

REFLECTING ON PEACE PRACTICE PROJECT

Cumulative Impact Case Study

Conflict and Peacebuilding in Tajikistan

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This document was developed as part of a collaborative learning project directed by CDA. It is part of a collection of documents that should be considered initial and partial findings of the project. These documents are written to allow for the identification of cross-cutting issues and themes across a range of situations. Each case represents the views and perspectives of a variety of people at the time when it was written.

These documents do not represent a final product of the project. While these documents may be cited, they remain working documents of a collaborative learning effort. Broad generalizations about the project's findings cannot be made from a single case.

CDA would like to acknowledge the generosity of the individuals and agencies involved in donating their time, experience and insights for these reports, and for their willingness to share their experiences.

Not all the documents written for any project have been made public. When people in the area where a report has been done have asked us to protect their anonymity and security, in deference to them and communities involved, we keep those documents private

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List of Abbreviations

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNR	Commission of National Reconciliation
CPT	Communist Party of Tajikistan
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced person
ITD	Inter-Tajik Dialogue
IMT	Islamic Movement of Tajikistan
IRP	Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RPP	Reflecting on Peace Practice
RRP	Raiony Respublikanskogo Podchineniya (Regions of Republican Subordination)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNTOP	United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UTO	United Tajik Opposition
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

Background on the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Project

From 1999 through early 2003, RPP engaged over 200 agencies and many individuals who work on conflict around the world in a collaborative effort to learn how to improve the effectiveness of peace practice. The agencies included international peace and conflict resolution NGOs, some intergovernmental organizations, as well as local organizations and groups working for peace in their countries. RPP conducted 26 case studies, and consulted with over 200 agencies and over 1,000 people to analyze peacebuilding experience. The findings of three years of analysis and consultation are presented in *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners*,¹ which reviews recent peace practice, assesses elements that have been successful (or not) and why, and points to learning on how to improve effectiveness.

The evidence gathered by RPP suggests that although many people do, indeed, work at many levels, conducting good programs at each level, these initiatives do not automatically “add up” to peace! RPP found that peace programs that were effective in contributing to Peace Writ Large addressed key factors driving the conflict; many programs, however, did not relate their objectives to the driving forces of conflict, and consequently had little impact on the overall situation. Often, programs that had powerful impacts on participants’ attitudes and relationships did not lead to activity or changes that affected a broader constituency of people, and programs working at the grassroots level were often not linked with programs at the elite level. Good programs had impact on the local situation, only to see this undermined by national regional developments.

- While RPP’s findings to date have pointed to many factors that have prevented programs from “adding up” to have an impact on the overall conflict situation, they have yielded less evidence on what contributes to the “adding up” process. Key questions remaining include:
- How do multiple different peace efforts have cumulative impacts on a situation? What elements and/or processes determine whether there is a positive cumulative impact of multiple programs, reinforcing what others are doing, as well as responding to changes in circumstances?
- How can we link micro (“peace writ little”) and macro (“Peace Writ Large”) levels in programming decisions in order to improve the impacts on the broader peace?

RPP is addressing these questions in new series of case studies regarding contexts in which there has been progress towards peace, in some cases sustained and in others not. These cases look specifically at whether and how multiple peace efforts have cumulative positive impacts at

¹ M. Anderson & L. Olson, *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2003). Available at <http://www.cdainc.com/rpp/publications/confrontingwar/ConfrontingWar.pdf>

particular moments, and how activities and successes at the community or local level and at the national level can be linked to provide sustainable changes and momentum toward peace.

Methodology

This case study of cumulative impacts of peace efforts in Tajikistan is primarily based upon information gathered through interviews with people representing different sectors of Tajik civil society, the political sphere and the international agencies that fund and implement peacebuilding, human rights and democratization programs in Tajikistan. Many of the people interviewed have been involved in peacemaking efforts directly and others observed them in their role as political analysts, journalists or as outside advisors and donors. The majority of the field interviews were conducted in July 2008 by Isabella Jean and Parviz Mullojanov with additional interviews conducted in August and September 2008 by Parviz Mullojanov. The case authors spoke with government officials and political party representatives who took part in official peace talks and the unofficial dialogue track; local NGOs, researchers, journalists and academics; and staff at OSCE, Eurasia Foundation, UNDP, Swiss Development Corporation, and DFID. Desk research and additional phone interviews were conducted to gather insights from UN and OSCE representatives who worked on Tajikistan peace process during the period 1992-1997. In total, the case writers conducted thirty-five interviews.

The sample was limited to the representatives of key organizations and individuals based in the capital city, Dushanbe. The case writers were unable to visit regional centers around Tajikistan and to interview former field commanders who fought during the civil war as part of the United Tajik Opposition forces. While we acknowledge that there are important regional perspectives that we did not capture, we were able to speak with representatives of political parties representing regional constituencies who live and work in Dushanbe.

Most of the interviews held in Tajikistan were conducted in Russian, with the exception of a few held in English with foreign staff of international organizations. The interviews followed an open-ended format, guided by the RPP cumulative case study inquiry areas, allowing the respondents to identify, describe and assess the peace efforts which in their view contributed (or not) to ending the Tajik civil war. In addition, many interviewees commented on the current state of affairs in Tajikistan, including the possible threats to peace and the on-going peacebuilding efforts.

The people we spoke to were generous with their time and open and honest in their assessments of the past peace efforts and the current socio-economic and political situation. With the benefit of hindsight, speaking eleven years after the signing of the peace agreement, people reflected on the progress or lack thereof on the political coexistence and democratization front and offered their analysis of what could have been done differently during the peace talks in the 1990s and during the reconciliation, political consolidation and peacebuilding phase that followed.

The authors would like to thank everyone interviewed for their contribution to this learning effort.



Background on Tajikistan

The population of Tajikistan is estimated to be at 7,320,716 (July 2006 data). About 79.9% of the population is composed of Tajiks, descendants of the ancient Farsi-speaking population of Central Asia. The majority of Tajiks (85%) are Sunni Muslims whose language, Tajik, is a branch of Farsi. The Tajik majority includes the Pamiris who inhabit the Badakhshan region of the country, also known as Western Pamir. Pamiri people speak several Eastern-Iranian dialects and follow the Shia (Ismaili) branch of Islam. According to 2000 census data, among the ethnic minorities residing in the country, there is a sizable Uzbek population (15.3%), as well as smaller minority groups such as Russians (1.1%), Kyrgyz (1.1%) and other groups (2.6%).² While the official national language is Tajik, Russian is widely used in the government and business spheres. Despite its poverty, Tajikistan has a high rate of literacy, with an estimated 98% of the population having the ability to read and write. Tajikistan is a rugged, mountainous country, with lush valleys to the south and north. In addition to the capital of Dushanbe, other large cities are Khodjand, Uroteppa, and Kurghonteppa. Most of Tajikistan's population centers are located in its narrow, deep mountainous valleys.

History of the Tajik Conflict

Sliding into Crisis (1989– 1992)

The Tajik Civil War was preceded by a series of political events that gradually transformed one of the most peaceful Soviet republics into a deeply divided society.³ A summary of these key events follows. Many of the political developments in Tajikistan were directly linked to the shifts taking place in USSR and the subsequent disintegration of the centrally planned economy directed from Moscow. We do not discuss this larger backdrop in detail.

Debates over the status of the Tajik language

The process of gradual destabilization of Tajik society started in 1989 when, due to the efforts and demands of the local intellectual stratum, the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party of Tajikistan (CPT) initiated public debates on the issue of giving state status to the Tajik language. Kakhor Mahkamov, the First Secretary of the CPT, intended to use the debates as a means to delay and ultimately preclude a positive solution to the issue. However, the prolonged debates over the status of the Tajik language became extremely politicized, causing division and interethnic tension, as well as rapid radicalization of Tajik intellectuals.

² CIA Factbook. Tajikistan. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html>

³ For more, see R. Slim & F. Hodizoda, "Tajikistan: from civil war to peacebuilding," in P. van Tongeren, H. van der Veen & J. Verhoeven (eds.), *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 516-535.

As a result, at the end of 1989, a group of Tajik intellectuals founded the first opposition movement, *Rastokhez* (Revival), with a goal of promoting democratization and national revival of the Tajik statehood, language and culture. Within one year, *Rastokhez* managed to gain critical public support, becoming the main political rival of the CPT. *Rastokhez* leaders were expecting to win at least 30% of the votes during the first national parliamentary elections scheduled for March 1990.

“February Events”

On February 12-15, 1990, a series of mass anti-government meetings and demonstrations occurred in the capital, Dushanbe. Followed by large-scale public disturbances and numerous cases of looting and street violence, these “February events” destroyed the future political prospects of the *Rastokhez* movement. The authorities and local mass media immediately accused *Rastokhez* of organizing the “February events.” Despite the lack of evidence, the majority of ordinary Tajikistanis started to consider the Democrats as the major cause of destabilization. As a result, the parliamentary elections were held under a state of emergency declared by the Government. Having no serious rivals, the CPT easily won the elections and took almost 95% of the seats in the new parliament.

As *Rastokhez* was discredited in the public eye, the Tajik Democrats started to look for another organizational framework to continue their political activities. As a result, the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT) was founded in August 1990. The new party included the majority of *Rastokhez* activists – many of them preferred to participate equally in both organizations’ activities. However, the weakening of the secular political opposition had created a vacuum in the country’s political atmosphere which was soon filled by local Islamists.⁴ The Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) of Tajikistan was founded in September 1990 despite the active countermeasures undertaken by the Communist-led Government.

Initially, the relations between the Tajik Democrats and Islamists were rather negative, but with increasing Government pressure, they began to improve. Their political alliance was finally shaped in the fall of 1991 mostly on the basis of anti-Communist and anti-government sentiments.

The First Presidential Elections

On August 19, 1991, a group of USSR Communist Party retrogrades attempted to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev’s government in Moscow. The Communist Party of Tajikistan supported the failed coup d’état, providing a reason for local democrats to launch a series of rallies and meetings demanding that the Tajik Government step down. The newly formed pro-democratic government in Moscow backed the demands of the Tajik opposition, and finally, at the end of

⁴ The first Islamic underground groups appeared in the republic in the mid-70’s pursuing mostly religious education and enlightenment goals. At the beginning of 1989 the Tajik Islamists joined the All-Union Islamic Renaissance party based in Moscow. However, their role in the country’s political life remained limited until the fall of 1990.

August 1991, Kakhor Makhkamov, the CPT First Secretary, agreed to resign. On September 9, 1991, the Parliament declared the independence of Tajikistan and called for the first Tajik presidential elections to be held in November 1991.

The Tajik Islamists and Democrats put forth a joint candidate for the elections – Davlat Khudonazarov, a famous filmmaker originally from the Badakhshan region. The Communists nominated Rahmon Nabiev, a native of the northern city of Khojand and a former First Secretary of the CPT who had been dismissed by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. In November, the nominee from the opposition was defeated in what most observers considered to be seriously flawed elections. More importantly, in the course of the elections, the first signs of regional division manifested themselves in the country's political atmosphere and in the voting patterns. Badakhshan and the majority of central districts⁵ mainly supported the opposition candidate, while the Kulob and Leninabad (Khojand) regions voted for the pro-Communist candidate.

Rally Marathon (March - April 1992)

In March 1992, the united opposition parties, provoked by a speech in which the speaker of the Parliament publicly insulted the people of the Badakhshan region, started a 52-day rally in Shahidon Square in front of the Presidential Palace in Dushanbe. The rally finally led to the overall paralysis of government infrastructure, including the local law enforcement agencies, which had become divided into several opposing factions as well.

In response, President Nabiev and his allies organized their own demonstration in Ozodi Square (in front of the Parliament Palace), bringing thousands of supporters from rural areas – mostly from the Kulob region. At the end of April, President Nabiev was forced to issue a decree on the formation of a new coalition Government. Several leading opposition figures were included in the Government, named the National Confidence Government, which, despite the name, remained overwhelmingly pro-Communist and immediately started to organize anti-opposition resistance all over Tajikistan. Representatives of the opposition received secondary positions while Government officials sabotaged both the opposition and their nominees in the Government.

