
7. The policy of Russia in Central Asia: a perspective from Tajikistan

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I. Introduction

The Republic of Tajikistan is living through a period of national and state reconstruction, self-determination, and political and economic integration into the world community. The birth of the independent state was accompanied by a widespread bloody conflict, one of the longest and most difficult on the territory of the former Soviet Union. It has become a constant feature in the life of the country and the Central Asian region as a whole and has greatly influenced the process of state formation in Tajikistan, the course and direction of transformation processes in its economy, its social and cultural life, and its foreign policy, including relations with the Russian Federation. The conflict has slowed down the achievement of full statehood in Tajikistan. Up to now the national security concept has thus not been fully determined, national interests have not been identified, foreign policy priorities have not been set, and the mechanism for the establishment and implementation of foreign policy has not been worked out.

The establishment of foreign policy is impeded by the constant changes taking place in the balance of political forces in the international arena and in the structure of geopolitical and regional ties. The situation is far from settling down and every one of the participants is searching for its place in the new system of international relations. Especially difficult is the building up of new relationships between the post-Soviet countries.

Tajikistan came into the world arena trying to strengthen its international position. It quickly gained international recognition and joined the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE),¹ the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and a number of other authoritative international organizations as a full and equal member. It has declared the most important direction of its foreign policy to be the strengthening of friendly relations with Russia, which is proclaimed a strategic partner. According to one survey,² this is supported by the overwhelming majority of the population and is stated in a number of the principal state documents of Tajikistan.

Relations between Russia and Tajikistan are very complex. This is characteristic for all the post-Soviet countries which are now mere fragments of the huge

¹ In Jan. 1995 the CSCE became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

² Wagner, S., *Public Opinion in Tajikistan, 1996* (International Foundation for Electoral Systems: Washington, DC, 1997).

former USSR. For 70 years Russia and Tajikistan were tied together, first as parts of a single political, economic and social organ and, second, as ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’. In some respects their ties are not only pure interstate relations. A considerable part of their relations now takes place at the level of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Another, indefinite and constantly changing, element of relations between them depends on the internal situations in the two countries. Their relations fall into three patterns: (a) the gradual breaking of old relations and changing them into conventional interstate relations; (b) a transformation of relations within CIS processes; and (c) the preservation of informal and indefinite relations under cover of the CIS during the period necessary for both countries to determine many aspects of their internal and external policy.

At present their relations are developing in the two latter directions. The ‘divorce’ was practically complete by 1996. Nevertheless, many ties have not been broken. Rather, they have changed but continue to function. Many are being transformed before our eyes.

The relations dominant between Russia and Tajikistan at present are a very intensive search for the best forms, ways and means of cooperation.

The development of cooperation

The Russian presence in Tajikistan takes the form of its embassy, the General Consulate in Khujand, groups of the Russian Federal Border Guard Service, and military formations of the Russian Armed Forces on the territory of Tajikistan—the 201st Motorized Rifle Division (MRD). A number of Russian offices are also accredited in Tajikistan, engaged in building up economic structures and so on.

The First Deputy Prime Minister of Tajikistan is responsible for relations with CIS countries, with Russia in the first place. The post is occupied by one of the leaders of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), the former Kazi-kalon of Tajikistan, Hoji Akbar Turajonzoda. In the government structure there is also a Department for Relations with the CIS where specialists look after relations with Russia, mainly in the economic sphere. In 1997 a CIS Department was opened in the Tajik Ministry of Foreign Affairs where foreign policy aspects of relations with Russia are being developed.

