

## THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN IN THE REGIONAL DIMENSION

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The collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the newly independent states in Central Asia have revived the rest of the world's interest in this region. Its countries were viewed primarily through the prism of their relations with the leading world and regional nations, particularly with Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey, without giving interstate contacts in this region

their due attention. However, it is the regional problems of the Central Asian republics that have largely determined their foreign policy.

On the whole, a paradoxical situation is being observed in this sphere. We are witnesses to endless statements by the regional leaders about friendship, fraternity, and cooperation for the good of all the residents of Central Asia, on the

one hand, and to various processes hindering cooperation and favoring the appearance of local conflicts, on the other. Some governments lack logic in their decisions. For example, air communication has still not been restored between the cities of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, although at one time flights between these countries were very popular among the population, and the need for them is obvious. Protection “in the name of state security” has become absurd, the peoples and

countries of the region are becoming increasingly alienated, even to the point of isolation. It is impossible to establish strong regional ties without openness and mutual trust. Today, regional cooperation is the only way the Central Asian countries can deal with the negative manifestations of globalization, which will have a direct impact on the economic development both of the region as a whole, and of each of its states individually.

## Republic of Tajikistan- Republic of Uzbekistan

As an inalienable part of Central Asia, Tajikistan is actively cooperating with the region’s countries and shares an extensive state border with two of them. Since it appeared on the political map of the world, the region has been in the focus of attention of many states, the influence of which largely determined the relations of the Central Asian republics among themselves. In contrast to the other republics of Central Asia, Tajikistan is not a Turkic state, but the ideas of Pan-Turkism are a cause for natural concern in the neighboring states. Tajikistan is particularly interested in Uzbekistan, which, since it gained its independence, has assumed the role of regional leader, motivating this by its unique geographic location in Central Asia. Uzbekistan is the only country that shares a border with all the region’s states, while also possessing significant natural resources, an industrial complex, and a strong army by Central Asian standards. In addition to these factors, Uzbekistan is considered the most urbanized state in the region. Not only is its capital, Tashkent, one of the largest cities in the republic, it also has Samarqand, Bukhara, Andijan, Namangan, Ferghana, and Kokand. It is worth noting that the Uzbek diaspora comprises up to 15% of Tajikistan’s population.

Diplomatic relations between these two states were established on 22 October, 1992, and on 4 January, 1993, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed a Treaty on Friendship and Mutual Assistance. But the first official summit meeting did not take place until five years later. On 4 January, 1998, on the invitation of Uzbek President Islam Karimov, the head of Tajikistan paid an official visit to Tashkent. During this visit, intergovernmental agreements were signed on mutual payments for cargo transportation and the delivery of Uzbek gas to Tajikistan. During Uzbek President Islam Karimov’s return visit to the Tajikistan capital in June 2000, several mutually advantageous agreements were signed. Among them, we should single out the Treaty on Eternal Friendship, which launched a new stage in Tajik-Uzbek relations.

The most propitious was Tajikistan President Emomali Rakhmonov’s visit to Uzbekistan on 27 December, 2001. For example, the Uzbekistan President said that his country was ready to hold a constructive dialog to resolve the problems between the two states. They include creating conditions for the unhampered movement of transportation means, citizens, goods, and services; liberalizing the conditions for passing through 26 checkpoints on the Tajik-Uzbek border; restructuring Tajikistan’s debt and reducing it by 10% (\$12 million); and lowering the price and fees of cargo transportation, the gas delivered to Tajikistan, and several other commodities. The leaders of the two countries agreed that the work of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Trade Cooperation should be revived (and subsequently stepped up) to further develop bilateral economic relations. Its first meeting

was held in Dushanbe on 23 August, 2002, at which the sides outlined problems in bilateral relations and drew up prospective ways to resolve them.

When analyzing the dynamics of Tajikistan's and Uzbekistan's foreign trade circulation, we should note the slump that is having a negative effect on the foreign economic relations of the two countries. The highest foreign trade turnover index was registered in 1999 at \$445.4 million, followed in subsequent years in descending order as follows: \$283.4 million in 2000, \$237.9 million in 2001, \$205.3 million in 2002, and \$199.8 million in 2003, while trade turnover rose by \$34.9 million in 2004, reaching \$234.7 million.<sup>1</sup> In so doing, gas deliveries account for the lion's share of Uzbek export in Tajikistan.

When looking at Tajik-Uzbek relations, we see a paradoxical situation. For example, a broad regulatory-legal base has been created in this sphere, and dozens of treaties and agreements have been signed. But on the initiative of the Uzbek side, cooperation has been curtailed unilaterally in essentially every direction, and in the economic sphere it has been reduced to a minimum.

The tough conditions created for protecting the Tajik-Uzbek state borders de facto verged on the transportation-communication blockade of Tajikistan. The actions of official Tashkent in this area not only made it difficult to implement the signed bilateral documents, but frequently directly and deliberately violated their provisions, including the Treaty on Friendship, Good Neighborly Relations, and Cooperation.

