

Conflict Studies Research Centre



Tajikistan Waiting For A Storm?

Henry Plater-Zyberk

May 2004

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

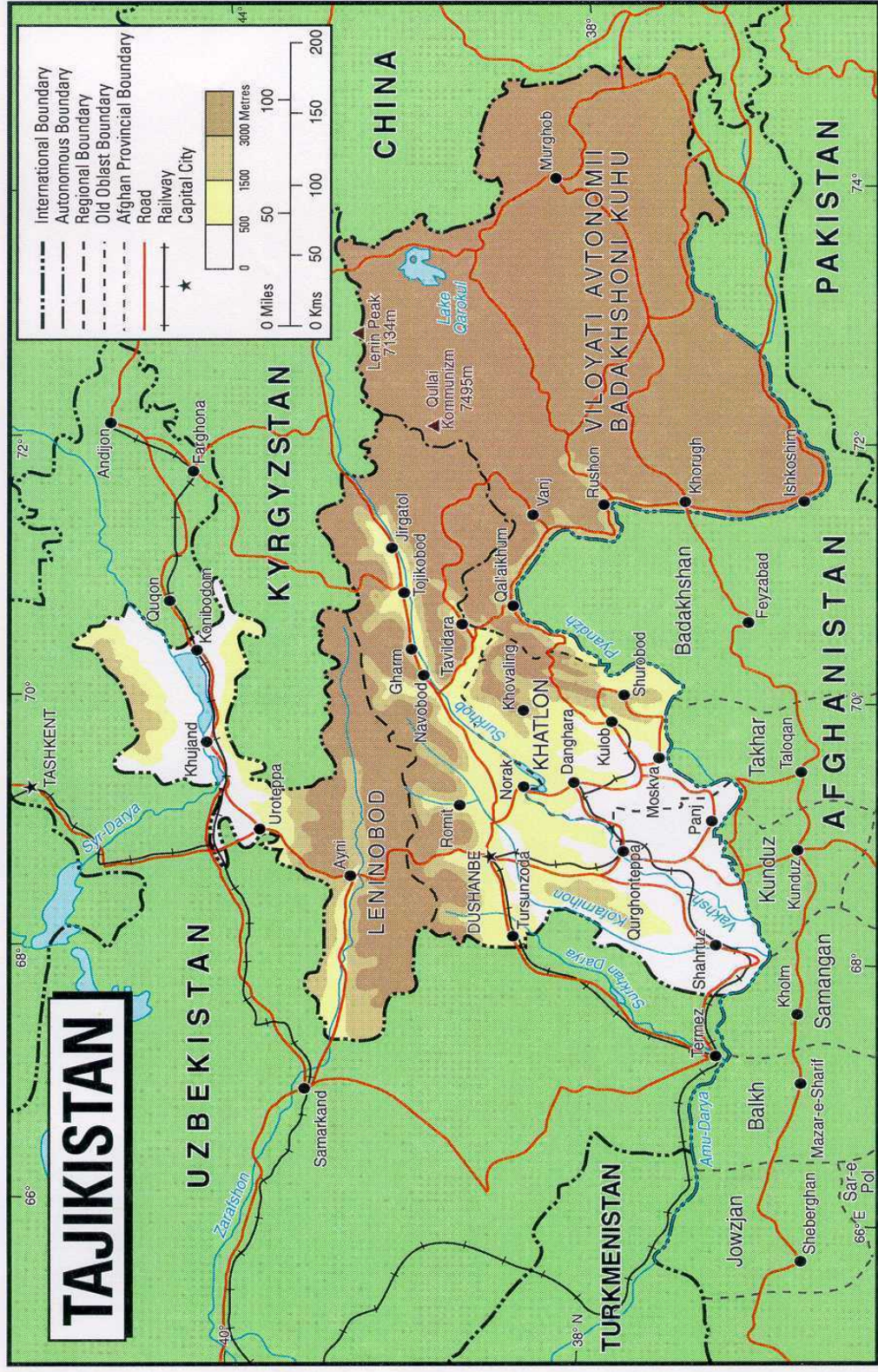
Henry Plater-Zyberk

Key Points

- * Tajikistan has been slowly stabilizing since 1997, after a long civil war.
- * Tajik power structures, controlled by President Rakhmonov, have developed steadily.
- * But Russian border guards and 201st Motor Rifle Division are still important for stability.
- * Many other countries now offer limited assistance, especially in combating the dramatic increase in drug smuggling from Afghanistan.
- * Dushanbe uses its new foreign links as a bargaining chip with Moscow, damaging relations.
- * Growing economic hardship and unabating corruption and patronage in the state administration may fuel radical religious groups.

Contents

Summary	1
After the War	1
The Tajik Army – Strongest Among Equals	3
The Russians in Tajikistan	4
The Border	7
Looking For New Partners	9
Drugs & Thugs	11
Islam	14
Economic Trends & Relationships	15
Annex 1 – Drugs Intercepts in Tajikistan	20



General Staff Map Section, GSGS 11836 (CAD), Edition 5-GSGS, September 1996
 Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative
 Produced by Military Survey, Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom 1996
 © Crown Copyright 1996

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

Henry Plater-Zyberk

Summary

The most distant from Moscow and the poorest of all former Soviet Republics, Tajikistan has had only seven years of uneasy peace in its twelve year history. After five years of bloody internal conflicts a peace agreement created an internal compromise based on the narrow interests of clans and regional administrations, resulting in corruption and inefficiency. The events of 9/11 brought Tajikistan, Afghanistan's neighbour with which it shares a spoken language, to the attention of the richest and most powerful countries and international organizations of the world.

This sudden show of cupboard love came in the form of financial assistance, credits, joint programmes, economic initiatives, offers of cooperation and projects to keep Tajikistan stable at all costs. Not much of this attention has turned into economic achievements, perceptible improvements in the performance of the state and regional administrations or the gradual atrophy of political tribalism, but it brought Tajikistan new opportunities on the international arena and gave the leadership in Dushanbe a limited opportunity for political and security partnerships, occasionally upsetting its relationship with its only dependable ally, Russia.

These changes reinforced the position of the Tajik leadership but also brought new problems. Dramatic events in Afghanistan removed the threat of large scale cross border incursions of Islamic militants but brought a rapidly growing drug industry and corresponding development of drug producing and smuggling networks to and across Tajikistan. The profits made by the smugglers and officials are potentially a time bomb which the inefficient and corrupt administration, divided by ethnic and regional interests, is incapable of disarming. The new international contacts have made Dushanbe more assertive vis à vis Moscow. Russian armed formation had saved the Tajik leadership on several occasions, largely because that was in Russia's interest, but now, as the Tajik economy slowly improves and foreign assistance in various forms begins to pour in, Moscow is insisting that Tajiks should contribute financially to the upkeep of the Russian units stationed in Tajikistan. Both sides try to avoid an open rift which could force Moscow to recall its troops. This would weaken Russia's influence in the region and probably spell the end of the present Tajik leadership, resulting probably in a series of internal armed conflicts and a subsequent rupture along clan and regional lines.

After the War

The birth pangs of the Tajik state, after the fragmentation of the USSR, were particularly long and painful. Tajikistan announced its independence two weeks after the failed coup in Moscow, on 9 September 1991. This resulted in immediate

open conflict between the Tajik communist bureaucrats, determined to hang on to power and an ad hoc coalition of Islamic and democratic forces. When in 1992 the political discord turned into civil war, none of the fighting factions had superiority in numbers or in weapons.

Moscow had only one division in Tajikistan and in contrast with the situation in most other republics never lost control over its personnel and equipment. Tajikistan had no military units which it could call its own and the forces of the republican Ministry of Internal Affairs were badly equipped and divided along tribal and regional lines. The involvement of the Russian division and border troops contingent proved decisive in the conflict, which during its initial phase alone claimed up to 100,000 dead, 600,000 displaced within the country and a further 80,000 immigrating to neighbouring countries, mainly to Afghanistan.¹ At the end of the civil war the total number of Tajik refugees in Afghanistan had reached 150,000.² Most of them have returned to Tajikistan, although 20,000 decided to stay in Afghanistan.

In December 1996, the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Said Abdullah Nuri, signed an agreement on a political solution to the civil war. The agreement stressed the speedy implementation of the conciliation process, including a universal amnesty, reciprocal pardoning of persons who took part in the military and political confrontation between 1992 and 1996, a full exchange of prisoners of war and other prisoners. Section III of the "Protocol on Military Issues" of the agreement addressed the changes in the power structures of the Tajik government, including a review of the commanding personnel.

The official peace talks were concluded on 27 June 1997 in Moscow, where Rakhmonov and Nuri signed the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. The agreement established a foundation for the national reconciliation process but did not satisfy everyone. It provoked two mutinies, in August 1997 and November 1998, led by a rebel warlord, the former commander of the Tajik rapid deployment unit, Makhmud Khudoyberdyev.³

The peace agreement allowed the strongest political and military players to divide the most important posts of the state apparatus and other influential positions among themselves. Seven years later, after some deft political manoeuvring, the Kulob elite (from President Rakhmonov's region) controls most of the important positions, treating every political challenge as an attack on the constitution and the stability of the country. This form of political monopoly on power precludes combating corruption, introducing professionalisation of the state and regional administrations and selection of state administrators based on merit, not their regional and ethnic connection.

