Chapter 3. Tajikistan

Bronze vessel excavated at site of ancient city of Khujand

Country

Formal Name: Republic of Tajikistan.

Short Form: Tajikistan.

Term for Citizens: Tajikistani(s).

Capital: Dushanbe.

Date of Independence: September 9, 1991.

Geography

Size: Approximately 143,100 square kilometers.

Topography: Mainly mountainous, with lower elevations in northwest, southwest, and Fergana Valley in far northern zone. Highest elevations in southeast, in Pamir-Alay system; numerous glaciers in mountains. Dense river network creates valleys through mountain chains. Lakes primarily in Pamir region to the east.

Climate: Mainly continental, with drastic changes according to elevation. Arid in subtropical southwest lowlands, which have highest temperatures; lowest temperatures at highest altitudes. Highest precipitation near Fedchenko Glacier, lowest in eastern Pamirs.

Society

Population: By last Soviet census (1989), 5,092,603; no later reliable estimate available. Annual growth rate 3.0 percent in 1992; 1991 population density 38.2 persons per square kilometer.

Ethnic Groups: In 1989 census, Tajiks 62.3 percent, Uzbeks 23.5 percent, Russians 7.6 percent, Tatars 1.4 percent, and Kyrgyz 1.3 percent.

Languages: Official state language, Tajik, is spoken by an

estimated 62 percent; Russian, widely used in government and business, a second language for most of urban non-Russian population.

Religion: Islam practiced by about 90 percent of population, mainly Sunni; remainder Russian Orthodox, with some other small Christian and Jewish groups.

Education and Literacy: Education compulsory through secondary school, but completion rate below 90 percent. Literacy estimated at 98 percent. In 1990s, facilities and materials extremely inadequate, and specialized secondary and higher education programs poorly developed.

Health: Generally low level of care in Soviet era continued or declined in 1990s. Number and quality of medical personnel, hospitals, and equipment undermined by low funding and civil war. Mortality and incidence of disease rose in 1990s because of pollution and shortage of medicines.

Economy

Gross National Product (GNP): Estimated in 1993 at US$2.7 billion, or US$470 per capita. Average growth rate 1985–92 was –7.8 percent per year. Beginning 1992, economic growth in all sectors crippled by transformation from Soviet system and by effects of civil war.

Agriculture: Largest sector of economy, dominated by cotton, grain, vegetables; food production insufficient for domestic consumption. Nearly all agricultural labor unmechanized, and output declined sharply in mid-1990s. Commitment to cotton as primary crop continues in post-Soviet era, although production has decreased.

Industry and Mining: Advancement and diversification slow in 1990s after specialized roles in Soviet period emphasized aluminum processing and chemicals. Contributed about 30 percent of net material product (NMP—see Glossary) in 1991. Productivity of nearly all industries declined in mid-1990s. Several minerals, including gold, mined on a small scale.

Energy: Hydroelectric power only major source, providing 75 percent of electricity; must import petroleum fuels and coal, only minor exploitation of domestic deposits. Power imports

from neighboring countries problematic in 1990s because of insufficient funds.

Exports: In 1995, worth about US$720 million. Principal items electric power, cotton, fertilizers, nonferrous metals (especially aluminum), silk, fruits, and vegetables. Postcommunist export markets outside Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) very slow to form, and traditional barter ties remain strong; principal customers within CIS Russia, Kazakstan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan; outside CIS Poland, Sweden, Afghanistan, Austria, Norway, and Hungary.

Imports: In 1995, worth about US$1.2 billion. Principal items fuels, grains, iron and steel, consumer goods, and finished industrial products. Principal suppliers in CIS Russia, Turkmenistan, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine; outside CIS Poland, Austria, France, Britain, and Turkey. Total non-CIS imports in 1995 US$265 million.

Balance of Payments: Estimated 1994 budget deficit US$54.7 million.

Exchange Rate: Tajikistani ruble introduced in May 1995 after using Soviet ruble (withdrawn elsewhere in the CIS in late 1993) until January 1994, then joining Russian ruble zone and adopting new Russian rubles then in use. January 1996 value of Tajikistani ruble 284 per US$1.

Inflation: Consumer price index rose 416 percent 1993–94, 120 percent 1994–95; controlled in 1995 by antiinflationary government program.

Fiscal Year: Calendar year.

Fiscal Policy: Highly centralized government system, with little regional authority. Initial price decontrol in 1992 caused extensive hardship, led to retrenchment and resumption of strong government control of prices and wages. In 1993, major sources of national income value-added tax (30 percent), enterprise profits tax (26 percent), and excise tax (13 percent).

Transportation and Telecommunications

Highways: In 1992, 32,750 kilometers of roads, of which 18,240 classified as main roads. One major highway connecting

Dushanbe in southwest with Khujand in northwest.

Railroads: Most important means of transportation, but do not link vital areas of northwest and southwest. In 1990 total track 891 kilometers, of which 410 industrial. Aging infrastructure depleting service reliability.

Civil Aviation: Airport at Dushanbe, only one with scheduled flights, in poor condition; cannot accommodate large international planes. Tajikistan International Airlines founded 1995 with Western aid.

Inland Waterways: None.

Ports: None.

Pipelines: Only short natural gas lines from Uzbekistan to Dushanbe and linking Uzbekistani points across Tajikistan's northwest extremity.

Telecommunications: In 1993, 259,600 telephones (one per twenty-two persons). Radio and television broadcasting is monopoly of the State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company. Thirteen AM and three FM stations offer programs in Tajik, Russian, and Uzbek. Television broadcasts from Dushanbe with relays from Iran, Russia, and Turkey. In 1992, 854,000 radios and 860,000 televisions in use.

Government and Politics

Government: National government with nearly all administrative powers, centered in executive branch (president and Council of Ministers, appointed by president). Head of government is prime minister. Supreme Assembly, unicameral parliament, with 181 deputies elected to five-year terms (first election 1995). Divided into three provinces, one capital district (Dushanbe), and one autonomous province with disputed status. Judiciary with nominal independence but no actual power to enforce rule of law.

Politics: Essentially one-party system dominated by Communist Party of Tajikistan. In 1994 presidential election had only one nominal opposition candidate with similar platform. Several opposition parties formed around 1990 and influenced events in early years of independence, but all now operate from abroad. Substantial maneuvering for power among former

communist elements within and outside current government.

Foreign Relations: Strong economic and military reliance on Russia and other CIS countries. Friction and distrust toward neighbors Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Postindependence cultivation of Afghanistan and Iran, the former complicated by Afghani role in Tajikistan civil war; limited relations with Western Europe and United States, despite policy of expanding contacts. Ongoing border dispute with China, 1996.

International Agreements and Memberships: United Nations (UN), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), CIS, and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

National Security

Armed Forces: Total forces 3,000 in 1996 (army only; no air force or navy). Officer corps dominated by Russians. Russian 201st Motorized Infantry Division, about 24,000 troops, contributes to CIS force, also including troops from Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, and dominates overall national defense. Morale problems and local loyalties hinder conscription and organization of Tajikistani national force.

Major Military Units: Army includes two brigades of motorized infantry and one brigade of special forces. Heavily reliant on Russian equipment and arms supply. Border troops include 16,500 Russians, 12,500 Tajikistanis, 1995.

Military Budget: In 1995 estimated US$67 million.

Internal Security: Main agency Committee of National Security, based on Soviet-era Tajikistan Committee for State Security (KGB), with full cabinet status. Police authority divided between Committee for National Security and Ministry of Internal Affairs, which had 1,500 troops in 1993. Beginning 1992, internal security poor because of civil war, pervasive corruption.

