

# Accord

## Politics of compromise **The Tajikistan peace process**

**Issue Editors: Kamoludin Abdullaev and Catherine Barnes**

**Conciliation Resources**

London 2001



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*Cover: Navruz and Days of Moscow celebration, Dushanbe, March 1998*

Source: Gennady Ratushenko

*Poster of politburo member, Summer 1992*

Source: Gennady Ratushenko





# Acknowledgements

Accord Programme Supervisor Andy Carl

Accord Programme Manager/Series Editor  
Catherine Barnes

Issue Editors  
Kamoludin Abdullaev and Catherine Barnes

Outreach and Marketing Rebecca Abraham

Photographs  
Gennady Ratushenko and Muhiddinjonov Maqsudjon

Production Assistance Hope Wischild

Copy editing Mara Stankovich

Thanks to the authors and to Jonathan Cohen, Sabine Freizer, Toliboi Iynusov, Najmi Kanji, John Macleod, Suhrob Sharipov, and Safar Tabari for their advice and/or comments on the text. We would like to thank the Swiss Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their generous financial support of the Accord: Tajikistan project, to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its contribution for activities in Tajikistan, and to the Department for International Development (UK) and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (USA) for their general support of Conciliation Resources' Accord programme.

**Tajikistan Centre for Citizenship Education** will publish a Russian version and undertake activities to use it in Tajikistan. 7 Gorki Street, room N2, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. E-mail: [gula@nosirova.tajik.net](mailto:gula@nosirova.tajik.net)

Published by  
**Conciliation Resources (CR)**  
173 Upper Street, London N1 1RG  
United Kingdom

Telephone +44 (0)20 7359 7728

Fax +44 (0)20 7359 4081

E-mail [accord@c-r.org](mailto:accord@c-r.org)

Website <http://www.c-r.org>

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Design by Hoop Associates  
Printed in the UK

UK charity registration number 1055436

**Site of 1989 conflict between Tajik  
and Kyrgyz for water and land,  
Isfara Leninabad**

Source: Gennady Ratushenko



## Acronyms & abbreviations

ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CIS/PKF	Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the CIS
CNR	Commission for National Reconciliation
CSCE	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (became OSCE in 1994)
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (UN)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DPT	Democratic Party of Tajikistan
DPTA	DPT Almaty platform





## 11 February 1990 rally in Dushanbe

Source: Gennady Ratushenko

### Transliteration note

One of the more contentious problems for English language publications about Central Asia is how to spell the personal and geographical names used in the region. The Soviet legacy meant that a Russianized spelling was used for many names – even though these spellings might be confusing for a Tajik. As Tajiks strive to reclaim their heritage, efforts have been made by many to drop Russian language based spellings. (For example, the Russianized ‘k’ sound has been replaced with the ‘q’ sound commonly used in Tajik and Turkic languages.) Nevertheless there are alternative ways to transliterate Tajik, which deploys the Cyrillic script, into English. We have tried to respect the individual’s preference for the spelling of their personal name (e.g., President Rakhmonov), even if it implies a mixture of spelling systems. Where an English version of a place names is widely recognized (e.g., Badakhshan instead of the more correct Badakhshon), we have chosen to use that form. Some places in Tajikistan have been recently renamed – notably the Leninabad province, which was changed to Sogd in 2000. To avoid confusion, we have used the names deployed in the 1990s, when the events described in this publication occurred. For place names outside of Tajikistan, we have referred to spellings used in UN maps so as to use a form widely in use internationally.

DPTT	DPT Tehran platform	OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (formerly CSCE)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
GNR	Government of National Reconciliation	UNCHR	UN Commission on Human Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
IDP	internally displaced person	UNDP	UN Development Programme
IRP	Islamic Renaissance Party	UNMOT	UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan
MIRT	Movement for Islamic Revival in Tajikistan	UTO	United Tajik Opposition
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)	WFP	World Food Programme
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference	WHO	World Health Organization

# Introduction

## From war to politics

**Catherine Barnes and  
Kamoludin Abdullaev**

In comparison with many of the ‘internal’ wars of the late twentieth century, the inter-Tajik conflict is notable both for its rapid escalation to war in 1992 and for its relatively quick conclusion through a negotiated settlement reached in June 1997. This issue of *Accord* documents these events, provides insight into the main parties to the conflict, describes the official and informal initiatives that comprised the peace process, and explores issues around implementation of the agreements and the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding.

If war can be understood in part as the failure of politics by ordinary means, the Tajik peace process helped to end the war through restoring the politics of compromise. The initial chapters explore the background to the civil war and reveal that it originated primarily in the dynamics of a power struggle between a new class of ‘political entrepreneurs’, rather than in deep social divisions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Tajikistan unveiled a vibrant array of political movements. They were formed at a time of great social and economic insecurity and were able to attract many activists. In addition, as Roy points out, inter-regional competition during the Soviet period generated tensions that fuelled the conflict; fighting was most intense where it intersected with localized antagonisms.

Decades of Soviet control over the state meant that few mechanisms were in place to manage this political diversity and the leaders of the new movements had little experience in the practice of political compromise. There were few counterbalances to ward off the rapid descent into violence as the means for gaining political dominance. This problem was exacerbated by external powers (foreign governments and armed movements) that directly or indirectly supported the different factions. With an interest in the outcomes of the war, they became in effect ‘secondary parties’ to the conflict. Although they contributed initially to the war effort, they later became vital resources to the peace process.

**Catherine Barnes works with Conciliation Resources as the Accord Programme Manager and Series Editor.**

**Kamoludin Abdullaev is a historian and serves as Deputy Director of the Tajikistan Centre for Citizenship Education.**





## Design and outcomes of the peace process

The challenge to the participants in the peace process was to end the fighting and restore order while also addressing the underlying dilemmas that made Tajikistan susceptible to war. There were a few early attempts by Tajikistanis to end the war and establish a government that would be considered legitimate by all parties to the conflict. Yet these efforts did not result in a durable ceasefire or political settlement. In late 1992, the United Nations Security Council, at the request of member states, authorized the UN to support a negotiated settlement. The UN later sponsored the inter-Tajik negotiations, which began in April 1994 and resulted in a peace treaty a little more than three years later.

The UN crafted a narrow mandate that focused on ending the war. The process it sponsored was oriented towards drawing the armed factions into a negotiation process that would conclude with an agreement capable of restoring stability. As a result, some political interests were not represented in the negotiations. Nor was the process designed to provide opportunities for effective public participation or for popular ratification of agreements reached. The agreements represented the minimum point of consensus between the negotiators at the time they were drafted and did not attempt to provide a normative blueprint for the future.

These omissions point to a central dilemma for many peace processes. This is the tension between the 'security first' approach – aiming for a negotiated settlement between the armed parties to end the fighting – versus a process based on broad participation that aims to develop substantive agreements capable of transforming the underlying conditions that generated the conflict. Many Tajikistanis would argue that life without armed conflict in the present is preferable to the risk of prolonging the war so as to make a more inclusive peace process or to reach a more 'perfect' agreement – even if the exclusion or agreements reached might contain the seeds of future conflict. Their history of war and violence has led many to prefer a government capable of sustaining a 'negative peace' based on life without war at the price of not enjoying their full range of personal rights and liberties.

Increasing numbers of Tajikistanis believe that this understanding of peace is unsustainable. Correspondingly, some of the authors believe that the future durability of the peace could be jeopardised by those excluded from the process and the power-sharing transitional government. Others are concerned that neither the process nor the substantive outcomes helped to consolidate a democratic transition. Exclusion of some interest groups and 'privileging those with access to the

gun' ended large-scale armed conflict. Yet it may not have ensured non-violent modes of political expression or enabled the diverse range of Tajikistanis to find a voice in the political system that will shape the future of the country.

## Multiple parties

The four articles by Asadullaev, Olimova and Olimov, Sattorzoda, and Akbarzadeh provide insight into the main political factions that dominated Tajikistan's public life during the 1990s. They reveal how the war grew out of the conflict over the reorientation of relations between the state and society. It became a contest over what kind of state and which social elements would dominate it. The key substantive issue in the conflict was the definition of principles that would guide the country's future. This took shape in the struggle between secular and Islamicist visions for the state. In addition to this central conflict, various opposition groups promoted a range of ideological platforms – 'democratic', 'nationalist' or more specifically regional agendas.

With this multiplicity of parties, a key challenge was to find a way to bring them into a negotiation process to reach agreement on the state structure that they would cohabit. Each party represented a coalition of interests that was realigned in the circumstances created by the war. The pressures and opportunities of this period often resulted in rapid changes as former allies were forsaken (for example, the alliance between Kulobi and Leninabadi factions), parties split from within (the Democratic Party of Tajikistan) or individuals switched allegiance. As the mediator and sponsor of the talks, UN officials had to engage in continuous consultations to identify the range of issues and aspirations fuelling the conflict, as well as to ascertain who represented a 'primary party' to the conflict and should therefore be invited to the talks.

The inter-Tajik negotiations were eventually structured around two opposing parties: the government and the United Tajik Opposition. The creation of a unified opposition bloc was crucial to reaching an agreement. Although dominated by one of its members, the Islamic Renaissance Party, it provided a channel for the government to negotiate with a range of opponents. It reduced the government's ability to use 'divide and conquer' strategies that typically rebound by prolonging conflict, as different parties seek to cut a better deal by shifting alliances. It also facilitated a process whereby agreements reached at earlier rounds of the talks between the two parties could build cumulatively into the basis for a comprehensive peace treaty.





### Coordinating the 'secondary parties'

In addition to bringing the primary parties to the negotiating table, it was important to elicit the support of the secondary parties who were likely to back them. Although the Tajik parties were ultimately responsible for making peace, the articles by Goryayev and Rigacci Hay describe the design and methods used in the inter-Tajik negotiations. They reveal a UN-led process that put great emphasis on recruiting a range of external stakeholders and coordinating the active participation of various governments and international agencies (who were able to play 'third party' roles). Foreign governments that had influence with the parties – notably those of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and the Central Asian countries – were official observers of the process and sponsored different rounds of talks. They also played important functions 'behind the scenes' in encouraging their allies to reach agreements.

As in many complex humanitarian emergencies created by war, a range of international agencies and non-governmental organizations worked with their Tajik counterparts to address the political, legal, humanitarian, socio-economic, and security dimensions of the conflict. The inter-governmental organizations – the UN, Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – all worked to unify their strategy in support of

the peace process. An informal Task Force on Tajikistan assisted coordination within the UN system. The keys to effective coordination of external actors in the peace process were: (a) a clear mandate for the lead institution – the UN – whose role was accepted by the primary parties to the conflict and (b) the painstaking and continuing process of consultation and information sharing by the UN Special Envoys and Special Representatives responsible for the negotiations. This exceptionally well-coordinated process deserves careful study to learn lessons that could be applicable in peace processes elsewhere.

### Internal and international dimensions

Although the Tajikistanis and the foreign governments participating in the peace process were motivated to reach agreement for a number of reasons, the changing circumstances in neighbouring states – Afghanistan in particular – were a significant catalyst. As the Taliban gained increasing control over Afghan territory, the decision-making calculus of the Tajik parties and the governments in the region was radically transformed. Most believed that their best option lay in a negotiated end to the war in Tajikistan. Many of the Tajikistani authors highlight the concern that continued fighting threatened Tajikistan's independent statehood. This awareness helped to keep them at the negotiating table and motivated them to reach agreement.

## Governance and the peace agreement

In their article on constitutional and legislative reform, Zoir and Newton argue that the General Agreement gave insufficient emphasis to the reform of constitutional and governance structures that would be capable of sustaining a democratic transition. The Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR) was responsible for overseeing implementation of the agreement and recommending constitutional amendments and post-war legislation with the technical assistance of the UN and the OSCE. Zoir and Newton maintain that this CNR mechanism contributed to a 'democratic deficit' both through its working methods – which were neither participatory nor transparent – and through its outcomes, which contributed to the consolidation of a highly centralized state structure with few constitutional 'checks and balances' to promote the rule of law.

## Creating a politics of dialogue

Yet the article by Abdullo points to the more political and less formal accomplishments of the peace process. He shows how the process as a whole helped to establish a normative pattern of dialogue and negotiation as the basis for politics. This was underpinned by the design of the negotiation process, which was based on rounds of talks, each aiming to reach agreement on a particular aspect of the entire negotiating agenda. Through the long series of talks, the Tajikistani negotiators developed the habits and skills of political dialogue to discuss their differences and to reach agreements. The fact that the negotiations were initiated while fighting continued (rather than making a ceasefire a precondition for talks) meant that the warring parties could 'come to the table' with confidence that talking did not mean defeat. The early use of Joint Commissions involving representatives of the different factions to oversee the implementation of interim agreements – for example on refugee return and the ceasefire – contributed to shared responsibility for outcomes and provided opportunities for joint problem solving. It also reveals how mechanisms for implementing interim agreements support the development of cooperation and dialogue that can later assist implementation of a 'final' agreement. As Abdullo points out, the Joint Commission monitoring implementation of the ceasefire also provided opportunities for direct negotiations among military field commanders, which brought them into the peace process.

Another reason why agreement could be reached was that the leaders of the different factions proved willing to take certain political risks. They were willing to talk to each other (for example, when President Rakhmonov flew to Afghanistan to meet with opposition leader Said Abdullo Nuri), to make difficult concessions (over power-



sharing or troop withdrawals, for instance). Furthermore, it seems that the leaders negotiating the agreement had the trust of many of their supporters, who were in turn willing to comply with the agreements reached.

## Civil society and unofficial peace initiatives

Although Tajikistan witnessed mass protest and wide public involvement in the creation of a new political order in the early 1990s, the official peace process was dominated by the leaders of only a few parties and political movements. Decades of Soviet rule meant that very few independent social institutions were capable of demanding a place in the process or of addressing the consequences of war. Yet as the article by Mullojanov indicates, Tajikistanis – sometimes with the support of international organizations – have begun to develop a civil society infrastructure composed of both traditional social institutions and newer non-governmental organizations. They have mobilized to facilitate reintegration and settle local disputes, and seek to address a range of other social needs.

The article by Slim and Saunders describes the 'second track' Inter-Tajik Dialogue project, which began in spring





1993 and continued through the post-agreement transitional period and beyond. It brought together, in their personal capacity, people from opposing factions to discuss the conflict and ways to end it. This initiative provided a channel of communication, helped to address misperceptions about opponents, and created a forum to explore and generate ideas and proposals. It helped to develop relationships between participants – including government officials and people who were later appointed to the CNR – and strengthened their problem-solving skills. Dialogue participants have also participated in post-conflict peacebuilding and undertaken initiatives to involve the wider public in developing approaches to address sources of tension. Thus the Dialogue provided a unique bridge between the official process and civil society and complemented the more overtly political approaches to ending the war.

### **Managing ideological difference**

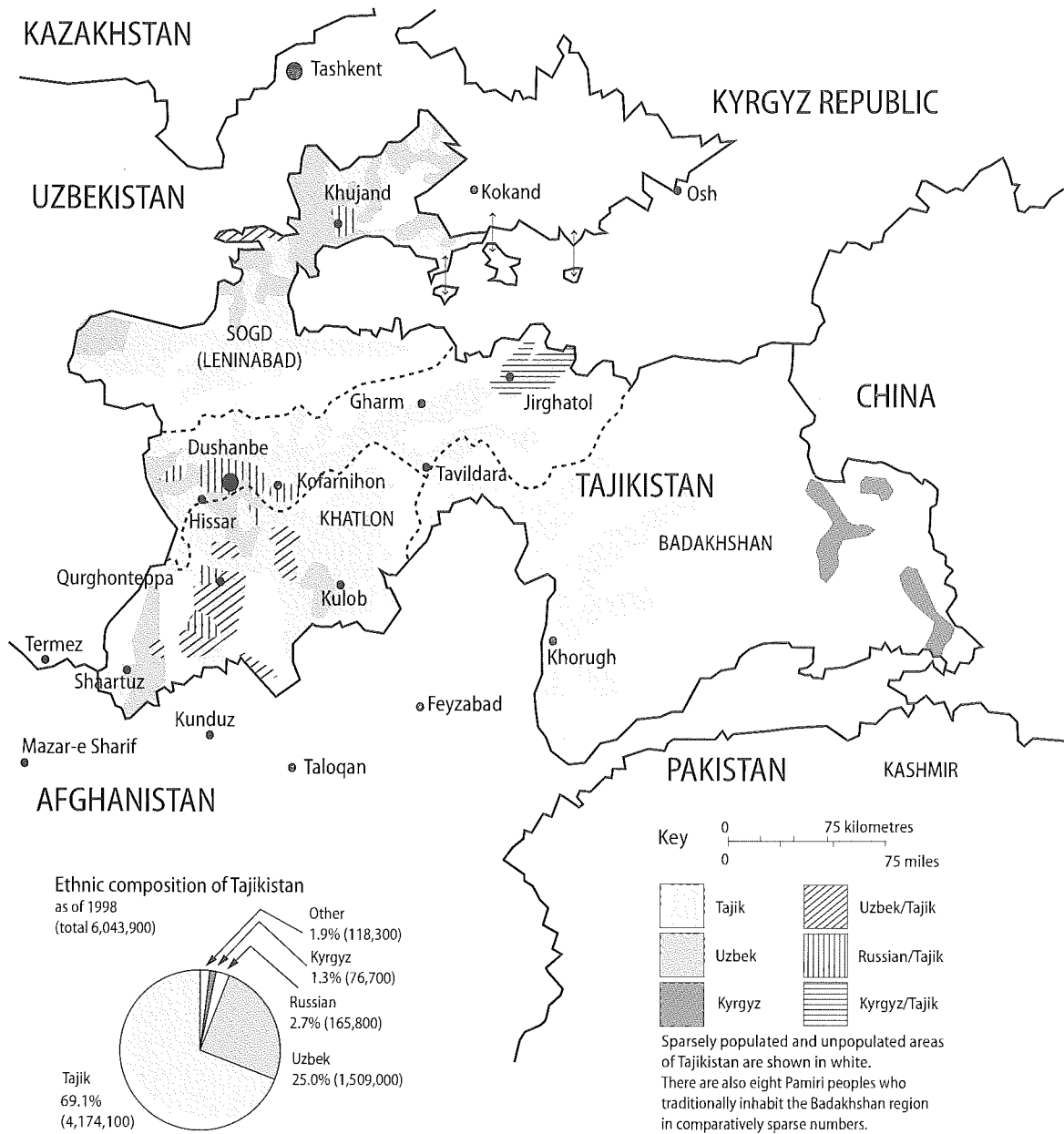
One of the more difficult issues for the government was overcoming the reluctance to negotiate with the Islamicist opposition. In so doing, it inevitably signalled that Islamicist parties would have some type of status in future. This jeopardized its ideological commitment to uphold the secularist principles enshrined in the

constitution, which was the basis of its own legitimacy. Since the General Agreement was signed, this dilemma has been addressed through the co-existence of Islamicist politics and an officially secular state. Yet Islamicists continue to debate whether Islam should be institutionalised in a non-partisan way within the state itself, be promoted through the political platform of Islamicist political parties, or be achieved through activism that falls outside constitutionally sanctioned methods.

These and other issues are likely to remain a source of tension for Tajikistanis. Yet the crucial question for the future is how these problems will be addressed. The war and the peace process have become a defining event in the long process of state-building in Tajikistan. It may be that memories of the horror of war, combined with the mechanisms and experience of reaching negotiated settlements, will mean that the art of political compromise will prevail as the method for managing conflicts peacefully.

# Maps

## Major Ethnic Groups in Tajikistan



Source: 1999 census data

## Topography of Tajikistan



# The Tajik civil war

## Causes and dynamics

**Shirin Akiner and  
Catherine Barnes**

*This article draws on Akiner's paper "Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?" Published by The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, Spring 2001.*

**Shirin Akiner is a Lecturer at the London-based School of Oriental and African Studies, specializing in Central Asian studies. Catherine Barnes works with Conciliation Resources as Accord Programme Manager and Series Editor**

In the early 1990s, as the forces that once held together the Soviet Union began to dissolve, political competition and conflict began to escalate in Tajikistan, the far south-eastern republic of the USSR. Shortly after independence was declared in September 1991, the struggle for state power played out more or less peacefully, albeit with frequent public demonstrations in the capital, Dushanbe. Nine presidential candidates contested the first multi-party elections, which were won by a former leader of the Communist Party. Yet a popular consensus on the legitimacy of his presidency remained elusive. Tension between supporters of the government and the opposition parties intensified to the point where different factions took up weapons. Less than a year after independence, Tajikistan was engulfed in civil war.

Between 20,000 and 60,000 people were killed in the first year of fighting when the war was at its peak, with most commentators judging that about 50,000 lives were lost between May and December 1992. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 600,000 people – about one-tenth of the population – were internally displaced and at least 80,000 sought refuge outside the country, mostly in Afghanistan. The brutality of fighting in rural areas in the south shocked Tajikistanis and foreign observers. Many unarmed civilians were murdered, apparently in an effort to force them to flee their homes. A peace process, led by the UN and with considerable participation from foreign countries, resulted in a political and military settlement centred on a power-sharing formula codified in the June 1997 General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. Since the treaty was signed there have been periodic skirmishes between government forces and renegade militia groups and continuing attempts (occasionally successful) to assassinate political opponents. Nevertheless, it appears that the danger of a return to civil war is now receding and that a new political order has been established.





As in many armed conflicts, the interests and actors that joined forces to fight the war were complex and changed over time. The main warring factions were composed of political groups allied with people capable of mobilizing armed militias, often through regional affiliations. In the early 1990s, the old political elite – many of whom were from the northern Leninabad region – joined in a new alliance with people from the Kulob region in the south. Kulobis were generally under-represented in positions of state power in the Soviet period but now had the capacity to muster armed groups to reinforce the government. The balance of power in this 'government alliance' shifted to the Kulobis as the war continued. By the end of the decade the Leninabadi old guard had been marginalized from government and the Kulobi faction retained power under President Emomali Rakhmonov.

Opposed to the government forces was a coalition of new opposition parties and their armed supporters. Most of these parties identified themselves by ideology, (e.g., promoting 'democracy' or 'Islamic values' or a revitalized 'Tajik nation') but drew their support from a particular region. The largest of these parties was the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), with its stronghold in the southwest amongst families relocated from the mountainous Qarateghin region who had been forcibly relocated to

the cotton fields of the Vakhsh valley in the Soviet period. The IRP aligned itself with the new Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), the Rastokhez popular movement composed mainly of Dushanbe-based intellectuals with a Tajik nationalist agenda, and La'li-Badakhshan, a party whose members were primarily Pamiri people advocating greater autonomy for the mountainous Badakhshan region in eastern Tajikistan. As the war progressed, some of these groups united in the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to further their military effort and to participate in peace negotiations.

The warring parties had a strong regional base. Unlike the contenders in the wars that have tormented the Balkans and the Caucasus in the 1990s, however, they did not engage in a secessionist war to establish their own independent territories – although some in the Badakhshan region may have been motivated by the ambition for greater autonomy. Nor was the war primarily 'driven' by deep-rooted animosities between regional or ethnic groups. Instead the conflict in Tajikistan had the classic dynamics of a civil war in which different interest groups mobilized to contest control of the state and its resources, as well as the principles upon which the newly independent country would be based: secular or Islamic, 'democratic' or authoritarian. Given the limited channels for political expression allowed during the Soviet era,

Tajikistan on the cusp of independence lacked well-developed mechanisms to manage political conflict and competition. This meant that there were few internal counterbalances capable of arresting the escalation to war. Yet to understand something of the causes and dynamics of the conflict, it is important to look briefly at the country's human and physical geography and its history, as well as its position in the larger geopolitical dynamics of the region in the early and mid-1990s. (See Chronology for a narrative of the unfolding war and peace processes.)

## Land, people and history

Tajikistan is a landlocked mountainous country situated to the north of Afghanistan, to the north-west of China, to the south of the Kyrgyz Republic and to the east of Uzbekistan. At 143,100 square kilometres, it is similar in size to Tunisia or Greece. High mountains, arid plateaux, and glaciers cover more than 90 per cent of the country. With a predominantly agrarian population, Tajikistan has some of the most densely populated arable land in the world. Few passes cross the mountains and many are closed by snow for several months each year. This has always made travel between different regions difficult and even modern transport networks suffer disruption, creating a significant obstacle to communication as well as social and economic integration.

Tajikistan has four main natural zones. The largest and highest is the Badakhshan region in the east, consisting of the Pamir mountains and plateau, with an average height of 4,000m and individual peaks higher than 7,000m. Badakhshan borders China and Afghanistan but its main valleys have created traditional routes linking it to central Tajikistan in the west and Afghanistan in the south, fostering social exchange between the communities of these regions. The second natural zone is located in the centre of the country and stretches from Badakhshan to the Uzbek border in the west. It is dominated by three mountain ranges – the Turkestan, Zarafshan, and Hissar – each running along an east-west axis at altitudes ranging from 2,000m to 3,000m. In the centre-east of this zone is the Qarateghin valley, where the Gharm and Tavildara areas are located. In the centre-west is the Hissar valley where Dushanbe is located and whose communities are closely linked with the south and with Uzbekistan to the west. The third zone, in the south-west, corresponds to the Khatlon province. It is located between the Hissar range and the Amu Darya/Panj river. It borders Afghanistan in the south-east and Uzbekistan in the west. A north-south mountain chain divides this zone into the Qurghonteppa region to the west – with its Kofarnihon and Vakhsh river valleys – and the Kulob region to the east. The fourth zone is in the north of the country, in the Zarafshan and Syr Darya river valleys, forming what used to be the Leninabad province, which was renamed Sogd in summer 2000. (To avoid confusion, it will be referred to

as Leninabad throughout this publication.) The northern area lies mostly in the fertile and densely populated Ferghana valley, which extends into the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. Its main city is Khujand. This zone was historically part of the ancient 'silk road' trading routes and supported an urban culture linked with other regions and peoples, which enabled a unique fusion of Iranian and Turkic cultures.

The physical geography of Tajikistan supported the development of many culturally distinct groups, most of whom are a part of the Iranian cultural world and are predominantly Sunni Muslims. One distinction has been between the peoples of the plains in the north, who in ancient times were a part of the rich urban-based culture of Transoxiana, and the people of the mountains in the centre, east and south-west, who were comparatively isolated and developed strong localized identities. There was relatively little interaction between the peoples of these regions until the Soviet era. The communities of the north-western plains had extensive contact with the Tajik centres of Bukhara and Samarqand, as well as with their Uzbek neighbours. The Tajik peoples of the mountains have, in modern times, distinguished between Kulobi, Qarateghini, and Hissari people. In the Badakhshan region there are eight distinct peoples belonging to the Eastern Iranian language family who are collectively referred to as Pamiris and are typically part of the Shi'a Imami Ismaili branch of Islam. They have ties with other Pamiris across the borders in Afghanistan, China and Pakistan. Approximately 25 per cent of the population in Tajikistan belong to ethnic Uzbek communities, many with their own distinct local identities, who form the largest bloc of non-Iranian peoples. There are also long-established communities of Arabs, mostly in the south; of Jews, mostly in urban areas; of Kyrgyz, mostly in the north; and – since the Soviet period – of Russians and other Slavic people as well as Armenians, Germans and Tatars, many of whom left during the upheavals of the late 1980s and early 1990s. There is also an extremely marginalized community of Central Asian, Tajik-speaking Roma (Gypsies), called the Luli or Jugi with roots in India.

The origins of the Tajik political nation are often traced back to the Samanid Empire (875-999 AD), which at its height stretched from the plains of southern Kazakhstan to the Hindu Kush and from the Pamirs to northern Iran. The Samanids were the last Iranian dynasty to rule Central Asia and were overthrown by the Turkic Karakhanids. After this period, local rulers established small but semi-independent principalities in the mountainous regions that had little contact with the larger states on the plains. By the early nineteenth century there were two main regional powers on the plains: the Emirate of Bukhara in the west and the Khanate of Kokand in the Ferghana valley. Both were absorbed into the Russian Empire towards the end of the century, although the Bukharan Emirate – which had authority over the central and

southern zones of Tajikistan – retained nominal autonomy until it was fully integrated into the USSR in the 1920s. It is notable that there is no history of protracted conflict between the peoples of these different regions and no pre-Soviet tradition of inter-communal animosity.

## Legacies of Russian and Soviet control

The early years of Russian dominance widened the differences between life on the plains and that in the mountains. The northern province was the most changed by Russian expansion. The new rulers promoted light industries, began to exploit mineral resources and built a rail link to the Caspian Sea, thus initiating modernization complete with expanded educational opportunities and the politicization of society. In the mountainous zones, however, little changed and people continued to live much as their ancestors had done for centuries. It was in this region that Basmachi fighters, aspiring to restore the Bukharan Emirate, contested the advancing Soviet power in Central Asia until the late 1920s. In an attempt to eliminate resistance, the Red Army massacred more than 10,000 Tajiks and Uzbeks between 1922 and 1926, according to official estimates. About a quarter of the population, mostly from the south, fled to Afghanistan. This was the first of successive waves of mass migration across the southern border in the following decades, as people sought to escape violent purges, forcible resettlement and collectivization, and religious persecution. These events had a lasting effect that contributed to the conflict dynamics which emerged during the civil war in the 1990s.

The Soviet period shaped many of the social, economic, and political features of contemporary Tajikistan. The boundaries of the country were controversially demarcated. Territories that were historically Tajik were initially placed within the new Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), whose leaders were soon accused of trying to ‘uzbekify’ Tajik society. Protest led to the formation of a Tajik SSR in 1929, with Dushanbe as its capital. It included the Leninabad province, but over half a million Tajiks and the Tajik centres of Bukhara and Samarqand remained in Uzbekistan – a source of grievance for many Tajik nationalists. Within the new Tajik SSR, national political, cultural, and educational institutions were established in an effort to consolidate the new nation. A standardized modern literary language developed, based on the Bukharan and northern group of Tajik dialects and emphasizing differences with standard Persian. The Cyrillic script was used to further integrate Tajik into the Soviet space and distance it from Iran and other parts of the Muslim world. Intensive efforts were made to develop transport links between different regions within Tajikistan and with neighbouring Soviet republics. All these developments helped to integrate the people of the different regions into modern Tajikistan, a

shared political and cultural entity that would become an independent state in 1991.

Yet social divisions remained and were deepened by policies to address labour shortages and, later, by the slow economic and social disintegration of the USSR. Beginning in the 1930s and continuing intermittently until the late 1960s, the Soviet authorities forcibly transferred people from the central and eastern zones of Tajikistan to provide labour for new industries and, especially, for intensive agricultural projects. These migrations meant that every part of Tajikistan experienced some degree of population movement during the Soviet period. This opened up inter-regional exchange and integration but generated conflict by stimulating inter-group competition and sharpening perceptions of social difference.

Until the 1970s, economic growth provided virtually full employment. Growing prosperity and greater social security characterized much of the Soviet period. In the early 1980s, a push to construct hydroelectric plants and other industries was accomplished with labour recruited from other republics and resulting in a sharp increase in unemployment and poverty amongst Tajikistanis. Young people were especially marginalized and some were drawn into criminal networks. Corruption intensified in the 1980s. It was expressed in nepotism, theft and bribery – and in the emergence of ‘mafias’ that controlled large-scale illegal economic activities, frequently appropriating state resources with the covert participation of officials. Some senior officials directly orchestrated mafia activities. Corruption on this scale undermined the legitimacy and control of government and created a set of *de facto* fiefdoms held by powerful shadowy figures who existed outside the law and were not held to account by any public authority. The civil war seems to have intensified these dynamics. Mafias were strengthened through the formation of militias and benefited from the erosion of legal controls and the exponential growth of the traffic in narcotics from Afghanistan. Furthermore, economic recession deepened with the dissolution of the USSR when access to credit and to customary markets in other republics was reduced.

## Political revival

Social discontent increased in the 1980s and took shape in the development of underground political movements and in occasionally violent inter-group conflict over the allocation of state resources. Independent, secular socio-political movements developed, fuelled by and in turn stimulating the emergence of genuine political debate. By the late 1980s some movements had taken a xenophobic and nationalistic character and slogans such as ‘Tajikistan for the Tajiks’ were used in street demonstrations. These developments contributed to an



exodus of ethnic Slavs, Germans and Jews, many of whom had professional skills and whose departure undermined the Tajik industrial, educational and health sectors. Yet ethno-nationalist appeals failed to mobilize the majority of the population. In 1990, Shodmon Yusuf founded the DPT. Together with other opposition parties, it organized a successful public demonstration in August 1991 that led to the resignation of the Tajik Communist Party leadership, which had supported the abortive coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The DPT had several thousand members in the early 1990s but was weakened by the war and remained the junior partner of the IRP in the UTO.

Apparently more durable, however, was a movement advocating a form of Islamic political ideology oriented towards restoring 'Islamic values' in the country. This movement seems to have originated in the 1970s out of an underground network for Islamic worship that shunned the state-controlled Islamic structures. Its heartland was in the Qurghonteppa region where communities resettled from Qarateghin lived. This underground movement began to develop a political agenda that took root among marginalized urban youth, as well as in some of the traditional village-based community networks. Despite their differences, by the early 1990s an alliance was formed between the leaders of the distinct Islamic factions who made up the IRP: the new 'radicals' (led by Said Abdullo Nuri), and what was at

the time Tajikistan's official religious 'establishment' (led by Khoji Akbar Turajonzoda). The majority of Tajikistanis consider themselves to be Muslims and regard Islam as an important part of their heritage. Yet it seems that most did not support the creation of an Islamic state and it appears that even local religious leaders were divided over whether the IRP offered the only way forward. Nevertheless, the contest between secularist and Islamicist visions for the state became and remains an important ideological conflict.

## Geopolitical dynamics

With Tajikistan's location at a crossroads between different political and cultural worlds, it is not surprising that a range of foreign actors have played significant roles in the dynamics of war and peace. Most notable were Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Russia and the Central Asian republics, particularly Uzbekistan. (See the Profiles section for more detail on their roles.) The warring Tajik factions largely depended on support from foreign sponsors, yet this support was never sufficient to give either side absolute superiority. Initially, the pro-government faction benefited from the efforts of Russia and other Central Asian countries to restore stability and retain the (non-Islamicist) *status quo* by deploying Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) 'peacekeeping' troops to guard the Tajik-Afghan border. The UTO forces benefited from the support of northern Afghan leaders and field



commanders and were able to base themselves across the border in Afghanistan. They may also have received support from militant Islamicist interests based in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Iran was also an important player, although its government played primarily a mediating role – perhaps because it acknowledged that a Shi'a Muslim revolution on the Iranian model was impossible in Sunni-dominated Tajikistan. Iran also shared with Russia a common strategic objective of minimising the potential for the USA and Turkey to increase their influence in the region and this strengthened their motivation to encourage a peace process.