In June 2003 Tajikistan held a constitutional referendum. Its conduct has been criticized by outside observers but its results allowed President Rakhmonov to run for another two seven-year terms. The bicameral Tajik Supreme Assembly has no power.

The power structures in Tajikistan were also carved up by clans. Today President Rakhmonov's kinsmen control all of them, together with other ministries and ambassadorial posts. Many misuse their position and are unashamed of their extracurricular incomes, opulent houses and mansions built ostensibly on meagre state salaries. Their sources of unofficial income are not investigated, creating

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

resentment and contempt for the authorities among the poor majority of Tajiks. In 2001, 83% of the Tajik population lived below the poverty level.⁴ This enormous, barely diminishing gap between poor and rich Tajiks may trigger future social problems and violent conflicts. However, for a while at least, barring a successful assassination attempt President Rakhmonov and his supporters can feel safe, protected by growing and increasingly effective Tajik power structures, the Russian 201st division, Russian border guard units and their air support arms stationed in Tajikistan.

The Tajik Army – Strongest Among Equals

When, after the collapse of the USSR, the new, independent republics acquired Soviet units, military bases, hardware, personnel, military educational establishments and other defence assets, Tajikistan had very little to acquire. Tajikistan is the only republic of the former USSR which has not taken over even one subunit of the Soviet Army. It was part of the Central Asian Military District, whose HQ was in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Its air cover was assured by two interceptor regiments in Andizhan and Termez, both also in Uzbekistan. There were no air force units in Tajikistan. Its air defence radar network cover was only above 5,000m.

The only large Soviet army unit on its soil was the 201st Motor Rifle Division, headquartered in Dushanbe. Russia understood that if it were to give up this division, it would lose influence in Tajikistan, possibly irrevocably, and the unit and its equipment would be divided up by the fighting groups and clans. The Tajik government had few commanding officers and skilled military personnel, so the Russian military personnel was allowed to stay. The shortage of qualified officers was such that the first Tajik defence minister was a Russian colonel, Aleksandr Shyshlyannikov, promoted later to the rank of major general. He was replaced after three years, on 7 April 1995, by a Tajik, Major-General Sherali Khayrulloev. Even then a suitable and politically reliable commander could not be found within the Tajik MOD. The new minister had made his career in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and had an unblemished track record as a supporter of President Rakhmonov.⁵

The first official Tajik military formation was established by president Nabiev in May 1992. It served as the Presidential Guard unit. The same year saw the creation of the special forces brigade of the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs. Both units were staffed mainly with inhabitants from Kulob region.

The birthday of the Tajik Army is officially recognized as 23 February 1993, when its Dushanbe garrison marched solemnly through the capital in a show of force. Eleven years later the Tajik army remains small, largely depending on Russian support and expertise. This is partly due to the difficult economic situation of the country and partly because the Tajik leadership has been reluctant to keep all armed formations under one command and has allowed several power wielding structures to establish their own units. Even the Emergencies Ministry has up to 2,500 troops guarding the generally peaceful Tajik-Kyrgyz and Tajik-Uzbek borders. Some of its units include Islamic fighters, who in the past fought against President Rakhmonov but were later integrated into government organizations in accordance with the peace agreement of 1997. Another unit with members of the former Islamic opposition is said to be the Dushanbe based 25th battalion.⁶

Until recently, president Rakhmonov felt no need to radically strengthen the Tajik Army. The country has been in economic trouble since its inception but to prioritize expenditure on power organizations was not difficult. Yet the army has not been at the top of Rakhmonov's list. His biggest worry was his internal opponents. To defeat them he had to reinforce and modernize the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Security Ministry. His list of security priorities was made easier by the presence of the Russian 201st Motor Rifle Division and the Russian border troops which have been guarding some of the most difficult sections of the Tajik-Afghan border and until the end of 1990s the Tajik-Chinese border, with Moscow bearing almost the full cost of their upkeep in Tajikistan. Relying on the Russian troops, border guards and advisers was safer and much less expensive than creating his own.

Short of money, military equipment and military expertise, the Tajiks had problems with their conscription system in spite of the large pool of more than 82,000 young men reaching military age annually.⁷ In the northern part of Tajikistan the authorities have had to resort to coercive measures.⁸

The most powerful and versatile Tajik unit is the 1st Special Forces Operational Brigade based in Varzob Gorge. The brigade nominally belongs to the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs but its tasks include special operations in Afghanistan and it would serve as the presidential guard in case of an internal conflict. The brigade consists of four battalions armed with tanks and APCs, and is supported by a helicopter unit, the only national air unit in the republic. The four battalions have highly specialized and well trained subunits deployed around the country. Ninety percent of the brigade's officers graduated from Russian military schools and academies and every second of them served in Afghanistan. General Sukhrob Kasymov, commander of the brigade, said in December 2001 that his troops had been training fighters of the Northern Alliance for their anti-Taliban campaign. All commands in the brigade are given in Russian.⁹ Colonel Kasymov, promoted since to Lieutenant General, commanded the Interior Ministry forces in August 1997 against the supporters of former interior minister Yakub Salimov and Makhmud Khudoyberdiyev when they attempted to overthrow President Rakhmonov.¹⁰

The Russians in Tajikistan

Russo-Tajik relations are based on the Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, signed in Moscow on 25 May 1993 and followed by 90 bilateral cooperation documents, some of them concerning defence and security matters, endorsed by the presidents of both countries. Russian army troops and border guards help to keep Tajikistan stable. Their presence in Tajikistan is most convenient for the leadership in Dushanbe and secures Russia's interests in the region, from which it is separated by two other countries. The Russian influence in Tajikistan is acceptable to China, other regional powers, the USA and Europe, all of which are concerned about radical Islamic movements in the region and drugs, and for whom every alternative to President Rakhmonov looks unconvincing.

The 201st division was once compared to the safety pin in a hand grenade - if it is pulled out the shrapnel of the explosion will reach Moscow¹¹ because Russia would instantly lose influence in Tajikistan. The division consists of 92nd, 191st and 149th motor rifle regiments, 401 independent tank battalion, self-propelled artillery and air defence missile regiments and 670th air group.¹² The aviation group, based near Dushanbe, had in 2003 five SU-25 ground attack aircraft. Russia rotates this unit

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

with other air units from Russia.¹³ Serving in the division is a hardship mission, but the rewards are considerable: the officers receive double pay, one year of service counts for three and they are paid for their leave trips home.¹⁴

The status of the division was legalized in April 1999 when Russia and Tajikistan signed the Treaty on the Status of the Russian Military Base and the Terms of Its Presence in Tajikistan.¹⁵ Central Asia was receiving full attention from the Russian leadership and Tajikistan was seen as a vital element of this new policy. When Vladimir Putin took over from Boris Yeltsin, Russian foreign policy, especially in Central Asia, became much more purposeful and coherent. Dushanbe was instantly assured of Moscow's support. Both sides began to talk about changing the status of the division to a military base. During his visit to the division in April 2003, President Putin praised the unit and said that Tajikistan and Russia plan "the further strengthening of our presence here".¹⁶ During the visit, the 201st division became, on paper at least, the 4th Russian military base.¹⁷ By May 2003, the commander of the 201st Division, Major General Perminov said that the process of turning the division into a base was "in the completing stage". Part of the process was to shift it from the centre of Dushanbe to its outskirts, making some Tajiks less nervous that it was too close to the seats of Tajik power and could interfere quickly and decisively in case of internal struggle. The new facilities are much more comfortable and suitable for a long term deployment.¹⁸

The problem facing Russian politicians and military accountants is Dushanbe's unwillingness to pay its share of the upkeep of the Russian troops deployed in Tajikistan. The Tajiks want to be paid a \$50m rental fee for the Russian satellite surveillance station "Okno" (*"Window"*) in Nurek, which the Soviet Ministry of Defence began to build in the 1980s. The station became operational on 18 July 2002.¹⁹ Tajikistan demands the ownership of the Russian hardware on its territory, expects Moscow to write off the \$300m debt it owes Russia.²⁰

The disagreement between the two countries went so far that in March 2004, the process of establishing the Russian military base in Tajikistan was suspended²¹ although as early as August 2003 the Tajiks were denying that they disagreed with Russia on the conditions on which Russian troops were stationed on Tajik soil.²²

The Tajik strategy is risky and might cost the present leadership in Dushanbe dearly. Their calculation seems to be that Moscow will not risk losing its historical role and influence in Tajikistan, especially now when the USA is willing to support regimes threatened by radical Islamic groups. An increasingly pro-American Uzbekistan may show interest in the area which it once controlled. Dushanbe also knows that if Russia were to pull out its troops and border guards from the Afghan border, it would have to move its anti drug "barrier" to the Russo-Kazakh border or establish new and even more politically and financially costly alliances with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, in the unlikely case of a Russian pull-out, the present Tajik leadership could not count on the same level of support from any other country.