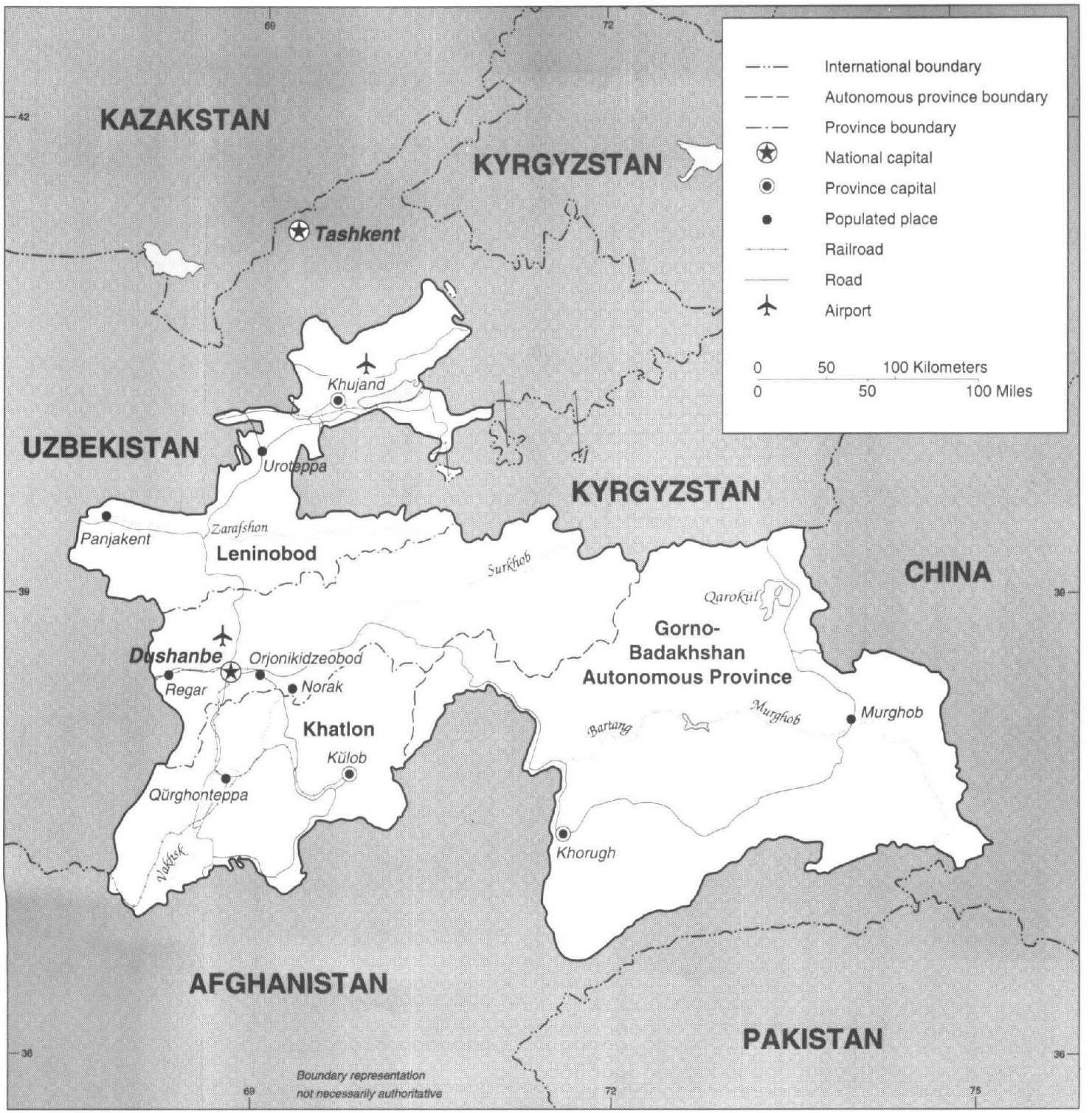


Figure 10. Tajikistan: Administrative Divisions and Transportation System, 1996

TAJIKISTAN, LITERALLY THE "LAND OF THE TAJIKS," has ancient cultural roots. The people now known as the Tajiks are the Persian speakers of Central Asia, some of whose ancestors inhabited Central Asia (including present-day Afghanistan and western China) at the dawn of history. Despite the long heritage of its indigenous peoples, Tajikistan has existed as a state only since the Soviet Union decreed its existence in 1924. The creation of modern Tajikistan was part of the Soviet policy of giving the outward trappings of political representation to minority nationalities in Central Asia while simultaneously reorganizing or fragmenting communities and political entities.

Of the five Central Asian states that declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Tajikistan is the smallest in area and the third largest in population. Landlocked and mountainous, the republic has some valuable natural resources, such as waterpower and minerals, but arable land is scarce, the industrial base is narrow, and the communications and transportation infrastructures are poorly developed.

As was the case in other republics of the Soviet Union, nearly seventy years of Soviet rule brought Tajikistan a combination of modernization and repression. Although barometers of modernization such as education, health care, and industrial development registered substantial improvements over low starting points in this era, the quality of the transformation in such areas was less impressive than the quantity, with reforms benefiting Russian-speaking city dwellers more than rural citizens who lacked fluency in Russian. For all the modernization that occurred under Soviet rule, the central government's policies limited Tajikistan to a role as a predominantly agricultural producer of raw materials for industries located elsewhere. Through the end of the Soviet era, Tajikistan had one of the lowest standards of living of the Soviet republics.

Independence came to Tajikistan with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The first few years after that were a time of great hardship. Some of the new republic's problems—including the breakdown of the old system of interdependent economic relationships upon which the Soviet republics had relied, and the stress of movement toward participation in the world market—were common among the Soviet

successor states. The pain of economic decline was compounded in Tajikistan by a bloody and protracted civil conflict over whether the country would perpetuate a system of monopoly rule by a narrow elite like the one that ruled in the Soviet era, or establish a reformist, more democratic regime. The struggle peaked as an outright war in the second half of 1992, and smaller-scale conflict continued into the mid-1990s. The victors preserved a repressive system of rule, and the lingering effects of the conflict contributed to the further worsening of living conditions.

Historical Background

Before the Soviet era, which began in Central Asia in the early 1920s, the area designated today as the Republic of Tajikistan underwent a series of population changes that brought with them political and cultural influences from the Turkic and Mongol peoples of the Eurasian steppe, China, Iran, Russia, and other contiguous regions. The Tajik people came fully under Russian rule, after a series of military campaigns that began in the 1860s, at the end of the nineteenth century.

Ethnic Background

Iranian (see Glossary) peoples, including ancestors of the modern Tajiks, have inhabited Central Asia since at least the earliest recorded history of the region, which began some 2,500 years ago. Contemporary Tajiks are the descendants of ancient Eastern Iranian inhabitants of Central Asia, in particular the Soghdians and the Bactrians, and possibly other groups, with an admixture of Western Iranian Persians (see Glossary) and non-Iranian peoples. The ethnic contribution of various Turkic and Mongol peoples, who entered Central Asia at later times, has not been determined precisely. However, experts assume that some assimilation must have occurred in both directions.

The origin of the name *Tajik* has been embroiled in twentieth-century political disputes about whether Turkic or Iranian peoples were the original inhabitants of Central Asia. The explanation most favored by scholars is that the word evolved from the name of a pre-Islamic (before the seventh century A.D.) Arab tribe.

Until the twentieth century, people in the region used two types of distinction to identify themselves: way of life—either

nomadic or sedentary—and place of residence. By the late nineteenth century, the Tajik and Uzbek peoples, who had lived in proximity for centuries and often used each other's languages, did not perceive themselves as two distinct nationalities. Consequently, such labels were imposed artificially when Central Asia was divided into five Soviet republics in the 1920s.

Early History

Much, if not all, of what is today Tajikistan was part of ancient Persia's Achaemenid Empire (sixth to fourth centuries B.C.), which was subdued by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C. and then became part of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, one of the successor states to Alexander's empire. The northern part of what is now Tajikistan was part of Soghdiana, a distinct region that intermittently existed as a combination of separate oasis states and sometimes was subject to other states. Two important cities in what is now northern Tajikistan, Khujand (formerly Leninobod; Russian spelling Leninabad) and Panjakent, as well as Bukhoro (Bukhara) and Samarqand (Samarkand) in contemporary Uzbekistan, were Soghdian in antiquity. As intermediaries on the Silk Route between China and markets to the west and south, the Soghdians imparted religions such as Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Zoroastrianism (see Glossary), and Manichaeism (see Glossary), as well as their own alphabet and other knowledge, to peoples along the trade routes.

Between the first and fourth centuries, the area that is now Tajikistan and adjoining territories were part of the Kushan realm, which had close cultural ties to India. The Kushans, whose exact identity is uncertain, played an important role in the expansion of Buddhism by spreading the faith to the Soghdians,who in turn brought it to China and the Turks.

By the first century A.D., the Han dynasty of China had developed commercial and diplomatic relations with the Soghdians and their neighbors, the Bactrians. Military operations also extended Chinese influence westward into the region. During the first centuries A.D., Chinese involvement in this region waxed and waned, decreasing sharply after the Islamic conquest but not disappearing completely. As late as the nineteenth century, China attempted to press its claim to the Pamir region of what is now southeastern Tajikistan. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, China occasionally has revived its claim to part of this region.

The Islamic Conquest

Islamic Arabs began the conquest of the region in earnest in the early eighth century. Conversion to Islam occurred by means of incentives, gradual acceptance, and force of arms. Islam spread most rapidly in cities and along the main river valleys. By the ninth century, it was the prevalent religion in the entire region. In the early centuries of Islamic domination, Central Asia continued in its role as a commercial crossroads, linking China, the steppes to the north, and the Islamic heartland.

Persian Culture in Central Asia

The Persian influence on Central Asia, already prominent before the Islamic conquest, grew even stronger afterward. Under Iran's last pre-Islamic empire, the Sassanian, the Persian language and culture as well as the Zoroastrian religion spread among the peoples of Central Asia, including the ancestors of the modern Tajiks. In the wake of the Islamic conquest, Persian-speakers settled in Central Asia, where they played an active role in public affairs and furthered the spread of the Persian language and culture, their language displacing Eastern Iranian ones. By the twelfth century, Persian had also supplanted Arabic as the written language for most subjects.

The Samanids

In the development of a modern Tajik national identity, the most important state in Central Asia after the Islamic conquest was the Persian-speaking Samanid principality (875–999), which came to rule most of what is now Tajikistan, as well as territory to the south and west. During their reign, the Samanids supported the revival of the written Persian language.

Early in the Samanid period, Bukhoro became well-known as a center of learning and culture throughout the eastern part of the Persian-speaking world. Samanid literary patronage played an important role in preserving the culture of pre-Islamic Iran. Late in the tenth century, the Samanid state came under increasing pressure from Turkic powers to the north and south. After the Qarakhanid Turks overthrew the Samanids in 999, no major Persian state ever again existed in Central Asia.

Beginning in the ninth century, Turkish penetration of the Persian cultural sphere increased in Central Asia. The influx of even greater numbers of Turkic peoples began in the eleventh century. The Turkic peoples who moved into southern Central

Asia, including what later became Tajikistan, were influenced to varying degrees by Persian culture. Over the generations, some converted Turks changed from pastoral nomadism to a sedentary way of life, which brought them into closer contact with the sedentary Persian-speakers. Cultural influences flowed in both directions as Turks and Persians intermarried.

During subsequent centuries, the lands that eventually became Tajikistan were part of Turkic or Mongol states. The Persian language remained in use in government, scholarship, and literature. Among the dynasties that ruled all or part of the future Tajikistan between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries were the Seljuk Turks, the Mongols, and the Timurids (Timur, or Tamerlane, and his heirs and their subjects). Repeated power struggles among claimants to these realms took their toll on Central Asia. The Mongol conquest in particular dealt a serious blow to sedentary life and destroyed several important cities in the region. Although they had come in conquest, the Timurids also patronized scholarship, the arts, and letters.

In the early sixteenth century, Uzbeks from the northwest conquered large sections of Central Asia, but the unified Uzbek state began to break apart soon after the conquest. By the early nineteenth century, the lands of the future Tajikistan were divided among three states: the Uzbek-ruled Bukhoro Khanate, the Quqon (Kokand) Khanate, centered on the Fergana Valley, and the kingdom of Afghanistan. These three principalities subsequently fought each other for control of key areas of the new territory. Although some regions were under the nominal control of Bukhoro, or Quqon, local rulers were virtually independent.

The Russian Conquest

After several unsuccessful attempts in earlier times, the Russian conquest and settlement of Central Asia began in earnest in the second half of the nineteenth century. Spurred by various economic and geopolitical factors, increasing numbers of Russians moved into Central Asia in this period. Although some armed resistance occurred, Tajik society remained largely unchanged during this initial colonial period.