The rapid rise of the radical Islamicist and ethnic Pushtun-based Taliban movement in Afghanistan in 1995-96 dramatically changed the regional geopolitical context. Fears that the Taliban might threaten Tajikistan encouraged foreign governments to pressure their Tajik allies to negotiate a settlement to the war. They subsequently provided practical support to the peace process. Similar fears provoked the Tajik factions into a pragmatic awareness that continued warfare could threaten the future independence of the country they aspired to control; a power-sharing compromise to govern a unified country was preferable by far to losing the country entirely. The UN was able to harness this convergence of interests to build a momentum for peace that culminated in the 1997 General Agreement.

### Future challenges

With the presidential and parliamentary elections of late 1999 and early 2000, the initial transitional period envisioned in the General Agreement was completed and most international monitoring bodies concluded their work. Tajikistan now faces the twin tasks of managing the problems of transition faced by all the post-Soviet countries as well as post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction.

In addition to the incalculable human costs of war, Tajikistan's already weak economy and infrastructure were devastated. Always the poorest of the former Soviet republics, social development and economic indicators have plummeted from the beginning of the 1990s. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased by more than half between 1992 and 1996 and although it began to rise slowly after the General Agreement was signed, GDP per capita in 1998 was only US\$215. Tajikistan had the lowest rating of all the USSR successor states on the 1999 UN Development Programme (UNDP) human development index. Although it is difficult to state precisely the size of the underground economy, it seems that illegal trafficking in Tajikistan's main exports – aluminium, cotton, gold and above all, narcotics – is the most dynamic sector. The strengthened criminal networks increasingly hold power that draws politicians,

bureaucrats, and militia leaders into patron-client linkages that permeate society and blur the boundaries between politics and crime.

The social costs of economic collapse have combined with the devastation of war to create great hardship for most people. Displacement and the massive destruction of property left a legacy of housing shortages and property disputes. Rapid population growth, from 5.2 million in 1990 to an estimated 6.5 million in 2000, has increased demographic pressures on land and other resources. The age structure of the population is weighted toward the young, with consequences for youth unemployment – almost 60 per cent of people aged 16-29 were unemployed in 1997. Interrupted education has contributed to a de-skilling of the workforce. Females have been especially hard hit. The war stimulated increased violence against women. This has been accompanied by a contraction in girls' access to education because of the hidden costs of schooling and increased discrimination in the workplace enabled by a labour surplus – all at a time when the war left many women as the sole providers for their families. Narcotics addiction has escalated and combines with impoverishment to create a growing problem with prostitution and HIV/AIDs. Both the government and the expanding civil society network are trying to address these problems but resources are extremely limited and likely to be insufficient to address the scale of need. These social and economic stresses have a potential political cost, particularly if forces wishing to promote their cause outside constitutional politics can exploit them.

One significant outcome of the war and the peace process was to transform the political landscape of the country – particularly with regard to the balance of power between regionally-based elites. The major change has been the increase in Kulobi control over state bodies and commercial enterprises throughout the country, despite President Rakhmonov's efforts in the late 1990s to make the regional representation in the government and bureaucracy more balanced. This contrasts with the decline in influence of Leninabad, once the wealthiest province. A sense of exclusion may fuel devolutionary – and possibly even secessionist – demands by some regional leaders. Residual inter-regional tensions combine with the latent potential for Islamicist insurgency to hold out the potential for future conflict. (For example, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan fighters based in the Qarateghin region may have links to militant Islamicist forces in Tajikistan.) Nevertheless, the trauma of the 1990s has generated an underlying consensus on one issue: hardly anyone wants to return to full-scale war and most people yearn for peaceful development. This consensus alone may be sufficient to preserve a degree of stability for years to come.



# Inter-regional dynamics of war

by Olivier Roy

Regional identities were closely linked to political affiliations during the Tajik civil war. Tajikistan is a predominantly rural country. Even in urban areas many retain connections to their family villages and neighbourhoods are often inhabited by people from the same region. Tajik society retains strong traditional networks of solidarity (commonly referred to as 'clans') built on these family and local community ties. These networks have commonly been used to maximize access to and control over resources and they were translated into the political and administrative structures of the Soviet Union. The one-party system, instead of bypassing these networks, gave them an arena to compete for access to positions and goods. Centralization meant that there were few legal opportunities for social promotion or economic prosperity other than through connections with the party elite. The Communist Party structure was based on administrative territorial divisions and grouped around district, province and republic level committees. To enhance their positions, local party *apparatchiks* needed connections with those higher up. Traditional networks fused with party connections and became the basis for political factionalism, although there was rarely anything ideological in their differences. Solidarity and power struggles were organized along these regional administrative divisions, thus giving them a political reality. This generated inter-regional antagonisms in the struggle for access to power, goods, and other benefits.

In Tajikistan this system tended to privilege an elite from the Leninabad province. Leninabad as a whole profited from industrial growth and comparatively high educational levels. It thus had considerable economic and social influence, which was underscored by political privilege. Although representatives from other regions – particularly Gharmis, Pamiris, and ethnic Russians – held powerful positions throughout the Soviet period, all the first secretaries of the Tajik Communist Party from 1946 to 1991 were Leninabadis. They were consequently able to bring benefits to their networks. One of the notable effects of the war is that a Kulobi elite, previously almost unrepresented in positions of state power, has supplanted the Leninabadi group in control of the government.

Regional factionalism exacerbated by intra-party competition existed in all the Central Asian republics. In Tajikistan, however, it also combined with inter-group antagonisms originating in Soviet policies of forcibly moving people to meet labour needs. Several large population transfers occurred in the 1930s, early 1950s, and as late as 1968. The policy involved transferring whole groups (an entire village or several 'clans') from one region – generally the mountainous areas of central and eastern Tajikistan – to another region where a labour force was needed. These groups were generally relocated in a single collective farm, or *kolkhoz*. Even if they were incorporated into a mixed *kolkhoz*, they generally had their own brigades and settlements. This had the effect of maintaining distinct group identities.

This juxtaposition of peoples from different regions tended to crystallise what had previously been loose regional affiliations into a more fixed group identity based on regional origin. In the 1970s and 1980s, inter-group antagonisms in the southern agrarian regions became more common as increasing scarcity caused by demographic pressure and limited agricultural inputs forced many communities to compete for land and resources. Tensions were especially high in the Vakhsh valley of Qurghonteppa, where Gharmi and Pamiri communities bordered indigenous Kulobi and Uzbek settlements. For example, local Uzbeks and resettled Gharmi communities disputed control over land and water during the 1960s. It was in these southern regions that some of the most fierce and brutal fighting of the war occurred in 1992. Kulobi-based militias expelled much of the non-Kulobi population during the winter of 1992-93 and many of the latter fled to Afghanistan. This localized pattern of conflict demonstrates that in the Tajik civil war, as in wars elsewhere, in some places conflicts generated by antagonistic localized rivalries intersected with the broader national conflict generated through political competition.

Olivier Roy is a researcher at the French Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) who served as Head of the CSCE mission to Tajikistan in 1993-94 and has published widely on Central Asia.

*Perspectives on the war and peace process*

## The Tajikistan government

by Iskandar Asadullaev



**President Rakhmonov with supporters, 1995**

Iskander Asadullaev is Director of the Centre for Strategic Research Under the President of Tajikistan and previously served as assistant to President Rakhmonov.

The emergence of President Emomali Rakhmonov's government in late 1992 marked a turning point in the Tajik civil war. At first, intensified fighting consolidated Rakhmonov's position as head of state, but then the peace process slowly took hold and led to the June 1997 General Agreement. Some might argue that this success was due to domestic and foreign players' need for a way out of a stalemate. Yet favourable conditions for reaching an agreement and sustaining it into post-war reconciliation are of little use if the country's leadership lacks the political will to build peace.

Rakhmonov came to power at a time of crisis in governance. Opposition activists had mounted prolonged demonstrations in Shahidon Square in Dushanbe in spring 1992 to protest against the Communist government of President Rakhmon Nabiev. Pro-Communist counter-demonstrators gathered in Ozodi Square and Nabiev distributed guns to his supporters. Violent clashes soon broke out and were stabilized only after the Russian army's 201st Division intervened. Under pressure from the opposition, Nabiev agreed to form a power-sharing coalition 'Government of National Reconciliation' (GNR) that soon proved unworkable. Armed opposition demonstrators from the Shahidon Square forced the Ozodi Square demonstrators out of Dushanbe. Although many pro-Communist demonstrators returned their weapons and went home, a faction from Kulob took their arms home with them and formed the nucleus of the Kulobi-based Popular Front militia that fought against perceived opposition supporters. The arena of armed conflict shifted south and rapidly escalated into open warfare. The GNR retaliated by blockading Kulob. In an effort to end the fighting, more than eighty political party representatives and informal leaders met in the south-eastern city of Khorugh, where they formulated a peace agreement. But the resulting ceasefire soon broke down.

After intense fighting that autumn and the start of international involvement in the conflict, Tajiks from different factions made one more attempt to resolve the conflict without external help. On 18 November 1992 they held a sixteenth session of the Tajik Supreme Soviet (in effect, the parliament) in the northern city of Khujand, which was untouched by the violence. The meeting was attended by deputies, the military commanders of the warring factions, party representatives, delegates from ethnic communities, and foreign observers. They sought to agree on a legitimate government. The military success of the Popular Front against opposition forces in the south determined the outcome. Nabiev, who had been forced to resign in September, was initially nominated for the leadership position but asked for retirement. This created the opportunity for Rakhmonov – at that time a mid-level official who had recently become head of the Kulob Soviet of People's Deputies – to be elected as head of the Supreme Soviet, and hence acting head of state and government.



The government Rakhmonov inherited was burdened by a ruined economy, a destroyed administration and a highly fragmented society. Thus the challenge to his presidency was to launch state-building in a way that would support the peace process. The problem was compounded by the need to establish Tajikistan's status and political orientation in the world system: to signal the type of state it would be and to choose between guiding principles of communism, Islamicism, and democracy. Many in Tajikistan, particularly among government supporters, favoured a destructive and ultimately deadlocked option of 'fighting to victory' against the Islamicist opposition. On the other hand, many opposition supporters adamantly opposed communism and advocated armed struggle to establish an Islamic order. Rakhmonov's government chose to distance itself from both communists and militant Islamicists. It advocated democratic development so as to retain popular support among a moderate majority at home and to develop good relations with CIS countries and other neighbours. This strategy secured domestic and international support.

Rakhmonov's government realized that continued war would only deepen inter-regional strife, lead to bankruptcy, and undermine the country's future. These internal incentives combined with pressure from international partners. Almost all the CIS governments wanted the government to make peace with the opposition. Russian and Iranian geopolitical interests converged in promoting an end to the civil war and the efficacy of the UN-sponsored process secured the success of the inter-Tajik negotiations.

A ceasefire was agreed comparatively swiftly through the participation of delegates who controlled armed forces and possessed the political power needed to stop the fighting. It was more difficult, however, to reach a political arrangement settling the underlying conflict. Disputes about power-sharing principles dominated the agenda. For the government, the problem was not how many positions the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) would have in a transitional government but about the fundamental problem of constitutional consistency. Could the government sacrifice the principle of secularism favoured by most Tajikistanis to accommodate Islamicist demands for a share of state power? Although the UTO did not openly question the constitutional principle of secularism, the ghost of an Islamic state hovered over the negotiations.

To avoid a stalemate or even collapse of the talks, the future legal status of the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) was made conditional on its implementation of the Protocol on Military Issues and its adherence to the (secular) laws of the country. The notion of an Islamic state was not disputed directly or addressed explicitly in the documents adopted by the negotiating teams. It was instead tacitly postponed and became a central feature of

the work of the Commission on National Reconciliation between 1997 and 1999. Here, too, the government and opposition parties showed flexibility and, with support from the agreement's external guarantors, the problem was finally addressed through a compromise. The IRP was legalized, while secularism remained central to Tajikistan's constitution. Yet in the long-term, the important dilemma of secularism versus Islamicism remains unresolved.

Another issue, often highlighted by outside observers, is that a 'third force' – customarily personified by Abdumalik Abdullajanov, the former prime minister from Leninabad province – was excluded from the peace process. During the first rounds of negotiations, the UTO demanded that a governing State Council of National Reconciliation be formed with half the seats allocated to the opposition. In 1996 Abdullajanov proposed that his party join the negotiations and advocated a 40/40/20 power-sharing formula, allocating his group 20 per cent of seats in the proposed State Council. Despite some support from the UTO, the government rejected this proposal because it would leave them in a minority position. After some consultation, so did the mediators, whose mandate was to reach agreement between the warring factions.

Ultimately a 70/30 power-sharing ratio was agreed, with the government retaining 70 per cent of positions and the UTO allocated the rest. The Abdullajanov faction was not represented in this arrangement but the agreement reflected the balance of power resulting from the war. Neither Abdullajanov's 'third force' nor Leninabad as a region had the political and military force to stake a claim to power equal to that of factions based in the south and east. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between Abdullajanov's Leninabadi-based faction and Leninabadis in general. The government tried to include people from all regions and all communities in its delegation to the peace negotiations. Most Leninabadis, like people from other regions, supported the outcome of the negotiations; without this, peacebuilding would have been impossible.

With the implementation of the 1997 General Agreement, Rakhmonov has sought both to consolidate his presidency and to build a broad-based Movement for National Unity and Revival involving people from all around the country. In so doing, he has sought to overcome the traditional clientelist and regional networks that have dominated Tajik political life and thus to counterbalance the potential for fragmentation. The signing of the General Agreement does not mean that peace has now come to Tajikistan forever, or that democratic institutions are fully operative. At the start of the twenty-first century, it is possible to talk only about the foundation for a democratic dispensation, yet the Tajik government remains convinced that only democracy can ensure a peaceful future.

*Perspectives on the war and  
peace process*

# The Islamic Renaissance Party

by Saodat Olimova and  
Muzaffar Olimov



Source: Genadiy Prituchenko

**IRP demonstrators, October 1991**

Saodat Olimova is a political scientist and head of the sociology department at the Sharq Information and Analytical Centre, Dushanbe. Muzaffar Olimov is a historian who is Director of Sharq. They have published extensively on modern Tajikistan and the civil war.

With the demise of the USSR, many in Tajikistan hoped that multi-party democracy would provide a choice of political development options and allow control of the state by society. In this climate of expectation, the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) of Tajikistan formed. It emerged from the June 1990 Congress of Muslims in the USSR, which created a pan-Soviet IRP, thus fulfilling the long dormant potential for Islam to be the basis of opposition to the prevailing communist ideology. Although illegal at first, the IRP in Tajikistan developed rapidly after independence and before the war in the period when religion-based parties could operate legally. It became a parliamentary party aiming to revive Islam after decades of erosion by anti-Islamic Soviet policies. Of all the Islamicist parties in Central Asia, only the IRP in Tajikistan participated in elections.

The IRP was more than a purely a religious movement; it was also a social and political phenomenon. Most new parties in Tajikistan began with ideological convictions but gradually ethno-regional interests dominated national and ideological concerns. Some leaders sought to use the new parties to redistribute state power and property to benefit themselves. The IRP was strongest in the Qarateghin region. Its ideological motivations intersected with regional concerns and it eventually became in effect a party representing Qarateghini interests.

The IRP was able to cooperate with other opposition parties. Its unlikely alliance with the 'democratic' parties was based partly on shared interests (a coalition of regional elites opposing the communist *status quo*) and partly on the tradition of egalitarianism and communal democracy in the Islamic culture of mountainous Tajikistan. Any remaining ideological contradictions were soon overshadowed by the logic of political and, later, military struggle. It fielded a joint candidate with the Democratic Party in the 1991 presidential elections but lost to the Communist Party candidate, Rakhmon Nabiev. After this defeat, the opposition movement continued the political struggle through the media, hunger strikes, and mass rallies. Prolonged demonstrations paralyzed the capital in spring 1992. As tensions escalated, a coalition Government of National Reconciliation (GNR) was formed with eight representatives from opposition groups, including the IRP.

Some in the Islamicist movement aimed to destroy the regime altogether. They helped form the military movement *Najot-i Vatan* (Salvation of the Motherland) in autumn 1991, transforming the opposition alliance into a military-political organization. Islamicists explain the resort to military force as a response to the hostility displayed by the communist regime. Some pro-communists used the slogan 'down with Islam' in their rallies, thus making them objects of a *jihad* holy war.

When President Nabiev distributed weapons to his supporters in spring 1992 and hostilities between regional groups escalated, many militants believed that armed struggle was the only option. After most opposition parties were banned by the Rakhmonov government in late 1992, most Islamicist activists went into exile. They formed a united front, the Movement for Islamic Revival in Tajikistan (MIRT), to coordinate their military and political initiatives. It was formed in Taloqan, Afghanistan, in 1993, with the IRP at its core. In 1994 it became the dominant group in the United Tajik Opposition (UTO).

Although they initially relied on a military strategy, the Islamicist groups eventually agreed to negotiate for several reasons. First, they realised that most Tajikistanis preferred secular political ideologies and resisted Islamicism. They also worried that the CIS would isolate Tajikistan because of a perceived 'Islamic threat'. Second, the IRP's goal was a Tajikistan united by Islamic principles. Yet the conflict had turned into a war between ethno-regional groups, thus risking complete fragmentation of the country – a development that negated their long-term goal. Third, the UTO could not hope to retain power over central government by exclusively military means, given the imbalance of demographic and economic resources between its strongholds and the pro-government regions. This became especially obvious in 1994, when many young people from 'rebel' regions migrated to other CIS countries in search of work, thus reducing the pool of new recruits. Finally the memory of the exile and defeat of the Basmachi fighters and communities who fled Tajikistan in the 1920s and 1930s created a powerful motivation for a negotiated settlement amongst many exiled grassroots members.

The inter-Tajik negotiations were periodically interrupted by military clashes. Both sides regularly packaged ceasefire demands with political issues. They used military operations – usually in Tavildara and Qarateghin, seven to ten days before the next round of talks – to bolster their position before demanding concessions. The IRP also used other pressure tactics, including bombing and hostage-taking. The IRP accused Russian troops in the CIS Peacekeeping Force (CIS/PKF) of ceasefire violations and interference in Tajikistan's internal affairs. It hoped that the CIS/PKF would be put under the control of UN observers, limiting their ability to resist UTO military operations. In the end, these tactics failed. As the peace process progressed, the warring parties demonstrated greater flexibility and shifted from military pressure to political strategies. Yet the course of negotiations was full of stoppages, reversals, and sudden advances – largely because of the insecurity of the participants.

The peace process gathered momentum as soon as President Rakhmonov and UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri took charge of the negotiating teams. The December

1996 meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri in Khos Deh, Afghanistan, was the beginning of real efforts at conciliation. Nuri made important concessions, which created conflict within the UTO leadership and deep frustration among many IRP members. Many UTO field commanders and fighters balked at the order to leave Gharm and the Qarateghin valley. Trust in their religious leaders eventually prevailed over their resistance. Subsequently, both the government and the UTO became increasingly open to compromise and generally complied with agreements. Over the next six months they agreed almost all the main military, political, and legal issues and in June 1997 the General Agreement was signed.

By 2000 the IRP had become one of the most powerful political parties in Tajikistan. Its members filled most of the government positions allocated to the UTO and it has once again become a parliamentary party committed to peaceful and legal political methods. It also operates a socio-economic development programme concentrating on women and youth. The IRP is unique in the region as an Islamicist movement participating peacefully in the political life of a secular state.

Yet some problems remain. Although it has expanded from its regional base and now has branches almost all over the country, the IRP has been unable to overcome the problem of regionalism and this has limited its influence. Also, some people question the concept of an 'Islamic party'. Khoji Akbar Turajonzoda left the IRP, arguing that Islam is incompatible with a limited political party. He promotes instead the integration of Islamic principles into the political system to encourage Tajikistan's evolution into an Islamic state.

Some IRP members, contrary to the law on political parties, have used mosques and *madrasas* for political activities. The government realizes that it is difficult to maintain a complete separation between politics and other social issues and is generally tolerant of preaching that touches on politics. It nevertheless maintains a strict ban on explicitly political activities in religious institutions. Finally, there are concerns that worsening socio-economic conditions, deepening corruption, and an 'ideological vacuum' (combining disillusionment with both 'communist' and 'democratic' ideas and the lack of powerful secular movements) may lead to a more militant and radical Islamicist movement in Tajikistan. The IRP will continue to try to channel this dissatisfaction into peaceful political struggle.

A major achievement of the Tajik peace process is that it facilitated the peaceful incorporation of Islamicist movements into the constitutional political process. It has created a system that can accommodate the political interests of different social groups professing divergent and even contradictory approaches to religion and the state.

## Perspectives on the war and peace process

# The Democratic Party

by **Abdunabi Sattorzoda**



Source: Getty Images/Alamy

**DPT demonstrators, February 1992**

**Abdunabi Sattorzoda was Deputy Chair of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan Almaty platform between 1995 to 1999 and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1997 to 2000.**

In the late 1980s, Tajikistanis began openly to articulate democratic ideas and to form political movements to achieve them. Among the new parties that emerged was the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), founded on 10 August 1990. It focused on critique of the Communist Party and Soviet officials who retained control over the country. The Communist leadership resisted the new political activists and restricted their rights. DPT supporters reacted by protesting in the streets and, with other opposition parties, the DPT organised peaceful rallies to pressure the government to resign.

The inter-Tajik conflict began in November 1991, when the Communist Party candidate Rakhmon Nabiev won the presidential elections, defeating the candidate jointly put forward by the DPT and the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). The democratic opposition, which had little political experience, refused to consider cooperating with the Nabiev government, although it did not engage in serious analysis of the political, social, and economic implications of such an option. Instead it joined a 52-day opposition rally in April and May 1992. This demonstration became increasingly radical and government supporters reacted strongly against the protesters. President Nabiev, in an effort to reduce political tensions, agreed to form a coalition Government of National Reconciliation (GNR). This power-sharing arrangement soon broke down under external pressure from some of the regional elites and internal tensions. The different factions that comprised the GNR had difficulties cooperating, due in part to the lack of experience and radicalism of the opposition forces combined with the obstinacy of the old Communist leadership that relied on force to ensure its continued position. With the collapse of the GNR and the start of a new government under Emomali Rakhmonov's leadership, the DPT and most other opposition parties were declared illegal and most DPT activists dispersed into exile, primarily in CIS countries.

Despite its losses and defeats, the DPT remained a political party. The Coordination Centre of Democratic Forces of Tajikistan in CIS was formed in Moscow in October 1993. This enabled DPT activists to establish close working relations with other Tajik opposition groups. The Coordination Centre developed a strategy to address the conflict and on 7 December 1993 this was incorporated into a document entitled 'Suggestions for the peaceful regulation of the military-political conflict in the Republic of Tajikistan'. It formed the basis for the democratic opposition's participation in the inter-Tajik negotiations and acknowledged that there was a real danger of losing independent statehood altogether if the war continued.



The United Tajik Opposition (UTO) was a mechanism for the DPT to participate in the peace negotiations, yet it did carry a cost. When the opposition met to discuss who would participate in the talks, the DPT promoted two principles: (a) representation of all political parties and movements and (b) retention of the balance of political force. This meant that each opposition party or movement would be represented on the basis of its relative size and influence. Although the DPT was the most prominent of the secular opposition parties, with a large membership and substantial popular support, it did not claim a separate place at the negotiating table because it had no armed supporters. Therefore the DPT, together with other opposition parties and movements, joined with the IRP to form the UTO – an alliance that cost the party its unity.

From the start of the peace process, a split developed between the DPT Chair Shodmon Yusuf and his deputies, on one side, and the party's executive and its grassroots members, on the other. Yusuf did not participate directly in formulating the 'Suggestions' document or give it his approval. Soon after it was released, he announced his opposition to any negotiations and declared it impermissible for party members to reach understandings with the Rakhmonov government, saying that no DPT member had the right to "negotiate with this criminal and treacherous regime." The unity of the UTO was restored in mid-February 1994 when UN Special Envoy Ramiro Piriz-Ballon met with DPT leaders Abdunabi Sattorzoda, Shodmon Yusuf and Rahim Musulmoniyon to discuss the party's participation in the peace process. Yet consensus on the DPT's role and strategy was still lacking. By September 1994, Yusuf and his followers were actively distancing themselves from the UTO. They sought to undermine the opposition alliance by proclaiming that although it had agreed to negotiate, it had no intention of reaching an agreement.

The following December, the main body of the DPT held a congress in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It approved the DPT's participation in the UTO and criticized Yusuf's leadership of the party. Six months later, the next DPT congress removed Yusuf from his post and elected Jumaboi Niyozov as its new leader. This group became known as the DPT Almaty platform (DPTA). Soon after, Yusuf and some of his supporters based in Tehran formed the DPT Tehran platform (DPTT), which unexpectedly reversed its position by entering into direct talks with the Rakhmonov government and indicating its willingness to cooperate. In exchange the government allowed the DPTT to register in July 1995. The DPTA, which continued to participate in the peace talks through its membership in the UTO, remained under a ban.

The DPTA had three representatives out of nine in the UTO delegation to the inter-Tajik negotiations. During the first rounds of talks, the agenda was hotly debated. The DPTA promoted issues that the government wanted to exclude from the negotiation agenda: power-sharing, legalization of banned parties and movements, amendments to the constitution, and release of political prisoners. The government instead preferred to concentrate on achieving a permanent ceasefire and the return of refugees.

With pressure from the international mediators, the government eventually agreed to address political reform in the agreement itself. But these issues were once again put on the periphery during the transitional phase (1997-2000), when significantly greater attention was given to implementing the Protocol on Military Issues than to the Protocol on Political Issues. According to some critics, the resulting less-than-democratic political system and government institutions reflects the lack of political will to address governance.

The 1997 General Agreement was the result of a political consensus to stop the brutal contest of war. The DPT's participation in reconciliation efforts evolved within the limits of the political dynamics of the time. The DPT believes that the consolidation of peace can create conditions favourable for the development of institutions suited to truly democratic governance in Tajikistan.

*Perspectives on the war and  
peace process*

# Abdullajanov and the 'third force'

by **Shahram Akbarzadeh**



Market in Khujand, Leninabad

**Shahram Akbarzadeh** is a lecturer in international relations at La Trobe University, Australia and editor of *Pacifica Review*. He has published widely on Tajikistan history and society.

**M**ore than three years of inter-Tajik negotiations between the government of President Emomali Rakhmonov and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) culminated in the signing of a General Agreement in June 1997. The international community hailed this as a momentous success. However, the political elite from the Leninabad region was not formally represented in the negotiations. Although the UN mandate focused on bringing about a negotiated settlement between the warring parties, the exclusion of this Leninabadi faction may undermine the future political stability of Tajikistan.

President Rakhmonov has pursued a course of action that many observers interpret as deliberate marginalization of the Leninabadi leadership and, indeed, of leaders from regions other than Kulob. The appointment of the present government, after Rakhmonov's re-election to a seven-year term at the end of 1999, appeared to confirm claims that Rakhmonov was staffing the cabinet with his Kulobi supporters. The four 'power ministries' (Internal Affairs, Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs) and some others were reserved for Kulobis. This dominance reflects the military strength of Kulobi fighters during the civil war. President Rakhmonov is reported to have stated that it would be naive to expect the victor to share the spoils, even with former supporters and allies. This was taken as a serious affront by the Leninabadi elite, who dominated the politics of Tajikistan for nearly four decades and provided financial and logistical support to the Kulobi faction in the most intense period of the civil war in May-December 1992.

The push to exclude the Leninabadi leadership from positions of power in the central government is often linked to the removal of the influential Leninabadi, Abdumalik Abdullajanov, from his prime ministerial position in January 1994. (Abdullajanov had initially retained the position after Rakhmonov rose to power in November 1992.) Abdullajanov contested the November 1994 presidential elections and lost by a narrow margin to the incumbent president. Foreign observers reported serious cases of electoral misconduct and fraud. Abdullajanov's chances of returning to prominence were seriously hampered by charges of embezzlement brought against him in 1994, barring him from holding public office and from standing in the parliamentary elections of February 1995. He then moved to Moscow, where he tried to regain some leverage over the Rakhmonov leadership by forming the National Revival Movement (NRM), together with two other former Leninabadi prime ministers, Abduljalil Samadov and Jamshed Karimov. The NRM lobbied for inclusion in the inter-Tajik negotiations. Despite the positive response from some elements of the UTO, the government blocked its participation.

It appears that when it eventually signalled its willingness to accept NRM's inclusion in the peace talks and the allocation of a ministerial quota to Leninabadi leaders, the UTO was looking for an ally. This was an ironic reversal of the political divisions of 1992, when opposition forces that later united in the UTO directed their protests against conservative Leninabadi leaders who were bolstered by support from Kulob. Rakhmonov's opposition to the NRM's participation in the talks was based on similar calculations: it would have weakened his hand against the UTO. It would also have pushed aside the legal constraints on Abdullajanov by making him eligible for political amnesty and reviving him as a legitimate political contender. It appears that Rakhmonov deemed Abdullajanov too resourceful and popular to warrant that risk. He succeeded in blocking NRM's participation partly because the main international sponsors of peace talks (Russia, Iran and the UN) shied away from confrontation. They either lacked the resolve or feared a backlash and a complete breakdown of negotiations if they forced the issue.

Rakhmonov's antipathy towards Abdullajanov betrayed a degree of insecurity. It appears that the President was concerned that Abdullajanov wielded significant authority even in exile. In May 1996, the murder of a prominent Leninabadi businessman provoked large demonstrations in various Leninabadi cities. They soon grew into a political protest against the appointment of Kulobi administrators at district and provincial level in Leninabad. The wave of arrests that followed these demonstrations specifically targeted known friends and supporters of Abdullajanov. According to a Human Rights Watch report, a prison riot against deplorable living conditions that took place in April 1997 in Khujand, Leninabad's provincial capital, provided a pretext for the murder and mistreatment of leading Leninabadi figures and allies of Abdullajanov. Twenty-seven prisoners were killed. In the following month, Rakhmonov survived an assassination attempt while visiting Khujand. The Rakhmonov leadership interpreted these events as further proof of the questionable loyalty of the Leninabadi leadership. This impression was further boosted in the following year.

In November 1998, former Tajik army Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdyev launched an incursion into Leninabad from Uzbekistan and challenged Rakhmonov's authority. It was Khudoiberdyev's third attempt to dislodge Rakhmonov from power. The choice of Leninabad as the scene of action, the suspected backing from Uzbekistan (denied by the Uzbek government), and his ethnic Uzbek maternal family connection were sufficient for the government to link Khudoiberdyev with Abdullajanov – who has also enjoyed support from the Uzbek

government. Tajikistan troops that included former UTO fighters suppressed this armed insurgency. The government then cracked down on suspected insurgents, arresting more than 150 people. In October 2000 four people were sentenced to death and 64 others received long prison terms for treason and terrorism.

Rakhmonov's uncompromising attitude towards Abdullajanov does not appear to be rooted in inter-regional antipathy. The Rakhmonov government has consistently appointed Leninabadis to the post of Prime Minister since November 1992 and the present government includes six Leninabadis, among them Prime Minister Akil Akilov. The issue, therefore, is one of personal loyalties and patronage. Rakhmonov has been careful to ensure the promotion of his allies and *protégés* at the expense of potential rivals, whatever their regional background.

This power play could adversely affect Tajikistan's future. The criterion of personal loyalty to Rakhmonov tends to encourage illicit patronage relations, at the expense of the ideal of government responsibility and responsiveness to the citizens of Tajikistan. Consequently, political dissent is likely to be organized along the familiar lines of personal patronage and mutual loyalty. This will entrench the culture of personal allegiance and informal reciprocity, leading to political mobilization through personal, family and clan patronage. Resentment at being excluded from power could precipitate political action along fault lines similar to those that led to civil war in 1992.

# Architecture of international involvement in the Tajik peace process

by Vladimir Goryayev

*The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.*

Vladimir Goryayev is Senior Political Affairs Officer in at the UN Department of Political Affairs and served as Executive Secretary to the inter-Tajik negotiations and advisor to all the UN Special Envoys and Special Representatives.

The Tajik peace process brought together a range of international partners who were able to coordinate their interventions effectively to support the efforts of Tajiks to end the war. They were united by the common goals of restoring peace, preventing the conflict from spreading throughout the region and alleviating the suffering of hundreds of thousands of victims of war. The UN was recognized as the leading international body driving the peace process and coordinating international responses to the crisis. Owing to the clear mandate from the UN Security Council, there was no ambiguity about the UN's sponsorship of the negotiations that were the focus of the peace process. The UN's role was accepted by all major parties to the conflict, the key observer countries and other states. Once the UN mandate was established, the offices responsible for implementation moved quickly and the UN presence was soon consolidated. Thereafter the UN response was characterized by an integrated approach involving the political, peacekeeping and humanitarian elements of the UN system.

The Special Envoys and, later, the Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General were at the centre of the complex effort to coordinate the actions of various UN departments, programmes and agencies, regional international organizations, and influential international NGOs. They also liaised closely with Tajikistan's neighbours and other interested countries. In addition to facilitating the official inter-Tajik negotiations, UN mediators also maintained liaison with the 'second track' dialogue initiated by Ambassador Saunders of the Kettering Foundation. Despite the apparent complexity of international interventions in the Tajik conflict, clear mandates and effective coordination prevented duplication and 'competition of initiatives' – thus facilitating the comparatively rapid achievement of a peace agreement and helping to alleviate the suffering of those affected by war.





## The role of Special Envoys/ Representatives of the UN Secretary-General

The UN response to the Tajik civil war began in September 1992, when the first fact-finding mission led by Raymond Sommereyns, Director of the West Asia Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the UN Secretariat, was dispatched to the country by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The mission travelled to the areas where fighting was most intense and met all the principal political and military leaders on both sides. It subsequently reported that Tajikistan was engulfed in civil war. On 2 October 1992, the Secretary-General conveyed the mission's findings to the Security Council. From 1 to 14 November 1992, a second mission visited Tajikistan, initiating the active involvement of key UN humanitarian agencies – the UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, and the World Health Organization (WHO). This mission also interacted closely with a high-level mediation team from four CIS countries, led by Felix Kulov, at that time Vice-President of the Kyrgyz Republic, and included the Deputy Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and the Russian Ambassador to Tajikistan. Their cooperation in November 1992 mutually reinforced the UN and CIS missions. It demonstrated the potential of an intervention that combined the involvement of the UN – perceived as an impartial third party with moral authority and expertise in multilateral negotiations – with that of Tajikistan's close

neighbours who could exert political, economic and military leverage. This first positive experience was the catalyst for a partnership used to the fullest extent during the negotiations and the implementation of the 1997 General Agreement.