Relations between Russia and Tajikistan are based on the Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance signed in Moscow on 25 May 1995.³ This document set out the principles upon which Russian–Tajik relations should be based: mutual respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity; the peaceful resolution of conflicts and non-use of force; equal rights and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; and respect for and observance of

³ For the text, see ‘Dogovor o družbe, sotrudnichestvo i vzaimnoy pomoshchi mezhdou Respubliki Tadzhikistan i Rossiyskoy Federatsii’ [Agreement on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation], *Akhbori Shuroi Oli* [News of Parliament] (Dushanbe), no. 14 (1993), p. 148 (in Russian, Tajik and Uzbek).

human rights and basic liberties and other internationally acknowledged norms. It created a serious and stable legal basis for relations. Since then over 70 treaties, agreements and protocols have been signed by the presidents of the two countries. The decree of Russian President Boris Yeltsin of 14 September 1995 'On Russia's strategic course with respect to the CIS member states'⁴ also stimulated the development of relations. Meetings of presidents, parliamentary leaders, ministers and heads of departments are held from time to time with the intention of developing relations in the areas of the economy and culture, coordinating the activity of the two countries on the international arena and strengthening their defensive capability. A marked advance was made in the winter of 1995/96, when the Tajik Government adopted a decision to join the CIS Customs Union.⁵ As early as May 1996 all the documents were prepared and coordinated for Tajikistan to join the Union. It finally joined in February 1999, its legislation having proved to be seriously incompatible with that of the four other members: it took two years to finalize the necessary documents, and the decision on joining was taken by the Majlisi Oli (the Tajik Parliament) only on 13 November 1998. Tajikistan is also doing its best to join the 'two' (the union of Russia and Belarus⁶).

In May 1996 a number of important agreements were adopted by a joint commission on trade and economic cooperation and development. However, almost none has been implemented in practice.

Work on mutual relations slackened during the Russian presidential election campaign of June–July 1996. However, immediately after his inauguration President Yeltsin met the President of Tajikistan, Imomali Rakhmonov, and confirmed the solid support of the Russian political leadership for Tajikistan to establish peace, to get out of its serious socio-economic crisis and to carry out democratic and economic reforms.

The visit to Tajikistan of Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in January 1998 was of great importance. A number of agreements were signed, such as programmes of cooperation between the two ministries of foreign affairs and defence for 1998 and agreements on energy problems, civil defence cooperation, the handling of emergencies and other matters. There were meetings and talks on deepening cooperation in different economic and humanitarian spheres and a Russian parliamentary delegation visited Dushanbe. Immediately afterwards a Tajik Government delegation headed by Prime Minister Yakhyo Azimov visited Moscow. On 24 November 1998 there was another session in Moscow of the Council of Heads of Government of the 'four' at which Azimov took his place. This conference approved the Agreement on the Customs Union and the Uniform Economic Space and the documents implementing it, determining the integration strategy for the coming years.

⁴ 'On Russia's strategic course with respect to the CIS member states', Presidential decree no. 940, 14 Sep. 1995. For the text, see *Segodnya*, 22 Sep. 1995, p. 9.

⁵ Formed on 20 Jan. 1995 by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. Kyrgyzstan joined in Mar. 1996.

⁶ Agreement on the Formation of a Community, 2 Apr. 1996. For the text, see *Diplomatscheskiy Vestnik*, no. 5 (1996), pp. 39–42.

During President Yeltsin's visit to Tashkent on 12 October 1998 a trilateral 'Declaration on general cooperation between the Russian Federation, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan' was signed,⁷ its purpose being to provide for joint action on political, economic and defence matters and interaction in the protection of the Afghan/Tajik and Afghan/Uzbek borders.

An important trend in bilateral cooperation is the coordination of assessments of and approaches to essential international problems, such as nuclear issues, crisis management, and coordination of action in the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organizations.

II. The role of Russia in the inter-Tajik conflict settlement

The complexity and diversity of the conflict in Tajikistan and the great number of parties involved have made the settlement process slow and difficult.⁸ Under the influence of global and regional power changes the positions of external forces trying to exert influence on the conflict have also changed considerably. From the very beginning the UN and the OSCE were of great importance. Iran and Pakistan also played an important part: both are interested in the peaceful settlement of the inter-Tajik conflict and offered their services as mediators. Iran made especial effort in this direction. After a period of some uncertainty, Russia took measures to stop the fighting and promote a political settlement. In January 1993 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Uzbekistan, at the request of Tajikistan, had agreed to form a Collective Peacekeeping Force (CPF).⁹ The participation of Central Asian countries was symbolic only. Russia took the burden on itself. Since 1994 its role as an observer and mediator has been the main feature of Russia's policy towards Tajikistan. Cooperation with Iran and Pakistan is a new element of Russia's policy for achieving peace in Tajikistan.¹⁰