Official Dushanbe, in turn, guided by its intentions to preserve and strengthen the historical ties of friendship and good neighborly relations between the Tajik and Uzbek peoples, the treaty obligations it has assumed, as well as by the interests of ensuring security in the region, systematically took measures to neutralize negative phenomena in bilateral relations along diplomatic channels.<sup>2</sup>

The picture of mutual relations of the two states would not be complete without taking a look at several aspects which de facto influence bilateral relations and determine them.

## 1. Territorial Disputes

In the historical sense, the state formations in Central Asia—the Bukhara emirate, and the Kokand and Khiva khanates—were essentially not the national states of a particular people. All the current countries in the region appeared on the political map of the world as a result of the “axing” in 1920. The Soviet leaders of that time did not take into account many historical, cultural, and ethnic factors, as a result of which from time to time the question is raised at the unofficial level in all the Central Asian countries of to whom particular territories belong, which of course creates a certain amount of tension in the interrelations of these states. And although there is little likelihood of provoking an armed border conflict, the unresolved nature of the problem of disputed sections could become a factor of dissension. It should be noted that until now such sections exist along the entire Tajik-Uzbek border. The country's leaders are resorting to extreme measures, right down to setting mines, in order to reinforce the state borders. Along with introducing a visa system, this “concern” is creating tension on both sides of the border since it is preventing border trade, which in turn is having an effect on personal prosperity.

## 2. Ethnic Problems

There is a large and compact Tajik diaspora living in Uzbekistan, which is concentrated primarily in the Surkhandaria, Samarqand, and Bukhara regions. According to Tashkent's official statistics,

<sup>1</sup> See: *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Tajikistan-2005*, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> See: Z.Sh. Saidov, *Vneshniaia politika Tadzhikistana v usloviakh globalizatsii*, Avasto, Dushanbe, 2004, p. 562.

there are more than one million Tajiks in the country (approximately 4% of its population), and according to unofficial data, more than 6 million, that is, in size this diaspora is inferior only to the titular nation. What is more, the Tajik diaspora is distinguished by intense sociopolitical activity, making a positive contribution to Uzbekistan's development.

At the same time, it should be kept in mind that the Tajik language, as we have already noted, is the only one in the region that does not belong to the Turkic group of languages. Linguistically, Tajiks are representatives of the Iranian group of languages. Tajikistan has declared 2006 the Year of the Aryan Civilization, the history of the Tajik people being part of its history.

If Tajik-Uzbek relations are viewed in the context of a dialog and confrontation of civilizations, the trend toward an attempt to strengthen the Turkic civilization is evident, which the presence of Iran in the region actively opposes. The intercivilizational dialog, like the political dialog, is a broad concept which includes various forms of socialization. In this case, the matter concerns not only discussions and talks: this kind of dialog includes many consultations and agreements, as well as coordinating action on specific questions. The goal of an intercivilizational dialog should be overcoming phobias, forming tolerant relations between nations, and ensuring their peaceful coexistence.<sup>3</sup>

### **3. Joint Use of Communication Lines**

The Central Asian states are located within a vast Asian continent far from the ports of the Pacific and Indian oceans. The countries of the region have a limited domestic market, as a result of which they simply have to use their communication potential to the maximum extent possible.

The independent republics of Central Asia inherited the region's entire transportation-communication infrastructure from the Soviet era. At one time it was built taking into account the unity of all the Soviet Union's communication lines. When the U.S.S.R. collapsed, the unified system of transport network control was also destroyed, which became another destabilizing factor in relations within the region.

The problem was intensified even more for Tajikistan by the fact that most of the republic's land routes were oriented toward Uzbekistan, which the latter used as an important lever of pressure in bilateral relations. In order to change the situation which developed, official Dushanbe began building roads that joined Tajikistan with China, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan. This made it possible for the republic to withdraw from its transportation impasse.

### **4. Influence of Other Countries**

As we have already noted, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the leading power centers—China, Russia, the European Union, and the United States—focused their attention on Central Asia as a strategically important region of the world with a convenient geographic location and enormous raw material resources, including hydrocarbons, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, and cotton.

Guided by its own national interests, each Central Asian state made a geostrategic choice in its foreign policy in favor of different leading players of world policy. Whereas in this respect some repub-

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<sup>3</sup> See: V. Niatbekov, "Mezhtsilizatsionnyi dialog na Srednem Vostoke," Documents of the international scientific conference "The Middle East in the System of Geopolitical Coordinates: Past, Present, Future," 16 March, 2005, p. 301.

lies of the region defined their priority as strengthening relations with the CIS countries headed by Russia, the Uzbekistan leadership steered a course from the very beginning toward developing ties with the Western states, primarily the U.S. The years 2002-2003, when Tashkent offered its military infrastructure to Washington for conducting the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan, can be considered the peak of American-Uzbek relations. But after the tragic events in Uzbek Andijan in May 2005, their relations abruptly deteriorated to the extent that Uzbekistan demanded that the United States withdraw its military bases, which caused a dramatic change in Tashkent's foreign policy. It should be added that prior to this, Uzbekistan's participation in all the integration processes in the region was usually negative in nature.