The first two UN missions revealed that the Secretary-General and the Security Council lacked the detailed information needed to design an effective strategy. To address this problem, in late December 1992 the Secretary-General decided to establish a small political mission in Dushanbe, with the agreement of the Tajik Government. Liviu Bota of Romania was appointed to head this United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), which started work on 21 January 1993. The mission was charged with the following tasks:

- a) to monitor the situation on the ground and provide the Secretary-General with up-to-date information;
- b) to ascertain the positions of all concerned parties on various aspects of the conflict and to encourage regional peacemaking efforts or, where no such efforts are in place, to encourage regional states or groups of states to undertake them;
- c) to assess the military situation in Tajikistan and explore how assistance could be provided to regional peacekeeping efforts;

d) to provide liaison and coordination services to facilitate prompt humanitarian assistance by the international community.

Information from UNMOT soon led the Secretary-General to appoint a full-time Envoy mandated to concentrate on achieving a ceasefire and establishing the process of negotiations for a political solution. On 26 April 1993, Ambassador Ismat Kittani of Iraq was appointed the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. In January 1994, he was succeeded by Ambassador Ramiro Piriz-Ballon of Uruguay. The efforts of Ambassadors Kittani and Piriz-Ballon, as well as those of UNMOT, began to produce results when the two Tajik parties held the first round of inter-Tajik negotiations in Moscow on 5-19 April 1994. These Special Envoys were later succeeded by Special Representatives resident in Tajikistan: Gerd Merrem of Germany (May 1996-April 1998), Ambassador Jan Kubics of Slovakia (July 1998-August 1999) and Ambassador Ivo Petrov of Bulgaria (from September 1999). Each in turn led the negotiation process that resulted in the General Agreement of 17 June 1997 and its eventual implementation. Although the Special Envoys/Representatives acted during different phases of the conflict and peace process, their contributions to the restoration of peace in Tajikistan were equally valuable. Over a period of almost seven years, the Special Envoys/Representatives and their staff were responsible for designing the negotiation process, maintaining contacts with all parties to the conflict and integrating the efforts of other countries and organizations. They served as mediators and worked with the Tajik parties to organize the negotiations and numerous high-level consultations between rounds. With the input of the Tajik negotiators, they drafted the protocols that made up the General Agreement.

Another important function of the Special Envoys/Representatives was to report through the Secretary-General to the Security Council and stimulate its active interest and involvement in the Tajikistan conflict. The Secretary-General reported regularly to the Security Council, helping to ensure that key member states remained politically committed to the process. This in turn helped to strengthen the hand of the Special Envoys/Representatives in performing their functions. Security Council backing was important not only in their work with the warring Tajik parties, but also for their contacts with states that directly or indirectly supported one of the Tajik sides.

In designing the negotiating strategy, the first Special Envoys, Ambassadors Kittani and Piriz-Ballon, paid special attention to the need for constructive integration of countries in the region into UN peacemaking efforts. The Special Envoys gave as much attention to their contacts with the governments of these countries as they gave to

direct consultations with the parties to the conflict. Following consultations in the capitals of Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, these countries became observers in the inter-Tajik negotiations, with the explicit agreement of both the Tajik government and the leaders of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). In September 1995, Turkmenistan joined the group of observer countries. (The important role played by these countries in the peace process is discussed in more detail in the chapter on the inter-Tajik negotiations.) In the years after the General Agreement was concluded, it became clear that it would have been impossible to reach an agreement without ensuring the synergy of efforts of the United Nations negotiating team and the governments of the observer countries.

## UN departments

Institutionally, the DPA was the leading UN office for the inter-Tajik negotiations. Under-Secretaries-General Marrack Goulding and Kieran Prendergast paid close attention to the negotiating process. At several critical junctures they intervened personally with the parties and other players. For example, when the negotiations reached an impasse on the issue of the venue for the second round, Goulding flew to Dushanbe in early May 1994 to consult with President Rakhmonov and the problem was solved. Prendergast directed the negotiating process in its final critical stage and personally chaired the Vienna donor conference in November 1997. DPA staff were also active. Sommereyns participated directly, albeit intermittently, in the negotiations. The DPA desk officer for Tajikistan served as a political adviser to all the Special Envoys/Representatives and was executive secretary at each round of talks and at the consultation meetings.

The DPA had several responsibilities: it developed the strategy of the peace process; organized each round of negotiations; prepared draft agreements; drafted the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council; provided substantive guidance and administrative support to UNMOT from January 1993 to December 1994; coordinated the efforts of other UN departments, programmes and agencies; and organized meetings at UN headquarters for the informal 'Group of Friends of Tajikistan'. In addition to these specific duties, DPA staff fulfilled the critical function of maintaining the institutional memory of the process.

At the same time, the DPA cooperated closely with other UN departments, particularly with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). DPA and DPKO officials acted as a unified team during the peace process. The Director of the Asia and Middle East Division of DPKO, Joachim Hütter, participated in the inter-Tajik

negotiations when the military and peacekeeping aspects of the peace process were discussed. After a UN peacekeeping mission was formed in December 1994, the spirit of cooperation between the departments was maintained. The DPKO became the lead department providing substantive guidance to UNMOT. It was responsible for the administration of the peacekeeping mission, prepared drafts of the Secretary-General's reports to the Security Council and convened the UN Task Force for Tajikistan. The DPA, however, retained responsibility for the negotiation process. This division of labour and responsibilities between the two departments proved effective.

## UN humanitarian agencies

The severe humanitarian crisis in Tajikistan affected the negotiation process. One of the most important issues on the agenda was how to address the problem of refugees. The DPA and the Special Envoys/Representatives worked closely with the relevant UN humanitarian bodies and their Tajik counterparts to devise strategies to respond to these problems. Everyone was aware that the humanitarian problems could not be solved without addressing the core political problems. Therefore, without compromising the humanitarian principles that guide their work, the agencies benefited from the political perspectives and advice of the DPA. The Task Force on Tajikistan at UN headquarters was a useful *ad hoc* coordinating body. It included all the relevant UN departments, programmes and agencies with representation from the DPA, the DPKO, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UNHCR, the UNDP, the WFP, UNICEF, the WHO, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, and the World Bank. Task Force meetings, organised by the DPKO, were held at UN headquarters whenever necessary, usually every two to three months. They typically addressed issues of concern to all the partners, such as measures to ensure the safety of personnel and operations, election monitoring, and donor conferences.

The UNHCR was accepted by the government and was able to play a much larger political and mediating role than is normally the case. This was made possible by both its operational capacity and its unwillingness to make artificial distinctions between the needs of internally displaced people and those who had crossed the border into Afghanistan. Coordination between the DPA and the UNHCR was particularly close. The Special Envoys/Representatives consulted regularly with the High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata. The UNHCR representative in Tajikistan, Pierre-François Pirlot, was included in the UN negotiating team when the refugee issue was discussed during the talks. This close coordination later facilitated the implementation of the Protocol on Refugees, in which the UNHCR played a key

role. The organization actively sought to promote conditions on the ground that would allow people to return home in safety. It developed a strong in-country protection programme that included both mediation and monitoring of human rights. It helped to resolve disputes, including those over house occupations, as well as providing emergency assistance and relief. It also initiated projects that contributed to poverty alleviation and peacebuilding. Many of these activities set new precedents for the UNHCR and, as a result, its operation contributed to the stability and security of the country. In later stages, however, the operation lacked the resources for a smooth transition from relief to development.

## Regional inter-governmental organizations

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with a membership of fifty-five states, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), with its membership of fifty-six states, were key partners in the Tajik peace process. The OSCE – known as the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) until 1994 – participated as an observer for the first time at the Tehran meeting in June 1994. The OIC participated in the next round of talks in Islamabad in October 1994. Both then continued as official observers in the process and were a part of the Contact Group of guarantor states after the General Agreement was signed.

The OSCE contribution to the peace process was particularly important. As the OSCE began to consider how it could play a role, its chairperson-in-office, Wilhelm Hoynck, exchanged a series of letters with Murrack Goulding that became an informal memorandum of understanding on the different roles that each organization would fulfil. This helped to ensure that there was no collision in their respective mandates. It was agreed that the UN would continue its leading role in the peace process, while the OSCE would take a primary role in promoting the development of democratic institutions – a task that included organizing elections, helping to develop a new constitution, and monitoring human rights. The OSCE mission in Dushanbe, which opened in June 1993, offered technical assistance to the Tajik government. Later in the transition period, after the General Agreement was signed, the OSCE monitored and regularly reported on the human rights situation of returning refugees and displaced persons. As a guarantor of the General Agreement, it provided support for implementation, in particular for the protocols dealing with political and military issues and refugee return.

The Special Envoys/Representatives of the Secretary-General coordinated their negotiating positions with representatives of the OSCE and the OIC and kept them

informed of all details of the process. Throughout the peace process, the UN Special Envoys/Representatives and their staff regularly communicated with the OSCE Secretariat, its chairperson-in-office, and mission staff. As the UN representatives made a point of communicating their plans and strategies, OSCE representatives were able to make relevant contributions in support of the process when necessary. In June 1994, Ambassador Piriz-Ballon had consultations with the OIC Secretary-General in Jeddah. The UN mediators benefited from the information provided by OIC and OSCE field staff.

One practical outcome of this coordination was that a clear and consistent message from the key multilateral organizations cut off opportunities for any of the parties to look for a more 'convenient' mediator who might be more amenable to a process promoting their own cause. The Tajik parties, dissatisfied with the pressure applied by the UN negotiating team at certain points in the peace process, mentioned a possible change in mediators – implying that the OSCE should take over the lead. The OSCE, however, immediately ruled out this option and consistently supported the UN process. At critical moments in the peace process, the OSCE issued official statements in support of the UN peacemaking efforts and this had a positive effect on the Tajik parties. The combination of clear and complementary organizational mandates, together with continuing efforts to ensure politically unified strategies, also helped to ensure that personnel from the different organizations were able to work cooperatively.

## The role of international NGOs

With the human costs of war escalating rapidly, several international NGOs came to Tajikistan to provide humanitarian assistance, help protect civilians, and facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Among the most active were the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Aga Khan Foundation, *Médécins sans Frontières* and Helsinki Watch/Human Rights Watch. The UN – through the Special Envoys/Representatives and UNMOT – maintained close contact with these NGOs and sought to harmonize international efforts to help restore peace. The UN's contacts with ICRC and the Aga Khan Foundation were particularly close.

The ICRC played a significant role in helping to implement the agreement on the exchange of prisoners of war and detainees. The political decision on exchanges was achieved in the third and fourth rounds of negotiations at Islamabad and Almaty, respectively, and it was an important confidence-building measure. Given its reputation, experience and technical knowledge, the ICRC was given the extremely complicated task of conducting the exchanges, which it did successfully. In its turn, the UN used its political leverage with the parties to

facilitate important elements of the exchanges that the ICRC had difficulty in fulfilling, such as gaining access for ICRC delegates to detainees in prisons. Although the ICRC representatives did not participate directly in the negotiations, they visited Islamabad and Almaty 'informally' when the humanitarian issues with which they were concerned were on the agenda.

Given the great moral authority of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan over the Ismaili population of Badakhshan, Special Envoy Piriz-Ballon and Special Representative Merrem consulted him on issues related to the peace process. His visits to the country, informal mediating role and moderating influence significantly contributed to the success of the peace process. The Aga Khan Foundation made major contributions to alleviating the humanitarian crisis, particularly in the eastern part of the country.

## CIS Peacekeeping forces

In late September 1993, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the CIS established the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in Tajikistan (CIS/PKF) composed of contingents from the Russian Federation – based on the 201st Division stationed in Tajikistan – and battalions from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. In the chaos of civil war and with the collapse of government authority in many regions of Tajikistan, the CIS/PKF was the only disciplined and reliable force able to protect humanitarian convoys and strategic installations, such as chemical plants and hydroelectric power stations. Foreign embassies and international organizations also relied on its protection. Its presence had a stabilizing effect and helped to ensure that heavy weapons did not fall into the hands of the combatants. They thus helped to prevent further destruction and casualties. The CIS/PKF, together with the Russian Border Forces, also helped to control the transshipment of massive quantities of arms, ammunition and drugs from neighbouring Afghanistan.

The Special Envoys/Representatives and UNMOT military observers maintained regular contact with CIS/PKF commanders to discuss the military situation in the country and explore options to secure a ceasefire. The Protocol on Military Issues, signed in March 1997, gave CIS/PKF forces the important and delicate role of accompanying UTO units from Afghanistan to the assembly areas under the supervision of UNMOT, which they conducted successfully. This model of cooperation between UN military observers and regional peacekeeping forces could be applicable elsewhere, when the risks involved in sending unarmed UN personnel are high and regional countries are prepared to furnish the military 'muscle' to achieve political objectives defined by the Security Council.



## Strengths and weaknesses of the 'Tajik model' of peacemaking

On 12 May 2000 the UN Security Council issued a statement recognizing that 'the United Nations has played a successful and important role in the peace process in Tajikistan.' The success of the 'Tajik model' of international involvement was determined by the following factors:

- a) The UN was involved in Tajikistan practically from the beginning of the conflict, interacting with all factions and external players. Acting together with a high-level mediation team of the CIS countries, in autumn 1992 the UN helped to prevent the escalation of inter-ethnic clashes in the Qurghonteppa region.
- b) All parties to the conflict, foreign governments and international organizations recognized the UN as the coordinator of the peace process. UN mediators, with support from the Security Council, were able to build consensus among countries in the region and ensure their sustained support for the peace process. This also prevented the multiplication of peace initiatives and their unhealthy competition, which could have been detrimental to the peace process.
- c) The Special Envoys/Representatives provided good offices in a pro-active manner: they led, rather than simply followed, the peace negotiations. They applied a wide spectrum of negotiating formats and techniques to stimulate progression. It was important that the UN negotiating team prepared all the draft agreements. This ensured coherence with the principles of the UN Charter. It also helped to avoid fruitless polemics over drafts prepared by the Tajik delegations.
- d) The Protocol on the Fundamental Principles for Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan was signed at a relatively early stage of the negotiating process. It set out the basic political parameters for future agreements and provided clear direction for the rest of the process.
- e) The peacemaking efforts of the Special Envoys/Representatives were supported at a critical juncture by the quick deployment of UN military observers. This helped to strengthen the confidence of the parties and encouraged their compliance in implementing the agreements.
- f) The negotiating efforts of the Special Envoys/Representatives moved in parallel with humanitarian action by UN specialized agencies and NGOs. This demonstrated the UN's commitment to Tajikistan and strengthened the position of the mediators.
- g) The support of the observer countries, which hosted the Tajik delegations and provided them with conference facilities, food and lodging, security guarantees, and other amenities greatly facilitated the process.



Although the UN's involvement in support of the peace process has been widely acknowledged as a success, it had its imperfections. The protocols signed by the Tajik parties contained agreements on principles that were rarely spelled out in detail and some lacked mechanisms for implementation. For example, the agreement on a 30 per cent quota for UTO representatives in the power structures did not explain how this provision would be achieved. The vagueness of the agreements caused some difficulty with implementation. Yet the protocols reflected the maximum compromise that could be achieved when they were being negotiated. An attempt to go into greater detail could have damaged the dynamics of the talks at a time of political uncertainties, which included the risk that the advance of the Taliban in Afghanistan might cause further destabilization.

Another frequent criticism is that the north of the country was not represented at the talks and that its interests were not reflected in the agreements. However, the mandate of the United Nations was to mediate between the two warring sides – the government and UTO – so as to achieve a settlement that would end the war. The protocols subsequently reflected agreements reached between these parties. A proliferation of negotiating parties was not justified and could have delayed the restoration of peace.

# Methodology of the inter-Tajik negotiation process

by **Elena Rigacci Hay**

**Elena Rigacci Hay is a researcher with the Italian International Affairs Institute, Rome, and assisted the UN mediation team during the inter-Tajik negotiations**

The inter-Tajik negotiations were conducted under UN auspices. UN staff conducted more than a year of preparatory consultations and then facilitated three years of difficult negotiations between the delegations of the government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). These efforts culminated in the signing of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan in 27 June 1997 and the subsequent initiation of the work of the Commission on National Reconciliation in Dushanbe.

## **The progress of the negotiations**

UN involvement was initiated in September 1992 at the appeal of Uzbek President Islam Karimov to the UN Secretary-General. This was supported a few days later by a similar letter from Mauno Koivisto, President of Finland. In April 1994 the first round of inter-Tajik negotiations was held in Moscow, followed by a second round in Tehran in June. A comprehensive agenda was adopted at the first round of the talks. Its main issues were measures aimed at a political settlement, the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons, and consolidation of Tajikistan's statehood. At a consultative meeting in Tehran that September, an agreement on a temporary ceasefire was signed. The third round of negotiations, in Islamabad in October 1994, resulted in a protocol establishing the Joint Commission for monitoring the ceasefire. At the fourth round of negotiations in Almaty in May 1995, agreement was reached on the exchange of prisoners of war and the repatriation of refugees. The UTO also presented its proposal for a transitional governing Council of National Reconciliation composed of both government and UTO representatives. The government delegation rejected this.

In August 1995, President Rakhmonov and UTO leader Nuri signed a Protocol on Fundamental Principles for Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan and agreed to a continuous round of negotiations. This



protocol became an important blueprint for all subsequent talks, providing the main parameters for future agreements in all key areas. Three phases of this 'continuous round' of negotiations took place from November 1995 to July 1996 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. They consisted of detailed discussions on the modalities for integrating opposition representatives into the government and opposition military units into the Tajikistan armed forces. These negotiations were interrupted in May by large-scale fighting that violated the ceasefire agreement.

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

### Reasons for breakthrough

The breakthrough leading to the 1997 General Agreement was stimulated by several factors. First, the government and the opposition were both exhausted by

the war (depletion of supplies and financial resources, and destruction of the country). Second was the convergence of Russian and Iranian interests to promote peace in Tajikistan. Each wanted to keep the US at a distance from the peace process and to minimise Taliban, Pakistani or Saudi involvement in Tajikistan. Third, changes in northern Afghanistan caused by the military advance of the Pushtun-dominated Taliban undermined the security of UTO forces based in the region. Although UTO leaders had contacts with Taliban officials, the Taliban were suspicious of the UTO's close links with Iran and its affiliation with the predominantly ethnic Tajik and Uzbek political and military leaders in northern Afghanistan. As a result, the UTO armed groups lost their important operational bases in Afghanistan. In addition, Afghan President Rabbani and Commander Masoud became dependent on cooperation with the Tajik government and Russia for arms, administration, fuel, food and routes of re-supply and consequently ceased their alliance with the UTO. The combination of these factors provided the catalyst for the agreement facilitated through the inter-Tajik negotiation process.

### The role of foreign governments

Several governments in the region had considerable interest in the future of Tajikistan and provided political, military, financial and other support to the Tajik faction they thought would best secure their goals. The UN mediation team took these political realities into account. Representatives of Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Uzbekistan and, later, Turkmenistan as well as the OSCE and the OIC were invited to participate as observers in the inter-Tajik negotiations. Important objectives were achieved by

involving them actively in the process. It helped neutralize the potentially destructive influence of foreign governments on the parties. Their leverage was instead used to help soften the positions of the Tajik parties, first to bring them to engage in direct negotiations and then to make compromises.

It is worth mentioning a few examples. The Deputy Foreign Ministers Vaezi and Chernishev of Iran and Russia, respectively, were instrumental in convincing the respective Tajik delegations to sign the Draft Agreement on a Temporary Ceasefire prepared by the UN negotiating team for the Tehran round in September 1994. The personal commitment of Pakistan's Foreign Minister Asef Ali made it possible to extend the ceasefire agreement. President Niyazov and Foreign Minister Shikhmuradov of Turkmenistan participated in the three rounds of talks in Ashgabat in person. Their moderating influence helped to sustain the negotiating process at a critical juncture, opening the way to a breakthrough for the entire process. The personal contribution of Russian Foreign Minister Primakov and his deputy, Mr. Pastukhov, were invaluable for reaching agreement on the Protocol on Military Issues in March 1997, one of the most important documents of the process. The direct involvement of Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati facilitated the signing of the Protocol on Refugees in January 1997. The good offices of Kyrgyz President Akayev were instrumental in achieving agreement on the Protocol on Political Issues during the consultations in Bishkek in May 1997.

Regular consultations with the observer countries in their capitals provided an opportunity for the UN negotiating team to inform the governments on the negotiations, to coordinate plans and actions, and to prepare for future rounds of talks. The respect and trust demonstrated by the UN mediators generated reciprocal confidence and a positive attitude towards the process among the governments of observer countries. The UN negotiating team regularly consulted with important members of the Security Council – including the US and China – as well as other non-observer countries in the region, such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Another mechanism established to keep lines of communication permanently open was the *ad hoc* 'Group of Friends of Tajikistan' established at UN headquarters in New York. The time and effort invested by the UN negotiating team in contacts and consultations with interested governments yielded an important return in the form of strong support from the Security Council for the Secretary-General's mediation efforts in Tajikistan. It also facilitated the moderating influence of the governments of Turkey and Saudi Arabia on Islamicist groups in their own countries that had a militant agenda in Tajikistan.

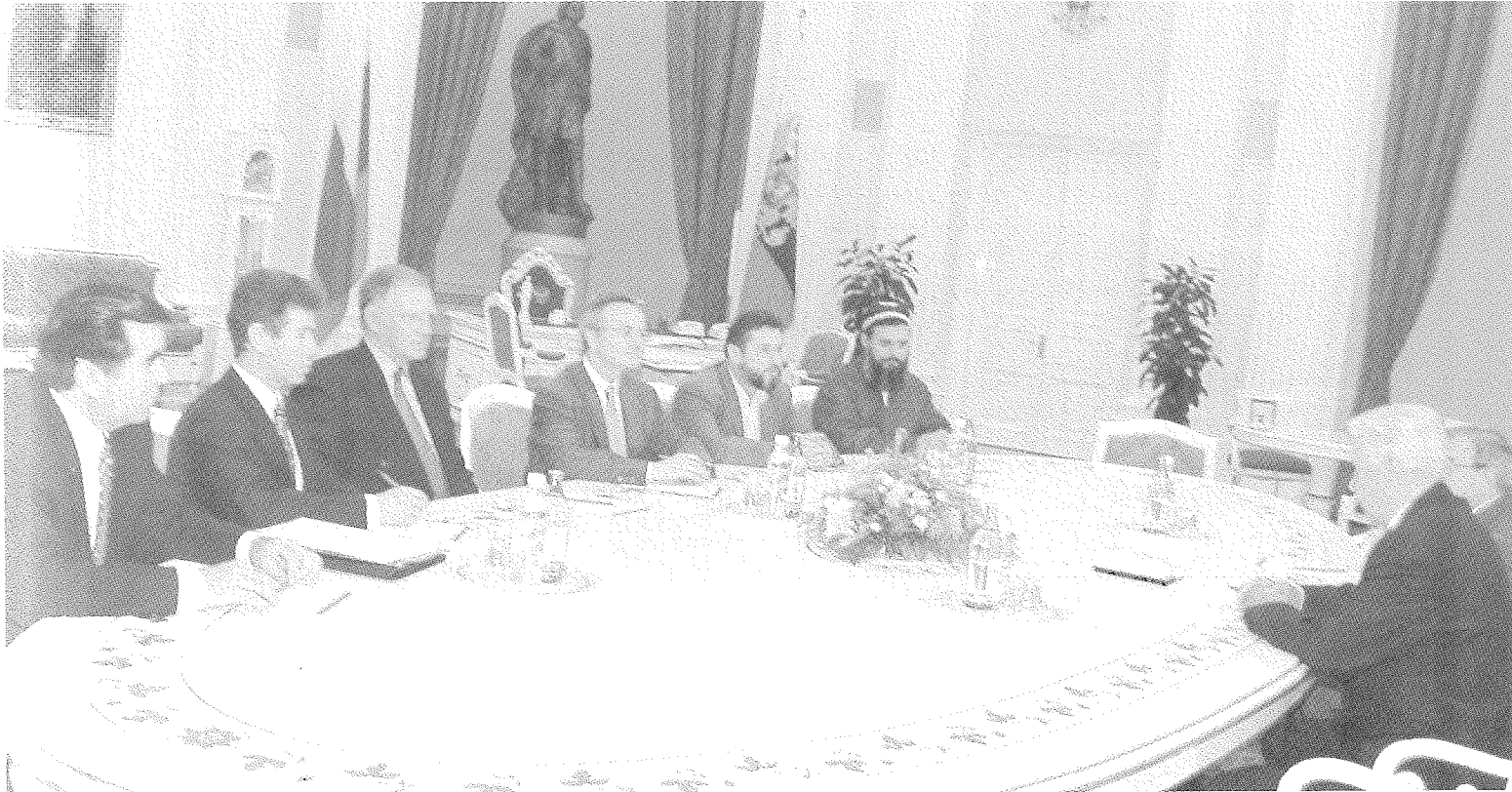
## Venues for the negotiations

The selection of the venue for the talks had political connotations and was an important procedural element. Each observer country government wanted to host the negotiations and aspired to achieve success in its capital. Therefore the UN negotiating team had to calculate precisely which of the eight capitals (Moscow, Tehran, Islamabad, Ashgabat, Almaty, Bishkek, Kabul, Tashkent) was the most appropriate and effective for achieving the concrete goals of the particular round. If the UN team predicted that more concessions were needed from the UTO delegation, for example, then Islamabad, Kabul or Tehran were appropriate locations because the host government would have more leverage with the opposition because of its closer relations with UTO leaders. It could consequently put more pressure on them than the 'unfriendly governments' of Russia, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Both Tajik sides were conscious of this tactical nuance and often fought fiercely to schedule the following round of talks in the country that better served their interests. This often led to prolonged delays and painful mediation efforts by the UN representatives to resolve the 'technical issue' of the venue. During the later stage from October 1996 to June 1997, when most of the protocols were signed, the venue rotated between the capitals of the two principal observer countries: Russia and Iran.

## Consultations and 'shuttle negotiations'

Preliminary consultations were an important part of the inter-Tajik negotiating process. The UN representatives were the only ones who maintained contact with all the parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. They had preliminary consultations with the Tajik government and the opposition, including their respective field commanders, as well as the governments of the observer countries. The UN mediators also conducted preliminary consultations with their international partners, including heads of the relevant UN bodies, NGOs, and regional organizations (the OSCE and the OIC). Preliminary consultations were conducted to prepare the ground for each round of talks. They explored the positions of the parties, identified potential stumbling blocks, developed possible compromise solutions, and prepared everyone concerned to achieve a concrete result.

Which partners were consulted before each round depended on the issues included in the agenda for that round as well as on its venue. Preliminary consultations always included contacts with the government of Tajikistan (President, Foreign Minister, and members of the delegation), usually in Dushanbe. Consultations with opposition leaders usually took place in Tehran or Islamabad, where many had been granted political asylum and maintained political offices. On several



occasions the UN team met with Tajik opposition leaders in Afghanistan. The UN team would meet with other actors as needed but always had extensive consultations with the host of the next round of talks.

One period of consultations became, in effect, an important stage of the indirect negotiation process. In July and August 1995 the UN team flew five times between Dushanbe and Kabul to carry out 'shuttle diplomacy' between Rakhmonov and Nuri. These efforts resulted in the Protocol of Fundamental Principles of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. This agreement provided a road map for the following rounds of talks and set the parameters for future protocols on political, military, refugee and other problems. These consultations turned out to be one of the most important stages in the negotiating process. They broke the deadlock between the two leaders, who at the time were not yet willing to negotiate face to face.

### **Host country agreements and invitations**

The UN and the host government – usually represented by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the country's permanent representative to the UN – signed a host country agreement before the round of talks. The document defined the logistical arrangements for the round and specified the diplomatic privileges and immunities that would be enjoyed by the members of each Tajik delegation. This document was particularly important for the UTO delegation in the early rounds. Tajik courts had indicted many of them on serious criminal charges. They feared extradition by the governments of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, and Turkmenistan – all of which had bilateral extradition agreements with Tajikistan. The host country agreements also provided privileges and immunities to the UN

negotiating team. The provisions of these agreements were fully respected by the host governments and became a source of confidence for the negotiators, thus contributing greatly to the negotiating process.

Following the preliminary consultations and the host agreement, the Special Envoy/Representative of the UN Secretary-General sent official invitations to the heads of the respective Tajik parties. The invitation was an important and substantive legal document that outlined the modalities of the round of negotiations. The mediators gave significant attention to drafting the invitation as it marked the beginning of the talks, navigating the delegations in the desired direction on substantive issues. It also included the time, venue, agenda, objectives, privileges and immunities of the delegations, and logistical arrangements. The invitations defined the number of members and advisers that could be included in each delegation. This served the practical purposes of letting the parties know how many people the host country government would provide with accommodation and other forms of logistical support.

### **Composition of the negotiating teams**

Each of the two Tajik delegations usually included up to ten members and up to five advisers and consultants. The government delegation was led successively by the Minister of Labour, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, the First Deputy Prime Minister and finally by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. After the first two rounds, the UTO delegation was led by Khoji Akbar Turajonzoda. On seven occasions, President Rakhmonov and UTO leader Nuri led their respective delegations. The government delegation generally included senior cabinet officials and influential political personalities. The UTO team also included key political figures. The rank of delegation members affected



the negotiation process. Delegations composed of high-ranking leaders could make important decisions on the spot, which greatly facilitated the negotiating process particularly in the final stage.

The delegations did not generally reflect the diversity of Tajikistani society but tended to be composed of senior male members of the warring factions. There were a few exceptions. Although UN mediators made an effort to convince the two Tajik parties to include representatives of civil society in their delegations, the effort had only partial success. The government delegation included Professor Saidov, Chairman of the Association of Uzbeks of Tajikistan, in the first two rounds. The UTO delegation included Ulfathonum Mamadshoyeva, a woman who was Coordinator of the Political Council of Opposition Movements of Badakhshan, during the high-level consultations in Moscow in April 1995.

## Modalities

Each round of inter-Tajik negotiations was organized in a way that helped foster an atmosphere of confidentiality, trust and efficiency. The mediators made efforts to limit the potentially destructive influence of the press on the Tajik parties, observer and other countries and the public at large. They believed that if opposing positions were announced publicly, it would be very difficult for the parties to compromise. They therefore sought to preserve the confidentiality of the process.

The UN mediators never substituted themselves for the two sides in the negotiations. At all levels they stressed that the responsibility for settling the inter-Tajik conflict rested with Tajikistanis. For their part, the Tajik delegations worked diligently to reach a negotiated agreement. The negotiations were based on a flexible structure that used several meeting formats:

**a) Plenary sessions with the Tajik delegations, the UN mediation team, and the official observers.** The press was often allowed to observe these sessions. Plenary meetings usually opened and concluded a round of negotiations but were also convened by the UN mediators at difficult points when it was necessary to draw public attention to one or other intransigent party. Sometimes this method was used either to generate public pressure or to publicize important intermediate results. Observer countries had no direct role in the plenary sessions and could not take the floor, offer opinions, or otherwise intervene.

**b) Plenary sessions without observers or the press.**

This format was used when the parties needed to present their initial positions on the agenda items, when the UN team needed to present its drafts of important agreements, or when important understandings reached

during the working consultations between the leaders of the two delegations had to be 'sold' to their members.

**c) Consultations between delegation leaders and UN mediators.** This small-team arrangement, bringing together two or three representatives from each delegation, was probably the most important way to discuss outstanding problems in depth and to search for compromise solutions. This format occupied about 80 per cent of the time and was generally the most effective and productive negotiation structure.

**d) Interaction with the representatives of the observer countries and host governments.** This form of negotiation was an important and effective way to solicit the support of observer countries and to channel their political influence with the Tajik parties. In critical circumstances, the UN mediators would adjourn a round of talks for a few days to consult with senior government officials of the relevant observer countries on specific issues. Sometimes this required travel to other capitals. For example, Special Representative Piriz-Ballon went to Moscow for consultations with high-ranking Russian officials in January 1996 when there was a renewal of military hostilities in Tavildara during the Ashgabat round of 'continuous negotiations'. On other occasions, senior representatives of observer countries travelled to the negotiation venue, as when Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Chernishev came to Islamabad in November 1994 for consultations. The consultations with observer governments kept them informed, engaged and confident that the Tajik delegations and the mediators were taking their views and interests into account. The UN team also maintained active communication with the host governments during the talks.

## Drafting protocols

The UN negotiating team always drafted the initial texts of agreements. This task required the mediators to develop a deep understanding of the positions advocated by the Tajik parties on each issue on the agenda and to sense the possible margin of each party's flexibility. They also needed expertise in preparing legal documents. In the course of preparing the draft agreements, the mediators introduced compromise options to address disputed issues. This proved to be a highly pragmatic approach. Because the UN team presented a draft text, it helped to avoid the pitfall of lengthy and heated debates by the Tajik parties on their own drafts – documents that would understandably have promoted the interests of one party over the other.

In the course of the negotiations, the parties accepted about 95 per cent of the UN's initial draft texts. The Tajik negotiators then concentrated on overcoming the remaining difficulties on a few substantive points. While

suspicious initially, Tajik negotiators gradually became confident that the UN's drafts were not intended to favour one party over the other but to reflect areas of possible compromise. Although drafting agreements was a serious responsibility and a complex task, it allowed the UN mediation team to keep charge of the process and move it forward – as well as to ensure that the principles of the UN Charter were incorporated and respected.

When the gap between the positions of the two parties was too wide or the political will to compromise was absent, the UN mediators sometimes shared their drafts with the most influential observers, requesting them to use their leverage with the parties to encourage them to compromise. The UN mediators often coordinated the compromise solutions they proposed with the observers. This helped the observers to feel a sense of ownership over the negotiating process. As a consequence, the observers contributed substantively to finding mutually acceptable formulas and acted decisively *vis-à-vis* the Tajik parties in advocating those solutions. The draft agreements were usually presented at the plenary sessions but the main negotiating task was conducted in small group meetings with delegation leaders. It was subsequently the responsibility of these senior representatives to convince their respective delegations of the merits of the compromise solutions. In this way, the leaders of the two delegations were co-owners of the agreements and vigorously defended them to their delegations.

