

Policy brief

EUUCAM

EU-CENTRAL ASIA MONITORING

Tajikistan: 'Revolutionary situation or a Resilient state?'

Anna Matveeva

Since 2008, after a period of relative growth and social stability, the situation in Tajikistan has been steadily deteriorating, leading to increased speculation that the country could emerge as a failing state.¹ Given its proximity to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the role it plays in the Northern Distribution Network – a line that funnels military supplies from Europe to NATO ISAF troops in Afghanistan – the ramifications of potential instability in Tajikistan would resonate beyond the country. The current briefing assesses to what extent such danger is in fact real by outlining developments in the key areas of economy and security, and examining the regime's capacity to cope with emerging challenges. The briefing concludes with recommendations for the EU and an outlook for future.

Energy

Tajikistan is a poor country in a troublesome neighbourhood. According to Tajikistan's State Committee of Statistics, 53 per cent of population is poor and 17 per cent, very poor. Average salary barely reaches US\$50 per month.² The country is experiencing a reverse industrialisation: 77 per cent of its

population lives in rural areas, compared with 63 per cent in the mid-1980s.

Tajikistan's development is seriously constrained by energy deficit. Its vast hydropower potential remains merely a potential, while the country suffers from acute shortages in winter months. Energy is a bone of contention among the countries in the region. In November 2009 Kazakhstan accused Tajikistan of misappropriating electricity from the unified Central Asian system and threatened to leave the regional power grid.³ Also in November the management of the Sangtuda (a hydropower station in which Russia has a 75 per cent stake) informed the Tajik government that it plans to halt production due to consumer debt, which at the end of October constituted US\$ 30 million and which the authorities did little to repay. Given the circumstances, continuing production does not appear to make economic sense.⁴

In December 2009 Uzbekistan left the Central Asian grid, depriving Tajikistan of

3 'Uzbekistan Withdrawing From Regional Power Grid,' 1 December 2009, RFE/RL Newline, http://www.rferl.org/content/Uzbekistan_Withdrawing_From_Regional_Power_Grid/1892220.html

4 Victoria Panfilova, 'Москва погрузит Душанбе в темноту: Сангтудинская ГЭС-1 может остановиться из-за долгов потребителей,' 16 November 2009, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, at http://www.ng.ru/cis/2009-11-16/11_dushanbe.html

1 See 'Tajikistan: on the Road to Failure', International Crisis Group, Asia Report N°162, 12 February 2009, Dushanbe – Brussels.

2 Victoria Panfilova, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 12 August 2009 at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1260225120>

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issues for international organisations (UN, European Commission, Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), EBRD, donor governments, including the UK, and international non-governmental organisations.

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1.2 billion kilowatt hours of Turkmen electricity delivered through Uzbekistan, upon which the country depends on during winter.⁵ This development may have serious consequences for Tajikistan for winter 2009/10 winter and for irrigation in summer 2010. The energy situation has not been helped by the decline of coal mining in the north and by the redirection of electricity from social needs to aluminium production at TALCO.⁶ In the early 2000s the plant used 32 per cent of the locally produced electricity and the rest of the required energy was bought in Uzbekistan, yet by 2008 TALCO consumed up to 43 per cent of total supplies, while households consumed just 28 percent.⁷

Energy problems reflect Tajikistan's poor record in attracting investment to strategic sectors. The country suffers from underinvestment that affects infrastructure, industry and agriculture alike. The government was successful in attracting investment from Iran and China,⁸ and hopes to receive another US\$3 billion from the latter. However, it is unclear how the country would repay the Chinese loans; it could potentially fall into a debt trap and offer assets to China in lieu of payments. On a positive note, steps were taken to improve the business climate. Legislation introduced in July 2009 streamlined the process of registering a business. New rules allow entrepreneurs to deal with only the State Tax Committee during the registration process. As a result, the country jumped up seven places from 159 to 152 out of 183 countries in the World Bank's *Doing Business* study, making the country a 'top 10 reformer' worldwide.⁹ There are few signs so far that investors are convinced, given Tajikistan's previous record of foreign businesses been pushed out of the country.

