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The Tajik Civil War and Russia's Islamist moment

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ABSTRACT

Contra the often-held assumption that the Islamist danger has been at the forefront of Moscow's security agenda since the Soviet–Afghan War, this article shows how different Russian decision-makers held different views of Islamism during the Tajik Civil War (1992–97). It argues that different relations to the Soviet past, especially to the Soviet–Afghan War, explain the differences in assessing Islamism in Tajikistan between the security agencies and political elites. Unlike the reformers in the Kremlin, the legacy Soviet security elites and diplomats in Russia and the neo-communist leaders in Central Asia recalled the Islamist danger from Soviet times. They emphasized it to the Kremlin who came to embrace their view as the Tajik Civil War progressed and tensions rose in Chechnya.

KEYWORDS

Russia; Tajikistan; Islamism; Boris Yeltsin; Afghanistan; USSR

During the Soviet–Afghan War, Soviet policymakers debated the need for the Afghan communists to co-opt Islam to increase their political legitimacy at home. They also pondered the presence of an Islamic threat to the Soviet Union emanating from Afghanistan. However, communist ideology and Cold War geostrategic considerations overshadowed religion in Soviet decision-making. Oblivious to the accommodation between communism and Islam that had developed in Central Asia, the Kremlin believed that religion was dying out in the USSR (Chernyaev 2003, Klimentov 2022; Kemper and Conermann 2011; Ro'i 2000).

While concern about Islamism, a movement that conceives Islam as a political ideology and wishes for the establishment of a theocratic pan-Islamic state (Maher 2016), had registered in Moscow after the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979,[1] Soviet policymakers only started taking the Islamist threat seriously at the end of the Soviet–Afghan War. During Mikhail Gorbachev's time, Soviet fears of an Islamist offensive in Central Asia grew as Mohammad Najibullah, the last pro-Soviet Afghan ruler, struggled in fighting the *mujahideen*, the anti-communist guerrillas who were by then conducting daring cross-border attacks against the USSR, and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan saw protests with nationalist and Islamic undertones. In parallel, the KGB and the military, at home, and in India, in bilateral contacts, insisted on the acuteness of the Islamist threat to Gorbachev

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(Kalinovsky 2011; Khalid 2021, 398–417; Klimentov 2020).[2] The Kremlin, however, still saw Islamism as a secondary concern and associated it with the hostile activities of foreign countries, primarily the United States and Iran.[3]

Against this background, this article examines Russian political and security elites' views of Islamism after the Cold War. Contrary to the prevalent assumption in Russian policy and academic circles and among some Western pundits that the Islamist danger has been at the forefront of Moscow's security agenda since the Soviet–Afghan War (Bodansky 2007; Hahn 2007; Knyazev 2001; Rashid 2002; and for critical views, see Heathershaw and Megoran 2011), it shows that decision-makers in Russia held different views of Islamism during the Tajik Civil War (1992–97).

The article argues that different relations to the Soviet past, especially to the Soviet–Afghan War, explain the differences in assessing Islamism in Tajikistan between the security agencies and the decision-makers in the Kremlin. Unlike the new Western-oriented reformers in the Kremlin, the legacy Soviet-era security elites and diplomats in Russia and the neo-communist leaders in Central Asia recalled the Islamist danger from Soviet times. These legacy Soviet elites emphasized the Islamist danger to Russian President Boris Yeltsin's team and to other political elites who came to embrace their view as the Tajik Civil War progressed and tensions rose in Chechnya. To the veterans of Afghanistan (the *Afgantsy*), the conflict in Tajikistan was the continuation of the Soviet–Afghan War.

Following research at the State Archive of the Russian Federation, this article analyses more than 1500 pages of assessments and reports by political (parliamentary committees and field missions), civilian (think-tanks, universities and research centres), military and intelligence institutions on the Tajik Civil War and Russian–Tajik relations that were circulated to Russia's Supreme Soviet (the parliament before October 1993) and State Duma (the parliament after December 1993). The numerous assessments testified to the plurality of opinions that existed in Russian society and that the parliament reflected in the 1990s. The article also draws on records of debates at the state Duma, memoirs and interviews with decision-makers and *mujahideen* journals. Conducting a historical analysis, it shows how diverging perceptions of Islamism have led, first, to tensions among Russian elites and then to changes in Russia's policy in Tajikistan.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. The next section discusses Islamism in the USSR and the elites' transition from the Soviet to the post-Soviet era. The third section gives an overview of the Tajik Civil War. The last section examines Russia's political and security elites' assessment of Islamism and their policies in Tajikistan.

Post-Soviet transitions and Islam

Since the late 1970s, Islamist reading and teaching groups developed alongside the Soviet state-administered Islam of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM) (Atkin 1989; Khalid 2021, 412–17; Naumkin 2005; Ro'i 2000; Tasar 2017). Most groups originated around Muhammadjan Hindustani, a scholar influenced by the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. The most prominent Central Asian Islamists of the 1990s, including the future leaders of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), gravitated toward Hindustani.

Most of these Soviet Islamists, however, remained strikingly apolitical, not confronting SADUM or the Soviet regime. Contrary to what US experts argued during the Cold War (Kemper and Kalinovsky 2015, 211–32; Khalid 2021), Soviet Muslims proved among the most loyal Soviet citizens. Hindustani, for example, benefited from SADUM's and some of the local authorities' protection in the 1980s and supported the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (Babadzhanov, Muminov, and Olcott 2004; Olcott 2007). He and other Central Asian Islamists showed little sign of solidarity with the *mujahideen*. While the KGB surveyed and sometimes imprisoned these homegrown Islamists, accusing them of being foreign agents,[4] the pressure on them remained limited.