### **5. Uzbekistan's Striving for Leadership in the Region**

Since it first acquired its state independence, official Tashkent has been striving to become the leader in Central Asia, which, incidentally, is also characteristic of Astana, in contrast to Bishkek, Dushanbe, and Ashgabad. Uzbekistan justifies its efforts by the fact that it is the largest state in the region, possesses the strongest army within its framework, and all the transportation routes of the Central Asian republics cross its territory to one extent or another. Of course, this policy did not meet with any enthusiasm in the neighboring countries and ultimately led to the deterioration in Uzbekistan's relations with them. What is more, if we are objective, not a single Central Asian state, including Uzbekistan, is able for several reasons at the moment to impose its policy on the other countries of the region. In Uzbekistan's case, these factors include social instability, which has recently acquired a political nature; the economic situation, which does not allow Tashkent to become a large investor in the neighboring countries; and the significant involvement of several leading world and regional nations in the region's life, which is not giving Tashkent the opportunity to enforce its role of leader in Central Asia.

### **6. Environmental Issues**

The environmental problems between the two states are largely caused by the Tajik Aluminum Plant (TadAZ) which is located next to the Uzbek border. It should be noted that the giant plant went into operation during the Soviet era, and the site of its construction was entirely in keeping with the Soviet Union's unified national economic complex. According to official Tashkent, the plant is detrimental to Uzbekistan's environment and to the health of its citizens. But these statements are mainly declarative and aimed at forming a negative opinion among the population.

It might be more expedient to come up with a solution to the environmental component of the problem. In order to do this, the generally accepted environmental demands had to be taken into account when TadAZ was expanded and a new plant built in the Khatlon Region. Modernization of the equipment at these enterprises to meet world standards could very likely reduce toxic discharges to a minimum. What is more, according to Deputy General Director of RusAl Sergei Annenkov, equipment will be installed in two new workshops at TadAZ which meets all the international environmental standards (this equipment was installed at all eight of RusAl's enterprises in operation in many countries of the world). What is more, according to Sergei Annenkov, for RusAl, environmental issues are of top priority, so the company intends to introduce environmental innovations at TadAZ too.

The environmental component of the problem is not unilateral in the interrelations between the two countries: several combines that pollute the environment of the neighboring regions of Tajikistan operate in Uzbekistan itself. For example, toxic discharges from the Bekabad Metallurgical Plant and Almalyk Mining-Metallurgical Combine have already been having a negative impact on both the health of the residents of northern Tajikistan, and on its environment for decades now. In other words, environmental problems are urgent in both states, and a common approach is needed to resolve them.

### **7. Transborder Rivers**

Recently, when the talk turns to factors capable of provoking a conflict in the region, for some reason the water problem, which has become more aggravated than ever before, is hushed up. Central Asia has been a farming center from time immemorial, and the nations of the region are well aware of the price of water. When Soviet power was being established, not simply land, but land-water reform was carried out in Central Asia, that is, a common water system was created, which automatically ceased to exist when the Soviet Union collapsed. Rivers, lakes, and other reservoirs changed their status in the twinkling of an eye, becoming a bone of contention between the new entities of interstate law. It should be added that approximately 30% of all the rivers on the planet are transborder rivers and pass through the territory of 68 countries.

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan possess the largest water supplies in Central Asia (66% and 18%, respectively). Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, the territory of which equals a total of 3,600,400 sq km and the total population of which reaches 45 million people, account for 16% of the water, that is, these three countries suffer from a water shortage. In Uzbekistan, the problem is aggravated by the drying up of the Aral Sea. The country has been inflicted by drought and is essentially an environmental disaster zone.

Water could become the same tool of interstate relations as oil and gas, and the assertion that God created water and it belongs to everyone is a thing of the past (for according to this logic, oil and gas should also belong to everyone). The current situation requires a new approach to the resolution of this problem, that is, some general model must be developed that can optimally be applied to all the Central Asian countries.

History shows that largely local and short-lived clashes and conflicts frequently arose in the region over water. Only mutually acceptable conditions will make it possible to avoid a conflict on these grounds in the future. Today, Tajikistan is drawing up large projects, including those which envisage building the Sangtuda-1, Sangtuda-2, and Rogun hydropower plants with the participation of big investors from the Russian Federation and Iran. Introducing these facilities into operation will significantly change the situation regarding water use and allow Tajikistan to take single-handed control over use of the water in the Amudaria River. This in turn will have a negative effect on the countries located further downstream. For Uzbekistan, the problem is aggravated by the fact that according to the treaty signed in 1946 between Moscow and Kabul, the Islamic state of Afghanistan also has legal rights to use the resources of this river. Achieving peace and stability in this country will make it possible to raise the demand for the Amudaria's water. Tajikistan's hydropower plants, which regulate water supply, are currently working more for Uzbekistan. When they switch from the irrigation to energy-related mode, these facilities will mainly operate not under summer, but under winter conditions, that is Tajikistan will feel a real increase in electricity manufacture, which will resolve the problem of the republic's energy shortage. The current situation does not meet Tajikistan's interests, but it is very convenient for Uzbekistan, which continues to receive a large amount of water essentially free.

A change in the current situation can be brought about by forming a new approach with the subsequent creation of a water market which is, in our opinion, in keeping with the times. But a constructive political and economic dialog between the two states is only possible with a more careful and scrupulous analysis of the factors reviewed above.