## Continuity

Most rounds of the inter-Tajik negotiations took place against the backdrop of continued civil war or major

violations of the ceasefire agreement. The negotiations were therefore an extension of the battleground. The two parties tried to use the negotiating process when it was to their advantage and interrupted it when developments on the battlefield made it advantageous. Continuity of the process was therefore critical. The UN mediators paid special attention to reaching agreement on the timing, venue and agenda of the next round of talks before concluding the current round. The current and future host country representatives were actively involved in the decision-making process on those issues. The UN mediators and the heads of the two delegations often made joint announcements regarding the next round of talks at the end of the current one. In that way, the political reputations of the leaders of the two sides were tied to honouring their commitment to attend the negotiations. Although developments on the ground interrupted the negotiations several times, in general, the two Tajik parties honoured their commitments.

## Conclusion

The sustained and vigorous peacemaking efforts of the 'international community' in Tajikistan serve as an example of applied diplomatic action. It was matched with the commitment of negotiators to reach an agreement that adequately reflected the political and military situation on the ground and thus facilitating effective settlement of the conflict. The UN involvement in Tajikistan stands as an effective example of its peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts in the turbulent history of the 1990s.

Inter-Tajik Negotiations	MEETING	DATE	VENUE
	<b>I Round</b> <b>II Round</b> Consultative Meeting <b>III Round</b> Consultative Meeting Meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri <b>IV Round</b> Meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri <b>V Round</b>  Meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri Meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri <b>VI Round</b> Meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri <b>VII Round</b> <b>VIII Round. Part 1</b> Meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri <b>VIII Round. Part 2</b> Meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri	4-19 April, 1994 18-28 June 1994 12-17 Sep. 1994 20 Oct.-1 Nov. 1994 20-26 Apr. 1995 16-17 May 1995 22 May-2 June 1995 19 July 1995 30 Nov.-22 Dec. 1995 26 Jan.-18 Feb. 1996 26 Jan.-21 July 1996 10-11 Dec. 1996 10-23 Dec. 1996 5-19 Jan. 1997 20-21 Feb. 1997 26 Feb.-8 Mar. 1997 9-16 Apr. 1997 16-18 May 1997 21-28 May 26-27 June 1997	Moscow Tehran Tehran Islamabad Moscow Kabul Almaty Tehran Ashgabat Ashgabat Ashgabat Khos Deh Moscow Tehran Meshed Moscow Tehran Bishkek Tehran Moscow

# The Inter-Tajik Dialogue

## From civil war towards civil society

by Randa M. Slim and  
Harold H. Saunders

Randa Slim is Executive Director of SLIM & Associates and a member of the Inter-Tajik Dialogue. Harold Saunders is Director of International Affairs at the Charles F. Kettering Foundation and served previously as the United States' Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs. He was co-moderator of the Inter-Tajik Dialogue.

The non-official Inter-Tajik Dialogue began in March 1993, when seven individuals from different factions in the civil war sat down around a table in Moscow. At that time, they formed a unique channel of communication across factional lines. Just past the peak of violence in a vicious civil war, they could barely look at each other. By the end of 2000, after twenty-nine meetings, the Dialogue continues. Its members and their process have become a mind at work in the midst of a country making itself. The Dialogue has helped to support a multi-level peace process that includes government negotiators, highly informed citizens outside government, and citizens at the grassroots – all working in complementary ways that reflect these roles.

Participants in the Dialogue helped to start and then maintained involvement with the inter-Tajik negotiations and engaged in activities in the society at large. The Dialogue had been convened six times before the UN-sponsored inter-Tajik negotiations began in April 1994. It continued throughout the period of official negotiations and then through the three-year transitional period after the 1997 General Agreement and beyond. Because most of the participants were citizens outside government, they were at the heart of Tajikistan 'public peace process'.

## Background

The Inter-Tajik Dialogue is a child of the Dartmouth Conference Regional Conflicts Task Force. The Dartmouth Conference started in 1960 and is the longest continuous bilateral dialogue between American and Soviet, now Russian, citizens. The Task Force was formed in 1981. It was co-chaired by Harold Saunders and, until 1988, Yevgeny Primakov, who was then succeeded by Gennady Chufrin. In 1992, Task Force members decided to draw on their experience as the basis to foster dialogue in one of the conflicts that had surfaced in the former Soviet Union. At the same time, Chufrin and Saunders published the article 'A Public Peace Process' in *Negotiation Journal*,



which conceived of the process of recurring dialogue as moving through five stages. This model became the operating framework for the Inter-Tajik Dialogue.

The first purpose of the initiators in 1993 was to “see whether a group can be formed from within the civil conflict to design a peace process for their own country.” This objective contrasted sharply with the objectives of some international NGOs that intervene in conflicts with the aim of directly mediating peace agreements. The second purpose was rooted in the conviction that peace becomes a reality only when citizens begin building a society with institutions and practices capable of resolving differences peacefully.

The Dialogue was designed with a dual agenda: to discuss specific problems at length and to increase understanding of the dynamics in the relationships that cause the problems. Patterns of interaction are changed through working together in sustained dialogue. For example, misperceptions give way gradually to a more realistic picture of the adversary. Although no one should be expected to change her or his identity or interests, participants can gain respect for other participants’ experiences; even adversaries can find common interests. The Dialogue aimed to help transform conflictual relationships so that the participants could work together constructively.

## Stages in the Dialogue

The first stage of the dialogue process is when participants decide whether to risk talking with the adversary. The initiating team contacted over a hundred Tajikistanis to determine their willingness to engage in dialogue and their capacity to listen to different views. An essential principle guiding the selection of participants was to ensure broad representation from the different factions of the conflict. Participants were typically from the second or third level of decision-making authority, as people at this level are often able to explore ideas more freely.

The second stage of the process – when participants map problems and relationships – began with the first three-day meeting in March 1993. It was facilitated by one American and one Russian who were members of the Regional Conflicts Task Force. During the three meetings between March and August 1993, participants in the Dialogue were absorbed with unloading their feelings about the origins and conduct of the civil war. In the third meeting, someone commented: “What we really need to focus on is how to start a negotiation between the government and the opposition about creating conditions for refugees to go home.” Most participants acknowledged that no other steps toward normalization could happen until citizens were back home. With this observation, the Dialogue progressed into the third stage of probing problems and relationships. In this stage, the participants explore approaches to each key issue and come to broad conclusions about desirable ways to address problems.

At the fourth meeting in October 1993, participants had a straightforward discussion about how to start a negotiation. The immediate problem was that the opposition was ideologically diverse and geographically dispersed. This created a dilemma over who would represent the opposition. Within two months, the leaders of different opposition factions had met in Tehran, developed a common platform, and formed the Moscow-based Coordination Centre of Democratic Forces of Tajikistan in the CIS. Two participants in the Dialogue signed this document and four became members of the steering committee for the Coordination Centre. At the fifth meeting in January 1994, participants from the opposition groups presented this new platform – which was to become the basis for the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) alliance. Pro-government participants questioned them intensively about it over the next two days. Some of the main points in that exchange were put in writing. The pro-government participants left the meeting with the belief that the basis for negotiation now existed and promised to report to the government. One month later, the government of Tajikistan accepted an invitation from the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General to join UN-mediated peace talks.

The Dialogue was a factor in the context that shaped the parties' willingness to engage in official talks. Yet as with any unofficial dialogue process, it is difficult to determine the extent and nature of its influence on government decision-making and hence to assess its impact. In complex political situations, it is almost impossible to identify precisely which of the many inputs bears most responsibility for changes. In this case, the government decision was taken against the backdrop of sustained diplomatic pressure to negotiate and its awareness of the escalating costs of war. Yet as was remarked by a high Tajikistani official who was involved in the government decision to negotiate: 'After six meetings of the Dialogue, it was no longer possible to argue credibly that negotiation between the government and the opposition was impossible.' Among the delegates to the first round of official negotiations in Moscow, one member of the government team and two members of the UTO team were also participants in the Inter-Tajik Dialogue.

In their sixth meeting in March 1994 – one month before the beginning of UN-mediated negotiations – Dialogue participants wrote their first document, the 'Memorandum on the Negotiating Process in Tajikistan'. This was the first of eighteen (so far) memoranda they prepared jointly to convey ideas to the negotiating teams and the larger body politic. Participants recognized that the government and opposition leaders were the main actors in the negotiations but sought to inform them of ideas discussed in the Dialogue. The task of creating the memoranda marked the transition of the Dialogue into stage four, which focuses on building scenarios and

planning strategies that contain mutually reinforcing or complementary steps to create the momentum for overcoming obstacles. The first memorandum recommended the creation of four working groups for the negotiating process. This would allow the diverse points of view held by government and UTO delegates to be channelled into solving practical problems such as refugee return, political change, disarmament, and economic regeneration. Much later the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR) – the central implementation mechanism of the 1997 General Agreement, which included several Dialogue members – organized its work programme through four sub-commissions, echoing the model discussed in that first memorandum.

## Proposals for the peace process

Once the inter-Tajik negotiations began, the Dialogue's aim was redefined as "designing a political process of national reconciliation for the country." Participants also addressed issues that brought the negotiations to impasse. Dialogue members discussed many of the issues that were addressed in the 1997 General Agreement. Although it is difficult to assess the effect of their ideas on the negotiations, the Dialogue influenced the thinking of its members and those to whom they talked. For example, in March 1995, those involved in the Dialogue began to discuss the concept of a 'transitional period'. Rather than endorsing the UTO's inclination to overturn the results of the elections that had excluded them, the Dialogue recommended a process of transition to a more inclusive political system. This concept – deployed in peace agreements elsewhere – was later incorporated into the General Agreement to describe the post-agreement phase, when the CNR continued the negotiating process while implementing the terms of the agreement.

In June 1995, the Dialogue considered a proposal from UTO supporters for a supra-governmental Coordinating Council. After considerable discussion, they issued a memorandum that recommended a Council positioned under the authority of the negotiating parties that would be responsible for implementing agreements. This was intended to address the government's concern that the Council would have greater authority than the government. The memorandum described the need: "to develop broad participation in the functioning of the political system and the affairs of the civil society on the basis of ensuring equal participation in power among all regions, political parties and movements and national communities." The CNR later served as a mechanism similar to the Coordinating Council model developed in the Dialogue. Some participants believe this approach originated in the Dialogue.



In May 1996, the Dialogue met in Dushanbe for the first time. They focused on designing a political process for national reconciliation and identifying the obstacles to it. They stated starkly that: “the primary obstacle to peace in Tajikistan is the absence of an adequate understanding on sharing power among the regions, political parties and movements, and nationalities in Tajikistan.”

In October 1996, after a joint commission that included a Dialogue member mediated the Gharm protocol among field commanders and local authorities, Dialogue members crystallized their concept for the peace process. According to the joint memorandum from that meeting: “Participants believe that one of the main obstacles to peace is lack of a common vision about what kind of country the Tajikistani people want their country to be.” Participants concluded that: “It is necessary to broaden public participation in the efforts to achieve peace by developing a multi-level peace process in order to ensure the widest popular involvement in achieving and implementing a nation-wide peace agreement.” To help achieve this goal, the Dialogue recommended the creation of a ‘consultative forum of the peoples of Tajikistan’ – an idea that was already in the air. Although President Rakhmonov and UTO leader Nuri indicated their agreement with this proposal, the consultative forum was never formed.

## Impact for participants

When the participants were asked about the effect of the Dialogue on their own lives and on the larger process of negotiations, they discussed three main types of outcome:

**Analytical:** The Dialogue helped the participants to gain a new understanding of the sources of the conflict in Tajikistan and about different strategies for managing it. The people who took part in the Dialogue represented the views and perspectives of the different parties and thus influenced each other’s perception of the conflict and understanding of their own and the other party’s interests. The Dialogue also helped participants to moderate their own positions and, in some cases, made them more amenable to compromise. Yet there is no way to document how these shifts in the participants’ views may have influenced their own parties’ formal negotiating positions.

**Substantive:** The Dialogue cannot claim credit for ideas that were put forward in the official inter-Tajik negotiations. Dialogue participants believe their own discussions of some of these ideas preceded those in the official negotiations. Some participants were also delegates to the official negotiations and were able to transmit the ideas into their teams. Memoranda produced during the Dialogue sessions were normally

shared with the leaders of the two opposing camps and with UN headquarters.

**Informational:** A series of public events were held in the US, Russia and Tajikistan. For example, the Dialogue group held a session at the United States Institute of Peace in June 1994. The members discussed the events in Tajikistan and various strategies for representing the different regional and ethnic interests in the country, including a variety of formulas for proportional and regional representation. In May 1996, the Dialogue group held its first meeting inside Tajikistan. It presented itself publicly in Dushanbe at a US embassy reception and before a seminar attended by three dozen university administrators and faculty. It is hard to document whether or how these events influenced public opinion. Yet at a minimum they provided public fora where ideas about conflict analysis and settlement could be presented and discussed. In the long-term, it is hoped that such ideas penetrated the political debate both domestically and internationally.

## The transitional and civil society phases

After the General Agreement was concluded, most Dialogue participants remained active in peacebuilding and consolidation. Four Dialogue participants became members of the CNR. Others became active in new civil society organizations. One member formed the Tajikistan Centre for Citizenship Education, which produces materials and organizes roundtable seminars on subjects important for peacebuilding, such as regionalism. With the formal end of the transition period, members of the Dialogue joined with others to create the Public Committee for Promoting Democratic Processes, registered in February 2000. This Committee is working on a range of projects that help to: (a) foster economic development benefiting all members of strife-torn communities; (b) develop university programmes and courses in conflict resolution; (c) foster dialogue in public forums at the regional level on issues of national importance; as well as (d) create a second national-level inter-Tajik dialogue.

In the post-transition period, Dialogue participants and their colleagues in the Public Committee are recognizing the importance of a concept that guided the Dialogue from its inception: a society committed to remaining at peace and developing peacefully must enlarge the spaces where citizens can come together to resolve differences and must engage citizens in ever larger numbers in the process of building the country. Dialogue members have moved from civil war to a concern for building a Tajikistani version of a democratic civil society. Throughout those nearly eight years, they have played significant roles at all levels in the multi-level peace process.

# Implementation of the 1997 General Agreement

## Successes, dilemmas and challenges

by Rashid G. Abdullo

Rashid Abdullo is a researcher with the UN Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding and served on the staff of UNMOT from 1996 to 2000

Many Tajikistanis share a belief, perhaps more emotional than rational, that their country enjoyed a state of 'national consolidation' prior to independence. They assume that irresponsible politicians damaged this consolidation and thrust the country into the flames of civil war. From this assumption follows the conviction that because the war is over, national unity and consolidation have been restored and will now be sustainable and permanent. Yet it is unrealistic to assume that national consolidation is something that is achieved once and forever. It is, rather, the outgrowth of a continuous process of developing timely and appropriate solutions to problems and contradictions. These solutions may not satisfy everyone all the time, but taken as a whole they must address the specific interests of the different social strata, political groupings, and regional concerns. The process of reaching these solutions requires compromise between different interests. National consolidation can therefore be understood as a permanent process of finding and maintaining compromises on as many as possible of the specific problems and disagreements that arise in the economic, social and political development of a country. If politicians from both ruling and opposition parties can achieve these compromises, then national accord and political stability can be secured. If the spirit and practice of compromise is not maintained, tensions will escalate and politics will radicalise, thus generating a crisis.

These dynamics must be taken into account when considering the peacemaking and peacebuilding process in Tajikistan. Political elites in the late 1980s and early 1990s failed to find suitable strategies to address a complex set of problems related to inter-regional contradictions. These included disparities that had arisen from the increasing economic role of southern regions, the demographic structure of the population, ideological diversification, and unequal participation in political decision-making in a country dominated by a northern political elite. Thus the war did not actually cause national disintegration. Rather it followed from the unresolved

confrontation among various political forces in 1990-92 and was a manifestation and aggravation of divisions that already existed within Tajikistani society. Yet even in the depths of war, the combatants never fundamentally questioned the legitimacy of Tajikistan's post-Soviet statehood and all its institutions. There was a fight for control of the state and its institutions.

By 1994, it was clear that there was no military 'solution' to the conflict. All the factions began to realize that continued fighting posed a profound threat to the existence of the Tajik state and the people's survival as a nation. This article will explore the structures and opportunities the peace process has provided for Tajikistani leaders – in various roles and representing various interests – to practice compromise. Through the practice of political dialogue and decision-making, they have re-established a unified government for the country. This challenge has continued into the transitional phase and beyond.

## The Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR)

The CNR was the mechanism created to oversee implementation of the General Agreement and to design a set of reforms to the government structure. The Commission included representatives of both the government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Because most opposition leaders were in exile when the Agreement was signed, the CNR's first meeting was held in Moscow shortly after the signing ceremony. It began work in Dushanbe in September 1997, after the UTO members returned to Tajikistan. Both the beginning of CNR meetings and the fact that prominent exiles had come home marked important symbolic turning points for post-conflict peacebuilding. The initial working meetings focused on organizational problems. UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri was elected Chair of the CNR and Abdulmajid Dostiev, then First Deputy Chair of the Parliament, was elected as his deputy. Under their leadership, the Commission negotiated its work plan and



schedule. The CNR had four subcommissions on refugee-related, military, political and legal issues. Mirroring the power-sharing principles of the Agreement, these subcommissions were chaired respectively by Shukurjon Zuhurov (government), Habib Sanginov (UTO), Ibrohim Usmonov (government), and Otakhon Latifi (UTO). With its organizational structure settled, the CNR began work on full implementation of the General Agreement.

## The Protocol on Refugee Issues

The most rapid progress in the initial period was with implementation of the Protocol on Refugee Issues. Within three to four months – with the intensive participation of the UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), the Russian Border Forces, the Commonwealth of Independent States Collective Peacekeeping Force (CIS/PKF) and other international agencies – tens of thousands of refugees returned home from Afghanistan and CIS countries. They were permanently resettled and provided with shelter and other necessities. This required large-scale restoration of houses damaged or destroyed by war and the return of illegally occupied properties to their owners, as well as social rehabilitation and reintegration of the erstwhile refugees.

The comparative success of the implementation of the Protocol on Refugees was due to the ‘push and pull’ factors inherent in the changing political conditions brought about by the peace process and the altered circumstances in Afghanistan, combined with a well-resourced return programme. After the General Agreement was signed, none of the parties had an interest in keeping large numbers of Tajikistanis in exile, particularly in Afghanistan where most refugees had fled. The government had long maintained that it prioritised the return of refugees – in part, perhaps, to prevent their recruitment as UTO fighters. It therefore welcomed the international attention (and resources) given to their return. Before the agreement was finalised, the UTO – aware that the refugee communities provided a power-base and also concerned for their safety and security in Tajikistan – had been reluctant to encourage their return.

All this changed when the military confrontation ended. The peace agreement, backed by international guarantees in combination with improved conditions in Tajikistan, encouraged refugees to return home. The UTO also had an interest in their return because they were likely to strengthen its domestic support base. At a more localised level, returning refugees also brought much-needed labour power, which could be deployed in depleted agricultural and industrial enterprises. A significant ‘push’ factor for those who had found refuge in Afghanistan was the escalation of war in the north of that country with the Taliban’s military offensive in the second half of 1997. This encouraged many to seek safety in

Tajikistan. The combined effect of these political, security, economic and humanitarian considerations was a consensus on the need to implement the refugee protocol rapidly. Return programmes were therefore implemented with minimal controversy between the leaders of the parties to the peace process.

## The Protocol on Military Issues

Just as significant in character, content and scale were the results of the implementation of the Military Protocol. The agreement aimed both to integrate Tajikistan’s many armed forces into a unified military and to promote decommissioning and demobilisation. Military cooperation between the parties began before the CNR started operations. They first reached agreement on a ceasefire in the Tehran Agreement of September 1994, which provided for a Joint Commission (JC) of government and UTO representatives to monitor implementation. The experience of working together helped members to progress from barely tolerating their political and military opponents to being able to work together to develop effective solutions to practical problems. Members of the JC, although representing different factions, formed unified teams to negotiate with commanders from the different sides. They often worked in potentially life-threatening circumstances to investigate and prevent violations of the Tehran Agreement. In so doing, many were not only expressing the interests of their own parties but also promoting the interests of the country as a whole. This experience of joint problem-solving between 1994 and 1997 created both the mechanisms and habits of working cooperatively and served as a precedent for the work of the CNR.

Implementation of the Military Protocol centred on the deployment of UTO fighters into ten officially established assembly areas where they could be registered for further integration into the Tajik military and other security services. One CNR priority was to draft laws for a general amnesty, which created the legal framework for releasing opposition members from prison and granting amnesty to more than 5,000 UTO fighters. Between July and November 1998, all UTO fighters in Afghanistan were relocated to Tajikistan through the combined efforts of the government, the UTO, the Russian Border Forces and the CIS peacekeepers. At the end of 1998, the UTO leadership announced the closure of all its military training camps abroad.

The next stage was the gradual integration of UTO troops into the national armed forces, partly through the establishment of provisional military units composed of UTO fighters. From early September 1997, one unit of UTO fighters was deployed in Dushanbe. It later became the 25th Battalion. By March 2000 – when CNR activity was completed – 4,498 UTO fighters had been integrated into the armed forces, mostly within their own units. The

strategy of retaining separate units was used in the early stages of unification to reduce the potential for tensions between people who had been fighting each other. The greatest levels of integration were achieved in the Committee for the Protection of State Borders because protection of Tajikistan's borders from armed intrusion by foreign forces was a common objective of both the government and the UTO.

While there have been successes in implementing the military protocol, the process was often difficult. It tested the capacity of the political leadership on both sides to control their own military commanders. During the war, the power base of the commanding officers from both sides was not derived from politicians but rather from local people who considered the military leaders as their protectors. The command and control structures were often weak and political leaders had few points of leverage over military commanders. Thus the ending of military confrontation was made possible also by the direct negotiations amongst the commanders themselves. For example, representatives of the government's forces made contact with UTO commanders in the Qarateghin valley in September 1996 and signed the Gharm Protocol. This agreement gave a form of legal recognition to UTO field commanders that signalled the government's acknowledgement of them as partners in the peace process. In turn, these commanders sent a cable to the negotiators at the December 1996 meeting in Moscow and politely but firmly demanded that the negotiators continue their efforts to reaching an agreement. Their action had a positive effect on the UTO delegation's position.

Perhaps the most important condition for the successful implementation of the Military Protocol was the cooperation of the field commanders. The latter were never merely the followers of political leaders; they were political power in themselves. Most had strong and charismatic personalities and were able to form armed units from people they recruited. They typically enjoyed the full loyalty of those who served with them, as well as the support of the population in the territories they controlled. When these commanders agreed to the peace treaty it was not difficult to convince their fighters to follow, particularly because many were ready for the war to end. Many engaged in direct contacts with their counterparts, which enabled them to gradually develop sufficient trust to address outstanding differences through negotiation rather than armed confrontation. Trust was facilitated by the tendency of military personnel to accord respect to other commanders, in contrast to a shared suspicion of politicians. Cooperation was furthered by the recognition that they could gain more political, social and economic benefits in peacetime than in war. The improving relationship between former military opponents gave further impetus for politicians to

continue implementing the General Agreement in order to preserve their political control over the peace process.

Although most UTO commanders supported the peace process, not all were fully content with the practical outcomes. Causes of dissatisfaction included delays in implementing decisions on government appointments, restoring pre-war jobs, closing criminal cases against commanders and fighters to fulfil the amnesty and unreliable distribution of supplies to fighters in assembly areas. In some cases, dissatisfied commanders balked at the integration arrangements and tried to preserve their autonomy. Most such problems were settled by the efforts of senior working groups of CNR members and representatives of the national Security Council and the armed forces. In a few cases, negotiation strategies were combined with the use or threat of armed force to subdue recalcitrant commanders. For example, a decisive test for the newly integrated armed forces occurred in November 1998, when former government and UTO fighters combined to defeat an uprising by the formerly pro-government Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdyev and his militia in the Leninabad region.

## Implementation of the Political Protocol

Compared with the protocols on refugee and military issues, there were many difficulties with implementing the Political Protocol, which was based on the principle that the former combatant parties would share government power. Under the agreement, 30 per cent of government positions were reserved for UTO representatives, with specific arrangements for ministerial positions. The first set of difficulties coalesced around the integration of some prominent UTO figures. There had been an initial agreement that the UTO's First Deputy Chair Khoji Akbar Turajonzoda would become Tajikistan's first vice premier and that UTO Commander-in-chief Mirzo Ziyoev would head one of the 'power ministries'. Implementation of these agreements was delayed by a combination of factors, including opposition within the government. Considerable international pressure was applied to the parties to reach a settlement on these sensitive issues. Rakhmonov and Nuri exercised their considerable political skill to reach an acceptable compromise. Turajonzoda was allowed to return to the country to assume the post of first vice-premier and Ziyoev was promoted to the rank of major-general and appointed head of the newly established Ministry of Emergency Situations. Other political appointments followed and, by the time the CNR's work was concluded, thirteen UTO representatives had been appointed as the heads of ministries and important committees. It was, however, more difficult to achieve the full 30 per cent allocation of UTO representatives in the second-tier positions of government.



Many anxieties surrounded the creation of the CNR and the return of opposition leaders from exile. Some government supporters feared that the return of UTO politicians would strengthen the opposition – and particularly the Islamicists – at Rakhmonov's expense. Some feared that the UTO leadership would attempt to impose a lifestyle similar to that in post-revolutionary Iran. Others feared that they would have to leave their positions in the public and private sectors to make room for the newcomers and returnees. Over time, however, many of these anxieties began to fade as they were proved groundless.

The CNR also had considerable powers to draft constitutional amendments and new legislation. It drafted reforms that enabled former opposition parties – and particularly those of a religious character – to hold their congresses openly and participate in multi-party elections. After the UTO leadership announced the dissolution of its military formations in August 1999, the Supreme Court lifted the ban on UTO member parties and organisations that had been imposed in June 1993. With the presidential elections in late 1999 and parliamentary elections in 2000, the transition period was officially regarded as successfully concluded.

## Pragmatism as the key to success?

Perhaps one of the most significant achievements of the transition period was that it demonstrated that the fears many had harboured about opposing parties had little rational basis. It also demonstrated that power-sharing – if it means sharing responsibilities for developing solutions to real political, economic, and social problems – can transform even the most radical people into pragmatists with greatly moderated views, thoughts and practices. Many CNR members had participated in the second-track Inter-Tajik Dialogue. Through this experience, they had improved their negotiating skills with an emphasis on trying to understand the positions of others and to seek integrative solutions to problems. It can be argued that the outcomes of implementing the General Agreement were related only minimally to its quality as a document. The determining factor in practice was the very political process of developing consensus between parties on a range of concrete issues and problems. Yet the CNR was only one of the necessary elements in the process.

The efforts of leading political and military actors to implement the peace agreement were underpinned by two significant sources of pressure. First, the Tajikistani population as a whole was convinced of its necessity. This was echoed by the realisation among most party supporters and fighters that they could only translate their political, ideological, and economic interests and aims into reality in a sovereign state. Most Tajikistanis

believed that the country could retain its independence only through further development of the peace process. A second source of pressure was the array of international actors and foreign governments interested in the successful implementation of the peace agreement. Their support was institutionalised in the role of the UN (and UNMOT in particular) and the Contact Group in monitoring implementation and providing analysis and recommendations to overcome obstacles. With this encouragement, both Rakhmonov and Nuri were able to translate the aspiration for peace into political mechanisms and policies. The core element in making these mechanisms work was their intensive bilateral contacts – including *tête-à-tête* meetings and regular political consultations – which enabled them to work through some of the most complex problems and crises.

## Crisis management

Three significant crises threatened the transition period. The first major crisis was in spring 1998, when armed clashes erupted between pro-government and UTO troops, first in Kofarnihon and then in eastern Dushanbe, resulting in both combatant and civilian deaths. These skirmishes seemed to be a carry-over from the war years, when the main method for settling problems was armed force. Yet the fighting shocked many. Importantly, leaders of the parties in the peace process recognised that the temptation to resort to military-political pressure could escalate to the point where they would lose control as more radical elements gained influence. They also realised that the failure of the peace agreement would jeopardise the support provided by the international community for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

The next crisis, from April to June 1999, was more explicitly political. It was sparked by delays in amending the constitution, extending amnesty to UTO supporters and closing criminal cases, incorporating UTO representatives into government and lifting the ban on the activities of UTO member parties. The UTO responded by suspending its activities in the CNR for a period. Both sides issued statements and counter-statements about the problems and their positions. Yet while this unfolded, cooperation in the day-to-day governance of the country continued and the UTO never threatened to suspend its participation or withdraw its representatives. The crisis was ended through a political settlement addressing the contentious issues. While the Tajik leaders did not waiver in their commitment to a negotiated approach to the crisis, their efforts were facilitated by the active mediation efforts of UNMOT, the Contact Group of guarantor states, and the OSCE.

In autumn 1999, crisis loomed once again in the run-up to the presidential elections scheduled for 6 November.



UTO member parties claimed that the government had set unequal conditions for both the nomination and registration of candidates for the presidency and for their pre-election campaign. In response, they threatened to boycott the elections. This crisis was also settled with the help of international mediators. The brinkmanship continued until Nuri and Rakhmonov signed an agreement on the night before the election. This agreement provided guarantees for free and unimpeded participation for all registered parties in the parliamentary elections in February 2000, which went relatively smoothly.

Attitudes changed through these experiences of crisis management. Leaders began to recognise that the threat of breakdown was quite normal in the complicated and difficult transition from civil war to peace. Bottlenecks are inevitable. Crises clearly indicate the problems and force the parties to take measures to address them. This awareness underscored the new approach, in which the main form of political struggle became the dissemination of position statements describing problems, rather than the distribution of arms. As a rule, these statements included the important caveat that they were intended primarily to promote development of the peace process rather than undermine it – thus leading to a normalisation of politics as the method for conflict management.

## Continuing challenges

The combined consequences of the civil war and its peace process were effective in resolving the contradictions that had led to the political crisis of 1990-92 and the civil war of 1992-97. Yet new contradictions have emerged in the course of economic, political and social development. Several key ones can be identified. First is the disjuncture between the economic power of

the northern region – which has adapted more quickly to the market economy – and the inadequate representation of the region's elites in decision-making. During the transition period, most of the new modernising elites from Leninabad concentrated on consolidating their position within the region. But in the future they will probably begin to demand more effective representation in central government. Another potential contradiction is emerging from the rapid evolution of the presidency as the dominant political institution and the comparatively weak development of civic society. A third dilemma arises from the emergence of new opposition interests and the political forces that claim to represent them, for example the Islamicist Hizbu-t-tahrir (Party of Liberation). Although many in the government tend to perceive such new political movements as representing no more than the ambition of individuals, there are good reasons to believe that they arise from sincerely-held beliefs and objective interests rooted in the development process of the past decade.

If the ruling elite ignores the fundamental causes of these contradictions, there is a risk that they could become the source of protracted conflict. If it ignores the first set of contradictions around regional disparities, the country could return to the dynamics that prevailed on the eve of political cataclysm in the early 1990s. Insufficient attention to the second set weakens democratic development and risks confrontation with international institutions and western governments. Attempts to address the third set of problems through suppression, rather than by addressing the causes of opposition, could stimulate resistance and risk political destabilisation. Future prospects for sustainable peace may depend on whether the lessons learned and experience gained through the peace process by this generation of political leaders will be used to address continuing problems and contradictions.

# Constitutional and legislative reform

**Rahmatillo Zoir and Scott Newton**

**Rahmatillo Zoir is Chair of the Tajikistan  
Juridical Consortium and Chair of the  
Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan.  
Scott Newton is a Lecturer at the  
London-based School of Oriental and  
African Studies who specialises in  
constitutional law and Central Asian  
legal systems.**

**T**he logic of peacemaking is often at odds with the logic of governance. The outcomes of Tajikistan's June 1997 General Agreement seems to offer yet another demonstration of this contradiction. Before the war, the system of governance in Tajikistan was based on centralization of political power in disregard of regional allegiances, monopolization of state authority by executive organs to the detriment of Parliament and the courts, exclusion of opposition elements from meaningful participation in political life, and flawed electoral procedures. These elements rendered that system inadequate to contain conflict and may have played a direct role in generating it. The General Agreement was intended, among other things, to provide a mechanism – through the work of the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR) – to recommend a set of reforms to the political system and institutions. The recommendations would then be taken up through the existing constitutionally mandated legal procedures.

The General Agreement therefore provided Tajikistan with an extraordinary opportunity, unique among post-Soviet states, to refashion its institutional arrangements for governance. The CNR could have convened a constitutional convention or a similar far-reaching process to make its recommendations for reform. The peace process could have been the catalyst for Tajikistanis to undertake deep-rooted evaluation of the systems underpinning their country's governing structures and of the legal system needed to address inherited problems. Yet the General Agreement did not address the serious democratic deficits of the political system derived from Soviet rule. Furthermore, in the transitional period, reforms were made that created a new layer of bureaucrats beholden to the central authorities and, ultimately, to the President. This was complemented by an increased concentration of power at the centre and the gradual incorporation of the



opposition into government. It now seems that the reformed political institutions cannot adequately facilitate participatory political life, pluralism, and the protection of rights. Although the end of fighting and a resumption of a degree of political stability have been welcomed by most Tajikistanis, there are concerns that the reformed system of governance may be unable institutionally to manage problems that could generate future political conflict.

The limited extent of post-Agreement institutional reforms is probably due to the relatively narrow political vision of the negotiators, rather than to technical non-compliance with the Agreement's provisions. The international sponsors of the negotiations are arguably

complicit in the failure of the opposing parties to design a peace treaty that would create systems to promote democratic consolidation. The international community sponsored the negotiations; foreign states were guarantors of the General Agreement; the UN and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were expressly empowered to provide assistance to the CNR. They used their leverage to encourage the settlement of other political disputes during the CNR's work. Yet it appears that they did not exert influence on the parties to adopt constitutional and legal measures that would strengthen the balance of power or other tools for enhancing democratic governance and the rule of law. This raises important questions about the

commitment of the international sponsors to promoting these principles while carrying out their peacemaking work.

To explore these issues, it is necessary to analyse the laws and institutions proposed in the General Agreement and the history of institutional change in the three years since it was concluded. The focus is on: 1) the constitutional amendments drafted by the CNR that were adopted and approved by popular referendum; 2) the parliamentary elections of 2000; and 3) the fate of the power-sharing arrangements contemplated in the agreement and the structure of Tajikistan's governance now that the CNR has completed its work and been disbanded.