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the Kremlin's mild concern with Islamism led it to continued, albeit reduced, support to Najibullah to create a buffer against the *mujahideen* and, simultaneously, to negotiate with them to hedge against Najibullah losing power. The military, the KGB and, to some extent, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) were more worried about Islamism's disruptive potential given their experience during the war and pushed to maintain a stronger commitment in Afghanistan. The likes of Vladimir Kryuchkov, Chairman of the KGB, and Eduard Shevardnadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs, argued that it was vital to support Najibullah, especially following the *mujahideen*'s promises to export Islamism to Central Asia (Gareev 1996; Kalinovsky 2011; Klimentov 2020; Kryuchkov 1996).[5]

The Kremlin, however, went a different way with all support to Kabul stopping by the end of 1991 amidst power struggles between USSR-level and Soviet Russia-level decision-makers. Yeltsin and his new Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev, a 40-year-old diplomat who was formerly only in charge of the MID's Department of International Organisations, were less mindful of Islamism than Gorbachev. Having gained political capital by promising a break with the USSR, they wished to distance themselves from Soviet clients abroad (Aven and Koch 2013, 181; Yeltsin 2008, 109). Only a month after Najibullah's fall in April 1992, Kozyrev visited Kabul to offer military cooperation to the new *mujahideen* government (Lyakhovsky 1995, 610). The policy shift in Afghanistan exemplified how Yeltsin's team of liberal reformers reassessed the communist-era security agenda and was ready to ally even with Islamist anti-communist forces. This shift came amidst the overall positive re-evaluation of Islam at the end of the Soviet period and the end of atheistic propaganda in Muslim regions.[6]

To this day, the Soviet–Afghan War is frequently remembered for leading to the radical Islamism of the twenty-first century. Observers trace continuities between Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Afghan Arabs and Usama bin Laden's arrival in Afghanistan with the Taliban, the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaeda's globalization and the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In so doing, they often erase the intermediate period of the early to mid-1990s, and present regions such as Central Asia as constant sources of Islamist danger (Heathershaw and Megoran 2011; Montgomery et al. 2016).

However, what many in the West and Russia assessed to be Islamism's failure marked the 1990s (Brutents 1998; Roy 1994). The ideology that had been so potent in the 1980s had trouble maturing into political regimes anywhere except for the Taliban's Afghanistan. Central Asia was a case in point, proving the Soviets right in their relative disregard for the Islamist threat until the late 1980s. While the IRPT in Tajikistan and the IMU in Uzbekistan struggled against the state authorities with foreign ideological and financial support in the 1990s, Islamism's overall influence remained limited in Central Asia

(Gunn 2003; Naumkin 2005; Olcott 2007; Roy 1997). Across the region, former communist leaders cloaked themselves in nationalism and 'traditional Islam', which integrated local customs and stayed clear from politics as in Soviet times, and smoothly transitioned from the Soviet Union to independence. Uzbekistan under Islam Karimov, Kazakhstan under Nursultan Nazarbayev and Turkmenistan under Saparmurat Niyazov saw local Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) First Secretaries stay in power for many years after independence. Kyrgyzstan's Askar Akayev, a scholar who rose to the top following infighting within the local CPSU, was one exception. Another was Tajikistan where a civil war pitted two regional coalitions of elites against each other, one supported by the IRPT, in a conflict that still ended with the victory of the *ancien régime*. Emomali Rahmon (Rahmonov), former head of a state-owned collective farm, became president in 1994.

In Russia, by contrast, the decision-makers who came to power in the Kremlin were not from the CPSU's highest echelon and had not been party to Gorbachev's belated and incomplete reassessment of Islamism and had little involvement with the Soviet–Afghan War or the protests in Soviet Central Asia. They were young liberal reformers centred around Prime Minister Egor Gaidar, an economist who had participated in the debates within the CPSU on the reforms of *perestroika*. Gaidar selected his collaborators for their absence of links to the former CPSU elite, especially among the security services, and similar academic background (Aven and Koch 2013, 17–19). Other leading figures such as Gennady Burbulis, an academic who became Yeltsin's Secretary of State, and Vladimir Shumeyko, an engineer who became the First Deputy Prime Minister, exemplified the break among political elites in 1991–93. Even Yeltsin, while a politburo member in 1986–87, had been removed from top decision-making afterward. He had instead relied on grassroots support born after his speech criticizing *perestroika*'s pace at the 1987 CPSU Plenum (Zezina et al. 2011, 166–72). By 1992, the top Soviet leadership including Gorbachev and Shevardnadze was marginalized or had moved to other post-Soviet republics.

Continuity was stronger in the Russian security bureaucracies. Save for the hardliners sidelined after the August 1991 coup and again after the 1993 constitutional crisis, Soviet-era military and KGB personnel remained in or ascended to decision-making positions. They were the heirs to the more statist thinking in Russian politics that re-emerged after the discredit that affected Westerners such as Gaidar and Kozyrev (Tsygankov 2010). Many *Afgantsy*, including Alexander Rutskoy, Boris Gromov (the last Soviet commander in Afghanistan) and Pavel Grachev occupied prominent roles in Russian politics. Despite the Afghan trauma, they appeared as heroes whose popularity political elites tried to co-opt. Rutskoy was, at the last minute, selected as Yeltsin's vice-president for purely electoral reasons in the 1991 presidential election, while Gromov was the vice-president on the losing communist ticket (Baturin et al. 2011, 117; Zezina et al. 2011, 252–62).

Despite the heated political battles of 1991–93, Russia also witnessed limited internal opposition to Moscow's continued central rule thanks to the continuity of regional political elites. One exception was Tatarstan, where local elites including Muslims led by former local CPSU First Secretary Mintimer Shaimiev, obtained a significant level of autonomy from Moscow. Another was the North Caucasus where tensions surged as local republics contested border demarcations and pushed for independence (Yemelianova and Broers 2020). Amidst this turmoil, Soviet-era political elites nevertheless managed to remain in power in North Ossetia, Dagestan and, initially, Chechnya–Ingushetia.

After splitting from Ingushetia, Chechnya soon saw a brutal conflict of its own as local separatists led by Dzhokhar Dudayev, also an *Afganets*, took power and fought against Russia between 1994 and 1996. Islam also played a role in the political mobilization in Chechnya as Dudayev worked to break with the communist past and, like the Central Asian rulers, build a national–Islamic platform.[7] This process happened as Islamist teaching and study groups swelled in the North Caucasus benefitting from the dire domestic economic and political environment and Saudi, Turkish, and Pakistani ideological and economic support (Trenin and Malashenko 2004).[8] While Islamism's influence remained limited in the North Caucasus, its gradual rise nonetheless influenced the Russian elites' perception of the Islamist danger in Tajikistan.

This review of post-Soviet transitions in Soviet Muslim regions highlighted two aspects. First, Islamism as an ideology of contestation in the post-Soviet space remained weak save for parts of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the North Caucasus. Despite the USSR being largely responsible for destabilizing Afghanistan, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was broadly unaffected by the Afghan fallout. Contrary to what some scholars and pundits have argued, there was limited continuity between the Soviet–Afghan War, the Tajik Civil War and the First Chechen War.