The Occupation Process

By 1860 the Central Asian principalities were ripe for conquest by the much more powerful Russian Empire. Imperial policy makers believed that these principalities had to be sub-

dued because of their armed opposition to Russian expansion into the Kazak steppe, which already was underway to the north of Tajikistan. Some proponents of Russian expansion saw it as a way to compensate for losses elsewhere and to pressure Britain, Russia's perennial nemesis in the region, by playing on British concerns about threats to its position in India. The Russian military supported campaigns in Central Asia as a means of advancing careers and building personal fortunes. The region assumed much greater economic importance in the second half of the nineteenth century because of its potential as a supplier of cotton.

An important step in the Russian conquest was the capture of Tashkent from the Quqon Khanate, part of which was annexed in 1866. The following year, Tashkent became the capital of the new Guberniya (Governorate General) of Turkestan, which included the districts of Khujand and Uroteppa (later part of Tajikistan). After a domestic uprising and Russian military occupation, Russia annexed the remainder of the Quqon Khanate in 1876.

The Bukhoro Khanate fought Russian invaders during the same period, losing the Samarqand area in 1868. Russia chose not to annex the rest of Bukhoro, fearing repercussions in the Muslim world and from Britain because Bukhoro was a bastion of Islam and a place of strategic significance to British India. Instead, the tsar's government made a treaty with Bukhoro, recognizing its existence but in effect subordinating it to Russia. Bukhoro actually gained territory by this agreement, when the Russian administration granted the amir of Bukhoro a district that included Dushanbe, now the capital of Tajikistan, in compensation for the territory that had been ceded to Russia.

In the 1880s, the principality of Shughnon-Rushon in the western Pamir Mountains became a new object of contention between Britain and Russia when Afghanistan and Russia disputed territory there. An 1895 treaty assigned the disputed territory to Bukhoro, and at the same time put the eastern Pamirs under Russian rule.

Tajikistan under Russian Rule

Russian rule brought important changes in Central Asia, but many elements of the traditional way of life scarcely changed. In the part of what is now Tajikistan that was incorporated into the Guberniya of Turkestan, many ordinary inhabitants had limited contact with Russian officials or settlers before 1917.

Rural administration there resembled the system that governed peasants in the European part of the Russian Empire after the abolition of serfdom in 1861. Local administration in villages continued to follow long-established tradition, and prior to 1917 few Russians lived in the area of present-day Tajikistan. Russian authorities also left education in the region substantially the same between the 1870s and 1917.

An important event of the 1870s was Russia's initial expansion of cotton cultivation in the region, including the areas of the Fergana Valley and the Bukhoro Khanate that later became part of Tajikistan. The pattern of switching land from grain cultivation to cotton cultivation, which intensified during the Soviet period, was established at this time. The first cotton-processing plant was established in eastern Bukhoro during World War I.

Some elements of opposition to Russian hegemony appeared in the late nineteenth century. By 1900 a novel educational approach was being offered by reformers known as Jadidists (*jadid* is the Arabic word for "new.") The Jadidists, who received support from Tajiks, Tatars, and Uzbeks, were modernizers and nationalists who viewed Central Asia as a whole. Their position was that the religious and cultural greatness of Islamic civilization had been degraded in the Central Asia of their day. The Tatars and Central Asians who shared these views established Jadidist schools in several cities in the Guberniya of Turkestan. Although the Jadidists were not necessarily anti-Russian, tsarist officials in Turkestan found their kind of education even more threatening than traditional Islamic teaching. By World War I, several cities in present-day Tajikistan had underground Jadidist organizations.

Between 1869 and 1913, uprisings against the amir of Bukhoro erupted under local rulers in the eastern part of the khanate. The uprisings of 1910 and 1913 required Russian troops to restore order. A peasant revolt also occurred in eastern Bukhoro in 1886. The failed Russian revolution of 1905 resonated very little among the indigenous populations of Central Asia. In the Duma (legislature) that was established in St. Petersburg as a consequence of the events of 1905, the indigenous inhabitants of Turkestan were allotted only six representatives. Subsequent to the second Duma in 1907, Central Asians were denied all representation.

By 1916 discontent with the effects of Russian rule had grown substantially. Central Asians complained especially of

discriminatory taxation and price gouging by Russian merchants. A flashpoint was Russia's revocation that year of Central Asians' traditional exemption from military service. In July 1916, the first violent reaction to the impending draft occurred when demonstrators attacked Russian soldiers in Khujand, in what would later be northern Tajikistan. Although clashes continued in various parts of Central Asia through the end of the year, Russian troops quickly brought the Khujand region back under control. The following year, the Russian Revolution ended tsarist rule in Central Asia.

In the early 1920s, the establishment of Soviet rule in Central Asia led to the creation of a new entity called Tajikistan as a republic within the Soviet Union. In contrast to the tsarist period, when most inhabitants of the future Tajikistan felt only limited Russian influence, the Soviet era saw a central authority exert itself in a way that was ideologically and culturally alien to the republic's inhabitants. The Tajik way of life experienced much change, even though social homogenization was never achieved.

The Revolutionary Era

The indigenous inhabitants of the former Guberniya of Turkestan played no role in the overthrow of the Russian monarchy in March 1917 or in the seizure of power by the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) in November of that year. But the impact of those upheavals soon was felt in all parts of Central Asia. After the fall of the monarchy, Russia's Provisional Government abolished the office of governor-general of Turkestan and established in its place a nine-member Turkestan Committee, in which Russians had the majority and provided the leadership. The Provisional Government, which ruled Russia between March and November 1917, was unwilling to address the specific concerns of Central Asian reformers, including regional autonomy. Central Asians received no seats in Russia's short-lived Constituent Assembly. The events of 1917 finally alienated both conservatives and radicals from the revolution.

In 1917 the soviets (local revolutionary assemblies including soldiers and workers) that sprang up in Russian areas of Turkestan and Bukhoro were composed overwhelmingly of Russians. In November 1917, a regional congress of soviets in Tashkent declared a revolutionary regime and voted by a wide margin to continue the policies of the Provisional Government. Thus,

Central Asians again were denied political representation. Eventually, local communists established a figurehead soviet for Central Asians.

Having been denied access to the revolutionary organs of power, Central Asian reformers and conservatives formed their own organizations, as well as an umbrella group, the National Center. Although the groups cooperated on some issues of common interest, considerable animosity and occasional violence marked their relations. One group of Central Asian Muslims declared an autonomous state in southern Central Asia centered in the city of Quqon. At the beginning of 1919, the Tashkent Soviet declared the Quqon group counterrevolutionary and seized the city, killing at least 5,000 civilians.

Meanwhile, in 1918 the Tashkent Soviet had been defeated soundly in its effort to overthrow the amir of Bukhoro, who was seen by the communists and the Central Asian reformers alike as an obstacle to their respective programs. The attempted coup provoked a campaign of repression by the amir, and the defeat forced the Russian authorities in Tashkent to recognize a sovereign Bukhoran state in place of a Russian protectorate.

Impact of the Civil War

An acute food shortage struck Turkestan in 1918–19, the result of the civil war, scarcities of grain caused by communist cotton-cultivation and price-setting policies, and the Tashkent Soviet's disinclination to provide famine relief to indigenous Central Asians. No authoritative estimate of famine deaths is available, but Central Asian nationalists put the number above 1 million.

In the fall of 1919, the collapse of the anti-Bolshevik White Army in western Siberia enabled General Mikhail Frunze to lead Red Army forces into Central Asia and gradually occupy the entire region. In 1920 the Red Army occupied Bukhoro and drove out the amir, declaring an independent people's republic but remaining as an occupation force. Turkestan, including the northern part of present-day Tajikistan, was officially incorporated into the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic in 1921.

By 1921 the Russian communists had won the Russian Civil War and established the first Soviet republics in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belorussia (present-day Belarus), Georgia, and Ukraine. At this point, the communists reduced the party's token Central Asian leadership to figurehead positions and

expelled a large number of the Central Asian rank and file. In 1922 the Communist Party of Bukhoro was incorporated into the Russian Communist Party, which soon became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Thereafter, most major government offices in Bukhoro were filled by appointees sent from Moscow, many of them Tatars, and many Central Asians were purged from the party and the government. In 1924 Bukhoro was converted from a people's republic to a Soviet socialist republic.

The Basmachi

An indigenous resistance movement proved the last barrier to assimilation of Central Asia into the Soviet Union. In the 1920s, more than 20,000 people fought Soviet rule in Central Asia. The Russians applied a derogatory term, *Basmachi* (which originally meant brigand), to the groups. Although the resistance did not apply that term to itself, it nonetheless entered common usage. The several Basmachi groups had conflicting agendas and seldom coordinated their actions. After arising in the Fergana Valley, the movement became a rallying ground for opponents of Russian or Bolshevik rule from all parts of the region. Peasant unrest already existed in the area because of wartime hardships and the demands of the amir and the soviets. The Red Army's harsh treatment of local inhabitants in 1921 drove more people into the resistance camp. However, the Basmachi movement became more divided and more conservative as it gained numerically. It achieved some unity under the leadership of Enver Pasha, a Turkish adventurer with ambitions to lead the new secular government of Turkey, but Enver was killed in battle in early 1922.

Except for remote pockets of resistance, guerrilla fighting in Tajikistan ended by 1925. The defeat of the Basmachis caused as many as 200,000 people, including noncombatants, to flee eastern Bukhoro in the first half of the 1920s. A few thousand subsequently returned over the next several years.

The communists used a combination of military force and conciliation to defeat the Basmachis. The military approach ultimately favored the communist side, which was much better armed. The Red Army forces included Tatars and Central Asians, who enabled the invading force to appear at least partly indigenous. Conciliatory measures (grants of food, tax relief, the promise of land reform, the reversal of anti-Islamic policies launched during the Civil War, and the promise of an end to

agricultural controls) prompted some Basmachis to reconcile themselves to the new order.

Creation of Tajikistan

After establishing communist rule throughout formerly tsarist Central Asia in 1924, the Soviet government redrew internal political borders, eliminating the major units into which the region had been divided. The Soviet rationale was that this reorganization fulfilled local inhabitants' nationalist aspirations and would undercut support for the Basmachis. However, the new boundaries still left national groups fragmented, and nationalist aspirations in Central Asia did not prove as threatening as depicted in communist propaganda.

One of the new states created in Central Asia in 1924 was Uzbekistan, which had the status of a Soviet socialist republic. Tajikistan was created as an autonomous Soviet socialist republic within Uzbekistan. The new autonomous republic included what had been eastern Bukhoro and had a population of about 740,000, out of a total population of nearly 5 million in Uzbekistan as a whole. Its capital was established in Dushanbe, which had been a village of 3,000 in 1920. In 1929 Tajikistan was detached from Uzbekistan and given full status as a Soviet socialist republic. At that time, the territory that is now northern Tajikistan was added to the new republic. Even with the additional territory, Tajikistan remained the smallest Central Asian republic.