At the beginning of May, the confrontation in the two squares ended up in clashes that continued for several days in the center of Dushanbe. May 5, 1992, the date on which blood was shed for the first time and the first casualties appeared, is considered the start of the Tajik Civil War.

Tajik Civil War: Chronology and Main Events

The course of the Civil War could be divided into several distinct stages:

⁵ This group of districts is officially called Regions of Republican Subordination (abbreviated as *RRP* from Russian *Raiony Respublikanskogo Podchineniya*). The RRP cover the central and eastern parts of the country including the historical Karategin (Gharm) region.

First Stage (May 1992 – February 1993): Open military confrontation led to the defeat of the opposition and its retreat to Afghanistan. This stage culminated in a four-month period of lawlessness, large-scale political repression, and ethnic cleansing.

Second Stage (March 1993 – January 1996): The United Tajik Opposition (UTO) got a foothold in the northern regions of Afghanistan and launched a guerrilla war against the Tajik Government.

Third Stage (January 1996 – June 1997): the UTO troops conducted several offensives inside Tajikistan and gradually gained control over several mountainous districts. The possibility of returning to open large-scale military confrontation remained, but the period ended with the signing of the Peace Agreement.

First Stage (May 1992 – February 1993)

The clash of the two rallies in Dushanbe squares in May 1992 ended with the defeat of pro-government Communist forces and their retreat to Kulob. Within one month, with the help of large-scale military and economic assistance from Uzbekistan and the Northern Leninabad (Khojand) region, the pro-Government forces managed to regroup and seize the entire territory of Kulob and its surroundings.

Thus, by June 1992, the republic was divided into two opposing parts: the pro-opposition forces controlled the capital, as well as the majority of the RRP districts (central and eastern parts of the country). The pro-Government/Communist forces established their own movement – The People’s Front – with a base in Kulob (south-east) and Leninabad (north). The People’s Front leaders refused to obey the National Confidence Government, considering the decree of its establishment unconstitutional. Later, they also refused to recognize the resignation of President Nabiev, which took place on September 4, 1992 under the direct pressure of radical opposition groups.

During this period, the major clashes occurred mostly in Kurgan-Tube Province, one of the biggest in the country, located between Kulob and the RRP regions. Both sides clearly understood that control over the province was key to winning the war. The province was mainly populated by ethnic Uzbeks and different regional groups of Tajiks – mostly Gharmis, Kulobis and Badakhshanis (Pamiris) -- who became divided along ethnic lines during the course of the war. Local Uzbeks and Kulobis fought on the Government side, while Gharmis and Badakhshanis supported the opposition.

In October 1992, the Russian Government made a decision to support the pro-Communist forces in Tajikistan. This turn of events drastically shifted the situation to the advantage of the People’s Front and eventually pushed the opposition to settle the conflict on the terms of the People’s Front.

On November 16, during a session of the Tajik Parliament in Leninabad (Khojand), with the participation of the opposition and the People's Front, representatives from the Kulob region managed to seize power by ousting the ruling Northern Leninabad (Khojand) "clan" to secondary positions. President Nabiev was officially dismissed, and Emomali Rahmonov, a former chairperson of a *kolkhoz* (collective farm) from the Kulob region was elected Speaker of the Parliament.⁶

In the subsequent military campaign, the Tajik opposition forces were defeated and driven out to the mountainous eastern regions of the republic. The main part of the opposition later moved to Afghanistan, where a network of military bases and training camps along the Tajik-Afghan border were organized.

Atrocities and Repressions

In the months leading up to the Khojand Parliament session, both sides' military formations committed atrocities and human rights abuses against civilians. However, starting in November 1992, the atrocities intensified, leading to a large-scale humanitarian disaster. The retreat of the opposition units left hundreds of rural and urban Gharmi and Badakhshani communities without protection. Under conditions of a weak central government and paralyzed law enforcement agencies, Gharmis and Badakhshanis became the main targets of repression, massacre, rape, and ethnic cleansing conducted by a number of criminal gangs, Kulobi units, and local Uzbek militias.

According to the opposition sources, up to 90% of civil war casualties occurred during the four-month period between November 1992 and March 1993. During this period, hundreds of thousands of Gharmis and Badakhshanis left the country, taking up refuge in neighboring Afghanistan and former Soviet republics.

Second Stage (March 1993 – 1996)

Today, many observers believe that if the new Tajik Government had managed to prevent or at least limit the scale of repression, especially the attacks on civilians, the war would have been over at the end of 1992. This view is supported by evidence that the opposition was in a state of disarray, with the various opposition structures increasingly becoming frustrated with the continuing military resistance. However, the massive atrocities against innocent civilians⁷ had the opposite effect of mobilizing a new and rapidly growing wave of volunteers to the opposition ranks. It gave the defeated opposition troops a new motivation for resistance and hope for further

⁶ The Session decided to abolish the post of President. The Speaker of the Parliament assumed the responsibilities of the Head of State. In 1994, the Parliament restored the post and in the course of further elections, Rahmonov was elected to the position of the President of Tajikistan.

⁷ The Tajik civil war's overall casualty numbers are estimated to be between 50,000-60,000. S. Akiner & C. Barnes, "The Tajik civil war: causes and dynamics," in K. Abdullaev & C. Barnes (eds.) *Politics of compromise: The Tajikistan peace process*. Accord 10. (London: Conciliation Resources, 2001). Available at <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/tajikistan/causes-dynamics.php>.

revival and revenge. In Afghanistan, the opposition parties established two new entities – the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and the Islamic Movement of Tajikistan (IMT). The Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) played a leading role in both movements. Due to limited financial resources, the Democratic parties and their leadership were gradually relegated to secondary positions within UTO.

In Afghanistan, the UTO, with significant assistance provided by the local mujahidin groups and especially by the Jamiate Islami party,⁸ managed to recruit thousands of new fighters, retrain and rearm the troops and launch a new wave of military operations across the border against the Tajik Government forces.

While in Afghanistan, the UTO commanders pursued a two-pronged strategy. First, small opposition units gradually penetrated through the Afghan-Tajik border into the territory of Tajikistan, transporting weapons and establishing a network of secret military warehouses and bases around the country. Second, they conducted regular small-scale guerilla operations against government troops and authorities inside Tajikistan, mostly in the eastern mountainous districts. Occasionally, they alternated these small-scale incursions with large-scale clashes and offensives. These were conducted mostly on the eve of the official peace negotiations, which began in 1994, as both sides tried to strengthen their positions before the next round of peace talks.

Third Stage (1996- 1997)

In the course of several years, the UTO troops managed to seize an essential part of the Afghan-Tajik border and mountainous areas of the country. In 1996, a new wave of large-scale clashes led to the defeat of all governmental garrisons and units located in the mountainous Gharm region.

As a result, by the end of 1996, the two sides in Tajikistan's civil war faced a military stalemate. Opposition troops had full or partial control over almost all mountainous districts located east of Dushanbe. Some opposition field commanders freely operated in the outskirts of the capital. However, the UTO units lacked the heavy armaments necessary to take over the lowland territories. On the Government side, the troops proved to be unable to regain control over the mountainous Gharm region.

This military stalemate accelerated the peace process. The United Nations and other external stakeholders intensified their peacemaking efforts, succeeding in bringing both sides to the negotiation table. The Peace Agreement between the United Tajik Opposition and the Tajik Government was signed on June 27, 1997, putting an end to five years of Tajik Civil War.

⁸ Jamiate Islami, one of the political parties of Afghanistan, represented the interests of the Afghanistan's Tajik minority. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the party (led by Ahmad Shah Massoud and Rabbani) was a key military actor in the anti-Soviet resistance movement.

Tajik Conflict Analysis: Key Driving Factors

Thus far, there has not been a broad consensus on the definition of the Tajik conflict; some scholars consider it inter-regional (as a struggle for power between different regional/ethnic clans), while others focus on its ideological (Islam versus Communist/secular ideology) or geopolitical aspects. The Tajik conflict has to be understood as a multi-faceted phenomenon, which means that its dynamics were influenced by a combination of different socio-political, ethnic and geopolitical factors. In the Tajik case – unlike in the majority of other conflicts in the post-Soviet republics – no one of these factors clearly prevails.

The following four key driving factors had a major impact on the development of the situation in Tajikistan: 1) the struggle for power, or regionalism, 2) ideology, 3) geopolitical interference, and 4) leadership and missed opportunities.

Internal Struggle for Power and Regionalism

Many observers believe that Tajikistan's unequal political and power-sharing system led to deep political divisions and the eventual escalation to violence. The imbalance in the system – typical of all former Soviet republics – had its roots in the internal party personnel policy traditionally pursued by the central Moscow Communist authorities, who relied on one of the local bureaucratic factions, or “clans” to ensure their domination at the local level. Although some of the ruling clans had rather limited public support and a narrow social base in their own societies, they continued to stay in power due to support from Moscow.

Soon after the collapse of the USSR, the control and authority of the old Communist elites were challenged by their local political rivals. In the majority of post-Soviet countries, the old Communist elites turned out to be powerful or skillful enough to remain in power, sometimes through internal transformation or through compromise with their political rivals. Tajikistan presented a different situation in which the old elites were not strong enough to suppress their opponents (or skillful enough to find a common ground with them), but not weak enough simply to give up the power to the “new” elites either.

In Tajikistan, the local political elites are formed mostly based on their regional identities. As the country is divided by high mountainous ranges into several rather isolated regions, ethnic Tajiks are similarly divided into several ethno-regional groups, which differ from each other in terms of dialects, culture and even religion. Therefore, the power-sharing process in Tajikistan always had a regional character. Historically, representatives of each region occupied their own niche in the social structure of local society. The descendants of migrants from Samarkand and Bukhara constituted a significant proportion in academic and cultural sectors by the end of the 1980s, while representatives of Kulob and Badakhshan prevailed in law enforcement bodies, and Tajiks from Gharm dominated the trade sector and the shadow economy. Since the 1940s, representatives of the Northern Leninabad (Khojand) Province have dominated the decision-

making levels and occupied leading positions in the Government and the Communist party apparatus.

During the Soviet period, the domination of Leninabad (Khojand) clan was maintained with direct support from Moscow. However, at the end of the 1980s, due to the weakening influence of Moscow, the political system of Tajikistan became extremely unstable. As a result, the long-standing leadership of the ruling Khojand clan was challenged by the representatives from Gharm, Kulob and Badakhshan regions, or the southern political elites. The Khojand leaders started to look for new allies among the southern clans in order to remain in power. In the end, they selected the Kulob clan, mostly because of its relative weakness as compared to other southern factions; as such, the Kulob clan was seen as easier to manipulate and less likely to instigate an internal power struggle. As a result, two major political alliances (Khojand/Kulob versus Gharm/Badakhshan) launched a furious struggle for power that finally led the entire country to a civil war. Because the political parties in Tajikistan are formed according to regional identities, the inter-party struggle is most often seen as a standoff among the regional elites.

Since the beginning of the war, the main part of pro-Government forces were from the Kulob region, with Khojand supplying them with ammunition, funds and weapons. Consequently, due to their control over the military forces, the Kulob clan finally managed to seize political power and to put an end to the political domination of the Khojandis.

The regionalism factor had a considerable effect on the peacemaking process as well as the war. The signing of the peace agreement in 1997 became possible as a result of compromises and mutual concessions made by the regional elites. Ultimately, the UTO (Gharmis and Badakhshanis) accepted the leading role of Kulobi elite in the country's political system. As part of the concessions, the Government agreed to share power with the opposition by allocating a 30% quota for the UTO representatives throughout official government structures. A *modus vivendi* between the central government and regional elites was established as well; regional elites accepted the domination of Kulobis at the national level, with the hope that central authorities would not interfere too much in the local affairs.

The Ideological Factor

During the conflict, the opposing sides actively used political and ideological slogans to mobilize their supporters, explain their motives and criticize their opponents. The propaganda of the pro-Government People's Front was based mostly on the militant Communist/Marxist ideology and the active use of anti-Islamic and anti-democratic slogans. Thus, one of the most popular slogans of the People's Front was about the restoration of the Soviet Union and prosecution of Democrats in all post-Soviet countries. In order to win the sympathy and support of Russia and Uzbekistan, leaders of the People's Front actively used pro-Russian and pro-Uzbek slogans, accusing the opposition of an ambition to establish an Islamic state and to oust all non-Tajiks from the country.