In 1994 peace talks between the Government of Tajikistan and the UTO began in Moscow under the aegis of the UN. Russia took an active part.¹¹ In late 1995 the negotiations came to a deadlock and hostilities resumed. In November 1995 the Russian President's assistant for international affairs, Dmitry Ryurikov, arrived in Dushanbe to hold consultations on ways of getting out of the deadlock. At a CIS summit meeting in January 1996 President Yeltsin and other prominent persons appealed for revival of the inter-Tajik dialogue in order to achieve peace.

⁷ For the text, see *Vestnik Posolstva Rossiyskoy Federatsii* [Herald of the Russian Embassy] (Dushanbe), no. 10 (1998).

⁸ On the origin of the conflict, see Amer, R. *et al.*, 'Major armed conflicts', *SIPRI Yearbook: World Armaments and Disarmament* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1993), pp. 104–107.

⁹ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 24 Feb. 1999.

¹⁰ Zviagelskaya, I., 'Poiski novykh podkhodov k postsovetskim konfliktam' [In search of new approaches to post-Soviet conflicts] in *Zapadnaya Aziya, Centralnaya Aziya i Zakavkaziya: Integratsiya i konflikti* [Western Asia, Central Asia and Transcaucasus: integration and conflicts] (Institute of Oriental Studies: Moscow, 1995), p. 261.

¹¹ Belov, E. V., *Rossiya i Mezhtadzhikskoye Uregulirovanie* [Russia and inter-Tajik settlement] in *Rossiya v Istoricheskikh Sudbakh Tadjikskogo Naroda* [Russia in the historical destiny of the Tajik people] (Sharq-i Ozod: Dushanbe, 1998), pp. 146–54.

Russia's policy on conflict settlement in Tajikistan took great strides forward with the appointment of Yevgeny Primakov as Minister of Foreign Affairs in January 1996. His first trip abroad was to Dushanbe, accompanied by the then director of the Federal Border Guard Service, Andrey Nikolayev, the head of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, the Minister for CIS Cooperation, Vyacheslav Serov, and the then Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev. In Dushanbe Primakov declared that repairing relations with the opposition was a precondition not only for political stabilization but also for the preservation of the country's integrity and for solving economic problems.

After five rounds of negotiations between the parties to the conflict, Yeltsin suggested that President Rakhmonov and the leader of the UTO, Said Adbullo Nuri, should meet in Moscow. To get Nuri's consent, Russia sent a plenipotentiary of the president, Yevgeny Mikhailov, who met Nuri in Kunduz on 23 July 1996. In spite of constantly arising obstacles and disagreements, with the help of the special representative of the UN Secretary-General the Russian representatives achieved agreement on an outline of a final document. After meetings in Teheran in October 1996 and Khodzdeh (in Afghanistan) in December 1996, Rakhmonov and Nuri declared their readiness to meet in Moscow. In December 1996 negotiations took place there, again with great difficulties. Under these conditions the Russian side proposed a compromise protocol on the functions and plenary powers of a National Reconciliation Commission. Negotiations with Chernomyrdin participating ended with the signing of a number of documents defining the time and details of the transition to peace and the mechanism for achieving national reconciliation.

In February–March 1997 a seventh round of negotiations in Moscow resulted in the signing of a protocol on military problems, a key document in the settlement which provided for the integration of the opposition and government armed units by 1 July 1998. The concluding round produced a General Agreement on Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997 in the presence of President Yeltsin.¹²

III. Military cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan

The most extensive ties between Russia and Tajikistan are in the military sphere. Tajikistan is the only country in Central Asia where Russia has armed forces, represented by the 201st MRD and the Federal Border Guard Service, stationed in Tajikistan together with the Tajik Army (12 000 men) and the border forces of the Tajik Committee of State Border Defence.¹³

Tajikistan is the only CIS country not to have joined the Partnership for Peace (PFP). Its leaders, especially the president and defence minister, are against it

¹² For the text, see *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 (July 1997), pp. 45–46.