With the creation of a republic defined in national terms came the creation of institutions that, at least in form, were likewise national. The first Tajik-language newspaper in Soviet Tajikistan began publication in 1926. New educational institutions also began operation about the same time. The first state schools, available to both children and adults and designed to provide a basic education, opened in 1926. The central government also trained a small number of Tajiks for public office, either by putting them through courses offered by government departments or by sending them to schools in Uzbekistan.

From 1921 to 1927, during the New Economic Policy (NEP—see Glossary) Soviet agricultural policy promoted the expansion of cotton cultivation in Central Asia. By the end of the NEP, the extent of cotton cultivation had increased dramatically, but yield did not match prerevolutionary levels. At the same time, the cultivation of rice, a staple food of the region, declined considerably.

Collectivization

The collectivization of agriculture was implemented on a limited scale in Tajikistan between 1927 and 1929, and much more aggressively between 1930 and 1934. The objective of Soviet agricultural policy was to expand the extent of cotton cultivation in Tajikistan as a whole, with particular emphasis on the southern part of the republic. The process included violence against peasants, substantial expansion of the irrigation network, and forcible resettlement of mountain people and people from Uzbekistan in the lowlands. Many peasants in Tajikistan fought forced collectivization, reviving the Basmachi movement in upland enclaves between 1930 and 1936. The interwar years also saw small-scale industrial development in the republic (see Industry, this ch.).

The Purges

Like the CPSU branches elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of Tajikistan suffered waves of purges directed by the central government in Moscow between 1927 and 1934. Conditions particular to Tajikistan were used to provide additional justification for the crackdown. Many Tajik communists were highly critical of the ferocity with which the collectivization of agriculture was implemented, and central party authorities were dissatisfied with the local communists' advocacy of the republic's interests, including attempts to gain more autonomy and shield local intellectuals. About 70 percent of the party membership in Tajikistan—nearly 10,000 people at all levels of the organization—was expelled between 1933 and 1935. Between 1932 and 1937, the proportion of Tajiks in the republic's party membership dropped from 53 to 45 percent as the purges escalated. Many of those expelled from party and state offices were replaced by Russians sent in by the central government. Another round of purges took place in 1937 and 1938, during the Great Terror orchestrated by Joseph V. Stalin. Subsequently Russians dominated party positions at all levels, including the top position of first secretary. Whatever their nationality, party officials representing Tajikistan, unlike those from some other Soviet republics, had little influence in nationwide politics throughout the existence of the Soviet Union.

The Postwar Period

The post-World War II era saw the expansion of irrigated agriculture, the further development of industry, and a rise in the level of education in Tajikistan. Like the rest of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan felt the effects of the party and government reorganization projects of Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev (in office 1953–64). Especially in 1957 and 1958, Tajikistan's population and economy were manipulated as part of Khrushchev's overly ambitious Virgin Lands project, a campaign to forcibly increase the extent of arable land in the Soviet Union. Under Khrushchev and his successor, Leonid I. Brezhnev (in office 1964–82), Tajikistan's borders were periodically redrawn as districts and provinces were recombined, abolished, and restored, while small amounts of territory were acquired from or ceded to neighboring republics.

During the Soviet period, the only Tajikistani politician to become important outside his region was Bobojon Ghafurov (1908–77), a Tajik who became prominent as the Stalinist first secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan in the late 1940s. After Stalin's death in 1953, Ghafurov, a historian by training, established himself as a prominent Asia scholar and magazine editor, injecting notes of Tajik nationalism into some of his historical writings.

The fate of Ghafurov's successors illustrates important trends in the politics of Soviet Central Asia in the second half of the twentieth century. The next first secretary, Tursunbai Uljabayev (in office 1956–61), was ousted amid accusations that he had falsified reports to exaggerate the success of cotton production in the republic (charges also leveled in the 1980s against Uzbekistan's leadership); apparently the central government also objected to Uljabayev's preferential appointments of his cronies from Leninobod Province to party positions (see Russification and Resistance, ch. 5). Uljabaev's replacement as first secretary, Jabbor Rasulov, was a veteran of the prestigious agricultural bureaucracy of the republic. Like first secretaries in the other Central Asian republics, Rasulov benefited from Brezhnev's policy of "stability of cadres" and remained in office until Brezhnev's death in 1982.

Rasulov's successor, Rahmon Nabiyev, was a man of the Brezhnevite political school, who, like his predecessor, had spent much of his career in the agricultural bureaucracy. Nabiyev held office until ousted in 1985 as Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev (in office 1985–91) swept out the repub-

lic's old-guard party leaders. Nabiyev's 1991 installation as president of independent Tajikistan, by means of an old-guard coup and a rigged election, exacerbated the political tensions in the republic and was an important step toward the civil war that broke out in 1992.

All the post-Stalin party first secretaries came from Leninobod, in keeping with a broader phenomenon of Tajikistani politics from the postwar period to the collapse of the Soviet Union—the linkage between regional cliques, especially from Leninobod Province, and political power. Although certain cliques from Leninobod were dominant, they allowed allies from other provinces a lesser share of power. As the conflict in the early1990s showed, supporters of opposing camps could be found in all the country's provinces.

The forces of fragmentation in the Soviet Union eventually affected Tajikistan, whose government strongly supported continued unity. Bowing to Tajik nationalism, Tajikistan's Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration of sovereignty in August 1990, but in March 1991, the people of Tajikistan voted overwhelmingly for preservation of the union in a national referendum. That August the Moscow coup against the Gorbachev government brought mass demonstrations by opposition groups in Dushanbe, forcing the resignation of President Kahar Mahkamov. Nabiyev assumed the position of acting president. The following month, the Supreme Soviet proclaimed Tajikistan an independent state, following the examples of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In November, Nabiyev was elected president of the new republic, and in December, representatives of Tajikistan signed the agreement forming the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS—see Glossary) to succeed the Soviet Union.

Antigovernment demonstrations began in Dushanbe in March 1992. In April 1992, tensions mounted as progovernment groups opposing reform staged counterdemonstrations. By May, small armed clashes had occurred, causing Nabiyev to break off negotiations with the reformist demonstrators and go into hiding. After eight antigovernment demonstrators were killed in Dushanbe, the commander of the Russian garrison brokered a compromise agreement creating a coalition government in which one-third of the cabinet positions would go to members of the opposition. The collapse of that government heralded the outbreak of a civil war that plagued Tajikistan for the next four years (see Transition to Post-Soviet Government, this ch.).

Physical Environment

Mountains cover 93 percent of Tajikistan's surface area. The two principal ranges, the Pamir and the Alay, give rise to many glacier-fed streams and rivers, which have been used to irrigate farmlands since ancient times. Central Asia's other major mountain range, the Tian Shan, skirts northern Tajikistan. Mountainous terrain separates Tajikistan's two population centers, which are in the lowlands of the southern and northern sections of the country. Especially in areas of intensive agricultural and industrial activity, the Soviet Union's natural resource utilization policies left independent Tajikistan with a legacy of environmental problems.

Dimensions and Borders

With an area of 143,100 square kilometers, Tajikistan is about the same size as the state of Wisconsin. Its maximum east-to-west extent is 700 kilometers, and its maximum north-to-south extent is 350 kilometers. The country's highly irregular border is about 3,000 kilometers long, including 430 kilometers along the Chinese border to the east and 1,030 kilometers along the frontier with Afghanistan to the south. Most of the southern border with Afghanistan is set by the Amu Darya (*darya* is the Persian word for river) and its tributary the Panj River (Darya-ye Panj), which has headwaters in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The other neighbors are the former Soviet republics of Uzbekistan (to the west and the north) and Kyrgyzstan (to the north).

Topography and Drainage

The lower elevations of Tajikistan are divided into northern and southern regions by a complex of three mountain chains that constitute the westernmost extension of the massive Tian Shan system. Running essentially parallel from east to west, the chains are the Turkestan, Zarafshon, and Hisor (Gisar) mountains (see fig. 11). The last of these lies just north of the capital, Dushanbe, which is situated in west-central Tajikistan.

More than half of Tajikistan lies above an elevation of 3,000 meters. Even the lowlands, which are located in the Fergana Valley in the far north and in the southwest, are well above sea level. In the Turkestan range, highest of the western chains, the maximum elevation is 5,510 meters. The highest elevations of this range are in the southeast, near the border with Kyr-

gyzstan. That region is dominated by the peaks of the Pamir-Alay mountain system, including two of the three highest elevations in the former Soviet Union: Mount Lenin (7,134 meters) and Mount Communism (7,495 meters). Several other peaks in the region also exceed 7,000 meters. The mountains contain numerous glaciers, the largest of which, the Fedchenko, covers more than 700 square kilometers and is the largest glacier in the world outside the polar regions. Because Tajikistan lies in an active seismic belt, severe earthquakes are common.

The Fergana Valley, the most densely populated region in Central Asia, spreads across northern Tajikistan from Uzbekistan on the west to Kyrgyzstan on the east (see fig. 1). This long valley, which lies between two mountain ranges, reaches its lowest elevation of 320 meters at Khujand on the Syrdariya. Rivers bring rich soil deposits into the Fergana Valley from the surrounding mountains, creating a series of fertile oases that have long been prized for agriculture (see Agriculture, this ch.).

In Tajikistan's dense river network, the largest rivers are the Syrdariya and the Amu Darya; the largest tributaries are the Vakhsh and the Kofarnihon, which form valleys from northeast to southwest across western Tajikistan. The Amu Darya carries more water than any other river in Central Asia. The upper course of the Amu Darya, called the Panj River, is 921 kilometers long. The river's name changes at the confluence of the Panj, the Vakhsh, and the Kofarnihon rivers in far southwestern Tajikistan. The Vakhsh, called the Kyzyl-Suu upstream in Kyrgyzstan and the Surkhob in its middle course in north-central Tajikistan, is the second largest river in southern Tajikistan after the Amu-Panj system. In the Soviet era, the Vakhsh was dammed at several points for irrigation and electric power generation, most notably at Norak (Nurek), east of Dushanbe, where one of the world's highest dams forms the Norak Reservoir. Numerous factories also were built along the Vakhsh to draw upon its waters and potential for electric power generation.