Second, in contrast to the new leadership in the Kremlin, the regional political elites and the security elites in the former KGB and the military in Russia and Central Asia had mostly stayed in power after the Soviet Union's breakup. These groups continued to harbour a deep-seated suspicion toward a foreign Islamist threat inherited from Soviet times; for instance, General Alexander Lyakhovsky, another *Afganets*, argued that the *mujahideen*'s plan to 'transfer the holy *jihad*' to Central Asia and help local Muslims 'fight the infidels for the liberation of the Muslim holy places in Samarkand, Bukhara and the establishment of *sharia*' had 'become a reality' after the USSR's collapse (Lyakhovsky 1995, 647). Other ex-KGB and military officers made similar arguments (Kryuchkov 1996; Spolnikov 1994; Varennikov 2001).[9]

A conflict between regions

The Soviets carved Tajikistan out of Uzbekistan in 1929. In the process, the Tajiks lost their economic, cultural and Islamic centres of Bukhara and Samarkand, while Soviet border demarcations created enduring tensions in Central Asia (Kassymbekova 2011). Tajikistan became the poorest Soviet republic, registering the lowest per capita gross domestic product and the highest demographic growth in 1990. It was also the republic receiving the most subsidies from Moscow, which, by 1991, amounted to 47% of the Tajik budget (Adamishin 2016, 253; Mandelbaum 1994, 207–24). Although many Soviet Tajiks had a positive view of the accelerated industrialization and secularization their country had experienced, particularly considering their experiences during the Soviet–Afghan War, the Soviet modernization project remained contested in rural parts of Tajikistan (Kalinovsky 2018). The country hence had one of the highest levels of religiousness in the USSR.

Because of its economic dependence on Moscow, the USSR's collapse proved particularly destabilizing for Tajikistan (Scarborough 2016). Ethnic and regional fragmentation then aggravated the economic issues as the country saw strains between regions that had unequally benefitted from industrial investment and political and economic power allocation in Soviet times. A conflict among Tajik CPSU elites was already brewing

before independence despite the last two CPSU first secretaries being from the Leninobod (now Sughd) region.

Before the civil war's start in May 1992, the country saw tensions built between former and new political elites against the backdrop of the 1991 presidential election in which the Islamist–democratic bloc's candidate, Davlat Khudonazarov, lost to Rahmon Nabiyev, a former Tajik CPSU First Secretary. The split between the two parties was mostly about regional loyalties as the new political elites formed a ragtag coalition to vie for power against Nabiyev's neo-communists. In a telling anecdote, when questioned about how Islamist they really were by Yevgeny Primakov, the director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, the successor to the KGB, IRPT leader Sayid Abdulloh Nuri said: '[h]ow extremist do you think we are if we nominated [Khudonazarov], an atheist Ismaili from Gorno-Badakhshan [a remote province in the Pamir Mountains bordering Afghanistan], for president?'[10] Although said in jest, the answer summed up well the intricate nature of Tajik politics and Islamism's supporting role in the new elites' coalition.

The main Tajik provinces and areas of direct control by the state in 1992 were Leninobod in the north near Uzbekistan; Hisor, west of Dushanbe and adjacent to Uzbekistan; Qurghonteppa (now Bokhtar), south-west of Dushanbe and close to Uzbekistan; Kulob, south-east of Dushanbe; Gharm, east of Dushanbe; and Gorno-Badakhshan. Among them, Leninobod and Hisor were the most industrialized. Qurghonteppa had seen investment in irrigation projects for the cotton industry and forcible resettlements from the Pamir and Gharm that led to resettled people being called Gharmis.

During the civil war, with the support of Leninobod, people from Kulob and Hisor formed the neo-communist forces, a common designation that denoted their continuity with the *ancien régime*. The Kulobi-led alliance fought the Islamist–democratic bloc – the opposition. In addition to the IRPT and democrats from among intellectual elites in Dushanbe, people from Gharm and Gorno-Badakhshan made up the bulk of the remainder of the bloc. While the civil war pitted the Islamists against more secular groups, regional divisions largely took precedence over religious ones. *Mullahs* in Kulob supported the neo-communist forces and former heads of *kolkhozes* in Gharm and Gorno-Badakhshan backed the opposition. Most of the non-Tajiks, including ethnic Russians, gravitated toward the neo-communists (Ramazanov 2010).[11] Between the coalitions, the bulk of the fighting happened in the plains of Qurghonteppa where people from different regions had become inter-mixed after resettlement (Epkenhans 2016; Heathershaw 2009; Djalili, Grare, and Akiner 1998, 133–34).

The war's most intense phase occurred from May to December 1992. While the opposition was initially on the offensive and controlled Dushanbe where it established a government under Akbarsho Iskandarov, the 'Popular Front' organized by Kulobis and neo-communist security forces later defeated them in Qurghonteppa. The neo-communists eventually crystallized with E. Rahmon as their political head instead of the discredited Nabiyev. They also received support in training and weapons and, occasionally, during fighting from the Uzbek military and local Russian volunteers. After they retook Dushanbe in December 1992, the neo-communists forced the opposition led by the IRPT to retreat to Afghanistan and some 60,000 Tajik refugees followed. Hundreds of thousands more people were displaced inside Tajikistan and took refuge in Russia and other CIS countries (Mandelbaum 1994; Djalili, Grare, and Akiner 1998).

In 1992, the Russian military force in Tajikistan – the 201st Motorised Rifle Division – remained stationed in Dushanbe with detachments in Kulob and Qurghonteppa. It was commanded by Mukhriddin Ashurov, a Tajik who had been close to Nabiyev but was staffed by ethnic Tajik recruits who often deserted and officered by Russians.[12] It did not participate in the fighting but supported the opposition government of Iskandarov by taking under its protection several strategic sites including the Nurek Dam in Tajikistan (Djalili, Grare, and Akiner 1998, 153–54; Knyazev 2001). In 1993, the 201st Division's role gradually changed as Moscow began supporting E. Rahmon. Aside from the 201st, Russia had also border guards along the Tajik–Afghan border.

After 1993, the opposition represented by the Islamists who controlled the military forces conducted cross-border raids from Afghanistan into Tajikistan, coming into conflict with Russian border guards. The IRPT received limited support in fighters, weapons and training from the *mujahideen*, Pakistan and some Afghan Arabs including the Saudi-born Samir Saleh Abdullah (Ibn al-Khattab) who would become the most infamous foreign fighter in Chechnya. Hekmatyar's *Hezb-e Islami* and other Islamists financed by Pakistan and the Gulf, and not Massoud's Tajiks, became the Tajik opposition's biggest backers for ideological reasons (Mandelbaum 1994).[13]

The *mujahideen* remained focused on the bigger prize of capturing Kabul, an endeavour in which some of them relied on post-Soviet countries' support, and never sought expansion into Tajikistan. *Jamiat-e Islami*, Massoud's group, repeatedly denied allowing cross-border attacks and trying to 'export the Islamic revolution to Central Asia'. It claimed it was afraid the West would believe Moscow's propaganda about Afghans' aggressive 'Islamic fundamentalism'.[14] This was a striking development. While conditions were favourable, the feared *mujahideen* were not eager to bring Islamism to Central Asia. National considerations trumped Islamic solidarity.

