



TAJIKISTAN : A CONFLICT DIAGNOSTIC, 2011



Executive Summary

Tajikistan is the only former soviet Central Asian republic to experience large-scale civil conflict. War has been a causal factor in Tajikistan remaining the most impoverished state in the region, consequently resulting in a deteriorating security infrastructure. This diagnostic found that history of armed conflict, international linkages and governance will leave Tajikistan's risk indicators vulnerable to negative trends for some time. However, Tajikistan's CFIP indicators project a low probability for conflict in the near term. Economic prospects look promising, while the political regime remains stable. The most-likely scenario will see Tajikistan retain its current level of stability, with Afghanistan's future security acting as a likely trigger mechanism for future conflict.

External Stakeholders

Actor	Impact	Effects
United States	Mixed	(+) As Tajikistan's largest bilateral donor, the US has been instrumental in financing and directing major health, economic, governance, and security programs through the Dept. of State and NATO's PfP. (-) The US has enhanced security ties with a Tajik administration noted for endemic corruption and politico-socio repression.
UN Organizations	Positive	(+) United Nations organizations have been a catalyst for stability in Tajikistan; through the World Food program (during 2008 food crisis), improving access to water and sanitation, health initiatives, and the UNDP's mine removal program.
Regional Organizations	Mixed	(+) The CIS, SCO, and OSCE have all contributed to enhancing Tajikistan's economic outlook by providing major development loans. (-) CSTO Secretary General, Nikolay Bordyuzha, continually sides with Moscow's pressure tactics regarding expanding military cooperation with Russia.
Afghanistan	Mixed	(+) Possible transit routes through Afghan territory may allow Tajikistan to expand trade opportunities. (-) Opiate production and war have remained major sources of instability along the Tajik/Afghan border.
Russia	Mixed	(+) 7,000 Russian troops and debt forgiveness have positively contributed to Tajikistan's economic and political security. (-) Russia's strategic use of oil/oil product exports has created volatility in Tajik food prices.
Uzbekistan	Negative	(-) Uzbekistan has used environmental and security concerns to boost truck tariffs and halt rail transport at the Tajik border.
China	Positive	(+) China/Tajik trade has grown rapidly with Beijing providing \$200M in loans for Tajikistan's Zeravshan Hydroelectric plant.
Kyrgyzstan	Mixed	(+) Relations have recently improved with cooperation/coordination through joint counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism initiatives. (-) Movement on border delimitation remains slow as Tajik enclaves remain a source of ethnic violence.
Iran	Positive	(+) Iranian investment and transit possibilities will increasingly reduce Tajikistan's dependence on a volatile Uzbek border.
Transnational Organizations	Negative	(-) IMU violence has exacerbated security concerns in the Ferghana Valley and Tajikistan's remote Rasht Valley.

Internal Stakeholders

Actor	Impact	Effects
Pres. Emomali Rahkmon	Mixed	(+) Political stability in a volatile region has allowed Tajikistan to make inroads since the civil war. (-) Presidential elections are unlikely to be transparent due to political exclusivity and continued corruption.
Opposition Parties (8 Registered)	Mixed	(+/-) Political parties offer some semblance of plurality but most remain either marginalized or loyal to the Rahkmon regime.
Ethnic Groups	Mixed	(+) Tajikistan's ethnic minorities do not significantly contribute to internal instability. (-) As the largest ethnicity, Uzbeks are not proportionally represented at the parliamentary level.