The two most important rivers in northern Tajikistan are the Syrdariya and the Zarafshon. The former, the second longest river in Central Asia, stretches 195 kilometers (of its total length of 2,400 kilometers) across the Fergana Valley in far-northern Tajikistan. The Zarafshon River runs 316 kilometers (of a total length of 781 kilometers) through the center of Tajikistan. Tajikistan's rivers reach high-water levels twice a year: in the spring, fed by the rainy season and melting moun-

Figure 11. Tajikistan: Topography

tain snow, and in the summer, fed by melting glaciers. The summer freshets are the more useful for irrigation, especially in the Fergana Valley and the valleys of southeastern Tajikistan. Most of Tajikistan's lakes are of glacial origin and are located in the Pamir region. The largest, the Qarokul (Kara-Kul), is a salt lake devoid of life, lying at an elevation of 4,200 meters.

Climate

In general, Tajikistan's climate is continental, subtropical, and semiarid, with some desert areas. The climate changes drastically according to elevation, however. The Fergana Valley and other lowlands are shielded by mountains from Arctic air masses, but temperatures in that region still drop below freezing for more than 100 days a year. In the subtropical southwestern lowlands, which have the highest average temperatures, the climate is arid, although some sections now are irrigated for farming. At Tajikistan's lower elevations, the average temperature range is 23° to 30° C in July and –1° to 3°C in January. In the eastern Pamirs, the average July temperature is 5° to 10°C, and the average January temperature is –15° to –20°C. The average annual precipitation for most of the republic ranges between 700 and 1,600 millimeters. The heaviest precipitation falls are at the Fedchenko Glacier, which averages 2,236 millimeters per year, and the lightest in the eastern Pamirs, which average less than 100 millimeters per year. Most precipitation occurs in the winter and spring.

Environmental Problems

Most of Tajikistan's environmental problems are related to the agricultural policies imposed on the country during the Soviet period. By 1991 heavy use of mineral fertilizers and agricultural chemicals was a major cause of pollution in the republic. Among those chemicals were DDT, banned by international convention, and several defoliants and herbicides. In addition to the damage they have done to the air, land, and water, the chemicals have contaminated the cottonseeds whose oil is used widely for cooking. Cotton farmers and their families are at particular risk from the overuse of agricultural chemicals, both from direct physical contact in the field and from the use of the branches of cotton plants at home for fuel. All of these toxic sources are believed to contribute to a high incidence of maternal and child mortality and birth defects. In 1994 the infant mortality rate was 43.2 per 1,000 births, the second highest rate

among former Soviet republics. The rate in 1990 had been 40.0 infant deaths per 1,000 births (see table 5, Appendix; Health Conditions, this ch.).

Cotton requires particularly intense irrigation (see Agriculture, this ch.). In Tajikistan's cotton-growing regions, farms were established in large, semiarid tracts and in tracts reclaimed from the desert, but cotton's growing season is summer, when the region receives virtually no rainfall. The 50 percent increase in cotton cultivation mandated by Soviet and post-Soviet agricultural planners between 1964 and 1994 consequently overtaxed the regional water supply. Poorly designed irrigation networks led to massive runoff, which increased soil salinity and carried toxic agricultural chemicals downstream to other fields, the Aral Sea, and populated areas of the region.

By the 1980s, nearly 90 percent of water use in Central Asia was for agriculture. Of that quantity, nearly 75 percent came from the Amu Darya and the Syrdariya, the chief tributaries of the Aral Sea on the Kazakstan-Uzbekistan border to the northwest of Tajikistan. As the desiccation of the Aral Sea came to international attention in the 1980s, water-use policy became a contentious issue between Soviet republics such as Tajikistan, where the main rivers rise, and those farther downstream, including Uzbekistan. By the end of the Soviet era, the central government had relinquished central control of water-use policy for Central Asia, but the republics had not agreed on an allocation policy.

Industry also causes pollution problems. A major offender is the production of nonferrous metals. One of Tajikistan's leading industrial sites, the aluminum plant at Regar (also known as Tursunzoda), west of Dushanbe near the border with Uzbekistan, generates large amounts of toxic waste gases that have been blamed for a sharp increase in the number of birth defects among people who live within range of its emissions.

In 1992 the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan established a Ministry of Environmental Protection. However, the enforcement activity of the ministry was limited severely by the political upheavals that plagued Tajikistan in its first years of independence (see Transition to Post-Soviet Government, this ch.). The only registered private environmental group in Tajikistan in the early 1990s was a chapter of the Social-Ecological Alliance, the largest informal environmental association in the former Soviet Union. The Tajikistani branch's main functions have been to conduct environmental research and to organize

protests against the Roghun Hydroelectric Plant project (see Energy, this ch.).

Population

Tajikistan's population has been characterized as primarily rural, with a relatively high birth rate and substantial ethnic tensions. Substantial forced relocation has occurred, first as a result of various Soviet programs and then because of the civil war.

By the time Tajikistan became independent, its social structure reflected some of the changes that Soviet policy had consciously promoted, including urbanization, nearly universal adult literacy, and the increased employment of women outside the home. However, the changes were not as far-reaching as the central government had intended, nor did they take the exact form the government wanted. Tajikistan's cities grew, but the republic remained predominantly rural. More women had wage-paying jobs, but society still held traditional women's roles in higher regard. Tajikistan had an especially high birth rate and the highest rate of population increase of all the former Soviet republics.

Population Characteristics

The 1970 census showed a population of 2,899,602. Overall, the rate of growth, which averaged 3.1 percent per year in the 1970s, rose to an annual average of 3.4 percent in the 1980s. According to the last Soviet census, taken in 1989, Tajikistan's population was 5,092,603. Since that time, no reliable estimate has been available; however, in the 1990s conditions in the country seem likely to preclude continuation of the rapid population increases of the 1970s and 1980s. The main factor in that change is the civil war and its repercussions: an estimated 50,000 dead, extensive shifting of populations within Tajikistan, heavy emigration, and a decreased birth rate caused by political turmoil and a plummeting standard of living. The birth rate was estimated at 3.0 percent in 1992.

Tajikistan's population is concentrated at the lower elevations; 90 percent of its inhabitants live in valleys, often in densely concentrated urban centers. In mid-1991, the overall population density for the republic was 38.2 persons per square kilometer, but density varied greatly among the provinces. In the northern Khujand Province, the density was 61.2; in the

two southern provinces of Qurghonteppa and Kulob (which, at the time of the census and again after the civil war, merged into a single province, Khatlon), 71.5; in those districts not part of any province, including Dushanbe, 38.9; and in the easternmost jurisdictions, the mountainous Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province, whose borders encompass more than 40 percent of Tajikistan's territory, only 2.6.

The mountain areas, which never have been densely populated, lost many of their inhabitants beginning in the 1930s through a combination of voluntary migration in pursuit of better opportunities, forced relocations to the lowlands, and the destruction of villages for construction of Soviet-sponsored hydroelectric dams. This pattern reversed partially after 1992, as people fled to the mountains to escape the civil war.

According to the 1989 census, Tajikistan's population was overwhelmingly young and 50.3 percent female. People under age thirty made up 75 percent of the population; people under age fifteen were 47 percent of the total (see table 3, Appendix).

In the last two decades of the Soviet era, Tajikistan had the highest birth rate of any Soviet republic (see table 2, Appendix). Average family size in the republic, according to the 1989 census, was 6.1 people, the largest in the Soviet Union. The average Tajik woman gave birth to between seven and nine children. The average annual population growth rate for rural Tajikistan in the 1970s and 1980s was higher than the rate for urban areas.

The two main causes of Tajikistan's growth pattern were the high value placed by society on large families and the virtual absence of birth control, especially in rural areas, where the majority of the population lived. Women under the age of twenty gave birth to 5.1 percent of the babies born in Tajikistan in 1989, and a relatively high proportion of women continued to have children late into their child-bearing years. According to the 1989 census, 2 percent of all the babies born in Tajikistan were born to women between the ages of forty and forty-four; 81 percent of those babies had been preceded by at least six other children.

In the late 1980s, the Soviet government reacted to the high birth rate by encouraging family planning. The plan failed because of poor promotion of the pronatalist policy in the European republics of the union, inadequate birth control methods, and the Tajiks' traditional admiration for large families and opposition to birth control. In rural areas, the inade-

Town of Kalay-Kum, across the Panj River from Afghanistan
Playing bozkashi, *a traditional game played on horseback*
Courtesy Stephane Herbert

quacies of health care and the reluctance of women to undergo gynecological examinations contributed to the failure of family planning prior to independence.

Urbanization

Statistically, Tajikistan is the least urban of all the former Soviet republics (see table 3, Appendix). By the 1980s, the republic had nineteen cities and forty-nine "urban-type settlements" (the term used for populated places developed as part of Soviet planning). At the time of the first Soviet census, in 1926, when Tajikistan still was an autonomous republic of Uzbekistan, only 10 percent of its inhabitants lived in cities. By the 1959 census, urbanization had risen to 33 percent. This growth reflected not only the development of Tajikistan in its own right but the resettlement of people from other parts of the Soviet Union to occupy government, party, and military positions. It also reflected an influx of political deportees. Most of the immigrants went to Tajikistan's two largest cities, Dushanbe and Leninobod. During the period before 1960, some populated places also were reclassified as urban or incorporated into an existing city's boundaries, thus creating an impression of even greater urbanization.

The growth of the urban population continued for most of the postwar era. Between the 1959 and 1979 censuses, Tajikistan's urban population more than doubled, while the rural population increased almost as rapidly. However, by the 1970s the rate of rural population growth had begun to outstrip that of urban areas. After reaching a peak of 35 percent in the 1979 census, the proportion of the urban population declined.

According to the 1989 census, although Tajikistan's urban population increased by 26 percent in the 1980s, the proportion of urban inhabitants in the total population declined to 32.5 percent during that period. By the start of 1991, the republic's five largest cities, Dushanbe, Khujand, Kulob, Qurghonteppa, and Uroteppa, accounted for 17 percent of the total population of the republic. Beginning with the 1979 census, emigration from cities exceeded immigration into them. In the 1980s, urban immigration also came predominantly from within Tajikistan rather than from other Soviet republics, as had been the case in earlier decades. As other ethnic groups emigrated from Tajikistan more rapidly beginning in the late Soviet period, the percentage of Tajiks in the cities rose. Nevertheless, Tajiks in Tajikistan were one of the Soviet nationalities

least likely to move from villages to cities. Those who did so were usually single men reacting to the scarcity of employment in rural areas.