¹³ On the Tajik armed forces, see *Sodruzhestvo NG* [supplement to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*], no. 1 (Dec. 1997), pp. 4–5. In Nov. 1998 the Russian border guard troops numbered 11 500 and the 201st MRD 6687. 'Russian Border Service', in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report–Central Eurasia: Military Affairs (FBIS-UMA)*, FBIS-UMA-98-302, 29 Oct. 1998; and *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 28 Nov. 1998.

on the grounds that Tajikistan has the CPF on its territory and does not need another, similar programme.

A legal basis for bilateral cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan in the military sphere has been created since independence. Military cooperation is regulated by multilateral agreements and treaties within the CIS and by a number of bilateral agreements, such as an agreement on Russian forces on the territory of the republic of 1992, treaties and agreements regulating different aspects of the presence of Russian military formations in Tajikistan, an agreement on the border force,¹⁴ and others. There are also agreements between different military structures, for instance, between the two ministries of defence. Military–technical cooperation is a constant item on the agenda of practically all meetings between the Russian and Tajik leaderships.

Another important step in defence cooperation was taken in early April 1999 when the Tajik Government and visiting Russian Defence Minister Igor Sergeyev reached an agreement allowing Russia to maintain a military base in Tajikistan for a period of 25 years.¹⁵ Tajikistan also confirmed its intention to join the CIS air defence system, the members of which, besides Russia, were Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

However, in spite of the close military ties of the two countries and strict coordination of their actions, the military strategy of Russia towards Tajikistan is not yet clear.

Peacekeeping

Russian military policy towards Tajikistan is illustrated by Russia's role in the CPF, of which the core is the 201st MRD. From the very beginning the CPF mandate was very vague and indefinite because of Russia's reluctance to get involved in a new Afghanistan. That made it impossible to use the relatively recently developed idea of peace enforcement, in other words, active interference in a conflict. On the other hand, the CPF was and is an important factor in the settlement of the conflict in Tajikistan. Both conflicting parties recognized it as a guarantor of agreements and requested the CPF to transport opposition military forces inside the country on their way from Afghanistan to their permanent locations. This was not mentioned in the agreement but was desirable for all parties. (The UN treats the CPF, which has only a CIS mandate, tolerantly, because it itself is overloaded with peacekeeping operations and because the world community is not very interested in the conflict.) The CPF guards the vital economic installations of Tajikistan, has provided humanitarian aid and necessary supplies to the needy Russian population of Tajikistan, and has assisted the migration of ethnic Russians and other ethnic minorities.

¹⁴ [Agreement on the legal status of the military forces of the Russian Federation in Tajikistan], [Treaty of cooperation between the Russian Federation and Tajikistan in the military sphere] and [Agreement between the Russian Federation and Tajikistan on the legal status of the Russian border forces in Tajikistan], *Akhbori Shuroi Oli* [News of Parliament] (Dushanbe), no. 14 (26 June 1993), pp. 148–49 (in Russian and Tajik).

¹⁵ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *RFE/RL Newslines*, vol. 3, no. 67, Part I (7 Apr. 1999).

The change in Russia's military policy towards Tajikistan influenced its attitude towards the creation of national armed forces by the new republic.

Other military cooperation

Tajikistan is the only country in the Central Asian region which gained almost nothing from the division of the former Soviet Army between the newly independent states. In contrast to other armies of the newly independent countries, formed on the basis of the military contingents and material-technical bases of the Soviet military districts, that of Tajikistan was constructed on the basis of the Popular Front—partisan detachments which appeared during the civil war. In the first place, this happened because Tajikistan had no military district of its own but was part of the Central Asian Military District with its centre in Tashkent. Second, the inter-Tajik conflict coincided with the very beginning of the division of the former Soviet Army. Fears that an independent Tajik Army would split and opposing groups begin shooting one another (as happened in Trans-Dniester in Moldova) led to a decision not to hand over to Tajikistan weapons of the former Soviet armed forces.

