Kurta-Pyjama are delivered by Afghan vendors. Indian manufactured bed sheets and jewellery is supplied by the Dubai Company. That means that all these Indian goods are delivered to Tajikistan with higher prices than the real export prices in India. Direct delivery of clothes and bed sheets from India is negligible. For instance, in 2010 total value of such deliveries was only 57,000 US dollars, that is over 41 times less than in 2003.

For increasing bilateral trade, it is necessary to start regular flights of passenger and cargo aircraft between Tajikistan and India. Currently, these flights are neither regular nor sustainable, as only Tajik Air Company is involved. Tickets are very costly due to monopoly in the activities of airport, navigation and fuel stations. It is necessary to establish flights of

KH. UMAROV

Indian air company (most probably Air India) on the route New Delhi-Dushanbe-Bishkek and back with competitive tariffs which can stop the monopoly of "Tajik Air" and to increase the scale of trade between the two countries, involving small traders in the development of mutually beneficial trade and for increasing jobs in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan is geo-politically interested in expanding its trade with India. But business circles of both countries lack sufficient information regarding the potential of mutual trade. It is, therefore, necessary to organize regular meetings between FICCI and Industrial and Trade Chamber of Tajikistan. Tajikistan has interest in using large experience of India regarding non-traditional energy – solar, wind, hydro, thermal etc. and seeks cooperation with India in this field on a permanent basis. Tajikistan needs Indian assistance for modern industrialization of different branches of economy and gives priority to the supply of advanced equipment from India. It is important for the fast development of SME in industry, agriculture and power sector.

Finally, boosting trade, productive cooperation and successful utilization of above described projects depends upon the presence of Indian banking system in Tajikistan. This is necessary for organization of payments, investments not only from India but from allied countries, increasing banking and credit culture in Tajikistan, developing competition in financial market etc. National Bank of Tajikistan must create favourable conditions for effective and increasing activity of Indian banks and non-banking structures in Tajikistan to enable the modernization of economy and prosperity of Tajikistan.

# TAJIKISTAN-INDIA BILATERAL RELATIONS

## *PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES*

MUZAFFAR OLIMOV

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The relations between the people of Tajikistan and India date back to antiquity. Recent research and archaeological excavations show a certain typological affinity between the cultures of South Tajikistan and Soan culture of North-West India as early as the Paleolithic age. In the Neolithic age, similar agricultural practices and social development gave rise to urban civilization and states in the two regions. Regular contacts seem to have existed between the Indus Valley towns and the settlements in South Turkmenistan.<sup>1</sup>

During the Greek and Saka rule when Northern India and Central Asia became part of the same state formation, cultural and economic interactions became particularly strong.<sup>2</sup> The high watermark of India-Central Asia relations was reached under the Kushan Empire which included territories of Central Asia and a considerable part of North India. The Kushan period witnessed lively and reciprocal cultural exchanges. The carriers of cultural influences in India were primarily the Kushan authorities, functionaries and soldiers; in Central Asia they were Buddhist missionaries and monks.<sup>3</sup>

Ancient ties between India and Central Asia became regular in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century when Islamised Central Asian Turks established control over North India. These contacts were temporarily disrupted by the Mongol invasions, but Timur's incorporation of a part of northwestern India into his empire restored the relationship between the two regions.<sup>4</sup>

The establishment and consolidation of Mughal rule in India during 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries gave a further boost as the rulers maintained strong

psychological and emotional ties with their Central Asian homeland.<sup>5</sup> Many of the Mughal emperors expressed the desire to re-conquer their homeland, though only two of them – Humayun in 1549 AD and Shah Jahan in 1646 AD – actually made any attempts in that direction.<sup>6</sup> According to Richard Foltz, India was the main beneficiary of the two hundred year long brain-drain.<sup>7</sup> It is also said: “Persian culture acted as a bond between the two peoples, mainly due to the Tajik nobility which wielded considerable influence in the Mughal court.”<sup>8</sup> Ethnically, the Tajiks are the descendents of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Aryans. Their mother tongue – Tajik – belongs to the Irano-Aryan group of languages and, hence, has similarities with Sanskrit language. The Tajik nobility in the Mughal Court greatly contributed to the evolution of India’s composite culture.<sup>9</sup>

The informal ties between India and Central Asia were further strengthened during the Soviet era when strong cooperation was established with the Soviet Union in the fields of science, politics, economics and culture.

Though India and Tajikistan symbolize two divergent politico-territorial regions, they share a common past that borrowed and experienced mutual influence. The import of ancient faith of Buddhism and the traditional knowledge of medicine, herbs and treatment of various ailments was repaid by the Tajiks, Uzbeks and others in terms of the faith of Islam and Sufism. The immigration of Central Asians was balanced by the diaspora of Indian traders, businessmen, priests and monks in Central Asia. The inflow of immigrant scholars and poets was returned by Central Asian scholars like Al-Biruni and Al-Khwarazmi to expatiate on the Indian system of education, caste and social organization. The introduction of Central Asian and Persian institutions of *iqta*, *jagir*, rank and technology – especially the wheel and other agricultural and industrial tools – was given a free space in the Indian system. In the long run, these had a considerable influence on Indian sculpture, painting, gardening, calligraphy, architecture, music, dress, dietary habits etc. As a matter of fact, an unprecedented parallel in the lifestyle of the two peoples was a natural corollary in the process of transmission and assimilation of socio-cultural influences.

Republic of Tajikistan’s small but young population is estimated to be more than seven million. The country is endowed with natural resources that could make it one of the rich countries in Asia. It has the largest natural water resources in the region, was the second largest in the former Soviet Union and now second only to Russia. It is also home to more than

65% of the glaciers in the region. (The Pamirs mountain range in Tajikistan has numerous glaciers and is home to the Fedchenko Glacier which is the largest glacier in the world outside the Polar Regions. It is more than 77 km long and 1,000 m thick and covers more than 700 sq km in area) Together with Kyrgyzstan, it controls over 90% of the water resources of Central Asia. Other than extensive water resources, Tajikistan has large reserves of mercury, brown coal, lead, zinc, antimony and tungsten, silver, gold, and an unpublicized uranium deposits. Unlike the other four Central Asia republics, exploitation of Tajikistan's modest fossil fuel and natural gas resources is currently economically unviable.

### BILATERAL RELATIONS

Bilateral relations between Tajikistan and India are at their best and can serve as an example for other nations in the region. They are based on mutual respect, convergence of interests and similarity of views. Most importantly, Tajikistan and India have no differences or issues to resolve. Tajikistan has consistently extended support to India in the United Nations and its forums, including support for India's candidature to posts in the United Nations system. Tajikistan along with other countries of Central Asia supported India's entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an Observer.

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon came on an official visit to India in December 1995, followed by a working visit on 22 January 1999 and another official visit in May 2001. In addition to that, leaders of both the countries met in Almaty on the sidelines of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) meetings. President Rahmon's fourth visit to India took place in August 2006. Each visit brought Tajikistan and India closer.

Former Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Dushanbe in November 2003 gave a special focus to forge closer relations and enhance bilateral cooperation. Both sides agreed to jointly combat terrorism, expand defense cooperation and identified other strategic areas of cooperation, including building of highways that could give Tajikistan link and access to Chabahar port in Iran via topographically and friendly regions of Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup> During the visit, two important agreements were signed to establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter-Terrorism and an Extradition Treaty. For India, the significance of enhanced cooperation with Tajikistan lies in the fact that it is not only a neighbor of Afghanistan; but a stable,

secular and strong Tajikistan is central to peace and stability in both Central and South Asia.

Bilateral cooperation is expanding in areas of mutual interest and benefit. India and Tajikistan also have instruments in place for cooperation in Information Technology (IT). India assisted in the establishment of an IT Centre of Excellence in Dushanbe. It was commissioned in August 2006. The IT centre was set up with a modest grant of US\$ 0.6 million. The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), a Government of India establishment executed the project. The Tajik National Centre for Patents and Information, an outfit of the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade administers the IT Centre. In addition to providing the equipment for the center, CDAC has trained the centre's faculty members in India.

The establishment of IT Centre is very laudable. But the project has a very tight budget. It would need an additional grant of at least US\$ 1.4 million, if it is to make an important contribution to human resource development in Tajikistan.

Scholarships for university education are India's best tools in human resource development. Training under ITEC covers wide and diverse areas of specialization. Similarly, ICCR scholarships facilitate education in most study programmes, excluding medicine and engineering, in any university in India. Over 250 Tajiks have benefited from ITEC training in English language, banking and finance, information technology, income generation, industrial development, rural development and management. In addition, Tajik diplomats have attended training modules at the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs. In view of the unqualified success of the ITEC programmes, institutions and establishments in India receive every year at least 80 ITEC trainees from Tajikistan.

Over 114 ICCR-sponsored Tajik students have successfully completed their studies from Indian universities and most of them have studied economics, sociology, management and business administration. Outstandingly, most of the ITEC and Indian universities' *alumni* on their return to Tajikistan are high on demand with banks, governmental, non-governmental and international organizations because of their qualifications, skills and familiarity with the English language. Importantly, most of them hold good positions in the government establishments, banks, international organizations and NGOs active in Tajikistan. During the academic year 2006-2007, 30 students of Tajikistan were given ICCR scholarships for post-graduate study programmes. At the same time,



Indian students are studying at the Tajik State Medical University.

### STRATEGIC COOPERATION

Tajikistan and India are faced with a wide range of questions connected with the most important challenges of modern times such as international terrorism, regional extremism and narcotics trafficking.

For Tajikistan to fully emerge out of the civil war situation, internal stability is very essential. This would be made possible only by allowing opposing political views to co-exist with politics of the country's leadership. Most importantly, the external factor central to the overall stability of Tajikistan is the stability of Afghanistan while Tajikistan itself is central to stability in Central Asia.

India's problems with cross-border terrorism and separatism in Jammu and Kashmir have roots not only across the border but also in Afghanistan. Thus, stability in Afghanistan is also vital for India. To this end India's strategic cooperation with Tajikistan is indispensable. Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee invited President Rahmon to pay a working visit to Delhi on 22 January 1999 while *en route* to Dushanbe from Hanoi. President Rahmon's visit laid the foundations for strategic cooperation. The one-to-one talk between the two leaders was path-breaking as it gave the impetus and a basis for implementation of an active strategic cooperation for security, peace and stability in the region. Subsequently, Prime Minister Vajpayee extended invitation to President Rahmon to visit India in May 2001. It was followed by Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit of Tajikistan in November 2003 which facilitated the consolidation of mutual interests and enhanced cooperation.

### DEFENCE COOPERATION

Tajikistan's Defence Minister, Colonel General Sherali Kharulloev visited India for the first time in December 2001 and his last visit was in January 2008, which resulted in defining the scope and areas of cooperation. India's Defence Minister, George Fernandes in April 2002, reciprocated the visit and gave more content to the cooperation. Since April 2002, there have been numerous delegation visits from both sides.

Defence cooperation covers a wide spectrum of bilateral interests and includes, sharing of information, material support and joint exercises. Of significance to Tajikistan is India's programme for training of defense

officers and human resources development, English language training, establishment of English language centre, an IT centre and rehabilitation of the military airfield at Ainy, near Dushanbe. India would also extend assistance to Tajikistan to raise and build an effective air force. The Ainy facility is the first home for Tajikistan's infant air force.

In addition, India has gifted military livery for two brigades, aviation suits, computers, military vehicles, and two Mi-8 helicopters along with spare parts and consumables. As a component of officers training, young military cadets from Tajikistan undergo training at the National Defense Academy at Khadakwasla in India. In addition, Tajik officers attend the Young Officers Course. Besides, the Tajik Ministry of Defense received a grant of US\$ 0.5 million to renovate and upgrade the Tajik Military Institute. Importantly, India is committed to the upgradation of the defense infrastructure. Defense cooperation includes making available experts and training of experts to handle strategic materials or substances.

Following President Rahmon's working visit on 22 January 1999, Major General Saidamir Zukhurov visited India in April 1999. His visit opened the doors to sharing of intelligence and expanding cooperation between the heads of the relevant organizations. The interactions and exchanges resulted in the signing of an Extradition Treaty in November 2003 and establishment of the much-needed JWG on Counter-Terrorism. The JWG held its first meeting in Dushanbe in January 2006 and a protocol was signed. The second meeting was held in Delhi prior to the visit of President Rahmon in August 2006.

#### ECONOMIC COOPERATION

There are several branches of the economy in which increased cooperation will be mutually beneficial to Tajikistan and India. In particular, there is ample potential in the areas of power, engineering, high technology, chemistry, processing and production of cotton fabrics as well as processing of agricultural produce. Today, the task at hand is to expand the gamut of joint activities and lay stress on the spheres of advance technology, manufacturing and services.

India could be a big consumer market for Tajik energy. Tajik entrepreneurs are ready to set up joint enterprises with Indian businessmen for production of electro-technical equipments, precision instruments, textiles and leather goods. Tajikistan has the capability to supply phosphorus fertilizer products and many other items to India.

Commerce and trade between Tajikistan and India is, to say the least, very insignificant. This situation persists despite the fact that there are enough agreements to promote two-way trade, commerce and technical cooperation. These include agreements on air-services, long-term cooperation in trade and industry and the protection of instruments. Additionally, there exists an India-Tajikistan Joint Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation. While instruments for cooperation are in place, action is lacking.

Official bilateral trade during 1994-2000 was not significant and the annual turnover hovered around US\$ 1.5 million. This accounted for imports from India while imports from Tajikistan were insignificant. However, a notional arithmetic calculation of India's export of consumer goods and garments through tourist baggage would give another picture – each weekly flight of Tajik Air brought in a group of 30 Tajik tourists carrying a minimum cash estimated at around US\$ 300,000. This would translate to around US\$ 15 million per annum – an unaccounted export that was also not well accounted in Delhi's domestic internal trade. On the other hand, the buyer was denied export benefits and tax concessions. This trade, however, dwindled by the end of 2000 as it dawned upon the buyers that retail outlets in Dubai and Sharjah offer better international goods at a lower price, guarantee and, importantly, trade was registered. And unfortunately the present situation is that it has completely stopped as there is no direct flight between Delhi and Dushanbe.

Between 2001 and 2003, India's official exports averaged US\$ 32 million annually. Tajikistan's major import from India was alumina. A major hindrance to official bilateral trade is unstated problems in opening of irrevocable and confirmed Letters of Credit for imports from India. On scrutiny, the problem actually lay in the Tajik businesspersons' lack of faith in Tajik banks. Given this situation and the absence of a better option, cash and carry trade was procedurally convenient.

#### APPRAISAL OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Taking into consideration various aspects of Indo – Tajik bilateral relations, there is mutual respect, trust and confidence. Many important milestones have been crossed and, on each stage a total understanding and convergence of views are evident on all issues of mutual concern. But India seems shy in action. Additionally, Tajikistan was lost in the larger picture of the Central Asia region which seemed to be perceived as being

Russian dominated area.

However, India's perception of Tajikistan underwent a qualitative change after the Taliban took over Kabul in September 1996. It is now central to India's strategic interests in the region. The prospect of Kabul falling to the Taliban was feared most by Tajikistan since September 1994 as it was at war with its own religious extremists and an armed political opposition that had bases and training centres in Afghanistan. Given such a difficult position, Tajikistan spared no effort in highlighting the need for bilateral consultations with India on security issues and made its apprehensions known at every available opportunity. The emergence of the Taliban, thus, resulted in many official level bilateral consultations and initiatives.

India's views and position on the Taliban were well known. With the fall of Kabul in September 1996, maintaining links with the legitimate Government of Afghanistan became crucial. For this, a reliable line of communication was most needed. India took Tajikistan into confidence on the agenda to contain the Taliban and a strategy to extend assistance to Commander Ahmad Shah Masood was formulated. Tajikistan, without any hesitation, extended full support to India. Thus, while every visit from Tajikistan was a milestone in bilateral relations, the working visit of President Rahmon on 22 January 1999 was extraordinary and path-breaking. It concretised Tajikistan-India relations in the realm of security.

Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Tajikistan in November 2003, though late, was both necessary and important. The visit, as expected, further strengthened and expanded Tajikistan – India bilateral cooperation within the framework of common geo-strategic interests. Its relevance is linked to the fact that India is facing cross-border terrorism. That Taliban is not formally governing Afghanistan is a relief, but their being undefeated makes Afghanistan unstable. The net result is that cross-border terrorism continues to bleed India while stability in Tajikistan and Central Asia, in general, remains under the constant threat of armed religious extremism and terrorism.

The poser here is: Does India recognize the centrality of Tajikistan in a long-term strategy to stop, if not curb, cross-border terrorism, defeat armed religious extremists, separatists and terrorists? How committed is India in the quest to secure national interests? Is India willing to be proactive in bilateral relations with Tajikistan?

India is a reluctant, if not a shy power. It is still shy of getting proactive in Tajikistan and Central Asia in general. This is because India's national

interests and aspirations are not being articulated. Therefore, India needs to emerge from her shell to formulate and implement a comprehensive defence and strategic cooperation policy. A stable Afghanistan is vital for both India and Tajikistan.

Many Tajik experts have persistently advocated close Indo-Tajik relations and a strategic role for India is the need of Central Asia. Commander Ahmad Shah Masood also held a similar view but his perception had a military dimension peculiar to Afghanistan. Commander Masood very categorically stated that India's cross-border terrorism and "adventures of the separatists" could be tackled if the "training fields in Afghanistan" are destroyed; and "this is possible only if Taliban is defeated convincingly". To defeat the Taliban, he wanted a stable Tajikistan and material assistance from India.

Taking into consideration the Tajik views, it is evident that India is being perceived as a shy and hesitant power. While India's credibility as a dependable friend was never doubted, she was never perceived to be a deterrent force to anyone. An assertive India is what Indians and the region need. The answer to the poser on India's commitment to secure her own national interests lies in India radically changing attitude for the region.

In any honest appraisal of Tajikistan-India relations, trade and economic relations need to be raised from the realms of nonexistence to something substantial and significant. While trade and commerce on both sides continue almost without any official control and directives, there is need for banking institutions like Exim Banks (or similar institutions). Chambers of Commerce in both countries should take the necessary initiatives. The current level of trade needs correction and some governmental thrust would work.

The second credit line of US\$ 25 million offered by India to Tajikistan is laudable but the terms and conditions need radical revision to accommodate the need of Tajikistan. It is being offered at the officially prescribed rate of 0.5% plus the London Inter-Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR); and this is too stiff. These terms and conditions, according to the department of Economic Affairs, Government of India, apply to Low-Income High Debt (LIHD) group countries. They are not compatible with the IMF guidelines given to Tajikistan.

The credit line has been offered twice, once in Dushanbe in 2003 and again in Delhi in August 2006. If India is indeed eager that the credit line be accepted, it has to revise the terms and conditions, particularly the

interest rate which should not exceed 1.5% per annum, no link to LIBOR and payable in 20 years with four or five years moratorium. Such a package would allow a substantial portion of the credit to go as a grant element and with no debt burden. India, therefore, should place Tajikistan in a category similar to Afghanistan which belongs to the category of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). This decision would be at the sole discretion of the Government of India.

#### AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

At the outset, India's interests in Central Asia should not surprise anybody in view of shared history. It has been about 25 years since the five Central Asian republics emerged as sovereign and independent states. India's relations with each of the five republics are, to say the least, very friendly. India's interests in the region are both economic and strategic. On the economic front, the agenda is to participate in the region's economic development. On the strategic front, the agenda is to be pro-active with a regional diplomacy policy and a regional security policy. After 25 years, one would have expected India to emerge as a prominent player in Central Asia but the reality betrays this perception. In view of the oft-stated economic and strategic interests in Central Asia, especially in Tajikistan, India must have in place a coherent Central Asia policy in general, and an unambiguous policy *vis-a-vis* Tajikistan and each of the other four republics. Thus, the agenda for the future, while giving a general focus to the region, should also consider the exclusiveness of each republic with a country-specific approach.

Given the 'new great game' scenario and the volatile situation in Afghanistan, the brittle stability in Central Asia region is under threat. This dangerous situation also poses a threat to India's security. In view of this, the Indian leadership would need to enhance its interactions with the leadership in the region and form a system for comprehensive dialogue and cooperation programme. Additionally, picking a leaf from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, India should work closely with all Central Asian Republics to make certain that the region is not home to the three evils of religious extremism, separatism and terrorism.

India's surging economy is well known in Central Asia but has made no real impact in view of the overemphasis on historical, cultural, civilizational and geographical links. It will be in India's interest to go beyond these areas. India is capable of participating in diverse economic

development and construction projects while also delivering capital goods, services, technology and a wide range of consumer goods. Looking at future, India's economy will continue to surge and her foreign exchange reserves would grow. Given the existing goodwill, India should use her economic and inherent prowess to play a prominent and influencing role in Central Asia.

With reference to Tajikistan, India's interests are hinged on economic, strategic, historical, cultural, civilizational and geographical links. Furthermore, it is vital for India that Tajikistan remains stable, secular and friendly. Considering the existing constitution and a multi-party political system, Tajikistan's credentials as a secular state pose no doubts. A noteworthy fact is that Tajikistan is an emerging democracy in the region as it is the only country that has a legitimate space for opposition political parties with opposing political views *vis-à-vis* the ruling regime and the ruling party. This provides a strong basis for democracy and political stability to take root. However, external factors like instability in Afghanistan and the re-emergence of the Taliban pose a threat to secularism, political stability and democratic principles in Tajikistan. Instability either in Afghanistan or Tajikistan has repercussions in both the countries.

India was not one of the great powers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but is likely to be one in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, her size and geo-strategic location with abundant natural resources, a large skilled base of manpower and inherent potential have given India the potential to wield influence in the world affairs. The US and her allies perceive India's influence amongst the newly independent countries and the developing world with suspicion or doubt. Thus perception has adverse repercussions on international economic assistance for India. Regardless, one would expect India to be pro-active in strengthening her strategic relations with Tajikistan.

Tajikistan does not have enough of an army that could guarantee its territorial integrity. It is also not in a position to establish, finance and support a big army. Though Tajikistan spends around 3.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – about US\$35 million per annum – on defense and security, it is paltry for the country's defense. Tajikistan's standing army is made up of conscripts. Under the system of conscription, the size of the force is large and not commensurate with requirements. India could help Tajikistan in establishing a small and well-trained voluntary army that could deter any military misadventure by an adversary. India must, without hesitation, expand the bilateral defense co-operation to include

the creation of a professional army on regimental lines. Tajikistan, in addition, needs an air arm that could extend aerial support to the ground forces.

A major agenda item is that India should perceive Tajikistan as being central to her strategy to end cross-border terrorism, separatism and religious extremism. Here, the Wakhan Corridor is an important factor. It is a natural route between Central Asia, China and the Indian subcontinent. Unlike the rest of Afghanistan, the Wakhan Corridor escaped the wars and killings. Commander Masood remarked: *“To defeat the Taliban and the mercenaries, they must be pursued – the Durand line is open to all who wish to cross.”*

No Indian agenda on regional security and stability can ignore the implications of the ‘new Great Game’ and the presence of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Sadly, the whole of Central Asia is being dragged into the game having the goal of evicting Russia from Central Asia and install US friendly regimes to encircle Russia and Iran. The net result is a prolonged war in Afghanistan and instability in the Central Asian region. Not surprisingly, the large US presence and the war on terror in Afghanistan have been perceived as an occupation of Afghanistan which complicates the situation.

In this scenario, India and the five Central Asian Republics must respond collectively to the repercussions of the ‘new Great Game’. Otherwise, the rivalry would keep both Central and South Asia on boil. The cause for instability in the region is the presence of an alien power waging a war and challenging the legitimate influence of countries belonging to the region.

In conclusion, India must take note of the fact that the ‘new Great Game’ rivalry enacted in Central Asia does not guarantee stability in the region and in South Asia. India must become proactive in her diplomacy and be a prominent partner in the economic development of the region. The leadership in India must also regularly interact with leaders in the region. In Tajikistan, the existing agreements must fully be implemented.

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10. The highway project, if it materializes, would necessarily go through Afghanistan. It would need to wind its way through friendly Afghan regions if it is to be functional through the year notwithstanding the vagaries of regional commanders, uncertainties and instability in Afghanistan. The transit routes in Afghanistan would necessarily be those where the Northern Alliance had control and influence.

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN MODERN TAJIKISTAN

ATHAR ZAFAR

The Republic of Tajikistan is culturally rich and traditionally vibrant, with several languages and people coexisting harmoniously for ages giving it the texture which makes it stand out. Though Tajik culture has its own origin but art, language, culture and tradition heed no boundaries and transcend the man made barriers of geography and religion and the eternity of time. The rich cultural fabric of Tajikistan has influenced and in turn has been influenced by the cultures and traditions of other places, near and far. Tajik or Persian language historically has been most prestigious language after Arabic in the Muslim world. It was a vehicle of cultural expression: in Central Asia from the establishment of the Arab rule, in some parts of the Ottoman empire and Mughal India. Tajikistan is the only Central Asian country in the region which speaks non-Turkic language. The influence of Tajik language and culture was over a wide area covering Balkans to Bangladesh and Persian Gulf to the north of Syr Darya. Today Tajik is the official language of Tajikistan, Farsi (Tajik in Arabic script) is the official language of Iran and Farsi Dari (Tajik in Arabic script) is one of the two official languages of Afghanistan. Besides, it is spoken in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and in some areas of Azerbaijan.