History of Armed Conflict	Risk Factor: 5.3 (Deteriorating)
<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tajikistan experienced a period of civil war from 1992-1997ⁱ - Influx of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Taliban fighters in 2009. Has increased number of terrorist attacks on Tajik soil (including the country's first suicide bombing in 2010).ⁱⁱ - Withdrawal of Russian border guards has led to armed engagements with the Taliban along the Afghan-Tajik border.ⁱⁱⁱ - Important transit country for rampant narcotics trafficking rings operating in Central Asia^{iv} 	
<p>Risk Assessment: Non-state actors, particularly Islamic insurgent groups, will continue to operate unhindered (especially in regions close to and bordering Afghanistan). This threat has the potential of becoming increasingly acute if Tajikistan does not develop the military and defensive capabilities necessary to control and contain insurgent activities.</p>	
Governance and Political Instability	Risk Factor: 9.31 (Deteriorating)
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable rule under President Rahkmon for the past 12 years^v - Ruling party received landslide victory in 2010 parliamentary elections. - Government has been effective thus far at clamping down on religious extremism.^{vi} - Anti-corruption drive in 2010 led to the dismissal of 15 regional prosecutors.^{vii} 	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall Polity IV Score of -3 remained unchanged from 2006 to 2011.^{viii} - Considered 'Not Free' by Freedom House's Restrictions on Civil and Political Rights and Freedom of the Press rankings. No change in either indicator from 2006 to 2011.^{ix} - Levels of corruption increased significantly from -0.91 in 2006 to -1.17 in 2011.^x - Recent audit revealed \$1 billion in irregularities at the National Bank^{xi} - President Rahkmon has been taking steps to groom his son, Rustam Emomali, as his designated successor.^{xii}
<p>Risk Assessment: President Rahkmon's rule has been marked by increasing corruption but does not appear to face any significant challenges from internal political dissidents. He will undoubtedly win a renewed mandate in the upcoming Presidential elections, allowing him to hold onto power until 2020.</p>	
Militarization	Risk Factor: 5.25 (Deteriorating)
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abiding signatory of the Central Asian Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, and completed NATO's disposal of surplus arms and Anti-Personnel Mines program in 2009. - Since the early 2000s, Tajikistan, a PFP country, is receiving both funding and training from American and NATO forces. This will improve Tajik capacity in areas such as border security, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking, disaster relief, and the reform of its armed forces.^{xiii} - Creation of CSTO Rapid Reaction Force has enhanced collective security^{xiv} - Tajikistan's ability to patrol its own borders is improving.^{xv} 	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Military and defense spending dramatically increased in Tajikistan during the years following the NATO invasion of Afghanistan; going from \$17.1M in 2001 (or 1.2% of GDP) to \$55.4M UDS in 2004.^{xvi} In comparison to other Central Asian states, however, Tajikistan's hike in militarization has been quite modest and its military spending has decreased significantly in the past few years (dropping to 1.46% of its GDP in 2009, and rising only slightly to 1.5% in 2010).^{xvii} - Tajikistan remains highly dependent on foreign military and defense forces, as the size of its army has remained very small (8,800 active members).^{xviii} - In Sept. 2011, Tajikistan and Russia reached an agreement allowing Russia to station 7000 troops at three different Tajikstani bases.^{xix}
<p>Risk Assessment: Any increases in militarization have been modest compared to those of other countries in Central Asia. Despite pressures by NATO to enhance its military and security capabilities, Tajikistan remains heavily dependent on foreign defense forces - particularly the CSTO. This explains the continued presence of Russian bases throughout Tajikistan.</p>	
Population Heterogeneity	Risk Factor: 4.33 (Stable)
<p>Ethnic Diversity: Tajik (79.9%), Uzbek (15.3%), Russian (1.1%), Kyrgyz (1.1%), Other (2.6)^{xx}</p> <p>Religious Diversity: Sunni (85%), Shia (5%), Other (10%)^{xxi}</p>	
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tajikistan freedom of religion accommodates a greater plurality of political parties than most Central Asian countries, including the Islamic Rebirth Party (IRP). The IRP is the only recognized religious party in Central Asia.^{xxii} - Tajikistan is more ethnically homogenous than other Central Asian republics, limiting post-war ethnic conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government respect for religion remains poor, with recent 2009 decrees banning prayer at unregistered sights and the wearing of the hijab, in addition to the closure of several "unregistered" mosques that did not adhere to the pro-government Hanafi school of Islam.^{xxiii} - Political discrimination increasingly targets ethnic minorities, including a 2009 decree banning the use of Russian as the "language of interethnic communication," favoring Tajik Linguistic dominance.^{xxiv} - Political representation among sub-ethnic groups, representing different regions, remains highly unequal.
<p>Risk Assessment: With a largely homogenous population, the risk of inter-ethnic violence remains low. Government actions may radicalize small elements of society due to repressive religious regulations, however, risk of conflict is negliable due to a lack of diversity.</p>	