All this caused great difficulties in constructing national armed forces, aggravated by the fact that Tajik military professionals moved over to the Russian border forces and the 201st MRD for better living conditions. That also had the effect of strengthening the connections between the Russian forces deployed in Tajikistan and the newly formed national army; but, again, the lack of a firm Russian policy on Tajikistan's own armed forces handicapped the process severely. From the very beginning the greatest difficulty for Tajikistan was an acute shortage of skilled personnel. It was not until 1996 that Russia decided to give free training to Tajiks in Russian military institutions. In 1997 the first 80 military graduates and eight graduates of military academies returned from Russia to Tajikistan. In 1996 the Russian Ministry of Defence also began to build up an Institute of the Chief Adviser on Military Affairs in the Tajik Army (a post held by General Yury Baranov) and there is now a staff of the Chief Adviser in the Ministry of Defence of Tajikistan, consisting of 20 Russian advisers working directly in military units of the Tajik Armed Forces observing the integration of the UTO opposition groups in the national armed forces.

Border guarding

Russia is Tajikistan's main partner in guarding its borders. On 19 October 1992 a border guard group of the Russian Federal Border Guard Service was formed in Tajikistan, based on the operative army department of the Central Asian border district. Russian presidential decrees provided the legal basis for it: 'On transferring the border forces on the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation,' and 'On the formation of border forces of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Tajikistan constituting

border forces of Russian guard group and the liquidation of the Central Asian border district'. The work of the Russian border forces in Tajikistan is regulated by a number of documents, the most important being the 'Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on the legal status of the Russian border forces in Tajikistan' of 25 May 1993 signed by Yeltsin and Rakhmonov.¹⁶ Russian military serving in the Russian border forces in Tajikistan on contract are mainly officers; the rank and file, 80 per cent of the force, are citizens of Tajikistan.

Until late 1998 the Russian border forces carried out their mission together with composite battalions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and participated in guarding the Afghan/Tajik border on the first line, that is, immediately on the border. The Uzbek battalions were withdrawn in November 1998, and Kyrgyzstan withdraw its troops in February 1999. Those of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were subordinated to Russian leaders; the Uzbek battalion was under Uzbek command. The joint Central Asian battalions were brought in to Tajikistan according to decisions taken by the CIS heads of state. The interaction of the Russian border forces in Tajikistan and the Tajik Committee of State Border Defence has been worked out. Military units of the latter guard the borders with CIS neighbouring countries and are stationed on the second line along the CIS outer borders. A number of frontier posts on the Afghan–Tajik border were passed over to the Tajik Committee on State Border Defence.

At present where Russia is concerned there are two approaches to guarding the CIS outer borders: (a) cooperation with CIS countries, whose outer borders are guarded either by Russia or with the participation of Russian troops (as in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan); and (b) cooperation with CIS countries which safeguard their outer borders themselves (Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan). CIS border forces also have regular joint operations, such as the 'Putina', 'Rubezh' and 'Inostranets' exercises. As the CIS inner borders are not formally agreed by treaties, the member countries' interests are closely interwoven just on the outer borders. This is especially relevant at present given the new menaces to CIS security—organized crime, illegal migration, drugs and arms transfers, and international terrorism. From this point of view the interaction of Russian and Tajik border guards is an example of the highest-level integration so far within the CIS.

The Russian border forces play an important part in the settlement of the conflict in Tajikistan. The return of UTO formations and refugees to the territory of Tajikistan is being carried out under their supervision at the Ishkashim and Pyanj frontier posts. In the event of mass migration connected with the complex situation in Afghanistan, a special programme with the help of international organizations has been worked out. Nevertheless, there are considerable problems in the field of border guarding. The existing legal basis is clearly inadequate. Some agreements and treaties are out of date or require amendment and for some there is no mechanism in place for their implementation. Another

¹⁶ See note 14.

critical problem is the legal confusion concerning citizens of Tajikistan serving in the Russian border forces (they account for 12 000 out of a total of 16 000) and in the 201st MRD. They come neither under Russian's laws nor under Tajikistan's. Either amendments to old treaties or new treaties are needed to provide social security for citizens of Tajikistan who are serving in the Russian Army and their families.