Tajik language is from the Indo-Aryan family of languages. Over the centuries it has changed to its modern form. Its origin and development can be divided into the three phases; Old Persian/Tajik, Middle Persian/Tajik and Modern Tajik. Old Tajik was spoken in the province of Pars and has similarity with Avestan and Sanskrit languages and all these are believed to have originated from the same roots. The oldest traces of Old Tajik date back to the 6th century BCE, but it was spoken until the 3rd century BCE. The period of the Middle Tajik is from the last Achmenian ruler and up to the advent of Islam in Central Asia. It is also known as Pahlavi language and is attributed to "Parthians". Modern Tajik begins

with the coming of Islam and Arabic alphabets in Central Asia. Samanids, who ruled from 875 to 999 A.D. were the native people and helped Tajik language and culture reaching its zenith. To this we should also add the contributions of the ordinary people of Transoxiana and Khurasan who actually retained the language rather than specific poets or rulers. It was the ordinary individual who took delight in his language and who continued its use even after others, including many major scholars, had abandoned it.

### SCRIPTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TAJIK LANGUAGE

The adoption of Arabic script for the Tajik/Persian language led to the creation of the Modern Tajik language. Written in Perso-Arabic script, it has been the official and cultural language of Central Asia since it first appeared.

The Latin script for Tajik language was introduced after the Russian Revolution, in 1920s, in order to facilitate an increase in literacy and create a distance from the Islamic influence. A decree for the same published in 1928, was enforced in 1930s.<sup>1</sup> Introduction of this script led to the increase in literacy rate and social upliftment of the Tajik people.

In the 1940s, the Tajik script was changed once again, this time to the Cyrillic script.<sup>2</sup> The change was stated to be necessary because Soviet Russia had progressed much in the fields of science and technology. Books were written in Russian language with Cyrillic script, so the need was felt that if the script is changed to Cyrillic, it will help bringing Tajik people closer to the development of modern day achievements. But the change was also necessitated due to the fact that Turkey had adopted Roman script for Turkish language. It caused anxiety among the Soviet leaders, that the new Pan-Turkic literature could develop in the Latin alphabet and may attract the peoples of Central Asia towards Turkey and away from Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> Introduction of Cyrillic script led to Russification of the Tajik language. It primarily led to the domination of the Russian language in official business and strong influence on the local language, but was limited to cities. Most evident were the changes in the names of the Tajik people. Russian suffixes like –ov and –ova, and a family name was given to every Tajik. Tajikistan predominantly being a rural country, relatively Tajik language remained unaffected.

### CURRENT STATUS REGARDING SCRIPT

In 1989, with the growth of Tajik nationalism, a law was enacted declaring Tajik as the state language. In addition, the law officially equated Tajik with Persian, placing the word "Farsi" after Tajik. The law also called for a gradual reintroduction of the Arabic alphabet. Many optimists in the 1990s believed that the Arabic alphabet would make a comeback to Tajikistan in some ten or fifteen years. They laid special emphasis on the fact that once Tajik scientific, historical and religious literature was wholly written in Arabic script, the transition to the Arabic alphabet would be vital, otherwise part of the culture would be irretrievably lost. In the early 1990s the Arabic alphabet was being gradually introduced into schools along with Persian that was taught as a special discipline. Books by Tajik and Iranian authors using the Arabic/Persian script began to be printed. Many billboards, announcements and street name plates were removed and replaced with those written in the Arabic alphabet. Newspapers and television began to give lessons in the Persian language and Arabic writing. However, in 1999, the word "Farsi" was removed from the state language law. As of now, the de-facto standard in use is the modified form of Cyrillic.

### OTHER LANGUAGES IN MODERN TAJIKISTAN

In Tajikistan, other than the Tajik, there are many languages in use, which include Yaghnobi and the languages of the Pamir and Badakhshan highlands. It may be noted here that none of the Pamir languages, including Shughni, has a written form. In comparison with the other Tajik/Persian languages the Pamir Group has retained a lot of ancient characteristics of Old and Middle Tajik, brought about by territorial seclusion.

**Shughnani:** It is spoken by about 20,000 Ismaili Shiites living in the middle valleys of the Panj and its tributaries the Gunth and Shab Darya. It is the largest linguistic group among the six groups that constitute the Kohistan-i-Badakhshan peoples. People of this region tried but failed in their attempt to establish Shughnani as the lingua franca and as a literary language for the region in 1920s.

**Ishkashemi:** To the west of Wakhan is a small community of Ishkashems, barely 2,500, living on both banks of Panj. The speakers are bilingual in Tajik and Ishkashemi, which is not a written language.

**Rushani:** It is spoken in the valley of the Bartang river in the north of Badakhshan range. The Shughnans and Tajiks influence the 20,000

Rushani speakers.

**Wakhi:** It is spoken in the highest valleys in the south central region of Badakhshan, valleys of the Pamir and the Wakhan corridor along the Wakh river. There are estimated 30,000 Wakhi speakers who are distributed in Afghanistan, Pakistan and China also.

**Yaghnobi:** It is different from the above mentioned languages. It is spoken by some 6,000 speakers in the high valley of Yaghnov river in the upper ridges of the Zarafshan. It is a remnant of Soghdian, the language of the ancient kingdom of the Samarkand. Yaghnobi survived and indeed flourished in the middle ages. The Yaghnobis are Sunni Muslims and bilingual in Tajik and Yaghnobi, which is not a written language.

There is a gradual decline of these languages and assimilation with the Tajik. For instance, among the Pamir languages, the Vanji language has almost become completely extinct.

#### PROMOTION OF THE TAJIK LANGUAGE

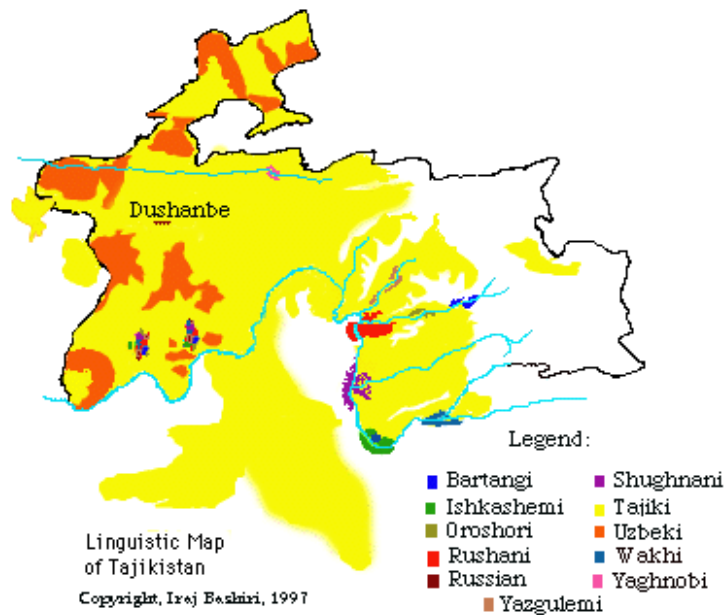
Government of Tajikistan sees language as an important unifying factor for the new nation and gives priority for its development which may lead to better integration of the different sections of the population. State language issues are referred to in Tajikistan annually on **Language Day**, on **July 22**. Tajikistan is the only CIS country celebrating Language Day as a state holiday. The President of Tajikistan speaks mostly Tajik and demands that ministries prepare reports in the state language. In general, the Tajik language is gradually returning to the household level and increasingly becoming a tongue of home use.

#### Iran's Assistance for Promotion of Tajik

Tajiks and Iranians have been connected historically, racially and culturally for thousands of years. Tajiks, like the majority of Iranians, are Aryan people and speak the Tajik language, which is also the (Persian with Arabic script) official language of Iran. It was one of the first countries to extend diplomatic recognition to the newly independent Tajikistan in 1991 and the first nation to establish an embassy in Dushanbe. Iran provided diplomatic assistance and built new mosques within Tajikistan. Due to the resurgence of Aryan culture within Tajikistan, Iran helped encourage cultural exchange through conferences, media, and film festivals. Iranian television programs, magazines, and books became increasingly common in Tajikistan.

President Ahmadinejad of Iran visited Tajikistan to open an underground tunnel. He commented that “Iran and Tajikistan are one spirit in two bodies”. Earlier Iran had also supplied to Tajikistan computers and softwares to propagate Arabic script for the Tajik language. Iran has donated 400,000 Persian language text books to Tajikistan with a view to revive the Farsi language in Central Asia.<sup>4</sup> Iran has also established six libraries in Tajikistan.<sup>5</sup>

#### LANGUAGE MAP OF TAJIKISTAN



#### TAJIK CULTURE

Origin of Tajik culture can be traced back to the Soghdians who lived in this region in ancient times and played an important part in the Silk Route trade. Zoroaster, the prophet of Zoroastrianism, was born in Balkh (present day northern Afghanistan) the area near Tajikistan. When Islam reached this region it gave another dimension to the local culture and enriched it further. The epitome was the period when Samanids came to power. The Samanid kings made Bukhara their residence and a focal point for art and science as well as an administrative center. In this period, the personal interest and support of the Shahs in arts and sciences, along with international trade, and the relatively stable political situation in the Silk Road region, all contributed to the flourishing of Tajik art and science. A

cultural rapprochement took place between the Tajik and Turkic people.

Tajik culture is said to have two trends, *shahri wa vodinasheen* (Urban and Valley people) and *Kuhistoni* (Mountainous). Ancient towns such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Herat, Balkh, Nishopur and Khiva were the nerve centres of Tajik culture but are no longer part of the country. More modern cultural centres in Tajikistan are Dushanbe, Khujand, Kulyab, Panjikent and Istaravshan. The Pamir people of Kohistan-i-Badakhshan Autonomous Region in the southeast, bordering Afghanistan and China, though considered to be part of the Tajik ethnicity, nevertheless are distinct linguistically and culturally from most Tajiks. In contrast to the mostly Sunni Muslim residents of the rest of Tajikistan, the Pamiris overwhelmingly follow the Ismaili sect of Islam. Isolated in the highest parts of the Pamir Mountains, they have preserved many ancient cultural traditions and folk arts that have been largely lost elsewhere in the country. With the arrival of Russians, Soviets introduced modern themes like drama, opera and ballet to the Tajik culture.

### **Social Institutions**

There are several institutions which play important role in Tajik culture. They provide the space, exchange thoughts and experiences and pass knowledge to the larger members in the society.

#### ***Mohalla* (Locality)**

It has its origin probably in the medieval period. Even in northern India this word is used indicating a small locality. *Mohalla* is a small community of neighbourhoods, it plays an important role in Tajik society. It is formed by the residents of a small village, town or city. After the independence of Tajikistan this institution has gained strength.<sup>6</sup> Traditionally feasts (to mark weddings or funerals), for example community projects, such as building *masjids* and repairing irrigation systems), and local charities are organized at the *Mohalla* level.

#### **Masjid**

Masjids play an important role in the social and cultural life of the Tajik people. It is the centre where people from all sections of the society come and meet on daily basis, and there is a big gathering on Fridays for the prayer. People meet and discuss issues related to them. The Imam also plays an important role. He is usually the chief guest at the local functions and performs local social ceremonies like marriages and naming of the

new born babies.

### ***Chaikhana* (Tea House)**

*Chaikhana* is the traditional tea house. It is a common sight in urban areas and can be found practically in every city and town. People usually sit on a special elevated platform or around a low table. A *chaikhana* normally serves traditional drinks like tea and traditional food, such as *pulao*, *samosa*, *kurutab*, and *kichiri mastova*. A *chaikhana* is more than a place to eat and drink. It is an important institution in Central Asia for socializing and networking. It serves as a kind of social club. Over a cup of tea, people discuss community issues and developments at the local level as well as major political, social, and economic topics. Community leaders, specially in rural areas, regularly gather in tea house to hear the opinions and gather the input of the elders in order to settle minor disputes or to organize a local charity event.

### **Contemporary Arts**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, culture and art in Tajikistan experienced significant changes. Several factors contributed to the acceleration of these changes. The government invested extensively in the development of arts after the establishment of Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic in the 1920s in order to promote strong national identity within the newly established Tajik state. Both old and new art forms received support from the state and various state funded agencies. Another factor was the Russian influence. Between the 1930s and 1990s, leading Russian universities, galleries, libraries, and archives opened their doors to the most talented Tajik students, scholars, and artists. Tajik students not only received free education but also scholarships, internship and advanced training. After returning home, these students brought new forms of artistic expressions with them, such as European style theatre, ballet, opera and oil painting on canvas. Yet, in the face of change, thousands of people still keep national traditions and styles intact. With the rise of national pride and the growing nationalism of the 1990s, there has been an increasing interest in traditional Tajik art forms.

### **Festivals**

During the communist rule, government used public festivals as a means of organizing people into public display of support for the party's official policies. Festivals were tightly regulated till 1991. After independence,



the situation has changed. The government of Tajikistan allows celebrations of all festivals including Islamic festivals without any restrictions. Days on which festivals are celebrated are declared as holidays. Festivals of Tajikistan can broadly be categorized into two parts Islamic festival – Eid ul fitr, Eid ul adha and non-Islamic festivals like Nawroz, Independence Day, Labor Day celebrations.

### **Nawrooz**

Nawrooz, meaning ‘a new day’ is national holiday of Tajikistan. It has its origin in Central Asian region and probably in Tajikistan in the pre Islamic era. It is the first day of spring according to the solar calendar usually on 21/22 March, hence it is called the ‘spring festival’. It is an important occasion when artisans perform their skills in public. Carnivals are organized in big and small cities and towns. People from all religions and regions meet and greet each other with great affection.

### **CONCLUSION**

Tajik language is one of the oldest languages of the world. Literature produced in this language has influenced other literatures of near and far in terms of thoughts, ideas, culture and religion etc. Tajik/Persian, was the official language of India for many centuries during medieval and Mughal periods and as late as till 1832. This language also has absorbed influences from other languages, including the Arabic, which gave it the permanent script called ‘Arabic script’, which continued for a long time. During the Soviet period it was changed to Cyrillic alphabet in Tajikistan.

Since independence there is an ongoing debate on the selection of script for this language. Many people in Tajikistan and Iran want that ‘Arabic Script’ should once again be adopted, which will connect the present generation to vast Tajik world classics. But some people say that it will take back the language standard of Tajikistan to the medieval period and may become a reason for Tajiks who will go far from the scientific and modern literature which is in Russian language and Cyrillic scripts. Here one thing may be noted that most of the Tajiks are bilingual. They speak, read and write Tajik and Russian languages.

There are some impediments hindering the formalization of Tajik language as a language for the country. Firstly, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, the ‘Tajikistan’ denomination is derived from the main tribe or chunk of people that gradually settled in

Tajikistan, i.e. to say the Tajik speaking people. All other former Soviet republics in Central Asia have taken their official state languages from the same model. Due to this reason, Tajiks dwelling north of Tajikistan, oppose the adoption of the Tajik language. The second problem is that countries which have dismembered from Greater Iran are opposing another Greater Iran or Ironshahr. An adoption of the Persian language in Tajikistan is construed as a serious step by the government to return to the Greater Ironshahr. At present it seems that in the foreseeable period Tajik language with Cyrillic script will continue to remain in use.

Regarding culture, it is difficult to generalize 'culture' of any nation, but it is even more difficult for a society as culturally diverse and complex as Tajikistan. Yet there are several features that are common to most in the country. Tajiks of the present day Tajikistan are having a complex mixture of national traditions and modern values. There are several factors that determined the way of life of the ordinary people in this country. The most important is whether one lives in the city or countryside. City dwellers have much higher incomes, more modern values, greater access to modern means of entertainment such as television, radio and the internet and means of communications. Another factor is what generation a person belongs to. Younger people often have greater access to international mass culture and tend to be more cosmopolitan in taste and nature. The third factor that determines their lifestyle is social status.

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century traditional Tajik society strongly endorsed separating the genders in public life. In the late 1920s, the Soviet authorities introduced and fiercely enforced a policy of liberalization of women. Women were encouraged to enroll in schools and universities and to serve in public positions. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century this policy had resulted in the creation of a large class of professional women who had their independent incomes and a strong presence in public institutions and at many levels of government. The situation began to change after 1991, as the steep economic recession, the civil war, an increasing isolation from the outside world resulted in a high level of unemployment. Women were among the first to lose their jobs and their voices in public life. Some older, pre-modern traditions also made a comeback in many parts of the country.

After independence, there has been great emphasis on reviving the Tajik culture from all quarters. Government of Tajikistan has been organizing seminars and fairs to emphasize and redefine 'Tajik culture' connecting itself with Zoroastrians and Samanid traditions of Tajikistan.

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## RUDAKI: THE MUSE OF TAJIKISTAN

SYED AKHTAR HUSAIN

Shibli Nomani in his *Poetic History of Persia* or the *Sherul Ajam* has traced the birth place of Rudaki in a village of Nakhshab, a district in Samarkand.<sup>1</sup> It was an irony of fate that the birth place of the father of neo- Persian poetry fell to Uzbekistan during the creation of the Soviet Socialist Republics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that would leave the Tajik, Dari and Farsi speakers from Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran to have remote claim over the poet. Nonetheless, Rudaki is looked upon as a common literary heritage by all the Farsi speaking peoples of Asia and his poetry is passionately read and appreciated at schools and universities of the world where Farsi language and literature are being taught. Situation of Rudaki's birth place in Uzbekistan has never spurred the Farsi speaking countries to proclaim their disclaimer but at the same time the Uzbeks have made little efforts to appropriate Rudaki to Uzbek life and culture. On the contrary, the situation of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi's tomb in Konya has empowered Turkey to dilute the Dari and Persian claim over her Muse and vehemently admire Mevlana as a poet of Turkey and the Turks have subtly absorbed him in Turkish language, literature and culture. Modern Turkey is dotted with innumerable *Mevlavi Hanas* where he is adored as a Turkish deity rather than as Dari or Persian savant.

Ever since the creation of Uzbekistan, Rudaki has never been admired by the Uzbeks. They have never hailed him as the greatest poet of Khorasan and Transoxiana nor showed inclination to appropriate him to their language, literature and culture. The monolith Uzbekistan can develop its cultural pluralism by promoting Rudaki's poetry within her precincts. However, one may sum up Rudaki's life and career in the Samanid Samarkand and Bukhara in the words of Nizami Aruzi Samarkandi. The noted critic on Rudaki, profiles the poet against the back-drop of Central Asia in the *belles-lettres* *Chahar Maqaleh*: During the reign of Nasr bin

Ahmad (911-942), the Emirate of Khorasan was the land of milk and honey. Bukhara was its winter-capital and in summer the capital of the Samanid kingdom was shifted to Samarkand or any other city of Khorasan. The royal coffer was filled with gold and silver. The soldiers were armed to the teeth and complete peace and tranquility prevailed over the kingdom. The horses of the Emirate were sent to Badghis for grazing and the Emir with his retinue used to sojourn at Herat which had abundance of delicious fruits and aromatic flowers. There were grapes of hundred and twenty hues in and around Herat and some were as black as coal and as sweet as sugar. In such poetic ambience Nasr bin Ahmad preferred Herat over paradise and his capital Bukhara was simply out of his sight, nay out of his mind. Four years had passed by and his generals and nobles could no longer endure the nostalgia for their kith and kin in Bukhara. They eventually invoked the Muse to perform a miracle. Abu Abdullah bin Jafar Rudaki answered their prayer. One fine morning the Emir was tipsy, Rudaki appeared before him and impromptu sung a song in praise of the Emir and his Bukhara on a romantic note:

The Ju-yi Muliyan we call to mind,  
 We long for those dear friends long left behind.  
 The sands of Oxus, toilsome though they be,  
 Beneath my feet were as silk to me.  
 Glad at the friends', the Oxus deep,  
 Up to our girths in laughing waves shall leap.  
 Long live Bukhara! Be though of good cheer!  
 Joyous towards thee hasteth our Amir!  
 The Moon's the Prince, Bukhara is the sky;  
 O sky, the moon shall light thee by and by;  
 Bukhara is the Mead, the Cypress he;  
 Receive at last, O Mead, thy Cypress-tree!

The song cast a powerful spell over Nasr bin Ahmad. All of a sudden he walked bare foot from his tent and straight away rode to Bukhara.<sup>2</sup> The critique of Nizami Aruzi Samarkandi on the poem of Rudaki stands valid today that 'it had always been imitated but never excelled'.

Rudaki was born near Samarkand in approximately in 858 AD. At a tender age of eight years he had memorized the holy *Quran* and also learnt the fine arts of poetry and music. Providence blessed him with a melodious voice which endeared him to the hearts of beautiful damsels of Bukhara. Fame of his poetry had reached the far flung borders of Khorasan. Thus he was appointed the *Poet Laureate* of the Samanid Court during the reign of Nasr bin Ahmad. He led an affluent life in Bukhara with two hundred

slaves at his beck and call and four hundred camels to carry his assets. He had more than a hundred volumes of poems to his credit of which a small fraction remained extant. At the fag end of his life, he fell from the grace of the Emir and his eyes were gouged out. The poet sang the swan song of his life and breathed his last in 940 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

Rudaki occupies a unique place in the annals of Persian literature. He was the first Persian poet who had a *Diwan* or collection of poems to his credit and introduced quatrains to the realm of Persian literature. His poetry smacks of simplicity of style and sublimity of thought. Besides, it is tinged with fine wit and humour. Stalwarts of Persian poetry, namely Nasir-i-Khusrau, Khaqani and a host of others had heaped praises upon him. The dictions and thoughts of Rudaki constitute the rich traditions of Persian literature. The poet having realized the vanity of the world and experienced the vicissitudes of life frowns upon materialism and preaches the gospel truth that great men of fortune after death part with all their mundane comforts. This philosophy of Rudaki has been cherished by all the great Persian savants and is the corner stone of the literary heritage of Central Asia. It develops a great sense of contentment in man and prevents him from becoming worldly-wise.

Rudaki had versified several genres of poetry but his forte was undoubtedly the Persian odes or *qasideh*. Among his chief patrons whom he eternally extolled in his odes were Nasr bin Ahmad Samani II and his *wazir* Abul Fazl Balami. The odes composed by the poet in the tenth century have remained the standard ode form of Persian poetry down to the present day. They are not simply words of praises heaped upon the undeserving persons by the poet to extract a handful of silver from them. The fact of the matter is that the odes of Rudaki have enriched the coffer of Persian literature and have immortalized his patrons. The grandeur of the Samanids no longer exists today but their account in the poetry of Rudaki shows the glorious past of the Samans which has rightly been noted by Sharif Gurgani:

"From all the treasures hoarded by the Houses  
Of Sasan and Saman, in our days  
Nothing survives except the song of Barbad,  
Nothing is left save Rudagi's sweet lays."<sup>4</sup>

Besides, they also depict peace and prosperity of the times in which the poet had lived and the benevolence of the Samanid king not only towards his subjects but also to his foes. Shibli Nomani while discussing the salient features of the poetry of Rudaki, makes the point crystal clear and quotes

a poem of the poet which shows the treatment of the Samanid king with his foes:

“It is narrated that the king at the time of war  
Orders to make the tip of his arrows with gold  
His victim’s shroud may be bought out of it  
If injured, may pay his medical bill by it.”<sup>5</sup>

Traditionally, the word WINE in Persian has been an important symbolism of literature and poets have intricately used it to discuss temporal and spiritual affairs of life in Persian poetry. Hence, the symbol in literature is interpreted literally and at times metaphorically and very often it is difficult to differentiate the former from the latter. Interestingly, as the orthodox Muslims were opposed to the consumption of alcohol, the poets of Persian literature, in order to have digs at them and ridicule their religious hypocrisy began to glorify WINE in poetry and added a new dimension to the usage of the symbolism in their literature. In the poems of Rudaki, the symbolism of wine is usually interpreted in the literal sense of the term and the poet glorifies WINE and claims that if a drop of it fell into the river Nile, the crocodile would remain inebriate for a century and if a gazelle drank a drop of it, would roar like a lion and would never fear a leopard.<sup>6</sup> Though the lines of Rudaki are full of exaggerations but while reading them, they evoke a smile upon the lips of the reader in a subtle manner.

People of Central Asia cutting across all barriers of caste, creed and colour celebrate the arrival of spring from 21<sup>st</sup> March every year and with it begins their new year. Spring is not only a season for them but also a festival and an age old custom which they celebrate for a couple of weeks. From the cold and frosty earth, new life evolves and gradually covers the land with lush green verdant: Flowers of myriad hues and pleasant aroma blossom and attract birds and bees whose buzz and hum rent the air and make the spring colourful and romantic. Finally, the land of Central Asia drops the mantle of white snow and wears a festive garb, instead. The Muse of Khorasan, Abu Abdullah bin Jafar Rudaki gives a picturesque account of the arrival of spring in a poem which is a masterpiece in Persian literature. The poem transports the reader to the land of Rudaki where he beholds: The tulip blushes like a newly wed bride. The bulbul, starling and dove begin to chirp in *Naurooz*. After a spell of shower, the zephyr arrives with invigorating freshness to heal the ailing and ushers in life and joy upon earth. The poet finally solicits the company of his beloved on *Naurooz* to doubly celebrate the *Eid*.<sup>7</sup>

The *Panchatantra* is a literary heritage of India which has greatly

influenced literary creativity all over the world and in particular the genesis and development of fables and stories. During the rule of the Sassanian Emperor Anushirwan, his minister Burzoe had brought a copy of the *Panchatantra* from India to Iran and translated it from Sanskrit into Pahlavi. After the Arab conquest of Iran, the *Panchatantra* was rendered from Pahlavi into Arabic by Abdullah Ibn-e-Moqaffa and he named it *Kalila wa Dimnah*. Samarkand and Bukhara were the seats of learning during the Samanid rule and the rulers had left no stone unturned in the promotion and advancement of knowledge. Realizing the importance of Indian classic *Panchatantra*, the Samanid *Wazir*, Abul Fazl Balami encouraged Rudaki to bring out a versified version of *Kalila wa Dimnah* in Persian. In 930, he composed the poem and received a huge sum of forty thousand *Dinars* from the Emir of Khorasan. But, what a pity! Only one hundred and twenty nine scattered couplets from the poem have survived the ravages of time and come down to us. However, in the prelude of *Kalila wa Dimnah*, Rudaki underlines the significance of learning and knowledge and maintains that:

“Since time immemorial human begins  
Looked upon knowledge as indispensable.  
Wise men toiled to amass it through the ages  
And they mastered languages.  
Knowledge is a burning lamp that enlightens a person  
And keeps him protected from all evils.”<sup>8</sup>

The cradle of Persian language and literature was the undivided province of Khorasan in which a distinct school of poetry evolved in medieval period and became famous as *Sabk-i-Khorasani*. The poets who belonged to the Khorasani school of poetry were Rudaki, Ferdowsi, Unsuri, Nasir-i-Khusrau and last but not the least Abdur Rahman Jami who contributed to the literary as well as philosophical development of Central Asia. It is interesting to note the first great classical Persian poet, Rudaki and the last, Abdur Rahman Jami represent the **Khorasani School of Poetry** and both have lived in Samarkand, a city of Tajik cultural heritage. Moreover, the Persian of Indian sub-continent called the *Sabk-i-Hindi* as an off-shoot of the *Sabk-i-Khorasani*. A noted scholar of *Sabk-i-Hindi* maintains that “It had started taking shape in the Timurid period in Khorasan and its founders belonged to the renowned school of Herat”.<sup>9</sup> Another renowned and authentic authority on Indo-Persian literature observes that besides the Iranians, the Turks, Afghans, Tajiks and Indians had equal contributions to the advancement of Persian in the Indian sub-continent.<sup>10</sup>



The Indian Persian is analogous to the Persian of Central Asia both in speech and letters. However, Rudaki is the most conspicuous poet of Khorasan and the pioneer of neo-Persian poetry whose verse reveals the characteristics of the *Sabk-i-Khorasani*. His poetry is marked with chastity and purity of language and clarity of expression. The melody of his poetry jingles like silver bells and even today the sweet damsels of Samarkand and Bukhara dance to the tune of Rudaki's poetry.

