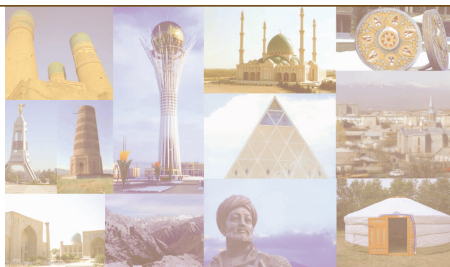


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TAJIKISTAN



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Highlights

Campaigning for parliamentary elections and election of local authorities has started in Tajikistan. President Emomali Rahmon signed the decree on elections. Elections to Majlisi Namoyandagon (the lower house of parliament) and local self-government institutions will take place on 28 February 2010, and elections to Majlisi Milli (the upper house) on 25 March 2010.

Tajikistan has a mixed electoral system. From 63 mandates in the lower chamber of the parliament, 22 deputies are selected through party lists and 41 deputies through single mandate districts. Eight parties are registered in Tajikistan: National Democratic Party of Tajikistan (NDPT) headed by President Rahmon, Agricultural Party of Tajikistan (APT), Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), Party of Islamic Renaissance of Tajikistan (PIRT), Communist Party of Tajikistan (KPT), the Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT), the Socialist Party of Tajikistan (SPT) and the Party of Economic Reforms of Tajikistan (PERT). In the current parliament, the overwhelming number of seats belongs to the representatives of the presidential NDPT, four places are occupied by the communists and two by representatives of the PIRT. The other parties failed to pass the 5% barrier in the last elections.

In December 2009, all the parties organized their pre-election congresses. Attention mainly focused on the congresses of the ruling NDPT and PIRT, the only legal parliamentary Islamic party in Central Asia.

On 26 December, the congress of the National Democratic Party of Tajikistan (NDPT) took place,

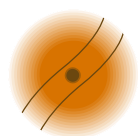
with the adoption of the list of candidates for the parliamentary elections. Experts note that more than half the candidates on the list had no prior experience in politics. At the same time the veteran members of NDPT such as the mayor of Dushanbe M. Ubaydullaev and ambassador of Tajikistan to Russia A. Dostiev did not nominate themselves for elections. Another noteworthy event at the congress was the promotion of the President's son Rustami Emomali to an administrative position in NDPT.

At its pre-election congress, the Party of Islamic Renaissance of Tajikistan (PIRT) adopted its list of 22 candidates for the forthcoming parliamentary elections, headed by PIRT chairman Muhiddin Kabiri. The list of PIRT candidates includes four women. PIRT's pre-election platform includes measures geared to improving the economic and social situation in the country, protection of labour migrants' rights, anti-corruption measures, and the introduction of a three-year moratorium on state expenditures for large-scale state celebrations and cultural events in order to save for the purpose of opening new workplaces.

Internal affairs

At the beginning of November, President Rahmon announced a large-scale amnesty of prison inmates. The amnesty commemorates the Year of the Great Imam Azam, the founder of the Hanafi branch of Islam, and the 15th anniversary of the declaration of the Constitution of Tajikistan. Over 10,000 inmates will be pardoned, including people who have already served at least three quarters of their sentences, women, minors, people aged 55 and older, the disabled, people infected with tuberculosis, veterans of World War II, veterans of civil war in Tajikistan, and also victims of the Chernobyl catastrophe. The amnesty also extends to prisoners who have received

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state awards, deserters and foreigners. It does not include those serving sentences for terrorism, murder or crimes against the State, and those under investigation on the same charges.

The former opposition leader and now a member of the upper chamber of parliament Haji Akbar Turajonzoda asked President Rahmon to extend the amnesty to the former head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Jakub Salimov, the former chief of the presidential guards Gaffor Mirzoev, and the leader of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan Mahmadrusi Iskandarov. Senator Turajonzoda described them as political prisoners, although government officials in Dushanbe consider them to be guilty of crimes against the State and therefore excluded from amnesty.

The last few months of 2009 were also marked by the ongoing persecution of opposition forces. Two inhabitants of Isfara district in northern Tajikistan were arrested on charges of participating in the terrorist organization, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). According to the State Committee on National Security of Tajikistan, IMU members have increased their activity, and 28 alleged IMU members have been detained. In the last three years, the IMU has carried out five acts of terrorism on Tajik territory.

Hajdar Bobomurodov was detained and charged with organizing a terrorist action in the city of Tursunzade. Investigators claim that Bobomurodov is a member of a group led by rebellious colonel Mahmud Hudoyberdiev, one of the leaders of the National Front during the civil conflict in Tajikistan. In the mid-1990s, Hudoyberdiev, a Special Forces commander, refused to surrender to the authorities. He organized various acts of rebellion and later fled to Uzbekistan after being defeated by government forces.