## Provisions of the Agreement

The texts of the Protocols that constitute the General Agreement did not explicitly address institutional reform. Their primary focus is expressed in the all-encompassing but only partly elaborated term: 'national reconciliation'. In addition to providing amnesty, the agreement appeared to contemplate a set of structural reforms, based on changes to laws, in order to achieve and institutionalize 'national reconciliation'. For example, the General Agreement provided for new electoral laws and constitutional amendments. Yet the text is as significant for its omissions as for its provisions. The virtue of the Agreement lay in its flexibility and the potentially comprehensive role it carved out for the CNR. Its vice lay in its failure to identify clear directions or guidelines for the CNR in its work of constitutional reform and in the structural bias in favour of the pre-existing system.

The CNR was composed of 26 members, designated by the Tajik government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) 'on the basis of the principle of parity' and headed by the leader of the UTO with a government representative as deputy. Members could not be removed unless they failed to fulfil their duties. The Commission was to be financed under a special line item of the state budget. The CNR's Charter made it exclusively responsible for:

- developing a mechanism to oversee the fulfilment by the parties to the Agreement of their obligations under it;
- implementing measures for the safe return of refugees and their active inclusion in the social-political and economic life of the country, and for rehabilitation of war-damaged housing, industrial and agricultural objects;
- developing proposals for reform of laws on the functioning of political parties, movements, and the mass media.

It conferred on the CNR and the President the following joint responsibilities 'for the transitional period':

- submission to national referendum of the proposed constitutional amendments;
- preparation and submission for approval by Parliament, and if necessary to nation-wide referendum, of a new law on parliamentary and local government elections;
- creation of a Central Election Commission;
- government reform: recruitment of UTO representatives to the structures of executive power including ministries, agencies, local administrative bodies, judicial and law-enforcement organs, in the light of the principle of regional parity;
- management and control of demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of armed opposition forces, reform of security forces and the procuracy;
- supervision of the exchange of all prisoners-of-war and liberation of forcibly detained persons;
- adoption of an Act of mutual forgiveness and the drafting of a law on amnesty, to be adopted by Parliament and the CNR;
- submission for parliamentary review of proposals for the date of elections to a new professional parliament under the supervision of the UN and the OSCE with the participation of those with observer status in the inter-Tajik negotiations.

For a body with broad administrative and law-drafting powers, the CNR was ill-defined and dependent on the government. Its charter lacked procedural safeguards to ensure its independent functioning, apart from the provision for 'close coordination with the UN and OSCE missions'. Potentially the most significant role of the CNR – to draft constitutional amendments and new legislation – was shared with the President, who already had the power to appoint half the Commission members. This put the UTO, an alliance representing diverse political groupings, at a structural disadvantage that could hamper its capacity to shape policy and decision-making in the transitional period. It can thus be argued that the CNR was from its inception vulnerable to pressure and to being ultimately coopted by government leaders.

The focus of the CNR's work was to facilitate cooperation between former opponents so that they could reach consensus on how to implement the General Agreement and shape the constitutional and legal arrangements that would guide the country's future. Yet during the two years of the Commission's activity, the UTO appeared to shed much of its oppositional character. Many members



increasingly adopted government-friendly positions and in some cases even switched party affiliation. Although the capacity for opposing parties to cooperate on matters of overarching concern is important in all democracies, the experience of Tajikistan's politics during the transitional period may have undermined the development of a strong 'loyal' opposition that could maintain accountability and political pluralism.

## Constitutional amendments of 1999

On 30 June 1999 Tajikistan's parliament, the *Majlisi Oli*, debated and adopted the amendments to the constitution prepared by the CNR and formally proposed by the President. Twenty-eight out of 100 articles of the constitution were substantially revised, twenty-one of them completely. The main structural changes introduced were the creation of an upper house of Parliament representing the regions and the extension of the presidential term from five to seven years, with a one-term limit. Amended Article 28 provided the constitutional framework for parties based on religion for the first time. The logic, essence and contents of the proposed amendments are troubling from the perspective of democratic consolidation.

The creation of an upper house, the *Majlisi Melli*, was intended to address the perennial problem of regionalism in Tajikistan's politics by ensuring regional representation and reducing inter-regional tensions. Bicameralism – when a country's legislature consists of two 'chambers' – is typically but not exclusively a feature

of federal polities, where the upper house affords representation to the federal units, as in the US Senate or the Russian Federal Council. The CNR did not recommend a federal system for Tajikistan. Yet its bicameralism might be seen as a quasi-federal compromise. It provides some mechanisms to give a voice in decision-making at the centre to the regions without granting them formal regional autonomy (except in the special case of Badakhshan, which already had a degree of constitutionally mandated autonomy). Although members of the *Majlisi Melli* are chosen on the basis of regional representation, the primary powers conferred on the upper house are over the justice system: to elect and recall judges and to approve the appointment and dismissal of leaders of the prosecutor's office. Therefore they lack the legislative powers to respond to concerns raised by their regional constituencies.

In the context of Tajikistan's highly centralized executive branch, which has responsibility for the administrative functions of government, the methods of electing members of the *Majlisi Melli* arguably strengthen the hand of the executive at the expense of the legislature and the judiciary. The new system may, in fact, diminish the legislature's independence and authority in comparison to those of its unicameral predecessor. Election to the *Majlisi Melli* is indirect. Three-quarters of the membership are elected by deputies of the aggregate local assemblies of each province, of the capital, Dushanbe, and of the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province. The system provides equal representation for the five regional administrative units or



provinces. The remaining quarter is appointed directly by the President. The parliamentary election law of 1999 permits local executive officials – who are ultimately accountable to the President, as employees of the executive branch of government – to stand for election to the *Majlisi Melli*. Over 80 per cent of the members elected or appointed in the 2000 elections were such officials. Furthermore, the *Majlisi Melli* convenes only when called by the President (the lower house, the *Majlisi Namoyandagon*, convenes regularly).

The extension of the presidential term from five to seven years makes it the longest constitutionally mandated term of office for a chief executive within the former Soviet Union. The restriction to one term in office appears to shorten the term any one individual might serve by three years (from two consecutive five-year terms to one seven-year term). Yet the incumbent President Rakhmonov had already been in office for almost a decade before his election to a newly extended term in November 1999.

Another amendment authorized the formation of political parties ‘among others, parties of a democratic, religious, or atheistic character’. This article was drafted primarily to legalize the activity of the Islamic Renaissance Party. Yet the disjunctive legal formula is unfortunate because it suggests that parties can be either democratic or religious, but not both. It further suggests that democratic parties are only part of a much larger universe of parties.

In addition to the substance of the amendments, some people have expressed concerns about the lack of transparency and participation in drafting and adopting the amendments. Owing to the circumstances in which it was created, the CNR was not a democratically representative body. It might have thought to seek legitimacy by a consultative process. Its drafting work was instead conducted in virtual secrecy, without consulting the other political parties, civic organizations, the scholarly community, or the general public. The government enjoyed a virtual monopoly of trained legal drafting skills and therefore had a considerable advantage in the actual drafting of amendments. Moreover, the process of referring amendments to a referendum did not comply with the constitutionally mandated procedures: the draft text was given to parliamentarians two days before the vote and the final text only one hour before it.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the constitutional amendments is what they failed to do. They did not introduce real structural reform or alter the highly centralised form of government characteristic of all post-Soviet states (with the arguable exception of the Russian Federation). They did not contemplate any substantive

regional autonomy or devolution, much less federalism. For example, the President has the power to appoint the heads of regional authorities, although members of local assemblies are elected directly. Nor did the amendments provide safeguards for greater transparency and accountability in the exercise of administrative authority or seek to curb undue administrative discretion. They did not enhance the system for the protection of rights or the freedom from administrative interference of the political process and the activity of political parties.

They also did not seek to redress pervasive gender inequalities in the public and private sectors. Tajik institutions have yet to incorporate a contemporary approach to gender or to introduce norms of non-discrimination and differential treatment, as appropriate or fair in given circumstances. The constitution addresses gender inequality as a separate matter, although only in the context of grounds for equal treatment. Moreover, the language used in the text relies exclusively on the masculine grammatical forms. Separate anti-discrimination or rights-protection legislation on the basis of gender does not exist. Legislation requiring differential treatment on the basis of gender (such as labour legislation) employs the vocabulary of assistance, thus perpetuating an ideology of female passivity.

Significant opposition to the proposed constitutional amendments arose from many quarters, as reflected in the independent press. Twenty-nine per cent of votes cast in the referendum rejected the amendments, a significant number in a region where ruling parties regularly poll 98 per cent or more in national elections. Most Tajikistanis nevertheless accepted the referendum’s outcome, as indeed did the UN and the OSCE.

## The parliamentary elections in 2000

The February-March 2000 elections were a watershed in the history of independent Tajik politics, with national elections contested on a multi-party basis. Despite the shortcomings of the CNR and the constitutional reform process, and despite the extraordinary political circumstances in which they unfolded, these elections represented a step forward in the search for a new and authentic form for expression of the popular will.

The conduct and results of the elections nonetheless revealed a number of serious substantive and procedural flaws in the election law drafted by the CNR. As in the case of the constitutional amendments, the law-creating process itself was problematic. Drafting was for the most part in the hands of the government. Opposition members of the CNR were limited to the role of observers. The OSCE made available some external technical drafting expertise, but with uncertain effect. The law was adopted swiftly and with minimal debate. It

was passed on 10 December 1999 and published the following day, when the President set the elections for 27 February 2000. The constitutionally mandated periods of notification were not observed.

The law and its implementation deserve careful study to guide further refinement and reform of the electoral process, perhaps including the development of a new Electoral Code. Although the norms established by the new election law appeared to open the floodgates to genuine political contest, they were for the most part declaratory and lacked procedural means for implementation. The concrete mechanisms of the law conferred on the central authorities and the Dushanbe elite several strategic and tactical advantages that, in practice, limited the participation and influence of opposition forces. Under the election law, twenty-two of the sixty-three members of the *Majlisi Namoyandagon* would be elected from republic-wide party lists on the basis of proportional representation, with a 5 per cent minimum threshold. (In initial versions of the law, only ten seats would have been filled by proportional representation.) The remaining forty-one members would be elected from regional constituencies on a simple first-past-the-post system. These seats would be contested by both party-affiliated candidates and self-nominated (independent) candidates able to collect 500 signatures.

Contesting the seats chosen on the basis of proportional representation meant, on a practical level, an ability to mount a country-wide electoral campaign. This in effect required a national party base and finances for mass media advertising. A consequence of this system is that those parties with the social base and political resources to contest a country-wide campaign were at an advantage. In the first round of elections, President Rakhmonov's People's Democratic Party did especially well, while parties with a primarily regional base did less well. Eligibility to contest parliamentary seats required prior party registration with the Ministry of Justice. Several parties were excluded on this basis, among them the 'New Opposition' – including the Agrarian Party, Junbesh National Movement of Tajikistan, and the Party of Justice and Development Tajikistan (renamed the Social Democratic Party in October 1999), and some others. They were variously denied registration, banned, or removed from the register.

In the elections, seventeen of the twenty-two deputies elected to the republic-wide seats were from Dushanbe and fifteen from the People's Democratic Party. The centralized character of the elections was reinforced because party-nominated candidates were able to stand simultaneously for the national constituency and the single-mandate regional constituencies. This rule placed independent candidates at a further disadvantage. Interestingly, aggregate voter support for the party-list

candidates of the national constituency was little more than half the support for candidates in the single-mandate constituencies.

## The structure of governance after the conflict

The provision for government reform in the CNR Charter was amended by protocol to give the UTO a 30 per cent quota of positions throughout the government and 25 per cent of members in the Central Election Commission. This quota was filled at most senior levels but not at the level of line officials. Yet it is possible to argue that a power-sharing arrangement on the basis of a quota, even if fully implemented, is an unpromising instrument of reform. It leaves the structure intact, does not provide for meaningful integration of outsiders, fails to stipulate participatory procedures for policy- and decision-making, and creates incentives to preserve an unreformed system. Most UTO representatives brought into government experienced pressure to adopt the government's views if they wished to retain their appointments.

Tajik political institutions after the CNR era are, if anything, more centralized than they were before. Of particular concern is the trend towards concentration of state power in the hands of the executive, which is ultimately accountable to the president, at the expense of the legislature and the judiciary. The structural bias of the new Parliament has been described. The *Majlisi Melli* is dominated by members who are simultaneously agents of executive power in their role as officials of the local *hukumat* administrations. The legislative staff of the *Majlisi Oli* (but not the parliamentarians themselves) and the judicial staff of the courts (with the exception of judges themselves) are all employees of the executive. The executive also retains control over local administrations. The president is both head of state and head of government and appoints or dismisses the prime minister and cabinet. In addition, the presidential administration duplicates many of the positions and functions of the government, exhibiting a parallelism of ruling structures (known traditionally as *dvoevlastie* or double rule) familiar from Soviet times.

The parliamentary elections marked the ending of the transitional period envisioned in the General Agreement. In the minds of most people, this signalled a welcome end to the Tajik conflict of 1992-97. Yet a legal-institutional analysis reveals that the underlying foundations of the country's new governance structures appear to replicate significantly the features of the old system that failed to mitigate political conflict and may, in fact, have contributed to it. This reveals the tension between the need to reach agreements that will restore stability after a war and the risk of exacerbating problems in governance that may give rise to future conflict.

# Civil society and peacebuilding

**Parviz Mullojanov**

**T**here are many definitions of 'civil society' but most are based on the concept of a public space between the individual and the state where a variety of actors seek to mediate relations between citizens and state authorities. It is a space for communication that creates opportunities for broad public involvement and therefore has a potentially important role in preventing and resolving conflict and making post-conflict reconciliation more sustainable. A peace process that involves only elite decision-makers can be disrupted by political events, leaders' pursuit of self-interest, or external interference. It is therefore important to assess the contribution of civil society actors to the Tajik peace process and to the process of reconciliation.

Since the General Agreement was signed in June 1997 the government has promoted post-conflict confidence building and national reconciliation and international agencies have provided funding for conflict resolution activities. This combination of political conditions and financial resources has stimulated the growth of conflict resolution and confidence building activities in civil society.

## **Traditional civil society and the new NGOs**

In Tajikistan today, civil society actors range from informal grassroots associations (community councils, neighbourhood associations, etc) to the more formal, officially registered non-governmental civic associations or NGOs. Tajik society has historically had a well-developed civic network at local level. Tajik communities in both rural and urban areas have traditionally been self-organized through councils of citizens, or *mahalla* councils. They organized community events and provided a space where male heads of households could discuss and address local problems and conflicts. Other fora included the traditional shared dinner in the local mosque, where community members could discuss common concerns.

**Parviz Mullojanov is Coordinator of the Public Committee for Promoting Democratic Processes, Dushanbe.**



During the Soviet period, these civic institutions were eroded. The authorities created state-sanctioned professional associations to serve the needs of the Soviet state and inhibited the development of independent social institutions and networks. As tensions grew in the early 1990s, this weakened civic network was unable to mediate conflict or to help stabilize the country. Paradoxically, with the virtual paralysis of these state-sanctioned institutions, residual local community networks became an important channel for different political groups fighting for power and were mobilized to disseminate political messages, obtain recruits, and generate financial support.

The emergence of officially registered NGOs is a new phenomenon in Tajikistan that originated in the political and social changes during the 1980s. NGOs began to form in the early 1990s and the sector has grown quickly: 300 NGOs had registered by 1997 and 625 by March 2000, including approximately forty-five women's organizations. These groups are developing into 'boundary spanning' organizations, connecting different parts of civic space.

### Top-level initiatives

The 1997 General Agreement was prepared and concluded exclusively at the level of decision-making leaders. The only direct contribution of local civic society

to the official negotiations was the participation of Tajik NGOs in the Public Accord Agreement, signed in 1996 by almost all officially registered local political parties, public movements and prominent NGOs. But sceptics saw it as a government initiative to show the unity of Tajik society on the eve of a new round of talks. Some representatives of Tajik NGOs participated in the official and non-official peace process. Some participants in the official process formed their own NGOs. Representatives of a few Tajik NGOs participated in the 'second track' non-official Inter-Tajik Dialogue.

It might be argued that public opinion – which is shaped partly through the activities of NGOs, public associations, mass media and influential intellectuals – had an indirect influence on decision-makers. Yet although public opinion in Tajikistan consistently opposed the civil war, fighting continued for six years. It seems that the peace treaty was concluded as the result of political or geopolitical factors, unaffected by public opinion or local civil society. Thus the public was not able to influence the terms and conditions of the General Agreement – in part because of the weakened and fragmented nature of civil society.

### Regaining strength

Since the General Agreement, the focus of conflict resolution activities has gradually shifted from the top



level to the middle and lower levels of society: the level of local communities and ordinary citizens.

During the civil war, the growing power of local field commanders undermined the standing of village councils and elders. Once the war ended, military influence waned and the traditional civic network began to regain its authority. Its role has increased gradually. Local governments cannot afford to provide local communities with basic services such as water and gas supply or reconstruction and repair of sewage systems. They therefore rely on community-based organizations. The central government has now instituted a programme to include the traditional civic institutions in its local administrative infrastructure by creating a network of *jamoats* – semi-official institutions located between the *mahalla* councils and local governments. The influence of traditional grassroots organizations on local government activities has increased considerably as a result.

Civic groups are also developing their capacity to represent local interests and organize their communities, sometimes with external encouragement. In an effort to reduce tensions arising from the repatriation of Tajik refugees from Afghanistan in 1995-96, international agencies – including the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – turned to the traditional civic network. At the time, refugees returning to their home villages were coming into conflict with members of other ethnic or regional groups. There were incidents of harassment, employment discrimination, use of refugees as forced labour, physical attacks and even murders of refugees. International agency staff and government officials drew on the authority of the elders and *mahalla* councillors. They invited the most respected representatives from different groups to dialogue meetings, which helped to open communication between different ethnic and regional communities. Local council members helped to smooth relationships and reduce tensions between communities, thus helping to prevent new conflicts. These activities were intensive in southern regions where the fighting had been the most intense and large numbers of people had been displaced. Their efforts seem to have had a cumulative effect. In 1997, when the last wave of returnees from Afghanistan arrived in Tajikistan, the hostile atmosphere and the scale of problems they encountered were reduced in comparison with previous years.

## Dialogue and education

Civic groups have also shouldered the responsibility of implementing conflict resolution, dialogue and education programmes. Their initiatives are gradually changing the political, social and even psychological atmosphere in the country.

Most NGOs conduct their conflict resolution work at community level, working directly with the population in urban, suburban or rural areas. Projects include training workshops and discussion-based activities for representatives of local village and elders' councils, different ethnic and regional groups, and local officials. Conflict resolution seminars are intended to help participants understand the different types of conflicts and methods to prevent and resolve them. Some NGOs concentrate on drawing *mahallas* and village councils into conflict resolution projects.

NGOs are proliferating in rural areas and are increasingly engaged in conflict resolution. This trend is particularly prevalent in Khatlon province, where military confrontation was intense and where serious inter-ethnic and inter-regional tension remains. Some programmes aim to rehabilitate refugee communities and reintegrate returnees to a peaceful life.

In 1999, civil society projects started to develop a more regional approach to conflict prevention. As the focus of military and political tension shifted to the north of the country, to the Ferghana valley, so the attention of both domestic and international NGOs turned to this area. A few international conflict resolution projects involve NGOs from both Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic; one of the largest is sponsored by the Swiss Development Agency and run by the Centre for Youth Initiative from Khujand city.

International agencies based in Dushanbe began to promote community-level conflict resolution programmes in 1996. They encouraged local NGOs willing to conduct such programmes in areas where different ethnic groups and regional communities co-exist. The OSCE Mission in Tajikistan has initiated a training programme for local moderators and conducted 320 training seminars. It aims to train about 12,000 local women as moderators for civic, gender and human rights programmes. The Counterpart Consortium, has supported the creation of a network of thirteen Tajik NGOs engaged in conflict resolution. Ten years later, the members are developing a general strategy for the network's future activity.

Civic groups also interact with other political forces. With the support of international agencies, Tajikistan's NGOs have been able to conduct some conflict resolution programmes with mid-level actors in the peace process – political parties, public movements and civic organisations. Most civic initiatives at this level are implemented by larger NGOs based in big cities and most include research on conflict prevention and resolution. There are far fewer activities at this level than there are in community-based projects, partly because the former are more expensive and complicated to implement.

## Gender and peacemaking

Women have played an important role in Tajikistan's civil society and women's groups have taken a lead in civil society conflict resolution efforts. Although Tajikistani women are not yet widely represented in government structures, they have been more successful in the voluntary sector: more than 35 per cent of Tajik NGOs are headed by women.

The leaders of many women's NGOs consider that the civil war was caused mainly by economic decline and low living standards, especially in rural areas where women do not traditionally work for money outside the home and are therefore dependent on the wages of adult males. Many males were killed during the war, which increased pressure on women to provide for themselves and their dependents. The status of women in Tajikistan's society remains extremely low and their capacity for conflict prevention is under-utilized. Many women's movement leaders argue that the participation of women in political, economic and social life would help consolidate the peace process but only if the traditional mentality can be transformed. Consequently, most projects conducted by women's organizations aim to raise women's social status. Their strategies range from political lobbying to social development to addressing conflict on the family and community levels.

Over the past several years, Tajik women's organizations, with support from international organizations, have been highly successful in implementing civic education and women's rights projects at the community level. They aim to prepare women to participate in political processes. For example, in 1999 the organizations Women's Voices, Orzu (Hope) and Oshtii Milly worked with the OSCE to arrange seminars on civic education subjects including rights, gender and culture, the role of political parties in democratizing society, and the role of local government. Open Asia held a series of seminars on violence against women in Tajikistan, a roundtable discussion on women and elections, and has developed three training modules on human rights. Traditions and Modernity conducted advocacy training workshops for the leaders of women's and human rights NGOs in August 1998. It also initiated a project called 'The women's school on political leadership' and ran training seminars in different regions for local NGO leaders, journalists and high school and university teachers. It arranged special training for women running for parliamentary elections and for election observers.

Women in different sectors of civil society – traditional networks, government-supported NGOs and those with foreign funding – have developed common platforms and taken on a new lobbying role. They successfully lobbied the president to re-introduce a quota for women

in elected bodies. The government has also adopted a 'National Plan of Action to Increase the Status and Role of Women 1998-2005' that will involve women's NGOs as implementing partners.

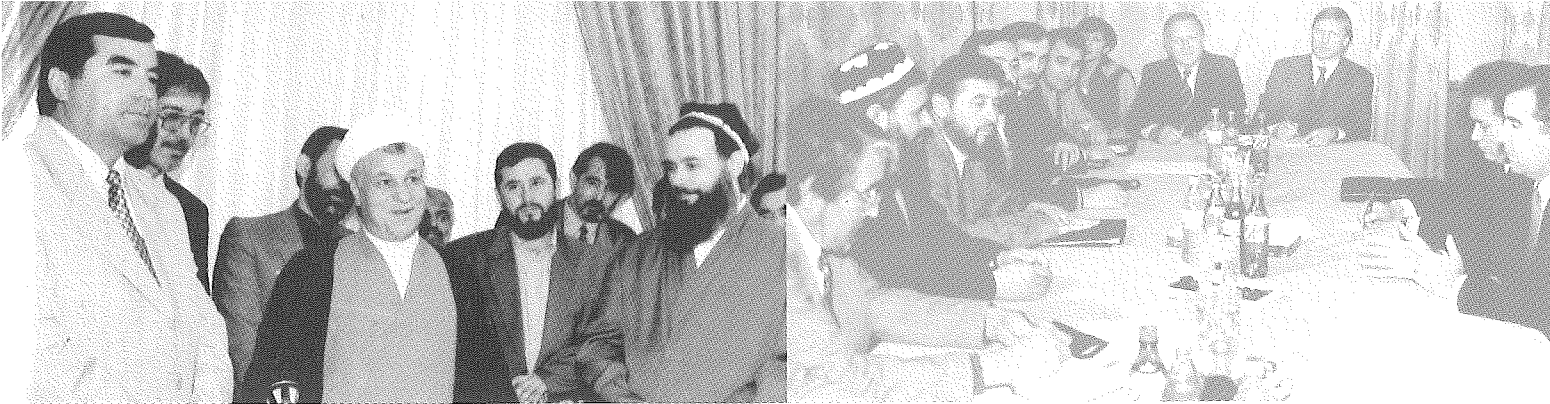
Alla Kuvatova, head of Traditions and Modernity, says that the main task of women- and gender-related organizations in conflict resolution is the same as that of other NGOs: to promote the participation of communities and ordinary people in the peace process. Part of this goal can be achieved by ensuring the active participation of Tajik women in social and political life. Therefore women's NGOs have their own place in Tajik civil society and could play a special role in conflict resolution and prevention. Their numbers and influence are increasing, in part because of support from international agencies.

## Constraints and challenges

After the conclusion of the peace treaty in 1997, new conditions were created in Tajikistan that are conducive to conflict resolution projects. Thirteen NGOs specialise in conflict resolution. The conflict resolution capacity of Tajik NGOs, however, has been constrained by several factors. Although the number of NGOs increases every day, only a dozen are fully established with secure grants, good relations with donors, and professional teams.

International organizations have helped with training needs and, more importantly, they are the source of financial support for Tajik NGOs. The continued financial, political and technical support of international organizations is important to expand the conflict resolution capacity of Tajikistan's civic organizations and their ability to engender dialogue, political participation and protection of rights.

Despite the rapid spread of conflict resolution activities among civic organizations, their impact on national reconciliation is inadequate, largely because of the disparity between the main elements of Tajik civic infrastructure: the European-influenced NGO sector and the traditional civic network. It is important to establish cooperation between the two and to revive the conflict prevention capacity of the traditional councils. This would help to adapt conventional conflict resolution methods to the demands of modern Tajik society. But this process is only beginning. By 2000, only a few Tajik NGOs operated conflict resolution projects at community level and only a few of their staff had working relations with community councils. Although creative competition may be a necessary part of civil society development, the future effectiveness of this sector's efforts at conflict resolution is likely to be linked to the integration of the NGO sector with grassroots civic networks.



# Key elements of the Tajikistan peace agreement

**1997 General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord and its related protocols (1995-97)**

## Implementation

### Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR)

The CNR is created as the mechanism to implement agreements. It is also charged with creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual forgiveness and instituting dialogue among various political forces to promote national reconciliation. The CNR is to be comprised of equal numbers of government and United Tajik Opposition (UTO) representatives and will be chaired by a UTO representative, with a government representative as deputy. It will form subcommissions on political, military, refugee and legal issues. The UN Special Representative, UNMOT and the OSCE Mission will provide assistance to the CNR. The CNR will function during the transition period between the signing of the June 1997 General Agreement and will disband after the new Parliament is convened.

### UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT)

The United Nations is requested to guarantee implementation of the General Agreement. UNMOT is requested to monitor implementation and to provide expert advice, consultations, and good offices at all stages.

### Contact Group of Guarantor States

The governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, who were official observers of the negotiations, are requested to act as political and moral guarantors of the General Agreement. These states – together with the UN, the OIC, and the OSCE – agree to form a Contact Group based in Dushanbe to monitor implementation and to provide expertise, consultations, and other good offices.

### Additional mechanisms

Joint Commissions with equal numbers of government and UTO representatives will oversee implementation of the ceasefire and refugee return agreements. The CIS collective peacekeeping forces will assist with the ceasefire and with implementation of the military

protocol. In the early agreements, the International Committee of the Red Cross, with UNMOT, will assist with the exchange of military personnel, an important confidence-building measure. The OSCE, through its mission, will facilitate implementation of the General Agreement in areas related to human rights and establishing democratic political and legal institutions.

## Political issues

The CNR will develop proposals to amend legislation on political parties, movements and the mass media. Together with the President, the CNR will develop proposals for amendments and additions to the Constitution – to be decided by national referendum – and a new law on elections.

### Government reform

UTO representatives will be incorporated into the structures of Tajikistan's executive branch of government (ministries, departments, local government, judicial, and law enforcement bodies) on the basis of a 30 per cent quota.

### Elections

A Central Electoral Commission will be formed for the transition period to conduct elections and a referendum on constitutional reform. UTO representatives will comprise 25 per cent of its membership. This will take place prior to the start of a new professional Parliament and a new Central Electoral Commission.

### Parties and movements

The ban will be lifted on UTO political parties and movements after the second phase of the military protocol is implemented and they will function within the framework of the constitution and laws of Tajikistan.

### Mass media

Bans and restrictions will be lifted after the second phase of the military protocol is implemented and the media will function within the framework of the constitution and laws of Tajikistan.



## Military issues

Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the UTO's armed units and reform of the government power structures will be carried out during the transition period by the President and the CNR, in close cooperation with UNMOT. Uncooperative armed units will be considered illegal and forcibly disarmed. Implementation will be coordinated by the CNR Subcommittee on Military Issues and a Joint Central Review Board with equal numbers of government and UTO representatives. The first to third stages will be completed within six months of the CNR beginning work. Constant contact will be maintained between unit commanders and joint training conducted to encourage mutual trust.

**First stage** Within two months of the CRN beginning work, UTO armed units will go to assembly points for registration and medical exams. Their armaments will be inventoried and placed in secure storage. Units returning from Afghanistan will enter Tajikistan without weapons. They will be accompanied by the CIS collective peacekeeping forces supervised by UNMOT and their base camps will be dismantled.

**Second stage** One month after the assembly process is complete, UTO armed units will be incorporated into the regular armed forces of Tajikistan as separate units and subordinated to corresponding chains of command. The UTO leadership will publicly announce that its armed units are disbanded. Units formed by local authorities (civil defence forces, etc.) will be disbanded and individual members given the opportunity to enter the Tajikistan armed services.

**Third stage** The Joint Review Board will determine whether individual troops are fit for further military service and make recommendations for appointments to command positions. Those who do not want to continue service or who are deemed unfit due to health, incompetence, or a criminal record prior to May 1992 will be demobilized to civilian life. People who previously held positions in Tajikistan's security services will be reinstated into their former or an equivalent position.

**Fourth stage** By the end of the transition period, former UTO units will be completely merged into governmental power structures. They will be sent to places of permanent assignment and quartered in separate barracks.

## Refugee issues

- The government will assume the obligation to reintegrate returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into the social and economic life of the country. This will include restoration of all rights, provision of humanitarian and financial aid, assistance with employment and housing, and return of homes and property.
- The government will not undertake criminal proceedings against returnees because of their participation in the political confrontation or war.
- A Joint Commission will address problems relating to refugees and visit regularly places where refugees and IDPs are concentrated.
- The UN, OSCE, and UNHCR are requested to provide assistance to ensure the safety of those returning voluntarily.
- Governments of the CIS states are requested to issue temporary identify documents to Tajikistani refugees and to assist the UNHCR with ensuring their safety.

## Amnesty

The 'reciprocal-pardon' Act on Mutual Forgiveness will be the first political decision taken by the CNR in its initial days of work. Within a month of this act, it will issue an Amnesty Act. According to these acts:

- All prisoners of war will be released.
- The convictions of those sentenced to imprisonment for activities in the political and military confrontation from 1992 will be annulled and their conviction record erased; outstanding criminal cases will be discontinued.
- Criminal charges will not be brought against those who committed crimes against the state during the political and military confrontation.
- Persons accused of certain crimes in the Tajikistan Penal Code are not released from punishment and criminal charges.
- Anyone who uses force in the future to settle political disputes will be held responsible under the laws of Tajikistan.

# Key texts

## Documents relating to the Tajikistan peace process

All texts listed are available on Conciliation Resources website, <http://www.c-r.org/accord>.

*Titles listed in bold appear only on the website.*

- Protocol on the Fundamental Principles of Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, 17 Aug 1995.
- Protocol of the Meeting of the Delegation of the State Commission of the Republic of Tajikistan and Field Commanders of Karategin [Qarateghin] Administration, held in Garm [Gharm] on 15-16 Sept 1997.
- Protocol on Settlement of the Political and Military Situation in the Areas of Confrontation, 11 Dec 1996.
- **Joint Statement of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, and the Leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri. 11 Dec 1996.**
- Agreement between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, and the Leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, on the results of the meeting held in Moscow on 23 Dec 1996.
- Protocol on the Main Functions and Powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, 23 Dec 1996.
- Protocol on Refugee Issues, 13 Jan 1997.
- **Joint Statement by the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Delegation of the United Tajik Opposition on the results of the talks held in Tehran, 5-19 Jan 1997.**
- Statute of the Commission on National Reconciliation, 21 Feb 1997.
- Additional Protocol to the Protocol on the Main Functions and Powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, 21 Feb 1997.
- Joint Statement [between E. S. Rakhmonov and S. A. Nuri] of 21 Feb 1997.
- Protocol on Military Issues, 8 March 1997.
- **Joint Statement by the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the delegation of the United Tajik Opposition on the outcome of the round of inter-Tajik talks held in Moscow from 26 February to 8 March 1997.**
- Protocol on Political Issues, 18 May 1997.
- Bishkek Memorandum, 18 May 1997.
- Protocol on the Guarantees of Implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, 28 May 1997.
- Tehran Declaration, 28 May 1997.
- General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, 27 June 1997.
- Protocol on Mutual Understanding between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, and the Leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, 27 June 1997.
- Moscow Declaration, 27 June 1997.
- Act on Mutual Forgiveness.
- Law on Amnesty for Participants in the Political and Military Confrontation in the Republic of Tajikistan.

**Source:** *News About Peace (Documents)*, Compiled by Abdunabi Sattorzoda and Ibrohim Usmon, Published by the Tajikistan Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR) and the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). Conciliation Resources has reproduced these documents directly from the original.



## Protocol on the fundamental principles of establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan 17 August 1995

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The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, and the leader of the Tajik opposition, Abdullo Nuri, strongly determined to ensure observance of the highest interests of the Tajik people, affirm that dialogue and cooperation are the essential ways to achieve stable peace in the country. To this end, the Government undertakes to refrain from carrying out any acts that run counter to the provisions of the protocols being concluded and from adopting such laws or measures which may be incompatible with these protocols. The Tajik opposition, for its part, undertakes to wage a political struggle by exclusively peaceful means in accordance with the laws in force in the Republic of Tajikistan and in conformity with the conditions and guarantees laid down in a general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord in the country. In this connection, the parties have agreed:

1. To conduct, beginning on 18 September 1995, a continual round of negotiations aimed at concluding, at the earliest possible date, a general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord in Tajikistan. The venue for the negotiations shall be agreed upon by the parties through the mediation of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General.
2. The general agreement referred to shall consist of separate protocols on the following groups of problems
  - (a) Political problems, including a consultative forum of the peoples of Tajikistan, the functioning of all political parties and political movements and the participation of their representatives in the power structures, as well as the deepening of the democratisation process in Tajik society;
  - (b) Military problems, including reforms of the governmental power structures, and the disbandment, disarmament and reintegration of the opposition's armed formations into the Government's armed forces or Tajikistan's civilian sector, in accordance with a timetable to be agreed upon at subsequent negotiations;
  - (c) The voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation and reintegration of refugees, including legal, economic and social guarantees for their protection;
  - (d) A commission to monitor and verify compliance by the parties with the general agreement;
  - (e) Guarantees for implementing the general agreement, including a possible role to be played by the United Nations, States and international organisations acting as observers at inter-Tajik negotiations;

(f) A donors' conference for financing the programmes to reintegrate refugees, displaced persons and persons demobilized during the national reconciliation process, and also for providing necessary assistance in restoring the national economy, which has been destroyed by the civil war.