Moscow has a very powerful economic weapon if it wants to show its dissatisfaction with Dushanbe. It can restrict the influx of Tajik guest-workers to Russia. This argument has been used in the past when Russia wanted to show displeasure with President Rakhmonov's policies.²³ Between 2000 and 2002, over 500,000 Tajiks worked at one time or another abroad, most of them in Russia, and the remittances sent home amounted in 2002 to \$250m.²⁴

The traditionalists among the Russian politicians, experts and commentators cannot envisage “losing” Tajikistan. Colonel General Leonid Ivashov, former director of the main department for international military cooperation of the Russian Defence Ministry, and involved in drafting most of the defence agreements with Dushanbe, argues that the Tajiks owe Russia so much “that compensation for functioning of the 201st division represents only kopecks”.²⁵ However, some Russian politicians are quite happy to call Dushanbe’s bluff. Tajikistan is, after all, far away from Russia, it has no important natural resources and has plenty of self-inflicted problems. If, after a Russian pull-out, the leaders were to be threatened by reemerging Islamic militant opposition they would have to beg Russia to intervene, to save their positions and very likely their lives. Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee said in a radio interview on 3 May 2004 that the 201st division might be withdrawn.²⁶

The Tajik demands are undoubtedly the result of the new American presence in the region and Washington’s willingness to “invest” in new alliances. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, a well informed Russian daily, announced in May 2003 that the Russian military presence in Tajikistan had been reinforced and that this was Moscow’s response to the expansion of the US military presence in the region.²⁷ This may explain one of the principal reasons why Moscow might reluctantly accept some of Dushanbe’s financial demands. The anti-USA/NATO lobby in Moscow is still very influential and happy to present US involvement in the area, no matter how innocuous, as a fiendish attempt to undermine Russia’s God-given rights in Central Asia. They pretend to believe that the recent formation of the countries in the region make their sovereignty somehow incomplete and negotiable.

Tajikistan takes part in some of the CIS air defence exercises, usually conducted and paid for by Russia. Such exercises are of limited value for the Tajiks as they have no air force and are not likely to be assaulted from the air, but they allow Russia to survey the skies of the Central Asian countries and some of their neighbours, maintain close links with Tajik officers and to be first in the queue when Dushanbe starts the bidding for air defence systems.

Since the beginning of 2003, Russia increased the number of joint military and military-border guard exercises with Tajikistan. Both types of exercises aim at protecting Tajik borders from incursion by unspecified forces from Afghanistan.

At the beginning of April 2003, the Collective Rapid Deployment Forces of the CIS conducted a tactical exercise at the Tajik Lohur range, about 40km southwest of Dushanbe. The exercise involved a battalion from the 201st Division.²⁸ Russian and Tajik border guards held joint exercises near the Tajik-Afghan border in June 2003²⁹ and at the beginning of August 2003, subunits of the Tajik 3rd Motor Rifle Division and an artillery brigade, together with 191st regiment of the Russian 201st Division conducted command-staff exercises in support of the frontier posts on the Tajik-Afghan border.³⁰ The exercise was held at Sumbula, in the Khatlon Province. Two weeks later, the Russian 201st division and Tajik power structures conducted joint exercises at the Lohur training grounds.³¹ At the beginning of September 2003, the 201st division took part in another joint exercise.³² On 21 November 2003, the Russian helicopters supporting border guards units in Tajikistan conducted a tactical exercise.³³ Russia and Tajikistan conducted a joint anti-terrorist exercise in March 2004, with the 201st Motor Rifle Division, the 3rd Tajik Motor Rifle Division and the Russian border guards of the Pyanj Detachment. The exercise was to prepare troops for a possible attempt by a large group of terrorists to break in from Afghanistan. The exercise was commanded by Major General Yuriy

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

Perminov, commander of the 201st Division, with the Tajik Defence Minister Colonel General Sherali Khayrulloev present as an observer of the exercise, which involved all the power structures of Tajikistan.³⁴

The border guard contacts of the two countries and all forms of interaction between them acquired a new significance after March 2003 when the Russian Border Guards Service was incorporated into the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Russian counterpart of the Tajik Security Ministry. The Russian Ministry of Defence and the FSB now pay the biggest share of the joint exercise costs. The Tajik Ministries of Defence, Interior and Security together with the Tajik border guards must contribute to most of the exercises, but their budgets and capabilities to conduct operations involving several organisations from two countries are modest. With its annual military expenditure assessed at \$35.4m, Tajikistan depends entirely on Russia.

With the approval of the Tajik government the Russians are rebuilding the old airbase at Chkalovsk. The total number of Russian troops in Tajikistan, including military experts and consultants, is said to be about 20,000.³⁵

The Russians are changing the legal status of many of their officers in Tajikistan and this allows them to put a public relations spin on the statements concerning their role in the country. Major General Yury Perminov, commander of the 201st division, said in May 2003 that since 30 April there were no Russian advisers in the Tajik armed forces, adding that the 201st division continues to train Tajik junior military specialists.³⁶ Young Tajik officers are trained in the Tajik Military Institute where there are 10 Russian instructors.³⁷

In May 2003 Tajikistan announced that it intended to reduce the number of cadets to be sent to Russian military schools and would send more military students to France, India and Canada. The main reason for this decision was that Russia was charging for the cadets' education whereas other countries offered attractive scholarships. Until 2003 Tajikistan was sending, on average, 100 men to Russian military schools and academies annually. In spring 2003, Dushanbe announced that it planned to send 16 young men to Russian military schools and 40 to India's. The group sent to India was to become helicopter pilots and navigators, paratroopers, signals and artillery officers.³⁸ This was an astute move, as the Indian armed forces are equipped with a wide variety of Soviet and Russian armament and other military equipment. The newly trained Tajik officers would have no difficulties in using similar equipment in the Tajik army. All the potential cadets were from the Tajik Military Lyceum established in 1984 in Dushanbe as one of many Soviet Suvorov military schools for children.³⁹ Its graduates are expected to join the country's military elite.

Moscow reacted quickly to the changed Tajik plan. The Tajik MOD announced in August 2003 that 56 Tajik military school leavers would be sent to study in Russia.⁴⁰ This will keep the number of Tajik officers trained in Russia very high. In 2003, there were 600 Tajik military trainees in Russia, 25 in India, 24 in China, 4 in the UK, 4 in the USA and 2 in Canada.⁴¹

The Border

Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, asked by an American journalist in the early 1990s why Russian soldiers were dying on the Tajik-Afghan border, answered

“The borders of Tajikistan are the borders of Russia”.⁴² This remark reflected very much the state of mind of many old-style Russian officials. Even those who may have cringed at Grachev’s remarks had no doubts that Russia had to defend the Tajik-Afghan border, mainly in Russia’s own interest. A whole set of arguments were produced for domestic and international consumption. They ranged from a mythical threat coming from the USA to Russia’s inability to protect its 7,000 km long southern border with Kazakhstan⁴³ and that Islamic extremism would have a domino effect in the region, reaching Russia’s southern borders and slipping through to Tatarstan, Bashkirya and the North Caucasus. Their position was partly vindicated after 9/11, when many countries recognised that the Russian military contribution to Tajikistan’s stability has had a beneficial effect on the whole region.

The Russian Group of Border Troops in the Republic of Tajikistan was established on 19 October 1992 on the basis of the military element of the old Soviet Central Asian Border District.⁴⁴ The agreement on the status of the Russian border troops in Tajikistan was signed on 25 May 1993.⁴⁵ It was originally signed for five years, with an automatic option for extension for the next five years. Article 9 of the agreement envisaged a step-by-step transfer of border guard duties on the Tajik-Afghan border to the Tajiks. Both sides allowed the agreement to lapse in May 2003 as the two countries could not agree on financing of the Russian border contingent. According to Maxim Peshkov, the Russian ambassador in Dushanbe, Russia covers almost all expenses of the Russian border troops stationed in Tajikistan, in spite of the agreements, which stipulated that the Tajiks were to pay 50% of the costs of stationing the Russian border guards in their country.⁴⁶ At the end of 2002 11,000 Russian border guards worked on the Tajik-Afghan border.⁴⁷ Most of the officers and NCOs in the Russian border troops units are Russian but most of the soldiers are Tajiks. Russian officers serving on the Tajik-Afghan border are rotated from regional border units. Officers serving in Dushanbe serve five years (on the Tajik-Afghan border three years) before they return to Russia.

Some high ranking Tajik officials suggest that Russian border guards are not needed to protect the Tajik borders and that they are hindering rather than helping Tajik attempts to intercept drug smugglers. This was seen by Russia as a negotiating move or an attempt to take over the border check points controlled by the Russians, to make money from drug traffickers.