Tajikistan's largest city, Dushanbe (which was called Stalinabad from 1929 to 1961), was a Soviet-era development. Badly battered in the Russian Civil War of 1918–21, the village experienced a population drop from more than 3,000 in 1920 to 283 by 1924, and few buildings remained intact. Nevertheless, in 1924 Dushanbe was chosen as the capital of the new Tajikistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Centrally planned development projects inaugurated in 1926, 1938, 1965, and 1983 established housing, government office buildings, cultural facilities, and sports and recreational facilities, as well as the municipal infrastructure. With the addition of about 100 factories, Dushanbe also became Tajikistan's industrial center. It is the headquarters of the republic's radio and television broadcasting facilities and film studio. Several institutions of higher education and scholarship are located there.

Soviet-era industrial development projects played a major role in the growth of cities on the sites of former villages. For example, Regar, which was established in 1952, is the center of Tajikistan's vital aluminum industry, as well as several factories dedicated to other activities. Norak and Yovon (Russian spelling Yavan—site of a large chemical plant), were developed as industrial centers near Dushanbe to play specific economic roles in the Soviet system.

The Rural Majority

In the last decade of the Soviet era, the rural population of Tajikistan grew in both absolute and relative terms. By 1989 the rural population had risen to 3,437,498, or 68 percent of the total population, an increase of nearly 1 million people over the 1979 figure. By the 1980s, the republic had more than 3,000 inhabited villages, of which about one-quarter had 200 inhabitants or fewer. Observers have estimated that 75 to 89 percent of all Tajikistantis were villagers in 1990.

The rural standard of living is considerably below that of urban areas. Sanitation often is poor, and in many cases no safe source of drinking water is available. By the late 1980s, fewer than half of rural inhabitants and only 14 percent of collective farm residents had a piped-in water supply. In the same period, hundreds of villages lacked electricity, and some had no access to telephones or radio or television broadcasts (see Transporta-

tion and Telecommunications, this ch.). Many rural areas experienced shortages of doctors and teachers. The ratio of hospital beds to inhabitants is much lower in rural Tajikistan than in urban areas and far worse than the average for the former Soviet Union as a whole (see Health Care System, this ch.). Even large villages are unlikely to have libraries or other cultural facilities.

Gender and Family Structure

The Soviet era saw the implementation of policies designed to transform the status of women. During the 1930s, the Soviet authorities launched a campaign for women's equality in Tajikistan, as they did elsewhere in Central Asia. Eventually major changes resulted from such programs, but initially they provoked intense public opposition. For example, women who appeared in public without the traditional all-enveloping veil were ostracized by society or even killed by relatives for supposedly shaming their families by what was considered unchaste behavior.

World War II brought an upsurge in women's employment outside the home. With the majority of men removed from their civilian jobs by the demands of war, women compensated for the labor shortage. Although the employment of indigenous women in industry continued to grow even after the war, they remained a small fraction of the industrial labor force after independence. In the early 1980s, women made up 51 percent of Tajikistan's population and 52 percent of the work force on collective farms, but only 38 percent of the industrial labor force, 16 percent of transportation workers, 14 percent of communications workers, and 28 percent of civil servants. (These statistics include women of Russian and other non-Central Asian nationalities.) In some rural parts of the republic, about half the women were not employed at all outside the home in the mid-1980s. In the late Soviet era, female underemployment was an important political issue in Tajikistan because it was linked to the Soviet propaganda campaign portraying Islam as a regressive influence on society.

The issue of female employment was more complicated than was indicated by Soviet propaganda, however. Many women remained in the home not only because of traditional attitudes about women's roles but also because many lacked vocational training and few child care facilities were available. By the end of the 1980s, Tajikistan's preschools could accommodate only

16.5 percent of the children of appropriate age overall and only 2.4 percent of the rural children. Despite all this, women provided the core of the work force in certain areas of agriculture, especially the production of cotton and some fruits and vegetables. Women were underrepresented in government and management positions relative to their proportion of the republic's population. The Communist Party of Tajikistan, the government (especially the higher offices), and economic management organizations were largely directed by men.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, Tajik social norms and even de facto government policy still often favored a traditionalist, restrictive attitude toward women that tolerated wife beating and the arbitrary dismissal of women from responsible positions. In the late Soviet period, Tajik girls still commonly married while under age despite official condemnation of this practice as a remnant of the "feudal" Central Asian mentality.

Tajik society never has been organized by tribal affiliation. The core of the traditional social structure of Tajiks and other sedentary peoples of Central Asia is usually the extended family, which is composed of an adult couple, their unmarried daughters, and their married sons and their wives and children. Such a group normally has joint ownership of the family homestead, land, crops, and livestock. The more prosperous a family, the more members it is likely to have. In the 1930s, some particularly wealthy Tajik families had fifty members or more. Although Islam permits polygamy, that practice has been illegal in Tajikistan for about seventy years; monogamy is the more typical form of spousal relationship because of the high bride-price traditionally required of suitors.

Traditional family ties remain strong. Tajikistan had one of the highest percentages of people living in families rather than singly in the Soviet Union. According to the 1989 census, 69 percent of the men aged sixteen or older and 67 percent of the women in that age group were married, 2 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women were widowers or widows, and 1.7 percent of the men and 4 percent of the women were divorced or separated. Only 7.5 percent of men over age forty and 0.4 percent of women over forty never had been married.

The strength of the family is sometimes misinterpreted as simply a consequence of Islam's influence on Tajik society. However, rural societies in general often emphasize the family as a social unit, and Islam does not forbid divorce. Grounds for

divorce in Tajikistan include childlessness, emotional estrangement (in some cases the result of arranged marriages), a shortage of housing, drunkenness, and economic dissatisfaction. The highest rate of divorce is in Dushanbe, which has not only an acute housing shortage but a large number of inhabitants belonging to non-Central Asian nationalities. Marriage across nationality lines is relatively uncommon. Ethnically mixed marriages are almost twice as likely to occur in urban as in rural areas.

Emigration

After the Soviet census of 1989, a wave of emigration occurred. In the absence of a more recent census, the scale of that movement has not been determined reliably. It is known that non-Central Asians, especially Russians, were a large component of the émigré group. According to one estimate, about 200,000 Tajikistani citizens had left by early 1992. Among the causes of emigration in the late Soviet and early independence eras were opposition to the 1989 law that made Tajik the official language of the republic, resentment of the growing national assertiveness of Tajiks, dissatisfaction with the standard of living in the republic, fear of violence directed against non-Central Asians (a fear based partly on the Dushanbe riots of 1990 but intensified by rumor and the propaganda of communist hard-liners looking for support against a rising opposition), and, in 1992, the escalation of political violence into outright civil war. Some of the people who left Tajikistan were Germans and Jews who emigrated not just from the republic but from the Soviet Union altogether.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 50,000 to 70,000 Tajiks fled from southern Tajikistan to northern Afghanistan to escape the carnage of the civil war that began in 1992. The total number of people who fled their homes during the troubles of 1992 and 1993, either for other parts of Tajikistan or for other countries, is estimated to be at least 500,000. Most of these people probably returned to their home districts in 1993 or 1994, with help from foreign governments and international aid organizations. The return entailed hardships for many. Some were harmed or threatened by armed bands from the victorious side in the civil war. For others the difficulty lay in the devastation of homes and the collapse of the economy in districts battered by the war.

Regardless of motive, the increased emigration in the late 1980s and early 1990s deprived the republic of needed skilled workers and professionals. The number of doctors and teachers declined, and industries lost trained workers who could not be replaced.

Ethnic Groups

In creating the new Central Asian republics in the 1920s, the central political leadership arbitrarily defined national identities, which until that time had had little political importance. In the case of the Tajiks, this meant not only differentiating them from the Uzbeks, with whom they had much in common despite their different native languages, but also from fellow Persian-speakers outside the Soviet Union. Although the labels "Tajik" and "Uzbek" were not Soviet inventions, they had little meaning to many of the people to whom they were suddenly applied. This circumstance led to much confusion when people were required to identify themselves by one of these two national designations.

The Tajiks' language, which they traditionally had called Persian (Farsi), was relabeled Tajik. Major Persian-language writers were called Tajiks, even if they had not used that term to describe themselves and had not lived in Central Asia. Tajik, like the other Central Asian languages, underwent a two-stage alphabet reform by order of the Soviet regime. First, the Arabic alphabet was abandoned in 1929 in favor of the Latin. Then, in 1940 Moscow declared Cyrillic the official alphabet of the Tajik language.

Meanwhile, during the 1930s and 1940s Tajik culture was redefined and Sovietized to suit the political requirements of the central government of Soviet leader Joseph V. Stalin. In this period, the accusation of "bourgeois nationalism" could destroy a member of the intelligentsia or a political figure. In the renewed wave of Stalinist repression after World War II, Tajik intellectuals were purged for being nationalists, a loosely defined offense that could be applied to any form of opposition to central government policies.

By the time Tajikistan became an independent republic in 1991, its multiethnic population included an ethnic majority of Tajiks and an even larger religious majority of Muslims (see table 4, Appendix). Despite Soviet claims that ethnic and religious loyalties had diminished sharply and were bound for extinction, there were strong indications in the late 1980s and

early 1990s that ethnic and religious identities remained essentially intact. Indeed, those factors began to exert greater influence as Soviet controls weakened and people sought alternative ideologies.

According to the latest census, taken in 1989, Tajikistan had a population of 5,092,603, of whom Tajiks constituted about 3.17 million, or 62.3 percent. The accuracy of subsequent population estimates suffers from the region's large-scale population movement. In 1989 about three-quarters of all Tajiks in the Soviet Union lived in Tajikistan. Of the remaining 1 million Tajiks, about 933,000 lived in neighboring Uzbekistan. Much smaller Tajik populations lived in Afghanistan and China. The other major nationalities living in Tajikistan were Uzbeks, 23.5 percent (1,197,841); Russians, 7.6 percent (388,481); Volga Tatars, 1.4 percent (72,228); and Kyrgyz, 1.3 percent (63,832). In order of size, the remaining 3.9 percent included populations of Ukrainians, Germans, Turkmen, Koreans, Jews (including those of European ancestry and "Bukhoran Jews," whose ancestors had lived in Central Asia for centuries), Belorussians, Crimean Tatars, and Armenians.