3. The protocols on these groups of problems shall be integral parts of the general agreement, and this document shall be incorporated into it as the first protocol.
4. Acting in the spirit of this Protocol and with a view to creating the necessary conditions for conducting further negotiations, the parties have agreed to extend the period of validity of the Agreement on a Temporary Cease-Fire and the Cessation of Other Hostilities on the Tajik-Afghan Border and within the country for the next six months until 26 February 1996.
5. The texts of this Protocol, which were signed by Mr. Rakhmonov, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and Mr. Nuri, the leader of the Tajik opposition, were exchanged on 17 August 1995, through the intermediary of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ramiro Piriz-Ballon.

(signed) *E. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

(signed) *A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

## Protocol on the meeting of the delegation of the state commission of the republic of Tajikistan and field commanders of Karategin administration, held in Garm from 15-16 September 1996

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At the negotiations the Government of Tajikistan was represented by the Government Commission under the chairmanship of the Security Council Chief Mr. Amirkul Azimov, consisting of the Minister of Interior, Gen. Saidamir Zukhurov, the Chief Military Commander of the Ministry of Interior troops, Gen. Saidamirov, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Gen. Chubarov, the Presidential Guard Commander, Gen. Gaffor Mirzoev, the Deputy Minister of Security, Gen. Bakhodur Abdulloev, the State Adviser, Mr. M. Kabirov and the Military Prosecutor, Mr. A. Olimov; the Delegation of the United Tajik Opposition was headed by the Chief Military Commander of the Karategin Front, Mr. Mirzokhuja Nizomov and consisted of the Commander of Tajikobod, Mr. Makhmadruzi, the Deputy Commander of Komsomolobod, Eshoni Aziz, the Commander of Garm, Mr. Mirzokhuja Akhmadov, the Commander of Garm, Mr. Sirodjiddin and the Commander of Komsomolobod, Mr. Kosimdjon.

Negotiations were mediated by the United Nations Organisation represented by Gen. Hasan Abaza and the Joint Commission for the Implementation of the Tehran Agreement.

With the view to provide the implementation of the agreements reached during the third phase of the fifth round of inter-Tajik talks in Ashgabad, to ensure effective cease-fire and cessation of military actions in Komsomolobod, Garm, Tajikabad and Djirgatal districts, to stabilise the situation in these areas and to make them a peaceful zone, participants of the meeting agreed to complete the following prior before finding the solution to political problems during the upcoming rounds of inter-Tajik talks:

1. To remove check points set up by the military formations of both sides in the area of Djirgatal and Tajikabad.
2. To re-instate Government Interior and Security bodies in Djirgatal and Tajikabad districts and create conditions for their effective work.
3. To allow the UTO members to travel without arms in the district centres of Tajikabad, Garm and Djirgatal.
4. As an exception and in concurrence with the appropriate bodies of Tajikabad, Garm and Djirgatal districts to give an opportunity to UTO commanders to have two armed bodyguards.
5. For the period of redeployment of the check point of the Government armed forces in Langari Shoh (Tajikabad district) to other place, with the view of monitoring to create a joint commission which will include two representatives of each side and one representative of the Military Prosecutor's Office of Tajikistan.
6. Control over the Government check points in Labi Jar and Chorsada rests with the Military Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, the Presidential Guard and two UTO representatives.
7. The sides agreed to provide free movement of transport and people along the Dushanbe-Djirgatal road.
8. Disputable issues will be jointly considered and investigated.
9. The Protocol will enter into force on 17 September 1996.
10. Control over implementation of this Protocol rests with the Joint

Commission for the Implementation of the Tehran cease-fire Agreement and UN military observers.

(signed) *Amirkul Azimov, Chairman of the Government Commission*

(signed) *Mirzokhuja Nizomov, Head of the Delegation of UTO Field Commanders in Komsomolobod, Garm, Tajikabad and Djirgatal districts*

(signed) *General Hasan Abaza, UNMOT Chief Military Observer*

*Garm, 16 September 1996*

### **Protocol on settlement of the military and political situation in the areas of confrontation, 11 December 1996**

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Mr. S. A. Nuri, condemn the recent marked deterioration in the military and political situation in the Karategin Valley and Tavildara areas of the Republic on the eve of their Moscow meeting, and have agreed as follows:

1. Before the signing of the Agreement in Moscow, to halt all military action starting at 00 hours on 12 December 1996;
2. The parties shall withdraw their armed units and formations from the Dushanbe-Khorog highway. Towards Tavildara, they shall establish their posts respectively on both sides of the Karanak pass (the government post in sector N1 and the opposition post in the village of Saridasht). They request the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan to assign representatives to these posts as observers. Simultaneously, the armed formations of the United Tajik Opposition shall withdraw from the centre of Tavildara to the village of Dashti-Sher. The government forces shall remain on the summit of the Khaburobot pass and in the Labi-Djar locality;
3. The parties shall remove their armed posts on the Dushanbe-Djirgatal highway. The United Tajik Opposition shall withdraw its armed formations from the regional centres of Komsomolobod, Garm, Tajikabad and

Djirgatal. The Ministry of Internal Affairs battalion shall remain at Garm at the location where it was previously stationed;

4. As a confidence-building measure, the United Tajik Opposition shall release the military personnel of the government forces taken prisoner or hostage in the course of the recent events in the Tavildara, Komsomolobod, Garm, Tajikabad and Djirgatal regions. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan and the International Committee of the Red Cross shall be requested to assist in the conduct of this humanitarian action;
5. For purposes of preventing valuables, weapons, narcotic substances and other items prevented by law from being smuggled in and out, a customs control post shall be established on the border between the Djirgatal region and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, and also, by the forces of the Government and the United Tajik Opposition, a joint border post;
6. The functioning of the lawful authorities in the territory of Tavildara, Komsomolobod, Garm, Tajikabad and Djirgatal regions shall be restored. In selecting and deploying troops and offices of the organs responsible for internal affairs, preference shall be given to local professionally trained personnel. The United Tajik Opposition accepts and will not impede the normal functioning of the structures of power;
7. Monitoring of the application of the present Protocol shall be the responsibility of the Joint Commission. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan shall be requested to assist in this respect;
8. The Protocol shall enter into force at the time of its signature.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S.A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G.D. Merrem, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan*

*Northern Afghanistan, 11 December 1996*

## Agreement between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, on the results of the meeting held in Moscow on 23 December 1996

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The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Said Abdullo Nuri, understanding the ruinous nature of the military and political confrontation and aware of the high responsibility for the future of the Tajik people and State, having met in Moscow on 23 December 1996, have agreed as follows:

The inter-Tajik talks and the implementation of the agreements reached during them must be completed within 12 to 18 months from the date of signature of the present Agreement;

Bearing in mind that the signature of the present Agreement marks the beginning of a qualitatively new phase in the attainment of peace and national accord, they have taken the policy decision to establish for the above-mentioned transition period a Commission on National Reconciliation. A representative of the Tajik opposition will serve as Chairman of the Commission. The delegations to the talks are instructed to determine in the course of the next round, which is to begin in Tehran on 5 January 1997, the quantitative and personal composition of the Commission and its specific functions and powers;

There is a need to implement a universal amnesty and reciprocal pardoning of persons who took part in the military and political confrontation from 1992 up to the time of adoption of the Amnesty Act;

To conduct within the shortest possible time a full exchange of prisoners of war and other prisoners. They requested the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan and the International Committee of the Red Cross to extend the necessary

assistance for the conduct of this humanitarian activity;

From the date of signature of the present Agreement, to proclaim a cease-fire and the cessation of other hostile activities for the entire period of the inter-Tajik talks;

For the purposes of establishing peace in the country, they have given instructions to the delegations to the talks to conclude them by 1 July 1997 through the signature of the documents provided for in the Protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition express their gratitude to the representatives of the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the other observer States at the inter-Tajik talks and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. B. Boutros-Ghali and his Special Representative, Mr. G. Merrem, for their hospitality and their cooperation in organising the meeting in Moscow.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*SA. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

## Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, 23 December 1996

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In connection with the beginning of a qualitatively new phase in the attainment of peace and national accord in Tajikistan and in accordance with the Agreement between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, the parties have taken the decision to establish for the transition period a Commission on National Reconciliation.

The main purposes of the Commission are the attainment of national

reconciliation through the implementation of the agreements reached in the course of the inter-Tajik talks, the creation of an atmosphere of trust and mutual forgiveness, and the institution of a broad dialogue among the various political forces in the country in the interests of the restoration and strengthening of civil accord in Tajikistan.

For these purposes, the Commission is assigned the tasks of:

Devising a monitoring mechanism and monitoring compliance by the Parties with the agreements on the establishment of peace and national accord in the country jointly with the other organs established for that purpose;

Implementing measures for the safe and appropriate return of the refugees, their active involvement in the social, political and economic life of the country and the provision of assistance in reconstruction of the housing and industrial and agricultural facilities destroyed by the war;

Developing proposals for amending the legislation on the functioning of political parties and movements and the mass media.

During the transition period the President and the Commission on National Reconciliation will exercise the following functions and Powers;

Submission to a nationwide referendum of proposals for amendments and additions to the existing Constitution;

Preparation and submission for approval by Parliament, and if necessary also by a nationwide referendum, of a new law on elections to Parliament and the local representative bodies;

Establishment for the transition period of a Central Commission on Elections and the Conduct of the Referendum;

Reform of the Government – inclusion of representatives of the opposition (the United Tajik Opposition) in the structures of executive authority, including ministries, departments, local authorities, judicial bodies and law enforcement agencies, in proportion to the representation of the parties in the Commission on National Reconciliation and taking into account the regional principle;

Guidance and monitoring of the disbandment, disarmament and reintegration of the armed units of the opposition, and conduct of activities to reform the authorities responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the agencies of the Office of the Public Prosecutor;

Monitoring of the conduct of a full exchange of prisoners of war, other prisoners and forcibly detained persons;

Adoption of a Reciprocal Pardon Act and drafting of an Amnesty Act to be adopted by Parliament and the Commission on National Reconciliation;

Development of a mechanism for converting the military-political movements into political parties;

Submission for consideration by Parliament of proposals regarding the date for the holding of elections to a new professional Parliament, to be monitored by the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with the participation of the observer countries at the inter-Tajik talks;

Decision adopted by the President and the Commission regarding issues of national reconciliation shall be binding on the authorities. The activities of the Commission on National Reconciliation shall be conducted in close cooperation with the United Nations Mission of Observers and the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan. The Commission on National Reconciliation shall cease its activities after the convening of the new Parliament and the establishment of its authorities.

The present Protocol forms an integral part of the Agreement signed in Moscow on 23 December 1996 by

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, S. A. Nuri and G. D. Merrem.*

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*SA. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. D. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

*23 December 1996*

## Protocol on refugee issues, 13 January 1997

With a view to overcoming the consequences of the civil war and achieving peace and national accord in the country, and in accordance with the protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995, the joint statement on the results of the fourth round of inter-Tajik talks in Almaty and the appeal by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Mr. S. A. Nuri, to their fellow countrymen who had been forced to leave the country, adopted in Moscow on 23 December 1996, the delegations of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (hereinafter referred to as "the Parties"), have agreed as follows:

1. To step up mutual efforts to ensure the voluntary return, in safety and dignity, of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes, and to complete this process within 12 to 18 months from the date of signature of this Protocol. With a view to ensuring their safety, honour and dignity, the Parties also call upon the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide assistance in order to ensure the safety of returning refugees and displaced persons and to establish and expand their presence at places where such persons are living.

2. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan assumes the obligation to reintegrate returning refugees and displaced persons into the social and economic life of the country, which includes the provision to them of humanitarian and financial aid, assistance in finding employment and housing and the restoration of all their rights as citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan (including the return to them of dwellings and property and guaranteed uninterrupted service), and not to institute criminal proceedings against returning refugees or displaced persons for their participation in the political confrontation and the civil

war, in accordance with the legislative acts in force in the Republic.

3. The Parties have decided to resume the work of the Joint Commission on problems relating to refugees and, within one month from the date of signature of this Protocol, with the assistance of UNHCR, to draw up a statute of the Commission.

4. The Parties have decided to instruct the Joint Commission, with the participation of representatives of local *hukumats* (executive committees) and the United Tajik Opposition for the period during which this Protocol is being implemented, to visit on a regular basis, in accordance with a separate timetable, refugee camps in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, places in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) where there are concentrations of refugees and districts in the Republic of Tajikistan to which refugees and displaced persons intend to return. Similar visits shall be organised by the Joint Commission to places where displaced persons live in large numbers. The above-mentioned timetable shall be agreed by the Joint Commission within one month from the date of signature of this Protocol.

5. The Parties appeal to the Government of the CIS States to consider issuing temporary identity documents to refugees from Tajikistan and to assist UNHCR in carrying out additional measures to ensure the safety of refugees and to defend their honour and dignity.

6. The Parties express their sincere gratitude to the United Nations, UNHCR, OSCE, donor countries and the Aga Khan Foundation for their assistance and at the same time make an urgent appeal to them and to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Development Bank, the Islamic Bank and the Aga Khan Foundation to provide additional and substantial financial and material support to refugees and displaced persons and to the Joint Commission on problems relating to refugees, and also for the purpose of rehabilitating the national economy destroyed by the war and improving the well-being of the population.

(signed) *Talbak Nazarov, Head of the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan*

(signed) *Khoja Akbar Turajonzodah, Head of the Delegation of the United Tajik Opposition*

(signed) *Gerd Dietrich Merrem, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan*

13 January 1997, Tehran

## Statute of the Commission on National Reconciliation, 21 February 1997

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, guided by the highest interests of the peoples of Tajikistan for the purpose of achieving a stable peace and national accord in the country, have adopted a political decision to establish a Commission on National Reconciliation (hereinafter referred to as the Commission), signing an Agreement and a Protocol in Moscow on 23 December 1996.

2. The purview of the Commission includes the whole range of problems associated with national reconciliation. Its tasks shall be to implement the agreements reached in the course of the inter Tajik talks, to promote the creation of an atmosphere of trust and mutual forgiveness and to institute a broad dialogue among the various political forces in the country with the view to restoring and strengthening civil accord in Tajikistan.

3. The Commission is a temporary body, established for the transition period. It shall cease its activity after the convening of the new Parliament and the formation of its leadership structures. The Commission on National Reconciliation shall begin its work two weeks after the signing of the Protocols on military and political issues.

### II. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION AND PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF ITS ACTIVITY

4. The members of the Commission shall be appointed on a basis of parity by the Government of the Republic of

Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition. The Commission shall comprise 26 members. It shall be headed by a Chairman, a representative of the United Tajik Opposition, who shall have one deputy, a representative of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (the individual membership of the Commission shall be announced 10 days before the Commission starts work). The leaders and members of the Commission shall work full-time, and may not be removed by the parties, except in circumstances which make it impossible for them to discharge their duties.

5. The Commission shall comprise four subcommissions: (a) On political issues (b) On military issues (c) On refugee issues (d) On legal issues

The Commission shall have the right where necessary to disband or combine subcommissions or establish new ones. Each subcommission shall elect its chairman, with two subcommissions being headed by representatives of the Government and two by representatives of the United Tajik Opposition. The Commission shall where necessary create working bodies – expert groups, a press service and others. The joint commissions established in the course of the inter-Tajik talks shall become working bodies of the Commission.

6. The quorum for meetings of the Commission shall be two thirds of its membership. Substantive issues shall be decided by consensus. Should this method prove inconclusive after 10 meetings, the procedure for deciding on the substantive issue shall thereafter be taken by the Chairman of the Commission. Procedural issues shall be decided by simple majority. Decisions adopted by the President and the Commission on issues of national reconciliation shall be binding on the authorities.

### III. FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

7. The Commission shall have the following functions and powers: Devising a monitoring mechanism and monitoring compliance by the parties with the agreements on the establishment of peace and national accord in the country jointly with the other organs established for that purpose; Implementing measures for the safe

and appropriate return of the refugees and their active involvement in the social, political and economic life of the country, and provision of assistance in reconstruction of the housing and industrial and agricultural facilities destroyed by the war;

Developing proposals for amending the legislation on the functioning of political parties and movements and the mass media.

During the transition period, the President and Commission on National Reconciliation will exercise the following functions and powers:

Submission to a nationwide referendum of proposals for amendments and additions to the existing Constitution;

Preparation and submission for approval by Parliament, and if necessary also by a nationwide referendum, of a new law on elections to Parliament and the local representative bodies;

Establishment for the transition period of a Central Electoral Commission on the Elections and the Conduct of the Referendum;

Reform of the Government – inclusion of representatives of the opposition (UTO) in the structures of executive authority (members of the government), including ministries, departments, local authorities, judicial bodies and law enforcement agencies, taking the regional principle into account;

Guidance and monitoring of the disbandment, disarming and reintegration of the armed units of the opposition armed forces and conduct of activities to reform the authorities responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the agencies of the Office of the Public Prosecutor;

Monitoring of the conduct of a full exchange of prisoners of war and other prisoners and the release of forcibly detained persons;

Adoption of a Reciprocal Pardon Act and drafting of an Amnesty Act to be adopted by the Parliament and the Commission on National Reconciliation;

Submission for consideration by Parliament of proposals regarding the date for the holding of elections to a new professional Parliament, to be



monitored by the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with the participation of the observer countries at the inter-Tajik talks.

#### IV. GUARANTEES OF SECURITY

8. The members of the Commission shall possess immunity. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition guarantee the security and immunity of members of the Commission in the discharge of their duties and in their free time. The members of the Commission may not be detained, arrested or tried for actions committed prior to their appointment to the Commission or for actions in connection with the discharge of their duties. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan guarantees the inviolability of the office and residential accommodation in which the members of the Commission and their families will work and live.

In order to ensure the security of members of the Commission and their families, a special unit with a strength of up to 80 personnel comprising representatives of the Government and UTO, on a basis of parity, shall be established by the Government within the Ministry of Security.

#### V. LOCATION OF THE COMMISSION

9. The Commission shall be located in the capital of the Republic, Dushanbe.

#### VI. MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

10. Expenses associated with the maintenance and work of the Commission (salaries, communications, transportation) shall be financed out of the State budget, special provision being made for this purpose.

#### VII. PROCEDURE FOR PUBLICIZING THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

11. For purposes of facilitating the process of national reconciliation and creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding, the press service of the Commission shall conduct press conferences and briefings and issue press releases and bulletins. The mass media of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik

Opposition shall regularly publicise the work of the Commission.

#### VIII. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OSCE IN PROMOTING THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

12. In accordance with the Protocol signed in Moscow on 23 December 1996 by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, the work of the Commission shall be conducted in close cooperation with the United Nations Observer Mission and the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Observer Mission in Tajikistan shall render advisory assistance to the work of the Commission, and also such other assistance as may be provided for in its possible future mandates. Decisions of the Commission on issues related to the activity of the United Nations Observer Mission in Tajikistan shall be taken in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. D. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

### **Additional protocol to the protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, 21 February 1997**

In the light of the problem which has arisen in the negotiations, and in order to ensure that the Commission on National Reconciliation starts to function as quickly as possible, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, following their meeting in Mashhad in the Islamic Republic of Iran on 20 and 21 February 1997, have decided as follows:

1. The words "in proportion to the representation of the parties in the

Commission on National Reconciliation" shall be omitted from the paragraph dealing with reform of the Government in the Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation dated 23 December 1996.

2. Thirty per cent of positions in executive structures, including ministries, departments, local authorities, and judicial bodies and law enforcement agencies, shall be assigned to representatives of UTO, the regional principle being taken into account.

3. The phrase "development of a mechanism for converting the military-political movements into political parties" in the Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation dated 23 December 1996 shall be deemed null and void from the date of signing of the Protocol on Military Issues, since this matter will be discussed under the heading of military issues.

*Mashhad, 21 February 1997*

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. D. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

### **Joint statement of 21 February 1997**

We, Emomali Rakhmonov, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and Said Abdullo Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition, met in the city of Mashhad, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 20 and 21 February 1997 and discussed various issues relating to recent incidents in our country, Tajikistan. Following the signing of the Moscow Agreement and the establishment of the Commission on National Reconciliation, we came to realise that the enemies of peace and stability in Tajikistan are striving to impede its implementation. For, regrettably, there still exist individuals whose interests are served more in war than in peace. Taking the representatives of international organisations, government employees,

members of the opposition and correspondents hostage as well as acts of terrorism carried out by the Rezvon Sadirov Group are instances of such reprehensible acts which have damaged the credibility of our State, nation and Government. In the light of the fact that no individual or group should violate the inalienable rights of human beings, we condemn such acts. Today, once again we address ourselves to the world and to our own nation and hereby announce that the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition condemn the hostage taking and terrorism in whatever form it is manifested, and undertake to do our utmost to prevent the recurrence of such acts that may impede the efforts of the Commission on National Reconciliation. We hope that the Commission on National Reconciliation, along with the President and all government officials of Tajikistan, would soon restore the country to the conditions we wish for and that the independent Republic of Tajikistan would gain fame as one of the peace-loving countries. We invite all our dear compatriots, irrespective of their political views, to gain a clear understanding of our efforts in this respect and to assist us wholeheartedly.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*21 February 1997, Mashhad*

## Protocol on military issues, 8 March 1997

In order to achieve peace and national reconciliation and form unified national armed forces and in accordance with the Protocol on the Basic Principles for Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995, the Moscow Agreements and Protocol of 23 December 1996 and the Statute of the Commission on National Reconciliation of 21 February 1997, the delegations of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (hereinafter referred to as the Parties) have agreed on the following fundamental military issues:

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The reintegration, disarmament and disbandment of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition as well as the reform of the governmental power structures of the Republic of Tajikistan shall be carried out during the transition period by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Commission on National Reconciliation in close cooperation with the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and in accordance with the timetable set forth in paragraphs 5, 9 and 11 of this Protocol.

2. The practical implementation of the provisions of this Protocol shall be carried out by a subcommission on military issues of the Commission on National Reconciliation and also by a joint central review board established on the basis of parity.

3. The Government and the United Tajik Opposition shall exchange the necessary information concerning the reintegration of the Opposition's military units and the reform of the power structures of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

4. Armed units which are not included in the information provided by the Parties shall be obliged to make themselves known to the subcommission on military issues of the Commission on National Reconciliation and provide it with the necessary information within two months from the date on which the Commission begins work. Armed units which do not cooperate in carrying out the provisions of this protocol shall be considered illegal and shall be subject to forcible disarmament.

### II. THE REINTEGRATION, DISARMAMENT AND DISBANDMENT OF THE ARMED UNITS OF THE UNITED TAJIK OPPOSITION

5. The reintegration, disarmament and disbandment of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition shall be carried out in stages.

(a) During the first stage, the United Tajik Opposition shall assemble its armed units in the assembly points agreed upon by the Parties in the Vanj, Garm, Djirgatal, Komsomolobod, Kofarnigan, Rushan, Tavildara and Tajikabad districts and the towns of Khorog and Magmurud in the Lenin

district, where personnel shall be registered and counted and given medical examinations. At the assembly points, an inventory shall be taken of weapons, military equipment and ammunition, which shall be stored in separate, securely guarded premises. This stage shall be carried out within two months of the date on which the Commission on National Reconciliation begins its work.

(b) During this stage, the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition situated in the territory of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, shall be transferred in stages to the territory of Tajikistan to previously determined assembly points from among those specified above through the Ishkashim and Nizhny Pyanj passage points. The armed units of the United Tajik Opposition shall cross the border without weapons or ammunition. With the consent of Afghan authorities, the subcommission on military issues of the Commission on National Reconciliation and UNMOT shall travel to the Islamic State of Afghanistan and draw up a register of the weapons and ammunition. The collective peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) shall, under the supervision of UNMOT, accompany the personnel, weapons and ammunition to the assembly points, where the weapons and ammunition on the register shall be stored in separate, guarded premises. The base camps and training centres of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition situated outside Tajikistan shall be dismantled and closed simultaneously with the transfer of the units referred to the assembly points in the territory of Tajikistan.

(c) During the second stage, no later than one month after the assembling of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition in the assembly points has been completed, those units shall be made into corresponding units of the regular armed forces of Tajikistan. They shall take a military oath and shall be given new uniforms, be assigned to the corresponding governmental power structures of Tajikistan in separate units and be subordinated to the corresponding chain of command. The relevant laws and military regulations of Tajikistan shall apply to them. The leadership of

the United Tajik Opposition shall publicly announce the disbandment of its armed units.

(d) During the third stage, the Joint Review Board shall certify the personnel of the reintegrated units of the United Tajik Opposition, determining, on an individual basis, fitness for further military service and the nature of such service and shall also make recommendations for appointments to command positions. Persons who do not express the wish to continue service or who are found unfit for service for reasons of health or found to be incompetent and persons having a criminal record prior to May 1992 shall be demobilized and returned to civilian life.

(e) The measures provided for in the first, second and third stages of the reintegration of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition into the power structures of the Government of Tajikistan shall be carried out within six months of the date on which the Commission on National Reconciliation begins its work.

(f) In the fourth stage of reintegration, the former units of the United Tajik Opposition will be completely merged with the governmental power structures. This process must be fully completed by the end of the transition period, i.e. before 1 July 1998.

6. The reintegrated units of the United Tajik Opposition shall be sent to their places of permanent assignment and quartered in separate barracks. A separate unit, the strength of which shall be determined by the President of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, shall be stationed in Dushanbe a week before the Commission on National Reconciliation begins its work.

7. Former members of the governmental power structures who were compelled to quit their posts because of the civil conflict and have expressed the wish to continue their service shall on the recommendation of the Joint Review Board be reinstated into their former or equivalent positions.

8. Persons who were members of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition and expressed the wish to receive military training shall be afforded equally with other nationals

of Tajikistan the possibility of attending the relevant training institutions.

### III. REFORM OF THE POWER STRUCTURES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF TAJIKISTAN

9. The reform of the power structures of the Government of Tajikistan shall take place on the basis of a re-evaluation of the personnel, including command personnel. This shall be conducted by the Joint Central Review Board within six months from the time when the Commission on National Reconciliation begins its work.

10. The Joint Central Review Board shall take its decisions on assignment to reserve status and reintegration into civilian life on the basis of three criteria: state of health, record of convictions prior to May 1992 and acknowledged professional unfitness.

11. Units formed by local authorities during the civil conflict (as civil defence forces, guard units, unsupervised formations, etc.) shall be disbanded within six months from the time when the Commission on National Reconciliation begins its work, and the formation of new units shall be halted. Persons expressing the wish to continue their service shall be integrated into the power structures of the Government of Tajikistan in accordance with the principles and procedures specified in paragraph 5 of the present Protocol. Members of these units not expressing the desire to continue their service, possessing a record of convictions prior to May 1992 or unfit for service on grounds of health shall be disarmed and reintegrated into civilian life.

### IV. CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

12. While the measures provided in the present Protocol are being implemented, the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition shall comply strictly with the provisions of the Tehran agreement and prevent any attempts to destabilise the situation in Tajikistan. At all stages of the reintegration of the governmental power structures, joint measures shall be taken to combat crime in the country. For purposes of building mutual trust during the first, second and third stages of reintegration, constant contacts shall

be established and maintained at the level of unit commanders, contacts among personnel shall be organised and special measures for joint training shall be conducted.

### V. THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

13. In order to ensure the full and effective implementation of the provisions of the present Protocol, the Parties request the United Nations, through its Observer Mission in Tajikistan, to monitor the process of implementation of the agreements indicated above, and to provide expert advisory assistance and good offices at all the stages specified in the present Protocol.

*Talbak Nazarov, Head of the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*Khoja Akbar Turajonzodah, Head of the Delegation of the United Tajik Opposition*

*Gerd Dietrich Merrem, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Tajikistan*

## Protocol on political issues, 18 May 1997

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In order to achieve peace and national accord in the country and in accordance with the Protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan, of 17 August 1995, and the Agreement and Protocol on the Basic Functions and Powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, of 23 December 1996, which was signed by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, the delegations of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (hereinafter referred to as "the parties"), in implementation of instructions by the President and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, have drawn up and adopted the Statute on the Commission on National Reconciliation, which is an integral part of this Protocol. The Agreement and Protocol of 23 December 1996, which were signed in Moscow, are also an essential part of it. The parties also

reached agreement on the following basic political questions:

1. The President and the Commission on National Reconciliation shall adopt the reciprocal-pardon act as the first political decision to be taken during the initial days of the Commission's work. No later than one month after the adoption of the reciprocal-pardon act, the amnesty act shall be adopted.
2. The Central Electoral Commission on Elections and the Holding of a Referendum shall be established for a transitional period with the inclusion in its membership of 25 per cent of the representatives of the United Tajik Opposition and shall conduct the elections and referendum before the beginning of the work of the new professional Parliament and the establishment of the new Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Tajikistan.
3. The reform of the Government shall be carried out by incorporating representatives of the United Tajik Opposition into the structures of the executive branch, including ministries, departments, local government bodies and judicial and law-enforcement bodies on the basis of a quota. The candidates put forward shall be appointed in accordance with a proposal by the United Tajik Opposition following consultations between the President and the Chairman of the Commission on National Reconciliation.
4. The bans and restrictions on activities by the political parties and movements of the United Tajik Opposition and the mass information media shall be lifted by the authorities of Tajikistan after the completion of the second phase of the implementation of the Protocol on Military Issues. The political parties and movements of the United Tajik Opposition shall function within the framework of the constitution and the laws in force of the Republic of Tajikistan and in accordance with the norms and guarantees set forth in the general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord in the country.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. D. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

*18 May 1997*

## **Bishkek memorandum, 18 May 1997**

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The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, met from 16 to 18 May 1997 in the capital of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, in order to conduct an in-depth discussion of the issues being considered within the framework of the inter-Tajik talks.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, who are committed to the highest national interests of the Tajik people, unanimously agreed that the previous negotiation process and the agreements concluded during it constitute a solid basis for bringing the political situation in the Republic to the level of peaceful, creative development. In this context, the next serious step forward was taken in solving the problems on the agenda of the inter-Tajik talks – a protocol on political issues was signed, which includes agreements on such basic issues as the adoption of the reciprocal-pardon act and the amnesty act; the inclusion of 25 per cent of the representatives of the United Tajik Opposition as members of the Central Electoral Commission for a transitional period; reforming the Government by including Opposition representatives in it on the basis of a quota; lifting the bans on activities by the political parties and movements of the United Tajik Opposition and the mass information media after the completion of the second phase in the implementation of the Protocol on Military Issues. In the context of the provision of the Protocol on Military Issues, agreement was also reached on deploying in Dushanbe a contingent of the armed units of the United Tajik Opposition numbering 460 persons and also 40 persons to protect the members of the Commission on National Reconciliation.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United

Tajik Opposition agreed in subsequent talks held in Tehran and Moscow to solve the problem of exchanging prisoners of war and imprisoned persons in all its aspects and devise an appropriate mechanism for that purpose.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition agreed that, as a result of the Bishkek meeting, the obstacles that had arisen recently in the negotiation process had been eliminated and the prerequisites for successfully continuing the talks had been met. They agreed that the Commission on National Reconciliation would begin its work immediately after the signing of the general agreement on peace and national accord in Tajikistan.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Tajikistan, G. Merrem, expressed their profound appreciation to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, A. Akaev, and the people of Kyrgyzstan for their hospitality and cordiality, the outstanding organisation of the talks and the active assistance provided for their fruitful completion.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. D. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

*18 May 1997*

## **Protocol on the guarantees of implementation of the General Agreement on Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, 28 May 1997**

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Pursuant to the Protocol on the Main Principles of Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995 and in order to ensure full and strict implementation of the General Agreement on Establishment of Peace and National Accord in

Tajikistan (hereinafter referred to as the General Agreement), which includes as its integral parts:

- Protocol on the Main Principles of Establishment of Peace and \* National Accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995; \* Protocol on Political Issues of 18 May 1997;
- Agreement between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov, and the Leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Said Abdullo Nuri, based on the results of their meeting in Moscow on 23 December 1996;
- Protocol on the Main Functions and Powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation of 23 December 1996;
- Charter of the Commission on National Reconciliation of 21 February 1997;
- Additional Protocol to the Protocol on the Main Functions and Powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation of 21 February 1997;
- Protocol on Military Issues of 8 March 1997;
- Protocol on Refugee-related issues of 13 January 1997

The delegations of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), in consultations with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan and Representatives of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan agreed as follows:

1. The good will of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Leadership of the United Tajik Opposition (hereinafter referred to as the Parties) and their commitment to achieving peace and national accord in the country shall be considered as the most important guarantees of strict implementation of the General Agreement. In this context, the material guarantees shall be deemed to be the agreements laid down in the above-mentioned Protocols and Agreements, in particular, to establish the Commission on National

Reconciliation with equal representation of the Parties and headed by a representative of UTO; to reserve for representatives of the Opposition (UTO) thirty (30) per cent of posts in the executive power structures and twenty-five (25) per cent of seats in the Central Electoral Commission; to carry out the reintegration, disarmament and disbanding of the UTO armed units, as well as the reform of the power structures of the Republic of Tajikistan; to ensure the voluntary return, in safety and dignity, of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes; to provide amnesty for persons who took part in the civil conflict and political confrontation, as well as to lift the bans and limitations on the activities of political parties and movements that are part of UTO and on the mass media which shall function within the framework of the Constitution and effective laws of the Republic of Tajikistan, and in accordance with the norms and guarantees established in the General Agreement.

2. The parties agreed to request the United Nations to provide guarantees of implementation of the General Agreement through possible adoption by the Security Council of the United Nations of a new mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) which would take into account the successful completion of the inter-Tajik talks and might provide for monitoring of the implementation of the General Agreement by the Parties, provision of expertise, consultations and good offices at all stages of its implementation and, possibly, other functions.

3. At the request of the Parties, the Governments of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan agreed to act as political and moral guarantors of comprehensive and strict implementation of the General Agreement by the Parties. In this connection, it may be desirable to have periodic meetings of the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of the guarantor States in Dushanbe.