Uzbekistan, which is just one of the four countries bordering on Tajikistan, nevertheless occupies a key position in Dushanbe's foreign policy. Since diplomatic relations were first established, Tajikistan has tried to create a friendly atmosphere in Tajik-Uzbek relations. But, while giving the practical side of bilateral relations their due, these relations are still vague and contradictory due to Tashkent's striving to be the leader in the region.

The political-economic aspects reviewed are prompting both sides to look for an optimal compromise in bilateral relations, for which a broad regulatory-legal base could serve as a guarantee: international treaties (interstate, intergovernmental, and interdepartmental); documents on delimitation and demarcation of the state border; other documents, including the joint presidential statements, minutes from government delegation talks, and so on.

As already mentioned, since it first gained its independence, Uzbekistan has accented its attention on creating strong ties with the industrial states of the West. But recently, these contacts have been characterized by confrontation rather than a constructive dialog. In 2005, Tashkent's foreign policy underwent significant changes expressed in the choice of its new priorities. These priorities reoriented the vector of diplomacy from the West to the East and gave preference to the countries of the former Soviet Union, which could to a significant extent also promote an improvement in Tajik-Uzbek relations.

## Republic of Tajikistan- Kyrgyz Republic

Kyrgyzstan declared its state independence on 31 August, 1991. The change in the republic's political status meant drawing up a new foreign policy, the goal of which was to protect national interests both in the post-Soviet space and in relations with states of the Far Abroad.

The Kyrgyz Republic is located in the interior of the Asian continent, far from sea ports, and the total length of its borders is equal to 4,104 km, 1,051 km of them it shares with Kazakhstan, 1,084 km with China, 870 km with Tajikistan, and 1,099 km with Uzbekistan.

Tajikistan established diplomatic relations with neighboring Kyrgyzstan on 14 January, 1993. These states have many things in common. For example, Kyrgyzstan's natural relief is also made up of mountains, which occupy a significant part of its territory, and it is second in the region after Tajikistan in terms of water resources, whereby rural residents comprise two thirds of the population.

From the very beginning, the political dialog between Dushanbe and Bishkek has been constructive. Dozens of agreements were signed within a short period of time. They formed a solid foundation for successful bilateral cooperation, the priorities of which took shape within the framework of frequent official visits by Tajik and Kyrgyz delegations and which was also promoted by the political will of the leaders of both countries to engage in cooperation.

The official visit by Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev to Tajikistan in 1996 was an important milestone in the recent history of the two nations. As a result of this visit, a Treaty on the Foundations of Interstate Relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic was signed, as well as several other documents relating to the economy and culture. In order to further develop trade and economic ties, the same year the Tajik government adopted a decision to open its trade representative office in the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek. What is more, based on the signed documents, as early

as February 1997, a Tajik-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission was created for carrying out a comprehensive review of bilateral issues. In October of the same year, its first session was held in the Kyrgyz city of Osh, during which six working groups were formed on border, financial, socioeconomic, communication, transportation, roads, and migration issues, as well as on fighting organized crime and terrorism.

The Tajik President made a return visit to the Kyrgyz Republic on 6-7 May, 1998. The heads of the two states discussed a broad range of cooperation issues in the socioeconomic, cultural, transportation, migration, and security spheres, primarily the problem of drug trafficking.

It should be noted that Kyrgyzstan fully supported Tajikistan joining the Customs Union made up of four CIS states and its full-fledged membership in the Central Asian Economic Community. On the whole, 1998 was a fruitful year designating a new stage in bilateral relations. The Kyrgyz Republic is the only neighboring country with which Tajikistan does not have visa requirements.

During the EurAsEC session on 27 April, 2003, a meeting was held between the Tajik and Kyrgyz leaders, at which they discussed the current state and prospects for Tajik-Kyrgyz relations, the potential of which is much higher than the present situation manifests.

During this time, the main list of mutually advantageous commodities was compiled. For example, electricity, building materials, asbestos slate, glass, consumer goods, including textiles, are sent from Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan. In order to further develop trade between the two states, a decision was made to open the Guliston market in Isfara, a town which borders on the Batken District of the Osh Region in Kyrgyzstan, which helped to create a favorable climate in strengthening ties between our states. Despite the decline in certain years, the dynamics of Tajik-Kyrgyz trade relations is generally heading upward. For example, whereas in 1991, trade turnover amounted to \$5.1 million, in 1998 and 1999, it increased to \$11.1 million. In 2000, a decline was noted to \$10.2 million, in 2001 to \$7.7 million, but in 2002, trade turnover rose slightly to \$8.9 million, and in 2003, an abrupt upswing was observed to \$31.2 million, but in 2004, trade turnover again dropped to \$22 million.<sup>4</sup>

During a meeting in Dushanbe held on 26-27 May, 2004, the heads of the two states discussed questions of further developing and strengthening ties in bilateral and multilateral formats, and expressed their viewpoints on problems relating to international and regional policy.

On 18 May, 2005, Kurmanbek Bakiev, who was acting president of the Kyrgyz Republic at that time, arrived in Dushanbe on a one-day working visit. Although it was short, this visit was propitious, in particular, a bilateral intergovernmental agreement was signed On Mutual Allotment of Land Plots.