The opposition, leaders initially preferred to use mostly anti-Communist and pro-democratic slogans in the hope of getting support from Russian Democrats influential in post-Soviet Russia. Later, when the Russian Government decided to assist the pro-Communist People's Front and especially after its defeat in 1992, the Tajik opposition preferred to use mostly Islamic slogans with the hope of getting support and finances from the Islamic and Arab world.

In general, the majority of political analysts consider the ideological factor to be of secondary importance in the Tajik case. Vladimir Goryayev, formerly with the UN Department of Political Affairs, offers this recollection from his direct contacts with the opposing sides: "Contrary to the oft-expressed opinion, analysis of the situation makes it clear that Tajik conflict was not and had nothing to do with a confrontation between neo-communism and Islam. My colleagues and I had numerous opportunities to meet with the field commanders and political leaders on both sides. From that experience it became obvious that [their] opinions did not contain either radical Islamist or neo-communist features. They were representing the interests of different factions of society and it is exactly those interests that came through in the negotiations process."⁹

Thus, despite the apparent ideological differences, the major lines of division were drawn along the ethnic and regional boundaries – especially after the repressions of 1992 when many Gharimis and Pamiris had no choice but to join the UTO regardless of their ideological background. According to one observer interviewed, "In reality, the opposition was not as united as its name suggests. There were disagreements between Democrats and Islamists, and it is widely known that most decisions were made by leaders from the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) because they controlled the funds."

Factor of Geopolitical Interference

The Tajik conflict is an instructive example of the decisive influence of external geopolitical actors on internal conflict dynamics. In the course of the interviews conducted for this case study, many people shared their analysis of how the Tajik conflict started and evolved due to the interference of external actors – i.e. Russia, Uzbekistan, Iran, and Afghanistan - and how it ended mostly because of the changes in the geopolitical situation in the region. In this regard, the exertion of external influence can generally be divided into two periods: 1) the years between 1991-1996, when outside influence was in support of one of the conflict parties, with the aim of achieving resolution through the victory of one of the sides, and 2) the years of "pressure for peace" in 1996-1997.

⁹ V. Goryayev, "The Methodology of Inter-Tajik Negotiations and Cooperation with International Partners," in UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP), *Peace Process in Tajikistan – Lessons Learned for the International Peace-Building*. Materials of the International Conference on the Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, 24-26 June 2007 (Dushanbe: United Nations, 2007).

Conflict Promotion by External Actors

Between 1991-1996, Russia and Uzbekistan were the main external actors whose influence defined the conflict dynamics and character. There was broad agreement among many of the people interviewed that the civil war was in fact the result of Russia's and Uzbekistan's meddling in Tajikistan's affairs. Initially, Russia's position towards the Tajik crisis and its key actors was ambivalent – mostly because of the uncertain situation within the Russian Government itself. In 1991, a new wave of Russian politicians who played an essential role in Yeltsin's coming to power had entered the sphere of big politics in Russia. This group of “democratic idealists” had maintained close links with democratic parties and movements in other Soviet republics since the early years of *perestroika*. They shared the belief that, in order to move ahead, it was necessary to get rid of the old Communist legacy all over the former Soviet Union. Therefore, during this rather short period, the Russian leadership, or at least part of it, supported Central Asian pro-democratic movements and parties in their struggle against local Communist elites.

This group of “democratic idealists” was opposed by a wide group of professionals in the Ministry of Defense, Russian border troops, GRU (Foreign Intelligence Service), and KGB, which were backed by former Communist leaders. The latter group believed that a narrow definition of Russian national and geopolitical interests must be the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. As a result, Russian foreign policy towards Central Asia in the early 1990s was rather uncertain, with different agencies and institutions holding conflicting points of view with regard to local issues – including how to deal with the Tajik crisis. Between August 1991 until September 1992, the Russian politicians, influenced by Democrats, supported the Tajik opposition parties, despite the resistance of military and intelligence leaders who sympathized with the local pro-Government coalition. During this period, the Russian Democrats consistently blocked all attempts of Russian troops located in Tajikistan to destroy the opposition, forcing them to observe the proclaimed “non-interference” principle.

However, by the middle of 1992, Democrats lost positions of influence within the Russian Government. By contrast, the position of the former Soviet nomenclature and bureaucrats strengthened, and this led to a major shift in Russia's policy towards the Tajik conflict changing to open support of pro-government forces in Tajikistan. This had a decisive impact on the course of events and led to the military defeat of the opposition in November - December 1992.

Compared to Russia, the neighboring government of Uzbekistan was more decisive and persistent in its position towards the Tajik crisis. From the beginning, Uzbekistan supported the pro-Government People's Front considering it as a means to promote the interests of the local Uzbek minority. Islam Karimov, President of Uzbekistan, was concerned that in the event that the Tajik opposition seized power, the local Islamists, Uzbek Democrats and minorities would become encouraged and mobilized, and would undermine the internal stability of his country. Initially, Uzbek assistance to the People's Front was limited to deliveries of supplies and finances, and political promotion at the international level. However, in late 1992, both

Uzbekistan and Russia united their efforts to launch a direct engagement of their troops and special units to support the Tajik Government side. In September – November 1992 Uzbekistan and Russia had engaged at least three of their special force brigades in Tajikistan.¹⁰ According to Russian sources, the Russian 15th special force brigade¹¹ made a crucial contribution in the seizure of Kurgan-Tube city and defeat of the opposition troops throughout southern districts of the country.

In December 1992, the Uzbek troops, along with local pro-Government army units (supported by the Russian 201st Rifle Division), conducted a series of military operations culminating in the capture of Dushanbe and seizure of the Gharm region. Later, after the withdrawal of Uzbek troops, Russian troops continued to play a decisive role in supporting the Tajik Government and restraining activities of the UTO units. Thus, the Russian border patrol units located along the Tajik-Afghan border (consisting of 17,000 troops in 1996) focused on preventing the penetration of the UTO fighters into the Tajik territory. The 201st Rifle Division units formed a second, stronger line of defense intended to enhance the borders in case of a large-scale offensive by the opposition.

The “Pressure for Peace” period

The period of 1996 – 1997 was characterized by a military stalemate and a changed geopolitical situation which pushed the involved countries to change their attitudes and strategies towards the Tajik crisis and promote a peace process in Tajikistan. The major factor during this period was the rise of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan in 1994-95. The Taliban troops gradually seized control of much of Afghanistan, and by 1996 approached the northern regions of the country near the Afghan-Tajik border. These events caused rapid shifts in the geopolitical context in and around Tajikistan and influenced the positions of all external actors.

Russia, Uzbekistan and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries were concerned about the radicalism and pan-Islamism of the Taliban leaders, who publicly declared their goal “to liberate the entire Central Asia region.” The concern of CIS countries increased considerably when news of the alleged cooperation and negotiation between the Taliban and the UTO leadership circulated. The Russians and their allies could limit the Tajik opposition activities by exerting pressure through old contacts in the Afghanistan’s Northern Alliance, but they had no such leverage over the Taliban; if the Tajik mujahidin commanders cut off relations with the Northern Alliance and turned to the Taliban, the whole situation around Tajik crisis would move beyond Russia’s control.

¹⁰ The three brigades represented the remainder of the Soviet troops which were withdrawn from Afghanistan in 1989. After the collapse of the USSR the brigades were officially transferred under the jurisdiction of independent Uzbekistan but in 1992 continued to be staffed mostly by Russian citizens. For more, see “Operational Group of Russian Forces in Tajikistan.” <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/ogrv-tajikistan.htm> (accessed 19 November 2010).

¹¹ The 15th brigade was led by Colonel Kvachkov, a GRU officer responsible for the design and implementation of the entire military operation in Kughan-tube. “Otchizna” Journal, № 17 (342-3), April 2008.

The rise of the Taliban influenced the positions of the Northern Alliance and neighboring Iran as well. Iran conventionally supported the Afghan Shiite population suppressed by the Taliban; consequently, it was interested in the survival and victory of the anti-Taliban resistance. As to the Northern Alliance, the arrival of the Taliban dramatically increased their dependence on fuel and ammunition supplies. Russia turned out to be the only reliable source of supplies for the Northern Alliance making its military capacities extremely vulnerable and dependent on Moscow. By 1996 the territory of Tajikistan remained the only reliable route for transportation of military supplies for the anti-Taliban troops. Consequently, during the period of 1995-1996, external geopolitical actors began to shift their attitudes and positions concerning the Tajik crisis. All of them, ranging from Russia to the Northern Alliance, became interested in promoting peace in Tajikistan and saw the continuation of the Inter-Tajik conflict as a threat to their long-term interests in the region.

A number of these external stakeholders joined the efforts of the UN and OCSE to bring the conflict parties to the negotiation table. Russia played a key role in convincing the Tajik Government to enter negotiations and remained very engaged in the process. An editor of an opposition newspaper interviewed for the case suggested that, “Russia got tired of the lengthy peace talks once they began and forced the parties to make peace quicker.”

Iran used its history of good relations with the UTO leaders to convince them to do the same. However, according to former opposition members, the most convincing factor for the UTO was the pressure that came from Ahmad Shah Massoud and Rabbani, the leaders of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. Since 1995, Ahmad Shah Massoud had started gradually to limit military supplies to the UTO, and under pressure from Russia he established a 15 kilometer “security zone” along the Afghan-Tajik border. According to opposition sources, he later gave the UTO leadership until the end of 1996 to cross the border and move all opposition units back into the Tajikistan territory. The UTO leadership faced a major dilemma: to continue military operations without reliable logistics and supplies from outside (an impossible feat from the military point of view), or to participate in the reconciliation process – mostly on the Government’s terms.

A former participant of the official peace talks argued that “[p]eace was achieved because of influence and great interest from external powers. The Peace Accords of 1997 would not have been signed without the pressure from Russia, Uzbekistan, Iran and the involvement of the US in the mediation efforts.” Many others we interviewed pointed out that geopolitical factors and external pressure effectively forced both conflict parties to speed up the negotiation process and to conclude the peace agreement.

The Factor of Leadership or Missed Opportunities

Today, many in Tajikistan wonder: was the Tajik society doomed to violent conflict? Was the civil war inevitable?

Many people see the answer to this question in the role played by Kahhor Mahkamov and Rahmon Nabiev—two leaders who headed Tajikistan during the pre-war period. Mahkamov, the First Secretary of the CPT, was a typical representative of the old Soviet bureaucracy; a hardline Communist, he lacked personal charisma and knowledge of the Tajik language and culture. Mahkamov was actually the only leader among the heads of Soviet republics who persistently resisted the idea of granting state status to national languages. As a result, under his leadership, the Tajik Government could not find a common ground with local intellectuals, a situation that led to eventual radicalization of inter-ethnic and inter-regional identities in the country. Mahkamov then refused to hold any kind of dialogue with the growing opposition, and the Government he led had no strategy to deal with them. Such passiveness led to further radicalization of the local civil society.

Rahmon Nabiev, the first elected President of Tajikistan, had much stronger character but, like his predecessor, he refused to engage in dialogue with the opposition. Instead, he pressured both Democrats and Islamists equally, laying the foundation for their further alliance. Moreover, Nabiev persistently rejected the idea of a Tajik national army, preferring to hand over the defense and internal security affairs of the Tajik state to Russia. As a result, Tajikistan remained the only Central Asian republic that refused to take control over the local Soviet military base.

Along with suppressing the opposition, Nabiev initiated a multi-step plan to enhance his personal authority. His first step was to dismiss the Minister of Interior, a Pamiri Tajik. The attempt failed but led the opposition to launch a 52-day anti-Government rally. Nabiev suddenly found himself alone before a united front of Islamists and Democrats with no means to protect his authority. At that time, Russia refused to interfere, and the Tajik Ministry of Interior announced its neutrality. As a result, Nabiev accepted the terms of the opposition, but almost immediately initiated a large-scale pro-Government rally and established several Government-sanctioned military units. Upon receiving 2,000 rifles from Nabiev's own Presidential resources, these pro-Government militia units initiated military operations in the southern regions of the country.