4. In order to monitor the implementation of the General Agreement by the Parties and to provide them with expertise, consultations and other good offices, the guarantor States agreed to establish, for the period of the implementation of the General Agreement, a Contact Group which shall be stationed in Dushanbe and shall consist of the ambassadors of the guarantor States accredited there or of specially appointed representatives. The Contact Group shall also include the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan, the head of the OSCE mission in Tajikistan and a representative of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). With the consent of the guarantor States, OSCE and OIC, the Special representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan shall perform the functions of the Contact Group coordinator. Besides the above-mentioned monitoring and good offices, the Contact Group shall inform the Governments of the guarantor States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations through his Special Representative for Tajikistan and the decision-making bodies of the OSCE and OIC about any violations of the General Agreement by the Parties and shall forward recommendations on the ways of ensuring compliance. The Contact Group shall begin its work in Dushanbe concurrently with the commencement of the functioning of the Commission on National Reconciliation. Rules of procedure of the Contact Group shall be established by its members within one week following the beginning of its work.

5. OSCE, through its mission in Dushanbe, shall facilitate the implementation of the General Agreement in the areas related to the observance of human rights and the establishment of democratic political and legal institutions and processes in the Republic of Tajikistan.

The present Protocol has been executed in the Russian and English languages, both language versions being equally valid.

*Talbak Nazarov, Head of the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan*



*Khoja Akbar Turajonzodah, Head of the Delegation of the United Tajik Opposition*

*Gerd Dietrich Merrem, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan.*

*Representative of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe; Representative of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference; For the Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan; For the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran; For the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan; For the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic; For the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; For the Government of the Russian Federation; For the Government of Turkmenistan; For the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan.*

28 May 1997, Tehran

• The Republic of Uzbekistan signed later, in September 1997.

## **Tehran declaration, 28 May 1997**

From 9 to 16 April and from 22 to 28 May 1997 the final round of the inter-Tajik negotiations on national reconciliation was held in Tehran under United Nations auspices. The delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan (RT) was headed by Mr. T. Nazarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RT. The delegation of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) was headed by Mr. A. Turajonzoda, First Deputy Leader of the UTO. Mr. G. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan, served as mediator during the negotiations. Representatives of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) took part in the negotiations as observers. The two stages of the final Tehran round of negotiations produced remarkable progress: agreement was reached on most of the provisions of the Protocol

on Political Issues which was signed at the meeting of President of the RT, E. Rakhmonov and the Leader of the UTO, A. Nuri in Bishkek on 18 May 1997, as well as the Protocol on the Guarantees of Implementation of the General Agreement on Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan was agreed and signed.

The Protocol on the Guarantees registers an important agreement of the observer States at the inter-Tajik talks to act as political and moral guarantors of implementation of the General Agreement by the Tajik parties in a comprehensive manner and good faith. In this context, the Tajik parties expressed the desirability of meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Dushanbe and agreed to include in the Protocol a provision about the establishment in Dushanbe of a Contact Group which would be made up of the Ambassador of the observer States accredited there or of Specially appointed representatives, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan, the Head of OSCE Mission in Tajikistan and a representative of the OIC. The Protocol on the Guarantees provides for an important role for the United Nations and the OSCE in the process of implementation of the General Agreement which is also regarded as a serious guarantee of its full implementation. At the same time, the delegations of the Government of the RT and the UTO expressed clearly their political position in the Protocol by having included a provision stating that the most important guarantees of implementation of the General Agreement were their good will and commitment to achieving peace and national accord in the country.

In view of the successful conclusion of the inter-Tajik negotiations on peace and national accord, the delegation of the UTO, in the course of the second stage of the Tehran round, raised an issue with regard to the future of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Tajikistan, their role and functions. In this connection, the delegation of the Government of the RT stated that the consideration of these issues raised by the UTO delegation was beyond the

competence of the inter-Tajik talks.

In connection with the successful conclusion of the inter-Tajik negotiating process, the delegations of the Government of the RT and the UTO, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, note with profound satisfaction and sincere gratitude that since June 1994 the hospitable capital of Iran has hosted four rounds of the inter-Tajik talks and two full-fledged rounds of consultations with the participation of the delegations of both parties and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. One can also hardly overstate the significance for the peace process of two meetings between President of the RT, E. Rakhmonov and the Leader of the UTO, A. Nuri that took place in July 1995 in Tehran and in February 1997 in Mashhad. On 17 September 1994 in Tehran visible advance towards peace and national accord in Tajikistan began when the two Tajik sides signed the Agreement on a Temporary Cease-fire and the Cessation of other hostile Acts on the Tajik-Afghan Border and within the country. Another important milestone was the signing in Tehran on 13 January 1997 of the Protocol on Refugee-related issues. Today's signing of the Protocol on the Guarantees concludes successfully the inter-Tajik negotiating process. In this context, the delegations of the Government of the RT and the UTO, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, express their heartfelt gratitude to the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their unflagging hospitality, assistance and support rendered in the course of a long and difficult search for the peace formula for Tajikistan. The sincere appreciation to the Islamic Republic of Iran is shared by the entire people of Tajikistan.

The delegations of the Government of RT and the UTO express their profound gratitude to the representatives of the observer States and observer international organisations at the inter-Tajik talks for the support given during the current round of negotiations and their agreement to act as political and moral guarantors of implementation of the General Agreement.

The delegations of the Government of RT and the UTO express their sincere appreciation to Mr. G. Merrem, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his valuable and tireless efforts that facilitated the successful conclusion of the negotiations.

*Talbak Nazarov, Head of the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*Khoja Akbar Turajonzodah, Head of the Delegation of the United Tajik Opposition*

*Gerd Dietrich Merrem, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Tajikistan*  
28 May 1997, Tehran

## **General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, 27 June 1997**

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For the purpose of achieving peace and national accord in Tajikistan and overcoming the consequences of the civil war, inter-Tajik talks on national reconciliation have been conducted from April 1994 up until the present time under the auspices of the United Nations. In the course of eight rounds of talks between delegations of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, hereinafter referred to as the Parties, six meetings between the President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, and also three rounds of consultations between the delegations of the Parties, which took place in Almaty, Ashgabad, Bishkek, Islamabad, Kabul, Meshhed (Islamic Republic of Iran), Moscow, Tehran and Khusdekh (Afghanistan), protocols were agreed and signed which, together with the present document, constitute the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (the General Agreement). It includes the following documents:

- the Protocol on the Fundamental Principles for Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995;
- the Protocol on Political Issues of 18

May 1997 and the related Agreement between the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov, and the Leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Said Abdullo Nuri, on the results of the meeting held in Moscow on 23 December 1996; the Protocol on the Main Functions and Powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation of 23 December 1996; the Statute of the Commission on National Reconciliation, of 21 February 1997; the Additional Protocol to the Protocol on the Main Functions and Powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, of 21 February 1997;

- the Protocol on Military Issues;
- the Protocol on Refugees of 13 January 1997;
- the Protocol on the Guarantees of Implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, of 28 May 1997.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed that the signing of the present General Agreement marks the beginning of the phase of full and interconnected implementation of the agreements reached, which will put an end once and for all to the fratricidal conflict in Tajikistan, ensure mutual forgiveness and amnesty, return the refugees to their homes, and create the conditions for the democratic development of society, the holding of free elections and the restoration of the country's economy destroyed by the many years of conflict. The highest national priorities of the country are peace and the national unity of all nationals of Tajikistan, regardless of their ethnic origin, political orientation, religion or regional affiliation.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide assistance and cooperation in the comprehensive implementation of the General Agreement. They have also agreed to request the Chairman-in-Office of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Governments of the guarantor States to provide cooperation in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the General Agreement.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed to register the General Agreement with the United Nations Secretariat in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. D. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

27 June 1997, Moscow

## **Protocol on mutual understanding between the President of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, 27 June 1997**

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The President of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, held a separate meeting in Moscow on 27 June 1997, to discuss issues associated with the strengthening of confidence-building measures between the Parties in the interests of advancing the process of national reconciliation in Tajikistan.

As a result of the meeting, the following agreements were reached:

- (1) To convene in Moscow by 7 July 1997 the first meeting of the Commission on National Reconciliation to discuss and transmit for consideration by the Parliament of Tajikistan the draft of the General Amnesty Act;
- (2) In implementation of the provisions of the Bishkek Memorandum of 18 May 1997 regarding solution of the problems of exchanging prisoners of war and imprisoned persons as an act of goodwill, to exchange by 15 July 1997 50 prisoners of war and 50 imprisoned persons, including all those detained since February 1997;
- (3) Firmly condemning terrorism and confirming that their positions regarding joint action to combat it remain unchanged, the Parties have

agreed that they will not use the existing known facts and suspicions to discredit one another politically.

(signed) *E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

(signed) *S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

In the presence of:

*Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN for Tajikistan, Mr. G. D. Merrem Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. E. M. Primakov Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. A. A. Velayati*

*27 June 1997, Moscow*

## Moscow declaration, 27 June 1997

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We, the President of Tajikistan, E. Sh. Rakhmonov, the Leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, G. D. Merrem, have signed today in Moscow the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. Thus, after five years of civil confrontation which became one of the most tragic pages in the centuries-long history of our country, the inter-Tajik talks on national reconciliation have been successfully concluded and the long-awaited day of the triumph of reason and hope for a peaceful future has dawned.

The President of Tajikistan and the Leader of the United Tajik Opposition express their sincere gratitude to the United Nations, under the auspices and with the mediation of which the negotiating process has been proceeding for the past three years. They express their conviction that the United Nations will provide Tajikistan with assistance and cooperation in the implementation of the agreements reached.

We are grateful to the observer countries at the inter-Tajik talks – Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – for their cooperation in moving the talks forward and their all-round assistance

during the years of our people's ordeal. Agreement at the international level to guarantee the implementation of the Agreement strengthens our conviction that all the obligations it contains will be implemented in full within the agreed periods.

We greatly value the role of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in the inter-Tajik negotiating process, and express the hope that they too will provide cooperation in the implementation of the agreements reached.

We thank the Government of the Russian Federation and President B. N. Yeltsin personally for their great contribution to the Tajik settlement and their cooperation in the successful conduct of the present meeting in Moscow.

As we enter on the new responsible phase of giving effect to the provisions of the General Agreement, we proclaim once again our desire for the speediest possible attainment of peace and national harmony in Tajikistan.

*E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

*S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

*G. D. Merrem, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Tajikistan*

*27 June 1997, Moscow*

## Act on mutual forgiveness

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In the name of our homeland, the Republic of Tajikistan, which is the successor of spiritual, moral and ethical traditions of a statehood developed by Tajiks throughout ages;

In the name of the revival and prosperity of our beloved country, its unity and territorial integrity, independence and freedom;

In memory of the pure souls of those who lost their lives;

In memory of the victims of the period of confrontation and armed fighting;

In the names of orphans and widows, fathers and mothers, and all those who lost their relatives and loved ones;

Taking into consideration the will of

the people for peace and national accord;

Aware of our historical responsibility for the past and present of our ancient country and with due respect for irrefutable rights and freedoms of each individual;

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Commission on National Reconciliation adopt and proclaim this Act on Mutual Forgiveness.

We forgive all those who took up arms and fought against each other during the period of the military and political confrontation;

Let them forgive physical and spiritual wounds and offenses they inflicted on each other;

May people work together in order to repair the damage of the war, ensure adequate care to orphans, widows, disabled and elderly and, by doing this, restore the feeling of friendship and respect in the society;

May the wrath of the Almighty fall on those who will dare to take revenge or subject people to persecution in connection with the past conflict and may they be damned by the nation. Such persons will be brought before courts.

We condemn the use of mass media for the purpose of making appeals directed against reconciliation, as well as settling old scores and publicly accusing each other. From now on, the Government, the United Tajik Opposition parties and organisations, as well as other parties, movements and public organisations will be held responsible under the laws of the Republic of Tajikistan if they use force in order to settle political disputes. With the view to facilitate the implementation of the Act on Mutual Forgiveness, all prisoners of war will be released. Relevant documents will be adopted by the Commission on National Reconciliation and the Majlisi Oli (the Parliament) in order to ensure the freedom and security of those who participated in the political and military confrontation from 1992 up to the time of signing of the present Act.

(signed) *E. Sh. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

(signed) *S. A. Nuri, Leader of the United Tajik Opposition*

## Law on amnesty to the participants of the political and military confrontation in the republic of Tajikistan

With the view of implementing the General Agreement on Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan and in accordance with Article 7 of its Charter, the Commission on National Reconciliation decided:

1. To annul the convictions of those sentenced to imprisonment, regardless of their duration, and the convictions of those sentenced to other punishment who took part in the political and military confrontation from 1992 up to the time of adoption of the present Amnesty Act.

2. To discontinue all criminal cases under proceeding and investigation and cases not considered by courts, with regard to persons affected by Paragraph 1 of the current Act.

3. Criminal charges will not be brought against persons who committed crimes against the State during the political and military confrontation.

4. Persons accused of crimes envisaged by Articles 63, 74, 76, 96, 104, 105, 121, 240, 240-1, 241 of the Penal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan are not released from punishment and criminal charges. With regard to persons who took part in the political and military confrontation from 1992 up to the time of adoption of the present Act and committed crimes envisaged by the above mentioned articles of the Penal Code, Article 4 of the present Act will be applied on the basis of the proposals of the parties and the decision of the Commission on National Reconciliation.

5. An amnesty erases previous conviction record.

6. The present Act shall enter into force on the day of its publication and affects all persons sentenced by the courts of the Republic of Tajikistan or against whom legal actions were taken by investigating bodies of the country and shall be implemented within the period of four months.







*Kyrgyz musical performance in the Pamir mountains*

Берендеев К. А. / Berendeev K. A.



# Chronology

## The colonial period

In 1866-67, the Kokand Khanate (including Khujand and other parts of today's northern Tajikistan) are seized and incorporated into the Turkestan Gubernatorial of the Russian Empire. In 1868, the Bukharan Emirate, including present-day central and southern Tajikistan, becomes a protectorate of the Russian Empire. The Anglo-Russian Convention creates the 'Afghan buffer' between the Russian and British empires in 1872. Russia and Britain end their border dispute in Central Asia in 1875, dividing the Tajik-populated territories along the line that will later become Tajikistan's border in the Pamiri Mountains. In 1916, a popular uprising against Russian rule begins in Khujand and spreads throughout Central Asia.

## The Soviet period

### 1917-26

The Russian Empire collapses. In February 1917, the first Muslim political organizations, *Shuroi Islomia* and *Jamiyati Ulamo*, emerge. In November, Soviet power is established in northern Tajikistan. By 1918, Basmachi fighters have organized against Soviet control. The Bukharan Emirate falls in 1920 and the Emir flees to Dushanbe. The Bukharan People's Soviet Republic is declared that September. In 1921, the Red Army conquers Dushanbe. Between 1921 and 1926, Soviet campaigns against the Basmachis result in more than 10,000 deaths and the mass flight of Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmenis to Afghanistan – a mass emigration that ends in the early 1930s after approximately 250,000 people have been displaced. In 1922, the bulk of Basmachi forces are crushed.

In 1924, the Soviet government demarcates new administrative-territorial boundaries in Central Asia, following ethno-linguistic divisions. The new Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), with a capital in Dushanbe, is subordinated to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), which is given the ancient Tajik-speaking centres of Samarqand, Bukhara and Khujand – a significant deviation from the ethno-linguistic principle. At the beginning of 1925, the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Province is incorporated into the Tajik ASSR.

### 1927-40

In 1927, Stalin orders the first purges of political opponents in Tajikistan. The Tajik literary language is transliterated from the classical Arabic script into the Latin script between 1926 and 1928. After years of dispute, Khujand province (Leninabad) is re-allocated to Tajikistan, which becomes the Tajik SSR, a constituent republic of the Soviet Union. From 1929 to 1934, highlanders are forcibly resettled in the Vakhsh valley and the first collective farms are formed. This triggers a second wave of emigration to Afghanistan, where tens of thousands of Tajiks and Uzbeks flee to escape forced collectivization and religious persecution. The main wave of Stalin's purges in 1937-38 almost completely eliminates the Tajik

intelligentsia. In 1940, Tajik is transliterated from the Latin script into the Cyrillic.

### 1941-79

In the 1950s, more Qarateghinis are forcibly resettled in the Vakhsh valley. The final wave of forced resettlement comes in the 1970s, with the removal of Yaghnobis from the mountains to the south-western cotton fields. In 1978, the first underground Islamic youth organizations emerge in Qurghonteppa.

### 1989

Inter-group tensions, often related to the struggle for limited resources, emerge and escalate into violent clashes between ethnic groups (Kyrgyz and Tajiks; Tajiks and Uzbeks). After mass protest, Tajik replaces Russian as the language of the republic. Many Russian-speakers begin to emigrate from Tajikistan.

### 1990

In February, rumours that large numbers of Armenian refugees are to be re-housed in the capital spark violent protest in Dushanbe. The Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT) is formed in August. The illegal inaugural conference of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRP) is held in October. In December multi-party politics is legalized.

## Independence and war

### 1991

Tajik President Kakhar Makhkamov supports the abortive coup against Mikhail Gorbachev (19-22 August). After the DPT, Rastozhez and other opposition forces organize a public demonstration calling for his resignation and free elections, Makhkamov steps down. On 9 September, the Tajik Supreme Soviet declares Tajikistan's independence. A 14-day rally in Dushanbe later in the month brings an estimated 10,000 protesters on to the streets, elections are called. Nine candidates contest the presidency. The DPT, IRP and Rastokhez form an alliance and put forward a joint candidate, Davlat Khudonazarov. In November, former Communist Party First Secretary Rakhmon Nabiev wins the election amid allegations of vote rigging. The USSR is formally dissolved in December.

### January-April 1992

In February, US Secretary of State James Baker visits Tajikistan, where he refuses to meet opposition groups and is rumoured to have indicated US support for Nabiev if the latter's government resists Islamic fundamentalism and Iranian influence. Nabiev subsequently acts more decisively against the opposition. A televised address by the Leninabadi speaker of Parliament, Safarali Kenjayev, attacking the Pamiri Interior Minister, Mamadayaz Navjuvanov, triggers confrontations that highlight regional divisions. In March, opposition sympathizers start a 52-day rally in Dushanbe's Shahidon Square, prompting counter-

demonstrations from pro-government and anti-IRP factions in Ozodi Square. In April, a 'Badakhshani Autonomous Republic' within Tajikistan is declared.

### May-June 1992

On 1 May, in an attempt to end the opposition rally, Nabiev uses emergency powers to form and arm a 'presidential guard' consisting primarily of Kulobis and some Leninabadis. Fighting breaks out, resulting in some deaths. The intervention of the Russian Army's 201st Division on 10 May stabilizes the situation. Weakened by the conflict, Nabiev agrees to a coalition 'Government of National Reconciliation' (GNR). He remains president but allocates a third of the ministerial posts to opposition parties. Leaders in Leninabad and Kulob refuse to recognize the GNR. By mid-May, the protesters have left Dushanbe and the armed conflict shifts south. Skirmishes break out between supporters of the previous government and supporters of opposition parties. Gharmis aligned with the opposition blockaded the roads to Kulob, where demonstrators recruited into the 'presidential guard' who have kept their weapons respond by forming the Popular Front militia. By June there is open warfare.

### July-August 1992

In July, more than 80 government and opposition politicians and informal leaders from all over the country, meet in Khorugh in an attempt to resolve the conflict without external help. They agree to a ceasefire and to release hostages and disarm militias. But fighting soon intensifies in the Vakhsh valley. In August, almost 100 armed opposition supporters storm the presidential palace and take 35 hostages, including ministers.

### September-October 1992

In September, the Presidents of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and Russia issue a joint statement promising to intervene to stop the war if fighting spreads in Tajikistan. They announce an increase in the strength of Russian border troops. Under pressure from the militant opposition 'Youth of Dushanbe', Nabiev is forced to resign. A Pamiri, Akbarsho Iskandarov, becomes Acting President and a Leninabadi, Abdumalik Abdullajanov, becomes Prime Minister. After an appeal from the Uzbek and Finnish presidents, the UN sends a fact-finding mission to investigate the war. In late September, the Popular Front breaks through the blockade of Kulob and kills many opposition supporters in Qurghonteppa.

### November-December 1992

On 4 November, the Russian Foreign Minister and Central Asian leaders meet in Almaty and ask for Russian troops to continue their peacekeeping role until a unified CIS force can be established. Two weeks later, Kyrgyz President Akaev meets UN Special Envoy Sommereyns and requests the UN to take a peacekeeping role in Tajikistan. After a second UN mission, the UN's

humanitarian agencies step in to alleviate the growing human cost of the war. Cooperation between UN and CIS peace initiatives begins.

From 16 November to 2 December, the Tajik Supreme Soviet holds its 16th meeting in Khujand, considered safer than Dushanbe. Some IRP members of Parliament, fearing for their safety, do not attend the Khujand meeting. Nabiev resigns voluntarily and Emomali Rakhmonov, a relatively unknown official from Kulob, is elected head of state. He forms a government without representatives of the democratic-Islamic alliance that is comprised mostly of Kulobi and Leninabadi Communist Party members. The new government overturns all GNR legislation, bans opposition parties and newspapers, and merges Qurghonteppa and Kulob into the new Khatlon province. In early December, the pro-Rakhmonov Popular Front enters Dushanbe. It launches punitive reprisals against Pamiris and Qarateghinis, who are killed or forced to flee. Opposition militias retreat to Gharm, Badakhshan, or Afghanistan. Military clashes in Dushanbe, Kulob and Qurghonteppa between May and November kill approximately 50,000 people – many civilians – send about 100,000 fleeing to Afghanistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, and displace 600,000 inside Tajikistan. Property and infrastructure damage is estimated at US\$7 billion.

#### **January-March 1993**

In January, the UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) establishes an office in Dushanbe and the UNHCR begins operations. The new state prosecutor brings criminal proceedings against prominent opposition leaders, most of whom are in exile. Under the leadership of Said Abdullo Nuri, the Movement for Islamic Revival in Tajikistan (MIRT) is formed in Afghanistan to coordinate the opposition's military and political activities. Military clashes continue in central Tajikistan. In March, Kyrgyz and Uzbek troops join their Russian and Kazakhstani counterparts in Tajikistan. The Dartmouth Conference sponsors the first meeting of the unofficial Inter-Tajik Dialogue in Moscow, bringing together seven participants representing different factions to discuss the conflict and ways to address it.

#### **April-August 1993**

In April, opposition forces launch the first 'spring offensive' across the Panj river from Afghanistan into southern Tajikistan – a pattern that is to continue every spring until 1997. CSCE involvement in Tajikistan begins with a visit in April by its chair and follow-up missions in May and August. Later that month, Amnesty International accuses the government and the Popular Front of large-scale human rights abuses in southern Tajikistan. In May, Russia and Tajikistan sign an Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.

In June, President Rakhmonov informs the parliament that he intends to build democracy. Battles take place in

Tavildara. Russian soldiers are killed when opposition forces attack the 12th Frontier Post on the Afghan border. In July, Russian forces respond by launching shells into northern Afghanistan and on 21 July Russia notifies the UN Security Council that it intends to assist the Tajik government by preventing attacks from Afghanistan. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali states that he will use his good offices to try to find a peaceful settlement. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) offers to mediate between Tajikistan and Afghanistan over the cross-border attacks. In early August, Russia urges Moscow-based opposition groups and the Tajik government to negotiate. It also makes a request for UN and CSCE peacekeepers. On 25 August, UN Special Envoy Ismat Kattani travels to Tehran, where many Tajik opposition leaders live in exile, to discuss the situation with Iranian officials. Also in August, a bridge on the Khujand-Dushanbe highway is blown-up, possibly to promote a separatist cause. The Leninabadi provincial government seeks to establish a Free Economic Zone with its own international trade agreements.

#### **September-December 1993**

UNHCR efforts to repatriate 20,000 Tajik refugees from Afghanistan are undermined when 15 returnees are murdered in Qurghonteppa. On 9 September, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev announces troop reinforcements and urges government talks with the opposition. Several days later the US agrees to provide humanitarian and development aid on condition that the government undertakes political and economic reform and respects human rights. In October, Russian and Central Asian troops stationed in Tajikistan are formally designated the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS/PKF). The UN is requested designate it a UN peacekeeping operation – a request it never grants. Also in October, the opposition forms a Moscow-based 'Coordination Centre of Democratic Forces of Tajikistan in CIS'. In December, the CSCE Council of Ministers decides to cooperate with the UN to stabilize Tajikistan and a couple months later establishes a permanent mission. With the encouragement of senior Russian officials, the opposition Coordination Centre releases its strategy to end the conflict.

### **The search for accord**

#### **January-April 1994**

In early March, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin meets leaders of the Coordination Centre in Moscow and MIRT leaders in Tehran. He announces subsequently that opposition leaders are ready to hold direct talks with the government. The first round of negotiations is set for mid-March but postponed to April after a proposed member of the government delegation is assassinated. On 5-19 April, the first round of inter-Tajik negotiations takes place in Moscow, with observers from

Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia and Uzbekistan, chaired by UN Special Envoy Ramiro Piriz-Ballon. The parties create an agenda for future talks based on three clusters of issues: political settlement; return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); and constitutional and institutional arrangements. They disagree over prioritization of issues: the government stresses the end of fighting and refugee return whereas the opposition wants an all-party council to govern Tajikistan and legalization of opposition parties. A tangible outcome of the first round of talks is a joint commission on refugees and IDPs, working closely with the UNHCR to promote voluntary repatriation.

#### **May-August 1994**

At the beginning of June, the Joint Commission on Refugees holds its first meeting in Moscow, chaired by the UNHCR, and defines its work programme. The second round of inter-Tajik negotiations, in Tehran on 18-28 June, focuses on establishing a ceasefire. Despite general consensus on the principles and terms, disputes over timing prevent agreement. In July, Rakhmonov announces his intention to run for president. In late July, Boutros-Ghali questions both sides' commitment to the peace process and suspends Piriz-Ballon's preparations for the next round of talks. Following this criticism, the government makes concessions to the opposition.

#### **September-December 1994**

The government and the opposition hold a consultative meeting in Tehran on 12-17 September. This results in a temporary but open-ended ceasefire agreement which establishes a Joint Commission to monitor implementation. The UN is asked to deploy military observers. In late October, the ceasefire comes into effect. At the third round of negotiations, in Islamabad from 20 October to 1 November, the negotiators agree to extend the ceasefire until February 1995 and draw up monitoring guidelines. Although broader political issues are also discussed, no agreements are reached. Ceasefire violations continue.

On 6 November, a referendum results in the adoption of a new constitution that bans parties based on religion. In elections on the same date, Rakhmonov wins the presidency against Abdullajanov, but CIS, Turkish, Iranian and Pakistani observers report widespread irregularities. The OSCE signals its disapproval of opposition parties' exclusion by not sending observers. The elections mark the rapid political rise of Kulobis.

Some prisoners are exchanged on 10 November, fulfilling an important UTO condition for future talks. On 16 December, the UN Security Council formally establishes UNMOT. It is charged with assisting the Tajik Joint Commission, investigating violations, to supporting the UN Special Envoy, and coordinating the delivery of humanitarian aid. Later that month, in violation of the

ceasefire agreement, the government sends troops to Badakhshan. Amid continuing ceasefire violations along the Tajik-Afghan border, Russian troops shell northern Afghanistan. Although criticized for its own ceasefire violations, the UTO insists that Russia is violating the ceasefire and renounces its previous agreement to hold the next round of negotiations in Moscow. The talks are postponed indefinitely.

#### **January-April 1995**

In 1995, the Pakistan-backed Taliban grows into an effective fighting force and begins to consolidate control over large parts of Afghanistan. This changes the political and strategic context of the Tajikistan civil war dramatically, as Tajik parties and foreign countries aspire to contain the Taliban. In late February, local and parliamentary elections are held in Tajikistan. The UTO parties are excluded and the northern-based Party of People's Unity boycotts the vote after the election commission rejects the candidacy of its leader, Abdumalik Abdullajanov. In early April, in violation of the ceasefire, UTO forces begin their annual 'spring offensive' from Afghanistan. The CIS/PKF retaliate by bombing the northern Afghan town of Taloqan, where the IRP has its headquarters. In late April, high-level talks between government and UTO representatives take place in Moscow under UN auspices. They result in agreement to extend the ceasefire for another month and for Rakhmonov and UTO leader Nuri to meet before the next round of negotiations.

#### **May-July 1995**

On 17 May, Rakhmonov flies to Kabul to meet Nuri for the first time. Over the next two days, they agree to renew the ceasefire for a further three months but announce no substantive breakthrough. The fourth round of talks, in Almaty from 22 May to 1 June, centres on Tajik political institutions. The UTO proposes a transitional government and indicates that it will recognize Rakhmonov as President if the government accepts this proposal. The government rejects it but indicates willingness to open the political system to opposition parties and to grant amnesty to their supporters. The two sides agree to exchange an equal number of prisoners, to grant Red Cross officials unobstructed access, and to speed up voluntary return of refugees. The government also agrees to suspend the death sentence on opposition leaders during the negotiation process. On 19 July, Rakhmonov and Nuri meet in Tehran. They agree to intensify efforts to reach agreements on the outstanding political and institutional issues. Yet the parties disagree subsequently on the venue for the next round of talks. In late July, the UNHCR begins to repatriate refugees from Afghanistan.

#### **August-December 1995**

In early August, senior representatives of the opposition meet with Uzbek officials, as the Uzbek government starts to distance itself from the Tajik government.

Between 2-17 August, Piriz-Ballon makes four trips between Rakhmonov in Dushanbe and Nuri in Kabul. The shuttle diplomacy results in the signing of the 'Protocol on the Fundamental Principles for Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan'. It is the first substantive agreement on political and institutional issues since the negotiations began. Both parties also agree to a continuous round of talks, to begin in September. Arguments over the venue threaten the proposal but agreement is finally reached on Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. On 30 November the fifth (continuous) round of inter-Tajik negotiations begins. It continues until July 1996, with frequent interruptions as the parties' signal their frustration with events on the ground or lack of progress in the talks.

### **January-June 1996**

Assassinations and abductions of influential people mark the first part of the year. In February, the previously pro-government Col. Mahmud Khudoiberdiyev occupies the south-western towns of Qurghonteppa and Hissar and threatens to attack Dushanbe. While fighting continues, Nuri writes to the UN Secretary-General in early May, demanding an end to the government's ceasefire violations. Fighting continues into July. Also in May, thousands demonstrate in Leninabad, frustrated with the north's perceived disenfranchisement. The government cracks down; five people are killed and hundreds arrested.

### **July-December 1996**

In the aftermath of the Leninabad protests, the National Revival Movement, led by Abdullajanov, demands to be included in the inter-Tajik negotiations as an equal 'third force'. Although the UTO claims to support their demands, the government rejects them. Consequently they do not participate in the peace negotiations. In late September, the Taliban seizes Kabul, then pushes further north. Key CIS countries agree to protect the CIS border against the Taliban and to strengthen border controls. Russia and Uzbekistan increase their cooperation. In September, military commanders of pro-government and UTO forces meet for the first time and sign the Gharm protocol. Nevertheless, between September and December, UTO troops mount offensives in eastern and central Tajikistan and establish themselves within 80km of Dushanbe. On 10 December, Rakhmonov travels to Khos Deh, Afghanistan to meet Nuri, which marks a major turning point in the negotiations. On 23 December, with the UTO gaining ground in central Tajikistan, Rakhmonov and Nuri meet in Moscow. They sign an agreement laying the foundation for the main peace treaty and agree to complete negotiations and implement the agreements reached in twelve to eighteen months. An additional protocol sets out the framework for a Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR). The government makes a major concession when it agrees to grant the Commission significant powers.

### **January-March 1997**

The sixth round of inter-Tajik negotiations is held in Tehran and Mashhad, Iran from 6 January to 21 February. By 13 January, the parties have agreed to the protocol on refugees, the least sensitive issue. By 21 February, government and UTO negotiators reach agreement on the statute and membership of the CNR, which will have no designated seats for outside groups. In February, renegade opposition commander Rezwon Sadirov takes international workers hostage. The UN and Red Cross withdraw their personnel to Uzbekistan. Rakhmonov and Nuri respond with a joint statement condemning terrorism and work together to free the hostages. Their cooperation culminates in late February in a joint UTO/government operation to capture Sadirov and his militia. Between 26 February and 8 March in Moscow, the seventh round of inter-Tajik negotiations results in the signing of the Protocol on Military Issues, which covers disarmament and reintegration of opposition forces. Negotiations on the political protocol remain difficult.

### **April-June 1997**

In April and May, the Taliban briefly seizes the Afghan city of Mazar-e Sharif near the Uzbek border, increasing pressure on the negotiators as many Tajik refugees are based in or near the battleground. From 15 to 17 April, government troops kill hundreds of prisoners in Leninabad – many of whom participated in the May 1996 demonstrations – after a prison riot. On 30 April, Rakhmonov survives an assassination attempt in Khujand. The eighth and final round of negotiations takes place in Tehran from 9 April to 28 May. Yet despite the momentum generated, talks slow down over political issues and the size of the armed contingent protecting UTO members of the CNR. The talks are suspended on 16 April. On 16-18 May, Rakhmonov and Nuri meet in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic and settle the last obstacles to the political protocol. The result is the Bishkek Memorandum and the Protocol on Political Questions. This protocol is based on a power-sharing quota system linked to a sequencing agreement. The government will lift the restrictions on UTO opposition parties, movements, and media as soon as the military protocol is successfully implemented on the condition that they operate within the Tajik legal framework of Tajikistan.

On 22 May, the eighth round of talks resumes in Tehran in anticipation of a June date for signing the peace treaty. The delegations finally agree to the last protocol on guarantees for implementing the general agreement, which in effect completes the treaty. They request the UN to extend UNMOT's mandate to monitor implementation of the agreement in the transition period. They also ask observer states to serve as guarantors of the agreement - who agree, in turn, to form a Contact Group based in Dushanbe for the transition period. In late May and early June, the UTO presses for prisoner exchanges before the agreement is signed and the ceremony is postponed.



Khudoiberdyev, who controls Qurghonteppa, re-emerges with new demands in mid-June, thus highlighting the potential of militia commanders to wreck the agreement.

On 27 June in Moscow, Rakhmonov and Nuri sign the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, which is witnessed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and other officials. Uzbekistan does not attend the ceremony and refuses to endorse the agreement as a guarantor until late August.