Demographic Stress	Risk Factor: 4.28 (Stable)
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population enjoys a stable growth rate averaging around 1% to 1.4% annually.^{xxv} As a result of sustainable growth, population density has grown from just 46 people per sq. km to 49 people per sq. km.^{xxvi} - Tajikistan's population of youth aged 0 – 14 has decreased by 3% over the last five years, illustrating increased demographic proportionality if future trends continue.^{xxvii} 	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population of youth aged 0 – 14 is still significantly higher than both the global average at 37%.^{xxviii} - Tajikistan's youth bulge has historically been, and remains, significantly higher than the rest of post-soviet Central Asia (regional average 29% - 30%).^{xxix}
<p>Risk Assessment: Demographic variables demonstrate a low probability of contributing to violence in Tajikistan.</p>	
Economic Performance	Risk Factor: 5.02 (Improving)
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tajikistan has experienced annual GDP growth rates of approximately 6-7 % over the past five years.^{xxx} IMF projects growth of at least 6% in 2011.^{xxxi} - GDP per capita at current international dollars has almost doubled, growing from \$433.78 in 2006 to \$819.99 2010.^{xxxii} - Inflation dropped from 10% per year in 2006 to 6.4% in 2010.^{xxxiii} - GINI score has experienced slight improvement.^{xxxiv} - Nearing completion of Rogun and Santugda 2 hydroelectric projects. Expected to begin supplying energy to Afghanistan later this year.^{xxxv} - Nearing completion of the Istiqlol Tunnel. An essential pillar of the 'modern day silk road' initiative.^{xxxvi} - Discovery of hydrocarbon and mineral deposits.^{xxxvii} - Growing bilateral trade links with China, Japan, Iran, and Russia. 	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tajikistan's dependence on remittances from workers living abroad (particularly in Russia) has increased from 35% to 39% of total GDP since 2006.^{xxxviii} - FDI inflows have dropped from 11.96% to 0.28% of GDP since 2005.^{xxxix} - Total debt servicing has increased from 2.46% to 9.59% of GDP since 2006.^{xl} - On-going friction with Uzbekistan has isolated Tajikistan from Soviet-era power grid and interrupted rail-traffic.^{xli} - Russian fuel tariff increase in April of 2011 resulted in food price increases of up to 30%, along with high levels of accompanying inflation.^{xlii} - Most of the country's infrastructure was constructed in the 1970s and has begun to slowly deteriorate.^{xliii}
<p>Risk Assessment: Tajikistan's extreme dependence on remittances and commodity exports leaves it highly vulnerable to further shocks to the global economy (particularly anything that has to do with Russia). The completion of hydroelectric projects along the Vakhsh River will help to balance out this vulnerability, but the resulting increase in tension with Uzbekistan over water resources may end up doing more harm than good.</p>	
Human Development	Risk Factor: 4.37 (Improving)
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relative poverty has declined from 1999 levels of 83.4% to 51% (in 2009), and extreme poverty rates have decreased on average 3.2% per year since 1999.^{xliv} - In 2008, 59% of Tajiks had access to clean water, with levels increasing to 70% for rural populations and 94% for urban populations by 2010.^{xlv} - Literacy rates have remained high over the past five years (at 99.5% for both men and women).^{xlvi} 	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tajikistan continues to have the least number of healthcare professionals per capita of any other country in Central Asia, and rural areas continue to be seriously disadvantaged regarding access to, and quality of, healthcare services.^{xlvii} - Although expenditures on healthcare (as % of GDP) have increased from 4.9% in 2006 to 5.3% in 2009, private 'out-of-pocket' payments account for far more than public spending - thus marginalizing the estimated 51% of Tajiks that continue to live in poverty.^{xlviii} - Infant immunization against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus has increased over the past five years; jumping from 86% (2006, 2007, 2008) to 93% in 2009. Similarly, infant mortality rates have decreased since 2006, and the life expectancy has also experienced a moderate increase.^{xlix} - Inequality of economic and social opportunity persists between men and women.
<p>Risk Assessment: Although Tajikistan's human development indicators are not quite up to international standards, trends demonstrate improvements in areas related to health and education.</p>	

Environmental	Risk Factor: 4.56 (Deteriorating)
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possesses the greatest freshwater reserves in Central Asia (annual production of 13 000 cubic meters per capita)^l - Negligible rate of deforestation^{li} - Minimal contributor to global GHG levels^{lii} - Has begun the rehabilitation of radioactive waste storage facilities, starting with the Soviet-era facility at Faizabad in September of 2010^{liii} - Recent project initiated to contain the threat of glacial lake outbursts^{liv} 	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slight reduction in amount of arable land per capita due to population growth (from 0.12 to 0.1 km²).^{lv} - Average temperature rise of over one degree Celsius in the past decade.^{lvi} This has led to the retreat or disappearance of 20% of the country's glaciers.^{lvii} - Severe drought and climatic shocks in 2007-2008 reduced crop yields by 40% and killed 70% of the country's livestock.^{lviii} Potential return of drought-like conditions witnessed this summer.^{lix} - Continued presence of uncontained uranium tailings remains a potential hazard to nation's water supply.