Thus, the Tajik crisis was driven not only by objective factors of political or social character. It was also caused by a set of grave mistakes made by key politicians and elites representing both sides, and especially by the two leaders who were unprepared for the new conditions and challenges of a complicated political transition.

Main Obstacles to Settlement

There were numerous obstacles to a settlement of the Tajik conflict. One of the obstacles was the **initial reluctance of the two conflict parties to make mutual concessions**. It proved to be impossible to establish a just and feasible power-sharing system in the country. All along, both sides could not agree on how to distribute and share power with their political opponents. This was especially true during the first two phases of conflict. Thus, at the beginning of the conflict, the opposition refused to share power with the pro-Government troops and leaders of the Kulob

region, while Kulobi elites gradually ousted all of their former allies, starting from the Khojand clan, when they came to power in 1992.

The most difficult task for the mediators was to convince the Kulobi clan leaders to share power at least with the UTO, which, by the end of 1996, was the only political organization able to challenge the Tajik Government. The final formula for the power sharing arrangement was agreed on by both sides at the end of official negotiations, eventually became seen as imbalanced and unjust by the various opposition factions and other marginalized political forces. The majority of the people interviewed for the case study described the post-agreement restructuring process as reflecting mostly the interests of the ruling regime as it ensured and justified the domination of only one regional clan (Kulob) for the foreseeable future.

In addition, **pre-existing stereotypes, prejudices and grievances from the war period** persisted between the conflict sides, and effectively hampered the reconciliation process. Similar kinds of biases were shared by the regional state actors. Thus, the Russian and Uzbek leaderships refused any possibility of a compromise with the Tajik Islamic movement due to their Islamophobia. At the same time, Afghan mujahidin leaders and foreign Islamic organizations, which supported the UTO, considered the Tajik Government as an anti-Islamic regime. All of these factors influenced the protracted process leading up to the eventual peacemaking stage.

Peacemaking and Peacebuilding Efforts

The peace efforts aimed at resolving the Tajik crisis can be divided into four distinct stages:

Stage I (May 1992 – Feb 1993), during which the overwhelming majority of peacemaking initiatives were undertaken by domestic actors;

Stage II (March 1993 – 1996), marking the beginning and expansion of international peacemaking initiatives and international mediation efforts;

Stage III (1996 – 1997), during which integrated peacemaking efforts were undertaken in the course of the last stage of the civil war;

Stage IV (post 1997 – present), during which post-conflict national reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts at the government, civil society and community levels have been pursued, with a gradual shift in focus to economic development.

Stage I (May 1992 – Feb 1993): Internal (Intra-Tajik) peace efforts

In the course of the first six months of the conflict, the overwhelming majority of initiatives intended to stop the conflict were undertaken by local stakeholders and politicians within the Tajik society itself, without direct involvement of third parties or external mediators. As

mentioned above, during this period, the main geopolitical actors – mainly Russia and neighboring Uzbekistan – did not promote peace, but preferred to assist one of the sides in the conflict. Despite the lack of outside support for peaceful resolution of an imminent conflict, a series of efforts were undertaken locally by the following actors:

1) Leading intellectuals and civic leaders

Several groups of local intellectuals concerned with the growing level of animosity and hatred between Tajiks initiated efforts to stop the violence. In general, many Tajik intellectuals considered a civil war to be illogical and abnormal, as they (perhaps idealistically) dreamed about the revival of national statehood and the return of the “golden ages” of Tajik history. Since the appearance of the earliest signs of conflict, several groups of respected intellectual leaders representing different regional elites exerted all possible efforts to reunite the nation and stop the confrontation.

A number of attempts were initiated by Davlat Khudonazarov, a former presidential candidate nominated by the opposition during the first presidential elections in 1991. An ethnic Badakhshani, Khudonazarov was considered as one of the most respected and influential leaders among Pamiris (Badakhshanis) and Democrats. In May-September 1992, Davlat and his group made a number of trips to the southern regions, organizing negotiations between local field commanders, politicians, and ethnic leaders. Khudonazarov’s efforts were influential in the first months of confrontation, when Badakhshanis made up the most active part of opposition activists and fighters. For instance, he insisted on the release of Sangak Safarov, a Kulobi leader, who was captured after the retreat of Government forces from Dushanbe to Kulob in May 1992. Later, in the hope of precluding the expansion of inter-Tajik confrontation, Khudonazarov prevented an offensive of opposition troops to Kulob.

2) Regional officials and community leaders

A number of attempts at conflict prevention were undertaken locally by mid-level officials and community leaders. Initially, the majority of officials at the district and regional levels opposed the attempts of top-level politicians to promote confrontation in their regions. They were backed by the overwhelming majority of local community leaders eager to maintain stability in their villages. One such example was a woman, a government worker before the war, who stayed in close touch with local political leaders in her village as well as the field commanders from the opposition side. Knowing that the commanders on the two opposing sides were former classmates, she arranged for a meeting between them in her grandfather’s house, insisting that they bring no weapons. She arranged for them to meet on several occasions and helped facilitate the discussions. In our interview with her, she recalled being surprised when told that her efforts had helped establish a ceasefire between the two combating units. Her close ties with the UTO leader, Said Abdullo Nuri, led to numerous death threats issued in her name from the

Government side, and eventually forced her to flee Tajikistan. Upon her return in the post-war period, she joined the Commission on National Reconciliation.

3) Traditional criminal clans and private business

These two sectors of Tajik society were keenly interested in maintaining stability and preventing the redistribution of resources and power. Therefore, the initial reaction of leading representatives of both sectors was to prevent the expansion of conflict as quickly as possible. This explains why, during the standoff by protesters in the two Dushanbe squares in April-May 1992, an alternative demonstration was organized by a group of the most respected criminal leaders. This third demonstration took place in between the two opposing squares (pro-opposition Shahidon Square versus pro-Government Ozodi Square), but its leaders were unsuccessful in preventing the violence between the protesters.

This brief overview begs the question retrospectively posed by a number of our interviewees: why were all these conflict prevention and conflict reduction efforts undertaken by respected representatives of local society unsuccessful in bringing the violent conflict to a halt? It is widely recognized that the major achievement of domestic peacemaking efforts in that period was a negotiation round held in Khorog (center of Gorno-Badakshan Province) at the end of July 1992. Initially, the results of the Khorog round seemed to be of historic significance because the negotiation teams had managed to find a common ground on a number of issues that were at the heart of the conflict. However, the day after the conclusion of the Khorog Agreement, large-scale fighting suddenly broke out in Kurgan-tube Province, and soon afterwards, military operations resumed even before the negotiating delegations left Khorog.

These events were typical of several other domestic efforts at peace that took place in the early stage of the conflict. Any relatively successful negotiation round was almost immediately followed by a new outburst of clashes, after which the confrontation was renewed with a higher level of brutality. There is now a widespread belief in Tajikistan that the intense level of inter-Tajik violence was the result of interference by a so-called “Third Force.” According to public opinion polls and the views of some Tajik observers we spoke with, the failure of all locally undertaken peace initiatives is seen as the result of meddling by the Russian and Uzbek intelligence services.

Consequently, most local conflict-resolution initiatives proved to be ineffective at preventing large scale violence. In addition, the opposition troops’ military losses made the Tajik Government unwilling to continue peaceful dialogue. Russia and Uzbekistan shared the Government’s belief in resolving the conflict by force, and with their support, the Government focused on repression and annihilation of the opposition forces and ethnic cleansing in the opposition strongholds.

Stage II (March 1993 -1996) – International involvement and civic initiatives

The United Nations began to pay attention to the Tajik crisis in August 1992 after a special appeal by Islam Karimov, the President of Uzbekistan.¹² The appeal resulted in two fact-finding trips of the UN special mission to Tajikistan aimed mainly at exploring the situation. Significant engagement by the UN and other international organizations started mostly in response to the large-scale humanitarian disaster that began in late 1992, when a wave of mass repressions, massacres and ethnic cleansing resulted in hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Tajikistan. Between 1993 and 1996, three major types of peace initiatives were undertaken by external actors.

Civic peace initiatives aimed at establishing the first unofficial channels of communication between the conflict sides. The most important initiative of this kind was the Inter-Tajik Dialogue (ITD), a joint American-Russian civic peace initiative held within the framework of the Dartmouth Conference since October 1993. Until the beginning of the UN-sponsored official negotiations, the Inter-Tajik Dialogue was one of the few unofficial channels of communication between the opposition and the Government. Reflecting on the ITD meetings, several participants noted that the joint Russian-American team was highly skilled and brought with them a working methodology for effectively structuring these meetings. Moreover, as one participant said, referring to Harold Saunders, former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs and Professor Vitaly Naumkin, Director of the International Center for Strategic and Political Studies in Moscow, “They were not just scientists and experts. They were important because of their political ties.”

The choice of participants for this Track II dialogue process was as critical as the identity of the facilitators. A former Minister and advisor to the current President pointed out during an interview that, since the intelligentsia was divided, with the majority supporting the opposition and others on the side of the government, the selection of people for both the official peace talks and for the Track II meetings was difficult. In his view, the opposition was primarily represented by Democrats in the ITD meetings, because few Islamic Renaissance Party members were able to participate due to their “inadequate preparation and lack of political experience.”¹³ Participants were selected based on their level of influence in the political, civic, academic, and cultural circles.¹⁴ Yet despite both sides’ lack of prior experience with peace negotiations, the dialogue sessions featured vigorous debates and led to important compromises.

¹² “Individual Profiles,” in K. Abdullaev & C. Barnes (eds.), *Politics of Compromise*, p. 93.

¹³ He further argued that there was a serious “crisis of human resources” on both sides, as he himself was picked to participate in official peace talks while serving in a post on the national Tajik television.

¹⁴ A. Matveeva, “Tajikistan: Peace Secured, But Is This the State of Our Dreams?” in M. Lund & H. Wolpe (eds.), *Catalytic Engagement: Leadership Networks for Transforming Intra-state Conflicts* (provisional title) (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, forthcoming); H. Saunders, “Public Peace Process,” in *The Inter-Tajik Dialogue* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 147-170.

During the peace talks, the memorandums crafted as part of these unofficial meetings were promptly submitted to the President, the leadership of the opposition, the UN, OSCE and the Russian and American mediators to inform their strategy during the official peace negotiations. Confidentiality and trust-building was important to all participants. Therefore, unofficial dialogue meetings were closed to public scrutiny, and journalists were not aware of the unofficial track, unlike the peace talks, which received some coverage in the news.¹⁵ Many ITD participants valued the space provided for open and honest conversations about setbacks in the official peace process. The commitment to dialogue on the part of the participants and facilitators of this important Track II effort is made evident by the fact that ITD meetings continued during new waves of violence, and were sustained beyond the signing of the peace treaty. By its tenth anniversary in 2003, the Inter-Tajik Dialogue had met thirty-five times.

International peacemaking efforts sponsored by the United Nations and the OSCE brought the most decisive results in 1994, when the United Nations launched the official round of Inter-Tajik negotiations.¹⁶ According to a former official involved in setting up the UN observer mission, the UN Security Council played a key role in providing legal legitimacy to the peace process. Resolutions of the Security Council outlined the process of negotiations, and the Secretary-General closely followed the process through his Special Envoys and Special Representatives. The Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General chaired the process of negotiations and drafting of the protocols leading up to the final agreement, traveling between Dushanbe and Kabul (where UTO leadership was located) to achieve consensus on the initial protocols. His efforts 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.¹⁷

Peace initiatives undertaken by involved countries included diplomatic efforts by Russia and CIS countries. Several key events raised the profile of the conflict in the eyes of the Russian political and military establishment and prompted its involvement and support of peace negotiations. In July 1993, a group of Tajik mujahedin based in Afghanistan attacked and destroyed a Russian military outpost located on the Tajik-Afghan border. Several weeks later, the Government forces failed to seize the Gorno-Badakhshan Province, leading to loss of control of this mountainous border area by the Russian forces.

These two events brought the Russian diplomats face to face with a new reality. The Tajik opposition had managed to restore and increase its military capacity. The civil war was not over but, on the contrary, was intensifying. It was clear that Russian troops could become one of the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The negotiation meetings were held outside of Tajikistan.