Criticism of certain elements of the Russian border guards in Tajikistan was on occasion justified. In autumn 2002, Major General Vladimir Valentinovich Platoshin, the commander of the Russian Border Guard air contingent in Tajikistan, was shot in his own Mercedes E290, the price of which exceeded four times his annual salary, allegedly by an unknown woman to whom he gave his personal pistol. General Ivanov, from the same unit, was arrested at the end of the 1990s for running a drug network.⁴⁸ Four Russian border guard officers were arrested in Moscow in 2002 and accused of cooperation with drug smugglers on one of the most important and sensitive border posts on the Tajik-Afghan border.⁴⁹

Major General Nuralisho Nazarov, First Deputy Chairman of the Tajik Border Protection Committee announced on 19 September 2003 that Tajik border troops were ready to take over the responsibilities of guarding Russian-controlled sections of the Tajik border. General Nazarov added that the cooperation between the two sides had left much to be desired, although there was no friction between Tajik and Russian border troops. His claim of readiness to take over the job was rejected a week later by Saidamir Zukhurov, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for defence

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

and security,⁵⁰ and President Rakhmonov acknowledged publicly the importance of the Russian border troops in Tajikistan by receiving in November 2003 the departing commander of the Russian border contingent in Tajikistan, General Markin and his replacement Major General Aleksandr Baranov.⁵¹

The Russians, however, would not let the case rest. In October 2003, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Council Nikolay Bordyuzha said at a news conference in Moscow that Tajikistan and Russia had failed to resolve their differences concerning cooperation of border guards at the Tajik-Afghan border. The Russians insisted on the Tajiks paying half of the upkeep of the Russian border guards in Tajikistan. President Rakhmonov's adviser, Suhrob Sharifov, retorted that Tajikistan would gradually take over the protection of its borders whether Russia agreed with it or not.⁵² He was unexpectedly supported by General Andrey Nikolayev, the chairman of the defence committee of the Russian State Duma and the former head of the Russian border troops, who agreed that, as an independent state, Tajikistan is entitled to ask the Russian troops to leave but warned that Tajik border guards were not yet ready to carry out their tasks independently.⁵³

The Tajiks are not in a strong position to argue. If the Russians were forced to leave they would probably take with them their air support unit, or demand a very high payment for their services. Both sides would have to address the supporting role played by the 201st division and, as its subunits cover 11 sections of the Tajik-Afghan border, its readiness to interact with Tajik-only border guards.⁵⁴ The Russians could be expected to request a reappraisal of the cost sharing of joint border guard and military exercises. Russia has also been careful with training only a small number of Tajik border guard officers, more than 200 over the last 10 years. Forty-eight border guards are now studying in Russia; not many, considering that most full time officer training programmes take several years.⁵⁵ Some of these officers have had to fill posts on the Tajik-Chinese border, abandoned by the Russian border guards at the end of the 1990s. Others will be responsible for patrolling comparatively peaceful borders with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The Tajik training centre for border guards opened in December 2003. The shortage of Tajik border guard officers will continue for the next several years, strengthening Moscow's hand in the negotiations with Dushanbe.

Forcing the Russian border troops out of Tajikistan could have grave consequences for the leadership in Dushanbe. This risk has been recognised by Abdurahmon Azimov, Chairman the Tajik State Border Committee. He accepted that Tajikistan expects to fully finance its troops,⁵⁶ also added two months later that "Even if the Tajik border guards are in charge of patrolling the border, the institution of Russian border guard advisers will remain here".⁵⁷

On 4 June, Presidents Putin and Rakhmonov met and agreed that Moscow will hand over to Dushanbe's control a 1,000km sector of the Tajik-Afghan border and the Russian military are to get the land that their bases in Tajikistan stand on for free, indefinitely. No timescale was announced, but Rakhmonov and Putin also agreed that the Russian border troops' stay in Tajikistan would be extended for a year - to 2006.

Looking For New Partners

In the post 9/11 climate Tajikistan has been "noticed" by several rich and influential countries. For the countries taking part in the post 9/11 operation in

Afghanistan, Tajikistan was an attractive partner. Tajiks are the largest minority in Afghanistan and the two countries have almost identical languages.

The Tajik leaders were made instantly aware that their country had become an important ally for the anti-Taliban coalition and tried to capitalize on its desirability by diversifying their military and security contacts. They agreed to provide facilities for the US campaign in Afghanistan, stressing that they could be used only for the humanitarian aspect of the campaign. In early 2002 the USA had up to eight C-130 cargo planes at the edges of the Dushanbe city airport.⁵⁸ Most of Tajikistan's new, richer defence and security partners appreciated the stabilizing presence of the Russian troops in Tajikistan and knew that there was no need to invest large sums in a military partnership with Dushanbe but were ready to provide funds for the Tajik border, security and law enforcement bodies, that is the organizations responsible for addressing their own concerns in the area: drugs, radicals and organized crime.

The US government earmarked, 1.1m dollars for Tajik security and law enforcement aid for 2003, out of a total package of \$ 49m.⁵⁹ By May 2003, the US had provided Tajik border guards with a half a million dollars worth of uniforms, short wave radios and other equipment. US government assistance for Tajik border guards in 2002 was \$700,000.⁶⁰

The first official warning that Tajik-Russian relations are not what they used to be came from the very top, a month before the lapse of the border agreement. In April 2003, President Rakhmonov said, for the first time in the 11 years of his rule, that he was "uncomfortable with the present state of Russo-Tajik relations," adding that "we have to raise them to a new level". He declared his readiness to "consolidate relations with the foremost countries of the world, such as the United States, France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Canada, Japan and others".⁶¹

In 2003 Tajikistan developed close military cooperation with India. Threatened by a variety of radical Islamic movements, India has developed several successful security alliances. One of the biggest buyers of Soviet/Russian made weapons for the last several decades, India can be an attractive partner to countries using such equipment who are willing to broaden their military contacts outside the former USSR. Expansion of military-technical cooperation between India and Tajikistan was discussed between Tajik Defence Minister and visiting Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha in January 2003. The two ministers discussed the possibility of training Tajik military personnel in India's military schools and jointly combating international terrorism.⁶² Far behind Russia, India trains the second largest group of Tajik officers. In August 2003, Tajikistan held a joint anti-terrorist exercise with India, the first Tajik exercise with a non-CIS member. The exercise took place in the Fakhorobod range, 30 km south of Dushanbe. India provided transport aircraft for assault troops. Tajikistan contributed two small transport aircraft. The Tajik army was represented mainly by the 7th air assault brigade.⁶³

Among the European countries, Tajikistan has developed especially strong military contacts with France. By agreement, the French contingent in Dushanbe, which in October 2003 numbered 100 soldiers was, according to the Tajik MOD's press official Zarobiddin Siroyev, to stay in Tajikistan "indefinitely".⁶⁴ Germany and the UK are cautious about offering Tajikistan military cooperation, but are happy to assist Dushanbe with combating drug trafficking. The Tajik organizations benefiting from this assistance are mainly the Tajik Drugs Control Agency and the

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

Ministry of Internal Affairs. In December 2003, the German government donated to the Tajik Drug Control Agency six Russian Zhiguli cars and several computers.⁶⁵

In March 2003, China gave the Tajik Ministry of Interior several cars with off-road capabilities, uniforms and equipment.⁶⁶ China claims a part of Tajikistan's Gorno Badakhshan region but its fear of a possible resurrection of radical Islamic movements in the region makes Beijing happy to cooperate on a bilateral level and within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to which both countries belong.

Tajikistan is one of the biggest supporters of stronger cooperation of the CIS's law enforcement agencies but its interests are primarily in international anti-drug cooperation, not in defence and security blocs. Dushanbe is equally happy to cooperate with the SCO combating drugs and terrorism. Between 6-12 August 2003, Tajikistan took part in the first SCO anti-terrorist exercise in Kazakhstan and China.⁶⁷

Tajikistan, the only Persian-language country in Central Asia, has also been courted by Iran since its independence. In 1992 Iran began to train a group of Tajik diplomats and the two countries developed cultural links in the early 1990s. Talks between Tajik Defence Minister Sherali Khayrulloev and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsin Aminzade in February 2003 discussed the possibility of training Tajik military personnel in Iranian military schools.⁶⁸

Drugs & Thugs

Seven years after the end of the civil war the Tajik power structures' main concerns are: the preservation of still delicate political stability; to assist, within the limits of their powers, the economic growth of the country; to monitor and conduct preventive action against radical Islamic movements and to combat organised crime and the rapidly growing drug trafficking networks. The problem of drug smuggling has become much worse in the last two years, mainly because the new leadership in Kabul is not able to control the booming drug industry in Afghanistan. A UN survey released in October 2003 shows that Afghanistan is now the world's largest drug producer. The survey also shows that seven percent of the Afghan population, about 1.7m people, are involved in the industry. Total income from drug production and trafficking may equal half of the Afghan domestic product.⁶⁹ According to Tajik sources the poppy fields in Afghanistan increased from 74,000 hectares in 2002 to 80,000 ha in 2003 and the area used for drug agriculture in Afghan Badakhshan Province, near the Tajik border, increased by 55%.⁷⁰ There are about 500 heroin producing laboratories of various sizes in Afghanistan.⁷¹ Poppy plantation areas have increased since the beginning of 2003, especially along Kunduz-Taloqan road in Afghanistan. Twenty new heroin production laboratories have been established in Afghanistan.⁷²

Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov was quoted in November 2003, after a Collective Security Treaty Organisation session in Kyrgyzstan, as saying that the value of narcotic substances produced in Afghanistan is \$2bn.⁷³ Drugs "Made in Afghanistan" are smuggled to Russia and in many cases further to Europe, via Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The Turkmen route has the advantage of the porous Turkmen-Kazakh and Kazakh-Russian borders. The Tajik route has the advantage of many mountainous, unguarded passages on the Tajik-Kyrgyz and Kyrgyz-Kazakh border, heavy traffic of goods to and from Tajikistan and its importance as a transit

point to and from Afghanistan. The main Tajik drug routes are via Badakhshan, the city of Pyanj and Khatlon region.⁷⁴

Tajikistan represents for smugglers the so-called Northern Route, and accounts for 90% of heroin seized in Central Asia and over 60% in the CIS. The rewards for smugglers and those who collaborate with them are staggering in this impoverished part of the world. The price of one kilo of heroin on the Afghan side is about \$9,000. It goes up to \$25,000 in Tajik Badakhshan and by the time it reaches Moscow it costs \$100,000.⁷⁵

Drug smuggling from Afghanistan is combated jointly by the Russian and Tajik border guards and law enforcement bodies. General Nikolay Patrushev, the man in charge of the Russian FSB and its border guards said in December 2003 that 84% of drugs confiscated by his subordinates came from Afghanistan.⁷⁶ The power wielding organisations in Russia and Tajikistan began to address the threat of drugs, with the level of attention it has so richly deserved, only in recent years. As a result they win occasional, widely publicised “battles” but are losing the drug war. The Tajik authorities claim that they confiscate 10-12% of heroin smuggled from Afghanistan. The UN International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) assessed these intercept figures at 3-4%. On the Afghan side of the border, drug control is practically non-existent and drug trade is supported actively by local warlords who need money to pay their troops and maintain their status. The individual ethnic groups living in the border area have their own drug smuggling networks.⁷⁷ Between 1992 and 2003 the Russian border guards and drug smugglers were involved in 561 firefights of which 22 took place in the first nine months of 2003. During this period the Russian border guards discovered 247 arms caches, seized 1,369 firearms, 573,902 pieces of ammunition, 698.5kg of explosives and 25,318 kg of drugs, including 8441.2kg of heroin.⁷⁸

Lieutenant General Aleksander Markin, commander of the Russian Border Directorate in Tajikistan, warned that with the current rate of drug trafficking it will take at least 10-15 years to deal with it.⁷⁹

The Tajiks established their national Drug Enforcement Agency on 1 June 1999 – almost three years before Russia decided to set up a similar organisation. The agency became operational in the second quarter of 2000. It employs 350 people and is funded jointly by the UNDCP and the government of Tajikistan. According to Rustam Nazarov, the director of the agency, to combat this and other problems his organisation maintains close links with secret services and law enforcement agencies in the CIS countries and in Europe.⁸⁰

On 24 September 2003 Tajikistan announced the establishment of the Data Collecting and Processing Centre for combating drug trafficking at the Drug Control Agency. The centre, set up on the initiative of the UN Regional Office for Drugs and Crime, received financial support from the United States and Germany.⁸¹

With the cooperation of OSCE and NATO, Tajikistan had planned to open a border guard training centre for Central Asian countries.⁸² Dushanbe made its plans publicly known in September 2003, at a most inopportune moment, when Russia and Tajikistan were airing their dissatisfaction with the Tajik-Afghan border arrangements. Without Moscow's political and financial support the Tajik project was doomed. Concurrently, in September 2003, the Council of the CIS interior ministers decided to open a CIS centre for combating drug-related crimes with its

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

HQ in Moscow. The Central Asian HQ of the centre was to be either Dushanbe or Bishkek.⁸³

The Tajiks have improved the coordination among the main organisations combating drug production and trafficking: the Drug Control Agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Security and the Committee for the Protection of the Republic's State Border. The border drug intercepts have been growing every year but, even if one accepts optimistic Tajik statistics, about 90% of smuggled drugs reach their target. In 1999, the Tajik and Russian border guards seized on the Tajik-Afghan border 2,565 kg of drugs, including 708kg of heroin. In 2000 the drug intercepts increased to 7,128kg including 1,882kg of heroin. In the first eleven months of 2003, the smugglers on the Tajik-Afghan border had almost 8,500 kg of drugs confiscated, of which more than 5,200kg was heroin. By the end of the year some 10 tonnes of drugs were confiscated in Tajikistan.⁸⁴

Drug intercepts by the Tajik law enforcement organisations and the Russian border contingent are increasingly widely publicised, mainly to prove that something has been done to address the problem. Annex 1 contains details of intercepts given media coverage from January 2003-March 2004. The Tajik authorities are less open about drugs cultivated and produced in Tajikistan, where poppy fields are said to be very much in evidence. This is the price the Tajik government pays for keeping peace inside the country, by avoiding upsetting powerful officials profiting from the drug trade.⁸⁵ There is clear evidence that home grown and smuggled drugs are widely used in Tajikistan. S Musoyev, an employee of the Tajik Drug Control Agency, said at a round table meeting in Khujand that drug use in Tajikistan had reached catastrophic proportions.⁸⁶

Drugs smuggled from Afghanistan are brought to Tajikistan by caravans and couriers using illegal crossing points, left in caches on either side of the border, and at a convenient moment they are picked up from the Tajik side, hidden in cars, lorries and aircraft or transported by individual "mules". Since July 2003, when Tajikistan abolished the death penalty for women, the smugglers have increasingly used women drug-couriers. A man can receive the death penalty for possession of 5g or more of heroin.⁸⁷

In spite of official statements about enormous quantities of drugs confiscated annually by the Tajik law enforcement agencies and the Russian border guards in Tajikistan, the information provided by both authorities is released randomly depending on the political atmosphere and public relations requirements of the drug combating organisations. Most of the intercepted drugs appear to have been seized by Russian border units. The Tajik Drug Control Agency plays only an auxiliary role for its Russian partners.

Tajik and Russian border guards also tackle weapons traffickers, some of whom try to smuggle drugs and weapons in the same consignments. A large number of confiscated weapons are being sent to radical groups in Central Asia. From the beginning of January to the end of December 2003, the Russian and Tajik border guards confiscated 13 "Strela" portable anti-aircraft missile launchers; 33 firearms of various types and sizes; 4,900 pieces of ammunition, including missiles, artillery shells, grenades and 100kg of explosives.⁸⁸ Purely criminal organisations are unlikely to need portable anti-aircraft missiles. The same can be said of the 12 rounds for grenade launchers, 12 artillery shells and 40 hand grenades confiscated by Russian border troops in March 2004; and the 20 mines, two missiles and radio transceiver found in February, although criminal groups have been known to use

hand grenades and explosives from disarmed artillery shells for their own activities.⁸⁹

Drugs and weapons smuggling goes hand in hand with trafficking of illegal migrants. Most of those intercepted by Russian and Tajik border guards are sent back to Afghanistan. Successful drug and weapons traffickers developed a side line in trade of refugee certificates known as “red booklets” or “red certificates”, issued by the Tajik Immigration Service, and Tajik passports. A Tajik passport costs \$1,000 on the black market.⁹⁰ This is more than ten times the average monthly income in Tajikistan. The Tajik authorities are particularly worried about the uncontrolled flow of clandestine and fraudulent migrants, suspecting that in this way members of radical Islamic groups from Afghanistan and Pakistan try to enter Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries.

Islam

The radical form of Islam began to enter Central Asia during the late 1980s. In December 1987, the head of the Tajik Republican KGB, Vladimir Petkel, referring to radical Islamic movements, warned against hostile ideological centres already present in Tajikistan.⁹¹ In some parts of Tajikistan, like in other Central Asian countries, Islam quickly filled in the spiritual and social post-communist vacuum. Its path was made smoother by generous donations from Islamic organizations and individuals, permitting a rapid construction of mosques and Islamic schools. In 1989, there were 17 large mosques conducting Friday prayers in Tajikistan. By 1992 their number increased to 130. In 1994 there were 2,800 mosques and 150 Koranic schools in Tajikistan.⁹² During the civil war the most powerful of the Tajik Islamic organizations, the Islamic Rebirth Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), was banned after joining the Islamic-democratic opposition but still succeeded in organising 30 training and educational centres for its supporters.⁹³ The IRPT was legalised in 1998, under the national reconciliation accord, but its leaders have been closely monitored by the Tajik law enforcement organs. Unable to challenge President Rakhmonov, the IRPT joined mainstream political life without abandoning its main principles. Some articles of the IRPT paper “Nadzhot” (Salvation) suggest that certain elements of the party would be ready to implement strictly Islamic law if they were to come to power.⁹⁴