Risk Assessment: The combination of Central Asia's growing water insecurity with the on-going risk of severe climatic shocks poses a significant challenge to Tajikistan's long-term food and energy security. Although we are likely to see this dynamic play itself out over several decades, neighbouring Uzbekistan has already begun to link its concerns over river-flow management to other issues of mutual interest.

International Linkages	Risk Factor: 6.67 (Deteriorating)
<p>Stabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By ceding a fraction of its territory, Tajikistan has settled a long-standing border dispute with China, ushering in a new phase of political, security and economic cooperation.^{lx} - America has become Tajikistan's largest bi-lateral donor, with FREEDOM Support Act providing stable donations with each fiscal year.^{lxi} - Regional organizations (CSTO, NATO pfp, SCO) have begun to invest more into Tajikistan's counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics capabilities.^{lxii} 	<p>Destabilizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor relations with Uzbekistan have exacerbated an already volatile trading route, inhibiting economic security.^{lxiii} - Deteriorating relations with Russia have resulted in high import tariffs on fuel, driving up food prices in an impoverished country.^{lxiv} - Tajikistan remains a major component of the northern opiate trafficking route, running from Afghanistan to Russia/Eastern Europe.^{lxv} - American drawdown in Afghanistan may lead to a deterioration of security on the Tajik/Afghan border, as well as decreased American engagement in Central Asia.^{lxvi}

Risk Assessment: Tajikistan's sensitive geopolitical location has attracted a number of states and organizations interested in stabilizing the country. However, many regional issues remain unresolved, with Afghan instability in particular keeping Tajikistan's security in flux.

Scenarios

Best Case Scenario:

A combination of global and domestic pressure results in serious gains being made in the fight against corruption and a gradual opening of the political system in advance of the 2013 President election. Afghanistan remains stable in the wake of American withdrawal and economic and security links with the Chinese continue to grow. Enhanced regional security cooperation neutralizes the problem posed by IMU and Taliban fighters, with a resulting decline in narcotics trafficking. The world economic situation improves, allowing Tajikistan to obtain the necessary funds needed to complete its development projects and diversify its economy. The youth bulge remains substantial but continues to approach levels proportionate to the global average. Favourable environmental conditions reduce regional tensions over water distribution and stabilize food prices. Government sponsored health and education reforms are successful and progress is made towards the achievement of the country's Millennium Development Goals.

Worst Case Scenario:

Public outrage over growing levels of government corruption forces President Rahkmon to clamp down on dissidents prior to the 2013 election. American withdrawal from the region causes Afghanistan to collapse, leading to an influx of Islamic militants and drug traffickers across Tajikistan's porous southern border. Rapid deterioration of the world economic situation dries up foreign direct investment, stalls completion of hydroelectric projects and drastically cuts remittance flows from Russia. Hordes of newly unemployed youth return home, exacerbating domestic political pressures. Drought and other severe climatic shocks bring Tajikistan into conflict over water supplies with neighbouring Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Attempts at health and education reform fail miserably and the quality of existing programs continues to decline.

Most Likely Scenario:

President Rahkmon maintains his hold on power during the lead up to the 2013 Presidential election. Corruption remains endemic but continued economic growth, combined with a decreasing reliance on remittances, keeps the population content. Important regional players continue to invest in Tajikistan's physical and economic security but major grievances with neighbouring countries persist. A volatile security situation in Afghanistan remains a source of instability as the Tajik-Afghan border remains porous and undefended. Demographic pressures slowly decrease as youth leave to find employment elsewhere. The effects of climate change continue to be felt across the country but major environmental disasters are avoided. Poverty rates continue to decline but attempts at health and education reform are slow to take hold, leaving rural communities at a significant disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts.

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