Despite problems with the IMF and other international loans, expensive TALCO litigation in European courts, the global financial crisis and energy shortages; the leadership is showing no signs of panic. It is adamant that the country's major assets will not be sold to foreigners. In February 2009 the parliament approved the bill to list Nurek and Rogun hydropower stations on the River Vakhsh, as well as TALCO, as strategic state assets excluded from privatisation. This gave a signal to Russian – and other potential investors – that they should abandon their hopes of ever owning these objects.¹⁰ Still, the government offered silver and gold deposits for tender despite its earlier reluctance to privatise mining. Tenders for 'Big Konimansur' deposit which

contains 90 per cent of Tajikistan's silver reserves have been announced,¹¹ and so were tenders for the Shahbas gold deposit in the north, which is estimated to contain 75 tonnes of gold.¹² It is believed that deposits are likely to go to China.

In an effort to achieve energy self-sufficiency, the government tried unsuccessfully to attract investment in Rogun hydropower station, but it emerged that expensive, technically complicated and politically problematic Rogun could be attractive to investors only if offered as a package with TALCO, as the collapse of the investment deal with RusAl highlighted. Once RusAL was made to understand that its appetite for a controlling stake in the aluminium plant would not be satisfied, its enthusiasm for developing electricity production for its own sake waned significantly. Presently, the government plans to finalise Rogun construction out of its pocket, which would require between US\$ 3 and 6 billion, and, after Uzbekistan's decision to leave the regional grid, it feels that it is within its rights to disregard potential opposition from Tashkent. The 2010 state budget allocates US\$160 million for Rogun, while US\$ 800 million are required to launch the first phase.

There is no consensus regarding whether Rogun would indeed solve Tajikistan's energy problems, even if more funds could be found. Many within the international development community believe that there are politically easier and more cost-effective means to generate energy. Yet for Tajikistan's leadership Rogun is a matter of national pride and a hope; realisation of the project would allow the country to become independent of its neighbours, while also reviving the country's industrial potential.

Security

The other area of concern is the growing religiosity among the population of this secular state, against a backdrop of economic and social hardship. The expanding influence of Islam on everyday life is reflected in changes in behaviour and customs. Alcohol production has been scaled down due to low demand,¹³ and an increasing number of restaurants have banned consumption of alcohol on the premises. More girls try to wear *rusari* head wear at school instead of permitted national dress.¹⁴ On the whole, forces of religious conservatism are becoming more pronounced, especially among younger people.

In the eyes of the ruling establishment, Islamist-related terrorism remains the main threat. According to the Ministry of Interior, in the period 1995–2009, 98 acts of terrorism were registered in Tajikistan, with 57 of them solved.¹⁵ Islamist-related violence

5 Konstantin Parshin, 'Tajikistan: Dushanbe May Stop Water Flow As Uzbekistan Pulls Plug On Power,' 30 November 2009, Eurasia Insight <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav113009.shtml>

6 Tajik Aluminium Plant, formerly known as TadAZ, a state-owned enterprise and a flagship of industry in Tajikistan.

7 'Emergency Project Paper On A Proposed Grant In The Amount Of SDR 4.0 million (US\$6.5 Million Equivalent), Republic Of Tajikistan For An Energy Emergency Recovery Assistance Project,' Report no: 43333-TJ, 18 April, 2008.

8 Victoria Panfilova, 'Рахмон посеребрил Поднебесную: Россия не получит обещанное Таджикистаном крупнейшее в мире месторождение серебра,' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 12 November 2009, at http://www.ng.ru/cis/2009-11-12/1_rahmon.html

9 'Doing Business 2010: Reforming through Difficult Times,' International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank, September 2009, quoted in David Trilling, 'Tajikistan: Business Climate Improving, But Corruption Remains An Obstacle To Investment,' 5 November 2009, Eurasia Insight <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav1104509.shtml>

10 'ТАЛКО и Рогун не могут быть приватизированы. Ключевые объекты таджикской экономики остаются у Душанбе,' 27 February 2009, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1235682540>