It is gratifying to know that cooperation also affects strategic spheres. For example, during Kurmanbek Bakiev's visit to Tajikistan in May 2005, the Kanibadam-Batken power transmission line was opened, which made it possible to eliminate the shortage of electricity to the Sogd Region of Tajikistan.

Cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is also developing very productively; one good tradition is a cultural dialog in which theatrical groups from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are playing a prominent role. Regular festivals in which the creative workers of both countries participate are helping to strengthen tolerance as well as decrease negative potential in the region. The theater reacts faster and with greater understanding to problems relating to globalization, be it the environment, labor migration, or transborder crime.

One of the main aspects of Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev's visit to Tajikistan on 26-27 May, 2004 was to participate in the ceremony of the official opening of Kyrgyz Culture Days in Tajikistan, within the framework of which the cultural treasures of the Kyrgyz people, and their achievements in art, music, sculpture, applied art, literature, and cinema were exhibited.

<sup>4</sup> See: *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Tajikistan-2005*, p. 255.



The Kyrgyz education system attracts young Tajik people. At present more than 650 Tajik citizens are studying in Kyrgyz universities, and there are secondary schools in Tajikistan which teach in the Kyrgyz language.

Certain characteristics can be traced in relations between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan which define the position of the two states. An adequate attitude toward them will make it possible to raise the political dialog between Dushanbe and Bishkek. In order to reach this goal, it is expedient to organize comprehensive, detailed, and objective research of the following factors, which will help to form a Tajik-Kyrgyz tandem in the region with clearly designated bilateral priorities.

### **1. Territorial Disputes**

Since Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are geographically located in Central Asia, any tension could lead to destabilization of the entire region.

There are approximately 70 disputed sections on the Tajik-Kyrgyz state borders, primarily in the Isfara District of the Sogd Region and the Jirgital Region of Tajikistan bordering on the Osh and Batken regions of Kyrgyzstan, respectively.

When talking about the settlement of ethnic groups in both states, it should be noted that it is not homogeneous: the Kyrgyz primarily live in the mountainous border regions of Tajikistan and their numbers reach a little more than 1% of the republic's total population of approximately 65 thou people.

A special feature of the territorial issue is the enclave factor. For example, there is a large Tajik enclave in Kyrgyzstan called Vorukh with a population of 28-30 thou people, 95% of whom are Tajiks, and 5% are Kyrgyz, which administratively belongs to the Isfara District of the Sogd Region in Tajikistan. The density of the population in the Batken District of the Batken Region in Kyrgyzstan surrounding it is much less.

The uneven use of resources had led to occasional clashes between the Kyrgyz and the Tajik; in particular, conflicts on these grounds occurred at the beginning of the 1980s and in 1989 (in the latter case, a major incident took place).

The penetration of armed contingents of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan into the Batken District of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1999 and 2000 propelled the resolution of border safety issues into the foreground.

Reviewing these territorial and ethnic problems, it should be noted that they require increased attention, a rational approach, and the search for joint solutions that meet the national interests of both states.

But on the whole, instability and explosiveness are not characteristic of Tajik-Kyrgyz relations (unlike Kyrgyz-Uzbek), which inspires hope for their positive settlement.

### **2. Joint Use of Communication Lines**

One of the main factors hindering the development of mutually advantageous cooperation, in our opinion, is that the main transportation-communication lines of Tajikistan are oriented toward Uzbekistan and the transit of cargo along them between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan increases the cost of the goods. But this problem is currently being resolved. For example, a shorter motorway between the two republics will be restored with the help of foreign investors in the next few years, which will supplement the current Osh-Khorog route that functions seasonally.

What is more, restoration of the Dushanbe-Vakhdat-Nurabad-Tajikabad motorway has begun in the Osh direction, which will go to the border with Kyrgyzstan. The first stage of the project also

envisages the building of four new bridges (these construction projects should be finished by 2007). The total cost of the project amounts to \$23.6 million. Its main creditors were the Asian Development Bank, which allotted \$15 million to this purpose, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which allotted \$6 million, and the Tajik government, which allotted \$2.6 million.

As for the near future, a project for building an Isfara-Osh motorway that bypasses the Uzbek enclave of Sokh is being considered. Its successful implementation will alleviate many problems for the residents in the border areas of both states, which will primarily be expressed in a minimum decrease in border conflicts with Uzbekistan. Incidentally, after the Kanibadam-Batken power transmission line, this is the second largest transborder project between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Increased cooperation in the transportation-communication sector is helping to develop the periphery regions of both republics.

### **3. Influence of Other Countries**

Kyrgyzstan's geographic location predetermined Bishkek's foreign policy, which is distinguished by predictability and stability. Along with other factors, Bishkek must take into account its contiguity with vast China, on the one hand, and with Kazakhstan, on the other, as well as Russia's 200 years of ongoing influence. Kyrgyz diplomacy's recent history can provisionally be divided into three stages.