The future of the Russian border force in Tajikistan is connected with the creation of a deep echelon system of border guarding and control and eventual transfer of parts of the border to the Tajik Committee of State Border Defence. A joint integrated command of the Tajik border force is supposed to come into being.

The situation is complex when two independent parallel structures belonging to different states participate in guarding one and the same border. Tajikistan, naturally, is unable to guard a very long border with a country in a state of war (Afghanistan) because of the small size of its own armed forces, its lack of advanced equipment, its limited potential for mobilization, the poor state of military construction and the lack of a military doctrine or national military strategy. This incomplete basis for its military security makes it impossible for it to guard the border with its own forces and repel possible external aggression.

In spite of their friendly relations, the national interests of Russia and Tajikistan are rather different. The Russian first-echelon border forces are defending the national interests and security of Russia, but not of Tajikistan. This cannot but make problems for the latter, for example, in trade.

IV. Trade and economic ties

Trade and economic ties used to be based on intergovernmental agreements on trade and economic cooperation as well as commercial contracts. The share of intergovernmental trade is now constantly decreasing. The main objects of export–import operations are strategic commodities. Cotton and aluminium dominate Tajikistan's exports; grain, gas, oil and oil products are imported.

Agreements reached are in practice not being fully put into practice, for a number of reasons, the principal ones being the incompatibility of Tajikistan's customs and tax regulations and difficulties in determining exchange rates. A group of specialists from Rosvooruzheniye, the main government agency for arms export and import operations, worked in Tajikistan for some time investigating the possibility of joint use of defence enterprises there. However, defence ties were not resumed because conditions satisfactory to both parties could not be worked out. A credit for Tajikistan of 500 million roubles on concessional terms was delayed and then postponed again because of the Russian financial crisis until the Russian Parliament had adopted the budget for 1999.

There are no laws regarding the operation of joint financial–industrial groups. In the very near future work on this will begin. In the meantime negotiations with Kazakh, Russian and Uzbek financiers and industrialists are going on.

There are plans to set up financial–industrial groups with Russia and Kazakhstan in uranium and with Russia in cotton in the near future.

On the whole the economic relations between Russia and Tajikistan, having been set back during the early period of independence, have not changed for the better. The Tajik Government and Russian institutions accredited in Tajikistan, such as the Russian Embassy, made great efforts to prevent the further deterioration of economic contacts between the two countries after the USSR fell apart. In the interests of economic cooperation with Russia, the Tajik Government cancelled some contracts with foreign firms, particularly in oil and gas extraction. Even so, no radical changes were achieved, although economic relations improved slightly during 1997. Thus, according to the Tajik State Statistics Agency, the share of Russia in Tajikistan's foreign trade was 12 per cent in 1997 as against 10.6 per cent in 1996.

It was not by chance that during Chernomyrdin's visit his Tajik hosts tried to draw Russia's attention to the Iranian–Tajik project for extracting oil and gas in Tajikistan and to the joint programmes of 'major' and 'minor' privatization. One member of the Russian delegation, Rem Vyakhirev, Chairman of Gazprom, took an interest in these proposals. Generally speaking, the presence on the Russian delegation of managers of Gazprom, Lukoil, United Energy Systems (UES) and Inkombank showed the revival of Russia's interest in its southern neighbours.

The opening of the Russian–Tajik Slav University in Dushanbe, founded under Article 22 of the 1995 Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, was a great event in Russian–Tajik relations. The university is financed partly by Russia and partly by Tajikistan and has 1200 students.