11 'Власти Таджикистана выставили на торги крупное месторождение серебра,' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 24 November 2009, at http://www.ng.ru/cis/2009-11-24/6_tajikistan.html

12 'Золотоносное месторождение Шахбас Таджикистан выставит на тендер,' *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 19 November 2009, http://www.ng.ru/cis/2009-11-19/6_tadjikistan.html

13 In nine months of 2009 33,000 decilitres of vodka was produced in Tajikistan, 11,000 less than in the nine months of 2008, in Tilav Rasul-Zade 'Винно-водочный бизнес Таджикистана терпит крах. Грядет «сухой закон»?' 29 October 2009, <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6351>

14 Tilav Rasul-Zade, 'В Таджикистане школьницам запрещают приходить на занятия в мусульманском платке «русари»,' 17 September 2009, <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6303>

15 Nargis Hamrabayeva, 10 December 2009, Asia-Plus at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1260429180>

appears to be on the rise. According to the deputy chair of the Committee on National Security Abdullo Navzarov, in 2007–09 Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) members conducted five bomb raids, as a result of which 13 people died. In 2009 28 IMU members were detained, compared to 18 in 2008.¹⁶ A number of violent incidents erupted in mid-2009: a suspected IMU member was killed outside the capital in a shoot-out with security forces,¹⁷ arrests of alleged IMU members increased during summer and the summit of the leaders of Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Russia in Dushanbe was disturbed by bomb explosions.¹⁸

The government's policy is to stress the distinctly secular character of the state, and to contain and control religious life. Following the 2007–08 registration of mosques, when many unregistered mosques were closed and some even demolished, there are only 3000 mosques, of which just 259 are *juma* (Friday) mosques and 18 Madrasas in a country of 7.2 million.¹⁹ In June 2009 President Rahmon announced his discouragement of making the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, this year, calling on wealthy people to donate their savings to charity instead. Every year 4,500 Tajiks perform the Hajj which costs an average of US\$3,000 per person.²⁰

Repression of previously-tolerated movements has increased. In January 2009 the Supreme Court of Tajikistan ordered the prohibition of activities by Salafi adherents, and forbid the importation and distribution of their religious material. The Salafis, numbering between 10,000 and 20,000, were portrayed as 'the true heart of opposition, promoters of popular discontent, who could at any moment promote a struggle to overthrow the established order'.²¹

Jamaat-ut Tabligh also was banned, with adherents suppressed. In September 2009 the Supreme Court sentenced five members to prison terms of between three and six years. Another trial of 56 people accused of belonging to the Jamaat-ut Tabligh began in December. The government described Tabligh as a hard-line extremist group based in India and Pakistan which engages in extremist activities in Tajikistan.²²

At the same time, ex-field commanders from the civil war era (1992–97) continue to be a source of security problems in former opposition areas. In February 2008 an incident took place in Gharm when an attempt to arrest the head of organised crime police squad Mirzohoja Ahmadov, an ex-United Tajik Opposition (UTO) commander, resulted in fatalities among troops sent to

arrest him.²³ More serious fighting broke out in Tavildara in July 2009. Shaykh Nemat Azizov, who led a group of militants, was killed by the Interior Ministry's Special Forces when they were tracked down in Tavildara. The Interior Ministry claimed Shaykh Nemat had entered Tajikistan to sell drugs from Afghanistan to fund militant operations in Pakistan and Afghanistan.²⁴

The last prominent civil war hero from the opposition side also met his death in July 2009. Mirzo Ziyeev, who held the position of civil emergencies' minister until his removal from the government in 2006, joined up with Mullo Abdullo, his civil war comrade-in-arms. Abdullo's 100-strong detachment allegedly crossed from Afghanistan where his fighters had been based for years, and raided police and administration buildings in Tavildara. Security forces countered the attacks, in which Ziyeev and five Russian citizens were killed, alongside with other fighters.²⁵ Ziyeev's switching sides with the militants demonstrated the dangers of letting dismissed security actors lead an independent life; a 'mistake' the Tajik leadership are unlikely to repeat in future.