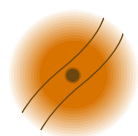
In November, court hearings of 56 members of Jamaat Tablig, an Islamic missionary organization, commenced in Dushanbe. Despite an official announcement that these hearings would be open, neither relatives nor media representatives were allowed to be present during the court sessions. The government cited security concerns and the large number of defendants present at hearings to justify these restrictions. This was the second time that active members of Jamaat Tablig went on trial in 2009.

President Rahmon signed the government decree “On the Order of Compensation of Expenses to Organizations for Granted Information”. The decree states that the “granting of information to an interested person” implies access to information contained in official documents, barring State classified data, and that government officials can charge fees for granting official information on their own. This new decree raised serious criticism among legal experts and the public because the decree contradicts the Constitution of Tajikistan, which guarantees the right of citizens to freely accessed information.

Foreign and international policy

The main foreign policy events in the last two months of 2009 were connected to the anti-terrorist campaign and security. At the beginning of December, the government of Tajikistan expressed support for the decision of President Barack Obama to increase military presence of ISAF forces in Afghanistan. The Tajik Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the following statement: “Tajikistan supports and will support all measures to introduce stability in Afghanistan. Tajikistan considers the new strategy of the U.S. president as one of the primary aspects of stabilization in the neighbouring country”.

Issues of terrorism, coordination of actions to maintain regional security, and also military-technical cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan were



the main topics of discussion during the visit of the Tajik Minister of Defence Sherali Hajrulloev to Pakistan. The meeting between Hajrulloev and the Pakistani Minister of Defence Ahmad Muhtor concluded with the signing of a document containing an agreement on future working visits of military officials of both countries and the stated intention of Pakistani officials to train military from Tajikistan.

Security issues were also discussed at the Tajik-German symposium in Dushanbe at the beginning of November. Participants in the symposium discussed the prospect of creating a powerful antiterrorist network that will include all the countries of Central Asia as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan. The main function of this network is exchange of information. The main focus of the law-enforcement departments will be to fight drug trafficking, corruption and illegal money operations.

In December, Germany offered technical assistance of US\$100,000 to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan. This assistance includes computers and copy machines as well as audio-video equipment. In the near future the German government will provide similar technical help to the Drugs Control Agency and the State Committee of National Security.

The OSCE bureau in Tajikistan and the Ministry of Defence of Tajikistan signed a memorandum on the creation of a national agency on mine clearing, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence. The Swiss foundation on mine clearing has been engaged in this activity in Tajikistan since 2003. There now remain over 15 million square meters of land not yet cleared of mines.

Security problems were the central theme both in discussions with Euro-Atlantic structures and CIS members. On 9-10 November, Dushanbe hosted a session of the Council of Ministers of Defence of CIS countries. During the session, the ministers approved

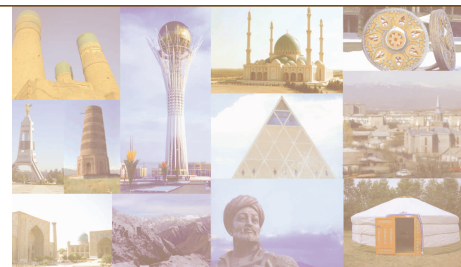
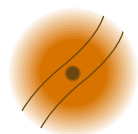
the concept of military cooperation for the period until 2015 and also confirmed the Council's plan of work for 2010.

Economy and business enterprises

As always, deficit of electric power was the main problem dogging the Tajik economy in the winter months. This year, northern Tajikistan is expected to be supplied with power through a high-voltage South-North electricity line. This line links the northern and the southern parts of Tajikistan into a combined electric power system. China's Eximbank financed the construction of the line and the Chinese company TBEA was the main contractor. The construction of the line cost US\$281m dollars, and over US\$267m was obtained in the form of a long-term loan from China.

A ban on the use of electric heating lamps was one of the measures designed to curb electricity consumption. Electricity saving is one of the most important issues in Tajikistan because every year during autumn-winter periods there is an annual deficit of electric power of up to 4,6 billion kWt/h. According to Barki Tojik (national electric power company), the deficit of electric power in Tajikistan increases by 500 million kW/h annually. The government is now seeking investors for the construction of plants that can produce power saving lamps in 2009-2011.

Despite expectations that Tajikistan would not face an electricity shortage this autumn, the authorities had to limit current consumption. Since 10 November, rural areas have been supplied with electricity for no more than seven hours a day. In the capital and regional centres of Tajikistan there are no restrictions on supply of electricity. The electricity company Barki Tojik promises to provide electricity to schools in rural areas during school hours.