After both Tajik coalitions proved incapable of securing a military victory, Russia, Iran and Afghanistan mediated between the belligerents and in 1997 accords signed in Moscow ended the Tajik Civil War. They gave the IRPT 30% of the positions in the executive branch and parliament and integrated some of its fighters into the army. They also confirmed the ascendency of the Kulobis in Tajik politics, leaving Leninobod, the former centre, in a supporting role.

In Russia's view, the changing situation in Afghanistan had made a settlement in Tajikistan more urgent. After the Islamist Taliban had taken Kabul in 1996, Russia and Iran had begun to modestly back Massoud's Northern Alliance to create a buffer between the CIS and the Taliban who supported the Chechens.[15] This saw Moscow's policy come full circle and marked the start of a re-engagement in Afghanistan that would increase over the next decade due to concerns over opiate trafficking and a renewed fear of Islamism. In the meantime, the First Chechen War had upset Russia's threat assessments and domestic politics.

Russian elites' changing views of Islamism in Tajikistan

The Russian reformers' anti-communist coalition

Views of the Tajik and Chechen wars in Russia have become coloured with time. Historians and policymakers now insert these conflicts into a holistic narrative about the Islamist

danger, but in the early 1990s there were varying assessments of the Tajik Islamists among Russian elites. Yeltsin's reformers saw the Tajik democratic parties and Islamists as fighting the obsolete communist regime and Islamism as representing no threat to Russia. There is in fact barely a mention of Islamism or the Tajik Civil War in Yeltsin's diary (Yeltsin 2008).

This article does not argue that the Kremlin's initial assessment of the events was wrong: Islamism was not the main driver of the Tajik Civil War. Rather, that Islamism may have threatened Russia's security. This was what Gorbachev's politburo had come to believe after 1987 and what Russian security elites would now be telling Yeltsin. Yeltsin's Westerners, however, thought that they would find an understanding with the Islamist–democratic coalition. To Anatoly Adamishin, Russia's and previously the USSR's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Kremlin 'absolutely lacked an understanding of what was happening' in Tajikistan and only saw the war through the anti-communist lens. After backing Nabiyev and the communists before the 1991 presidential election, the Kremlin 'began supporting the Islamists against the secular authority' in 1992, Adamishin argued.[16]

For Yeltsin, the CIS was also a bargaining chip in Russian domestic politics and backing the Islamist–democratic bloc in Tajikistan was a way to undermine Gorbachev and bury the USSR. Yeltsin was thus considerably annoyed in November 1991 at a meeting of the State Soviet, the governing council formed after the August 1991 coup, to learn that Gorbachev might send forces from Russia to other Soviet republics. 'They would be sent through me [by Gorbachev] without asking me!,' he complained to Shevardnadze.[17]

More pragmatically, supporting whichever party held Dushanbe was a way for the Kremlin to prevent additional trouble. Kozyrev feared that Rutskoy or another hawk may arbitrarily use military force in the CIS, including in Tajikistan, to if not restore the USSR, then to prop up Russia's influence (Aven and Koch 2013, 197–98).[18] Supporting the status quo prevented Russia's costly entanglements in post-Soviet conflicts and allowed the Kremlin to protect the 300,000 native Russian speakers in Tajikistan, most of whom were in Dushanbe, while at the same time disarming Rutskoy and the other hawks who wanted to use that as a pretext for military intervention. The issue of the Russians in Tajikistan thus featured prominently in Russian–Tajik relations. In late 1992, the MID alerted Iskandarov to the harassment befalling the 'non-Tajik population' of Tajikistan, threatening to use the 201st Division to protect it.[19]

Testifying as to the good Russian–Tajik relations, Gaidar visited Dushanbe in October 1992 to sign bilateral agreements on trade, economic cooperation, transport and migration. The two parties additionally signed an agreement on the rights of ethnic Russians in Tajikistan and discussed the status of the 201st Division.[20] 'There was no obstacle for an all-round expansion and intensification of relations' with Tajikistan, Gaidar explained.[21]

Two weeks later, Iskandarov came to Moscow to further discuss economic and military cooperation. On the agenda, the 201st Division's status occupied a central place. Iskandarov wanted his government to get control of the division in the same way as other CIS republics had received legacy Soviet military units. According to both Adamishin and Iskandarov, Yeltsin and Gaidar had approved that transfer of control in October.[22] The fact that Ashurov, the 201st Division's commander, had then accepted a position

in the State Soviet, a new body under Iskandarov's government, confirmed this.[23] In November, days before the opposition lost it, Kozyrev visited Dushanbe, apparently to finalize the 201st Division's transfer.

Yet, at the last minute, according to Adamishin and Iskandarov, Russia reversed course.[24] Under pressure from the MID, the military, the KGB and, according to Iskandarov, Karimov, Yeltsin changed his mind. Russia retained control over its forces and reaffirmed that it would stay neutral in the civil war and only intervene to protect ethnic Russians.[25] The shift appeared as a first sign that the Kremlin wanted to hedge its bets in Tajikistan amidst the strengthening of the neo-communist forces. The account of Kozyrev's visit stressed the threat represented by 'the spread of warring Islamic fundamentalism in the regions bordering Russia',[26] a departure from earlier positive statements. A striking sign of this course correction was the immediate resignation of Ashurov, with the support of the MID and the officers of the 201st Division, from the Tajik State Soviet.[27] This added to the confusion when, as the neo-communist forces approached Dushanbe in December, Russian media reported contradictory information, including that the 201st Division would fight to protect Iskandarov.[28]

On the international stage, the Russian political elites also discarded the Islamist danger in 1992. Visiting Riyadh, Ruslan Khasbulatov, an economist who had risen during *perestroika* to become the Supreme Soviet's Chairman, never mentioned the issue despite the Saudis' longstanding support of the *mujahideen* and rising influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Rather, he discussed how Saudi Arabia and Russia could collaborate in various spheres. After both sides voiced their fear of Iran, Khasbulatov thanked Riyadh for helping in the negotiations with the Afghan *mujahideen* over the release of the Soviet prisoners of war from Pakistan.[29] There was no concern that the Saudis would support the IRPT as they did the *mujahideen*.