Developments such as these emphasise the interconnectedness of security in Tajikistan with that of Afghanistan. In September the Taliban stepped up their activities in Kunduz province close to Tajikistan, which is controlled by German ISAF troops. They seized two fuel tankers and attacked military vehicles. Non-Afghan militants of Central Asian origin assumed to belong to the IMU were moved to Kunduz from the tribal areas of Pakistan, including with the use of military helicopters.²⁶

In the worst case scenario of Taliban attacks from across the border, Tajikistan's security forces would be unable to defend the country on their own for an extended period. In this case, article IV of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), which stipulates that an attack on one member of the organisation means an attack on all, would be evoked. All necessary means, including the use of force, would be employed by CSTO members to resist such attacks.²⁷

State Resilience

Tajikistan is facing multiple challenges, but this does not mean that the country is on its way to collapse. Tajikistan remains a resilient, if not a very inspiring state. The regime has a

23 'Murder Invokes Ghosts of Tajikistan's Past', IWPR Reporting Central Asia, No. 533, 20 February 2008.

24 Andrew McGregor, 'Counterterrorism Operations Continue in Tajikistan,' *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* vol. 7 issue 25, 13 August 2009 http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35410&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=13&cHash=e6ebe55615

25 Bruce Pannier, Abubakar Siddique 'Ten Years After IMU Raids, Central Asia Still Battling Militants,' 6 August, 2009 http://www.rferl.org/content/Ten_Years_After_IMU_Raids_Central_Asia_Still_Battling_Militants/1794035.html There is no clarity about the circumstances in which Ziyeev died. According to the official version, he was killed by Abdullo militants when he tried to persuade them to negotiate with the government. Other versions are that he was shot by the government troops during fighting in Tavildara or that he did not side up with Abdullo at all, but was shot dead pre-emptively, so he does not join Abdullo.

26 Sanobar Shermatova, 'Should Central Asia Fear Taleban Spillover?' IWPR Reporting Central Asia no. 595, 6 November 2009, http://www.iwpr.net/?p=rca&s=f&o=357261&apc_state=henprca

27 Colonel General Nikolai Bordyuzha, Secretary General, Collective Security Treaty Organisation, speaking on 'The Collective Security Treaty Organisation and Regional Security Challenges in Eurasia,' 8 December 2009, International Institute for Security Studies, London.

16 *Novosti Kazakhstan Information Agency*, 2 November 2009 http://www.newskaz.ru/world_news/20091102/346560.html

17 'Tajik Gunfight Kills Suspected IMU Member', 10 August 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Tajik_Gunfight_Kills_Suspected_IMU_Member/1796552.html

18 Lev Makedonov, 'Подполковника заминировали к визиту Медведева' [Lieutenant Colonel was mined for Medvedev's visit], 31 July 2009 http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2009/07/31_a_3229694.shtml

19 According to Minister of Culture Mirzoshohrkh Asrori, in 'Ислам стал официальной религией в Таджикистане,' 6 March 2009, <http://news.invictory.org/issue22081.html>

20 Konstantin Parshin, 'President Rahmon appeals to Tajik believers to make charitable donations', 17 July 2009, *Asia-Plus*, <http://www.asiaplus.tj/en/articles/286/3869.html>

21 Asia News, 9 January 2009, at <http://www.sperforum.com/a/17609/Supreme-court-of-Tajikistan-outlaws-Salafi-Islam>

22 RFE/RL Newline, 10 December 2009, at http://www.rferl.org/content/Trial_Of_Suspected_Islamic_Extremists_Opens_In_Dushanbe/1900084.html

proven ability to resist challenges and, on occasion, pre-empt unwelcome developments through state action. It provides short-term stability at the cost of substantive reform. The weakness of the current state is not in its tendency towards crisis and failure, but in its inability to act as a developmental engine in the long-term interests of the country.

Three groups of factors – social, political and external – act against the possibility of major destabilisation.