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# CIVIL WAR IN TAJIKISTAN

MUZAFFAR OLIMOV

## INTRODUCTION

The years of independence and transition were not an easy time for Tajikistan. In 1992 the armed conflict started followed by the long period of instability and confrontation between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO).

During the civil war almost 85,000 people were killed, approximately one million people (every sixth citizen of Tajikistan) were displaced, more than 55,000 children lost their parents and 35,000 houses were destroyed. Damaging realities and consequences of the war, continuous clashes between armed groups, difficulties of the reconstruction of destroyed industries, economic crises, threat of the disintegration of the country made the warring parties start peace talks. The negotiation process resulted in the conclusion of the General Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Tajikistan signed by Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov and UTO Leader Said Abdullo Nuri on 27 June 1997 in Moscow. It put an end to five years armed conflict in Tajikistan and marked the beginning of the active process of post-war reconstruction and reintegration. Regardless of enormous difficulties, the Tajik society succeeded in overcoming the anger and hatred and achieving peace and high level of national consent and understanding.

This paper examines the causes of the inter-Tajik conflict, actors and conclusions of civil war in Tajikistan.

## CAUSES OF THE INTER-TAJIK CONFLICT

Many papers have been written about the inter-Tajik conflict and its causes. Drawing on these works, one can clearly see that the Tajik conflict was

multi-faceted with many different causes, but the most important are the following:

1. The conflict between local elites over power and resources in the territory after the break-up of Soviet Union;
2. The conflict between the state and Islam;
3. Political resistance to reform (reformers vs. old guard).

Tajikistan is a landlocked mountainous country situated to the north of Afghanistan, to the south-west of China, to the south of the Kyrgyz Republic and to the east of Uzbekistan. With an area of 143,100 square kilometers, it is similar in size to Tunisia or Greece. High mountains, arid plateau, and glaciers cover more than 93 per cent of the country. With a predominantly agrarian population, Tajikistan has some of the most densely populated arable land in the world. Few passes cross the mountains and many are closed by snow for several months each year. This has always made travel between different regions difficult and even modern transport networks suffer disruption, creating a significant obstacle to communication as well as social and economic integration.

Tajikistan has four main natural zones. The largest and highest is the Badakhshan region in the east, consisting of the Pamir mountains and plateau, with an average height of 4,000 m and individual peaks higher than 7,000 m. Badakhshan borders China and Afghanistan. The second natural zone is located in the centre and the west. In the centre-east of this zone is the Qarateghin valley, where the Gharm and Tavildara areas are located. In the centre-west is the Hissar valley where Dushanbe is located. The third zone, in the south-west, corresponds to the Khatlon province. It divides into Qurghonteppa region and Kulyab region. It borders Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

The fourth zone is in the north of the country, in the Zarafshan and Syr Darya river valleys, forming what used to be the Leninabad province, renamed as Soghd. The northern area lies mostly in the fertile and densely populated Ferghana valley, which extends into the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. Its main city is Khojand. This zone was historically part of the ancient 'Silk Road' trading routes and supported an urban culture linked with other regions and peoples, which enabled a unique fusion of Iranian and Turkic cultures. The physical geography of Tajikistan supported the development of many culturally distinct groups, most of whom are a part of the Iranian cultural world and are predominantly Sunni Muslims.

Social discontent increased in the 1980s and took shape in the development of underground political movements and in occasionally violent inter-group conflict over the allocation of state resources. Independent, secular socio-political movements developed, stimulating the emergence of genuine political debate. By the late 1980s some movements had taken a xenophobic and nationalistic character. In 1990 was founded the DPT.

More serious was Islamic political movement. The Civil War in Tajikistan was the most vivid conflict related to religion, and in reality it was an open expression of the conflict between Islam and communism that had started stirring during the Soviet period. During the Soviet period, Islam had existed not only as a lifestyle and part of identity of the residents of Central Asia, but also as a school of legal thought and ideology. Indeed, the most important function of Islam and of Muslim leaders in Soviet times was to protect the collective identity of the society. However, starting with Kokand's *mullahs*, who took refuge in Eastern Bukhara in the 1920s and 1930s, and through *ishans* and *khojas* who supported the disgraced Islamic intellectuals of 1950s and 1960s, Islam continued to develop in different ways. During the break-up of the Soviet Union, the conflict between Islam and communism assumed an open form. By the early 1990s, an alliance was formed between the leaders of the distinct Islamic factions who made up the IRP (Islamic Revival Party)

#### DRIVING FORCE AND ACTORS IN CONFLICT

The political development of sovereign Tajikistan was strongly influenced by Soviet political traditions and the norms of political conduct that formed during the Soviet period. The bipolarization of political forces at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in the former USSR did not stimulate the formation of democratic alternatives in political behavior, and in fact limited political choices to the rigid dichotomy of "democracy – anti-democracy," both for the electorate and the political elites, which eventually led to the breakout of civil war in Tajikistan. Adding to the complexity of the situation in Tajikistan, the elites were just as divided and diverse as the Tajik demographic composition itself, consisting of various regional and local groups. The regional partitioning of the Tajik population became the main driving force that promoted the formation of relatively strong parties and the powerful opposition movement During the period of the collapse of the USSR and the sudden independence of

Tajikistan, presented the opportunity to correlate actual power of the regional elites to their real weight and influence. Local and regional solidarity united the members of local groups, which participated in the struggle and introduced clans to the political life of the country. Regional elites turned to parties as a means of political mobilization and political struggle.

Its driving force was the desire of regional elites to redistribute authority and resources during the collapse of Soviet power, and to have share in the redistribution of state ownership. Immediately after independence, regional elites of diverse ideological and foreign policy orientations began scrambling for power in the new sovereign state. Gradually, the share of certain Tajik ethno-regional groups increased in numbers among these fledgling political movements, and as a result distinctly regional interests began to emerge within them under the shield of an “all-national” agenda.

The alliance between democrats and Islamists, known as the military-political association *United Tajik Opposition* (UTO), was established on the grounds of regional solidarity and anti-communism. In 1992-1993 the conflict exploded into a civil war led by two main conflicting camps – the *Popular Front* and the *United Tajik Opposition* (UTO) (a coalition of opposition parties). During the conflict a significant shift of elites took place, as the previously governing Soviet elite from Soghd (formerly Leninabad) Oblast in northern Tajikistan was removed from power. The Kulyab regional elite ascended to power, and played the main role during the war in pushing other regional elites to the periphery of power.

Opposition activists had mounted prolonged demonstrations in Shahidon Square in Dushanbe in spring 1992 to protest against the Communist government of President Rakhmon Nabiev. Pro-Communist counter-demonstrators gathered in Ozodi Square and Nabiev distributed guns to his supporters. Violent clashes soon broke out and were stabilized only after the Russian army’s 201st Division intervened. Under pressure from the opposition, Nabiev agreed to form a power-sharing coalition ‘Government of National Reconciliation’ (GNR) that soon proved unworkable. Armed opposition demonstrators from the Shahidon Square forced the Ozodi Square demonstrators out of Dushanbe. Although many pro-Communist demonstrators returned their weapons and went home, a faction from Kulyab took their arms home with them and formed the nucleus of the Kulyabi-based Popular Front militia that fought against perceived opposition supporters. The arena of armed conflict shifted south

and rapidly escalated into open warfare. The GNR retaliated by blockading Kulyab. In an effort to end the fighting, more than eighty political party representatives and informal leaders met in the south-eastern city of Khorogh, where they formulated a peace agreement. But the resulting ceasefire soon broke down.

After intense fighting that autumn and the start of international involvement in the conflict, Tajiks from different factions made one more attempt to resolve the conflict without external help. On 18 November 1992 they held a sixteenth session of the Tajik Supreme Soviet (in effect, the parliament) in the northern city of Khujand, which was untouched by the violence. The military success of the Popular Front against opposition forces in the south determined the outcome.

Nabiev asked for retirement and Rakhmonov – at that time a mid-level official who had recently become head of the Kulyab Soviet of People's Deputies – was elected as head of the Supreme Soviet, head of state and government. After most opposition parties were banned by the Rakhmonov government in late 1992, most Islamic activists went into exile. They formed a united front, the Movement for Islamic Revival in Tajikistan (MIRT), to coordinate their military and political initiatives. It was formed in Taloqan, Afghanistan, in 1993, with the IRP as its core. In 1994 it became the dominant group in the **United Tajik Opposition** (UTO). Although they initially relied on a military strategy, the Islamic groups eventually agreed to negotiate for several reasons:

1. Most Tajikistanis preferred secular political ideologies
2. All politic forces were worried that the CIS would isolate Tajikistan because of a perceived 'Islamic threat'.
3. The conflict had turned into a war between regional groups, thus risking complete fragmentation of the country.
4. Since 1994 many young people from 'rebel' regions migrated to other CIS countries in search of work, thus reducing the pool of new recruits.
5. Finally the memory of the exile and defeat of the Basmachi fighters and communities who fled Tajikistan in the 1920s and 1930s created a powerful motivation for a negotiated settlement amongst many exiled grassroots members.

## PEACE PROCESS

The inter-Tajik negotiations were conducted under UN auspices. In April 1994 the first round of inter-Tajik negotiations was held, in Moscow, followed by a second round in Tehran in June. A comprehensive agenda was adopted at the first round of the talks. Its main issues were measures aimed at a political settlement, the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons, and consolidation of Tajikistan's statehood. At a consultative meeting in Tehran that September, an agreement on a temporary ceasefire was signed. The third round of negotiations held, in Islamabad in October 1994, resulted in a protocol establishing the Joint Commission for monitoring the ceasefire. At the fourth round of negotiations held in Almaty in May 1995, agreement was reached on the exchange of prisoners of war and the repatriation of refugees.

In August 1995, President Rakhmonov and UTO leader Nuri signed a Protocol on Fundamental Principles for Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan and agreed to a continuous round of negotiations. This protocol became an important blueprint for all subsequent talks, providing the main parameters for future agreements in all key areas. Three phases of this 'continuous round' of negotiations took place from November 1995 to July 1996 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. They consisted of detailed discussions on the modalities for integrating opposition representatives into the government and opposition military units into the Tajikistan armed forces. These negotiations were interrupted in May by large-scale fighting that violated the ceasefire agreement.

An important turning point was reached in December 1996, when Rakhmonov and Nuri met in Khos Deh, Afghanistan and agreed to cease hostilities. During the following rounds of talks, held between January and May 1997 in Tehran, Moscow, Meshed (Iran) and Bishkek, the two sides agreed on a range of key substantive issues: the modalities of disarmament and reintegration of the UTO armed groups into national armed forces; legalization of the *Islamic Renaissance Party* (IRP); a 30 per cent quota for UTO representatives in executive power structures; and guarantees for the implementation of agreements reached. On 27 June 1997, the General Agreement was signed in Kremlin and witnessed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, eight foreign ministers from the observer countries and the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

### THE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL RECONCILIATION (CNR)

The CNR was the mechanism created to oversee implementation of the General Agreement and to design a set of reforms to the government structure. The Commission included representatives of both the government and the *United Tajik Opposition* (UTO). The CNR had four subcommissions on refugee-related, military, political and legal issues. The most rapid progress in the initial period was with implementation of the Protocol on Refugee Issues. Within three to four months – with the intensive participation of the UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), the Russian Border Forces, the Commonwealth of Independent States Collective Peacekeeping Force (CIS/PKF) and other international agencies – tens of thousands of refugees returned home from Afghanistan and CIS countries. They were permanently resettled and provided with shelter and other necessities.

Just as significant in character, content and scale were the results of the implementation of the Military Protocol. The agreement aimed both to integrate Tajikistan's many armed forces into a unified military and to promote decommissioning and demobilization. By March 2000, when CNR activity was completed, part of combatants was demobilized, and 4,498 UTO fighters had been integrated into the armed forces.

There were many difficulties with implementing the Political Protocol, which was based on the principle that the former combatant parties would share government power. Under the agreement, 30 per cent of government positions were reserved for UTO representatives, with specific arrangements for ministerial positions. The first set of difficulties coalesced around the integration of prominent UTO figures in system of power. But by the time the CNR's work was concluded, thirteen UTO representatives had been appointed as the heads of ministries and important committees. After the UTO leadership announced the dissolution of its military formations in August 1999, the Supreme Court lifted the ban on UTO member parties and organizations that had been imposed in June 1993. With the presidential elections in late 1999 and parliamentary elections in 2000, the transition period was officially regarded as successfully concluded.

### LESSONS OF THE INTER – TAJIK CONFLICT

#### Lesson 1. Elite Groupings being the main institution of governance in



**central Asian countries, management of these groups will ensure stability.**

The first reason for the conflict demonstrates how regional clan bodies are the main institutional structure (non-formal structure) in the country. The situation in other Central Asia countries is similar: Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have territorial and regional elites; Uzbekistan has regional industrial groups, and Kazakhstan has the system of *zhus* (territorial and family clans). This is the reason why the management of elites and achievement of balance between the local/industrial elites is the key to a state's stability.

The experience of regulating the inter-Tajik conflict shows that the pragmatic approach of international actors towards conflict management was the correct one. The achievement of compromise between the elite groups in the course of the negotiation process and the formation of a new configuration of elite groups led to sustainable peace in Tajikistan.

The major features of the system that helped to maintain stability up to today are: (a) flexible management of elite groups and maintenance of a balance between the elites; (b) administrative resources, including those for defense and law enforcement agencies; (c) total control over the media. This ensures stability in the country regardless of the unemployment level, poverty incidence, lack of resources and inter-ethnic differences. The loss of control over the clan and elite groups leads to the loss of power, as it has happened with Askar Akaev in the Kyrgyz Republic.

To address the issues of political pluralism and other elements of democracy, the fact is that when a traditional institutional structure, i.e. a sustainable clan and group "pyramid" including all regional, ethnic, confessional and social groups is still in place, the development of democracy takes place as a peripheral process that involves the citizens, new individualists and marginalized groups of the population. This statement, however, is applicable only to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The situation in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is different from that.

The experience of Tajikistan shows that in Central Asia parties start to play a prominent role in the political process only when the balance between the elite groups is considerably shaken and the groups start colliding openly. Elite groups view the parties only as an effective tool of political mobilization of their supporters in an open conflict.

While agreeing that the current management scheme provides a quite high level of stability, it should be noted that it does not provide a solution to extremely important issues related to the succession of power and its

legitimacy. These are not settled in any country of Central Asia. This was one of the reasons why the situation in Central Asian countries is described as unstable and uncertain in terms of future perspectives.

**Lesson 2. One Should not play with Islam. Relations between the State and Islam determine the longevity of the power of governments in Central Asian countries.**

One of the most important causes of the civil war in Tajikistan was the conflict between the state and Islam. Now, years after the signing of the peace agreement, one can study the role of religion in igniting and regulating the conflict.

There are currently many debates about whether or not a religion in particular, Islam can serve as the source of a conflict. It is fashionable among top researchers to contest Huntington's clash of civilization's thesis, expressing the opinion that religion cannot serve as a basis for conflict. The masses think the same way. According to the public opinion poll, conducted by Research Centre "Sharq" in the Republic of Tajikistan in March 2007, 91.4% of the respondents thought that Islam is a religion of peace and understanding. Only 1.4% thought that Islam is a religion that allows violence. Others were indifferent towards this issue. However, along with this data, 28.3% of the Muslim respondents thought that Islam should be the only religion and all atheists are sinners (*kafir*).

Nevertheless, Islam does constitute a risk factor that could lead to conflict in Central Asia. First of all, there are many differences and contradictions between the world's religions, and competition between religions is an established part of human society. But the real question is at what point and why people take up arms on behalf of their faith.

People start a conflict when there is a threat to their existence, including when their access to resources, their identity, or their territory is at risk. Religion is a part of one's identity, and as such, can serve as the basis of a conflict. Armed conflicts, like the Tajik civil war, more often than not erupt due to a multiplicity of factors. In the Tajik case, the conflict of identities was complimented by the conflict of ideologies, the break-up of the power system and the violation of the balance between the elite groups, the fight between clans and elite groups for access to power and resources, and control over territories as well as inter-ethnic conflicts (between Arabs and Turkish nomads and Tajik farmers in Kurgan-Tube area, for example).<sup>1</sup>

When we discuss the lessons of conflict and peace process in the Republic of Tajikistan, one should remember that the contents of relations

between Islam and the state are changing as the Central Asian states are evolving. The major phases in the development of Islam and the corresponding risk of violence at each stage are sketched below:

**1<sup>st</sup> Phase:** The first phase consists of period directly before and right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Civil War in Tajikistan was an open expression of the conflict between Islam and communism that had started stirring during the Soviet period.<sup>2</sup>

**2<sup>nd</sup> phase.** The second phase started with the promotion of economic reforms. The price of the transition turned out to be too high in several Central Asian countries. Because of this hardship, a majority of researchers agree that Islamic movements in Central Asia are or at least initially were of a social nature. This is the nature of *Hizb ut-Tahrir*.<sup>3</sup>

**3<sup>rd</sup> Phase.** The third phase started only recently for the Central Asian countries with the implementation of projects aimed at the rehabilitation of the Silk Road. Central Asia has become a place of transit that links the rapidly growing economies of China, India, Pakistan, Iran and Russia. These flows include exchanges of ideas and ideologies that come both from the West, and more frequently, from the Islamic world. The countries of Central Asia have become a part of the Islamic world; they participate in the activities of the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Islamic Development Bank, the Islamic Sport Organization, and other Islamic organizations.

More and more countries are identifying themselves as a part of the Islamic world, and there has emerged a new dilemma for states where there existed none before: they must choose to associate themselves with the Judeo-Christian West or the Islamic world. The Central Asian states have taken different paths to choose their identification. Tajikistan has made up its mind, while the final self-identification of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is still in the making.

The conflict potential related to religion in Central Asia includes three components:

1. The conflict of identities in the process of individual identification – this is, the transformation of the “homo Sovieticus” into the “homo Islamicus.”
2. The social conflict, in which Islam becomes a mantle of the struggle for social justice. The worsening of social and economic circumstances, the expectations that never came true, and the ignored vital interests of large groups of the populations of the

Central Asian states help to spread political Islam movements that submit alternative proposals in the political marketplace and have a pronounced social character.

3. The conflict of states that are going through the identification process. When states that identify themselves as a part of the Muslim world are included in the general context of the clash of civilizations, they in a way take on the burden of conflicts that started before the Central Asian states gained independence.

What's more, Islam in Central Asia has a networking nature: it does not have an actual leader. This fact is very pronounced in Tajikistan's case. It's readily apparent in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, but both the DUM (Spiritual Authority of Moslems in Uzbekistan) and DUMK (Spiritual Authorities of Moslems in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) only hold nominal authority and possess very little control over the real situation. *Hizb ut-Tahrir* in Central Asia is certainly a network-based movement, and states cannot effectively fight against networks.

Islam's increasing influence in Central Asia is the result of the need to protect the identity of society and to ensure a collective understanding of the meaning of life. Therefore, the spiritual leaders of Islam (representatives of the formal or non-formal clergy, Islamic intellectuals, Sufi *ishans*, *khoji* or *pirs*) are:

- The bearers, guardians and broadcasters of traditions, spiritual values, ceremonies, rituals and knowledge from one generation to another;
- the bearers, guardians, broadcasters and interpreters of ethics and moral values;
- the initiators of the spiritual life of communities;
- and those who regulate the social life of communities, putting that life into the frameworks that are established by traditions and the law.

Immediate channels of power of Muslim spiritual leaders are:

1. Organizing and participating in rituals that are the major controlling power of the personal, public, and in many ways, the political life of the Muslim society;
2. Systems of private religious education that create disciples of the Islamic movement with authority in society. The example of Talibs

and Iranian *medarssah* students shows that the traditional system of private religious education is at the same time an important part of the traditional self-organization of the Central Asian communities.

3. The system of Islamic law that maintains its influence in the family.

Muslim spiritual leaders also gain influence through the informal systems of insurance and charity that they set up to replace ruined social protection systems. Mosques serve as the distributors of this charity. This function is important in the modern societies of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but is much less important in Kyrgyzstan.

According to polls and interviews, an overwhelming majority of men in Central and Southern Tajikistan with high and average incomes, donate 2 percent of their income to charity on a regular basis through mosques (*zakat* and other forms). In all households, the amount donated accounted for some 0.3 percent of annual income. The organization of charity through mosques is much less popular in the territory of Northern Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Southern Kyrgyzstan.

In the course of market reform in Central Asia, the search for ways to create an "Islamic economy" intensifies. There are new, "Islamic" methods of handling business and finances, for example, *Akromiya* in Uzbekistan. Not too long ago in Kyrgyzstan, a group of ministers met to talk about Islamic banking.

Also there is a "privatization" or "individualization" of religion underway. It reflects the deep social and cultural changes within the society of Central Asia and the inability of communal Islam to satisfy new intellectual, spiritual, social and political needs and interests. The group mindset and solidarity contradict the individualism that is spreading in the course of market reforms. This promotes the diversification of Islamic trends, the reduction of the role of traditional Islam as means of social control, which makes it possible to activate radical Islamic movements.

These trends have given birth to religious leaders of new kind, harsh people who ignore social control and the generally accepted norms, freely manipulating the conscience and behavior of their followers.

What can we do to help stop religious-based violence before it starts? As per the experience of inter-Tajik conflict one can conclude that Islam and Islamic political movements should be treated seriously and contacted for a dialogue. The legalization of the *Islamic Revival Party* in Tajikistan

(as a part of the General Agreement) and the institutionalization and respect for religious freedom drastically reduced the tension level in the society and eliminated religious extremism in the post-conflict period in Tajikistan despite high scale of poverty.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that this was a transition period from conflict to peace. It may be impossible for a state to exist in normal circumstances without providing a framework for religious organizations.

No Central Asian country has demonstrated an adequate response to these processes. This is not surprising, since none of them have gone through process of secularization, or articulated policy on religion. Their national legislation on religion is contradictory. There is no clear and precise perception of how freedom of religion and conscience should be protected or what restraints should be placed on religion.<sup>4</sup>

All these questions need thoughtful, careful, legislative solutions, made collectively with the participation of religious leaders, scientists and politicians. The institutional capacity of religion should be strengthened; religious education should be further developed, and last but not least, people should be taught about other religions.

#### CONCLUSION

The impact of Islam on the development and regulation of conflicts in Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries is great, but Islam can also play a role in the maintenance of stability and peace. Since ancient times Islam has carried out the function of placing restraints on power. The Islamic movement in Central Asia is a religious, social and political development. Accordingly, Islam in Central Asia will inevitably become a base for opposition movements and political parties. It may seem strange, but it was the *Islamic Revival Party* in Tajikistan that during several years (1999 to 2006) was one of main disciples of democratization.

The Central Asian countries have not yet chosen a side in the conflict between Islam and the West. Islamists from Central Asia, different from the Islamic movements in other parts of the world, do participate in a dialogue with the state. They formulate their positions, explain their goals and try to find common understanding. If this chance is not used, if there is no serious and comprehensive work on the relations between Islam and the state, it will lead to future conflicts in the region.

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## RECONCILIATION AND PEACE IN TAJIKISTAN

MANSI MEHROTRA

The recent history of the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) can be broken into five phases: first between 1985-1990 when the process of social and political transition in Tajikistan started with Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika. It guided cultural, ethno-nationalist and religious movements in Tajikistan, which later developed into, second phase (1990-1992), when political confrontation, due to active and aggressive demands for political accommodation and compromise by the newly formed parties, i.e., *Democratic Party*, *Islamic Renaissance Party* (IRP) of Tajikistan, *People's Movement Rastokhez*, *National Cultural Public Unions La'li Badakhshon*, *Oshkoro*, *Hisori Shodmon*, *Mehri Khatlon*, and *Ehyoi Mastchoh*, began.