Russia's Islamist moment

The Russian political elites' assessment of the Islamist danger only changed in 1993 and led the Kremlin to provide economic, political and military support to the neo-communists. This shift in Russian policy was due to four factors. First was the changing military fortunes of the opposition as, immediately after Dushanbe's capture, Abdumalik Abdullajanov, Prime Minister of E. Rahmon, visited Moscow to discuss economic and military cooperation. After talks with Victor Chernomyrdin, a Soviet-era *apparatchik* who had replaced Gaidar as prime minister in a sign of Yeltsin's turn away from the Westerners, Abdullajanov was denied a meeting with the president. The Kremlin was still on the fence about Tajikistan.[30] A MID report in January 1993 similarly advocated neutrality in Tajikistan while noting that the Tajik democratic opposition's leaders were now lobbying Moscow for continued Russian support. Yet, E. Rahmon's neo-communists, the report stressed, controlled the capital and most of the country and similarly offered to develop bilateral ties.[31]

Kozyrev's retrospective assessment similarly emphasized pragmatism. The Russian military and border guards in Tajikistan were, according to him, in disarray while the country crumbled around them. For this reason, as across most of the CIS, Moscow was content with backing whichever party provided stability. E. Rahmon – a man who had, in Kozyrev's words, 'some populist ideas' and was 'supported by one of the [armed] bands' – managed

to get 'support from the people'. After that, 'with [Russia's] help, things started to stabilise', Kozyrev argued (Aven and Koch 2013, 197). While one of Russia's Westerners, Kozyrev had become more practical by 1993, influenced by his disappointment with the West's limited support of Russia's new course and the rising influence of competing statist elites in Russia (Tsygankov 2010).

Supporting the party controlling Dushanbe was also still a way to protect ethnic Russians in Tajikistan, a topic that particularly concerned the nationalist opposition in the State Duma. The Russian minority's support of the neo-communists reinforced the pressure on the Kremlin to align with them.[32] In April 1993, Kozyrev made that point to the State Duma, arguing that the defence of Russians was a major reason to keep armed forces in Tajikistan.[33]

Second, officers in the Russian army and KGB and diplomats in the MID in Moscow and in the field, among them many *Afgantsy*, played a role in drawing the Kremlin's attention to the Islamist danger. Previously, they had criticized Yeltsin and Kozyrev for cosying up to the *mujahideen*. During the Tajik Civil War, they transferred the image of the enemy from the *mujahideen* to the IRPT (Braithwaite 2013, 305–06; Göransson 2015, 258; Musalov 2019, 425, 440–44).[34] These security elites wrote at length about the continuity between the Soviet–Afghan War and conflicts in post-Soviet Muslim regions (Brutents 1998; Gareev 1996; Kirpichenko 2017; Knyazev 2001; Kryuchkov 1996; Lyakhovsky 1995; Primakov 2006).[35] They also made that point to the Kremlin and parliament as they pushed for Russia's re-engagement in the former Soviet Union (Tsygankov 2010).

An MID report to the Supreme Soviet noted in 1992 that 'Islam's attractiveness with its idea of submission and conciliation as a guarantee for stabilization and the preservation of traditional authority' was strong among the Tajik opposition. It also argued that 'democratisation had already brought Islamisation processes in [Central Asian] republics quite far'.[36] The Russian Ministry of Defence (MoD) registered similar concerns. 'There was propaganda [in Tajikistan] of creating a fundamentalist Islamic state.'[37] The MID and MoD saw that as important with foreign powers' rising interest in Central Asia. Yet, before the Tajik Civil War, most Russian political and security elites agreed that Islamism's rise had little implications for Russia although its Muslim regions were similarly witnessing an Islamic revival.[38] As in Soviet times, they saw Islamism as a threat coming from abroad, not yet as a domestic problem.

From late 1992 to 1993, the military and the KGB circulated several more reports to the Supreme Soviet stressing the Islamist danger to Russia. One emphasized 'the pressure of Islam's partisans on state authorities' in Dushanbe.[39] Another argued that there was a risk that the Islamists would 'export their activities to [Russia's] Muslim republics' if Moscow abandoned Tajikistan. This could mean that 'Russia would need to meet the threat of Islamic extremism and oppose it (including militarily) on its lengthy and ill-equipped borders'.[40]

An article by Victor Spolnikov, former KGB station chief in Kabul who had requalified as a researcher at Moscow's Oriental Studies Institute, distilled the arguments of Russia's security elites. After explaining how 'unofficial Islam' in Central Asia had long worried the KGB, he argued that the Soviet–Afghan War had triggered the creation of the Tajik Islamist movement. The roots of the Tajik Civil War went back to the end of the Soviet–Afghan War. In 1989, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze made the mistake of having a 'policy of "two Afghanistans" by conducting parallel negotiations with Najibullah and the *mujahideen*'. By negotiating with the IRPT, Yeltsin and Kozyrev were repeating that

mistake in Tajikistan. Yet, Spolnikov warned, Afghan and other fundamentalists saw their struggle for power as a component of worldwide Islamic revolution (Spolnikov 1994, 112–113).

Spolnikov's account confirmed that, in the KGB's perception, Soviet political elites took the Islamist threat only half-seriously during the Soviet–Afghan War. The Kremlin had never fully embraced Najibullah and the KGB's claim, shared by some in the military and the MID, that the Afghan Communists had to serve as a bulwark to Islamism's expansion into the USSR. Now, the security elites were making Tajikistan their I-told-you-so moment. Although the IRPT was certainly not en route to world *jihad*, arguments such as Spolnikov's gained ground.

Like the security elites in Russia, the officers of the 201st Division in Tajikistan had, like the Russian minority, gravitated toward the neo-communist forces from the start. Their opinions also weighed on the decision-makers visiting from Moscow, especially as cross-border attacks from Afghanistan intensified. To Aleskender Ramazanov, the Information Officer of the 201st Division, the Tajik Civil War pitted the 'supporters of the Soviet democratic state' against the Islamists who attacked and took hostages among the Russian population with Iskandarov's blessing (Ramazanov 2010, ch. 11). Echoing Spolnikov's arguments, Ramazanov argued that Russia had to keep its forces in Tajikistan to defend ethnic Russians and keep Islamism at bay: 'Afghanistan and Tajikistan were similar security situations and related to the core security interests of Russia.'[41]

Ultimately, the Russian security forces in Tajikistan may at times have acted on their own in supporting the neo-communists. Vladimir Kvachkov, a colonel in military intelligence whose Uzbekistan-based unit had passed to the control of Karimov in 1992, has suggested that Tashkent and Moscow had tasked him with overthrowing Iskandarov's government in fall 1992.[42] While it is unlikely that Kvachkov's planned coup had support from the Kremlin, there was likely support for it locally and among security elites in Russia. The latter would swiftly embrace E. Rahmon after his takeover of Dushanbe. As for Uzbekistan, it had opposed the Islamist–democratic coalition in Tajikistan from the start.