Why people obey

The state continues to place considerable, often impossible demands upon the population. Recent examples include the announcement that each family would have to contribute around \$700 for construction of Rogun,²⁸ that citizens would have to pay for provision of any official information by state bodies,²⁹ and the drafting of state sector employees and even those in private companies who provide services to the state, to 'voluntarily' pick cotton in the autumn 2009 harvest.³⁰ Still, most people either obey these escalating demands or find ways of working around the system. There are no protests, as there was a remarkably low level of protest during winter 2008 when energy shortages were dire and children were dying of cold. The question is why.

One explanation is that people are dependent upon the state. The state has a bureaucratic apparatus which covers the whole territory and provides formal services to the population – as well as exchanging informal favours - by issuing documents, permits, licenses, state registries. It can make life hard by denying them. The local authorities can threaten various bureaucratic punishments, such as expelling children from schools, prohibiting farmers from exporting their products beyond the provincial boundaries, disadvantaging them over land allocation etc. Civic awareness remains low and people are often unaware of their rights. For example, although the state adopted legislation prohibiting the sending of children to pick cotton, few are aware of it in cotton-producing Khatlon where the authorities act as if nothing has changed.³¹

Symbolic means which remind the citizens of the existence of the state are important in ensuring compliance, with portraits, elections, national holidays and military parades looming large in the public domain.³² The system's resemblance of the Soviet institutional pattern also conveys a sense of familiarity and continuity with the past, which remind the population of stability. This is reinforced by the sense that little can be gained by protesting, of which the experience of the civil war serves a powerful reminder. In the run-up to the civil war of 1992, citizens

28 See, for instance, 'В Таджикистане открываются пункты приема средств на Рогунскую ГЭС' 10 December 2009 <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1260437400>

29 A. Reutov, 'Таджикским властям спустили план продажности. Даже за разговор с чиновником гражданам придется платить,' 27 November 2009, *Kommersant-Daily* № 222 (4277), 27 November 2009, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1259303820>

30 Tavil Rasul-Zade, 'Таджикистан: Новый сезон хлопкового рабства. Приглашаются все желающие,' 20 October 2009 <http://www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6342>

31 'Tajikistan: Cotton Harvest Relies Heavily On Child Labour,' 3 November 2009, *Eurasia Insight* <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav110309.shtml>

32 'Legitimising Central Asian Authoritarianism: Political Manipulation and Symbolic Power,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 61, issue 7, September 2009, pp. 1095 – 1121.

had been convinced that wealth existed in the republic, and the problem lay in uneven distribution, as representatives of one region were unjustly deprived while others were privileged. At present many believe that the state coffers are largely empty and that it has little to offer to its people. Moreover, the deficit of public information, low geographical mobility and mutual suspicion among representatives of different regional groupings create powerful barriers against the solidarity needed to mobilise around a common agenda.

Control Machine

The regime successfully manages to project a public image of strength, which is what matters. The state does not need to exercise total control or a high level of repression since the society already has become increasingly passive over the years. Still, it has a considerable and diverse security sector with institutions of control inherited from the Soviet era, such as the Ministries for State Security and the Interior, and structures created as a result of the civil war (Ministry of Defence) and post-war developments, such as Border Troops or the Ministry of Emergencies. Although the security sector looms large, civilian control by the President and his entourage is firmly entrenched. The presence and visibility of security sector agents throughout the country maintains a sense that everybody is being watched, although this is not necessarily the case.

Manipulation of political opponents in and outside the government is a skill that President Emomali Rahmon has mastered. The period 2004–2009 witnessed frequent rotations of appointments including persecution and imprisonments, but more often than not officials did not fall from grace entirely, but were allocated less prestigious positions to ensure the preservation of the elite cartel. The forthcoming February 2010 parliamentary elections are likely to perform this function of turning unwanted officials into parliamentary dignitaries without disgracing them. This does little to improve the government's professional capacities, but creates a certain predictability for political elites.

The Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) is allowed to operate as the main opposition party insofar as it does not step out of the government-provided space, disabling it from emerging as a force for radical transformation of the existing order. In the absence of political agents who could use compromising information to challenge the leadership, the majority of society is largely unaware of the true state of affairs in the country and is inclined to believe the official explanations that hardships are beyond the government's control. Thus, elite stability is key, while popular consent to rule can be manipulated to a certain degree.