In August 1991, the opposition united under the democratic-Islamist forces were able to oust the communists and instituted a short term government in Dushanbe (The alliance later came to be known as *United Tajik Opposition* (UTO) since November 1994). In September 1991, Tajikistan acquired sovereign status followed by the third phase (mid-1992 to June 1997) which saw the rise of aggressive nationalism amongst Pamiris and Qarategni-Garmi. They were seen as a threat by Khojandi (the traditional ruling elite) and their supporters, i.e., militia group of Kulyabis and Hissaris. This led to the outbreak of the civil war in Tajikistan.

The causes for civil war lay in the history of interaction between the ethno-regional groups; rise of ethnic self-consciousness; weakening of the state structure; economic breakdown; lack of political accommodation of the ethno-regional groups and disinterest towards coalition-building which undermined the prospects of ethnic rapprochement; partisan and propagandist media; government policies of persecution of members of opposition party; forged elections; political parties were organized along ethno-regional lines; role of external actors and lack of or delayed international response to internal crises of Tajikistan.



The involvement of external actors (Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan etc.) in Tajik crisis was particularly due to atypical geopolitical location of Tajikistan that provided diverse interests ranging from gateway to Central Asian energy and mineral resources; to continue dominance by restricting the influence of rival nations; and to check terrorism, pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, drugs and arms trafficking. The assistance came in the form of active and passive moral and financial support; and military hardware and personnel.

In 1992, the Kulyabi government under Imomali Rahmon was instituted with the support of Russia and Uzbekistan, thus, the Sogdians lost their power position in their region. Soon after coming to power, the Kulyabis started to severely persecute the members of the opposition that led to their departure to Iran, Russia, Afghanistan and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The opposition initially received assistance from Iran. With the outset of the civil war, the assistance was provided on both sides by mercenaries from Russia, Uzbekistan, Baltic States, Caucasus, Afghan Mujahideen, Arab instructors as well as significant number of criminal elements released from the jails of Tajikistan who took part in the internal war.

In an ethnic conflict, the democratic-Islamist opposition was not only able to maneuver its political position within Tajikistan but it was also able to secure recognition by the international community. The IRPT led the opposition in the negotiation process during the civil war. It was thus able to enhance not only its international status but also got international assistance.

The Tajik crisis was first time brought to the notice of Security Council on October 30, 1992 through the efforts by Uzbekistan government. Subsequently, the United Nations Secretary General, as part of his peacekeeping initiatives and in close consultation with the Security Council, sent to Tajikistan a small integrated United Nations unit of political, military and humanitarian officers to monitor the situation on the ground, provided liaison services and constitute a ground core for any possible more extensive United Nations participation in the regional efforts in Tajikistan in the future. The Units became operational on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1993.<sup>1</sup>

Five years of civil war in Tajikistan formally came to an end after vigorous national and international initiatives and the changing national and international environment. The peace talks were sponsored by the United Nations and supported by Contact Group of Guarantor States

(Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS Peacekeeping Forces).

In late 1996, Taliban established its authority in Afghanistan. The Afghan Mujahideen, who were supporting the Tajik opposition forces, lost their control in Kabul and parts of northern Afghanistan. Iran, another supporter of the opposition, also wanted an early solution to the prolonged civil war. Iran was also concerned about the growing relations between the members of IRPT and Pakistan and the rise of Taliban forces on its eastern border. In the meantime, Iran developed strategic relations with Russia. The common interests were noted at many bilateral meetings of the senior leaders from the two countries. For example, the leaders of Iran and Russia showed their common interests in the meeting held in Tehran on March 6, 1994.

Russia was also losing its hold over Uzbekistan, another important regional player, due to Uzbekistan's efforts to get out of the Russian influence and its subsequent tilt towards the United States of America. The prevailing fragile situation was providing an opportunity to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces to become proactive in the region, much against the interests of Russia and Iran. Russia had two options to face the challenge of Islamic guerrilla fighters firstly, by increasing the forces on the borders and secondly, to start a political dialogue between the warring sides. According to Lena Jonson, when the Taliban movement, composed of Pashtuns, took control of Kabul in September 1996, Moscow at first feared that its members would develop close relations with the Tajik opposition. Some Russian politicians including General Lebed, at that time Secretary of the Russian Security Council, advocated that Russia should provide active support to the anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan in order to meet the threat posed in the south. According to Lebed, "the route to Bukhara lay wide open to a Taliban offensive which could also threaten the Russian city of Orenburg. The cities of Orenburg, Chelyabinsk and Omsk near Kazakhstan today constitute the axis of Russia's new state border".<sup>2</sup>

Internally, Tajikistan was facing acute social, economic and security crisis. In addition, during his visit to Khujand in April 1997, where there was tense situation arising between the Kulyabis and the Khojandis, Tajik President Imomali Rahmon narrowly escaped an attack on his life. The leaders realized that the economic instability and security and political crisis in Tajikistan was pushing the country into Afghan style anarchy.

The formal peace in Tajikistan was established after eight rounds of talks that were held in Moscow (5-15 April 1993); Tehran (18 – 25 June 1994, also on 12-17 September a consultative meeting of the delegations of both sides, which established a Joint Committee for Observing the Agreement on Ceasefire took place in Tehran); Islamabad (20 October – 1 November 1994); Almaty (22 May – 1 June 1995); Ashkhabad (3-24 November 1995, 26 January - 18 February, 8 - 21 July 1996); Mashad and Tehran (5 January – 19 February 1997); Moscow (26 February - 9 March 1997); Tehran (9 April - 28 May). In addition, six meetings and three rounds of consultations between the Government of Tajikistan and UTO were held.

The reconciliation process led to signing of the “**General Agreement on Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan**” in Moscow on 27 June 1997, better known as General Agreement. It was ‘gist’ of nine documents that were signed in the course of eight rounds of negotiations between the delegations of the government of Tajikistan and the UTO. The main part included: Protocol on main principles of establishment of peace and national accord in the RT dated 17 August 1995; Protocol on political issues dated 18 May 1997; Agreement of the President of the RT and the UTO Leader on the outcomes of Moscow meeting dated 23 December 1996; Protocol “On the main functions and authorities of the National Reconciliation Committee” dated 23 December 1996; Provision “On the National Reconciliation Committee” dated 21 February 1997; Additional Protocol to Protocol “On the main functions and authorities of the National Reconciliation Committee” dated 21 February 1997; Protocol on military issues dated 8 March 1997; Protocol on the refugees’ issues dated 13 January 1997; Protocol on the guarantees of the implementation of the General Agreement on Establishment of Peace and National Reconciliation in Tajikistan dated 28 May 1997.<sup>3</sup>

The signing ceremony was attended by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group (CG) of Guarantor States, Secretary General Azeddine Laraki of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and senior officials of the OSCE, Under Secretary General for Peace Keeping Operations, Bernard Miyet and United Nations Secretary General’s Special Envoy, Merrem. The government of Uzbekistan gave its assent in New York on 26 August 1997. Together the CG and organizations monitored the implementation of the General Agreement by providing expertise, advice, good offices, and recommendations on ways to ensure the parties’ compliance with the General Agreement.

With the signing of the peace agreement, Tajikistan saw a new phase of nation-building process (1997-2000) that was based on national reconciliation established by the government and the opposition.

Main mechanism for the implementation of the General Agreement was National Reconciliation Committee (NRC), which consisted of 26 members divided equally between the Government and UTO. Sayid Abullo Nuri, UTO Leader became the Chairman of NRC, and Abdulmajid Dostiev, Deputy Speaker of Majlisi Oli, acted as the Deputy Chairman of NRC. The NRC consisted of four sub-committees: on military, political, juridical and refugee issues, in which 3 people from both the government and the UTO were represented.

Under the leadership of Said Abdullo Nuri, NRC was inaugurated in July 1997 and on September 15, 1997 its mandate went into full effect. Initially, there were serious efforts by both the government and the opposition to assist NRC to achieve its objectives. The commission along with the president was intended to oversee the implementation of General Agreement. The work of the Commission was to be conducted in close cooperation with the United Nations Observer Mission in Tajikistan and the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan. The Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and the United Nations Observer Mission in Tajikistan was to render advisory assistance. Decision on the Commission on issues related to the activity of the United Nations Observer Mission in Tajikistan was to be taken in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary General. The General Agreement specified a transition period of twelve to eighteen months during which all the protocols of the agreement were to be implemented.

During the transition period, the following provisions were to be implemented:

- 1. 30 percent UTO representation in government executive structures:** - It was never implemented. Nuri was criticized for putting forward a lenient stand and for compromising with the Tajik government over several principles under the agreement that were to be implemented as agreed. This resulted in the nominal status of the opposition in the politics of Tajikistan. Presently, the local Tajik population is not aware of the opposition political parties. In addition, the controlled media, both print and electronic, had made the people completely ignorant about the leader of the parties. As a matter of fact, for a common man self-sustenance is a major concern than Tajik politics.

- 2. Voluntary and safe return of all refugees and internally displaced people:** - During the repatriation of refugees from Afghanistan a volatile situation developed as the refugees were trapped due to Taliban advances in northern Afghanistan around Sakhi near Mazar-e-Sharif in September-October 1997. In the beginning, Uzbekistan closed Termez pass and Afghan-Uzbek border but due to international pressure the refugees were repatriated via Uzbekistan. In 2000, Tajik government refused the entry of Tajik refugees from Afghanistan claiming that the presence of armed combatants among the refugees posed security risk to Tajikistan and that country lacked necessary economic and infrastructural resources to accommodate them. It resulted in mass human trafficking of Tajiks to Middle East and CIS countries.
- 3. Disbanding, disarming and reintegration of opposition forces into government power structures:** - Despite the UTO fighters enrolled in the regular Tajik army, the question on reform of the power structures and the distribution of the UTO personnel among them is still contested. The demobilized fighters had no alternative to their livelihood as there were / are no jobs in the public and private sectors. Creating jobs and training them in some vocational courses was another concern for the government. Those who joined the services complained of lack of food and equipments, inadequate accommodation, non-payment of salaries, no proper instructions, training or visit from their superior headquarters, and many of the ex-UTO fighters faced isolation and humiliation. In fact, some of the armed fighters are still loyal to their former military commanders.
- In Qarategin Valley there remained non-reintegrated armed groups of former UTO who pose security threat in the region. These groups are practically independent with their respective area of influence and are involved in banditry and hostage taking. Though government has at times tried to control the activities of these groups, it has only got limited success to reintegrate them into the government structure or civilian life.
- 4. Reform of government structures:** - On 3 December 1998, President Rahmon and Sayid Nuri reached an agreement that the Assembly of Representatives (Lower House) would comprise of 63 seats and the National Assembly (upper house) 33 seats. It was also decided that the local elections would be conducted

simultaneously with the election to the Assembly of Representatives. On 10 December 1998, the new electoral law was adopted by the parliament.

- 5. Constitutional Amendments; amendments to the law on elections, the law on political parties and movements, and the law on mass media allowing the functioning of free and objective mass media:** The UN established a working group and on the eve of the presidential elections followed by signing of 22-point protocol by Tajik President and Nuri on political guarantees for the participation and conduct of the elections to the parliament. In May 1998, the CNR amended a bill on political parties whereby political parties based on religion were to be banned thus making the functioning of the IRPT unlawful. Nuri emphasized that it was incompatible with the principles of General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. He met President Rahmon that led to the establishment of a 12 member Conciliation Commission<sup>4</sup> comprising of representatives of the government, CNR and the parliament assisted by UNMOT to review the controversial article of the draft law and submit the proposal by June 1997. The commission was funded by the Aga Khan Foundation. The commission reached a consensus to prohibit the use of religious institutions for political purposes. Finally, on 13 August the Supreme Court of Tajikistan lifted the ban on UTO political parties, namely, the IRPT, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan,<sup>5</sup> the Lal-i Badakshan Movement, and the Rastokhez Movement. On 18 September 1998, the IRPT held its first congress since 1993. Delegates amended the Party's charter, bringing it in line with the requirements of the new Law on Political Parties as revised in November 1998. According to the new law on presidential elections, the nominees were required to submit the signatures of 5 percent of the electorate, namely 145,000 individuals, to register as candidates with the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda (CCER). Only President Rahmon could collect the necessary signatures. The other three candidates i.e. Turayev, Kuvvat and Usmon could not secure the necessary signatures. They complained about being prevented from doing so by intimidation and obstruction at the local level.<sup>6</sup> The Ministry of Justice subsequently re-registered the party allowing it to participate fully in all political activities. In addition, the opposition

parties were made non-functional due to charges on its members for violation of the Law on Political Parties. In this regard, the Agrarian Party and the National Unity Party were banned, Party of Justice and Progress (PJP) and National Movement Party of Tajikistan (NMPT) were denied registrations, and the activities of Party of Economic and Political Revival of Tajikistan were suspended. Finally four candidates filed their names for the post of the president. Imomali Rahmon from Peoples Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT), Saifiddin Turayev from Party of Justice of Tajikistan, Sulton Kuvvat from Democratic Party of Tajikistan, and Davlat Usmon from IRPT filed their nomination. The IRPT wanted its Deputy Leader, Haji Akbar Turajonzoda, to be its candidate but instead Turajonzoda urged the party to support Rahmon. It led to Turajonzoda's exclusion from IRPT.

Finally in 1999 the first presidential elections took place. Owing to widespread allegations of infringement of democratic norms of elections, the OSCE refused to send observers to monitor the elections. The elections took place where Rahmon won the elections with thumping majority.

The practice of making the opposition parties non-functional continued. According to Shokirjon Khakimov, Deputy Leader of Socialist Democratic Party of Tajikistan, "We had to struggle for three years to get our party registered for legitimacy. We wrote to different national and international organizations that we cannot constitute our party as the party is not registered. During the elections all the parties were prohibited from contesting the elections and new opposition parties were created which were actually the supporters of the Rahmon's PDPT. The new parties created were the Agrarian Party of Tajikistan and the Economic and Political Party of Tajikistan. This was done to present to the international community that the elections in Tajikistan were democratic and based on multi-party system."<sup>7</sup> The Presidential elections were followed by the parliamentary elections in 2000.

A constitutional referendum was held in June 2003 whereby Tajik government initiated a 56<sup>th</sup> amendment by constitutional referendum. The Article 67 of the 56<sup>th</sup> amendment permits the incumbent president to have two terms in office thus confirming Rahmon leadership of Tajikistan till 2020. The amendment did

not include the current term of the president. The amendment produced some irritants in the political climate of Tajikistan.

6. **Full exchange of prisoners of war and other forcibly detained people and Adoption of an Amnesty Law and an Act on Mutual Forgiveness:** - In 1998, under the general amnesty, UTO submitted a list of 5,377 former combatants who were to be pardoned as part of their integration into state and military structure. The arrests and detention of the UTO fighters was a serious issue since the establishment of formal peace.
7. **Establishment of a Central Electoral Commission for conducting elections and referenda, with 25 percent UTO representation in its composition:** - The Central Commission on Elections and Referenda consists of a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and 13 members. The appointment of election commissions failed to ensure multi-party composition and a neutral election administration. In addition, the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda (CCER) had not issued regulations on the implementations of the electoral law, and no written instructions had been given to the lower election commissions.
8. **Setting the date for new parliamentary elections:** - the date for presidential and parliamentary elections was set for 1999 and 2000 respectively. The elections were held under UN and OSCE supervision.

Despite its shortcomings, the final conditions of the 1997 peace agreement were concluded. The opposition formed a new alliance, For the Promotion of Democracy, which abstained from contesting the legislative elections of February and March 2000 after the dissolution of the CNR. The elections took place in an uneasy social and political environment. In addition, there was inherent lack of confidence between the parties. The JEOM pointed out that the elections did not meet the minimum standards. "It listed weaknesses in the legislation, which failed, among other things, to ensure the independence of the election administration commission, and the minimum level of transparency during voter registration, printing of ballots, tabulation, announcement, and publication of the results. On the polling day, there was a high rate of proxy voting in more than 68 per cent of the precincts observed and voters were allowed to cast ballots without proper identification documents in 67 per cent of those precincts."<sup>8</sup>



In November 2003, the Socialist Democratic Party organized Coalition for Fair and Transparent Elections. The IRPT and the Democratic Party joined the coalition in calling for a revamp the national election law. The OSCE and UN advocated electoral reforms. In July 2004, the president signed a new election law. The amended law drew criticism from international community as it introduced US \$500 as registration fee for each election candidate thus preventing the opposition politicians from running the forthcoming parliamentary elections of February 2005.<sup>9</sup>

Although the November 2006 Presidential elections were peaceful, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights noted that "The 6 November 2006 presidential elections in the Republic of Tajikistan did not fully test democratic electoral practices as outlined in the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document, due to a lack of genuine choice and meaningful pluralism, and revealed substantial shortcomings. Despite the presence of five candidates and some administrative improvements, the 6 November 2006 presidential election was characterized by a marked absence of competition. Parties that determined themselves as political opposition to the incumbent chose not to nominate candidates. As a result, voters were presented with a choice that was only nominal."<sup>10</sup>

Apart from this there are numerous efforts taken by the international community to establish a dialogue between the government and the opposition. The Inter-Tajik Dialogue (ITD) is a child of the Dartmouth Conference Regional Conflicts Task Force.<sup>11</sup> The Dialogue was designed with a dual agenda: to discuss specific problems at length and to increase understanding of the dynamics in the relationships that cause the problems. Patterns of interaction were changed through working together in sustained dialogue. ITD consisted of 14 prominent citizens of Tajikistan divided among different political factions where 3 Russians and 3 Americans form the third party and co-chaired the meetings alternatively.

In March 2000, ITD members formed a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) known as Public Committee for Democratic Process (PCDP) along with Tajik Peace Building Initiative, after the completion of series of elections. The task was to establish network of regional dialogues inside Tajikistan to vent out grievances within elites, develop an educational program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of

Tajikistan due to deteriorating standards, and formation of a regional economic development committee for community-based process around local economic development issues.

### PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The foremost task is of nation-building and of developing a democratic political culture. The rebuilding of Tajikistan requires national and international efforts to undertake projects dealing with structural reforms, economic development, and improvement of demographic situation.

However, solution of urgent issues is handicapped by corruption in the country. Tajik political institutions are centralized; the president and his administration control the decision-making process unemployed ex-combatants; lack of transparency; media is controlled; opposition parties are marginalized; and economic recession has effected employment, investment, and corporate profits. In addition, security concerns due to long and unguarded borders with Afghanistan keep the stability in Tajikistan uncertain.

The illegal drug trade is flourishing. It is undermining Tajikistan's social, moral and legal fabric by pushing its youth into criminal activities and interfering in its governing and judicial bodies. Tajikistan is a major conduit for narcotics produced in Afghanistan. The drug trade led to drug addiction among the youth. These young people need to be provided with jobs and drug rehabilitation facilities as they can be a source of major trouble, including being recruits for Islamic militant groups in the future. At a meeting of the Shanghai Five (Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan) in June 2001, all leaders, plus the Uzbek president, adopted a framework for cooperation in battling Islamic insurgency.

The most prominent political party is President's party, i.e., *Peoples Democratic Party of Tajikistan*. The two other parties with some support base are the Communist Party and the IRP. The *Democratic Party* is split into many factions, and many of its leading figures are now in government. The Tajik government is able to maintain its rule because the Tajik opposition parties are regionally based, divided, unorganized, lack resources and remain unpopular amongst Tajik citizens due to limited opportunities for them to propagate their policy. As one IRP senior official mentioned that "It is easier to fund the *kalashnikov* than to support political and social platforms." In addition, the present leadership is successful in crediting itself for bringing peace in the region and has tainted the

opposition for being responsible for the civil war. In fact, opposition to the government is often referred to as a derogatory term in Tajik society. It is because the country has witnessed a civil war and majority of population fear that any opposition might push them into another major crisis. Therefore, the opposition may not be in a position to secure support to their policies. In addition, the role of Russia behind “king maker” can not be overlooked.

According to official statistics, the economy is on the road to recovery. Yet Tajikistan still remains the poorest country in the CIS with the lowest income per capita. In late January 2008, the government disclosed that the national debt stood at a whopping \$1.2 billion, a figure that is almost one-third of the country’s GDP. Most alarming for the country’s creditors, the government’s 2008 budget allocated a mere \$44.2 million for debt repayment.<sup>12</sup>

The question is to which state will Rahmon approach to bail out Tajikistan from economic crisis- Russia, China or the West including United States of America? Russia has the largest investments in strategic economic concerns in Tajikistan. Most of the Tajik immigrant workers are presently working in Russia. Tajik relations with Russia have soured, when Dushanbe summarily cancelled a contract with the Russian conglomerate RusAl to finish construction on the Rogun dam. In addition, Russia’s policies towards immigrants have made Tajiks doubt Russia’s solemn concern towards Tajikistan.

Tajikistan’s two biggest creditors are China and Uzbekistan. China is actively and aggressively involved in diverse projects in Tajikistan including construction and exporting commodities. A large number of Chinese offices have opened in Tajikistan. Consequently, Tajiks have been showing interest in sending their children to China for learning Chinese language. The knowledge of Chinese language may provide them better job opportunities. The International Monetary Fund report of March 2007 noted that the total loans provided by China are “Although concessional in nature (with grant of 40 percent), the disbursement of these loans will lead to a rapid reaccumulation of debt.”<sup>13</sup>

Thus, prevailing conditions could open a window for the United States and western nations to revive an ambitious plan to marginalize Chinese presence and Russian influence in the region. It can be done by linking Central Asia’s power grid to South Asia. Under the American-backed blueprint, first aired in the spring of 2006 by the State Department, infrastructure investment in Tajikistan would unlock the country’s vast

potential to generate hydro-power. Tajikistan's surpluses could then be exported to South Asian nations, especially Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The possible reorientation of Central Asia's power grid would deal a substantial blow to Russia's geopolitical influence in the region. Although, Tajik president is providing opportunities to Western nations of getting involved in Tajikistan, common Tajiks do not trust the western nations for two reasons, firstly, the Soviet legacy when anti-American and western sentiments were too strong and secondly, the colour revolutions in Central Asian republics keep their mistrust strapping.

### CONCLUSION

In the new transition phase, the following are priority tasks:- Political accommodation with regional and opposition representation in decision making, Development of democratic self-governing institutions, Political parties to have national outlook and not regionally biased; Opportunity to be provided to develop democratic political culture where political parties and people have opportunities to exercise their rights; Develop free and independent media; Expand and involve the local Non Governmental Organizations in strategic planning; Check corruption at various levels; Not to overindulge in religious laws; and Concept of Checks and balance should be adopted. There is no doubt that a strong centre and state is required for nation-building. But denying political accommodation to the opposition in the fragmented Tajik society is likely to increase group resistance up to some verge beyond which extremist forces might get strengthened and lead to more violent opposition.

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## CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL SECURITY IN BUDGET PREPARATION

SHAMSUDDIN JALALOV

Financial security of a state can also be ensured by a reasonable and scientifically based approach to budgeting. Direct budgetary process should be preceded by estimation of existing resources. This estimation should be conducted throughout entire budget vertical line. It is well-known that, in case of developing and transforming societies, priorities justification is of first importance in pre-budgetary process. The later is an expression of lack of resources. The more backward economy of a country is, the more acute is determination of priorities. Besides, priorities can be divided into current and strategic one.

What is understood under the priorities in general? It is those areas, development of which can have positive impact on entire economy and on increasing dynamic of living standards of population, i.e. can speed up the dynamic of economic development, income and consumptions of population, stimulate fast increase of national budget. It should be particularly pointed out that development priorities throughout entire economy at the same time must solve these three tasks. Otherwise, these are not priorities. Current, as well as strategic priorities at the same time should be considered while making socio-economic development forecasting as well as national budget drafts.

While economic estimation is given to all resources' package, it means the resources are differentiated depending on development efficiency parameters and, in particularly, depending on capital- and knowledge-intensity. Such an economic estimation is possible based on detailed computation. Those capabilities, use of which ensures high parameters of socio-economic efficiency of certain group of resources, will be assigned as priorities.

Current priorities are those capabilities which in a year or two can provide effective solution of those tasks, as mentioned above. To such priorities belong, for example, reform of economic relations in cotton growing. It should be mentioned that economic reform by itself is a resource which belongs to organizational component of aggregate resources of a society. At the same time, it is a priority, use of which can sharply increase efficiency of use of natural, material, and labour resources. Economic reform in cotton growing means, first of all, reform of entire organizational and economic relations in this area, application of system approach to development of this sector.

Such form can be conducted in two years, or three at most, and achieve striking results. In a short period, the volume of cotton produced will increase much that would bypass average volume for the last three years by almost 12-fold, productivity will increase two times, which makes production of this crop profitable. It can bring not only sharp increase in agricultural gross product but also GDP. However, the later will receive speeding-up caused by the level of use of production capacities in cotton-cleaning, textile, food (vegetable oil), mixed fodder industries, as well as cattle breeding development, increase in the volume of meat, milk, egg, and wool consumption. Income increase of cotton growers, as well as adjacent to cotton-growing area, particularly processing of increased volume of agricultural products will stimulate effectual demand of population. In the aggregate, all described results of implementation of the reforms in cotton-growing will mean considerable enlargement of taxable basis, fast growth of national budget income, and increase in sufficiency level of their resources.

Current priorities assume effective mobilization of organizational and innovative resources of society. It is fully feasible to conduct preliminary calculations on realization of such priorities. For example, it is possible to list all activities and expenditures for receiving, on average, 3 tons of cotton wool yield. Main obstacle here can be corruption deeply rooted in management structures, as well as lack of qualified labour force, in particular, agricultural experts, including men in their best able-body age (most of whom are in labour migration).