Russia and Tajikistan are linked by major migration flows. According to the IFES-96 opinion survey in December 1996, 53 per cent of potential emigrants from Tajikistan planned to go to Russia.¹⁷ In 1995, 71.3 per cent and in 1997 89.9 per cent of emigrants from Tajikistan went to Russia. According to other studies, there are a potential 80 000–90 000 Russian and Russian-speaking migrants from Tajikistan.¹⁸

Since independence a change has been observed in the reasons for migration. According to data from the State Statistics Agency of Tajikistan in 1991, the main reasons for departure from Tajikistan were inter-ethnic conflicts and a deterioration in the titular population's attitude to the Russian-speaking population. In December 1996, however, the main reasons were the search for a better life (in first place), uncertainty about the future (in second place), economic difficulties, economic and political instability, and the departure of relatives.¹⁹

Tajik citizens, both Tajiks and Uzbeks, also leave for Russia mainly in search of work—in 1995, according to the Tajik Ministry of Labour and Employment, 5618 people, of whom 3209 were from towns and 2409 from the countryside. The actual figures are considerably higher than the official data. There are

¹⁷ Wagner (note 2), p. 39.

¹⁸ Data of the Sharq Centre, Dushanbe.

¹⁹ Wagner (note 2), p. 39.

currently over 200 000 working migrants from Tajikistan in Russia, according to the Department on External Migration of the Tajik Ministry of Labour and Employment, and about 500 000 during the summer months.

In 1997 a treaty on dual citizenship, first concluded in September 1995 (ratified by the Tajik Parliament in November 1995 and by the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian Parliament, in December 1996) came into force.²⁰ This legitimized the residence in Tajikistan of thousands of people with Russian citizenship, giving them all the rights of citizens of Tajikistan, and slowed down the process of repatriation into Russia, but increased Tajik and Uzbek migration into Russia.²¹ The problem of Tajik citizens serving in the Russian border force in Tajikistan and in the CPF began to be gradually solved. In 1997 a treaty between Russia and Tajikistan on the return of refugees and other migrants was prepared and is now being examined. An office of the Russian Federal Migration Service in the Russian Embassy in Tajikistan began work in January 1997.

V. Conclusions

The break-up of the USSR undermined security for many parts of the post-Soviet territory. New states, including Tajikistan, are in many ways unable to protect themselves from internal and external threats. Military-political and economic security in many respects is sustained with outside help. All this is aggravated for Tajikistan by its geographical and geopolitical position. It is at the junction of several big subregions with different religions, civilizations and cultures and is the object of a great deal of attention from some countries in the world community, a focus of their national interests. Tajikistan's political importance is strengthened by its simultaneous membership in European and Asian international organizations. The geopolitical interests of various countries are interwoven in Tajikistan in different ways and in different places. Geopolitical processes in the Central Asian region are leading to a strengthening of the positions of the USA, Western Europe, China, and the South Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

Tajikistan is supporting the developing integration processes on the post-Soviet space, especially maintaining close ties with Russia. The reasons for this support are economic, social, humanitarian, internal and geopolitical military factors combined. The most important are:

1. Internal conflict continues and the very statehood of Tajikistan is weak. This is a threat to its territorial integrity which will continue into the post-conflict period and is the main factor inducing it to seek a strong protector.

²⁰ 'Dogovor ob uregulirovanii dvoynom grazhdanstve Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Tadzhiestan' [Treaty on the settlement of dual citizenship of the Russian Federation and Tajikistan], *Akhbori Majlisi Oli* [News of Parliament] (Dushanbe), no. 22 (1995), p. 186. According to data of the Russian Embassy in 1997, 16 311 persons had gained dual citizenship.

²¹ Data of the Sharq Centre, Dushanbe.

2. Tajikistan is more interested in strengthening the CIS than any other member state because it prefers to be part of a great multipolar formation, Russia being the mainstay of the CIS. Tajikistan therefore supports all Russia's integration initiatives.

3. Tajikistan is the only Persian-speaking country in the Central Asian region. Its need to build the national state and fear of the Turkic ethno-political community are aggravating its relations with its neighbours and leading it to regard Russia as a powerful counterbalance.

4. In spite of all talk about the multipolarity of the world, in real life Tajikistan has to deal with a peculiar 'one-and-a-half' polarity. Insofar as it is in a geo-strategically vital position and has many internal problems, Tajikistan is obliged to stick to Russia as its greatest possible strategic partner.

5. A military 'umbrella' is vitally necessary for Tajikistan because it is quite unable to guard a very long border with militant Afghanistan.