¹⁷ V. Goryayev, "Architecture of international involvement in the Tajik peace process," in K. Abdullaev & C. Barnes (eds.), *Politics of Compromise*, p. 32.

major targets of local guerrilla fighters. The Russian Government, given its well-known “post-Afghan syndrome,” wanted to prevent this scenario.

Consequently, Russia and other CIS countries gradually started to revise their policy towards the Tajik conflict by shifting their efforts towards its peaceful resolution. The first signs of the shift were noticeable as early as 1993. The Inter-Tajik Dialogue, for instance, was launched at the direct request and with active support of the Russian Government.¹⁸

Stage III (1996 – 1997) – Integrated peacemaking efforts¹⁹

Initially, peace efforts in Tajikistan were undermined by the absence of coordination and cooperation between the international, regional and domestic stakeholders. One of the UN observers, Vladimir Goryayev, notes, “The role of observer countries such as Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan during negotiations was tremendous, but consensus among this group did not emerge immediately. It required an immense amount of work to develop a common vision that took into consideration the interests of each country and ensured that they worked as a team.”²⁰ Initially, even the external geopolitical actors closely involved in the Tajik conflict, such as Russia and Uzbekistan, did not coordinate their peace efforts and initiatives. The weak coordination and duplication of efforts manifested itself in a tangled web of different civic initiatives and efforts by international organizations and the involved countries.²¹

Coordination between peacemaking actors and mediators started to improve in 1995. In 1996, the stakeholders, ranging from the involved third countries to the United Nations and other international organizations, united their efforts to bring peace talks to fruition.²² Goryayev states that “[t]he involvement of observer countries and regional organizations in the process of inter-Tajik negotiations neutralized the potentially disruptive influence that individual governments could have had on the process and prevented competition among states on peacekeeping initiatives. In the end, their influence helped to bring about rapprochement between the Tajik parties.”²³ Each stakeholder played its own role in the peacemaking process. These roles are described below.

¹⁸ P. Mullojanov & R. Slim, “From Civil War to Peace-building: The History of Sustained Dialogue in Tajikistan (1993-2006).” Unpublished chapter available on request from the authors.

¹⁹ See Appendix 1 for a comprehensive list of various mechanisms that comprised the overall Inter-Tajik peace process.

²⁰ V. Goryayev, “The Methodology of Inter-Tajik Negotiations and Cooperation with International Partners.”

²¹ Several international organizations and agencies also provided humanitarian assistance some of which was aimed to support refugee repatriation. UN Agencies such as UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP were involved at different stages. In addition, ICRC, Medecins Sans Frontiers, Save the Children and a few other international NGOs assisted the war-affected population.

²² S. Tadjbakhsh, “Tajikistan and Afghanistan International Peace-building Compared: Lessons Learned” in UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP), *Peace Process in Tajikistan – Lessons Learned for the International Peace-Building*, p.105.

²³ V. Goryayev, “The Methodology of Inter-Tajik Negotiations,.”

a) **Forcing the Parties to Make Peace**

External geopolitical actors such as Russia, Iran and the Northern Alliance (then Rabbani-led Afghan Government) began promoting peace by exerting direct and steady pressure on the conflicting sides to bring them to the negotiation table.²⁴ By the time official negotiations ended, ten inter-governmental and governmental representatives participated in the peace process as mediators, observers and guarantors of peace: the Special Envoys and Representatives of the UN Secretary-General, observers of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of 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.²⁵

The official peace process was concluded when the “General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan” was signed in June of 1997 encompassing the parties’ recognition of the following national interests:

- 1) The protection of the independence and territorial integrity of Tajikistan and the unity of the Tajik people;
- 2) The consolidation and strengthening of the independent national state of Tajikistan as the true safeguard of political, social and economic stability;
- 3) The establishment of a democratic political order that meets the political and social interests of all levels of the society;
- 4) The creation of conditions, in which every member of society can prosper;
- 5) The protection and consolidation of the distinctive national character, cultural and spiritual values of the Tajik people;
- 6) The maintenance of a proprietary position for the Republic of Tajikistan amongst the free countries of the world community.²⁶

The General Agreement aimed to address military, economic, political and humanitarian concerns. The Peace Accord included commitments by the parties on the return of refugees, demobilization and reintegration of UTO fighters into governmental structures, the reform of the armed forces, police and security apparatus; and modifications in the democratic processes in the country leading to elections and the formation of a new Government. The parties requested the assistance of the United Nations in the implementation of the Agreement.²⁷

²⁴ E. Primakov, “Approaches to peace in Tajikistan,” *Sulghi Osie*, June 26, 2002.

²⁵ T. Nazarov, “Political Dialogue – A Path from War to Peace and National Accord” in UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP), *Peace Process in Tajikistan – Lessons Learned for the International Peace-Building*.

²⁶ Excerpt from the speech of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon at the International Conference on the Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, 26-26 June 2007, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. UNTOP, 2007.

²⁷ K. Abdullaev & C. Barnes, “Key points of the 1997 General Agreement,” in *Politics of Compromise*, p. 64.

b) **Provision of Technical Assistance and Legitimacy**

The role of the UN and other international organizations and donor countries was to ensure the appropriate conditions for the negotiating teams, and to provide them with the needed technical and financial support. One such contribution was the provision of a UN umbrella to all rounds of Inter-Tajik official negotiations. This lent legitimacy to the reconciliation process, and confidence that the sides would observe their obligations, promises and provisions made under the Peace Treaty. This was especially important for the opposition, as a number of its leaders and ordinary activists were initially skeptical about the future implementation of the peace accords. Therefore, UN's role was also important during the subsequent period of implementation of the Peace Treaty provisions, which the UN and other international organizations monitored.

This distribution of responsibilities among the external peacemaking entities proved to be effective in making the early attempts at Tajik national reconciliation possible. There are differing opinions concerning the real contribution of each stakeholder towards the peace process in Tajikistan, but in general, most Tajik and international experts agree that their main role was to bring the leaders of conflicting sides together and to ensure appropriate conditions for successful peace talks. However, after the peace talks started, the most crucial factor became the extent to which the conflicting sides were ready for compromise. In many cases, even the pressure from outside or the best process provided by mediators could not help the two sides to find a common ground.

c) **Domestic Factors Leading to Agreement**

Many observers, analysts and former participants in the peace talks argued that ultimately, common ground became possible when the efforts of external actors converged with two important factors originating in the national psyche and political will of the opposing parties themselves. First, a **set of ideological beliefs and national values was shared** and respected by all conflict parties in Tajikistan. The shared value and aspiration of safeguarding Tajik independent statehood laid the motivational foundation for the peace accords. In the beginning of the 1990s, the idea of an independent Tajik nation-state constituted an ideological foundation for the surprising alliance between secular pro-Western Tajik Democrats and Islamic radicals. In the 1994-1997 peace talks, a similar ideological common ground justified the eventual compromise between the Tajik Government and the UTO. People interviewed for the case study strongly felt that one of the major factors that brought the opposing Tajik fractions together was the understanding that the continuation of civil war would jeopardize the further existence of Tajikistan as a sovereign state. As one person said, "The threat of splitting Tajikistan was understood with a historical perspective in mind. We knew from the past that when wars are fought, territory is lost. The pain of losing our cultural capitals of Samarkand and Bukhara to Uzbekistan is still strong. Both sides felt it and understood that we have to move forward together." This shared goal of safeguarding Tajikistan's state sovereignty and territorial integrity was fully acknowledged during the official negotiations.

Second, important **concessions were made due to the personal contribution and political will of several top-level politicians from both sides** – especially by the President of Tajikistan Rahmonov and the Chairman of the UTO, Said Abdullo Nuri. A political scientist interviewed for the case study mentioned that the meeting held between Rahmonov and Nuri in Northern Afghanistan was an extraordinary example of their willingness to find common ground. As experienced and informed leaders, they understood the consequences of continuing the military confrontation. The majority of politicians and field commanders around them were not yet ready for such concessions; some of them even actively resisted the conclusion of the peace accords, and some refused to recognize them. However, both leaders pushed the peace process forward, using all possible means to convince the skeptics around them. For example, President Rahmonov pressed the Parliament to adopt amendments to the Constitution allowing the activities of “parties based on Islamic values” in Tajikistan. These amendments are considered today as the cornerstone for the peaceful co-existence between the secular state and political Islam in Tajikistan.

Stage IV (post 1997-present): National Reconciliation & Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

This stage marked the period of post-conflict national reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts at the government, civil society and community levels with a gradual shift to economic development.

The conclusion of the peace agreement in 1997 allowed many opposition members to return to Tajikistan. Among them were participants of the Inter-Tajik Dialogue who had until then attended the parallel Track II meetings held in Moscow. Randa Slim and Parviz Mullojanov write in their historical account of the Inter-Tajik Dialogue that in the years after the peace talks concluded, the majority of the ITD members “were directly engaged in peace efforts inside the country aimed at strengthening the peace process in Tajikistan. A number of ITD members participated in the activities of the Commission of National Reconciliation (CNR) – some of them on behalf of the opposition while others representing the government. Several ITD members who were working in the growing Tajikistani NGO sector developed and implemented programs in the field of conflict resolution and confidence building.”²⁸ A representative of the ruling political party in Tajikistan today, and a former ITD member, noted during our interviews that, “meetings held after 1997 were as important as the ones before and during the peace talks.” The implementation of the peace accords proved to be a challenging process fraught with many divisive issues. ITD members made recommendations for implementing the details of the agreement and introducing the necessary changes to the constitution and legislative processes. Additional recommendations were provided with regards to the process of integration of former opposition fighters into the regular Tajik army.

²⁸ P. Mullojanov and R. Slim, “From Civil War to Peace-building: The History of Sustained Dialogue in Tajikistan (1993-2006).” Unpublished chapter available on request from the authors.

During an important ITD meeting in 1999, participants made a decision that “it is time to change the type of dialogue participants and cast the net wider than the top and mid levels of intelligentsia to include ordinary citizens and communities,” and that “the more people especially at the community level are involved in the peace process, the more stable it becomes.”²⁹ In June 2000, former ITD members established the Public Committee for the Promotion of Democratic and launched a four-track civic initiative in Tajikistan. The initiative included establishing a network of regional dialogues inside Tajikistan to serve as a platform for discussions between key representatives from the local governments, traditional leadership and local political party members in seven regions of the country. These dialogue meetings were often led by ITD participants and did not have much involvement from outsiders, except for financial support.³⁰ Another area of work included training of professors and curriculum development program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to advance the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding at the university level. In addition, the Public Committee established a network of regional economic development committees in areas that had seen the most destruction during the civil war to engage local leaders and communities in a dialogue process aimed at identifying local development needs and developing strategies for economic development. Finally, the Committee launched a national Tajikistani Issues Forums Network to promote the practice of deliberative talk and discussions of public issues of concern to Tajikistan’s citizens.³¹

A number of other civil society initiatives were established to promote reconciliation and support the process of peacebuilding in post-conflict Tajikistan. One important area of work that was taken up by several civil society groups was the question of religious education, which was not effectively dealt with in the initial efforts of the Commission of National Reconciliation and remains an issue to this date. Essentially, a segment of the population supported by the Islamic Renaissance Party is advocating for the expansion of Islamic religious schools – a move that is frowned upon by the secular government. Ongoing dialogue on this issue, spearheaded by several NGOs with financial support from an international donor, has yielded some results. In looking for a compromise on this issue, the civic groups conduct public opinion research in over thirty-five towns around the country to gauge perceptions among spiritual leaders and among the general public and collaborate in joint projects with OSCE and other partners to develop policy options on religious education.

The “Goodwill Ambassadors Project” funded by the Swiss Government organized visits by influential political leaders from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the border areas where conflicts

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See also, P. Mullojanov “From Dialogue to Action in Tajikistan,” International Civil Society Forum for Public Deliberation Publications, <http://www.icscpd.org/from-dialogue-to-action-in-tajikistan> (accessed 17 November 2010).