As for long – run or strategic priorities, they can also be defined by economy vertical line. For example, reconstruction of Madrushkent – Aniroad, or Obburdon – Ovchi – Istaravshan turnpike have local but strategically important meaning for Maschohi Kuhi and Ayni districts. Improved roads allow to increase the efficiency level of production capacity

in upper reaches of Zarafshon valley. Reconstruction of Ayni – Panjakent – Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border road on the other hand is a priority project of national importance. The latter can become a branch of international road corridor connecting Ferghana valley and Samarkand oblast not only with South Tajikistan but also with Afghanistan and China. Apropos, this road has been put in commission but is far from realization of its real purpose due to closed Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border. It is natural that such priority projects must have been taken into account not only in the long run projection of socio-economic development but also in annual projections, and budget drafts both for one-year and three-year dimensions by referring to all named documents relevant expenditures.

In short, national priorities reflect budgetary support to priority sectors of economy. Such a support is related also to realization of highly effective and quick-return projects. Besides, prioritized are such measures as structural reform of economy, goal-oriented complex programs, direction of innovative potential, social protection of vulnerable strata of the population.

In this aspect, there are serious deficiencies in terms of planning, forecasting and budgeting. It especially relates to strategic priorities of long-term nature. For example, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). We mean both PRSP-1 and PRSP-2. Authors of researches by World Bank rightly mention that the status of this Paper is not clear in terms of budget preparation. The Paper includes a number of measures for gradual reduction of poverty, however, neither national nor local budgets have resources for financing consecutive implementation of the Strategy. In general, it is not known what part of activities are financed by attracting outside financial sources and what part is financed by domestic centralized and non-centralized sources. For the last years, such kind of programs are not developed. However, regarding other programs mentioned above the content does not lose its topicality.

It is mainly stipulated by the fact that still the mechanisms for determination of strategic priorities are not formed. Existing mechanism for their determination, which actually is running separately from budget process, is absolutely unsuitable. Budget instructions, which are used for budgeting vertically, do not include any directions for necessity and methods of priority estimation. These instructions do not have enough practical interest for a variety of reasons:



Firstly, they do not have directions on use of resources which during budgetary term could be used for achieving set goals. This is one of serious deficiencies in draft budgets and has negative impact on realization of priority goals. This is the reason behind not showing necessity for priority estimation in the instructions.

Secondly, entire content of such instructions is influenced by the principle of justification of main budgetary indicators from upper bound achieved points. Such an approach locks the hands and minds of budget draft developers and does not direct them for search of achieving maximum results. Such an approach is very convenient for current budget developers, since they cannot conduct search for new, non-traditional possibilities of budget expenditure efficiency;

Thirdly, instructions for budgeting do not direct draft developers for use of normative approach, for periodical review of cost standards by taking into account science and technological progress and changing environment. Officials in the Ministry of Finance and Financial Departments of local *Hukumats* (Governments) instead of use of cost standards in budgeting, use actual expenditures for the past periods. It is done specially in order to avoid intensity of budget implantation at different levels. One can, a priori, assert that interests of corruption loopholes on national budget's funds in this regard play not the last role. Described situation needs serious reviews as it does not take into account the **interest of financial security**. It is necessary to add into instructions on budgetary drafting amendments, meaning of which is unconditional use of cost standards or use of specified upper bounds of cost. First of all, such standards must be used in development of measures on implementation of current and long-run (strategic) priorities.

Fourthly, instruction for project development does not envisage responsibility for making decisions going against main ideas of the budget. Quite often, such decisions are taken both by national and local governments.

Fifthly, during budgeting, financial needs of functioning ministries, authorities, companies, and enterprises are taken into account. There is no stipulation on creation of new organizational structures which also will be directed to resolving budgetary tasks. It would be more rightly, along with institutional approaches during national funds planning, to use principle of goal financing. At the same time, objectives should be clearly stated, for example, infectious diseases reduction, increase in the

library fund of schools and municipals, provision of primary school children with hot meals, etc.

Sixthly, instructions for drafting the budget do not direct ministries and agencies to seek new opportunities to increase revenue, to increase activities' efficiency, and hence, to ensure increase in national budget revenues. The latter continuously make an attempt to lower taxation potential to make life easier for themselves, since vast majority of the heads of ministries and departments due to continuing incorrect, anachronistic cadre policy are not able to be more creative in their tasks.

Seventhly, during planning of social indicators the named instruction does not direct the efforts of project developers to achieve common levels to ensure the material and spiritual well-being of the people. Therefore, when planning the fund and the average salary of state employees, Ministry of Finance does not take gradual approximation the real and not fictitious minimum subsistence or consumer basket as a task. Such an approach often leads to fraudulent events in the activities of the Ministry of Finance to increase wages. So, instead of the promised increase of salaries of secondary schools teachers, under direct consultation of international financial and economic organizations representatives, surcharges to the basic salary of these workers were cut and their teaching load (operating rate and the number of students per 1 teacher) was increased. As a matter of fact, salary increase of teachers turned to be its actual decrease and increase in labor intensity out of norms, which ultimately leads to the increase of illiteracy level among students.

During preparation of the budget, applications come from institutions, companies, associations, ministries and departments, public organizations, trade unions, and finally from the voters which turn into serious demands on the part of members of parliament. It is natural to assume that the budget amount requested by applications heavily exceeds the volume of real financial resources. The public is accustomed to the fact that such applications, in their overwhelming majority, do not reflect the strategic direction of development of the country, as well as current and strategic priorities. The Finance Ministry also follows the path of sharp reduction in the volume of funds requested. This is done without expert evaluation of applications and without ensuring proper transparency.

Budget developing is also faced with problems such as the shortage of qualified financial professionals, especially employees with sufficient

knowledge of the specifics of budgeting in transition to market economy. Such a shortage is obvious especially in the process of collecting data, which are necessary for development of the draft budget. The system of financial authorities still needs to introduce a system for automated collection of information, since it is still far from complete computerization. Therefore, much data of financial authorities cannot be trusted.

Equally erroneous is the practice of endorsement of projects at the level of central government. This process suffers from the following disadvantages: a) Ministry of Finance due to the late development of budgets does not have sufficient time for meaningful study of applications. It should be noted that applications are submitted to the Ministry of Finance very late. The vast majority of applications for funding are rejected by the Ministry of Finance. It cannot be otherwise, since the real sources of financing do not allow to approve all applications. In addition, the bulk of the applications does not reflect budgeting priorities.

The process of endorsement of local budgets is not unique by its transparency. Endorsement of activities that are included in the draft local budgets, largely depends on the skills, flexibility and maneuverability of the heads of local authorities, as well as their connection with the ministry and the central government. Instructions on compiling project budgets do not provide clear criteria for the endorsement of local budgets. The process of draft budget endorsement goes under limited practices which is unavoidable in a poor country. Instead, there should come such an endorsement which would be based on established priorities and strategies within the framework of socio-economic policy.

Budget endorsement process is conducted unilaterally and under the dictation of the Ministry of Finance. However, the latter does not present claim to local authorities regarding under utilization or incomplete use of available resources. The Finance Ministry does not have information on the economic potential of each district and the budget, which is planned for 3 years and does not include measures to reduce the dependence of local budgets on central budget. It is possible that such a situation is the result of simultaneous preparation of local and central budgets. This work should be carried out throughout the year. In this work, along with the budget and the tax authorities, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade should also be involved.

“Specialization” of the districts and regions into the “givers” and “takers” has existed for many decades (it existed even in Soviet times) which automatically led to the consolidation of totalitarian attitudes in practice of Ministry of finance officials. More negligence is practiced towards the interests of districts - “givers”, and lack of attention to possibilities of districts - “takers”. Such behavior would lead to going away from the practice of analysis of possible fundamental change of the situation.

In budget developing, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that in most districts there are sharp differences between settlements in terms of socio-economic development. Therefore, the budget should also include the means for alignment level of socio-economic development of the population. It is necessary to use the experience of Russia on creation of regional municipal development fund to support those people who have felt deficiency in resources for development.

It should be noted that the time of the preparation of final draft of the national budget is insufficient to ensure that the budget will serve as a true engine of social and economic development of the country. It has become common practice that the main parameters of the draft budget must be submitted to the Government by 15 October. Then it is time to analyze and make amendments by the government and further promotion of the document to the *Majlisi Namoyandagon* of the *Majlisi Oli* (Lower House of Parliament). For this reason, the Committee on Economy, Budget, Finance and Taxes does not have sufficient time for the analysis of the main provisions of the draft.

It should be noted that in the Russian Federation, draft budget for the next year is given to the Parliament not later than August 15. The duration of the budget cycle from the start of work on the draft budget up to the approval of its execution is 2.5 years.

In Tajikistan, the draft budget does not have scientific expertise. Such an initiative is not taken by the *Majlisi Namoyandagon*. By their nature, development and discussion of draft budgets do not have democratic characteristics. This is expressed in the following: a) country’s public is not involved in the development of local and national budgets. There is an extensive and well-proven practice of public discussion of draft budgets and budgets around the world (Iran, India, USA, Germany, Finland, Sweden, etc.). The opinion of civil society actors is not taken by the Ministry of Finance and other stakeholders in budgeting; b) the Parliament is under Government pressure for quick

discussion and adoption of the Law on the National Budget; c) the role of the Parliament over the implementation of budget is negligible. In very rare cases parliamentary commissions are organized to check public expenditure and the regularity of government revenue receipts. This public authority is not able to implement the principle of effectiveness of the budget system.

Therefore, it is important to increase the timing for budget process by including into the process not only the country's public, but also scientists and experts.

# LABOUR MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES IN TAJIKISTAN

## *TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES*

PARVIZ KHAKIMOV

To restore a high level of economic development over the medium term is not feasible without changing trends in economic policy measures. Previous period known as the period with high development rate was mainly maintained through the export of labor, i.e. migration and subsequent remittances and foreign assistance from bilateral donors, which provided an appropriate level of investment in Tajikistan. Undoubtedly, this kind of support will greatly contribute to the development over the next years.

External labor migration (ELM) has become one of the most important phenomena in Tajikistan. In fact, there is no sphere of social life, on which ELM would have no effect. Pursuing the effective economic policy without taking into consideration of this phenomenon is not possible. ELM and workers' remittances are two sides of the same coin. In other words, the two variables are directly interlinked, i.e. increase in ELM leads to augmented remittances, and vice versa, while an increase in the above two streams has significant and unequal implications for the national economy.

In Tajikistan high rates of population growth in recent years has increased the number of labour forces, who without this opportunity to realize their potential in the domestic market have become the external labor migrants.

The main factors pushing the workforce from the country on the international labor market are:

- low wages and a huge wage gap in the domestic and international markets;
- high unemployment rate especially among youth;
- poverty;

- collapse of the former system of employment as a result of structural changes in the economy;
- social stratification of the society, which flows in the form of the polarization of rich and poor, etc.

The internal labor market at this stage unable to provide all working-age population with jobs, thus finding no realization of their potential working-age population, is increasingly integrated in the international labor market.

At the end of the pre-crisis period, the Tajik economy has evolved significantly, which contributed to significant positive changes at the macroeconomic level. Real GDP grew by almost 25%, and for three years (2006 to 2008) average annual growth was 7.5%. Nominal wages increased by 2.5 times, while real wages by 1.5 times, and the average pension for this period increased by 3.2 times. Country's economic development was stimulated largely by the current growth in domestic demand due to the large volume of labour migrant remittances. In 2008 remittances grew by 1.5 times compared to the previous year and amounted to 53% of GDP.

Despite the negative impact of the global financial and economic crisis, real GDP growth during these two years was 3.4 and 6.2% respectively. Inflation rate in 2009 and 2010 was 5% and 7% that were 2.4 and 1.7 times lower than in 2008 (11.8%).

In early 2009, the macroeconomic situation in the country, i.e. at the time of the impact of the global financial crisis, had the following trends. As world prices for major export commodities of the country in 2009 declined, foreign trade was 27.2% compared with previous year, including the reduced export by 28.3% and import by 21.5%, respectively. The foreign trade balance declined as prices of export products (cotton and aluminum) fell faster than prices of imported goods, which led to the current account deficit.

The channels connecting the national economy with the world economy are the main external sources of financing, development and revenue for the country (along with internal sources). Changes in volumes generally influence the level of development of economic sectors. In the case of Tajikistan, one of this external channel connecting national economy with the global economy is labor migration that integrates not only the country's economy (integration increases the degree of interdependence of countries), but also households with migrants in the world economy, because global changes would directly affect both the country and these households.

The global financial crisis as a whole had a negative impact on the

economy of the country. As a result of falling demand and prices for major exports of the country (aluminum and cotton) the balance of payments worsened, along with the reduced flow of labor migrants, which caused the reduced proportion of their remittances. According to the estimates of Asian Development Bank (ADB) in January 2009, remittances dropped by 22% every year, but according to our estimates, in 2009 remittances declined by 30% and amounted to US\$1.8 billion.

The IMF report<sup>1</sup> mentioned that the global financial crisis did not affect Tajikistan's economy greatly, as the country was not integrated into the global economy fully, but this is an erroneous statement. The crisis today is especially noticeable in the volume of export and import, net trade, banking sector, industry, agriculture, domestic trade, services, transport, construction, housing market, social sphere, development of small and medium business, etc.

Many studies confirmed that remittances are more stable, cyclical and balanced sources of foreign capital than the volatile FDI and ODA.<sup>2</sup> Remittances have become the most stable source of financial receipts in Tajikistan. Unlike foreign aid, the flow of cash transfers is not bound by strict conditionality of the international lending institutions. For example, in Tajikistan, there has been an increase in foreign direct investment: at the beginning of 2005, accumulated investments were US\$174.8 million, and by the end of 2007 they rose to US\$653.4 million. Other investments amounted to US\$262.5, and US\$376.7mln. If in 2005 Tajikistan received US\$54.5 million as direct investment, then in 2007, total incoming investments were US\$388.4 million. This is a significant progress in terms of their growth rate. However, these investments are lower than the remittances, and, moreover, are not diversified in different sectors of the economy. According to the NBT, remittances to Tajikistan reached US\$2.66 billion in 2008, US\$1.8 billion in 2009 and US\$2.35 billion in 2010 (see Fig. 1). Due to the downturn in the economy of the Russian Federation, the opportunities for employment of migrant workers diminished, and as a result, remittances declined by 31.4% and 25% during the years 2009-2010 compared to 2008.

The World Bank reported that Tajikistan headed the list of countries where the share of remittances to GDP in 2006 and 2007 was 36.2% and 45.5% respectively. Remittances in the Republic of Tajikistan through official channels increased significantly, and in 2007 they increased by 1.75 times as compared with 2004 (see Fig. 2).

The amount of remittances sent by migrants in 2008 was two and



FIGURE 1 : TRENDS OF LABOUR MIGRANTS REMITTANCES IN TAJIKISTAN FOR 2002- 2010 (IN MLN. USD)

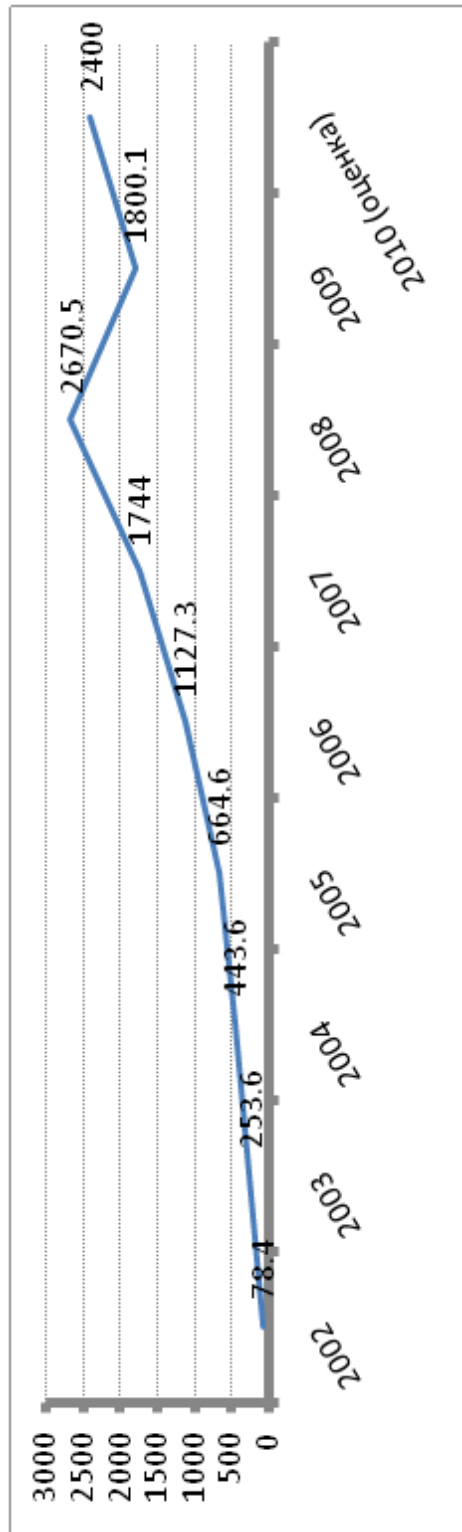
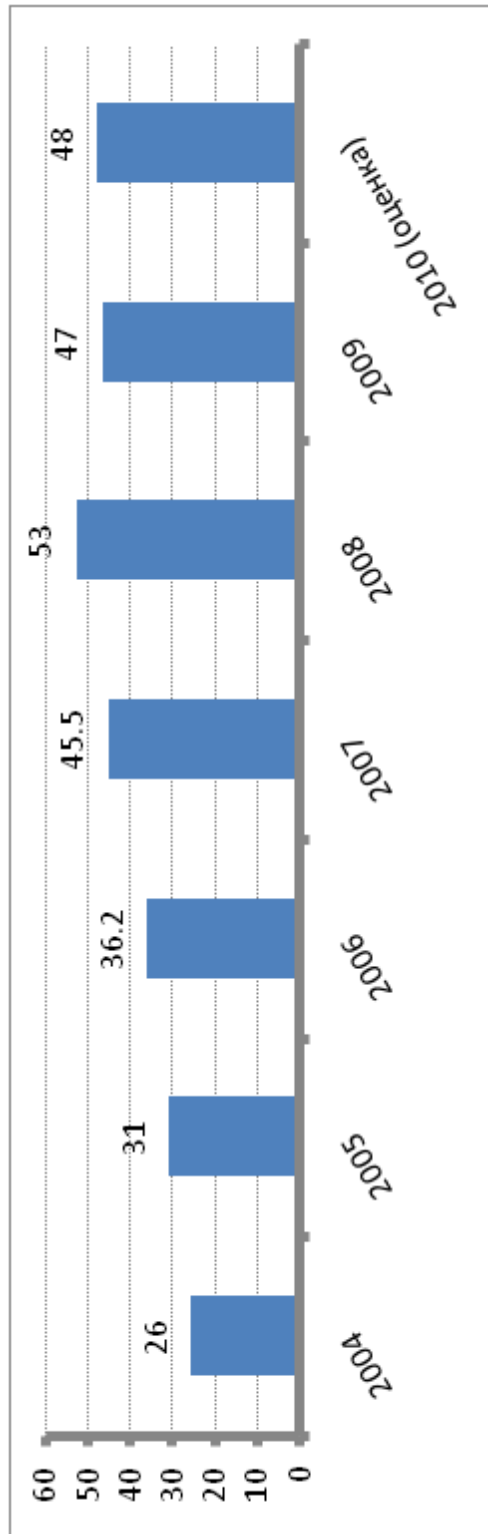


FIGURE 2 : MIGRANT WORKERS' REMITTANCES AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP OF TAJIKISTAN (2004- 2010)



four times higher as compared with 2006 and 2004 respectively. But two main points should be noted that affected the growth in remittances. First, number of remittances through formal channels of transfer (banks and money transfer operators) increased. Secondly, this increase was due to augmented ELM connected with cash transferred facilities. However, until now remittances did not affect the country's economy, increasing employment and creating new jobs. Tajikistan lacks effective modality for absorption of remittances by the economy, despite experience in world practice.

In accordance with official and expert estimations in 2008 the absolute number of Tajik labour migrants ranged within 800,000 to 1,300,000 respectively. The number of labour migrants in 2009 during the world financial crisis decreased by 20 to 30% as compared to the previous year. The data of Federal Migration Service of Russian Federation show that the total number of Tajik labour migrants as of December 2010 was 900,000,<sup>3</sup> while the Migration Service of Ministry of Internal Affairs reported 400,000 of labour migrants outside the country for the same period.

Moreover, labour migrants make a significant share of GDP in the host countries. According to the expert estimate, 6 to 8% of GDP of the Russian Federation is raised by migrants. According to the World Bank assessment based on the IMF data, in 2007 the remittances of labour migrants from Russia was only 1.4% of GDP, which was 4 to 5 times less than wealth created by them. (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: REMITTANCES AND THEIR SHARE IN GDP OF COUNTRIES IMPORTING THE LABOR FORCE (MILLION U.S. DOLLARS)<sup>4</sup>

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Share of exported cash facilities from countries-recipients of ELM in 2007 (%)
<b>Luxembourg</b>	4,011	5,077	6,000	6,627	7,561	9,281	19.6%
<b>Lebanon</b>	2521	4081	4,233	4,012	3,498	2,845	12.0%
<b>Bahrain</b>	872	1,082	1,120	1,223	1,531	1,483	6.6%
<b>Oman</b>	1,602	1,672	1,826	2,257	2,788	3,670	5.8%
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	15,854	14,783	13,555	13,996	15,611	16,068	4.3%
<b>Switzerland</b>	9,223	11,411	12,921	13,324	14,377	16,273	3.4%
<b>Russia</b>	2,226	3,233	5,188	6,989	11,438	17,716	1.4%
<b>USA</b>	36,126	36,545	39,347	40,635	43,922	45,643	0.3%

The table shows that recipient countries benefit from labor migration.

Migrant workers make a substantial contribution to social protection system in host countries, based on tax collection through deductions of wages of population.

Researchers have reached no consensus about the effect of remittances on economic growth in the countries - exporters of labor forces. One can note positive points, the others mark out a negative impact, while the third say there is no relationship between these two variables.<sup>5</sup> For example, Chami et al say about the negative correlation between these two variables.<sup>6</sup> Survey data from 113 countries around the world for the past 30 years have revealed a negative correlation between remittances and economic growth. Therefore, researchers have found that remittances are the cause of the lack of incentive to work for anyone who is in receipt of remittances.

Supporters of a positive correlation between remittances and economic development are much more, among them, for example, Solimano,<sup>7</sup> Giuliano and Ruiz-Arranz, Mundaka and others,<sup>8</sup> Kh. U. Umarov, R.U. Ulmasov, Z.S. Sultanov.<sup>9</sup> When arguing a positive relationship between these two variables, Kh. Umarov and R. Ulmasov note that remittances to Tajikistan exceed more than 3.4 times the budget expenditures. Such transfers play an important role in solving social problems. Contribution of ELM exceeds the government contribution to the maintenance of all groups of social enterprises and institutions.<sup>10</sup> Giuliano and Ruiz-Arranz believe that positive linkages of these two variables can say about dependence of impact of remittances on economic growth and the extent of national finance system development.<sup>11</sup> Using panel data of 101 countries of the world, they concluded that remittances provide economic growth in less developed countries. Giuliano and Ruiz-Arranz argue their point of view that the absence of developed financial markets in these countries is offset by remittances and increased liquidity, which is associated with the orientations of the latter on development of industrial needs. This causes rapid economic growth.

The division of opinion advocates a positive and negative correlation between the two above-mentioned variables and their conclusions can be explained. Proponents of the negative correlation between remittances and economic growth are right in terms of influence and the relationship of remittances and economic growth at the micro level, although these conclusions require empirical evidence in other studies.

Proponents of a positive correlation between remittances and development are undoubtedly right, because it becomes regular when it

comes to the relationship of these two variables at a macro level. Remittances have a positive effect, at least, on the development of such sectors as *transfers (banking operation), tourism, transport, telecommunications and trade*.

As regards the impact of remittances on other sectors of the economy, they positively affect the development of such industries as construction, services, small and medium business, trade, transportation sectors and education.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between remittances and development of individual sectors, such as education,<sup>13</sup> industry, agriculture, etc.

The growth of construction, aviation, and services sectors, that have most contributed to the growth of the economy as a whole, cannot be dissociated from migration of workers and the massive inflow of remittances. It is confirmed by the increase in passenger transportation in 2007 by 2.7 times as compared in 2000<sup>14</sup> (Table 2).

TABLE 2 : VOLUME INDICES OF PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION BY TRANSPORT ENTERPRISES (2001-2007)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	<i>As percentage of the previous year</i>						
Tajikistan	115	120	131	133	117	99	111
CIS average	<b>99</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>96</b>
	<i>As percentage of 2000</i>						
Tajikistan	115	138	180	240	281	278	310
CIS average	<b>99</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>74</b>

Undoubtedly, the enormous and sustained remittance flows in Tajikistan (and in general in many recipient countries) have served the cause of strengthening the national currency against foreign convertible currencies. Can strengthening the national currency due to the huge and stable cash flows cause Dutch disease?<sup>15</sup> What happens to ELM and remittances in the current financial crisis? What's behind the decline in production in Tajikistan? How do the stable cash transfers affect the decline in production in the country and vice versa?

The main reasons for the drop in industry sector production in Tajikistan, increased unemployment, and hence the increase in migration, are primarily associated with the transition from one economic system to another, the severance of economic ties between enterprises in a single cycle of the former Soviet Union, civil war, lack of competitiveness of the

remaining enterprises in the market conditions, etc.

Stable remittances are likely not the cause of de-industrialization, for the simple reason that the process of decline in production began in the early 1990s, while labor migration, and hence the remittances flow began in 2000.<sup>16</sup> Huge remittances are not the cause of de-industrialization of the country, however, they constitute obstacles to the revival of domestic production, because steady infusion of foreign currency into the country's economy becomes a reason of strengthening the national currency, and this causes a lack of competitiveness of goods and services produced in the country.