- The first stage—from the day Kyrgyzstan gained its independence to 2001, when Bishkek initially defined the other CIS countries as its priority partners and began actively cooperating with them in the bilateral format and within the framework of the Commonwealth, EurAsEC, CST, SCO, and other post-Soviet integration structures.
- The second stage—from 2001 to 2005. At that time, “western accents” were more acutely felt in Bishkek's foreign policy, including the landing of American paratroopers in the republic. There were two reasons for these changes.
  1. The inefficiency of the integration formations within the framework of the CIS, the economic component of which was declarative without shifting to a practical plane.
  2. Kyrgyzstan's active participation in the antiterrorist campaign headed by the U.S. and its allies in the coalition. Interest in obtaining economic dividends from having a corresponding infrastructure in the country.

The third stage began in 2005 when Kurmanbek Bakiev came to power in Kyrgyzstan, who is trying to maneuver between the states of the West and the republics of the former Soviet Union, including Tajikistan.

### **4. Transborder Rivers**

There is a large number of lakes in Kyrgyzstan, including Issyk Kul, and there are rivers and glaciers providing inexhaustible sources of fresh water. In so doing, the country uses no more than 20% of their supplies for its own needs. The largest rivers are the Naryn, 535 km in length; the Chu, 221 km in length; and the Chatkal, 205 km in length. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan essentially play the role of the region's water donors.

Recently, the problem of water has been becoming increasingly politicized because the states consuming the largest amounts of water are downstream of the transborder rivers and do not wish to take the

interests of the water donors into account. This matter is going as far as speculation around the Aral Sea, which has unfortunately been essentially lost. The current water situation requires a different approach based on transforming the structure of agriculture, as well as on changing the operating conditions of the irrigation system. But the water-consuming states are sticking to their guns. It is infringing on the vitally important interests of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the water and energy complex of which operates for the good of the economies of neighboring countries and in detriment to their own.

International law regulating water problems recognizes full sovereignty of each country with respect to the rivers running through its territory, which presumes that other states of the same region of the basin have no legal rights to limit the use of the river of the particular country within its borders. This problem will only get worse with each passing year, which in the near future will reinforce the status of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in the region. It would be logical for Dushanbe and Bishkek to coordinate their actions in order to form and legalize a water market in Central Asia.

In order to improve the situation that has developed in this sphere both in the region as a whole, and in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in particular, bilateral relations should be reviewed taking into account the real potential of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which will be an important political and economic step. The first initiatives in this direction have already been taken: the construction of a new motorway and reconstruction of the old road between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will promote the economic development of these republics. Another favorable factor of bilateral cooperation is its reliability, stability, and predictability.

## Republic of Tajikistan- Republic of Kazakhstan

Thanks to its vast territory (Kazakhstan accounts for 2,724,900 sq km of Central Asia's four million sq km), this country is one of the ten largest countries in the world. Kazakhstan was one of the last Soviet republics to declare its state independence (on 16 December, 1991). Nevertheless, by 1995, their statehood was recognized by 111 countries, with 92 of which they established diplomatic relations.

The first initiatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan demonstrated the peaceful nature of its diplomacy. The country voluntarily rejected the enormous nuclear arsenal it inherited from the Soviet Union, as a result of which the region became a zone free from weapons of mass destruction. The main achievement of Kazakhstani diplomacy is the initiative put forward at the 47th session of the U.N. General Assembly in October 1992 on convocation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the first summit of which was held 10 years later on 4 June, 2002.

Astana's foreign policy is largely determined by Kazakhstan's geographical location. It is the only country in the world which borders on two nuclear nations: on the Russian Federation in the east, north, and northwest (the length of their common frontiers is equal to 6,467 km) and on China in the southeast (their common border is 1,460 km in length). Of the Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has the longest border (2,300 km in length) with Uzbekistan. It is followed by Kyrgyzstan with 980 km and Turkmenistan with 380 km. The country is washed by the Caspian Sea in the west. Tajikistan is one of the region's republics which does not have a state border with Kazakhstan. In this respect, our states do not have the problems characteristic of several border states, in particular, those existing in Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations.

A key place in Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy is occupied by relations with the Central Asian countries. Diplomatic relations between Tajikistan and Kazakhstan were established on 7 January, 1993, and as early as 13 January, Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov paid a working visit to Kazakhstan. In the same year, the foundation was laid for a regulatory legal base, which included the Treaty on the Fundamental Principles of Interrelations between the Republic of Tajikistan

and the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Agreement on Principles of Economic Trade Cooperation, as well as several other important documents. The signing of them began a new phase in bilateral relations, which also predetermined the further development of mutually advantageous ties.

In November 1995, Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov visited Kazakhstan again. During this visit, several mutually advantageous agreements were signed that regulate bilateral contacts in the economic sphere.

When looking at this period, it is important to mention that Kazakhstan made its contribution to strengthening peace in Tajikistan by becoming one of the guarantors of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Consent in Tajikistan.

On 2 September, 1998, Kazakhstan Minister of Foreign Affairs Kassymzhomart Tokaev paid an official visit to Dushanbe. As a result of this visit, several documents of mutual interest were also signed.

On 3 October, 1998, the first meeting of the Tajik-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Trade Cooperation was held in Astana, the purpose of which was to identify priority areas in bilateral cooperation. In particular, questions were raised regarding the regulation of mutual debt obligations. In the same year, measures were adopted for transferring the resolution of labor migrant problems to a higher quality level, including their legal settlement, as well as resolving issues regarding transit from Tajikistan through Kazakhstan to other CIS countries.