In turn, there is an immediate menace to Russian interests in Tajikistan from the spread of the conflict in Afghanistan into Central Asian territory. This could result in Russia's losing its southern buffer zone. The spread of international terrorism, drug trafficking, uncontrolled migration, epidemics, pandemics and other calamities are among the risks and the challenges of our time.

Russia's main task to its south and in its policy on Tajikistan is to preserve and strengthen its influence in Central Asia by preventing it from becoming involved in the sphere of influence of other states and securing the CIS southern borders. To achieve this goal Tajikistan is still a reliable partner for Russia. A defence alliance with Russia is one of the main guarantors of Tajikistan's military security. The civil war in Afghanistan is full of ethnic contradictions and antagonisms. The Taleban are carrying out genocide on ethnic Tajiks,²² which cannot but affect Tajikistan. Tajikistan has become a front-line state, fully realizing the danger of large-scale involvement in the Afghan conflict.

All this explains the very limited extent of economic, humanitarian and cultural ties between Russia and Tajikistan and the very great extent of military cooperation.

These are the principal factors. There are also the factors of Tajikistan's dependence on Russian technologies and the pro-Russian orientation which part of the Tajik elite and intelligentsia have preserved. There is a large Tajik diaspora in Russia, a rather large Russian diaspora (6 per cent of the population) in Tajikistan, and huge seasonal migration of Tajik labour to Russia.

Relations between Russia and Tajikistan are hindered by: (a) Russia's continuing search for its place in the world, reflected in the course of its foreign policy; (b) uncertainties about the plans of Russian financial and industrial oligarchies for Tajikistan's resources; (c) political instability in Tajikistan; (d) the profound socio-economic crisis in Tajikistan; and (e) the fact that Tajikistan is

²² Iskandarov, K., 'Vliyaniye Afghanskogo krizisa na situatsiyu v Tadzhikestane' [The influence of the Afghan crisis on Tajikistan], *Central Asia* (Luleå), vol. 2, no. 14 (1998), pp. 51–60.

lagging behind in economic reforms and as a result the two countries' normative and legal bases are not compatible.

All this complicates the attitude of Russia towards Tajikistan. On the one hand, military-political relations between Russia and Tajikistan are intense and relations among the parliamentarians of the two countries are active. On the other hand, up to 1998 no Russians of the first rank had visited Tajikistan, whereas the presidents of Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey and the Vice-Chairman of the Chinese National People's Congress had made official visits in spite of the situation in the country.

In the opinion of many observers, Russia may find itself in the strange situation of providing some military-political stability in Tajikistan and thus creating favourable conditions for Western and Eastern companies to explore Tajikistan's mineral resources and local market. In future, when Russia reduces its forces in Tajikistan and withdraws them as the result of a peaceful process, it will lose its influence in this strategically important region. It might be expected that Moscow has begun to understand this. However, understanding without economic ties and substantial investments in the Tajik economy cannot provide for Russian interests in Tajikistan.

In this respect, the Mayor of Moscow, Yury Luzhkov, is more active. He has established bilateral ties with Tajikistan, for example, arranging days of Russian culture in Dushanbe in March 1998, presenting Russian schools with textbooks and so on. In recent years active cooperation has been developing between Tajikistan and some of the Russian regions. Delegations have been exchanged with Bashkortostan, Chuvash, Omsk, Saratov, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, the Kurgan region and others. Cooperation is currently developing on a joint programme of medium-term trade and economic cooperation, an agreement on the broadcasting of Russian television to Tajikistan, and an agreement on cooperation in the production and repair of armaments. The problems of joint mining of silver (at Big Kani-Mansur), antimony (at Zeravshan), coal (at Nazar-Ailok and Fan-Yagnob) and other deposits are being examined.

Relations between Russia and Tajikistan after independence were developing according to the CIS model. In general the people of Tajikistan admit that their country is in the Russian foreign policy orbit and in the sphere of Russia's national interests. However, since economic, humanitarian and cultural ties are scant and military cooperation very extensive, the long-term prospect of cooperation between the two countries is not very firm.