Thus, manifestation of the negative impact of remittances can be considered an example of domestic producers. Commodities produced by them are not only competitive in foreign but in domestic market, due to dollarization of the economy and strengthening the national currency in relation to the first one in the absence of protectionist policies in the domestic market. In other words, a large and steady flow of foreign currency becomes the cause of strengthening the national currency and domestically produced goods by their price cannot compete because of the appreciation of the national currency and acts as a barrier to exports of goods produced in the country.

However, in conditions of the financial crisis there is a decline of migration flows, and consequently, the decrease in remittances, which can cause a revival of domestic production if the Government would take appropriate measures. In other words, the global financial crisis contributes to the development of domestic production, and the country becomes less dependent on exports, at least, of essential goods, thus making the country's economy less vulnerable to the influence of external factors. Moreover, the revival of domestic production provides food security and creates additional job places, which, therefore, indirectly affect the decrease in ELM (as a positive aspect).

The weakening national currency may contribute to the revival of domestic production, due to declining foreign exchange earnings to the economy, as well as lowering prices on the world market and the reduced demand for major export commodities of the country, such as cotton and aluminum.

Based on the above reasons, if there is no intervention in the foreign exchange market by National Bank of Tajikistan (NBT), we can observe a positive trend of reviving production with government direct support and reducing the tax burden on the development of production in small and

medium-sized businesses.

Another increasingly important aspect of the impact of remittances is the depreciation of foreign currency on the domestic market recipient of remittances, or, in other words, strengthening the national currency against foreign currencies, which in turn becomes a reason for the increase in consumer price indices (CPI) that can be observed in Tajikistan.<sup>17</sup>

One of the main reasons for the increased ELM flows in the past few years. is connected, namely with the increase of CPI in the domestic market as well as reduced purchasing power parity (PPP) of the population against the growth of CPI, which is one reason for the increase in the number of ELM and will resemble a (vicious) circle against the background of global financial crisis. In other words, the standard of living of households without ELM accompanied by increased consumer prices will decline.

In general, over the past years there has been a decline in agricultural production. Remittances and the decline in agricultural production are in close inverse relationship, i.e. the decline in ELM (at least among households with labor migrants) increases agricultural productivity per ha, as the share of remittances is much higher than the proportion of household's income from agricultural activity in aggregated income of households and vice versa.

Moreover, households receiving remittances are likely to have less incentive to work than households without migrants. As the results of regional survey Kayes Mali report, households receiving remittances get less agricultural products than households not receiving remittances.<sup>18</sup> And in the case of Tajikistan, in our opinion, there is a negative correlation of ELM and remittances on the one hand, and decline of agricultural production, on the other hand, which requires its own empirical evidence.

The relationship between the ELM and the productivity of agriculture is a separate subject of study, which has to draw attention of future research. Other factors, such as soil erosion and salinization, rising groundwater levels, water scarcity, desertification, etc. are also the causes of decline of productivity in the agricultural sector and serve as accelerators of ELM, as shown by results of a study conducted under the project EACH-FOR funded by the European Commission.<sup>19</sup>

Household income and expenditure patterns of the population are the main indicators reflecting their economic situation. Consumer spending grew by 11.9 times in 2007 compared with 1998.<sup>20</sup> The structure of consumer expenditure shows that with rising incomes of the population their expenditures for food are falling, with simultaneously increasing

TABLE 3 : AGGREGATE INCOME OF POPULATION, 1998-2007(IN SOMONI)<sup>21</sup>

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total <i>o/w</i> :	7.25	11.3	16.9	24.3	29.7	35.4	43.4	55.5	75.9	100.5
Wage and salary income	2.17	3.18	5.7	9.92	12.8	16.3	19.3	25.3	32.9	42.5
Pensions, benefits, scholarships	0.1	0.17	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.75	0.97	1.7	2.68	3.1
Compensatory payments including beneficent aid	0.04	0.3	0.05	0.06	1.1	0.93	0.93	2.17	0.53	0.7
Property income	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.02	0.07	0.02
Income from realty sale	0.06	0.02	0.04	0.09	0.1	0.09	0.02	0.12	0.21	
Income from personal subsidiary plot	2.94	6.49	8.47	11.3	12.6	12.4	13.6	16.0	19.6	22.2
Other cash receipts (including trading income and income from independent professional activity)	1.93	1.13	2.43	2.65	2.57	4.88	8.62	10.2	19.9	32.1



expenses for non-food items and costs associated with the provision of services (Table 3).

The average per capita gross income of the population had also significant growth over the entire observation period. Consideration of income sources shows that other incomes (including income from trade and from an independent professional activity) increased by almost 1.2 times per household member. The structure of income per household member, labor earnings over the same period increased by 1.4 times. On the other hand, income from individual subsidiary farming only accounted for 54% of the income received by households for one member in 2007 as compared with 1998. Income from other sources tended to increase over the entire observation period.<sup>22</sup>

The increase in ELM, and hence an increase in remittances (an increase in their share in household budget), as mentioned previously, may become one of the causes of almost doubled declined income from subsidiary plots. Perhaps another reason for the drop in production was a shortage of skilled labor (and possibly the use of child labor), and lack of motivation to work in agriculture or various kinds of soil degradation, and in some cases, lack of practice of crop rotation that was cause for the decline in productivity. But it should be noted that the decline occurred across the country, i.e. for all households, while not all households have ELM, might affect households with ELM significantly, than the households without ELM. On this aspect ELM in subsequent studies should be paid special attention with the aim of determining the degree of correlation between the ELM and the decline in agricultural productivity in the country.

Considering the structure of budget expenditures of households and total income of the population showed that an increase in income increases expenditure of the population in favor of non-food items.<sup>23</sup> The share of remittances is significant in income increase that has not been identified as a separate source of household income. Since similar studies are conducted by the Agency of Statistics on a periodic basis, it would be appropriate in the questionnaire about the sources of income to also incorporate such a source of income as income from external and internal migration (as a possible answer), which would reveal the impact of remittances on living standards of households. The availability of accurate data to assess the effect of ELM on the level of household wealth on a periodic basis, the Government would pursue effective policies accordingly to maximize the benefits of ELM and the remittances of migrant workers,

and prevent negative consequences, both at the macro and micro levels.

It is theoretically and empirically proved that migrants with lower levels of education contribute positively to the domestic market, reducing competition, thereby increasing the income of the remaining workforce in the internal market and contributing significantly to reducing poverty.<sup>24</sup>

Impact of remittances and the very essence of the dynamics of migration on development are ambiguous. If the mechanism does not include migration of the poor, remittances are likely to further exacerbate the inequality among the population. However, if the welfare of migrants increases, remittances are likely to be invested, than used in consumption.<sup>25</sup>

Impact of remittances on poverty reduction is particularly important in countries where their share in GDP is more than 5% or 30% of total exports.<sup>26</sup> According to the calculations of R. Adams with an increase in remittances by 10%, poverty rate decreases by 3.5%.<sup>27</sup> Cash facilities transferred from abroad have a positive impact on the social structure of Tajikistan, increasing the number of middle strata of population and, consequently, reducing the category of poor and extremely poor. Many households now maintain their standard of living through remittances - children, brothers and parents. Financial position of households, with family members involved in labor migration, is more favorable. They have more opportunities to avoid the risk period of social transformation.

Based on 1974 data of the least and moderately developed countries, Adams and Page (2003) found that remittances have a statistically significant effect in reducing poverty.<sup>28</sup> Studies of the effect of remittances on poverty using household data show that remittances reduce poverty, at least among households with migrants. Therefore, ELM plays a key role in poverty alleviation and reducing regional disparities in income levels, subject to the same access to ELM. Moreover, if labour migrants are individuals with low educational levels, poverty reduction will be substantial, since most poor and vulnerable strata of the society is the population with lower educational level and mostly living far away from the main centers, in rural areas of the country. Consequently, the impact of financial crisis will be especially pronounced at the micro level, which reduces the share of income from ELM in total household income.

With regard to mitigating the negative effects of foreign labor migration and remittances of migrant workers and to maximize the benefits on the basis of historical trends, the following measures should be taken:

- need to develop import-substituting production to reduce regional

disparities in terms of development and migration activity of population, which ultimately contributes to:

- ✓ creation of additional jobs and increase of employment levels, thus reducing the uncontrolled population movements from rural to urban areas of the country;
- ✓ increase in budget revenues through taxation of new economic entities, and accordingly, an increase in government expenditures on social needs;
- ✓ ensured social protection of migrant workers and their family members;
- ✓ increase in number of economically active population and the decline in the economic dependency that would eventually lead to an increase in per capita income;
- ✓ reduced regional differentiation in terms of development;
- ✓ decline in informal employment;
- ✓ reduced scope of ELM;
- ✓ ensuring food security and reducing the vulnerability of the economy from the impact of external factors;
- ✓ lower prices for local products in the domestic market;
- ✓ increase in level of domestic consumption;
- ✓ increase in the country's exports and export earnings;
- ✓ reduced imports;
- ✓ increase in the share of wages, pensions, allowances and scholarships in the gross income of the population;
- ✓ increase in expenditures of the population in favor of non-food items;
- ✓ increased fund accumulation of the state and people;

A scheme of equity financing projects must be established in all sectors of the economy in the areas with active participation of NGOs, international organizations and migrant households. This will redistribute the income of migrants in favor of non-food needs (investments and savings), along with consumer needs that will help to reduce migration flows in the medium term, regardless of external market conditions and economic and financial crises.

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22. See: [www.stat.tj](http://www.stat.tj)., Aggregate income of the population of Tajikistan in the period

from 1998 to 2007. (Data of sample survey of households, per household member per month).

23. This is confirmed by law of Ernst Engels which reads: "With the increase in income increases expenditure but not for non-consumer goods".
24. For example: see R. Adams, *Remittances and poverty in Guatemala*. Development Research Group (DECRG) MSN MC3-303. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3418. September 2004, ? Inter-American Development Bank, 2004, [www.iadb.org/mif/remittances](http://www.iadb.org/mif/remittances)
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26. [www.thedialogue.org](http://www.thedialogue.org) - Manuel Orozco, Remittances and Rural Development Program, Inter- American Dialogue, 1211 Connecticut Av. Washington, DC, USA [morozco@thedialogue.org](mailto:morozco@thedialogue.org)
27. R. Adams, *op cit*.
28. Inter-American Development Bank, 2004, [www.iadb.org/mif/remittances](http://www.iadb.org/mif/remittances)



INDIC STUDIES IN TAJIKISTAN  
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR  
(21-22 DECEMBER 2015)

*A Report*

A two-day international seminar *Indic Studies in Tajikistan* was organized by Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation (HRCF) in collaboration with Tajikistan National University, Dushanbe at the main Auditorium hall of the Tajik National University, Dushanbe on 21-22 December 2015. Over 350 delegates including renowned academics, experts and specialists from Tajikistan National University, Tajik-Russian Slavic University, Institute of Language and Literature, Institute of History, Tajik Pedagogical University, Institute of Philosophy, Institute of Industrial Studies, Institute of Service & Entrepreneurship, Institute of Economy and Demography, SHARQ - NGO, all In Dushanbe and Dangara State University participated in this Seminar. It was for the first time that various issues related to Indic studies and dimensions of India-Tajikistan relations were discussed in Tajikistan itself, with the enthusiastic participation of the cream of Tajik intelligentsia. Over 30 Tajik scholars including Acad. M.S. Imomzoda, Rector, Tajikistan National University; Prof. Abdul Qahor Saidov, Prof. Larissa Dotkhudayeva, Prof. Hamzakhon Kamalov, all from Institute of History, Tajikistan Academy of Sciences; Prof. Lola Dodhudoeva, Dr.(Ms) Bibisulton Navbaharova, Dr. Saidhoja Alizoda, Prof. Muzaffar Olimov, Prof. Sattorzoda Abdunabi, Prof. Tajiddin Mardoni, all from Institute of Language and Literature, Tajikistan Academy of Sciences; Prof. Kholdnazar Mohabbatov from Tajik Pedagogical University; Prof. Habibullo Rajabov, Prof. Kh. Umarov, Dr.(Ms) Rakhmatullaev Zarina, Prof. Fazil Obidov, Dr. (Ms) Yorova Sabohat and Dr. (Ms) Nurova Myramby, all from Tajikistan National University; Prof. Jura Latifov, Prof. (Ms) Guzel Maitdinova, Dr. (Ms) Zarina Umarova, all

from Tajik-Russian Slavic University ; Dr. Valdosh Valdoshov from Dangara State University; Dr. Alishoev Hurshed from Institute of Service and Entrepreneurship; Mr. Sattorov Ikrom from Institute of Industrial Studies; Dr. Osmanali Saidov from Institute of Economy and Demography; Dr. (Ms) Mallahova Zabunnesa from Institute of Philosophy; Dr. Munsifa Babajanova, Dr. Sharofat Arabova and others presented their papers dealing with various issues related to Indic studies in Tajikistan. The seminar was widely covered by Tajikistan's visual and print media.

The seminar focused upon the following themes:

1. India and Tajikistan: Historical – cultural ties (Kushans, Buddhist heritage, etc.)
2. Parallels in Art, Architecture and Handicrafts
3. Language and Literature
4. Indic Studies in Tajikistan
5. Economic Cooperation: Potential and Prospects
6. Common Challenges (Religious Extremism, Drugs Trafficking and Cross-border terrorism).

It was for the first time that any serious academic discussion of contacts between Tajikistan and India was held in Tajikistan itself with the active participation of over 300 senior scholars/academics from there. The Seminar made several important recommendations, for promotion and development of India-Tajikistan relations in cultural, social, educational and economic spheres. The Seminar renewed and reinforced the historical-cultural links between India and Tajikistan. It reinforced the ideological foundation for closer and greater cooperation between Tajikistan and India.

**The Inaugural Session** was held on Monday 21 December 2015 at the main auditorium hall of Tajikistan National University, Dushanbe with over 350 faculty, students and senior academics participating. **Academician M.S. Imomzoda**, Rector, Tajikistan National University presided over the Inaugural session. **Prof. Syed Nuriddin Syed**, Tajikistan's Minister for Education and Science in his inaugural address, highlighted the close historical and cultural relations between India and Tajikistan. He also released the book *Tajikistan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* edited by Prof. K. Warikoo and Kh. Umarov (300 pages), being the unique Indo-Tajik venture of academic collaboration, on this occasion. Acad. Imomzoda, the Rector of Tajikistan National University expressed his great pleasure in having this seminar being organized at his University in such a grand scale. He was of the opinion that it was over 5 years now that such a



grand seminar was being held at Tajikistan National University. The mood at the seminar inauguration was that of a festival with several Tajik musicians attired in traditional Tajik dress playing their folk instruments to welcome the delegates. Indian Ambassador in Tajikistan **Mr. Biraja Prasad** in his address, detailed various Indian initiatives for developing closer socio-economic ties between India and Tajikistan. He announced Government of India's support to set up Hindi Chair at Tajikistan National University, Dushanbe. He also announced the expansion of Indian fellowships to Tajikistan's scholars for study in India. **Prof. K. Warikoo**, Secretary General of Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, in his remarks referred to the special relationship between India and Tajikistan based on geographical proximity, ethno-linguistic affinity and shared ideals. He stated that such an enthusiastic participation of Tajik academia and scholars, who have devoted their lives to the study of India-its history, culture, language and society, vindicates the importance and relevance of this seminar. He elaborated upon various activities of the Himalayan Foundation in developing Central Asian Studies in India.

**First Session** of the seminar (21 December 2015) was chaired by Prof. Muzaffar Olimov. Prof. Anupa Pande, Dean, National Museum Institute, New Delhi dwelt upon Mahaparinirvana Buddha in Tajikistan. Prof. Habuibullo Rajabov explained the language and literary links between India and Tajikistan. Common ethno-cultural heritage of India and Tajikistan was explored by Prof.(Ms) Larissa Dotkhudayeva. Dr.(Ms) Bibsulton Navbaharova made her presentation on the importance of Persian manuscripts in Indian libraries. This session provided a historical-cultural perspective to strong civilisational links between India and Tajikistan.

**Second Session** of the seminar(21 December 2015) which was chaired by Prof. Kh. Umarov, dealt with the mutual political relationship between the two countries and the common challenges of religious extremism and terrorism faced by both countries. Prof. Abdunabi Sattorozoda provided perspectives on the development of mutual relationship between Tajikistan and India. Problems of extremism and terrorism confronting the region were addressed by Prof. Jura Latifov of Tajik-Russian Slavic University, who was also a former diplomat posted in Afghanistan during the Soviet/Najibullah period. He underlined the challenges of extremism and terrorism emanating from Afghanistan and Pakistan, posing serious threat to peace and stability in India and also in Tajikistan. Prof. Guzel Maitdinova of Tajik-Russian Slavic University

examined the problems of political integration in Central and South Asia. The absence of transit corridor between India and Tajikistan through Pakistan and Afghanistan was also discussed. Prof. K. Warikoo provided his perspectives on revitalizing India-Tajikistan relations both in cultural and economic terms. He underlined the need for a transit and trade agreement between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan to facilitate the overland transit and trade of goods from India to Tajikistan via Pakistan and Afghanistan, and vice versa. Dr. Punit Gaur of CRRID, Chandigarh called for a multi-faceted approach to develop India-Tajikistan relations. This session evoked detailed discussion, particularly on the problems of extremism and terrorism and the absence of direct transit corridor between India and Tajikistan.

**Third Session** of the seminar (21 December 2015) was chaired by Prof. Abdunabi Sattorzoda. Whereas Prof. (Ms) Lola Dodkhudayeva presented her paper on the role of Indian intellectuals in state building in Bukhara during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Prof. Abdul Qahor Saidov examined the state of diplomatic relations between the Bukhara Emirate and India in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Prof. Hamzakhon Kamalov recounted the cultural contribution of Mughal personalities. Dr. (Ms) Mallahova Zaibunnesa highlighted the relevance of Maulana Azad for the development of modern Muslim society in Tajikistan. Prof. Muzaffar Olimov examined the Afghan factor and threat of Islamic radicalization in the current situation in Tajikistan. The last presentation in this session was made by Dr.(Ms) Nurova Mayramby who brought to fore the themes of nature and harmony in Indian and Tajik novels.

**Fourth Session** of the seminar which was held in the morning of 22 December 2015, was chaired by Prof. Anupa Pande. This session featured presentations by veteran Tajik scholars, who have been working on diverse Indic themes for decades. Whereas Prof. Tajiddin Mordoni examined the description of India in the novels of Sadriddin Aini, Dr.(Ms) Rakhmatullaev Zarina made a presentation in Hindi evaluating the contribution of modern Indian women writers. Dr.(Ms) Sabohat Yorova detailed the Central Asian research works on the contribution of Bhishma Sahni. Dr. Saidkhoja Alizoda gave an analysis of Amir Khusro as described in *Tuhfat-ul-Habib* of Phakyri Khuravi. Prof. Javed Kholov reflected upon Tajik-Persian poetry in Indian literature. This session evoked considerable enthusiasm and discussion among the Tajik Indologists.

**Fifth Session** held on 22 December 2015 which was chaired by Prof. Jura Latifov, discussed the key issues related to economic cooperation

between India and Tajikistan. Whereas Prof. Kholdnazar Mohabbatov gave a historical perspective of the geo-economic ties between India and Tajikistan, Prof. Khojamahmad Umarov analysed the problems and prospects of economic cooperation between the two countries. Dr. Osmanali Saidov, former Tajik diplomat posted in India, described Tajikistan as the strategic partner of India. Prof. Fazil Obidov analysed the state of banking operations in India and Tajikistan. Mr. Ikram Sattorov of Tajikistan's Ministry of Industry provided a comparative analysis of Chinese and Indian investment in Central Asia.

**Sixth Session** (22 December 2015) which was chaired by Prof. K. Warikoo, carried forward the deliberations on Indo-Tajik relations. Dr. Khurshid Alishoev recounted the contribution of Prof. Chopra as the founder of Islamic economics. Dr.(Ms) Zamira Umarova explained the cultural interrelations between India and Tajikistan in the development of jewellery art. Dr.(Ms) Sharofat Arabova explained the impact of Indian cinema on the development of cinema in Tajikistan. Dr.(Ms) Munsifa Babadjanova, formerly a Tajik diplomat posted in India, and now holding the UNESCO Chair on inter-cultural dialogue, described the Buddhist monastery of Ajina Tepe as the finest example of cultural cooperation between India and Tajikistan. Prof. (Ms) Najimddinov Javlon, an octogenarian Tajik academic, described some weapons as mentioned in Indian literature. This session was rounded up by a presentation on Indian economy by a young Tajik scholar Mr. Rosiev Shuhrat.

The seminar concluded on 22 December 2015 with the last session chaired by Prof. K. Warikoo and Prof. Kh. Umarov and with full participation of all the leading Tajik academics, literati and scholars. This was an interactive session which threw numerous proposals. After thorough discussion, the seminar adopted several resolutions/recommendations unanimously, which are given as under.

**The main recommendations adopted in this session were:**

1. The Seminar participants congratulated the Himalayan Foundation for taking the bold and timely initiative of organizing this Seminar, which addressed the long standing need of bringing the Tajik academia and experts together at one platform.
2. The Seminar participants proposed to the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation to publish the proceedings of this seminar. All participants resolved to send their revised papers alongwith illustrations/photographs to Prof. K. Warikoo and Prof. Kh.

Umarov, the editors of this volume.

3. The seminar recommended that popular Indian TV channel(s) showcasing commonalities in Indian culture and tradition with that of Tajikistan, be included by Tajikistan's TV channels. It also recommended active collaboration between Tajik and Indian film/television producers for making joint TV serials and films.
4. The seminar participants request the government of India to support teaching and research programmes on Hindi language and literature and Indian studies in Tajikistan National University, Dushanbe and elsewhere in Tajikistan.
5. The seminar calls upon the governments of India and Tajikistan to take necessary steps for preservation and restoration of ancient common heritage in the form of old manuscripts, inscriptions, frescoes, paintings, antiquities, monuments etc. in various parts of Tajikistan. Particular attention is drawn to the need to restore the ruins of ancient Kushan forts of Yamchun and Kahkaha and a Buddhist monastery in Gorno Badakshan region.
6. The seminar calls upon the governments of India and Tajikistan to secure direct transit access through expanding the Afghanistan-Pakistan transit agreement to facilitate free flow of goods from India to Tajikistan via Pakistan and Afghanistan and vice versa.
7. The seminar calls upon the governments of India and Tajikistan to encourage the participation of Indian public and private sector to help in Tajikistan's strategy of import substitution.
8. The seminar calls upon the government of India to involve Indian expertise/hydel power companies in the exploitation of hydel power resources in the Pamirs.
9. The seminar, recognizing the threat to regional security and peace from the destabilizing forces of terrorism, religious extremism and from the ongoing conflict/violence in Afghanistan, calls upon the governments of Tajikistan and India to coordinate and collaborate in maintaining peace and security in the region.



Indian Ambassador Brij Prasad speaking at Inaugural Session (21 December 2015). Seated on the dias are Prof. Rajabov, Mr. Saidov Nuriddin, Minister of Education and Science, Tajikistan, Acad. M.S. Imomzoda, Rector, Tajikistan National University and Prof. K. Warikoo, Secretary General, HRCF



View of the audience



View of the audience



Tajikistan's Minister of Education Mr. Saidov Nuriddin speaking at the Inaugural Session (21 December 2015)



Prof. K. Warikoo making his remarks (21 December 2015)



Tajikistan's Minister of Education Mr. Saidov Nuriddin releasing the book *Tajikistan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (21 December 2015)



Acad. M.S. Imomzoda, Rector, Tajikistan National University with the book *Tajikistan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (21 December 2015)



Panelists in the first session Prof. Larissa Dotkhudayeva, Prof. Anupa Pande, Prof. Muzaffar Olimov, Prof. Habibullo Rajabov (21 December 2015)





Panelists in the third session Dr. Rakhmatullaeva Zarina, Prof. Mardoni, Prof. Sattorzoda Abdunabi (22 December 2015)



View of the audience



Prof. Kholnazar Mohabbatov, Prof. Jura Latifi, Prof. Khodjamakhmad Umarov, Prof. Valdosh at the third session (22 December 2015)



Prof. Muzaffar Olimov, Dr. Babadjanova, Prof. K. Warikoo, Dr. Alishoev Hurshed, Dr. Sharafat Arabova



Prof. Kholdnazar Mohabbatov, Prof. Anupa Pandey, Prof. Kh. Umarov, Prof. Larissa Dotkhudayeva, Prof. K. Warikoo, Prof. Guzel Maitdinova, Prof. Jura Latifi, Prof. Rajabov, Prof. Obidov at the concluding session (22 December 2015)



Group photograph of seminar participants (22 December 2015)

# CONCEPT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

(APPROVED BY THE DECREE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN ON 27 JANUARY 2015, NO. 332)

## 1. General Provisions

- 1.1 The Concept of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan (hereinafter 'the Concept') is a political act, which determines and regulates major principles, objectives, obligations and priority directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan based on the long-term national interests of the country.
- 1.2 Elaboration and adoption of the Concept is necessitated by the specification of goals, tasks and directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan in terms of transformations of political, social, economic and cultural life of the country and formation of a new geopolitical image in the world and the region in the second decade of the XXI century. The Concept provides for elaboration and pursuance of the foreign policy that facilitates an adaptation of the progress of the country with increasing processes of integration, regionalization and globalization, creates new auspicious facilities to prevent and curb potential risks and challenges threatening national security and lays down a solid ground for consistent realization of national interests based on objectiveness and balance.
- 1.3 The legal framework of the Concept consists of the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, laws and statutory-legal acts regulating activity of the state authorities of the country in the sphere of foreign policy and as well as comprised of international legal instruments recognized by the Republic of Tajikistan.