The most outstanding event in bilateral relations was Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev's visit to Tajikistan on 13 June, 2000. It ended in the signing of agreements defining the further development of relations between the two countries. They included the Agreement on Cooperation in Education; the Agreement on Cooperation in Science, Technology, and Information; and the Agreement on Cooperation in the Fight Against the Illicit Circulation of Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and Precursors.

On 22 February, 2001, the second meeting of the Tajik-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held. Now Kazakhstan is one of Tajikistan's main partners in this sphere, and trade turnover between the two countries is on the constant rise. Whereas in 1991, it amounted to \$12.7 million, in 1998 it was \$61.9 million, in 1999, \$82.4 million, in 2000, \$88.1 million, in 2001, \$92.2 million, in 2002 up to \$75.7 million, by 2003 it has increased to \$100.4 million, and in 2004 to \$156.1 million.<sup>5</sup>

On 25 March, 2004, a business forum was held in Almaty, in which businessmen of both countries took part.

On the whole, economic cooperation is gaining momentum. There is an agreement on using the resources of the Kazakhstan Investment Fund for carrying out Tajikistan's most important projects. The building of several hydropower facilities, surveying and operating oil fields, developing the mining industry, financing several coal fields in Tajikistan, enhancing agriculture, and reconstructing available capacities and building new factories for producing cement, concrete, and reinforced concrete items could be promising areas of mutually advantageous cooperation.

At present, a joint Tajik-Kazakh venture called Andrasmon (the volume of investments is equal to \$500,000) is operating in the north of Tajikistan, in the Sogd Region. The money is intended for repair and restoration work at mineral fields, at the plant, and also for developing ores. The Kazinvest-Mineral Company acted as investor in the project on the Kazakh side.

A trend was noted toward strengthening cooperation in the banking sphere, which is necessary for improving the Kazakh investment climate with subsequent involvement of Kazakhstan capital in the Tajik economy. One of the largest banks of Kazakhstan, TuranAlem, opened its representative office in Tajikistan, which could also promote the development of bilateral ties. The formation of a streamlined interbanking system based on the existing contract-legal base will make it possible to reinforce economic trade contacts and insure investments in the priority sector of the national econo-

<sup>5</sup> See: *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Tajikistan-2005*, p. 255.

my. There is a wealth of promising areas in the economic sector: agriculture, the textile industry, hydropower engineering, ferrous metallurgy, and so on.

During the civil uprising in Tajikistan, many citizens of the republic found refuge in Kazakhstan. A small but quite mobile Tajik diaspora lives in its former capital of Almaty, which is engaged mainly in small business and construction.

Humanitarian ties are also strengthening; the Society of Tajikistan-Kazakhstan Friendship is giving a new boost to cooperation in the cultural sphere.

We already noted above that Kazakhstan (like Uzbekistan) is claiming the role of regional leader, but Astana (in contrast to Tashkent) is actively carrying out a more constructive foreign policy with regard to the Central Asian states. Kazakhstan objectively has more opportunity to strengthen its regional status than Uzbekistan. This includes its dynamically developing economy underpinned with continuous investment flows; political stability in society; and Kazakhstan's authority in Central Asia.

The future prospects for Tajik-Kazakh cooperation will largely be determined by a whole set of measures that together comprise the national interests of both states.

## Republic of Tajikistan- Republic of Turkmenistan

The Republic of Turkmenistan is mainly a state of contrasts, a combination of large area and relatively small population (the share of urban dwellers constitutes approximately 40%). The country is rich in natural resources, including hydrocarbons, and their significance is growing with each passing year.

Turkmenistan is the only republic in the post-Soviet space that has officially declared its neutrality, and this also predetermined Ashgabad's foreign policy (endorsed by a special resolution of the U.N. General Assembly on 12 December, 1995).

The republic's diplomacy is distinguished by tranquility unusual for an Eastern state: official Ashgabad did not go into hysterics over the crisis in Afghanistan during the time the Taliban was in power in this country. What is more, it even established close contacts with its leadership. For example, as early as 1994, the Kushka (Turkmenistan)-Turgundi (Afghanistan) railroad went into operation, which raised the dynamics of bilateral cooperation.

Turkmenistan's interest in this southern neighbor is largely aroused by Ashgabad's desire to create new export routes for its hydrocarbon resources to the promising markets of the Asian states through Afghanistan.

The alliance between Turkmenistan and the Taliban movement aroused open displeasure among the other Central Asian countries. On the whole, official Ashgabad is carrying out a very cautious foreign policy with respect to the region's states, and did not become a member of the Central Asian Community that existed at one time, nor has it expressed an opinion about the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. However, neighboring Uzbekistan has already joined the SCO, while strong neighboring Iran has also announced its interest in this organization. At the same time, Turkmenistan is developing extremely dynamic relations with China.