The main “Islamic” opponent of the Tajik leadership is Hizb ut-Tahrir el Islami (HuT) – the Islamic Liberation Party established in 1952 in Jerusalem. Originally militant and active, the HuT has retained its militant views but so far conducts mainly discreet, if persistent propaganda operations in Central Asian. Between 2000 and April 2003 the Tajik law enforcement organisations uncovered almost 100 HuT cells and seized several thousand books and leaflets. There has been no evidence that the HuT took part in violent operations recently but its publishing endeavours suggest that the organisation still fully supports militant Islam and may turn violent. The movement recently began to attract new, better educated adherents in Northern Tajikistan.⁹⁵ The slow resurgence of radical Islam in Tajikistan was acknowledged by the Tajik leaders some years ago. President Rakhmonov mentioned the presence of radical Islamic ideas in Tajik society in a speech on 20 September 2001 and warned that the education of young people could be misused by those propagating radical views.⁹⁶

According to Mahmud Mirzoyev, head of the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs Department for Combating Organised Crime, HuT has a wide network of loosely

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

connected cells, each with 10-15 people. Between 1999, when HuT began its activities in Tajikistan, and 2002, the Tajik authorities arrested 12 TuH activists and instituted 66 criminal proceedings against the organisation. Most were for distribution of extremist literature, but HuT has been accused in the past by the Tajik authorities of hostage taking and robbery.⁹⁷ The Tajik Security Ministry, the main organisation responsible for combating HuT, cooperates closely with the Russian FSB. HuT was placed on the terrorist list in Russia in February 2003 and in June 2003 the FSB arrested in Moscow 55 people on suspicion of having links with the organisation. One was found in possession of 400 grams of TNT, two detonators and 38 leaflets and books.⁹⁸

There are signs that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), pushed by Uzbek law enforcement organisations and the army out of the country, has been able to find shelter among pro-Islamic groups in Tajikistan.⁹⁹ The once powerful movement conducted guerrilla warfare in the 1990s but has been decimated by armed forces and law enforcement agencies and by the post 9/11 war in Afghanistan. The IMU may decide to join forces with the HuT and to adopt some of its more discreet methods to attract a section of the impoverished and disillusioned youth in Tajikistan.

If President Rakhmonov fails to address the most pressing economic issues, corruption and political patronage, the Islamic movements can count on new members, mostly young Tajiks. The first, truly worrying sign for the leadership in Dushanbe would be the appearance of suicide bombers in Tajikistan. “Unused” suicide killers could come to Central Asia once the coalition troops pull out of Iraq.

Economic Trends & Relationships

The key factors of Tajikistan’s continuing uneasy stability and development are good relations with Russia and steady economic growth. The most recent statistics showing 10% economic growth in 2003¹⁰⁰ look impressive only when one forgets the low starting point. Between 1992 and 2002 the population of Tajikistan increased by 14% to 6,250,000¹⁰¹ and the level of unemployment was estimated at 40%. Almost every third able bodied inhabitant of Tajikistan seeks work abroad, mainly in Russia.¹⁰² Tajik foreign debt was \$1.2bn in 2002, more than twice the annual revenue for the same year.¹⁰³

With its newly discovered geostrategic importance the leadership in Dushanbe is becoming slowly addicted to foreign financial assistance and credits. In May 2003, at the fourth consultative meeting of donor countries supporting Tajikistan, representatives of 11 countries and 18 organisations pledged \$9000m within three years, of which \$200m will be provided as humanitarian assistance.¹⁰⁴

With foreign help Dushanbe hopes to develop its oil fields. Tajikistan extracted 12,000 tonnes of oil in the first eight months of 2003 and imported 27,288 tonnes of oil products during the same period. The oil reserves in the republic are estimated by the Tajik Ministry of Power Engineering at 430 million tonnes but so far only 18 oil fields out of 28 are being exploited. Most Tajik oil reserves are buried seven kilometres underground and Tajik engineering companies lack the capacity to extract it.¹⁰⁵

Fresh water is potentially Tajikistan’s greatest accessible economic asset. According to President Rakhmonov, Tajikistan is the source of over 60% of the

water resources in Central Asia.¹⁰⁶ That may be so, but the Tajik leadership has failed to capitalise on it. Twelve years after the country declared independence, the administrative and economic climate in the Tajik oil engineering and water engineering industries, like in other branches of the Tajik economy, is not attractive to foreign investors.

The economic growth of Tajikistan has been made possible by the seven peaceful years achieved with Russian help, thanks to which Moscow was able to retain a foothold in the most distant part of its former empire. President Rakhmonov's periodic criticisms of Moscow's defence and security policies in the region are made mainly for internal consumption and as a bargaining chip. No other country has so much to lose and no other country is sufficiently interested in Tajikistan's stability to commit almost two divisions worth of various units, fund them and accept occasional combat casualties. Moscow also monitors the large Tajik community in Russia, looks for Dushanbe's Tajik enemies residing in Russia and sends them back even if they face the death penalty. Yakub Salimov, former interior minister, accused by the Tajik judiciary of high treason, was sent back to Dushanbe by the Russians at the end of February 2004.¹⁰⁷ Safaralli Sadirov, a leader of a group active during the 1992-1997 war, was arrested in Irkutsk in 2003 and extradited to Tajikistan in April 2004.¹⁰⁸ Moscow is also a useful ally in disputes with Tajikistan's neighbours, although none of them is seen in Dushanbe as a threat.

Uzbeks represent 25% of the Tajik population. About a million Tajiks live in Uzbekistan, a much smaller percentage of the large Uzbek population. The cities of Samarqand, Bukhara, Chuet and Sukh have Tajik majorities. The rights and obligations of the respective minorities and the Uzbek border policies create from time to time frictions between the two capitals. Tajikistan depends on Uzbek gas supplies and Uzbekistan uses Tajik water but many related contractual problems are not yet finalized. Tajikistan is particularly upset by what it sees as the arrogance of its bigger and more powerful neighbour. Tashkent conducts its border policies with Dushanbe paying no attention to its concerns, without explaining its border policies and accusing its neighbours, frequently justifiably, of unwillingness to engage in serious border talks and lack of professionalism. The Uzbek decision to mine some parts of the not yet delineated common border with Tajikistan without consultation is particularly annoying for Dushanbe. By February 2004, 62 Tajiks had died on these landmines.¹⁰⁹ In March 2004, 23 Uzbek paratroopers were detained after landing in the Tajik Isfara district during a military exercise conducted close to the common border. The Tajik authorities were not bothered by the unexpected "invasion" but insisted that they had not been notified about the exercises.¹¹⁰ In the past, the Tajik authorities suspected that the Uzbeks supported and offered a safe haven to Tajik rebels wanted in Tajikistan "for attempting to change the constitutional system and organizing criminal groupings".¹¹¹ The Uzbek government rejected the accusation, saying that the rebels, even if they were briefly able to live in Uzbekistan, settled there illegally.

Tajik-Kyrgyz relations are on the whole correct. The two countries are jointly the biggest proprietors of water resources in Central Asia, an asset which they fail to use to their own advantage. The common border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is practically open and the population on both sides expects to trade with their neighbours without hindrance. Attempts to toughen the border regime, usually introduced by local authorities, are met with little understanding, especially on the Kyrgyz side, resulting in occasional violence.

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

With the exception of Afghanistan, the Tajik leaders have no reason to worry about their neighbours. The biggest problems they face are internal, many of them of their own making. Political elites, accountable to no one, have divided power and resources among themselves, showing little interest in the poor, disillusioned majority, who have little chance to vote their leaders out. This system will function as long as the new oligarchs are able to keep all other political newcomers away from decision-making and are able to misuse the electoral process. Many of President Rakhmonov's temporary allies are interested only in their own local power base, their clans and their supporters, not in the well functioning of the state apparatus and the whole country. If President Rakhmonov decides to modernize his country, he will encounter stiff resistance from a powerful coalition of his former and new political opponents. He will then need all the help he can get from his old and new allies.

ENDNOTES

¹ *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 6, 2002, p109, quoting: "Tajikistan: A brittle peace", International Crisis Group Asia, No 30, 24 December 2001. Other sources show much smaller casualty figures. Most of the statistics in the Tajik civil war are very imprecise and were often provided by the local authorities with their own political agenda and very little knowledge and interest in internal and external migration processes.

² Mark Khrustalev, *Grazhdanskaya Voyna v Tadzhikestane: Istoki i Perspektivy*, Moscow, MGIMO, 1997, p51.

³ *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 6, 2002, p116. Col Khudoyberdiyev was killed in October 2001.

⁴ "Tajikistan: K Voprosu o Politicheskikh Itogakh Desyatletya Nezavisimosti", Tashid Abdullo, *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 6, 2001, p102.

⁵ Major General Sherali Khayrulloev was born on 8 November 1949 in Dangarin District - President Rakhmonov's power base - of the Kulob region in Tajikistan. In 1970, after graduating from the economic faculty of the Tajik State University, and two years after a firefight on the Soviet-Chinese border, Kharulloev was called up to serve in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) of the USSR. Service in the MVD had one distinct advantage: conscripts were not expected to serve far away from home. He rose from platoon commander to Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan and in 1995 became the first Tajik defence minister of Tajikistan.