Although ethnically classified with the Tajiks in the Soviet era, several Eastern Iranian peoples who had not been assimilated over the centuries by their Persian- or Turkic-speaking neighbors preserved distinct identities. These groups were the Yaghnobs and seven Pamiri peoples. At the end of the Soviet era, the Dushanbe government allowed some leeway for education, broadcasting, and publication in the Pamiri languages. However, these limited reforms were more than outweighed by the repression that the victors in the civil war directed against the Pamiris in 1992 on the grounds that they tended to support political reform.

In the last decade of Soviet power, Tajiks became a larger proportion of the republic's total population. The 62.3 percent they constituted in the 1989 census was an increase from their 58.8 percent proportion in the 1979 census. This trend seemed likely to continue into the late 1990s, barring such countervailing factors as civil war and emigration, because Tajiks accounted for 70 percent of the republic's natural population increase in 1989.

For much of the Soviet era, the central government used inducements such as scholarships and cash bonuses, as well as outright reassignment, to increase the settlement of Russian workers in Tajikistan. In the 1920s and 1930s, the small num-

ber of Tajikistanis with industrial and professional skills prompted the central authorities to relocate individuals with special expertise to Tajikistan, and Moscow sent many other people as political prisoners. By 1940 roughly half of the republic's industrial work force belonged to nonindigenous nationalities; most of these people were Russian. The engineering profession had a particularly large proportion of Russians and other non-Central Asians. Non-Central Asians settled in Tajikistan during World War II as industries and their workers were shifted east of the Ural Mountains to prevent their capture by the German army. Additional Russians and other Europeans went to Tajikistan in this period as war refugees or political deportees. As a result, between 1926 and 1959 the proportion of Russians among Tajikistan's population grew from less than 1 percent to 13 percent. During the same period, the proportion of Tajiks dropped from 80 percent to about 50 percent. This figure fell especially fast during the agricultural collectivization of the 1930s.

Because of the prominence of Russians and other non-Tajiks in such urban activities as government and industry, Dushanbe, the capital, became a predominantly non-Tajik city. According to the 1989 census, Tajiks constituted 39.1 percent, Russians 32.4 percent, Uzbeks 10 percent, Tatars 4.1 percent, and Ukrainians 3.5 percent of Dushanbe's population of about 602,000. Although educated, urban Tajiks were likely to speak Russian well, few Russians living in Dushanbe spoke Tajik or felt a need to do so. This situation caused increasing resentment among Tajiks in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

By the end of the Soviet era, many educated Tajiks were criticizing what they perceived as the continued privileged position of Russians in society. Even after decades of improved education and indoctrination of younger generations of Tajiks, Russians and other nonindigenous peoples still occupied a disproportionate number of top positions in the republic's communist party (see Political Parties, this ch.). Tajiks also saw Russians perpetuating their dominance by hiring practices biased against Tajiks. By the end of the Soviet era, Tajiks often were a small minority in the administration of the republic's main industrial enterprises, including the chemical plants, the cotton textile industry, and large construction projects (see Labor, this ch.).

The preindependence government of Tajikistan made some provision for the distinctive needs of minority nationalities liv-

ing within the republic's borders. It provided education, mass media, and cultural offerings in Russian (see Education; The Media, this ch.). In 1988 state radio began broadcasting in German, Kyrgyz, and Crimean Tatar. There were several Uzbek-language bookstores in the republic. Late in the Soviet era, Dushanbe had cultural centers for Uzbeks, Ukrainians, and members of other nationalities as well as restaurants that provided ethnic foods for Uzbeks, Tatars, Koreans, and Germans.

Forces of Nationalism

Ethnic tensions increased in Tajikistan, as they did elsewhere in Central Asia, under the troubled conditions of the late Soviet era. Already in the late 1970s, some ethnic disturbances and anti-Soviet riots had occurred. One consequence of heightened resentment of Soviet power was violence directed at members of other nationalities, who were made scapegoats for their attackers' economic grievances (see Economic Conditions in the Early 1990s, this ch.). An example of this conflict was a clash between Tajiks and Kyrgyz over land and water claims in 1989. Antagonism between Uzbeks and Tajiks reached a new level during Tajikistan's civil war of 1992, when Uzbeks living in Tajikistan joined the faction attempting to restore a neo-Soviet regime to power (see Transition to Post-Soviet Government, this ch.).

In 1989 attacks on Meskhetians (one of the Muslim groups deported from Central Asia by Stalin) spilled over from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan when about 2,000 Meskhetians were evacuated from eastern Uzbekistan to a remote settlement in northern Tajikistan. A violent conflict between inhabitants of the area and the Meskhetians resulted in the intervention of security forces and removal of the Meskhetians entirely from Central Asia.

The late 1980s and early 1990s also saw open criticism by Tajiks of their treatment as a people by the central Soviet authorities and by their Turkic neighbors, especially the Uzbeks. A key issue was disparagement of the Tajik heritage in statements of Soviet nationalities policy, which labeled the Tajiks a "formerly backward" people that only began to progress under Russian and Soviet tutelage. Tajiks, who claimed a heritage of more than 2,000 years of Persian and Eastern Iranian civilization, also were indignant at the emphasis on Russian and Western civilization, at the expense of the Tajik heritage, in the history and literature curricula of Soviet-

era schools in their republic. Soviet policy toward publication of literature and the two Soviet-mandated alphabet changes served to isolate Tajiks from their cultural heritage.

One of the important consequences of the growth of Tajik nationalism in the late Soviet era was the enactment in 1989 of a law declaring Tajik the state language (although the use of Russian, Uzbek, or other languages was still recognized under some circumstances). The law officially equated Tajik with Persian and called for a gradual reintroduction of the Arabic alphabet. By the early 1990s, however, the law's main impact was to alarm the republic's Russian speakers; although some Russian loanwords were dropped in favor of contemporary Iranian Persian terms, the use of the Arabic alphabet remained sharply limited.

Like the Russians, the Uzbeks were criticized for denying the Tajiks' distinctive ethnic identity and ancient roots in Central Asia. Tajik nationalists accused the authorities in Soviet Uzbekistan of practicing overt discrimination against the Tajik population by forcing Tajiks to register their nationality as Uzbek, undercounting the size of the Tajik minority in Uzbekistan, and failing to provide Tajiks there with adequate access to educational and cultural resources in Tajik. Tajik nationalists also complained that the central government and their Central Asian neighbors had exploited Tajikistan's raw materials and damaged its environment.

Although nationalism had an increased appeal in Tajikistan in the late Soviet and early independence periods, it was not a dominant political force there. No popular movement advocated secession from the Soviet Union before its dissolution at the end of 1991, although there was support for renegotiating the union treaty to obtain more favorable conditions for Tajikistan. In the late 1980s, supporters of the communist old guard played on nationalist feelings to enhance their own position, but after Tajikistan became independent, those individuals became increasingly antinationalist; identification with local patron-client networks continued to rival nationalism as a political force.

Religion

Islam, the predominant religion of all of Central Asia, was brought to the region by the Arabs in the seventh century. Since that time, Islam has become an integral part of Tajik culture. Although Soviet efforts to secularize society were largely

unsuccessful, the post-Soviet era has seen a marked increase in religious practice. The majority of Tajikistan's Muslims adhere to the Sunni (see Glossary) branch of Islam, and a smaller group belongs to the Shia (see Glossary) branch of that faith. Among other religions, the Russian Orthodox faith is the most widely practiced, although the Russian community shrank significantly in the early 1990s. Some other small Christian groups now enjoy relative freedom of worship. There also is a small Jewish community.

Islam

The Sunni branch of Islam has a 1,200-year-old tradition among the sedentary population of Central Asia, including the Tajiks. A small minority group, the Pamiris, are members of a much smaller denomination of Shia Islam, Ismailism, which first won adherents in Central Asia in the early tenth century. Despite persecution, Ismailism has survived in the remote Pamir Mountains.

During the course of seven decades of political control, Soviet policy makers were unable to eradicate the Islamic tradition, despite repeated attempts to do so. The harshest of the Soviet anti-Islamic campaigns occurred from the late 1920s to the late 1930s as part of a unionwide drive against religion in general. In this period, many Muslim functionaries were killed, and religious instruction and observance were curtailed sharply. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, official policy toward Islam moderated. One of the changes that ensued was the establishment in 1943 of an officially sanctioned Islamic hierarchy for Central Asia, the Muslim Board of Central Asia. Together with three similar organizations for other regions of the Soviet Union having large Muslim populations, this administration was controlled by the Kremlin, which required loyalty from religious officials. Although its administrative personnel and structure were inadequate to serve the needs of the Muslim inhabitants of the region, the administration made possible the legal existence of some Islamic institutions, as well as the activities of religious functionaries, a small number of mosques, and religious instruction at two seminaries in Uzbekistan.

In the early 1960s, the Khrushchev regime escalated anti-Islamic propaganda. Then, on several occasions in the 1970s and 1980s, the Kremlin leadership called for renewed efforts to combat religion, including Islam. Typically, such campaigns

Morning ceremony of a Sufi brotherhood group, Naqshbandiya
Courtesy Stephane Herbert

included conversion of mosques to secular use; attempts to reidentify traditional Islamic-linked customs with nationalism rather than religion; and propaganda linking Islam to backwardness, superstition, and bigotry. Official hostility toward Islam grew in 1979 with Soviet military involvement in nearby Afghanistan and the increasing assertiveness of Islamic revivalists in several countries. From that time through the early post-Soviet era, some officials in Moscow and in Tajikistan warned of an extremist Islamic menace, often on the basis of limited or distorted evidence. Despite all these efforts, Islam remained an important part of the identity of the Tajiks and other Muslim peoples of Tajikistan through the end of the Soviet era and the first years of independence.

Identification with Islam as an integral part of life is shared by urban and rural, old and young, and educated and uneducated Tajiks. The role that the faith plays in the lives of individuals varies considerably, however. For some Tajiks, Islam is more important as an intrinsic part of their cultural heritage than as a religion in the usual sense, and some Tajiks are not religious at all.