- 1.4 Republic of Tajikistan reaffirming its commitment to international accepted legal acts, carries out its foreign policy on the basis of the following principles:
- recognition of equality, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, non-use or threat of force in international relations, commitment to the peaceful solution of disputes and conflicts and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other;
  - respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
  - fulfillment of obligations arising from international law;
  - observance of the rule of international law in international relations;
  - deideologization of interstate relations, establishment and intensification of equal and mutually beneficial relationship with countries all over the world;
  - non-acceptance of any form of violation of human rights in the international practice.
- 1.5 The Concept reflects national interests of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of the foreign policy, which at present and in the near future consist of the following:
- protection and strengthening of the national independence of Tajikistan and its national security; establishment of security belt and good neighborliness along the borders of the country;
  - enhancement of relations of confidence, friendship and cooperation with countries all over the world based on mutual interests;
  - creation of favorable conditions for economic, social and cultural development and the gradual improvement of the living standard of the people and reinforcement of economic security of the country;
  - promotion of energy independence of Tajikistan, food security and a break-up of the country's communication deadlock;
  - protection of the rights and freedoms, dignity and interests of citizens of Tajikistan inside and outside the country;
  - reinforcement of the positive image of Tajikistan in the world as a democratic, secular and legal state;
  - assistance to constructive and legitimate activities of Tajik societies and associations of compatriots in other countries.

## 2. Republic of Tajikistan in the System of International Relations

- 2.1 The realities of the second decade of the XXI century show that international relations are still in transition and the system of multipolar world is still emerging. Deep political and economic changes emerge on the geopolitical landscape of the modern world that is fraught with the transformation of international relations.
- 2.2 Ever-increasing process of globalization is recognized as the most important peculiarity of the present time. This process, along with the stimulation of closer links between peoples and nations and setting up all-embracing system of political and economic, scientific and cultural connections, it may simultaneously cause undesirable effects, such as increasing a gap between developed and underdeveloped countries, the increase in pressure on the national and cultural values of the peoples and etc. Moreover, under immediate impact of globalization processes modern threats and challenges gained global significance and became a factor of concern of humanity. These threats and challenges are grouped as follows:
- uneven development and economic inequality, increasing competition for access to world markets and strategic resources, deepening financial and economic crises;
  - growth of international terrorism, drug trafficking and weapons smuggling, transnational organized crime;
  - rise of political and religious extremism, ethnic and racial conflicts, civilization and ideological clashes;
  - domestic and regional conflicts, fanaticism and ethnic and racial separatism, escalation of political tensions in different parts and regions of the world;
  - intensification of demographic problems, poverty and indigence, unemployment and massive uncontrolled migration;
  - lack or deficit of essential material resources, above all water and nutrition;
  - climate change, ecological and sanitary-epidemiological challenges.
- 2.3 Along with these challenges which threaten security of the system of international relations, including the security of the Republic of Tajikistan as an integral part of this system, there are also the

following regional factors that are known as hazardous to the national interests of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- by virtue of its geographical location, Republic of Tajikistan's location in the spotlight of the geopolitical interests of the modern world;
- Tajikistan's proximity to conflict-prone regions, to sources of terrorism, fundamentalists' training centers and drug production zones;
- expansion of terrorist and extremist groups, fundamentalist parties and movements in the region;
- probability to use territory of the country for cross-border drug trafficking and dissemination of extremist ideology;
- unresolved issues of delimitation and demarcation of borders between the countries of the region and probability of an eruption of conflict among ethnic groups and peoples in the region;
- presence of various types of obstacles towards efficient regional integration, free movement of people and unhindered movement of goods and services;
- lack of genuine cooperation in the effective water and energy resources management in the region;
- exacerbation of demographic and environmental challenges in the region and their possible use to create tension in the country.

The foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan will be developed and implemented taking into account the current global threats and challenges and regional factors.

- 2.4 Prevailing and the major task of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the long term is to protect the supreme interests of the state in the international arena that will be implemented by means of building external favorable conditions for overall sustainable development, strengthening foundations of national independence and sovereignty of Tajikistan and continued efforts to reach agreement and respect of mutual interests with foreign states and international organizations in the course of an implementation of foreign policy priorities of the country.
- 2.5 To achieve this goal, Republic of Tajikistan will implement an independent multi-vector foreign policy that meets the supreme

state and national interests aiming at building friendly and mutually beneficial relations with other countries based on unconditional respect for international law.

- 2.6 Taking into account geopolitical position of the Republic of Tajikistan, given natural and demographic resources and the rate of its socio-economic development, country's foreign policy will be pursued based on the principles of objectiveness and pragmatism. It is inseparably linked with economic needs of the country and is aimed at strengthening and expansion of trade and economic collaboration of the Republic of Tajikistan in the system of global economic relations and political and diplomatic support of the country's economic interests.
- 2.7 The foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan is known as "open doors", peace-seeking and objective policy in the course of pursuance of which Tajikistan stands ready to build up friendly relations with all countries and recognize shared interests based on reciprocal respect, equality and mutually beneficial cooperation.
- 2.8 The foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan is a transparent and predictable policy which is based on the principle of recognition and commitment of the country to international treaties and generally accepted rules of international law.
- 2.9 The foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan in its inter-state relations with neighboring countries and the region pursues a policy of friendship, good neighborliness and non-intervention in the internal affairs of each other, which is aimed at creating a confidence and security belt along the borders of the country. This policy aims at the peaceful resolution of all outstanding matters, including border, water and energy issues through dialogue and negotiations based on mutual understanding of parties concerned and respect of the principle of equal and indivisible security in the region.
- 2.10 Taking into account progressive development of the processes of political and economic multilateral and multi-level integration in the system of international relations, the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan aims to ensure active participation of the country in international and regional organizations, whereby Tajikistan intends to noticeably contribute to the strengthening of security, stability, cooperation and constructive international dialogue and take advantage of these organizations to ensure



sustainable development of the country.

- 2.11 Based on expansion of important geopolitical regional, international and globalization processes of the modern world, Republic of Tajikistan in practice acknowledges a balance between globalization processes and the national interests of each country, respect for the sovereignty and independence of any state, creation of equal opportunities, formation of overall security system and promotion of decent conditions for each state and the people, regardless of its potential, role and importance in the geopolitical distribution of resources as the most important and vital rules of the world order. Tajikistan is convinced that globalization and national interests should complement each other and provide a reliable guarantee for sustainable development of international relations.
- 2.12 The Republic of Tajikistan is in favor that emerging new world system should completely be free from wars and conflicts, cruelty and violence, religious and cultural fanaticism and xenophobia and be based on equal cooperation and partnership of all countries in the world, and all sorts of threats to international and regional peace and stability must be eliminated by consensus and constructive dialogue on the basis of international law, primarily the UN Charter as the principal organization governing international relations.
- 2.13 The Republic of Tajikistan supports establishment of effective mechanisms of the consonance of national interests and international efforts, consolidation of aspirations of all states to the cause of the formation of adequate measures to resist modern threats and challenges. At the national level, Tajikistan undertakes political, legal, informative, socio-economic and specific measures with the view to strengthening key aspects of the foreign policy in countering international terrorism, extremism, illegal drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, religious fanaticism, illegal migration, environmental risks, climate change and threats to information and food security.

### **3. Foreign Policy Priorities of the Republic of Tajikistan**

The Republic of Tajikistan identifies and implements its foreign policy priorities based on objectives of the state and supreme national interests.

Geopolitical and geo-economic features of today's world predetermine that priorities should regularly be reviewed. They may be subject to change based on the level and the content of relationship of the Republic of Tajikistan with individual states or group of states, international and regional organizations, as well as due to the national and state needs.

### **3.1 *Bilateral Diplomacy (Bilateral Relations)***

The Republic of Tajikistan believes that long-term and stable relations with its traditional partners – members of the Commonwealth of Independent States meets its political, economic and cultural interests and taking into account a concept of diverse and multi-level integration within the Commonwealth it will seek to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation with the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Given the position of the Russian Federation in the world and the region, intensification and strengthening of traditionally friendly relations and strategic partnership with this country is of particular importance for the Republic of Tajikistan.

Extension of relations with the Russian Federation on the basis of equality and mutually beneficial cooperation in political, defense, military-technical, economic, trade, investment, labor migration, science and education, information, cultural and other areas meets national interests of the Republic of Tajikistan and is considered to be an important factor of regional peace and stability.

Neighboring states in the countries of the region are prioritized in the system of international relations of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Tajikistan supports further promotion of centuries-old and friendly coexistence of the peoples of Central Asia.

The importance and necessity of equal and mutually beneficial, selfless and strong relationship are the determining factors in relations with the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Republic of Tajikistan in its policy will always adhere to the principle of mutual respect, constructive cooperation and goodwill in respect of this neighboring state.

Common goals and challenges faced by the countries of the region, determine the need to expand and deepen relations with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan on the basis of confidence, friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation.

The Republic of Tajikistan believes interaction and extensive regional integration is an important toolkit to address economic, social and

environmental challenges and build lasting peace and genuine stability in Central Asia.

Increased cooperation with Ukraine, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Republic of Armenia is one of the most important objectives of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan. Continued and sustainable development of these countries since the onset of a new millennium has enabled necessary conditions to achieve this goal.

Strengthening good-neighborly and friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation with People's Republic of China is one of the most important dimensions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Asian sector. These relationships thanks to the will and efforts of both sides assumed a significance of strategic partnership and created a favorable ground for the progressive build-up of comprehensive cooperation in political, security, military-technical, trade, economic and cultural areas.

The Republic of Tajikistan is in favor of a quick restoration of lasting peace in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and affirms that enduring peace, security and political stability of the neighboring state meets its national interests.

The Republic of Tajikistan supports the efforts of the international community and the Afghan government aimed at a comprehensive solution of the Afghan conflict and the economic rehabilitation of the country's transition to a self-sufficient Afghanistan and based on historical, linguistic and cultural affinities between the two nations considers the deepening of multifaceted mutually beneficial cooperation with this friendly and neighboring country as a priority of its foreign policy.

Factor of historical, linguistic and cultural community plays essential role in relations of the Republic of Tajikistan with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Republic of Tajikistan will further continue to expand strong relations of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation with this country on the basis of bilateral and multilateral formats.

Acceleration of the process of economic reform in Tajikistan and the gradual integration of the national economy in the global economic system determines progressive development of political, economic and cultural ties with highly developed countries of the world.

Adoption and the use of experience of these countries in economy, society, science and technology, culture and cutting-edge technology will

contribute to further political and economic prosperity of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Republic of Tajikistan taking into account enormous authority and the role of the United States of America in global politics and economy will continue to make efforts to boost multifaceted ties with this country and sustain strong partnership relations based on the principle of shared interests.

With due account of the rapid pace of development and the growing international importance of the North, Central and South America, in particular Canada, Republic of Cuba, United Mexican States, Federal Republic of Brazil and Argentine Republic, Tajikistan attaches an increasing importance on these countries, and consequently, establishment of fruitful cooperation with these nations meets its national interests.

A positive breakthrough has occurred in the relationship between Tajikistan and the European Union since the beginning of the XXI century and this trend is increasing with every passing year.

In view of promoting development of the major areas of the national economy, Tajikistan acknowledges the European Union as one of its most important economic partners and will continue to seek expansion and deepening of the long-term sustainable cooperation with this influential interstate association on the basis of the principle of shared benefit.

This interaction in general will embrace all European institutions, including European Parliament, Council of Europe, European Investment Bank and other organizations and agencies.

Meanwhile, strengthening and reinforcement of bilateral multifaceted cooperation with the European countries, including Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, French Republic, Italian Republic, Kingdom of Spain, Swiss Confederation, Kingdom of Belgium, Republic of Austria, Czech Republic, Republic of Poland and the Baltic states is of paramount importance for the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Republic of Tajikistan in order to penetrate into emerging markets of capital, technology, raw materials and industrial products is committed to strengthen mutually beneficial relations with the countries of Southeast Asia, including Japan, Republic of Korea, Kingdom of Thailand, Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Singapore and other countries of the region considering this trend as one of the most important guidelines in its foreign policy. The state of bilateral relations with these countries creates an enabling opportunity to achieve this goal.

The Republic of Tajikistan is keen to expand multifaceted cooperation with Japan as a reliable partner and donor-country and is committed to further develop relations with country, both directly and through international financial institutions.

The Republic of Tajikistan welcomes an intensification of mutually beneficial cooperation with the Republic of Turkey in different areas, including attraction of Turkish investments into the economy of Tajikistan.

Taking into account the role and influence of the Republic of India in the region and the world, given a centuries-old experience of historical and cultural ties of the Tajik and Indian peoples, as well as its tremendous economic and technological capabilities, Tajikistan will gradually expand and deepen multifaceted cooperation with India.

Strengthening political interaction and growth of fruitful economic cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with regard to its trade and economic opportunities and geo-strategic position has a special meaning for the Republic of Tajikistan.

In view of the interests of the Arab States of the Gulf, including Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Qatar, State of Kuwait and United Arab Emirates to investing in economic projects of national and regional significance in Tajikistan, the Republic of Tajikistan seeks to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation with the countries of the Gulf. In order to strengthen relations with the Arab world, Tajikistan remains committed to bolster cooperation with regional organizations, in particular with the League of Arab States.

Considering international prestige and importance of the Arab Republic of Egypt in regional and world politics, the Republic of Tajikistan is interested to expand cooperative relationship with this country.

The Republic of Tajikistan considers African continent as a promising guideline for the fruitful cooperation in different areas.

In this context, the Republic of Tajikistan will exert efforts to establish cooperative links with the Arab countries of North Africa - Kingdom of Morocco, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Republic of Tunisia, State of Libya and the countries of central and southern parts of this continent, particularly South Africa Republic and Republic of Mozambique.

In the Pacific direction new opportunities are being opened up on the example of Australia and New Zealand for increased collaborative relations in many areas. The use of these opportunities is one of the most important foreign policy objectives of the Republic of Tajikistan.

### **3.2 *Multilateral Diplomacy (Multilateral Relations)***

In terms of rapid increase in the globalization process and progressive deepening of political and economic integration in the world, multilateral cooperation with international and regional organizations and institutions is a priority of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Republic of Tajikistan recognizes these organizations and institutions as an important mechanism for advancing joint efforts to combat modern threats and challenges, as unique platform for the resolution of disputes and problems in international relations and as an effective tool for promoting international peace and stability. In order to contribute to the formation of a new and equitable system of international and regional relations, as well as to protect and promote its own national interests, Republic of Tajikistan takes an active part in the activity of these institutions.

In this context, relationship with the United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organization, Asian Cooperation Dialogue, Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia and the international financial institutions is priority.

The Republic of Tajikistan is in favor of strengthening the coordinating role of the United Nations in the XXI century and recognizes the UN as the sole institute regulating international relations authorized to make decisions related to collective actions to protect peace and maintain security of the international system.

The Republic of Tajikistan believes that with the view of an adaptation of the UN actions to the needs and realities of today's world, a comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including its Security Council is the call of the times.

Protection of national interests and the active promotion of productive initiatives and proposals of the Republic of Tajikistan in the United Nations, its specialized agencies, as well as efforts aimed at obtaining membership of the Republic of Tajikistan in the principal bodies of the UN are one of the key objectives of the foreign policy of the country.

The Republic of Tajikistan considers comprehensive cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in compliance with its national interests and intends to

efficiently use resources of this organization as a platform to demonstrate spiritual and cultural achievements of the Tajik people, as well as protect and revive its tangible heritage.

The Republic of Tajikistan is supportive of increased cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its institutions and intends to make good use of their expertise, political and intellectual capability in the democratization of society, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, security and stability and addressing economic and environmental challenges.

Participation in the activities of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the strengthening of cooperation with the States Parties is one of the priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan. Tajikistan highly values the role of the CIS in the preservation and development of traditional relations between States Parties on a new platform based on the concept of multi-level integration.

The Republic of Tajikistan considers the establishment of different bodies of economic and security integration under the umbrella of the CIS, such as the Eurasian Economic Union, Common Economic Space, Customs Union, Collective Security Treaty Organization as a genuine manifestation of the integration processes in the post-Soviet space and will contribute to their development and improvement. Furthermore, considering national interests and with the view of exploitation of their potential and opportunities for the country's needs it will facilitate development and reinforcement of these processes.

The active participation of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization aims to strengthen good-neighborly ties, relations of confidence and friendship among the Member States and observers of the Organization, as well as security and stability and sustainable development in the region. Tajikistan stands for the further growth of authority and the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the deepening of economic relations, implementation of infrastructural projects and promotion of cooperation in the field of environmental protection and enhancement of cultural dialogue for the sake of the regional integration.

The Republic of Tajikistan viewing historical, cultural, civilizational and religious commonality with Islamic countries unwaveringly supports fruitful cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and its institutions. Tajikistan due to the vital and urgent need to uplift prosperity and development of the Islamic world into a new level and eliminate

existing and urgent hardships, considers it appropriate to develop and implement Development Strategy of the Islamic Countries, whose key objective should be quality, steady and balanced economic, spiritual and cultural growth of the OIC Member States.

The Republic of Tajikistan in its foreign policy places primary emphasis on strengthening fruitful cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization and acknowledges it as a regional organization with a specific geostrategic importance and enormous economic potential.

The Republic of Tajikistan is committed to help revitalize and extend the Organization's activities in terms of an implementation of regional projects in economic, trade, transport, communications and energy fields.

The Republic of Tajikistan is committed to contribute to consolidation of efforts to address the crucial issues of the Asian continent, intensify and enrich the content of interaction within the framework of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue and to reinforce its role.

The Republic of Tajikistan among agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue attaches paramount importance to poverty reduction, environmental protection, sustainable access of the population of the Asian continent to basic needs, improving people's preparedness for disaster risks management, expansion and deepening of regional and inter-regional platform for cooperation in the energy sector.

The Republic of Tajikistan fully supporting the idea of building confidence and security belt in Asia and enhancement of productive cooperation in this area shall undertake necessary measures to improve its relations with the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

Tajikistan values the opportunity of the Conference essential in collective exploration of tools and remedies to address the challenges and eliminate transnational and cross-border risks on the continent and strengthen cohesion between the participating States.

The Republic of Tajikistan values intensification of inclusive interaction with its partners to strengthen national and state security as one of the priorities of its foreign policy and considers its membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in compliance with the national interests. The activity of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Organization is aimed at the establishment of effective mechanisms to address modern threats and challenges.

In this context, the country's membership in the Organization, along



with the presence of the military base of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Tajikistan is one of the prominent factors of ensuring national security and the maintenance of stability in the region.

Tajikistan being a party to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) "Partnership for Peace" Program considers it important to interact with the Organization in order to promote security and stability and build an atmosphere of confidence throughout the Eurasian space.

With the view of implementing priorities of its foreign policy, the Republic of Tajikistan enhances multilateral cooperation with its partners in trilateral and quadrilateral formats and is determined to make good use of these platforms of constructive dialogue for the benefit of strengthening friendly relations and cultural connections and identification of effective toolkit to counter new threats and challenges.

### ***3.3 Economic Diplomacy***

Rapid geo-economic evolution of contemporary world and global economic trends predetermine ever-growing importance of economic diplomacy and continued improvement of the economic aspects of the role of topical issues in international policy. In this regard, efficient and reasonable use of means and tools of economic diplomacy is one of the priorities of Tajikistan's foreign policy strategy that would facilitate achievement of national and public goals.

In this context, attraction of foreign investment, integration of the Republic of Tajikistan in the regional and global economy and promotion of economic security of the country are essential to stimulate economy.

With the aim to encourage bilateral and multilateral foreign economic relations and lead international economic cooperation it is necessary to implement the following tasks:

- protect economic interests of the Republic of Tajikistan in the system of international economic relations, security and strengthening of the national actors access into the orbit of world economic relations and their effective functioning in this space;
- create external favorable conditions for the strengthening and expansion of the economic potential of the economic ground of the country;
- set up co-operation aimed at improvement of the regulatory framework of the "green economy" through cutting-edge expertise and the availability of the country's favorable conditions and

- implement mutually beneficial international cooperation in this field;
- facilitate the country's connectivity to the international and regional transport, energy and communication basis;
  - build favorable trading opportunities and protect the interests of domestic business within the framework of international economic relations;
  - attract foreign investment, government and commercial companies of other countries and compatriots living abroad to participate in the implementation of large-scale infrastructural, energy and transport projects of regional significance;
  - promote active participation in the World Trade Organization with the view to protect and promote national interests in the global trade and economic arena;
  - encourage multifaceted cooperation with the regional economic commissions of the United Nations, UN donor agencies to facilitate an implementation of national development strategies aiming to create a solid ground for sustainable development of the country;
  - deepen cooperation with international and regional financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Islamic Development Bank, Eurasian Development Bank and European Investment Bank and the others in order to promote the country's access to soft credits and grant financial resources;
  - promote trade and economic ties with neighboring countries as an element of trust and security zone along the borders of the country.

### *3.4 Water Cooperation Diplomacy*

Due to population growth, expansion of agricultural land, irrational use of water resources, climate change and environmental challenges, the issues of lack of drinking water, utilization of large and small transboundary rivers and other water related issues turned into a factor that highly affect international relations.

On this point, Central Asia is one of the sensitive regions and Tajikistan as a country with abundant water resources advocates fair and efficient use of these resources through regional and international cooperation. It believes that continued promotion of water cooperation

diplomacy is the only tool for tackling water related issues. In particular, continuation of regional cooperation within the framework of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea seems to remain important.

The Republic of Tajikistan in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law has the right to use its natural resources, including water to ensure the country's sustainable development and decent living conditions for its people.

The Republic of Tajikistan applies this right with regard to the use of water resources on the basis of shared regional interests, building on the principles of good neighborliness, respect and genuine mutual interests, inclusive dialogue and cooperation to respond to the existing challenges. Tajikistan as the upstream country and main source of water resources in Central Asia will never create obstacles under any circumstances to the water supply in the region. Acknowledging this principal stance, promotion of energy independence and efforts to address challenges in this area in the spirit of equal partnership and regional cooperation is set forth as one of the priorities of foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Republic of Tajikistan is consciously carrying out water cooperation diplomacy and leads a goal to play a decisive role in resolving water-related issues on the world stage. This diplomacy in the light of constructive initiatives in the water sector (The International Year of Fresh Water, 2003, International Decade of Action Water for Life, 2005-2015, The International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013) that have been welcomed and supported by the international community, stipulates an implementation of new initiatives within the framework of regional and international organizations, particularly under the United Nations.

The purpose of these steps is to notice the need for and promoting the ideas of productive interaction in addressing water challenges in order to preserve the life and prosperity of human civilization.

In this connection, one of the priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan is to ensure the country's leading role in water issues in the region and in the international arena, which corresponds to the national interests and aspirations of the international community.

### ***3.5 Cultural and Humanitarian Diplomacy***

Growing trend of globalization has unprecedentedly expanded close relations between nations and countries that enable ample opportunities for the access of humanity to the latest and valuable achievements of civilization and the use of yields of creative thoughts of the people.

Along with this, material and spiritual problems of mankind gain a global significance, which cause an increase in pressure on the national cultural traditions and values of the people and an outbreak of a clash of civilizations.

Under these circumstances, realization of cultural and humanitarian diplomacy, which taking into account positive and negative trends of globalization it provides spiritual existence, protection and preservation of indigenous national and cultural values of the Tajik people, promotion of decent introduction of the Republic of Tajikistan on the international scene as a country with ancient history and culture and as the modern democratic and legal state, expansion of cultural and humanitarian cooperation with the countries all over the world to ensure positive perception of Tajikistan and its people are determined as one of the priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Achieving the objectives of cultural and humanitarian diplomacy necessitates Tajikistan to implement the following tasks of its foreign policy:

- improvement of the legal framework of cultural ties with foreign countries and regional and international organizations;
- protection of the rights, interests and dignity of citizens, including migrant workers of the Republic of Tajikistan abroad via establishing overarching framework and expansion of consular offices of the Republic of Tajikistan in regions where nationals of the country reside;
- cultural, humanitarian, educational and legal support of compatriots abroad on the basis of international law and international treaties of the Republic of Tajikistan, promotion of associations of compatriots abroad and the protection of ethnic and cultural identity, including native language within the laws of the countries of their residence;
- promotion of constructive activity of the Forum of Tajiks and Persian-speaking nations to the cause of strengthening ties with foreign nationals, application of their potential and might for the development of political, economic, spiritual and cultural interaction, creating an atmosphere of interest and friendly relationship of the international community and international political circles with Tajikistan and its people;
- with the aim to bolster development of international tourism and attract tourists to the country, delivery of assistance to creating

- appropriate conditions for the stay and visits of foreign citizens to Tajikistan;
- facilitate the establishment of interfaith dialogue with an emphasis on historical experience and contribution of Tajiks to the formation of religious and civilization tolerance.

### **3.6 Information Diplomacy**

Due to unprecedented progress in technology and the latest advances in information and telecommunications in the second decade of the XXI century, traditional notion of distance and temporal space has undergone radical changes and a new manifestation of civilization – information is formed.

A fulcrum of information civilization is consisted of unlimited publication and boundless exchange of information, development of Internet technologies and the expansion of satellite communication, dissemination and broadcast of news and information, as well as formation and development of digital diplomacy.

Under these conditions, global information space is transformed into a foreground of a clash of political, economic and cultural interests of the power centers of the modern world, an effective tool for shaping public opinion and its orientation in the interests of certain groups and circles.

In line with the development of global information space along with positive factors that enable wide access to the latest achievements of civilization, there is a negative trend fraught with a risk for the information security of states, including for the Republic of Tajikistan.