⁶ *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 6, 2002, pp112 & 114.

⁷ CIA Factbook, 2003.

⁸ Asia Plus, 11 June 2003.

⁹ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 26 December 2001; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 December 2003; Eurasianet.org, 3 January 2001.

¹⁰ RFE/RL, 11 August 1997.

¹¹ *Genshtab bez Tain*, Viktor Baranets, Moscow, Politburo, 1999, p68.

¹² *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 6, 2002, p118. RFE/RL, 4 May 2004, quoting *Ekho Moskvu*, 3 May 2004. The strength of the 201st division was originally estimated at 12,000 and the present declarations in Moscow that the division has about 6,000 people may suggest that troops in the support units of the division are not counted or that the support functions have been taken over by the Tajik Army.

¹³ ITAR-TASS, 20 May 2003.

¹⁴ *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 30 May 2003.

¹⁵ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 May 2003.

¹⁶ Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 April 2003.

¹⁷ AVN, 28 April 2003; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 25 April 2003.

¹⁸ *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 30 May 2003.

¹⁹ *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 6, 2002, p119; Russian Centre TV, Moscow, 19 June 2003, FBIS.

²⁰ RFE/RL, 17 March 2004.

²¹ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 19 March 2004.

-
- 22 AP-Blitz, 13 August 2003.
23 Eurasianet.org, 7 October 2003.
24 Eurasianet.org, 7 October 2003; CIA Factbook 2004.
25 Russia against terror archive, 8 March 2002, www.wps.ru.
26 *Ekho Moskvy*, 3 May, 2004; RFE/RL, 4 May 2004.
27 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 May 2003.
28 ITAR-TASS, 3 April 2003.
29 ITAR-TASS, 24 June 2003.
30 Asia Plus, 6 August 2003, FBIS.
31 AP-Blitz, 13 August 2003.
32 AP-Blitz, 2 September 2003.
33 ITAR-TASS, 21 November 2003.
34 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 23 March 2004.
35 *Voyenno-Promyshlyennyy Kur'yer*, 11-17 & 18-24 February 2004.
36 AVN, 23 May 2003.
37 *Voyenno-Promyshlyennyy Kur'yer*, 18-24 February 2004.
38 *Voyenno-Promyshlyennyy Kur'yer*, 18-24 February 2004.
39 AVN, 28 May 2003.
40 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 4 September 2003.
41 *Voyenno-Promyshlyennyy Kur'yer*, 18-24 February 2004; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10
March 2004.
42 *Genshtab bez Tain*, Viktor Baranets, Moscow, Politburo, 1999 p69.
43 AP-Blitz, 28 January 2003.
44 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 10 November 2003.
45 AP-Blitz, 17 October 2003.
46 *Vechernyy Dushanbe*, 10 October 2003, FBIS.
47 Eurasianet.org, 10 October 2002.
48 *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 4 September 2002.
49 *Tajikiston*, 16 October 2003, FBIS.
50 AP-Blitz, 29 September 2003.
51 AP-Blitz, 12 November 2003.
52 *Tajikiston*, 16 October 2003, FBIS.
53 *Tajikiston*, 16 October 2003, FBIS.
54 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 May 2003.
55 ITAR-TASS, 20 February 2004.
56 Ruz-I Nav, 5 February 2004, FBIS.
57 ITAR-TASS, 2 April 2004.
58 Russia against terror archive, 8 March 2002, www.wps.ru.
59 Asia Plus, 23 February 2004.
60 ITAR-TASS, 22 May 2003.
61 *Vremya Novostey*, 7 April 2003.
62 AP-Blitz, 30 January 2003.
63 Tajik TV 1, 6 August 2003, FBIS.
64 ITAR-TASS, 6 October 2003.
65 Asia-Plus, 19 December 2003.
66 *Soghd Varorud*, 31 March 2003, FBIS.
67 AP-Blitz, 12 August 2003; ORT TV.
68 AP-Blitz, 14 February 2003.
69 AP-Blitz, 30 October 2003.
70 Asia-Plus, 11 December 2003.
71 Stringer, Moscow, 4 November 2003, BBC MS.
72 ITAR-TASS, 29 December 2004.
73 ITAR-TASS, 19 November 2003.
74 Stringer, Moscow, 4 November 2003, BBC MS.
75 Stringer, Moscow, 4 November 2003, BBC MS.
76 Interfax-AVN, 19 December 2003.
77 Stringer, Moscow, in Russian, 1 January 2004, BBC MS.
78 AP-Blitz, 17 October 2003.

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

- 79 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 10 November 2003; *Biznes I Politika*, Dushanbe, 29 December 2003, BBC MS.
- 80 *Rodnaya Gazeta*, No 8, 27 February-4 March 2004, p2-3. In February 2004 Gen Nazarov, described as first deputy head of Tajik Drug Control, appeared at a conference on combating drug trafficking organised in Kabul; ITAR-TASS, 9 February 2004.
- 81 AP-Blitz, 24 September 2003.
- 82 Tajik Radio 1, 24 September 2003, FBIS.
- 83 Asia Plus, 23 September 2003, FBIS.
- 84 *Vechernyy Dushanbe*, 10 October 2003, FBIS; Interfax-AVN, 29 December 2003; *Rodnaya Gazeta*, No 8, 27 February-4 March 2004, p2-3; ITAR-TASS, 9 February 2004.
- 85 Stringer, Moscow, in Russian, 1 January 2004, BBC MS.
- 86 Asia Plus, 8 July 2003, FBIS.
- 87 tajnet.com, 30 July 2003, FBIS.
- 88 Asia-Plus, 24 December 2003; ITAR-TASS, 24 December 2003. These figures differ from those supplied by Nikolay Patrushev the head of the Russian FSB. Speaking at a press conference on 19 December 2003, Gen Patrushev said that in 2003, border guards in Tajikistan seized 130,000 units of ammunition and 160kg of explosives. (Interfax-AVN, 19 December 2003.)
- 89 Khovar news agency, 10 March 2004, BBC MS; ITAR-TASS, 6 April 2004.
- 90 Stringer, Moscow, in Russian, 1 January 2004, BBC MS.
- 91 *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 3, 1999, p47.
- 92 Mark Khrustalev, *Grazhdanskaya Voyna v Tadzhikistane: Istoki i Perspektivy*, Moscow, MGIMO, 1997, p35.
- 93 Mark Khrustalev, *Grazhdanskaya Voyna v Tadzhikistane: Istoki i Perspektivy*, Moscow, MGIMO, 1997, p54.
- 94 For specific examples see: *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 3, 2002, pp148-151.
- 95 Asia Plus, 12 June 2003.
- 96 *Tsentrlnaya Aziya i Kavkaz*, No 3, 2002, p152.
- 97 AP-Blitz, 14 February 2003.
- 98 ITAR-TASS, 14 June 2003; *Encyclopedie des Terrorismes et Violences Politiques*, Jaques Baud, Lavazuelle, 2003.
- 99 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 26 June 2002.
- 100 Asia Plus, 12 February 2004.
- 101 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 11 March 2002.
- 102 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 28 April 2003; CIA Factbook 2003.
- 103 Asia Plus, 2 May 2003; CIA Factbook 2003.
- 104 Tajik TV 1, 3 May 2003, FBIS.
- 105 AP-Blitz, 5 September 2003.
- 106 AP-Blitz, 1 September 2003.
- 107 RL/RFE, 10 March 2004.
- 108 *Vremya Novostey*, 8 April 2004.
- 109 ITAR-TASS, 3 February 2004.
- 110 ITAR-TASS, 24 March 2004.
- 111 *Rossiskiye Vesti*, 19-25 November 2003.

Annex 1 – Drug Intercepts in Tajikistan January 2003-March 2004, as reported by Tajik and Russian media

During the first six months of 2003, the Tajik law enforcement agencies, together with Tajik and Russian border troops seized 4,379kg of opium and heroin.¹

July 2003

2 July - A group of smugglers from Afghanistan were intercepted by a Tajik border patrol in Shuroobod District. After a firefight the smugglers escaped, leaving three sacks of hashish weighing 25kg.²

10 July - Police in Dushanbe arrested a drug dealer with 3kg of heroin.³

During the first stage of the operation Poppy 2003, which began at the end of May and lasted 50 days, officials from the Tajik Drug Control Agency, State Border Protection Committee, State Revenue and Tax Collection Ministry, Security Ministry and Ministry of Internal Affairs seized more than 1,500kg of drugs and destroyed large areas of cultivation of drug-bearing plants

22 July - Tajik law enforcement bodies announced that, after a firefight on the Tajik-Afghan border, they intercepted 2kg of heroin, 13kg of hashish and 3.5kg of other drugs. In a separate operation the Tajik Drug Control Agency arrested at the Tajik-Uzbek border a smuggler with 1.5kg of cannabis.⁴

July 24 - After inspection of a Russian made Niva off-roader, Russian border guards seized 5.56kg of heroin.⁵ The same day Soghd Varurd News Agency announced that 2kg of heroin was seized in a car in the northern Soghd region.⁶