Third, the Central Asian leaders also played a role in changing the Kremlin's opinion of Islamism. Since 1990, the communists in Tajikistan had blamed the upheaval on 'emissaries of the fundamentalist and national–Muslim movement'.[43] The neo-communists continued to do so under E. Rahmon. In December 1992, the new Tajik Minister of Interior Affairs suggested that the 'Islamist forces had prepared an armed coup [in Tajikistan] since 1978' and the Islamic Revolution in Iran. He thus integrated the Tajik Civil War within a decade-long struggle against political Islam.[44]

In parallel, as Islamists from the future IMU challenged his power in the Fergana Valley and expressed solidarity with the IRPT in 1991–92 (Naumkin 2005), Karimov became the staunchest anti-Islamist in Central Asia. He had previously sided with Kryuchkov and Shevardnadze in calling Gorbachev to boost support for Najibullah against the *mujahideen* in 1989.[45] By 1992, Karimov claimed 'the events [in Tajikistan] were one hundred times more dangerous than what was happening in Nagorno-Karabakh' because the 'transfer of power to […] national–democratic and Islamist forces could become a stimulus for these forces' activation in Uzbekistan'.[46]

Karimov then brought the Islamist threat to Yeltsin's attention and played a role in defining Russia's policy, including by advocating against the transfer of the 201st Division

to Iskandarov in Tajikistan. In Adamishin's words, the Kremlin 'did not believe its own prophets', that is, the security agencies and the diplomats, but it believed Karimov (Adamishin 2016, 254).[47] This was remarkable continuity from the Soviet to the post-Soviet period. While the ruling political elites had changed in Moscow, they had not in Central Asia where neo-communist leaders feared the same sources of political contestation as in Soviet times – the democrats and the Islamists. To counter Islamism, which they recalled from the Soviet–Afghan War, they summoned nationalism and 'traditional Islam'. The *mujahideen*, meanwhile, shrewdly noted how Central Asian regimes 'dominated by the old guard that was sympathetic to Najibullah'[48] feared Islamism for their 'recycled communist rule'.[49]

Finally, the rising tensions in the North Caucasus gave more credence to the claim that there was an Islamist danger to Russia and influenced the political elites. One report to the Supreme Soviet in 1992 from a research centre close to the Russian Orthodox Church stressed that the Kremlin's policies had given disproportionate importance to the 'Islamic factor' in Russia and the CIS. It had been wrong to support the IRPT simply because it was 'anti-communist' and allied to 'national–democratic forces', the report argued.[50] Yeltsin's team then started to make links between the situations in Tajikistan and Chechnya.

In May 1993, Grachev, Yeltsin's Minister of Defence, explained that 'if the fire of war was not extinguished in Tajikistan, there could be dangerous consequences for Russia, even more so since there are aggressive attitudes in Chechnya'.[51] In December 1994, the Kremlin had the Tajik civil war on its mind as the First Chechen War started. Because of their support for the IRPT, Yeltsin's advisers feared that the *mujahideen* may also support the Chechens (Baturin et al. 2011, 598). The parallel between the two conflicts was made more apparent when, following reports stressing how the peace negotiations in Tajikistan had involved Prince Aga Khan IV, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslims, Yeltsin asked his team to adapt this experience to Chechnya in 1995. The Kremlin wanted to 'organise a peace conference in Makhachkala [in Dagestan] with the participation of influential Muslim leaders' and Aga Khan IV to press Dudayev into accepting Russia's conditions. While Islamism was a marginal factor in the First Chechen War, the advent of a conflict in another post-Soviet Muslim region cast the Tajik civil war in a new light.

Russia's new policy in Tajikistan

After the civil war's tide turned, the Russian security elites played a growing role in defining policy on Tajikistan. In February 1993, Grachev visited Dushanbe. Meeting the officers of the 201st Division together with E. Rahmon, he promised support in creating a Tajik national army and defending the border with Afghanistan to prevent the spread of 'aggressive' Islamism that 'could lead to war, including on the territory of Russia'.[52] More Russian military officials visited Dushanbe in the following months.

Alongside the military, Russia's political elites showed support for the neo-communists. Visiting Dushanbe in April 1993, Kozyrev explained after a meeting with E. Rahmon and Abdullajanov that 'Russia cannot abandon its friends' given especially the 'difficult' situation on the Tajik–Afghan border.[53] A month later, during E. Rahmon's visit to Moscow, Yeltsin promised that Russia would not allow the Islamists to increase their influence in

Tajikistan.[54] As cross-border attacks from Afghanistan into Tajikistan intensified, there was no longer any difference in rhetoric between the Kremlin and the security elites.

In July 1993, a large-scale cross-border attack by the opposition led to 45 casualties among Russian border guards. It was a harrowing moment for the Kremlin and one that vindicated the security elites' argument about an Islamist danger and raised the possibility of a merger of the Afghan and Tajik conflicts. After the attack, during a further visit to Dushanbe, Grachev, with Yeltsin's support, threatened retaliation against Afghanistan and the Tajik opposition. The Islamists, he denounced, were waging an 'undeclared war' against Russia, an expression the Soviets had commonly used to mean the *mujahideen*'s war against the communists.[55] The next month the MID went as far as to threaten airstrikes in Afghanistan if new attacks occurred.[56] That threat had an immediate effect. While they accused Russia of replaying the Soviet–Afghan War by supporting the neo-communist E. Rahmon, the *mujahideen* promised to 'take every possible measure to not allow attacks against Tajikistan from [their] territory'.[57]

The July attack led to a rare moment of unanimity between Yeltsin, the government and the State Duma, consolidating the shift in policy on Tajikistan. The Deputies gave Yeltsin a free hand in dealing with the Islamist threat, including by deploying armoured vehicles and fighter jets to Tajikistan.[58] Some days later, Yeltsin ordered the recruitment of Russian volunteers for the 201st Division (Yeltsin 2008, 300–03, 317). Moscow and Dushanbe, meanwhile, signed six agreements on military cooperation and a comprehensive treaty of friendship and cooperation.[59] Russia promised to increase its military presence in Tajikistan to 24,000 troops. In early 1994, while Grachev oversaw a joint military exercise in Tajikistan,[60] Kozyrev went to Tashkent to discuss a partnership between Russia and Central Asia to stop 'chaos, extremism, and bloodshed' in Tajikistan.[61]

At the international level, Russia's new policy on Tajikistan resulted in a tougher stance toward countries sponsoring Islamism. Returning to Saudi Arabia in 1993, Khasbulatov recounted the July attack at the Tajik–Afghan border and complained about the Saudis welcoming Dudayev during *Hajj*. Some Muslim countries 'supported [the Tajik opposition] with combat training in military-training camps, weapons and money', he claimed. Such actions were 'inimical not only toward Tajikistan, but also toward Russia given the "transparency" of the CIS borders and Russia's national state interests'. Saudi Arabia had to 'rightly consider all the negative consequences of the escalation of tensions around Tajikistan', Khasbulatov warned.[62] Khasbulatov's tone had completely changed from the previous year. Increasingly, Russian policymakers were worried about the disruptive activities of domestic and foreign Islamists in the CIS.