³¹ R. Slim, “The Sustained Dialogue Process in Tajikistan: 1993- 2005.” Excerpt from a presentation at United Nations Expert Group Meeting, “Dialogue in the Social Integration Process: Building peaceful social relations –by, for and with people,” New York, 21-23 November 2005, pp. 13-14, available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/sib/egm/paper/Randa%20Slim.pdf> (accessed 17 November 2010),

over access to land and water are common and where they helped mediate disputes before those could turn violent. Similarly, the “Regional Dialogue and Development Program” established and funded local mediation centers in the Ferghana Valley. However, there are ongoing challenges that continue to undermine the sustainability of these conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Many mediation centers fell apart when the donor has pulled out the funds. Furthermore, the traditional leaders and elders who were involved in both of these projects are getting older, and there is little support for continued capacity building in mediation.

A number of international NGOs such as Mercy Corps and CHF continue to implement community development and mobilization projects in conflict-prone areas of Tajikistan aimed at strengthening local capacities for peace. Mercy Corps report notes that while these programs have contributed to reducing the potential for violent conflict in some of the areas, a longer lasting impact is contingent on a coordinated effort by national and international actors working at conflict issues at the macro level, such as disputes over borders and resources.³²

Analysis of Cumulative Impact

The Tajik peace process is considered a model for a peacemaking intervention that successfully combined the resources and influence of external actors with the political will and determination of domestic conflict parties to bring the seven-year war to an end through a negotiated agreement. The results of the Peace Accord signed in 1997 are significant. Tajikistan was reunited as a nation and survived as a sovereign state within its internationally recognized borders. The peace process created conditions for further strengthening and centralization of state power. Within a few years, the Government managed to put an end to the despotism of local field commanders and warlords.³³ It ensured the political stabilization process which, in turn, created conditions for economic and social development and overall rehabilitation of all sectors of the Tajik society.

However, the peace process was also accompanied by serious shortcomings – less obvious at the beginning but much more noticeable today – which undermine its positive impact. The most noticeable is the incomplete character of a number of provisions in the Peace Treaty. As one former participant of the peace talks recalled, “We celebrated the relatively quick resolution but unfortunately it meant that many issues were left unresolved.” This was especially true with regard to the implementation mechanisms for the most important provisions, such as the

³² For more details, see Mercy Corps, “Ferghana Valley Field Study: Reducing the Potential for Conflict through Community Mobilization.” Report. (Portland, ORE, May 2003), available at <http://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/file1134154677.pdf> (accessed 17 November 2010).

³³ In August 1999, the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) announced that no further opposition military units existed – all had been disarmed and either integrated into existing government units or demobilized. That announcement led the government to lift the ban on opposition parties. R. Slim, “The Sustained Dialogue Process in Tajikistan: 1993-2005.”

agreement on amnesty for opposition fighters and the agreements concerning the power-sharing process. For example, the agreement on a quota of 30% quota for UTO representatives in government bodies did not provide how the quota would be implemented.³⁴

The deficiencies in the official peace accords led to later tensions and disagreements. The **amnesty provisions**, for example, were later interpreted and defined by law enforcement agencies as they saw fit. The prosecutors developed rather complicated procedures for amnesty: each former UTO fighter was required personally to visit a local prosecutor's office and to make a confession about all crimes committed during the conflict. The prosecutors were required to prove the cases, and if the crimes were not serious, the confessing person was granted amnesty. In this case, the former combatants would receive a special paper, called an Amnesty Certificate. This meant that, despite the previous agreement, UTO fighters were not considered amnestied if they did not pass this procedure and obtain the certificate. The procedure was extremely complicated and humiliating. Moreover, according to the opposition sources, in the majority of cases the law enforcement officers tried to force the former combatants to confess to a number of additional crimes that they had not participated in.

Over the years, Islamic Renaissance Party members have voiced grave concerns about the fact that less than 1,000 of the 5,000 former UTO fighters which were officially included in the Amnesty List during the official negotiations have succeeded in obtaining their Amnesty Certificates. The majority of these amnestied fighters were bodyguards or close relatives and friends of the opposition leaders. As to the ordinary opposition activists and fighters, they remained unprotected, and many of them were later prosecuted and imprisoned.³⁵ Many mid-level leaders among the field commanders were arrested or fled the country.³⁶ In recent years, several top IRP leaders have been imprisoned on corruption charges, and many former opposition fighters have been gradually forced out of positions in the Tajik security services.³⁷ This is a source of major discontent and frustration among former opposition activists. Many of them harbor negative attitudes towards both the Government and the former UTO leaders, accusing them of conformism and betrayal. Local political observers argue that this has led to radicalization of these members of Tajik society. There is evidence that those former UTO fighters who remained in the country subsequently went underground and are beyond the control

³⁴ R. Abdullo, "Implementation of the 1997 General Agreement: successes, dilemmas and challenges," in K. Abdullaev & C. Barnes (eds.), *Politics of Compromise*, p. 48.

³⁵ B. Pannier, "Tajikistan: Former Opposition Leader Urges Civil War Amnesty." Radio Free Liberty/Radio Liberty, March 15, 2007. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1075295.html>.

³⁶ Former mujahidin and members of their families make up several areas of concentration or centers of Tajik Diaspora in Russia. The majority of them have not returned to the country because of fear of arrest and prosecution. Many of them have changed their names and passports or received Russian citizenship. However, even in Russia they do not feel secure because there have been many cases when Russian authorities deported Tajik citizens per request from Tajik law enforcement bodies.

³⁷ I. Watson, "Islamist Political Party Faces Conflict in Tajikistan." National Public Radio, February 21, 2008. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=19214821>.

of authorities, international organizations or independent experts. It is almost impossible now to determine what kinds of processes – political, ideological, and organizational – are currently happening inside these underground circles.³⁸

One of the political analysts interviewed for the case study brought up the February 2000 parliamentary elections, in which a few former combatants put forth their candidacies. The Government's interpretation has been that these candidates were running for parliamentary seats in order to secure immunity from prosecution for their wartime offenses and claimed that the signatures gathered on their behalf were fake and precluded them from running in the election. The political analyst, reflecting on this decision to exclude the former combatants from the political process, added that he saw this "as a big step forward for peace and security, but a step back for democracy."

The uncertain and insecure status of former UTO activists and fighters has forced them to take radical steps to protect themselves. A number of small-scale skirmishes between groups of former UTO fighters and Government forces have occurred in the post-conflict period. In 2008, the tension between former UTO field commanders and the Government increased considerably, leading to major clashes that for the first time seriously put in doubt post-conflict stability. The tensions began in February 2008, when the Government attempted to arrest one of the former field commanders in the Gharm area. The attempt failed, but in the course of the next few days, several hundred armed fighters gathered in Gharm town threatening to attack the capital if the Government forces tried to repeat the attempt.³⁹

Another serious confrontation took place in the Gorno-Badakhshan Province in early spring 2008, when the Government attempted to move several hundred specially trained commandos into the province on the pretext of preventing drug trafficking activities in the region. This set off a rumor among the local population that the Government was going to conduct a large-scale military operation to eliminate local field commanders and members of the opposition. The population immediately responded with a rally in the central square of Khorog town, making this one of the first mass anti-Government rallies since the end of the civil war. Tensions in both regions remain high and threaten to undermine stability, not only on the regional but on the national level as well.⁴⁰

The absence in the peace accords of **a mechanism to implement the 30% quota** for UTO political representatives throughout government structures has proved to be as problematic as the amnesty provisions. Since the very beginning of the implementation process, this agreed-on

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ See "Signs of Trouble – Gunfire in Garm," in International Crisis Group, "Tajikistan: on the Road to Failure." Asia Report N°162 – 12 February 2009, p.6.. http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/central-asia/tajikistan/162_tajikistan_on_the_road_to_failure.ashx.

⁴⁰ For more see "Demonstrations in Khorog," in ICG, "Tajikistan: on the Road to Failure."

protocol had a superficial character, with no mechanism to monitor and verify to what extent the Government was observing the quota agreement. According to opposition sources, not all government agencies were included in the agreement, and the 30% quota was never fulfilled. Moreover, the peace accords did not envisage any mechanism to maintain UTO inclusion in government institutions. On the contrary, under the accords, the quota was temporary, in force only until the first parliamentary elections.

This gave a legal reason for the Government to gradually decrease and then eliminate the quota. From the very beginning, the Government started to oust the opposition members who had joined government bodies under the quota provisions – first by firing ordinary employees, and then by getting rid of the senior ones. Today, representatives of the Gharm region, who were supposed to be the main beneficiaries of the quota agreement, are almost entirely relegated to secondary positions and have little access to decision-making power or any leading governmental positions. The situation with representatives of other regions, such as Gorno Badakhshan (Pamir), is even worse.

Moreover, the ruling Kulobi elites in the Government are also divided into several conflicting factions. Nowadays, the leading positions in the business sector and the government, especially in “power ministries,” are occupied by members of the President’s family and representatives from Danghara, the home district of President Rahmonov.⁴¹ The remaining officials, originally from other parts of Kulob, have limited access to these key positions within the government structures. Tensions and enmity mirroring pre-war divisions between the leading regional “clan” and the rest of the regional political factions have thus increased and have manifested themselves in the broader society at the level of ordinary citizens.

Culture of Political Dialogue

Many people interviewed for the case study shared their reflections about the extent to which the peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts of the 1990s promoted and strengthened a culture of dialogue in the political life of the country. First, the meetings and dialogue between President Rahmonov and the UTO leader Said Abdullo Nuri were mentioned as key steps towards building this culture of dialogue in the earliest stages. One observer speculated that since Nuri’s death, the new leader of the Islamic Resistance Party, who is younger and was not involved in the resistance movement in the ‘90s, may be unable to continue the type of dialogue that Nuri had with Rahmonov, due to the fact that “the relationship is not there.”

Former participants and others described the impact of the unofficial (Track II) Inter-Tajik Dialogue process as significant in preparing the ground for the official talks and serving as a safe space where important ideas and options were discussed before being raised at the negotiation table. According to one former participant, “[ITD] influenced the formation of a shared position of the political elites, which was critical. Such Track II dialogue processes should always be

⁴¹ A. Matveeva, “Tajikistan: Peace Secured, But Is This the State of Our Dreams?”

conducted in parallel to the official negotiations.” In an article based on interviews with ITD organizers, participants and political analysts, Anna Matveeva outlines a number of important contributions of the Inter-Tajik Dialogue to the peace process. Specifically, the dialogue process and its participants:

- provided inspiration for peace by creating a sense that negotiated settlement is possible;
- acted on manifestations of conflict at a local level (select dialogue participants were involved in negotiating local ceasefires on the ground);
- acted as a catalyst for the opposition to organize politically and formulate its interests and positions and enabled and enriched the official talks by preparing both sides psychologically for official peace talks;
- prepared concrete recommendations, political initiatives and designs for decision-makers (recommendations on refugee return, political change, disarmament, economic regeneration as well as the idea of a Coordination Council for National Reconciliation which later was established as Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR));
- promoted internal debate within the opposition circles and acted as an informal channel for the opposition leaders to test ideas and convey messages to the Government;
- elevated the quality of political debate and created a platform for expression of opinions other than the Government and opposition with those who were not involved in the official talks or did not represent sides, used the dialogue as an opportunity to get their views heard;
- Influenced, to an extent, the wider society in Tajikistan through participants sharing their ideas and insights with the general public, as many of them held positions at universities, media, and civil society groups.⁴²

In retrospect, participants in both the official talks and the Track II efforts agree that these meetings provided extraordinary opportunities for key political and civic leaders to hone their negotiation and dialogue skills, which are part and parcel of democratic politics. According to one former ITD member, “The people who participated in ITD meetings held in Moscow in the ‘90s, as well as those who later were engaged in the regional dialogue meetings initiated by us, have effectively used their skills to tackle potentially divisive issues at the local level.” Another former ITD member, and a current member of a political party, asserted that “the dialogue meetings and negotiation process leading to the peace agreement had an enormous impact on establishing and strengthening the culture of political dialogue. Political debates are solved easier in Tajikistan today. We learned how to talk to people whom we find disagreeable. This culture of dialogue is still alive, but principles of pluralism and inclusive democratic participation are not always upheld. For political dialogue to be more effective, many changes need to be made including limiting the powers of the President and increasing the decision-making authority of the Parliament.”