In light of this, information diplomacy of the Republic of Tajikistan has identified promotion of information security as its primary purpose and within the advocacy and implementation of this objective, Tajikistan shall implement the following tasks:

- encourage real and accurate communication to the wider international community perception of domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- present and promote achievements and prospects of socio-economic development of the country and its cultural and scientific progress;
- promote the country's friendly climate for investment, fruitful economic cooperation and tourism development;
- deliver aid to creating effective means of information impact on

- foreign public opinion in order to encourage positive recognition of Tajikistan abroad;
- contribute to country's media empowerment in the international information space;
  - establish noticeable international cooperation in the field of information;
  - timely and effectively response to cybercrime and information threats on state independence and national interests of the Republic of Tajikistan, historical shrines and spiritual and ethical values of the Tajik people.

Pursuance of information diplomacy of the Republic of Tajikistan shall be based on a broad application of modern information and communication facilities. The Republic of Tajikistan stubbornly adheres to the development of a set of international legal and ethical standards on information security and its full compliance in the global information space.

#### **4. Development and Implementation of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Tajikistan**

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan in accordance with his constitutional authority determines the foreign policy of the country and as head of state represents Republic of Tajikistan in international relations.

Majlisi Milli (Upper Chamber) and Majlisi Namoyandagon (Lower Chamber) of Majlisi Oli (Parliament) of the Republic of Tajikistan under their constitutional powers provide legislation for the implementation of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan and the fulfillment of international obligations.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan participates in the implementation of foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan, promotes the fulfillment of its international obligations and stimulates an introduction of the country in the foreign states and international organizations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an executive body in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan exercises public administration in the field of external relations of the Republic of Tajikistan with foreign states and international organizations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly implements foreign policy that entrusted with the task to coordinate the activity of government authorities of Tajikistan within the country and abroad on issues associated with the foreign policy. All government authorities carry out their foreign

relations through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In the course of decision-making processes on the implementation of the foreign policy, public opinion shall be taken into account through an interaction of executive authorities with the Council on Foreign Policy under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Council deliberates on the process of an implementation of the country's foreign policy, reviews and makes recommendations aimed at improvement and enhancement of its efficiency.

**BANQUET SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA,  
MR. NARENDRA MODI DURING  
HIS VISIT TO TAJIKISTAN (JULY 13, 2015)**

**Your Excellency President Emomali Rahmon, Honorable Ministers,  
Eminent Guests**

Excellency, thank you for your warm welcome and hospitality. Thank you for the sentiments that you have expressed for India. These are truly precious gifts of friendship.

Excellency, you have led your nation through the uncertain first steps of independence and transition. You have guided your people through challenges to put Tajikistan on the path of prosperity. Your leadership has helped advance stability in a critical region.

Excellency, we also deeply value your friendship towards India. Your five visits to India is of a proof your commitment. Even more, you have given concrete shape to the idea of a strategic partnership.

This is the last leg of my visit to all five great nations of Central Asia.

And, as it usually happens, I have saved the most special place for the last.

Tajikistan is the closest Central Asian neighbor – separated by a narrow strip of land.

There was a moment in history when much of India and Tajikstan were one.

Since then, Amu Darya and Ganga have nurtured life in our respective countries.

But, across our mighty mountains, Indians and Tajiks have shaped each other through the ages.

We see it in relics of Buddhism in Tajikistan. We feel it in our daily lives. We see it in the landscapes of our cities.



We hear it in the familiar words of our languages. We experience it in the writings of Sheikh Sadi and Abdul Qadir Bedil, whose grave is in Delhi. We recall the inspiring poetry of Mirzo Tursunzade on the India of 1947.

President's own chronicle, "Tajikistan in the mirror of history - from Aryan to Samanids" recalls our ancient relationship.

Your love for our cinema and the popularity of Hindi here tell us that we do not just live in proximity; we are also close in spirit.

Just two events today speak clearly of the strength of our human bonds – a place of honour for Rabindranath Tagore in Dushanbe and the release of the Hindi Edition of Tajik historian Dr. Bobojon Gaffurov's *Tajikon*.

They bear witness to our timeless links, but also to the unity of values and aspirations.

They also tell us that because we influence each other so much, we must work together closely.

Excellency, as Gurudev Tagore said, civilisations must be judged not by the amount of power it has developed, but how much it has evolved and given expression to the love of humanity.

This is the vision that brings India and Tajikistan together Excellencies, we work together for peace and stability in our region. We support the cause of a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. We are partners in combating terrorism.

Our cooperation for the progress of our two countries is also growing. We have worked together in human resources development. And, we have also built a modest but growing economic partnership.

Today, President Rahmon and I have attended a large workshop to promote cooperation in agriculture and support farmers in our two countries. We will also expand our trade and investment ties as also our development partnership.

Connectivity between India and Central Asia, including Tajikistan, will grow in the years ahead. We should be inspired by our ancestors who could not be held back by the tallest mountains.

That has been the focus of my visit in the region. India's membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation adds a new dimension to our engagement.

My visit to Tajikistan will be the start of a new journey for our relations.

Excellency, we must also remember that we belong to an age of entirely

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new opportunities for development and prosperity; and, new possibilities of partnership.

As Bedil urged us, “The sea of time and place, for you, is but one gulp Limit not your boundless imagination”. Imagination will not be a constraint for us. With your guidance and leadership, Excellency, and the strength of goodwill between our people, we will take our relationship to new heights.

To share a meal with you on the last day of my journey is a special joy for me. With these words, let me ask you to join me in raising a toast to: The good health and well being of President Rahmon;

Peace, progress and prosperity for the friendly people of Tajikistan;  
The everlasting friendship between India and Tajikistan.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF TAJIKISTAN  
H.E. EMOMALI RAHMON  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INDIAN-TAJIK  
AGRICULTURAL FORUM  
(DUSHANBE, JULY 13, 2015)

*Y.E. Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great pleasure for me to sincerely welcome the dearest guest of Tajikistan, H.E. Narendra Modi in your presence.

Everybody in the world is aware that the relations between our countries are based on historical and cultural ties of our ancient peoples and high values, which emanate from good behavior, philosophy of humaneness and wide outlook and good intention of our ancestors.

Particularly in such a sincere environment, today in the morning, we, together with H.E. Narendra Modi discussed a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues and once again emphasized our willingness to undertake necessary measures to transform our bilateral relations into a multidimensional strategic partnership mutually rewarding for our peoples.

Given our close neighborhood, Tajik-Indian trade and economic ties should be proportionate to our existing potential for cooperation in the nearest prospect.

With this regard, the co-chairs of Tajik-Indian Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Academic and Technical Cooperation were given instruction to develop Strategy for development of trade and investment relations within their next meeting to be held in Dushanbe this year and to undertake specific steps to promote cooperation of businesses of our countries.

Within our morning discussion with H E, we paid an utmost attention to the importance of agriculture in the economy of our countries and the need for expansion of our cooperation in this area.

It is not secret that India has made visible achievements in agriculture, including research, development and processing of agricultural products as well as food security. It is worthwhile to study the experience of this country and many countries in the world follow India's agricultural policy.

With this regard, we welcome any mutually rewarding initiative on development of agricultural cooperation with India, particularly on encouragement of more Indian companies to the processing of agricultural products, introduction of new technologies and latest methods of research in this vitally important sector of national economy.

This forum, which is being held with participation of governmental agencies, experts from research centers and institutes, private companies and reputable businesses, is particularly aimed at achieving these noble objectives. I hope that the outcomes and agreements reached within the Forum will be implemented by both parties.

Cooperation in this area is an integral part of effective measures undertaken by our Government to ensure food security and achieve one of our three national strategic objectives.

I would like to emphasize that Tajikistan has huge economic potential to establish mutually rewarding cooperation between our countries.

Currently projects amounting 7.5bn USD are under implementation in Tajikistan. Our legislation foresees more than 40 types of guarantees and benefits in terms of taxation and customs procedures.

Favorable climate and nature of our country with affluent sunny days and water resources, as well as fertile valleys for growing quality fruits and vegetables and other products, provides an abundant opportunity for the further development of agriculture.

Agribusiness compounds, including vegetable vegetable production and horticulture have been developing and export of fresh and dried fruits and vegetables to other countries has been growing in our country lately.

Establishment of wide-range international cooperation in these areas as well as establishment of joint ventures on processing of agricultural products, wool and leather, cotton products, horticulture and vegetable production, livestock, apiculture and development of new lands requires application of the latest technologies and encouragement of investments.

With this regard, these areas as well as processing and storage of agricultural products with a view to increasing export potential of the

country for the export of environmentally pure products and textile joint ventures should be one of the priorities in the Tajik-Indian relations in the nearest future.

I hope that we will be able to give a new impetus to our joint efforts to expand our cooperation.

I wish you strong health, happy day and good luck.

*Thank you!*

## JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA, DUSHAMBE (JULY 13, 2015)

The Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Narendra Modi paid a State visit to the Republic of Tajikistan from 12 to 13 July 2015 at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon.

1. The President and the Prime Minister held wide-ranging talks on bilateral, regional and international issues. The discussions between the Leaders were warm and cordial and the outcomes of the visit reflected the mutual trust that exists between the two countries.
2. President and Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the excellent relations between India and Tajikistan. They noted that ties between their countries are based on shared history and cultural affinities between their people. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to take all necessary steps to transform bilateral relations into a multi-faceted strategic partnership for the mutual benefit of the people of both their countries.
3. The two leaders welcomed continuing exchanges at Ministerial and senior official levels, which serve to cement bilateral ties. They noted the existing broad legal framework for development of cooperation between the two countries and called for an enhanced focus on implementation of outcomes envisaged under bilateral agreements/MoUs in various areas.
4. The two leaders noted the rising trend of extremism and terrorism in many parts of the world and in their immediate neighbourhood, posing a threat to India and Tajikistan as well as the region. Both sides further emphasized the need for adoption of the "Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism" by the UN General Assembly.

The leaders underlined the importance of a stable and secure environment for economic development and prosperity of their countries. They agreed to continue their active engagement and cooperation in the fight against terrorism and extremism, and reaffirmed their determination to act resolutely against organizations and agencies that support terrorism.

Prime Minister Modi expressed appreciation at Tajikistan's efforts at curbing extremism and radicalism and to ensure secular governance, which is a common ideal of both the countries.

5. The Leaders decided to reinvigorate official-level interactions in the framework of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism for strengthening cooperation in the fight against terrorism and instructed that the JWG meet at an early date. They emphasized the need for continued cooperation between their security agencies including information sharing mechanisms to counter the growing menace of extremism and terrorism.
6. The Leaders expressed satisfaction at ongoing defence cooperation, which remains one of the main pillars of partnership between the two countries. The Prime Minister reiterated India's commitment to supporting the development of Tajikistan's defence capacities to enhance stability and security. The President of Tajikistan welcomed India's assistance in capacity building of the Tajik defence forces.
7. Despite being close neighbouring countries, the Leaders noted that that trade and economic linkages between India and Tajikistan are not in keeping with their potential. They highlighted the importance of trade and investments in developing a balanced and sustainable bilateral relationship and committed to work together to overcome structural and functional issues hampering economic relations between the two countries. The Leaders mandated the 8th session of the India-Tajikistan Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (JCM), to meet in Dushanbe this year and draw up a concise strategy to deepen trade and investment relations and identify specific steps to facilitate exchanges between the business communities.
8. The Leaders underscored the importance of improving connectivity in the region to realize the full potential of trade and commerce. The two leaders discussed ways and means to explore possibilities of developing an alternate surface route in cooperation with other countries of the region. Tajikistan reiterated its support to the

International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) which will considerably reduce transit time and cost for transportation of goods between India and Central Asia and beyond and welcomed recent measures to speed up its implementation.

9. Both Leaders recognized that the proposed Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan Trilateral Transit Trade Agreement (PATTTTA) would facilitate trade between Tajikistan and the countries of the South Asian region. They decided that further consultations would be held on the inclusion of India to this arrangement.
10. The Leaders stressed the importance of enhanced air connectivity between the two countries to facilitate trade and economic linkages as well as tourism and greater people-to-people interactions. They called upon relevant authorities in both countries to find constructive ways and means to increase the frequency of flights on the Delhi-Dushanbe sector, including the provision of Fifth Freedom rights for carriers.
11. Underlining the importance of agriculture in the economies of both the countries and given India's expertise in the agricultural sector, including research, development and processing of agricultural products, the Leaders agreed to deepen cooperation in agriculture. Tajikistan expressed its intention to facilitate agricultural cooperation with India, and in particular welcomed greater involvement of Indian companies in the agricultural sector in Tajikistan. The Leaders noted that a Workshop on Agriculture was being held in connection with the visit involving officials, experts from research institutions and organisations, private enterprises and business leaders of both the countries. They called for early implementation of the outcomes and agreements reached at the Workshop.
12. The Leaders noted the centrality of energy security for rapid economic development. Tajikistan thanked India for successful up gradation and modernisation of the Varzob-1 Hydro Power Station through the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) as well as various training programmes organised for experts from Tajikistan in the field of hydropower. Highlighting the vast untapped hydropower potential, the President of Tajikistan sought greater Indian engagement in the field of hydropower generation in Tajikistan.
13. The Leaders noted that health sector is an important area of



bilateral cooperation. Acknowledging the growing number of people from Tajikistan visiting India for medical treatment, they agreed to expand cooperation in the field of health for the benefit of the people of the two countries. Tajikistan welcomed India's proposal to implement a tele-medicine project in Tajikistan by connecting reputed multi-speciality hospitals in India with hospitals in Dushanbe and other regions of Tajikistan for offering medical consultation and education.

14. The Leaders stressed the importance of education and human resource development in nation building and agreed to enhance cooperation in the education sector through greater exchanges between educational institutions of the two countries. The Leaders also highlighted the importance of better utilization of scholarships offered under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) for capacity building in Tajikistan.
15. The Leaders identified cooperation in food processing, mining, pharmaceuticals, textiles, skill development, science & technology, Information Technology, culture and tourism as promising areas for further cooperation. The leaders underlined the importance of closer interactions between the business bodies and investment promotion agencies of the two countries for enhancement of economic engagements.
16. The Leaders emphasized the centrality of cultural interactions in further deepening the close bonds between the peoples of India and Tajikistan. They called for active implementation of the Programme of Cooperation between India and Tajikistan on Art and Culture for the period 2016-18 and agreed that relevant organisations hold "Days of Culture" in each other's country.
17. Prime Minister Modi thanked Tajikistan for its support in declaring June 21 as International Day of Yoga in the United Nations and for successful organisation of events to mark the occasion on 21 June, 2015 in Dushanbe and various regions of Tajikistan. The Leaders noted the role of Yoga and its health benefits and agreed to cooperate further in promotion of Yoga in Tajikistan. They welcomed the proposed AYUSH information cell at the Embassy of India, Dushanbe for sharing information about Yoga and other traditional Indian medical practices in Tajikistan.
18. Prime Minister Modi thanked Tajikistan for installation of a bust

of renowned Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore in Dushanbe. The Leaders acknowledged the contemporary relevance of Tagore's writings and agreed that the symbolic presence of Tagore in Tajikistan will promote harmony between cultures.

19. Considering the huge popularity of Indian cinema in Tajikistan, the Leaders agreed that cooperation in the field of television and radio-broadcasting would further enhance people to people contacts and cultural understanding.
20. Underlining the importance of greater cooperation and more people-to-people interaction, the Leaders instructed their officials to hold Consular Consultations at an early date to discuss liberalization of the existing visa regime.
21. The Leaders noted that Afghanistan occupies a central position in Asia and reaffirmed their support for peace and security in Afghanistan through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.
22. The Leaders expressed satisfaction at the excellent cooperation between the two countries on multilateral issues and mutual support for their initiatives in the United Nations and other international forums. The Leaders underscored the need to deepen such interaction on issues of interest to both countries and for developing countries as a whole. Tajikistan reiterated its support for India's candidature for permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council.
23. Prime Minister Modi thanked Tajikistan for support to India's membership to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Leaders agreed to work together within the framework of SCO for economic development, security and stability of the region.
24. The Leaders emphasised that the outcomes and understandings reached during the visit undoubtedly mark a milestone in the development of a long-term strategic partnership between the two countries. The two leaders applauded the deep trust and confidence between the countries and underlined that the strategic partnership between India and Tajikistan is of mutual benefit to their two countries as well as for greater regional stability.
25. Prime Minister Modi expressed deep gratitude to President Rahmon for the warm welcome and the gracious hospitality extended during his visit to Tajikistan. Prime Minister extended an invitation to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to visit India at an early date. The invitation was accepted with pleasure.

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA AT THE BANQUET  
DINNER HOSTED BY PRESIDENT OF TAJIKISTAN  
NOVEMBER 14, 2003

**“Your Excellency, Mr. President,**

My delegation and I thank you for your warm words and for your justly famous hospitality.

This is my first visit to your beautiful country. Tajikistan is a new country, but an ancient nation.

I have spent less than a day here, but the extent of our cultural interaction is clearly visible.

These links date back to the days of Alexander the Great and the Kushan empire, and are practically as old as recorded history itself. The teachings and poetry of Sufi saints such as Amir Khusrau and Mir Sayyed Hamadani have forged an unbreakable bond between our cultures. From language, architecture and music to philosophy and even cuisine, there is much here which is very familiar to an Indian.

Mr. President, We are here to strengthen our bilateral relationship on the foundation of our historical associations and shared commitment to regional stability, democracy and secularism. I am happy to find an equal interest in Tajikistan for a multifaceted partnership with India.

We have agreed to sustain the rapid expansion of our bilateral relations. Over the last decade, we have already established excellent political relations and enduring cooperation for regional stability. There are still untapped complementarities between your resource-rich country and our technical capabilities.

The areas for potential interaction range from machine tools, food processing and consumer goods to hotels, hydroelectric power and road infrastructure. I hope the financial assistance which we have offered you can be used for mutually identified projects in some of these areas.

Mr. President, We have common perspectives on regional and

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international issues. We are both concerned by the effects of instability in our shared neighbourhood. We are aware that despite our successes in the recent past, the battle against terrorism and religious extremism is far from over. We need to remain vigilant to defeat terrorism and to stop those who support it in whatever form. India will continue to work closely with Tajikistan to achieve this vital objective.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I request you to join me in a toast:

To the health of His Excellency President Rakhmonov;

To the progress and prosperity of the friendly Tajik people;

To eternal friendship between India and Tajikistan.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER SHRI YASHWANT SINHA'S  
ADDRESS AT THE TAJIK NATIONAL  
STATE UNIVERSITY (JANUARY 29, 2003)

**Excellencies, Distinguished Rector, Members of the Faculty, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am truly delighted to be here with you in your wonderful University.

I have been in Tajikistan for less than a day, but already I feel at home. That feeling is natural, because of a long history of friendship between our people. Our way of living, the strong family bonds, a secular and liberal outlook, have all drawn us close together through the previous centuries. That imprint of friendship clearly shines through in the manner we relate to each other.

We in India have heard of your magnificent Pamir Mountains and mighty rivers from the time of the Silk Road. Our traders who travelled through the Silk Road brought us fascinating accounts of Tajikistan. I wanted to cross the magnificent Himalayas, see the stark beauty of Hindukush, and then salute your Pamirs; the very rooftop of the World. And I wanted to reach Tajikistan in two hours.

But in today's age, when communication has diminished distance, I had to travel the extra few thousand miles to reach you. Because sometimes politics can elongate distances.

This long journey gave me the time to reflect, to wonder over your trials and your troubles. I am conscious that for a full five years from 1992 onwards, the people of Tajikistan had to live in dark shadows and gloomy times, with fears of what might happen the next day. A lot of what happened during the civil war in Tajikistan was unleashed from that epicenter of terrorism in our neighbourhood. A neighbour which has adapted cross-border terror as an instrument of state policy. Terror reached across Hindukush to trouble your tranquility.

But terror always fails in the long run. Tajikistan has come out

successfully from its trial, with its ideals intact. In the process, you have no doubt suffered, but it has strengthened your democracy. That, in the ultimate analysis, is the test of democracy. Even as democracy is vulnerable to acts of terror, it has the resilience to stand its ground.

I am glad that the people of Tajikistan have given a fine example of the strength of democracy. I would like to congratulate you all on your perseverance, patience and for the triumph of your principles. While we celebrate your achievements, I would also like to share with you the conviction of people of India that together we can work for peace and stability in the entire region.

India wishes its friends in Central Asia well. And it wishes to contribute to a very prosperous tomorrow for all of you.

My long journey also gave me time to think of India's own struggles. I'll start from the time before our independence. We were engaged for the first part of the twentieth century in our freedom struggle. It was an unequal fight. Mahatma Gandhi and millions of Indians were engaged in a peaceful struggle against the mightiest Empire on earth.

An Empire which claimed that Sun never sets on it. But an Empire whose Colonies lamented that the Sun of Happiness had stopped rising for them. We wanted to get out of that darkness of oppression. It was a time when the most basic of human rights were denied to a vast majority of the World; a time when people did not have the fundamental choice of determining their way of life.

We carried on struggling patiently. And we did so resolutely. The Indian nation made huge sacrifices then. Thousands died. Finally, our Sun rose above the horizon. It promised liberty on 15th August 1947. India was to become independent all over again. The Colonizers promised to sail home. But it was a flawed dawn.

India was arbitrarily slashed into two. Migration and murder followed. Millions were uprooted. At least a million died. Our people continue to suffer the wounds of that bitterness. But India's tolerance, that concept of treating the World as one large family, provided the balm.

Since then the wounds may have healed, but memories linger. Of needless destruction and avoidable deaths.

So on 15th August 1947, we had two choices. First, we had an enormous task of national development. We could have, ostrich like, shut ourselves to the outside World and engaged ourselves selfishly and single-mindedly to our own national tasks, to pursuing the economic greed of our prosperity.

We could have done so regardless of what went on in the rest of the deprived World! Because even in 1947, Colonialism had a huge Empire. Countries and populations across the World continued to live in shadows; under the dark veil of racism and segregation. With the passage of time, these terms sound unreal. Almost unbelievably so now. But, in 40s and through most of the 50s, they were daily reminders of a different, deprived way of life.

India decided against the first option. Its traditions did not let it adopt the easy ostrich like option. So, it chose the morally right but difficult second option. That of helping others. It championed the cause of the colonized and the suffering. India's was a lonely voice then. But it was a loud and principled voice, and India insisted that the destiny-makers of the World should hear and heed it.

Gradually, India's World vision began to emerge; a vision where all countries were equal and all people could choose freely. A vision which required dignity of life on equal terms. Slowly, but surely, the colonies were consigned to history. Independence blossomed all over the World; assertively and happily.

This was also a time when development was an experiment. It was a process of growth and learning. We stumbled along the way like others must have. But we learnt by experience, and we persisted. As we did so, we found new technologies. Technologies suitable to our needs. Technologies which could have been useful to other developing countries too.

Once again, we chose the path of sharing. Our ITEC Programme, the programme of cooperation, was set up to share our developmental experience and our resources. We have become richer because we distributed. And we have the satisfaction for having shared; content that we could bring smile at least to some, across the World.

Nonalignment was another manifestation of the same desire. It was not an act of passivity. It was a desire for balance, for non-interference, and for independence of action. For most of 60s and 70s, we and others chose to walk together along this path. Our unity gave us strength. It also gave us ideas for economic cooperation. I think the time has come again for us to view its meetings with a renewed sense of purpose. New challenges have emerged. New directions have to be found against terror which wounds the borders, and strikes the innocent.

Nineties have also seen an altogether new harvest in India. Some call it a super bumper harvest. If once people identified oil boom with Gulf,

today the frontiers of technology are being crossed repeatedly in India. IT, they say, is India.

Now, in this new IT age, we need a new agenda. An agenda for the 21st century. An agenda which spreads knowledge and shares prosperity. India stands ready to contribute.

From April this year, India would have a Focus Central Asia programme. Economic activities would be the high point of this programme. We wish to bring out the best, so that trade between Central Asia and India increases manifold. Not just in one direction, but in both directions.

We also are seriously looking at new modes of transport. Tajik Air would soon be flying to Delhi. This is a welcome development. Recently, India, Iran and Afghanistan, have decided to open a new sea and road route. Our goods will travel upto the Iranian Port of Chah Bahar. And from there through new roads in Afghanistan, the goods will travel to and from Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries. India is making 200 kms of this road which will be ready in two years time. I would like to call this the "Silk Road of Destiny". A Silk Road which changes the destinies of our people with prosperity.

India would also like to share its strengths in technology to tap the huge resources of hydroelectricity in Tajikistan. We have built dams and power stations all over the World. We would happily do so for our friends in Tajikistan - because in sharing lies the positive action between nations. And that indeed, has been the message of India from ancient times.

India respects Tajikistan and wishes it well. In fact, our relations were sketched out in a very fine poem by the great poet Bedil. He had said: *Dilli Tajik Hindu Chun du Shami, Anjuman, Afrukht Ba Doghi In Du Shami, Anjuman Afroz, Bedil Sukht* (The heart of the Tajik and the Indians illuminated the World with twin flames. And in the flames of these two fires was glowing Bedil).

It is with the feeling of similar warmth that I wish Tajikistan prosperity and happiness. I would also like to thank this fine University for giving me the honour today of sharing my thoughts with you. I wish it great success.



**HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES** is a quarterly Journal published by the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, which is a non-governmental, non-profit research, cultural and development facilitative organisation. The Journal is devoted to the study of various issues pertaining to the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, connected with its environment, resources, history, art and culture, language and literature, demography, social structures, communication, tourism, regional development, governance, human rights, geopolitics etc.

While the principal concern of the Journal is on its focal area, i.e., from Afghanistan to Myanmar including the Central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and North East states; papers with a broad sweep addressing environmental, social, cultural, economic, geopolitical and human rights issues are also welcomed.

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