By July 1996, a debate on Tajikistan at the State Duma exemplified the changed perception and policy. Gathering representatives from the MID, the border guards, the military and Deputies, it saw the security elites and the MID exaggerate the Islamist danger. The MID, now under the old guard's Primakov, argued that Russian forces' departure from Tajikistan would lead to 'the creation of hotbeds of instability on [Russia's] southern borders' and 'boost destructive processes including in Russia'. Islamic extremism's 'expansionist plans […] encompassed the entire Central Asia and in perspective were directed against Russia's interests', he continued.[63] The deputy head of the border guards was even more direct. 'If [Russian] forces left Tajikistan […] all of this [Islamist instability] would move beyond Tajikistan's borders to the borders of that same Chechnya, or other regions along the borders of Russia or on the territory of [Russia].'[64]

Some Deputies attending the meeting were less concerned about Islamism in Tajikistan, though admitting that it represented a threat to Russia. Semyon Bagdasarov, who had been involved with military propaganda during the Soviet–Afghan War and was now responsible for the State Duma's contacts with Central Asia, remarked that Russia still had to be careful to not end up – as in Afghanistan – fighting the entire Muslim world. 'Tajikistan was the testing ground where [Russia] was managing [its] relations with Muslim countries,' he noted.[65] Such balanced assessments were among the factors that led to Russia's support for the peace accords between E. Rahmon and the IRPT. While Russian elites now saw Islamism as a danger, they considered the main threat to come from Afghanistan. This became an incentive to foster an agreement in Tajikistan if all parties, as stressed by Yeltsin and Primakov, recognized the necessity of Russia's military presence.[66]

Beyond this, the First Chechen War had affected perceptions among Russian political elites who feared the cross-influences between the two conflicts. Alexei Mitrofanov, a nationalist Deputy who had participated in the July 1996 meeting, highlighted the movement of fighters between Tajikistan and Chechnya in a State Duma roundtable in 1997.[67] Alongside the Islamist threat, he justified Russia's military presence in Tajikistan by the necessity to protect ethnic Russians, showing how this argument remained important. Vladimir Lysenko, an independent Deputy and a scholar specializing in the North Caucasus, also highlighted the parallel between Tajikistan and Chechnya after a mission to Dushanbe in September 1996. 'If Islamic fundamentalism was not stopped today on Tajikistan's borders, then tomorrow it would be in Russia's south,' he argued.[68] To him, it was necessary to keep Russian military bases in Tajikistan and support E. Rahmon as a bulwark against Islamism.

Conclusions

Far from the cliché of a constant fear of Islamism in the former Soviet Union, political elites in the Kremlin and the Russian parliament, people with few links with Soviet-era security elites, initially saw Islamists and democrats as ideological allies against the neo-communists in Tajikistan. Like the democrats, the Soviet regime had persecuted the Islamists. By contrast, the security elites and the MID, bureaucracies with a stronger continuity with the Soviet period, had negative opinions of the Islamists from the start. In Tajikistan, they saw the IRPT as an offshoot of the *mujahideen* and warned about an Islamist danger to the CIS connected to Afghanistan. As Anatoly Chubais, another of Gaidar's young economists who became Deputy Prime Minister in 1992–94, once noted, this duality of elites demonstrated how Yeltsin's Russia stood 'with one leg in the old world, and with one leg in the new one' (Aven and Koch 2013, 195). By 1993, the security elites' assessment of the Islamist threat shared by neo-communist Central Asian leaders such as Karimov and E. Rahmon trickled down to political elites and led to a reversal of Russia's policy in Tajikistan. The fact that by that point the Tajik Islamists had lost Dushanbe and Russia faced its own troubles in Chechnya helped the security elites make their point.

The change in policy in Tajikistan illustrated a broader shift among Russian elites. As the economic crisis discredited Gaidar's reformers, Yeltsin increasingly relied on Soviet-era *apparatchiks* and security elites. In Kozyrev words, this was 'the bureaucracy's revenge' as 'either politically neutral people, or people from the past such as Primakov', who became Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1996 and Prime Minister in 1998, or Chernomyrdin rose to the top. These people 'were generally neutral, brave, not bad people

personally. But without an ideology and understanding that you need to reform', Kozyrev argued (Aven and Koch 2013, 194–96). The return of the Soviet-era elites explains why the Kremlin became more comfortable dealing with the neo-communist elites in Central Asia instead of their Islamist or democratic oppositions.

Later, as radical Islamism took hold in Chechnya and Dagestan and the Taliban captured Afghanistan, a new generation of security elites led by Vladimir Putin – head of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), another successor to the KGB – would build on the now hegemonic discourse about the Islamist threat among Russian elites. Instrumentalizing the refurbished memories of the Soviet–Afghan War, the Tajik Civil War and the First Chechen War, Putin would claim that Islamism directed by foreign forces had always represented an existential danger to Russia. The fight against the Islamist threat would then become the centrepiece of his political project shaped by the Second Chechen War in 1999.