According to Tajik officials, the power deficit is the result of unsettled relations with Uzbekistan regarding electricity and hydrocarbons trade. Uzbekistan refused to transfer Turkmen electricity through its grid network. In addition, Sangtuda 1 hydropower electric plant does not fully operate, since only one of its four electricity generators is currently in use. Two other generators of the station are not operating since they are under preventative inspection, and the third unit has been stopped for technical works. In mid-November, the management of Sangtuda 1 warned Tajik authorities that the hydroelectric power plant might stop operating owing to consumers' debts for supplied electricity.

Despite the slight decrease in tariffs for electricity supplied by Sangtuda-1 HPP (US\$0,0169), the situation concerning the collection of payments is still not satisfactory. The Tajik electricity distributor company Barki Tojik only pays for about 10% of the energy consumed. The general debt may exceed US\$10m. The management of Sangtuda 1 HPP hopes to settle the situation promptly without resorting to extreme measures. The complete stoppage of electricity production will lead to an increase in Tajikistan's power deficit. Sangtuda 1 HPP covers only one-sixth of the country's total electricity needs.

Observers note that the possible stoppage of operation of Sangtuda 1 HPP was announced right after the Chinese-Tajik Investment business forum on 13 November in Dushanbe. At the forum Chinese firms were invited to participate in 10 hydroelectric engineering projects, construction of roads and in mining operations. It is also known that Dushanbe plans to receive Chinese investments of approximately US\$3bn.

Tajikistan officially announced its plan to launch a tender for the concession of deposits of silver, lead and zinc called Big Konimansur, earlier promised to Russia by President Rahmon. According to some sources, the tender has been won by Chinese

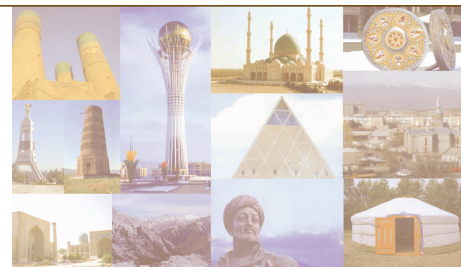
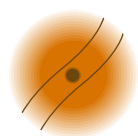
companies. Chinese companies are already mining gold deposits in the north of the republic. The Tajik-Chinese enterprise Zarafshan alone extracts about 7 tons of gold a year. Zarafshon is controlled by the Chinese company Tsitsinm, which has the majority of shares.

In recent years, the interest of Chinese companies in precious and nonferrous metals in Tajikistan has increased. Chinese companies have invested over US\$1bn in developing electricity production in Tajikistan. According to experts, Chinese businesses and Chinese government are presently Tajikistan's largest creditors.

President Rahmon declared an acceleration of construction of the Rogun hydroelectric plant on Vahsh river. This power plant has a designed capacity of 3600 MWt. The authorities stated that the construction of this hydroelectric plant will end the country's electricity deficit. A large-scale fund raising campaign for the construction of Rogun plant has already started in Tajikistan. President Rahmon urged the inhabitants of the republic to invest considerable amounts of money in the completion of Rogun hydroelectric plant, saying that every family, except poor ones, should buy about US\$700 worth of stocks. Average monthly wages in Tajikistan presently stand at about US\$70! To attract additional investment, President Rahmon ordered the urgent printing of stocks for Rogun hydroelectric plant and for sales of these stocks to commence in early 2010.

The Tajik parliament has approved the state budget for 2010, nicknamed the "anti-crisis" budget. Minister of Finance Safarali Najmiddinov informed that the total size of the state budget for 2010 will exceed the size of the state budget for 2009 by 18.1% and will amount to 6.5 billion Somoni. In US dollar terms, the budget has fallen 8%, down to US\$1.5bn.

The budget deficit in 2010 is expected to reach 1% of GDP, the growth rate of industrial production 5% and



inflation 9%. The finance minister also announced the allocation next year of approximately US\$150m from the budget to complete the construction of the Rogun hydroelectric plant.

The World Bank intends to allocate US\$20m to Tajikistan to bolster its state budget for 2010. Also the United Nations Framework Promotional Programme for Development and the UNDP country plan for 2010-2015 were signed in Dushanbe. The UN Framework Programme consists of four components: reduction of poverty and efficient management, maintenance of food security and improvements in food nutrition, provision of pure water, ecological safety, a steady provision of electricity and basic services. The total size of the programme is US\$281m.

The UNDP country plan includes taking measures to reduce poverty, prevent diseases such as AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, to introduce efficient control and prevention of crisis situations and measures to induce environment restoration. A total of US\$166.3m has been earmarked for this plan. Tajikistan will therefore receive over US\$447m from UN and UNDP sponsored programs.

According to the data presented by the State Statistical Committee of Tajikistan, the monthly average rate of inflation is 0.4 %. The growth of inflation is caused by rise in prices for foods – 2.3 %, non-foods – 6.3 %, and prices for services – 13.7 %. By the end of November 2009, the cost of food products per individual in the consumer's basket was US\$21.

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