In contrast to other Turkic-speaking states, Turkmenistan is carrying out an active policy with all the countries of the Persian world, including with Tajikistan. Diplomatic relations were established between Dushanbe and Ashgabad on 27 January, 1993. Since the two states gained their independence, contacts between them have been conducted at the ministerial and departmental level, but the Turkmen leader has not yet paid an official visit to Tajikistan, nor has the head of Tajikistan been to Turkmenistan. Admittedly, in 1995, Emomali Rakhmonov stopped in Ashgabad on his way home from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The same year, Turkmen Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov

visited Dushanbe twice, and it should be mentioned that the contacts between the foreign ministries of the two countries are very intense.

1998 was memorable for its talks at the governmental level, according to the results of which an act was compiled on verifying the debts of the economic entities of both countries.

When the new ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to Turkmenistan, Kozidavlat Koimdo-dov, presented his credentials, the head of the Turkmen state noted: "Turkmenistan and Tajikistan have vast potential for cooperation based on the principles of good neighborly relations, mutual understanding, and trust." With respect to the prospects for developing Turkmen-Tajik relations, the sides talked in favor of further expanding and strengthening propitious partnership in all spheres, which meets the interests not only of the people of these countries, but also of the region as a whole.

Nevertheless, economic cooperation is unstable. For example, in 1999, bilateral trade turnover amounted to \$16.5 million, in 2000 to \$34 million, in 2001 to \$72 million, in 2002 to \$57.1 million, in 2003 to \$33.8 million, and in 2004 to \$41.3 million.<sup>6</sup>

Many industries are not operating actively, although Tajikistan is in great need of energy resources, and Turkmenistan, as we already noted, is rich in hydrocarbon deposits. Turkmenistan was a traditional supplier of glass to Tajikistan, and products manufactured by the Vakhsh nitrogen-fertilizer plant, the Yavan chemical plant, the Dushanbe refrigerator plant, as well as enterprises of the textile industry were delivered to the Turkmen market from Tajikistan.

There is a compact Turkmen diaspora residing in the south of Tajikistan, in the Julikul District of the Khatlon Region, the size of which, according to the latest population census, is more than 20,000 people. There are secondary schools in the country which teach in the Turkmen language, and a Turkmen Society has been created. At the beginning of the 1990s, Tajik citizens lived in Turkmenistan, but now they have all returned to their homeland. During the civil uprising in Tajikistan, one of the rounds of the inter-Tajik settlement talks was held in Ashghabad.

Turkmenistan occupies a unique geographical location, which has defined the great influence of border countries. Official Ashghabad gives immense importance to cooperation with the Persian-speaking states, since two of the four countries bordering on Turkmenistan are part of the Turkic world (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan), and the other two (Iran and Afghanistan) are Persian-speaking.

In summary, a paradoxical situation has developed: countries usually form a solid legal basis of bilateral relations, but there is no real economic cooperation between them. However, Tajik-Turkmen relations are the opposite—stable economic contacts are combined with the absence of official visits by the leaders of these states. The objective political and economic development of the region is compelling Dushanbe and Ashghabad to look for new ways of bilateral interaction that meet their national interests.

## Conclusion

The role and place of the Central Asian states in Tajikistan's foreign policy are determined by a set of interests, the most important of which are in the economic, political, and security spheres.

Economic cooperation implies expanding contacts on the existing basis. The economy of the region's states, despite all the statements of their leaders, is dependent. What is more, this dependence is mutual, for until recently the national economy of these republics was a part of the single Soviet economy, the collapse of which, including the single transport and energy system, had a most negative effect on the Central Asian countries. This situation may play a low-down trick on the region's states in the near future by relegating them to the backyard of globalization. In this respect, raising the level of economic cooperation is vitally important. Tajikistan is looking for a way out of this situation, in particular, it is trying to strengthen comprehensive cooperation with the Central Asian countries.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Tajikistan-2005*, p. 255.

The republic's political interests were laid down as early as the Soviet era and were ultimately formed at the initial stage of independence. They are based on preventing the ideas of religious extremism from penetrating the country. The second urgent problem is Pan-Turkism. Tajiks have the experience of many centuries of coexistence with the Turkic-speaking peoples. Nevertheless, the re-animated ideas of Pan-Turkism are radical and extremist in nature, and the Turkic-speaking countries themselves are ambiguous about the idea of uniting the Turks.

Interests in the security sphere revolve around the problem of self-preservation of statehood. The main threats in this sphere are the ongoing drug trafficking from neighboring Afghanistan and international terrorism, which has become aggravated recently. Tajikistan is among the top five states on the planet in terms of drug confiscation. The world community's perception of Central Asia as one of the largest drug terminals is of enormous detriment to official Dushanbe's prestige. This problem can be resolved by taking a new approach expressed in the coordinated actions of all the region's states.

During the past 15 years, Central Asia has significantly changed, a new world, new reality, and new threats have arisen here, but some features of the not-so-distant common past still remain. Today the region is going through one of the most important periods in its recent history. This coincides with the new stage in human development—globalization, which is perceived ambiguously in scientific circles, from neo-colonialism to the highest degree of human development. But whatever the case, Central Asia must occupy a worthy place in the world community by relying on its available resources, the use of which will only be effective when each state of the region defines its interests based on the real state of affairs.

The current situation is prompting the region to draw up new forms of regional cooperation that can promote the stable development of all the states in Central Asia.