External factors

Several external factors also work towards stability. Adverse effects of instability in Afghanistan feed the fear of chaos. Uzbekistan acts as a convenient and vicious enemy, every so often taking new steps to disadvantage Tajikistan. Thus, many of the government's failures can be easily explained by the unhelpful policies of the Karimov leadership.³³ Cultivation of an 'enemy image' resonates well with the Tajik majority, which is inclined to regard President Rahmon as a bastion against the Uzbek domination, allowing the regime to rally around the nationalist agenda.

33 Arkadii Dubnov, *Vremya Novostei*, 10 December 2009 <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1260429120>

Despite the financial crisis, labour migration to Russia has not altered much, taking potential 'angry young men' out of the local situation, while their remittances create a social safety net. Labour remittances are estimated to constitute 46 percent of Tajikistan's GDP. Returns of migrants to Tajikistan have not been massive and remittances grew again in 2009. According to data from CONTACT, an international system of financial transfers, in the second quarter of 2009 the transfers from Russia to Tajikistan grew 53 per cent compared to the first quarter. In three quarters of 2009, the average monthly transfer from Russia to Tajikistan stood at US\$444 per capita.³⁴ The Russian State Statistics Committee reported slightly different figures showing that remittances dropped, but still constituted US\$ 1300 million in three quarters of 2009.³⁵ Those who lose their jobs prefer to stay in Russia in the hope that the situation will improve rather than returning home to labour in the cotton fields.

Lastly, international assistance plays a role, meeting the government's most urgent needs in the social sector and mitigating popular discontent. Foreign aid allows the leadership to take credit for undertaking development projects, which it presents as state authored, thus strengthening its legitimacy. However, the significance of aid should not be exaggerated. Tajikistan is far from an aid-dependant country: in 2007 the net ODA to GNI ratio amounted to 6.1 per cent and net ODA constituted \$221 million.³⁶

Implications for the EU

The EU needs to keep its expectations of what can be achieved in Tajikistan proportional to the context and be mindful that its political system may not be conducive to any substantial reform, as its resilience lies in projection of power and predictability. The EU does not have significant leverage to influence political outcomes, while geopolitical rivalries enable the Tajik government to shift between different poles if pressure from international actor or another becomes uncomfortable.

The EU needs to assess which of its available instruments are conducive to the operational environment. Problems that Tajikistan faces – be they energy shortages, lack of basic food commodities or spillover of instability from Afghanistan – are unique in Central Asia. For example, Tajikistan is the only state that potentially requires large-scale humanitarian assistance. The EU needs to take this into account in the pursuit of its regional strategy, as it is unclear that at present Tajikistan has an adequate capacity to benefit from it.

Until a solution to the energy problems is found, the country will balance on the edge of a humanitarian catastrophe every winter, requiring donors to be on standby to provide relief aid. The EU, in collaboration with other donors, needs to help Tajikistan in elaborating a sustainable, realistic strategy on how to satisfy domestic demand for energy, first and foremost in the

social sector. This would include an assessment of viability of the construction of Rogun hydropower station in the conditions of absence of foreign investment, use of domestically-produced electricity for aluminium production instead of household needs and options for developing alternative means of energy production.

The European Commission started to provide funding for Islamic–secular dialogue through its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); for instance, it allocated funds to International Alert, a UK NGO, for a 'Dialogue for a Policy on the Relationship between the Secular State and Religion.' Such steps are welcome, but much more needs to be done to improve analysis and get a more nuanced picture of the diversity of religious life in Tajikistan to generate concrete ideas of what can be done to ensure peaceful co-existence between the state and religion.

The decision not to engage with Russia, especially in the security sphere, was unfortunate, as it undermined the leverage the EU might have had on the Tajik leadership and it prevented pulling the strengths of different actors together. In the current deteriorating security context the EU needs to step up its operational consultation and cooperation with Russia in relation to the Tajik – Afghan border and work out a plan of joint preventative measures in case Taliban advances threaten to spill over into Tajikistan.