25 July - Two women carrying 14 kg of heroin were detained by the Tajik police in Dushanbe.⁷

29 July - Officers of the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs arrested a 27 year old female, resident of Dushanbe, with 14kg of heroin.⁸

30 July - Three kilograms of heroin and 5kg of cannabis were confiscated by Ministry of Interior officers. In a separate operation 35 packets of heroin were seized after a firefight with smugglers.⁹

August 2003

Between 2-5 August - Tajik police arrested 30 drug dealers, confiscating 22kg of drugs, including 19kg of heroin.¹⁰

4 August - Officers from Tajik law enforcement bodies and Russian border guards confiscated 75kg of heroin at the Tajik-Afghan border.¹¹

7 August - 2kg of heroin, 13kg of hashish and 3.5kg of raw opium were abandoned by a group of armed smugglers trying to cross the Tajik-Afghan border.¹²

12 August - Russian troops found 100kg of raw opium in Khatlon Province.¹³

In mid August Russian border guards seized 8kg of hashish and 36.7kg of other drugs.¹⁴

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

19 August - A Russian border guard unit extracted 2.77kg of heroin and 23.5kg of other drugs from a smugglers' cache. An announcement of a seizure of 39.7kg of drugs was made the previous day by the press service of the Russian Border Contingent.¹⁵

500kg of heroin was seized in August, 390kg of which was intercepted in one operation conducted on 27 and 28 August.¹⁶

September 2003

1 September - Russian border guards discovered a cache with 0.7kg of heroin.¹⁷ The Tajik Border Protection Committee announced a seizure of 10kg of heroin.¹⁸

4 September - Tajik law enforcement officers intercepted 8.8kg of heroin in two separate operations.¹⁹

6 September - Two packets of heroin of unspecified size were confiscated by Russian border guards on the Tajik-Afghan border.²⁰

11 September – The Tajik Drug Control Agency seized over 150kg of opium in northern Tajikistan. The intercepted opium was about to be smuggled to Russia.²¹

Between 15 and 19 September Russian border troops and Tajik law enforcement agencies seized, in several raids, 67.8kg heroin, 4.4kg of marihuana and 5kg of poppy-stick.²²

24 September - Russian border guards confiscated 41.8kg of heroin and 4.4kg of other drugs from a smuggler intercepted on the Tajik-Afghan border.²³

29 September - Russian border guards seized 31kg of drugs, including 6kg of heroin in two separate operations.²⁴

In September 2003, Tajik authorities destroyed 100,000 bushes of wild hemp in Bobojong District in Soghd Province.²⁵

October 2003

Between 7 and 17 October the Tajiks intercepted and destroyed 1,229kg of drugs, including 289.2kg heroin. The public burning of the confiscated drugs was witnessed by several Tajik and foreign officials, which may account for the unusually large amount of drug intercept at such a convenient time. More than one tonne of drugs was apparently found in one day.²⁶

18 October - Russian border guards discovered a cache containing 10.3kg of heroin.²⁷

On 25 October the Russian State Press agency ITAR-TASS announced the interception of 9kg of heroin by the Russian border guards on the Quala-I-Khum section of the Tajik-Afghan border.

29 October - Officers of the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs confiscated, in two separate operations, 27.5kg of heroin and 6.2kg of other drugs.²⁸

Between 29 and 30 October Russian border guards intercepted two Tajik nationals attempting to smuggle 60kg of heroin.²⁹

30 October - Tajik Interior Ministry officers and Russian border guards confiscated 68kg of drugs. In separate operations the Russian authorities seized 150kg of heroin smuggled via Afghanistan and a further 80kg of heroin was intercepted in Tajikistan.

Between January and October 2003 the Tajik authorities destroyed about 8000 bushes of cannabis planted in Tajikistan.³⁰

November 2003

2 November - Russian border guards confiscated more than 85kg of heroin on the Tajik-Afghan border.³¹

Russian border troops discovered over 19kg of heroin in a hideout on the Tajik-Afghan border.³²

18 November - Russian border guards seized 50kg of drugs, including 7kg of heroin, left by couriers in a pick-up place.³³

19 November - 10 kg of heroin seized in Dushanbe by Tajik police. During the same week 4kg of various types of drugs were intercepted in other operations in the Tajik capital.³⁴

22 November - Russian border guards confiscated at the Tajik-Afghan border 84kg of heroin. In a separate operation Russian border guards seized 42kg of heroin in the area of Gorno Badakhshan and the Tajikistan Drug Control Agency and Border Protection Committee intercepted 80kg of hashish.³⁵

December 2003

At the end of December, Russian border guards discovered a cache with 200.6kg of raw opium.³⁶

January 2004

8 January - Three armed traffickers were killed by Russian border guards. Three bags, of unspecified size and weight, of heroin and marihuana were seized during the operation.³⁷

9 January - At the airport of Khujand, in northern Tajikistan, Tajik police arrested a passenger attempting to smuggle 3kg of heroin to Russia.³⁸

19 January - Russian border guards intercepted two drug couriers at the Tajik-Afghan border with 3kg of heroin.³⁹

29 January - A 23 year old inhabitant of the Itifoq state farm in Moskva district near the Afghan border was arrested for possession of 2.25kg of heroin.⁴⁰

February 2004

In February the Russian border guards confiscated 90kg of drugs including 80kg of heroin.⁴¹

March 2004

Russian and Tajik law enforcement officers confiscated 86kg of drugs in a joint operation.⁴²

Tajikistan – Waiting For A Storm?

In March, Russian border guards seized more than 200kg of heroin and 170kg of other drugs on the Tajik-Afghan border.⁴³

ENDNOTES

-
- 1 AP-Blitz, 5 August 2003. Over the same period Uzbekistan seized 210kg of drugs, Kazakhstan 275kg and Kyrgyzstan 87kg.
 - 2 Asia Plus, 3 & 8 July 2003, FBIS.
 - 3 Asia Plus, 11 July 2003, FBIS.
 - 4 AP-Blitz, 22 July 2003.
 - 5 AP-Blitz, 25 July 2003.
 - 6 Soghd Varorud News Agency, 25 July 2003, FBIS.
 - 7 AP-Blitz, 26 July 2003.
 - 8 AP-Blitz, 30 July 2003.
 - 9 AP-Blitz, 31 July 2003.
 - 10 ITAR-TASS, 5 August 2003, FBIS.
 - 11 Tajik TV 1, 5 August 2003, FBIS.
 - 12 AP-Blitz, 8 August 2003.
 - 13 AP-Blitz, 13 August 2003.
 - 14 AP Blitz, 14 & 18 August 2003.
 - 15 AP-Blitz, 18 & 19 September 2003.
 - 16 AP Blitz, 29 August & 1 September 2003.
 - 17 AP-Blitz, 2 September 2003.
 - 18 AP-Blitz, 3 September 2003.
 - 19 Crime Info, Dushanbe, 11 September 2003, FBIS.
 - 20 AP-Blitz, 6 September 2003.
 - 21 AP-Blitz, 11 September 2003.
 - 22 AP-Blitz, 15, 18 & 19 September 2003.
 - 23 Khovar, 24 September 2003, FBIS.
 - 24 AP-Blitz, 30 September 2003.
 - 25 Asia Plus, 23 September 2003.
 - 26 AP-Blitz, 17 October 2003.
 - 27 AP-Blitz, 20 October 2003.
 - 28 AP-Blitz, 31 October 2003.
 - 29 AP-Blitz, 30 October 2003.
 - 30 AP-Blitz, 31 October 2003.
 - 31 Tajnet.com, Dushanbe, 3 November 2003.
 - 32 AP-Blitz, 14 November 2003.
 - 33 ITAR-TASS, 19 November 2003.
 - 34 AP-Blitz, 20 November 2003.
 - 35 Asia Plus, 22, 23 & 24 November 2003.
 - 36 Interfax-AVN, 29 December 2003.
 - 37 ITAR-TASS, 8 January 2004.
 - 38 ITAR-TASS, 10 January 2004.
 - 39 Asia Plus, 19 January 2004.
 - 40 Crime Info, Dushanbe, 29 January 2004.
 - 41 Khovar news agency, 10 March, BBC MS; ITAR-TASS, 1 March 2004.
 - 42 *Rodnaya Gazeta*, No 8, 27 February-4 March 2004, p2-3.
 - 43 ITAR-TASS, 1 April 2004.

Want to Know More ...?

See: International Crisis Group, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*, 19 May 2004, <http://www.icg.org>

The CIA World Factbook, <http://www.cia.gov/publications/factbook>

The Eurasia Foundation, <http://www.eurasia.org>

Asia Plus Information Agency, <http://www.aspiaplus.tajik.net>

Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the
Author and not necessarily those of the
UK Ministry of Defence

ISBN 1-904423-74-4

Published By:

Defence Academy of the
United Kingdom

Conflict Studies Research Centre

Haig Road
Camberley
Surrey
GU15 4PQ
England

Telephone: (44) 1276 412995
Fax: (44) 1276 686880
Email: csrc@da.mod.uk
<http://www.da.mod.uk/csrc>

ISBN 1-904423-74-4