## Making peace sustainable

### July-December 1997

In July, the CNR begins work in Moscow under Nuri's leadership. The members agree on a general amnesty – to enable UTO members to return legally to Tajikistan – and an Act on Mutual Forgiveness. Later that month, prisoners of war are finally exchanged. In a joint letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Rakhmonov and Nuri call for a donors' conference to address the serious economic needs of the country. On 9 August, fighting erupts between pro-government groups. In the following days, forces from the Presidential Guard and the Interior Ministry drive these groups, and Khudoiberdyev's troops, away from Qurghonteppa towards the Uzbek border. In early September, monitored by the government and UN and CIS observers, UTO armed forces begin to move from central Tajikistan to Dushanbe in anticipation of their leaders' return from exile.

The CNR starts work in Dushanbe on 15 September, in a meeting opened by Rakhmonov and led by Nuri. At the Hong Kong meeting of the World Bank and IMF in late September, Tajikistan asks the international community to contribute US\$80 million in 1998. Repatriation of refugees continues, with the first phase completed. Yet many returnees lack basic shelter. The next phase of repatriation from Mazar-e Sharif is frustrated by both fighting between Afghan factions and Uzbekistan's reluctance to allow the refugees passage through its territory. Throughout the autumn, the CNR concentrates on drafting amendments to the 1994 constitution, in consultation with the Contact Group. In October, Rakhmonov and Nuri draft a plan to repatriate and integrate UTO forces from Afghanistan. The Presidential Guard headquarters are attacked, probably by formerly pro-government militias and skirmishes escalate on the Tajik-Uzbek border. On 28 December, the first group of UTO fighters take the Tajikistan military oath.

### 1998

In January, Tajikistan's Prosecutor-General drops all outstanding charges against UTO leaders, in compliance with the amnesty law. In March, Tajikistan joins the common economic market between Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. Fighting breaks out near

Dushanbe between government and pro-UTO troops. In May, Parliament reluctantly agrees to legalize the IRP on condition that mosques and *madrasas* do not organize party cells. In July, four UNMOT personnel are murdered in Gharm and many international agencies and governments withdraw their personnel. In September opposition leader Otakhon Latifi is assassinated. In November, Khudoiberdyev leads some 1,000 troops across the Uzbek border to invade Leninabad. A Tajik army comprised of former UTO and pro-government soldiers defeats the attack.

### 1999

In June, relations between the UTO and the government appear close to breakdown but are restored after Parliament approves constitutional changes allowing opposition parties to contest elections later in the year. In August, the UTO makes a formal declaration ending its military-political opposition. Tajikistan's Supreme Court removes the official prohibition on IRP activity. Armed forces from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) invade the Batken region of southern Kyrgyz Republic from the Gharm region of Tajikistan, apparently intending to invade Uzbekistan. The Uzbek government responds by bombing Kyrgyz and Tajik territories. In September, more than a year later than planned in the General Agreement, constitutional amendments are adopted through a public referendum. In November, all remaining bans on opposition political parties are lifted. By December, six parties are registered. In the November presidential elections, Rakhmonov wins 96.91 per cent of votes; his IRP opponent receives 2.1 per cent. International observers report irregularities but accept the results.

### 2000

In February and March, elections for the new bicameral Parliament are held. Rakhmonov's People's Democratic Party wins most seats and the main opposition parties receive significantly fewer votes than expected. By February, most refugees and IDPs are resettled. Mahmadsaid Ubaidullayev, the mayor of Dushanbe and new speaker of the upper house of Parliament, survives an assassination attempt. With the completion of both presidential and parliamentary elections, the transition period envisioned in the 1997 General Agreement is concluded. The CNR finishes its work in March and UNMOT closes its office in April. In June, Russia and Tajikistan agree to maintain Russian military forces in Tajikistan to replace the now disbanded CIS/PKF. Over the summer, Taliban forces move near the Tajik border. Russia uses its bases in Tajikistan to reinforce military assistance to the Afghan Northern Alliance, loyal to the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani. Also in the summer, the IMU renews its attempts to invade Uzbekistan, apparently crossing from Tajikistan.

# Profiles

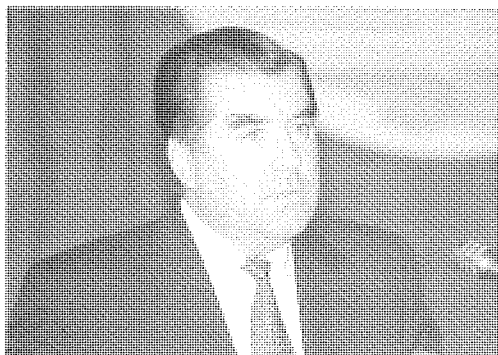
## Individuals

### Said Abdullo Nuri



Also known as Mullo Abdullo Nuri or Mullo Abdullo Saidov, Nuri is a politician and religious leader who was a key figure in the Tajik war and peace processes. He was a leader of the Islamicist forces as well as head of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and later chair of the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR). Nuri was born in the Qarateghin valley town of Tavildara, then called Sangvor, on 15 March 1947. Under the Soviet policy of forcibly resettling communities from Qarateghin to work in the new agricultural settlements in the south, Nuri and his family were removed to the Vakhsh valley in 1953. Like many other members of the new Islamicist movements, Nuri received religious training at home from both his father and an unofficial cleric. Nuri's religious stature grew with his activism. In 1974 he formed the illegal Islamic educational organization *Nahzat-i Islomi*. The Soviet authorities warned Nuri against his activities in 1983. Three years later he and forty others were arrested for producing and disseminating 'religious propaganda' and imprisoned for 18 months. After his release in 1988, he was invited to work with the official Tajik religious administration, the *Qaziyat*. In the late 1980s, Nuri became aligned with the young activists who formed the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). With the outbreak of war and under threat of arrest, he left the country for exile in Afghanistan. He became leader of the Movement of Islamic Revival of Tajikistan (MIRT) and, as head of the UTO, was active in the inter-Tajik negotiations. He was elected CNR chair and subsequently played a significant role in implementing the peace agreements. In 1999, he became head of the IRP.

## President Emomali Rakhmonov



Rakhmonov was born on 5 October 1952 in Danghara, Kulob. After graduating from a technical college as an electrician, he started work at a factory in Qurghonteppa in 1969. After a stint in the Soviet Navy from 1971 to 1974, serving in the Black Sea and the Pacific, he returned to the factory. From 1977 to 1982 he combined work with study to obtain a degree in economics. In 1976, he became secretary of administration to the chair of the trade union committee on the Lenin collective farm in Danghara and from 1988 to 1992 served as the farm's director. In 1990, Rakhmonov was elected to the Tajikistan Supreme Soviet and in early November 1992 was appointed chair of the Kulob Provincial Soviet of People's Deputies, immediately before the sixteenth session of the Supreme Soviet. That meeting, held in Khujand, was intended to settle the conflict over political control of the country. Rakhmonov was elected chair of the Supreme Soviet – a position that made him de facto head of state. It is likely that Rakhmonov's rapid rise to power was due, in part, to support from Sangak Safarov, founder of the Popular Front militia. After consolidating his position, Rakhmonov authorized the government to participate in the UN-sponsored peace negotiations. After the presidential system was reinstated in 1994, Rakhmonov became president, winning more than 58 per cent of the vote in elections that November. After the signing of the General Agreement in June 1997, Rakhmonov performed the hajj religious pilgrimage to Mecca. In July 1997, he founded and became leader of the Movement for National Unity and Revival of Tajikistan. In March 1998, he joined the People's Democratic Party, becoming its leader shortly afterwards. In the November 1999 presidential elections, he received 96.91 per cent of the vote and thus secured a further seven years as head of government.

## Khoji Akbar Turajonzoda



Also known as Akbar Qaharov, Turajonzoda was born in 1954 into an influential family in the Kofarnihon region near Dushanbe. He studied in established religious institutions first at the Bukharan *madrassa*, then at the Islamic Institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Amman University in Jordan in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This gave him an excellent training in Islamic law, an opportunity to learn foreign languages and an international perspective. Between 1985 and 1987 Turajonzoda worked in Tashkent at the Department of International Relations in the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Central Asia. He was appointed *Qazi-kalon* – leader of Tajikistan's official Islamic institutions – in 1988. In 1990 he was elected to Tajikistan's Supreme Soviet. As *Qazi*, Turajonzoda was the main representative of 'establishment' Islam in the country, in contrast to the unofficial strand that Nuri embodied. Turajonzoda viewed the development of the IRP with scepticism, in part because it advocated a different path to Muslim revival. Also, by implicitly promoting a political party as the vehicle for revival, it challenged his authority as head of the *Qaziyat*. He nevertheless made an alliance with the IRP during the war and was forced to flee the country at the end of 1992. In 1993 Turajonzoda was appointed first deputy chair of the newly formed MIRT and became deputy chair of the IRP. In 1995 he travelled to Iran, Arab countries, the US, Europe, Russia, Uzbekistan and elsewhere seeking support for the UTO. He also participated in the UTO's delegation to the inter-Tajik negotiations. After a period of controversy, in March 1998 President Rakhmonov appointed Turajonzoda as first vice-premier responsible for relations with CIS countries. The following year Turajonzoda supported Rakhmonov's presidential candidacy after announcing that the IRP had lost its vision and become mired in partisan squabbles. This led to his dismissal from the post of deputy chair of the IRP.

## Political parties and armed factions

### The Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT)

The most influential secular opposition party in Tajikistan, the DPT was formed on 10 August 1990 in Dushanbe with Shodmon Yusuf as chair. In its first year, it had about 3,500 members from all regions. In 1992 the DPT published several newspapers, all of which were banned in 1993. For the 1991 presidential elections, the DPT joined other opposition groups to support a joint candidate, Davlat Khudonazarov, who lost. Between March and May 1992 the DPT and its allies held a 52-day anti-government rally in Dushanbe's Shahidon Square that led to confrontations with government supporters. The DPT became embroiled in the ensuing Tajik civil war and was formally banned in June 1993. A split formed in the DPT over the issue of cooperation with the IRP in the UTO and whether to negotiate with the government. Yusuf expressed reluctance over both these issues and after attempts to reach compromise, a party congress in December 1994 in Almaty, Kazakhstan removed Yusuf as DPT chair. Soon after, Yusuf and his supporters formed the DPT Tehran platform (DPTT). The DPTT demonstrated a willingness to work with the government and was legally registered in Tajikistan in July 1995. The faction that had rejected Yusuf's leadership called itself the DPT Almaty platform (DPTA). Two DPTA leaders, Jumaboi Niyozov and Abdunabi Sattorzoda, later joined the Commission on National Reconciliation to oversee implementation of the 1997 General Agreement. In August 1999, Tajikistan's Supreme Court rescinded the ban on the DPTA, which registered in December 1999 as a legal political party that could contest elections. In October 1999, the DPTA left the UTO.

### The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRP)

Known in Tajik as the *Hizbi Nahzati Islomi Tojikiston*, this party grew from an underground youth organization that emerged in 1978 in Qurghonteppa. The core of the organization consisted of people resettled from the mountainous Qarateghin region to the Vakhsh valley and Qarateghinis who remained in their native region. In June 1990, Davlat Usmon and Said Ibrahim Gadoev participated in the founding congress of the All-Union Islamic Renaissance Party for the Muslims of the Soviet Union. Appeals to the Tajikistan Supreme Soviet for an inaugural conference of a Tajikistan IRP were rejected. The official clergy in Tajikistan, headed by *Qazi-kalon* Turajonzoda, confirmed the principle of the separation of religion and state and advised against political participation by the clergy. Nevertheless, the IRP held an illegal inaugural conference on 6 October 1990. Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union in September 1991, the Tajikistan IRP formed a coalition with other opposition parties. Under public pressure, the Supreme Soviet was forced to rescind its ban on the IRP and other opposition parties the next month. The IRP was subsequently registered in December and later

proclaimed its independence from the All Union IRP. Islam was declared the guiding principle of the party, while its immediate task – according to party leaders – was to establish a 'legal and democratic state'. At this point party membership stood at 20,000.

The IRP was the only Central Asian Islamic party to participate in general elections. After proclaiming the November 1991 presidential elections to be fraudulent, the opposition bloc took its protest to the streets of Dushanbe. During this period, Turajonzoda joined the opposition. As the conflict became increasingly violent, the IRP and other opposition forces later formed the *Sitodi Najoti Vatan* (Fatherland Liberation Front) to coordinate armed struggle against the pro-government Popular Front. After the opposition forces were defeated in November 1992, IRP leaders escaped abroad or retreated into eastern Tajikistan. In 1993 the exiled IRP joined the MIRT.

The IRP was the backbone of the UTO and participated in negotiations that led to the General Agreement. The Supreme Court reversed the 1993 ban on the IRP in August 1999, more than two years after the signing of the Agreement and too late for the party to participate effectively in the November presidential elections. After repeated protests from the IRP and international pressure, their candidate was registered at the last minute but received only 2.1 per cent of the vote. The IRP remains the most powerful opposition political party but faces turbulent years ahead as it competes for political dominance with the secular-oriented government.

### La'li Badakhshan

This political movement, representing opposition figures from the Badakhshan region in eastern Tajikistan, was formed in Dushanbe on 4 March 1991 and registered on 30 May. It was banned between June 1993 and August 1999 but continued to operate illegally. In 1999 it had nearly 3,000 members. La'li Badakhshan is a regional organization whose stated objective is educational, social, economic and political development in Badakhshan. In the 1991 presidential elections, La'li Badakhshan, supported the candidate of the opposition bloc. In the ensuing civil war, it coordinated the activities of Pamiri forces who joined the UTO and as a result the pro-government Popular Front persecuted Badakhshanis. Atobek Amirbekov, the party's leader from its inception, took part in several rounds of the inter-Tajik negotiations between 1994 and 1997. In June 1997 La'li Badakhshan entered the Commission on National Reconciliation. The party left the UTO in December 1999.

### Movement for Islamic Revival in Tajikistan (MIRT)

Known in Tajik as *Harakati Nahzati Islomii Tojikiston*, this movement was formed by exiled Tajik opposition leaders at the end of 1993 in Taloqan, Afghanistan, to coordinate all exiled Tajik opposition activists and their military

forces. Its leaders were Nuri (chair), Turajonzoda (first deputy chair), and IRP leader Muhammad Sharif Himmatzoda (deputy chair). The IRP dominated the MIRT and commanded 8,000-15,000 fighters. The MIRT acted as a government in exile from 1993 to 1996. In addition to leading what it considered a *jihad* holy war in Tajikistan, the MIRT engaged in diplomacy. In 1995 its leaders visited the US and Western Europe, and established contacts with the UN, the OSCE, and international NGOs. At the same time they established close contacts with the authorities in Moscow and Tashkent. MIRT leaders also visited Libya, Iran and other Muslim countries and established close contacts with the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In 1994 MIRT joined the UTO and entered the inter-Tajik negotiations. In 1998 its armed forces began to be integrated in Tajikistan's regular army, a process that took more than a year to complete.

### **The Movement for National Unity and Revival in Tajikistan (MNURT)**

Known in Tajik as the *Harakati Vahdati Melli va Ehyoi Tojikiston*, this is Tajikistan's largest political movement. It is sponsored by the government and chaired by President Rakhmonov. The MNURT was formed in July 1997 and registered that August. It declared its aim as the unification of "different social layers and forces of Tajikistan and the establishment of a stable civil accord, mutual trust and agreement." The movement incorporates representatives of all regions and a majority of political parties and associations loyal to the president, including the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan. The MNURT is ruled by a general assembly of founding organizations and governed by an executive council of elected and appointed representatives of all member organizations. Its chair, President Rakhmonov, heads an executive committee elected by this council.

### **The Party of People's Unity (PPU)**

This party was formed in the northern city of Khujand on 30 November 1994 and was registered on 16 December 1994. Its chair and founder is former Prime Minister Abdumalik Abdullajanov. At the time of registration, it had 895 members, with branches in Dushanbe, Leninabad and Badakhshan, and some districts in the south. The PPU remained legal through most of the war but was banned in December 1998, following an attempt to assassinate Rakhmonov in Leninabad in April 1997 and an armed uprising led by Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdyev in November 1998 that the government claimed was linked to Abdullajanov.

### **The People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDP)**

This government-affiliated party, known in Tajik as *Hizbi Khalqi Demokratii Tojikiston*, was formed on 10 December 1994 and registered five days later. It was initially called the People's Party of Tajikistan but at its third congress in June 1997 the word 'democratic' was added. The party membership in November 1998 stood at 20,000 and

included all regional and provincial administrators and some members of the intelligentsia. In March 1998, President Rakhmonov joined and was elected chair. The PDP's organizational structure resembles that of the former Communist Party of Tajikistan. It is a founding member of the MNURT. Five members of the PDP were elected to Parliament in 1995 and the party chair, Rakhmonov, was elected President in the November 1999 elections. The PDP considers itself a centrist, parliamentary political party which aims to unite "all citizens of Tajikistan, regardless of language, ethnic affinity, social status or political beliefs...for the establishment of rule of law and a sovereign, democratic and secular state." It asserts that "diversity in cultures, languages and religions is an invaluable treasure of the people of Tajikistan."

### **The Popular Front**

Known as *Sitod-i Melli* in Tajik, this predominantly Kulobi paramilitary force provided much of the military muscle that brought the Rakhmonov government to power. It emerged in May 1992 during the pro-Communist rally in Dushanbe, when then President Nabiev created a 'presidential guard' by distributing weapons – including an estimated 1,700 guns – to the demonstrators. Nabiev officially disbanded the guard several days later. Many Kulobis, however, took the Kalashnikovs they received back to Kulob, where they started to organize paramilitary groups. The self-proclaimed Popular Front first appeared in Khatlon province in the summer of 1992 and later surfaced in Hissar province near Dushanbe. Its most prominent leaders were Safarov Sangak and Faizali Saidov. It is thought that between May and November 1992 they received substantial support – including money, weapons and ammunition – from various sources supportive of the Tajik government, including those in Uzbekistan and Russia. In November 1992, at the 16th Session of the Supreme Soviet, all the important positions were given to Kulobis, who at the time held the military balance of power. Rakhmonov was elected leader. After the current government came to power in early 1993, the Popular Front was disbanded by presidential decree and its units became the core of the national army.

### **The United Tajik Opposition (UTO)**

In response to the conflict that had forced most of their leaders into exile, in early 1994 the IRP, the MIRT, the DPT, the Coordination Centre of Democratic Forces of Tajikistan in the CIS (formed in Moscow in 1993), the *Umed* association of Tajik refugees and other movements joined together to take part in the inter-Tajik negotiations. During the talks their coalition crystallized and was named the United Tajik Opposition in November 1994. In 1997, the La'li Badakhshan movement joined. The UTO, led by Nuri, was dominated by the MIRT and strongly influenced by the IRP. After the DPT split in 1994, the DPT Tehran platform left the UTO, while the DPT Almaty platform remained a member. The UTO



coordinated the opposition's military strategy and its participation in the negotiations between April 1994 and June 1997. The General Agreement provided for a Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR) with equal representation of government and UTO members. Nuri became head of the CNR and was thus responsible for overseeing implementation of the agreement. In 1998-99 the UTO suspended its activity in the CNR several times, claiming that the Rakhmonov government had failed to honour its responsibilities under the Agreement. Before the October 1999 presidential elections, the UTO suffered serious setbacks. The DPT Almaty platform left the UTO soon afterwards and La'li Badakhshan left in December. The UTO then effectively ceased to exist, as the IRP was its only remaining member.

## States

### Afghanistan

Afghanistan and Tajikistan share a 1,200-km border and their affairs have been closely entwined during the twentieth century. Muslim Basmachi fighters based in Afghan territory harassed Soviet authorities in the 1920s and early 1930s. Many Tajiks later fled to Afghanistan to escape persecution and forced collectivization. In the mid-1930s, the Red Army closed the Tajik-Afghan border, thus ending migration flows in both directions. On the eve of the Soviet invasion in 1979, the number of ethnic Tajiks in Afghanistan was between four and eight million – equal to or exceeding the number of Tajiks in Tajikistan. At the beginning of the 1990s, central government functions collapsed almost simultaneously in both countries. The Tajik-Afghan border region again became a hotbed of political and military instability.

From 1992, an estimated 80,000 or more Tajikistanis – mostly opposition supporters – fled to northern Afghanistan and in 1993 the Tajik opposition established military bases there. Tajik Islamicists received considerable support from their Afghan counterparts in the form of military training and supplies and some Afghan units fought alongside the Tajik opposition against the Tajik government and Russian frontier guards. However, the UTO's closest Afghan allies were the factions supported by Russia – those led by President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masud, both ethnic Tajiks. The partnership was probably motivated as much by cooperation in the immense cross-border narcotics trade as by an idealistic desire to help co-religionists and ethnic kin.

The ascendancy of the Taliban, comprised predominantly of ethnic Pushtuns, in 1994 encouraged the Tajik opposition and government to enter negotiations. Rabbani also encouraged mediation and supported the Tajik peace process. The first meeting between Rakhmonov and Nuri took place in Kabul in May 1995.

The Taliban's capture of Kabul in September 1996 provided further incentive for Tajik reconciliation. On 11 December 1996 Rakhmonov and Nuri met again under Rabbani's sponsorship in the Afghan village of Khos Deh, where they signed an important protocol about the ceasefire and the Commission on National Reconciliation. This marked an important turning point in the peace process.

The Taliban's northward advance in 1997 forced almost all Tajik exiles to leave Afghanistan for Tajikistan. It has since been reported that a Tajik opposition faction has established secret ties with the Taliban and enjoys their support. The Taliban's rise indirectly helped Russia to strengthen its position in Central Asia, whose governments have strengthened their military links with Russia to protect themselves from the perceived threat of militant Islamicist movements. An end to the war in Afghanistan remains a significant concern for Tajikistan. A peaceful and friendly Afghanistan will help to transform Tajikistan from a 'frontier zone' buffer state trapped in the geopolitical conflict between CIS states and Afghanistan to a potentially important crossroad between Southern and Central Asia and between the Near and Far East.

### Iran

The majority of people in Iran and Tajikistan share membership in the Persian language family. Most Iranians, however, are Shi'a Muslims, whereas most Tajiks are Sunni. Iran's leaders maintained amicable relations with Tajiks from opposing sides of the conflict throughout the 1990s. Tehran never officially supported the Tajik Islamicists' aspiration to create an Islamic state but directed their efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the civil war. Tehran did, however, support the emergence of the Tajik opposition in 1991-92 and it hosted Tajik opposition leaders from 1993 to 1998. Yet its general policy was to maintain good relations with Russia. Both states wished to prevent greater involvement by the Taliban, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in Tajikistan. They also aimed to minimize US and Turkish influence in the region and keep them at a distance from the inter-Tajik negotiations. Iran was a key sponsor of the negotiations and had the status of an official observer of the process. It hosted the second, sixth, and the eighth rounds of the negotiations, one consultative meeting, and two meetings between Rakhmonov and Nuri.

### Pakistan

Tajiks have traditionally had a close connection to the peoples of the northern part of the Subcontinent. Pakistanis, like Tajiks, are predominantly Sunni Muslims and the Tajik Farsi language was once widely spoken in Pakistan. A thin strip of Afghan territory ranging from 15 to 50-km wide along the Eastern Pamirs at an elevation of 3,000m and higher now separates the two countries. Pakistan's involvement in the Tajik civil war is unclear but

it is rarely viewed as a major player. Yet it was an official observer of the inter-Tajik negotiations and Islamabad hosted the third round of peace talks in October–November 1994. It is possible that groups based in Pakistan supplied weapons and other forms of military support to the opposition, perhaps with the complicity of government officials, but no firm evidence is available. Pakistan does not welcome Russian military engagement in Tajikistan, especially in the light of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. Afghanistan remains a source of tension in Tajik–Pakistan relations. Each provides extensive support to opposing forces: Tajikistan (with Russia and Iran) backs the Northern Alliance and Pakistan backs the Taliban.

### **The Russian Federation**

Russia was a key external player in the Tajik civil war. Russian control over Tajik-populated territories in Central Asia was established in the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the establishment of Soviet rule in 1921, Russia has maintained military forces in Tajikistan and it was the only country in Central Asia where the government did not demand the withdrawal of Russian troops after independence. Dushanbe delegated the protection of its Afghan and Chinese borders to the Russian Federation until it could develop its own frontier troops. Tajikistan hosts the 201st Division of the Russian army. The Russian government and army maintained official neutrality in the Tajik civil war but there are claims that the army supported pro-government forces with vehicles, ammunition and weapons. If this was the case, it might have been due to the actions of individuals rather than to Moscow's directives. During the 1992 clashes in Dushanbe, the Russian garrison served as a shelter for leaders under threat and the venue for negotiations between opponents. From 1993, many members of the opposition, particularly those from the DPT, were given refuge in Russia. Although initially it engaged in official relations only with the Tajik government, from mid-1993 Russia played an important role in encouraging the parties to talk and then served as a key sponsor and observer of the inter-Tajik negotiations. It hosted several of the most important rounds of negotiations – the first one and the final two – as well as one consultative meeting and two meetings between Rakhmonov and Nuri. The General Agreement was signed in Moscow and witnessed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on 27 June 1997. Four years later, Tajikistan remains Russia's closest ally in Central Asia. The military aspect of their cooperation prevails over the economic and cultural dimensions.

### **Uzbekistan**

The Uzbek and Tajik peoples have been close neighbours for centuries. Although Uzbeks speak a Turkic language that differs from the Persian (Farsi) Tajik language, most Tajiks and Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims and have

traditionally lived in sedentary communities. This differentiates them from the traditionally nomadic Kyrgyz and Kazakhs. Minority populations of ethnic Tajiks and ethnic Uzbeks, numbering more than one million each, live on either side of the border. The ancient Tajik urban cultural centres of Bukhara and Samarqand were incorporated into Uzbekistan early in the Soviet era. Uzbekistan today is significantly larger in area and population, and richer in natural resources.

Uzbekistan played a significant yet ambivalent role in the Tajikistan war and peace process. It is widely thought that Uzbekistan provided military assistance to pro-government forces in 1992–93 to support their fight against Islamicist opposition, thus contributing to the rise of President Rakhmonov. From 1995 Uzbekistan's attitude to Rakhmonov shifted. Karimov began to criticize his government's intransigence in the peace process and became concerned about Russian military engagement in Tajikistan.

Uzbek President Islam Karimov also helped initiate UN involvement in peacemaking when, in September 1992, he appealed to the UN Secretary-General to address the deteriorating situation. Uzbekistan was an official observer in the inter-Tajik negotiations. It objected initially to the 1997 General Agreement and did not sign up as a guarantor of the treaty but it later joined the Contact Group to support its implementation.

Cross-border invasions by armed insurgents is a sensitive issue in relations between the two countries. In November 1998, anti-Rakhmonov forces led by Col. Mahmud Khudoiberdiyev launched an attack on Leninabad from Uzbek territory. The Uzbek government denied involvement. The Tajik government, for its part, denies supporting militant groups of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which launched attacks in 1999 and 2000 into Kyrgyz and Uzbek territory from Tajikistan. Uzbekistan retaliated by bombing villages in eastern Tajikistan in October 1999.

Karimov's brief visit to Dushanbe in 2000 notwithstanding, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan do not coordinate closely. They tend to promote opposite approaches to regional security affairs. Tajikistan and Russia support the anti-Taliban alliance in Afghanistan, while – drawing on the experience of the Tajik peace process – advising Karimov to negotiate with the IMU. Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic denounce the Tajik government for insufficient effort to destroy IMU forces on Tajik territory and have begun to engage directly with the Taliban. Uzbek authorities have questioned the Uzbek–Tajik border and have unsuccessfully attempted to demarcate it unilaterally. Since late 2000, a joint Uzbek–Tajik commission has been working on border demarcation.

# Further reading

## The internet

### General

Eurasianet (Open Society Institute)  
<http://eurasianet.org/>

Harvard Forum for Central Asian Studies  
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~centasia/index.html>

INCORE guide to Internet sources on conflict and ethnicity in Tajikistan  
<http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries/tajik.html>

Interactive Central Asia Research Project  
<http://www.icarp.org/tajik.html>

Tajikistan government contact information  
<http://www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/980305tj.htm>

The Tajikistan Update  
<http://www.angelfire.com/sd/tajikistanupdate/>

### News sources

Asia Now – Central Asia (CNN, Time, and Asiaweek)  
<http://www.cnn.com/ASIANOW/central/>

ASIA-PLUS  
[www.internews.ru/ASIA\\_PLUS](http://www.internews.ru/ASIA_PLUS)

Central Asia News.Net  
<http://www.centralasianews.net/>

Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)  
<http://www.iwpr.net/>

Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty  
<http://rferl.org/>

Transitions on Line  
<http://www.tol.cz/>

## Reports and research

International Crisis Group  
<http://www.crisisweb.org/>

International Eurasian Institute for Economic  
and Political Research  
<http://iicas.org/>

## Human Rights

Amnesty International  
<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Human Rights Watch  
<http://www.hrw.org>

U.S. State Department Country Reports  
[http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/)

## International agencies and humanitarian assistance

Relief Web  
<http://www.reliefweb.int>

OSCE Mission to Tajikistan  
<http://www.osce.org/tajikistan/index.php3>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)  
<http://www.unhcr.ch/world/asia/asia.htm>

UN Development Programme – Human Development  
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<http://www.undp.org/hdro/>

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**Jawad, Nassim and S. Tadjbakhsh.** *Tajikistan: A  
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**Olcott, Martha Brill.** *Central Asia's new states:  
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**Roy, Olivier.** *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations.*  
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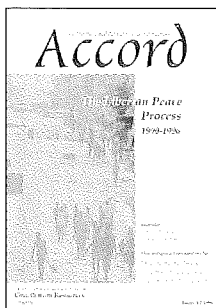
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Reshaping community in the former Soviet Union.*  
University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.

**Tabyshalieva, Anara.** *The Challenge of Regional  
Cooperation in Central Asia: Preventing Ethnic Conflict in the  
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Institute of Peace, 1999.

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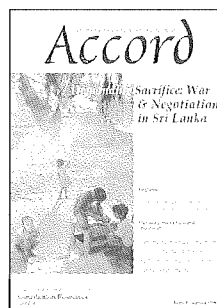
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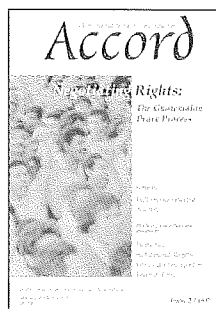
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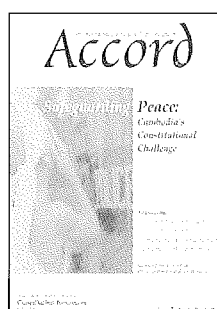
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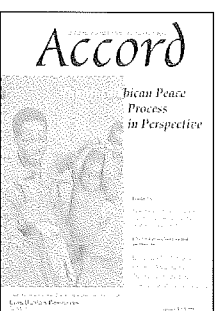
Issue 5 November 1998

This issue documents the violent collapse in July 1997 of the country's governing coalition barely six years after the 1991 Paris agreements that had 'officially' ended Cambodia's long war.

Khmer language edition (1999): The  
Khmer Institute of Democracy

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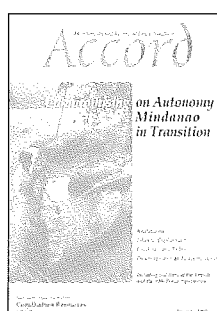
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## **The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective**

Issue 3 January 1998

This issue revisits key aspects of the Mozambican peace process five years on from the negotiated settlement between the Frelimo Government and Renamo.



## **Compromising on Autonomy: Mindanao in Transition**

Issue 6 April 1999

This issue centres on the political settlement that brought an end to twenty-four years of civil war in the Southern Philippines and focuses on the negotiations between the Philippines Government and the Moro National Liberation Front over the struggle of the minority Muslims of Mindanao for self-determination.



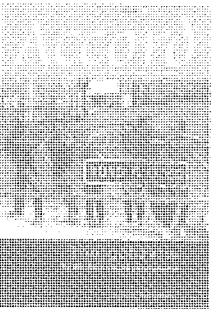


### **A question of sovereignty: the Georgia–Abkhazia peace process**

Issue 7 October 1999

Accord 7 provides a unique insight into a political stalemate and points towards possible avenues out of the deadlock. Writers from both Georgia and Abkhazia analyse the obstacles and the opportunities of the negotiations process. International authors look critically at interventions from the UN and the Russian Federation and at civic peace initiatives. The conflict illustrates the challenges faced by divided communities in the search for peace when parties are unable to move beyond grievance and insecurity.

*Russian language edition available from CR and on website: [www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org)*



### **Striking a balance: the Northern Ireland peace process**

Issue 8 December 1999

The authors of Accord 8, many of them key players in the peace process, explore the factors that convinced those on all sides of 'the Troubles' that talking was a better alternative than fighting. They describe the development of an environment conducive to negotiations and assess the aspects of the Belfast Agreement that have either facilitated the political process or caused problems with implementation.

*Russian language edition available from CR in late 2001*



### **Paying the price: the Sierra Leone peace process**

Issue 9 2000

In Accord 9, the authors - most of them Sierra Leonean - explore the processes leading to the Abidjan (1996), Conakry (1997), and Lomé (1999) accords. They analyse the dilemmas around implement these agreements, the difficulties of power-sharing, and the challenge of supporting justice and reconciliation. They also document a range civil society peacebuilding initiatives, including those by women and local community activists and by the Inter-Religious Council.

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## **Future issues**

**The Bougainville peace process in Papua New Guinea.** The story of the Bougainville peace process – still underway – provides a rare glimpse of peacemaking Melanesian style. The long-standing secessionist war, triggered in part by disputes over the RTZ copper mine and led by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army came to a negotiated end in 1997. Since then, an extraordinarily inclusive peace process has proceeded with mixed results. The indigenous and innovative methods and models employed provide an important lens for comparative reflection to inform conflict resolution processes elsewhere.

**Northern Uganda (Acholiland) peace process.** Since the mid-1980s, the northern districts of Gulu and Kitgum in Uganda have experienced violent conflict characterised by the mass abduction of children, widespread human rights violations, and mass displacement. The internal conflict between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army has become linked to larger geopolitical interests and is now indelibly entangled with the conflict between the government of the Sudan and the SPLM/A in the south. While a meaningful peace process remains elusive, there have been many significant peacemaking initiatives by various internal and external actors. These remain largely undocumented. Conciliation Resources and the Ugandan Acholi diaspora organization, Kacoke Madit, will produce this issue to assist peace initiatives at the local and international levels by supporting the analysis needed to learn lessons from the past that can inform strategies to address current and future challenges.

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