⁴² Ibid.

There was disagreement, however, about whether these skills are still utilized, especially in the current political climate. Several people expressed their concern that “the culture of political dialogue is not strong,” but added that in case of a potential deterioration of the political situation, there may be attempts to revive and utilize the skills acquired during the Inter-Tajik peace talks. Even more concerning to some observers is the fact that the new generation of Tajiks is growing up with little exposure to any form of dialogue or vigorous discussion in the political sphere.

In the years since the signing of the Agreement, one platform that attempted to promote and reinforce the importance of dialogue was the National Dialogue Project (formerly known as Political Discussion Club), which was formed under the auspices of the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP). Former UNTOP staff described the initiative as a forum that fostered constructive interaction between state authorities, opposition parties and civil society and improved citizens’ legal knowledge and access to information. According to the former head of UNTOP, the “[National Dialogue Project] generated new forms of social partnerships, specific recommendations and initiatives for further action.”⁴³ More specifically, during these working sessions, the Government and opposition figures reached agreements on amendments to the parliamentary elections law (submitted to the Parliament as a draft law), and leading to the inclusion of representatives of all political parties in district electoral commissions during the parliamentary elections in 2005 and presidential elections in 2006. The dialogue work improved working conditions for political parties at the local level, and specifically for the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) of Tajikistan in the regions where tensions from the civil war damaged the trust between authorities and party leaders. As a result of an agreement reached at a National Dialogue session, IRP was able to open branches in several of these districts.

Despite these achievements, UNTOP warns that, “the relationship between the secular state and the representatives of political Islam in the form of legally functioning political parties remains ill-defined, especially at a local level, and unfortunately, the ill definition of this relationship has conflict potential.”⁴⁴ This recognition also highlighted the need for the National Dialogue Project to expand its dialogue and policy formulation activities into the regions and continue its work on drafting laws and recommending improvements in dialogue with civil society. However, since UNTOP closed its doors in Tajikistan in 2008, the activities of the National Dialogue Project have not been sustained and the expansion of the work was made impossible due to lack of funds.

Today, “political dialogue” is widely seen as an oxymoron in the current Government dominated by one political party. Other dialogue initiatives have sprung up to take up this niche but their

⁴³ V. Sotirov, “The United Nation’s Political Involvement in the Post-Conflict Peace-building in Tajikistan,” in UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP), *Peace Process in Tajikistan – Lessons Learned for the International Peace-Building*, p. 61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

influence on the higher levels of politics is tentative. The Secular-Islamic Dialogue Project is one of the few platforms for continued debate at the civil society level, and an attempt to influence the policy level. In regards to the issue of religious education mentioned above, an analyst with the Project argued that “[t]he Ministry of Education wouldn’t be able to solve this issue. It is staffed by secular bureaucrats, which leads the religious community to believe that the Ministry is predisposed against them. The early attempts to bring these two groups together proved futile as the Ministry officials did not want to sit at the same table with Islamic leaders. Our committee was eventually able to foster dialogue based on common goals of peaceful coexistence and maintaining stability in the country. Still, there are many disagreements, but they both see a level of interdependence between these issues. They also recognized each other as legitimate representatives and members of civil society, so ministry officials and academics now talk to religious leaders.”

With regard to public dialogue and open discussion of wartime events and post-war reconciliation in the country’s mass media, there has been a pervasive silence. In 2006, “Farazh” was the first newspaper among the nation’s media sources to start publishing articles about the civil war and its aftermath. According to its editor, “Before, no newspaper or public information source mentioned anything about the civil war, like it never happened. No names of field commanders were ever mentioned. This is history of the Tajik people as much as the rest of our history, but it has not been written yet. We want to publish historical facts as well as opinions from both sides so that people in Tajikistan have a clear picture about those years.” Critics of this approach include Government figures, the internal security apparatus as well as members of the opposition who feel that this “opening up of the old wounds” will raise the specter of old hatreds. Others, among them journalists and intellectuals affiliated with the opposition, insist that “if we don’t know what happened, history can repeat itself.”

The role of international agencies & NGOs

Analysts and observers of Tajikistan’s civic and political life regard the role of international agencies and non-governmental organizations in peacebuilding efforts as significant. Virtually everyone we interviewed mentioned the critical role of the UN over the years. Some argued that the presence of international organizations such as OSCE and the United Nations Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding (UNTOP) had a “calming or restraining effect” on the domestic political context.

However, the involvement of foreign organizations in democracy promotion has raised some concerns. The motivations of organizations such as the Soros Foundation and OSCE have come under scrutiny over the years, and some people argued that these agencies’ human rights programs missed opportunities to focus on the right things, i.e. fostering inclusive democracy in the formal political sphere and assisting with creation of mechanisms for implementation of the amnesty and quota provisions. Several local observers raised questions about the usefulness of advocacy by international organizations to change laws, e.g., on the media. One observer mentioned that the work of these organizations is most valuable when they provide technical

expertise such as different legal models and mechanisms for constitutional reforms. Conversely, open advocacy is often regarded with suspicion especially by government entities. Another commentator disagreed and argued that, “The West is responsible for legitimizing the current political regime. In the last elections [2005], OSCE observers did not use the chance to either boycott the elections or issue a stronger statement about violations. International organizations have failed to help Tajikistan achieve the democratic freedoms enjoyed in other parts of the world. After the events of 9/11, Western organizations reflect the foreign policies of their governments and prioritize security and economic development over human rights and democratization.”

A number of people also mentioned financial support and knowledge sharing in the early stages of development of local civic groups as important contributions of outside agencies in the post-conflict phase. However, they questioned the sustainability of externally funded initiatives, as multiple projects have already dissipated due to lack of continued funding. At the same time, one person pointed out that “international organizations can have a negative impact on bolstering those in power. This is done through financial means such as the international loans that keep Rahmonov’s regime in power, as well as intangible ways such as continuous praising of the 1997 Peace Accords that makes the current regime come out looking as these extraordinary peacemakers. This supports the regime’s self-image of a reconciling force. The current Government has little self-criticism.”

The gradual shift of priority areas on the part of the donor community has had both negative and positive effects on the local civil society sector in general, and on the peacebuilding efforts specifically. As one person said, the arrival of international organizations that have a narrow mandate suddenly introduces new problems in the country: “Local groups are so dependent on foreign funds that they write proposals in any new area covered by external funding sources. For example, the Land Mine INGO came to Tajikistan, and we suddenly got more landmines to worry about!” In other conversations, people referenced the disproportionate focus of international organizations on “border issues,” which reflects the foreign policy directions of external governments vis-à-vis their stance on terrorism and Afghanistan. For example, the OSCE is planning to launch a large cross-border security project in southern Tajikistan, where much of the Afghan drug trafficking is concentrated. “Secure borders” happens to be a key issue for Europeans who do not want extremists to enter European Union space, but it is not the central issue for many in Tajikistan.

When reflecting on the effectiveness of multiple and often disconnected peacebuilding efforts, several people pointed out that linkages between these efforts were difficult to establish and maintain because donors behaved in “territorial” ways, and developed their priorities “in armchairs far away from the actual context.” Several people raised concerns about the ability of groups funded through outside sources to “choose their own path.” One head of program funded by a foreign donor said, “We are constantly negotiating with our donor about local decision-making.” A head of another local NGO working on reconciliation issues argued that if local

groups are unable to present their own ideas for funding to donors, then these initiatives, however well-designed and implemented, will lack local ownership and commitment on the part of staff and participants.

Among some of the positive shifts, people described the Eurasia Fund's recent decision to work directly with communities and other locally based groups that do not have an official status, in addition to the legal entities (i.e., registered local NGOs) they normally fund. Peacebuilding is not a central focus of the Eurasia Fund, but many of its projects aimed at economic development and capacity building include a component of peacebuilding and aim to reduce tensions at the community level.

The impact of internationally funded conflict resolution projects in the Ferghana Valley in the north of Tajikistan is difficult to ascertain. As one person said, "I think there were thousands of training sessions on conflict resolution held in Ferghana, but small disputes over water, land and border issues are still prevalent and communities are up in arms on a regular basis." Because the borders between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are not firmly established, and there is a serious dependence on shared water sources, these issues periodically threaten stability in this overpopulated region. Besides conflict resolution projects, many international NGOs and their local counterparts have also focused on economic development in the Valley, but the long-term impact of these interventions hinges on the resolution of the border and water disputes through official means.

International organizations funding social transformation, development and peacebuilding projects in Tajikistan are struggling with the human dimension of their programs – or as one person called it, "activating" the local people who take part in them. Critics point out that many projects seem to be initiated haphazardly, and as long as "money is spent, reports are written, everyone is happy." There is little joint strategy making or attempts to jointly define issues among the donors and international agencies. As a result, one of the driving factors in the Tajik conflict – the factor of regionalism – is not well understood and not well-factored into the programming of international organizations. One senior program staff person mentioned that "we are not even sure how to work on this issue or around it. While we have field offices in most regions and some of our projects bring together representatives from all regions, we are not sure if this indeed addresses the regionalism issues and what kind of impact we are having."

Conclusions

Integrating the analysis and reflections shared by the people who were interviewed for this case study, we draw three main conclusions based on the existing evidence of cumulative impacts of peace efforts in Tajikistan.

Conclusion I:

The results and outcomes of the peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts are ambiguous; thus, the

Tajik peace process could be considered a story of success or failure depending on the criteria used.

It is a success story if the criterion is the end of military confrontation and establishment of peace in the country. In this regard, the peacemaking efforts and initiatives undertaken by various actors achieved the principal goal of establishing peace in Tajikistan. Moreover, peace in Tajikistan proved to be sustainable, which is an outstanding example in comparison to many other conflict areas around the world that had signed peace agreements but subsequently slipped back into war.

It is also a success story if the goal was to ensure – as soon as possible – stability in the country and dissolution of illegal military troops whose existence made the peace process fragile. Paramilitary units, criminal gangs, independent field commanders from both sides were disarmed, and none of these actors challenge Tajik central Government today. The political stability promoted conditions conducive for economic and social development of the country.

However, it is a failure if we consider the goal of a peacemaking intervention to be more than the conclusion of a peace treaty. According to this criterion, peace intervention should promote a lasting peace based on the elimination of structural violence and unjust practices in the political sphere. As many people pointed out, a successful peacemaking intervention in a conflict driven by a struggle for political power requires a mechanism for effective redesign of the political system in ways that would guarantee equal access to political power and resources for all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or regional background.

According to one former Government official, “The most important result of the peace process is that we no longer are fighting a war. Many in Tajikistan say that we do not have national reconciliation. After the work of the Committee on National Reconciliation was completed, the process of grabbing power was intensified, with more inexperienced people from the regions promoted to Government seats. But this is a lip service to democracy, most of these people don’t know how to govern. The minimal goal of stopping war has been achieved, but reconciliation and democracy, not yet.” Another former participant of the peace talks and Track II meetings summed up: “The conflict was between regional elites for control of political power. Pure and simple, there was not much ideology. This has not changed. We are not a unified nation.” A representative of an international organization said that “Peace here is false, tenuous, a façade and there are lots of unresolved issues.”

From this point of view, the most significant shortcoming of the Tajik peace process is that it has failed to transform the power-sharing system in the country. Therefore, the unjust and unbalanced character of the local political system – where representatives of one region dominate while the others have no access to power and resources – remains unchanged. The only difference from the pre-war period is that the domination of the Leninabad (Khojand) elite shifted to the Kulobi clan. The peace accord merely provided an official affirmation of the new

status-quo, and by doing so legitimized the dominant position of the new elite, which continues to this date.

A number of people noted that the Tajik Government's "undemocratic" interpretation of the peace accord provisions was made possible partly because the UN and other contributors to the Tajik reconciliation process were so eager to maintain it as a success story that they disregarded some obvious deviations from democratic norms and values. The United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP) and other international agencies preferred to hush up cases of violation of rights, suppression and unreasonable prosecution of former UTO activists.

According to some of our respondents' statements, there were a number of attempts to attract the attention of international stakeholders to such cases, but no follow-up actions were taken.