Notes

1. KGB Major, interview, Moscow, February 2019. The KGB Major was an adviser in the Afghan KGB (KhAD).
2. Svetlana Savranskaya, "A New Phase in the Great Game," 1 February 2019. National Security Archive (NSA). https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/afghanistan-russia-programs/2019-02-01/new-phase-great-game-us-soviets-india-pakistan-vied-shape-new-afghanistan-late-1980s/.
3. "Dokladnaya," 16 December 1989, Gorbachev Foundation (GF), *fond* (*f.*) 5, *opis'* (*o.*) 1, *delo* (*d.*) 0; "Zapis," 23 August 1990, GF, NSA. https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//rus/text_files/Afganistan/1990.08.23%20Gorb-Najib%20memcon.pdf/.
4. Davlat Khudonazarov, interview, Moscow, February 2019.
5. Jamiat-e Islami (Jamiat), *AFGHANews* 6, no. 15 (August 1990), 4.
6. "Postanovlenii," 24 August 1990, *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii* (RGANI), *f.* 89, *o.* 11, *d.* 5, l. 1–5; "O politike," 19 April 1991, RGANI, *f.* 89, *o.* 20, *d.* 66, l. 5.
7. "Dokumenty," July–August 1993, *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (GARF), *f.* 10026, *o.* 5, *d.* 432, ll. 47–51.
8. Djamboulat Souleimanov, interview, phone, March 2019. Souleimanov, an insurgent commander during the First Chechen War, had travelled for Islamic education to Pakistan in the 1990s. Mairbek Vatchagaev, interview, phone, December 2018. Vatchagaev was a political leader in Chechnya in the 1990s.
9. "Peregovorakh," 16 August 1989, RGANI, *f.* 89, *o.* 10, *d.* 46, l. 1–13.
10. Khudonazarov, interview.
11. Marat Khakel, "Unesennoe vekom," *Soldat Rossii*, January 2003. https://soldatrossii-a.jimdofree.com/марат-янович-хакел-унесенное-веком/таджикистан-в-судьбах-людей/глава-30/.
12. "Polyakh," *Kommersant*, 27 October 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/27906/.
13. Khudonazarov, interview; "Dokladnaya," 16 December 1989.
14. Jamiat, *AFGHANews* 9, no. 14 (September 1993), 1, 7.
15. "Opium," *Kommersant Vlast'* 39, 3 October 2000. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/17772/.
16. Anatoly Adamishin, interview, Moscow, August 2019.
17. "Stenogramma," November 1991, RGANI, *f.* 89, *o.* 3, *d.* 126, l. 77.
18. Andrei Kozyrev, "Partiya," *Izvestia*, 151, 30 June 1992, 1, 3.
19. "Zayavlenie," *Kommersant*, 17 October 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/27042/.
20. "Polozhenie," October 1992, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 1275, ll. 71–73. Also, "Tadzhikistan," April 1993, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 1275, ll. 30–34.
21. "Tadzhikistan," *Kommersant*, 13 October 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/26485/.

22. Adamishin, interview; "Akbarsho," *Evropeiskii Dialog*, 12 May 2021. http://www.eedialog.org/ru/2021/05/11/akbarsho-iskandarov-jeks-i-o-prezidenta-tadzhikistana-v-osnovnom-v-tadzhikistane-vse-byli-za-gkchp/.
23. "Pravitel'stvo," *Kommersant*, 12 November 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/29691/.
24. Adamishin, interview; "Akbarsho," 12 May 2021.
25. "Kozyrev," *Kommersant*, 11 November 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/29212.
26. "Itogakh," November–December 1992, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 1275, ll. 1–5.
27. "Pravitel'stvo," 12 November 1992.
28. "Rossiiskie," *Kommersant*, 15 December 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/33370; "Rossiiskoe," *Kommersant*, 17 December 1992, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/33713/.
29. "Dokumenty," July 1992, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 5, *d.* 422, ll. 1–12.
30. "Tadzhikskii," *Kommersant*, 23 December 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/34423/.
31. "Situatsiya," January 1993, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 1275, ll. 6–9.
32. Khakel, "Unesennoe."
33. "Rossiiskoe," 17 December 1992; "Rossiya," *Kommersant*, 28 April 1993. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/46428/.
34. Aleksandr Knyazev, interview, phone, November 2019; Senior Lieutenant, interview, phone, January 2020; Adamishin, interview. Knyazev was a Soviet journalist in Afghanistan. The lieutenant was in the Soviet army's propaganda department during the Soviet–Afghan War.
35. "Vyvod," *Afghanistan.ru*, 15 February 2010. https://afghanistan.ru/doc/16632.html. According to Kirpichenko, the war in Algeria also raised the Kremlin's concern about Tajikistan.
36. "Tsentral'naya," 1992–93, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 1275, ll. 82–84.
37. "Obshchestvenno," 1992–93, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 1275, ll. 74–75.
38. "Tsentral'naya," 1992–93; "Analiticheskie," December 1991, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 5, *d.* 791, ll. 1–20.
39. "Polozhenii," October 1992, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 3337, ll. 2–4.
40. "Tadzhikistan," August 1993, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4., *d.* 3337, ll. 80–95.
41. "Redaktor," *TV-201*, June 1997. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_-Y-8ZjgKI/.
42. "Novaya," *Radio Ozodi*, 30 Mach 2019. https://rus.ozodi.org/a/29851597.html/.
43. "Materialy," February–December 1990, GARF, *f.* R9654, *o.* 6, *d.* 176, ll. 21–22.
44. "Islamskii," *Kommersant*, 16 December 1992. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/33520/.
45. "Peregovorakh," 16 August 1989, RGANI, *f.* 89, *o.* 10, *d.* 46, ll. 1–13.
46. "Sobytiya," 1992–93, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 4, *d.* 1275, ll. 42–49.
47. Adamishin, interview.
48. Jamiat, *AFGHANews* 8, no. 1 (January 1992), 4.
49. Jamiat, *AFGHANews* 11, no. 1 (January 1995), 1.
50. "Spravki," December 1992, GARF, *f.* 10026, *o.* 5, *d.* 856, ll. 1–9.
51. "Pavel," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 7 May 1993. https://yeltsin.ru/archive/periodic/52039/.
52. "201-ya," *Kommersant*, 6 February 1993. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/38160/.
53. "Rossiya," *Kommersant*, 10 April 1994. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/44721/.
54. "Rossiisko," *Kommersant*, 26 May 1993. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/48914/.
55. "Rossiiskie," *Kommersant*, 20 July 1993. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/54173/.
56. "Moskva," *Kommersant*, 24 August 1993. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/57440/.
57. Jamiat, *AFGHANews* 9, no. 13 (August 1993), 1.
58. "Rossiya," *Kommersant*, 16 July 1993. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/53861/.
59. "Parlament," *Kommersant*, 16 July 1993. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/53892/.
60. "Pavel," *Kommersant*, 24 March 1994. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/74281/.
61. "Itogi," *Kommersant*, 12 February 1994. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/71126/.
62. "Dokumenty," July–August 1993, ll. 1–20.
63. "Stenogramma," July 1996, GARF, *f.* 10100, *o.* 14, *d.* 5161, ll. 2–5.
64. "Stenogramma," July 1996, GARF, *f.* 10100, *o.* 14, *d.* 5161, ll. 20–21.
65. "Stenogramma," July 1996, GARF, *f.* 10100, *o.* 14, *d.* 5161, l. 30.
66. "Afganizatsiya," *Kommersant*, 1 February 1996. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/125863/.
67. "Stenogramma," 17 February 1997, GARF, *f.* 10100, *o.* 14, *d.* 5240, ll. 43–48.
68. "Dokumenty," September 1996, GARF, *f.* 10100, *o.* 14, *d.* 4632, ll. 95–99.

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