Outlook

While short-term disruption of stability is unlikely given that the regime maintains a firm grip on power, longer-term prospects appear rather bleak, as demodernisation of the country deepens, and education and health sectors continue to decline. Massive labour migration to Russia has proven to be a long-term phenomenon which the financial crisis has not significantly affected. This trend has profound implications for the national economy and social life, which have not yet been fully analysed, but which international development actors would have to take into account in their future policy-planning.

The energy fallout between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan which further aggravated their precarious relationship threaten to unleash rounds of retributions and obstruct cross-border transit. Since they are both key components in the supply chain for NATO ISAF troops, the flow of supplies into Afghanistan could experience disruptions.

The developments in Afghanistan over the next eighteen months will be key, given the 2011 deadline for the beginning of the withdrawal of US troops announced by President Obama. The dangers are that IMU fighters in northern Afghanistan would seek to disrupt the new supply line through Central Asia and may mount armed challenges to the secular regimes in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Thus, the escalation of hostilities in northern Afghanistan carries the risk that the Central Asian region could be dragged into the Afghan conflict. If fighting intensifies, Tajikistan is likely to be more affected than it has been thus far, and security may again emerge as an overarching concern, compared to which other priorities would be less important.

³⁴ Rasul Shodon, 'Таджикские мигранты в среднем за раз отправляют на Родину \$444, - Центробанк РФ,' 10 December 2009, <http://www.asiaplus.tj/news/49/60240.html>

³⁵ Sergei Rassov, CA-News, 9 November 2009, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1257837420>

³⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/24/20/1882885.gif>

About EUCAM

The Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Spain, in co-operation with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Belgium, has launched a joint project entitled "EU Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM)". The (EUCAM) initiative is an 18-month research and awareness-raising exercise supported by several EU member states and civil society organisations which aims:

- to raise the profile of the EU-Central Asia Strategy;
- to strengthen debate about the EU-Central Asia relationship and the role of the Strategy in that relationship;
- to enhance accountability through the provision of high quality information and analysis;
- to promote mutual understanding by deepening the knowledge within European and Central Asian societies about EU policy in the region; and
- to develop 'critical' capacity within the EU and Central Asia through the establishment of a network that links communities concerned with the role of the EU in Central Asia.

EUCAM focuses on four priority areas in order to find a mix between the broad political ambitions of the Strategy and the narrower practical priorities of EU institutions and member state assistance programmes:

- Democracy and Human Rights
- Security and Stability
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Education and Social Relations

EUCAM will produce the following series of publications:

- A bi-monthly newsletter on EU-Central Asia relations will be produced and distributed broadly by means of an email list server using the CEPS and FRIDE networks. The newsletter contains the latest documents on EU-Central Asia relations, up-to-date information on the EU's progress in implementing the Strategy and developments in Central Asian countries.

- Policy briefs will be written by permanent and ad hoc Working Group members. The majority of the papers examine issues related to the four core themes identified above, with other papers commissioned in response to emerging areas beyond the main themes.

- Commentaries on the evolving partnership between the EU and the states of Central Asia will be commissioned reflecting specific developments in the EU-Central Asian relationship.

- A final monitoring report of the EUCAM Expert Working Group will be produced by the project rapporteurs.

This monitoring exercise is implemented by an Expert Working Group, established by FRIDE and CEPS. The group consists of experts from the Central Asian states and the members countries of the EU. In addition to expert meetings, several public seminars will be organised for a broad audience including EU representatives, national officials and legislators, the local civil society community, media and other stakeholders.

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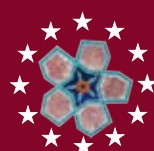
FRIDE is a think tank based in Madrid that aims to provide original and innovative thinking on Europe's role in the international arena. It strives to break new ground in its core research interests – peace and security, human rights, democracy promotion and development and humanitarian aid – and mould debate in governmental and nongovernmental bodies through rigorous analysis, rooted in the values of justice, equality and democracy.

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