However, it would be unfair to lay the blame only on the international actors. The local stakeholders also made a number of serious mistakes that compromised the content and spirit of the peace accords. For instance, the UTO negotiation team underestimated the necessity of thorough deliberation of all peace protocols; as a result, the UTO leaders did not insist on the development of detailed mechanisms for implementation of the provisions of the peace agreement.

As for the Government, it had an opportunity to use the provisions of the peace accords to eliminate factors that could lead to a renewal of the conflict in the future. There was a broad agreement among people we interviewed that the peace accord created conditions for advancing the national reconciliation process, correcting existing shortcomings, resolving remaining conflict issues, and healing war grievances, etc. However, many commentators point out that during the last decade, the Government exploited the shortcomings of the peace accords to increase its advantage over the opposition and rival regional clans and to effectively eliminate all serious political opponents.

Conclusion II:

The current peace in Tajikistan rests on an unbalanced and internally unstable political system sustained by the use of methods of undemocratic character and external factors favorable to the regime. It has been sustained not because each side of the conflict is equally satisfied with its results, but because in the post-conflict period, the Government gradually suppressed its political rivals, starting from the former UTO parties.

Domestic and international analysts point out a number of negative consequences of this unbalanced political system:

- *An increasing gap between the ruling political elite and the rest of society.* The excessive centralization led to a situation in which power is concentrated in the hands of a narrow circle of officials, mostly members of the President's family.⁴⁵
- *Lack of public oversight over government activities.* When the UTO was eliminated as a military and political movement, any counterbalance to the central government disappeared as well. Opposition parties have not been able to gain equal footing in the parliamentary system or in government structures. Since 2001-2002, civil society and the public have had no means to influence government activities and decision-making process.
- *Concentration of economic resources in the hands of a few.* As a result, all decisions in the economic and social spheres are made in the interest of the ruling elite and the President's family members, without regard for public opinion and interests. This has led to the concentration of the country's economic and financial resources in the hands of the ruling elite, with a concomitant rise of corruption and deviation from ongoing reform processes.

The current regime in Tajikistan successfully managed to maintain stability in the country through suppression of political opposition, yet it has also succeeded in maintaining a certain level of popularity among the people. The October 2007 presidential elections have proved the popularity of President Rahmonov, who is widely associated with the establishment of peace in the country. As one political scientist said, "President Rahmonov is seen as a unifier of all Tajiks."

Domestic and international observers agree that the relative stability of the regime in Tajikistan has been maintained thanks to two factors:

- 1) A favorable geopolitical situation around Tajikistan that limits negative influence of external actors on the internal political situation and ensures a flow of international financial assistance from outside, especially in the post-9/11 years, when Tajikistan's location and cooperation became strategically important to the Coalition troops fighting in Afghanistan.
- 2) The flow of migrant labor to Russia (almost 1.2 million people per year). With the majority of young men from rural and urban areas living the country as seasonal workers, the Government has been able to maintain stability and neutralize public discontent. As one person pointed out, "The stability in Tajikistan is explained by the absence of the radical element or the hot-headed youth who are working off their steam at construction sites in Russia." Remittances sent by migrants (almost 2 billion USD per year) constitute a major part of hard currency income into the country and the state budget. However, the global financial crisis may undermine this stability. According to the International Crisis Group

⁴⁵ For more on the current state of democracy in Tajikistan, see A. Matveeva, "Tajikistan: Stability First" in *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Volume 5, No.1: 163-186 (July 2009). <http://www.tfd.org.tw/docs/dj0501/163-186-Anna%20Matveeva.pdf>.

report issued in early 2009, “The annual departure of Tajikistan’s most dynamic and enterprising citizens has up to now provided [Tajikistan’s President] with an economic lifeline, not to mention a political safety valve by removing those most likely to oppose the regime. With the onset of the world economic crisis, however, labor migration is likely to diminish sharply in 2009, and along with it the remittances that are so vital to the country’s economic stability.”⁴⁶

Conclusion III:

The tensions in Gharm and Gorno-Badakhshan in February and March 2008 raise important questions about the potential return of political instability in Tajikistan. Escalation of tensions occurred against a backdrop of failed economic reform, and increasing external pressures and public frustration. The collapse of the agricultural sector where 72% of the population is employed deepened the poverty of many thousands of Tajik farmers. At the same time, the failure of energy reforms led to increasing shortages of electricity, rise in prices, and a deepening social crisis. The situation has been worsened by the rise of corruption in the country and the autocratic political establishment, as well as external pressures stemming from the global financial crisis, the rise of food prices around the world, climate change and the uncertainty of the geopolitical situation in the region. Despite the attempts of the international donor community to improve the situation through development interventions and direct assistance to the Tajik government, the socio-economic situation has been steadily declining. Public discontent and frustration are growing, making radicalization of the political opposition imminent. Some observers point to the recent appearance of a network of underground radical organizations such as Hizbi Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Tajikistan.

In light of this deteriorating situation, observers concerned with the future of peace and stability in Tajikistan offered three scenarios:

Scenario One: Stabilization and economic growth or “The Most Positive Scenario”

This scenario implies the continuation of favorable factors such as a stable geopolitical situation in the region and continued financial stability in Russia allowing it to absorb a steady flow of seasonal Tajik laborers. In addition, greater political stabilization in Afghanistan would ensure greater regional stability. This scenario is predicated, however, on a near-term shift in the Government’s policies to bring about economic reforms, improve the conditions in the energy and agricultural sectors and increase employment. In the political sphere, political reforms leading to greater power-sharing and increased participation of representatives from the regions in the decision-making process would bring domestic political stability.

⁴⁶ International Crisis Group. “Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure.” Asia Report N°162, 12 February 2009
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/>

Scenario Two: The preservation of existing model of governance and power sharing or “The Status-Quo Scenario”

This scenario implies that all external factors conducive to the perseverance of the current regime would continue to exist. The ruling regime would continue to avoid any transformation of the existing political system and maintain the status quo through suppression of viable political opposition. The growing discontent with deepening poverty and social tensions would be mitigated due to the increasing outflow of labor migrants. At the time of the case study interviews, the labor migration patterns had begun to shift from seasonal character to one that was effectively turning a critical mass of the Tajik population into permanent expatriates.⁴⁷ Political and economic experts assert that this system is not internally stable as it almost entirely depends on external factors such as the employment situation in Russia, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan, overall economic situation in the region and in the world.

Scenario Three: Return to Destabilization or “The Most Negative Scenario”

This scenario implies that geopolitical and economic situation in the world and in the region would become unfavorable for Tajikistan. A sudden downturn in the Russian economy provoked by a global economic crisis could lead to large-scale unemployment. In addition to economic decline, political developments inside Russia could lead to increased deportations or even a moratorium on migration. Such developments would have dramatic consequences for Tajikistan, which is heavily dependent on Russia’s prosperity and thriving labor market.⁴⁸ In this case, Tajikistan would face a vast increase in unemployment, and due to the failure of domestic economic reforms, the government would be unable to employ the returnees. The social tensions stemming from the return of hundreds of thousands of migrants could dramatically undermine the political stability in the country.⁴⁹

Finally, in the opinion of many people interviewed for the case study, the threat of political and military conflict remains real. Many warned that given the existing asymmetry of the political system, the struggle between different regional elites could resume with the possibility of return to military confrontation.

As we write, it is difficult to say which scenario is likely to take place. In 2007, when the imminent collapse of the agricultural and energy sectors was not yet apparent – the third

⁴⁷ This trend began to reverse in late 2008/early 2009 when the financial crisis affected Russia’s construction boom.

⁴⁸ According to Human Rights Watch, by early 2009, remittances from laborers working outside of Tajikistan fell by 30 percent compared to the same period in 2008, pushing even more Tajiks into poverty.

<http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87618>

⁴⁹ A widely quoted February 2009 report by the International Crisis Group concluded that Tajikistan is at risk of social unrest and its government is in danger of collapse. For more, *see* “Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure.”

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/tajikistan/162-tajikistan-on-the-road-to-failure.aspx>.

“destabilization” scenario seemed to be almost impossible. However, the deepening economic and social crisis, and the inability and unwillingness of the regime to deal with it, has pushed a number of local observers to consider it more seriously. According to several people interviewed for this case study, the possibility of this pessimistic scenario could not be excluded – both due to the extreme dependence of Tajikistan on external factors and the growing instability caused by domestic political grievances.

Tajikistan remains a distinctive case in the post-Soviet landscape and in the Central Asian region in general. Since the collapse of the USSR, it remains as the only conflict that was resolved through a peace treaty while many others, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia-Abkhaz, Georgia-Ossetia and Transnistria conflicts, remain unresolved. The continued interest by conflict-resolution scholars and practitioners in Tajikistan, its conflict and its resolution, is stimulated by ongoing debates in the field about the effectiveness of peace interventions and their long-term impact. The case poses several important questions for further inquiry by conflict resolution practitioners. Is the principal goal of a peace processes and other peacebuilding interventions to stop violence and conclude the peace treaty as soon as possible, and at any cost? Many observers and analysts, including those interviewed for this case, argue that peace agreements that lead to preservation of injustice and inequity cannot be considered successful, and cannot be sustained in the long term because such peace agreements fail to transform the conflict. In conflict situations where division of political power is at the heart of the matter, can peace agreements be expected to transform the way the state functions and if so, what is the appropriate role of external actors in promoting domestic political reforms?

The experience with conflict resolution in Tajikistan following a brutal civil war is considered by many an illustrative example of traditional conflict management approach, according to which the activities of mediators and others involved in bringing peace were divided into two consequent steps. The first step – which was officially declared and successfully implemented – was the cessation of violence and military confrontation. The second step – which was not declared but was accomplished – was the promotion of political victory of one side (the Tajik Government) through consistent disregard of numerous violations of the rights of the other side (the opposition). This effectively led to the preservation of the existing and traditional system of power sharing, which deepens social injustice and inequality and contradicts basic democratic norms.

The future developments in the political life of Tajikistan would shed more light on the debates about whether peace efforts in Tajikistan were indeed successful or have failed - depending on which of the above mentioned or other potential scenarios would actually take place.

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Appendix I

The following list was provided by Prof. Abdunabi Sattorzoda, a former participant in official and unofficial peace talks and currently the Head of the Strategic Research Center under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Prof. Sattorzoda was one of the people interviewed for this case study.

In the course of the Tajik peace process, many different mechanisms were used such as mediation and negotiations, dialogue sessions, meetings, consultations and good offices by external parties:

1. Official Inter-Tajik peace negotiations, which lasted from April 1994 to May 1997;
2. Consultative working group meetings or so-called meetings at the highest levels with participation of a part of the delegations of the parties. Three such meetings were held: on September 12-17, 1994 in Teheran; on April 19-26, 1995 in Moscow, and on October 18, 1996 in Teheran;
3. Meetings at the highest levels between the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon and the UTO Leader, Said Abdulloh Nuri. Eight such meetings were held in Kabul, Tehran, Hosdeh, Meshhed, and Bishkek;
4. Meeting between representatives of the armed units of the Republic of Tajikistan and UTO commanders held on September 15-16, 1996 in Gharm;
5. Inter-Tajik dialogue within the Dartmouth Conference Framework with the participation of American and Russian politicians and diplomats from March 1993 to December 2003.
6. Meetings of the informal Group of Friends of Tajikistan in the UN Headquarters;
7. The Public Council (established on 9 March 1996), composed of political parties and public organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan;
8. Consultation with the Special Envoys (later Special Representatives) of the UN Secretary-General at the highest level held, as a rule, between the rounds of negotiations;
9. Consultations of the Special Envoys/Special Representatives with the members of the Tajik delegations at negotiations;
10. A donor conference, held in Vienna in November 1997;
11. The Joint Commission on observing the Tehran Agreement;
12. The Commission on National Reconciliation (and its sub-commissions on political, military, refugee and legal issues);
13. The working and expert groups of the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR);
14. The Contact Group composed of Guarantor Countries;
15. Meetings between the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and the Chairman of CNR Said Abdulloh Nuri;
16. Working meetings of the President with the members of CNR;
17. Conciliation Commissions;
18. Joint CNR and Contact Group meetings.