In any case, Tajiks have disproved the standard Soviet assertion that the urbanized industrial labor force and the educated population had little to do with a "remnant of a bygone era" such as Islam. A noteworthy development in the late Soviet and

early independence eras was increased interest, especially among young people, in the substance of Islamic doctrine. In the post-Soviet era, Islam became an important element in the nationalist arguments of certain Tajik intellectuals.

Islam survived in Tajikistan in widely varied forms because of the strength of an indigenous folk Islam quite apart from the Soviet-sanctioned Islamic administration. Long before the Soviet era, rural Central Asians, including inhabitants of what became Tajikistan, had access to their own holy places. There were also small, local religious schools and individuals within their communities who were venerated for religious knowledge and piety. These elements sustained religion in the countryside, independent of outside events. Under Soviet regimes, Tajiks used the substantial remainder of this rural, popular Islam to continue at least some aspects of the teaching and practice of their faith after the activities of urban-based Islamic institutions were curtailed. Folk Islam also played an important role in the survival of Islam among the urban population. One form of this popular Islam is Sufism—often described as Islamic mysticism and practiced by individuals in a variety of ways. The most important form of Sufism in Tajikistan is the Naqshbandiyya, a Sufi order with followers as far away as India and Malaysia. Besides Sufism, other forms of popular Islam are associated with local cults and holy places or with individuals whose knowledge or personal qualities have made them influential.

By late 1989, the Gorbachev regime's increased tolerance of religion began to affect the practices of Islam and Russian Orthodoxy. Religious instruction increased. New mosques opened. Religious observance became more open, and participation increased. New Islamic spokesmen emerged in Tajikistan and elsewhere in Central Asia. The authority of the official, Tashkent-based Muslim Board of Central Asia crumbled in Tajikistan. Tajikistan acquired its own seminary in Dushanbe, ending its reliance on the administration's two seminaries in Uzbekistan.

By 1990 the Muslim Board's chief official in Dushanbe, the senior *qadi*, Hajji Akbar Turajonzoda (in office 1988–92), had become an independent public figure with a broad following. In the factional political battle that followed independence, Turajonzoda criticized the communist hard-liners and supported political reform and official recognition of the importance of Islam in Tajikistani society. At the same time, he

repeatedly denied hard-liners' accusations that he sought the establishment of an Islamic government in Tajikistan. After the hard-liners' victory in the civil war at the end of 1992, Turajonzoda fled Dushanbe and was charged with treason.

Muslims in Tajikistan also organized politically in the early 1990s. In 1990, as citizens in many parts of the Soviet Union were forming their own civic organizations, Muslims from various parts of the union organized the Islamic Rebirth Party (IRP; see Political Parties, this ch.). By the early 1990s, the growth of mass political involvement among Central Asian Muslims led all political parties—including the Communist Party of Tajikistan—to take into account the Muslim heritage of the vast majority of Tajikistan's inhabitants.

Islam also played a key political role for the regime in power in the early 1990s. The communist old guard evoked domestic and international fears that fundamentalist Muslims would destabilize the Tajikistani government when that message was expedient in fortifying the hard-liners' position against opposition forces in the civil war. However, the Nabiyev regime also was willing to represent itself as an ally of Iran's Islamic republic while depicting the Tajik opposition as unfaithful Muslims.

Other Religions

The vast majority of the non-Tajik population of Tajikistan is composed of peoples who were also historically Sunni Muslims (Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Tatars, and Turkmen). The next largest religious community is presumably Russian Orthodox, the historical faith of many Ukrainians as well as Russians. A cathedral in Dushanbe, St. Nicholas, serves the Orthodox community. By the end of the Soviet era, Tajikistan also was home to small numbers of people belonging to other Christian denominations, including Roman Catholics (most of whom were German), Seventh-Day Adventists, and Baptists. There also was a small Armenian minority, most of whose members belonged historically to the Armenian Apostolic (Gregorian) Church. Other religious groups included small numbers of Jews and Bahais. The number of adherents to these minority religions probably decreased sharply in the 1990s because of the wave of emigration from Tajikistan in the early independence period.

Culture and the Arts

As they did during the Soviet era, educated Tajiks define

their cultural heritage broadly, laying claim to the rich legacy of the supraethnic culture of Central Asia and other parts of the Islamic world from the eastern Mediterranean to India. Soviet rule institutionalized Western art forms, publishing, and mass media, some elements of which subsequently attracted spontaneous support in the republic. However, since the beginning of Soviet rule in the 1920s, the media and the arts always have been subject to political constraints.

Literature

Despite long-standing Soviet efforts to differentiate between the Persian speakers of Central Asia and those elsewhere, Tajiks in Tajikistan describe all of the major literary works written in Persian until the twentieth century as Tajik, regardless of the ethnicity and native region of the author. In Soviet times, such claims were not merely a matter of chauvinism but a strategy to permit Tajiks some contact with a culture that was artificially divided by state borders. Nevertheless, very little Persian literature was published in Cyrillic transcription in the Soviet era.

Three writers dominated the first generation of Soviet Tajik literature. Sadriddin Aini (1878–1954), a Jadidist writer and educator who turned communist, began as a poet but wrote primarily prose in the Soviet era. His works include three major novels dealing with social issues in the region and memoirs that depict life in the Bukhoro Khanate. Aini became the first president of Tajikistan's Academy of Sciences.

Abu'l-Qasem Lahuti (1887–1957; in Tajik, Abdulqosim Lohuti) was an Iranian poet who emigrated to the Soviet Union for political reasons and eventually settled in Tajikistan. He wrote both lyric poetry and "socialist realist" verse. Another poet, Mirzo Tursunzoda (1911–77), collected Tajik oral literature, wrote poetry of his own about social change in Tajikistan, and turned out various works on popular political themes of the moment. Since the generation that included those three writers, Tajikistan has produced numerous poets, novelists, short story writers, and playwrights.

Cultural Institutions

By the mid-1980s, more than 1,600 libraries were operating in Tajikistan. Of particular importance is the Firdavsi State Library, which houses a significant collection of Oriental manuscripts. In 1990 Tajikistan had twenty-seven museums, the fewest of any Soviet republic. Among the most notable are the

Behzed Museum of History, Regional Studies, and Art, and the Ethnographic Museum of the Academy of Sciences, both in Dushanbe. There are also significant museums of history and regional studies in several of the republic's other cities. The republic had fourteen theaters in 1990. Only the three Baltic republics, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan—all with smaller populations—had fewer. The republic's film studio, since 1958 called Tadzhikfil'm, opened in Dushanbe in 1930. By the mid-1980s, it was producing seven or eight feature films and thirty documentaries per year for cinemas and television.

The Soviet era saw the introduction of opera and ballet to Tajikistan, as well as the organization of Tajik-style song and dance troupes. Dushanbe's opera and ballet theater was the first large public building in the city; its construction began in 1939. Dushanbe also has theaters devoted to Tajik and Russian drama, as well as a drama school. There are theaters for music, musical comedy, and drama in several other Tajik cities as well.

Films are shown in theaters in Tajikistan's cities and in villages on an irregular basis. In the last decade of Soviet rule and in the early 1990s, video and audio cassettes became increasingly popular sources of entertainment, as well as a means of disseminating information outside government control. The political turmoil and economic problems of Tajikistan in the 1990s took a severe toll on the country's cultural life and on the elite that fostered it.

Education

Soviet social policy created a modern education system in Tajikistan where nothing comparable had existed before. However, by the time the republic became independent the quality and availability of education had not reached the Soviet Union-wide average, still less the standards for Western industrial societies. After independence, the education system remained under the control of the national Ministry of Education with full state funding.

Historical Development

By the 1920s, few Tajiks had received a formal education. According to the first Soviet census, in 1926 the literacy rate was 4 percent for Tajik men and 0.1 percent for Tajik women in the territory of present-day Tajikistan and in the Republic of Uzbekistan. During the late 1930s, the Soviet government

began to expand the network of state-run schools. There was strong public opposition to this change, especially from Islamic leaders. As a result, some new state schools were burned and some teachers were killed.

Over the ensuing decades, however, the Soviet education system prevailed, although a uniform set of standards was not established in every instance. For the average Tajikistani citizen in the 1980s, the duration, if not necessarily the quality, of the education process was neither the greatest nor the least among Soviet republics. As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the system was divided into schools for primary, middle (or secondary), and higher education. Middle schools were differentiated as either general or specialized. For the period between 1985 and 1990, an annual average of 86,800 students attended general-education middle schools and an average of 41,500 students attended specialized middle schools. In the academic year 1990–91, Tajikistan reported 68,800 students in institutions of higher education.

Education in the 1980s and 1990s

Prior to 1991, the level of educational attainment in the adult Tajikistani population was below the average for Soviet republics. Of the population over age twenty-five in 1989, some 16 percent had only primary schooling, 21 percent had incomplete secondary schooling, and 55 percent had completed a secondary education. Those statistics placed Tajikistan ninth among the fifteen Soviet republics. Some 7.5 percent of inhabitants had graduated from an institution of higher education, placing Tajikistan last among Soviet republics in that category, and another 1.4 percent had acquired some higher education but not a degree.

In secondary education, 427 out of 1,000 Tajikistanis graduated from a nonspecialized middle school and another 211 out of 1,000 went through several grades of such schools without graduating. An additional 110 out of 1,000 had attended a specialized middle school. Despite the nominal emphasis placed by the Soviet system on science and mathematics, the quality of education in those subjects was rated as poor in the last decades of the Soviet period.

The languages of instruction in the state system were Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Russian. When Tajik became the state language in 1989, schools using Russian as the primary language of instruction began teaching Tajik as a second language from

the first through the eleventh grades. After independence, school curricula included more Tajik language and literature study, including classical Persian literature. However, few textbooks were available in Tajik; by the end of the 1980s, only 10 to 25 percent of students attending Tajik-language schools had textbooks or other teaching materials in their own language.

By the late Soviet era, education in Tajikistan also suffered from infrastructure problems. School buildings were in poor repair. The construction industry, an area of particular weakness in the republic's economy, produced only a small fraction of the new school and preschool facilities it was assigned to complete each year. As a result, schools sometimes ran on triple shifts.

Vocational Education

In the late Soviet era, the quality of technical training available in Tajikistan fell far below the standard for the Soviet Union as a whole. Graduates often were far less prepared for technical jobs than their counterparts elsewhere in the union. Many vocational schools were poorly equipped and lacked basic supplies. The general shortage of textbooks in Tajik also affected vocational courses. Although instruction was available in about 150 trades in 1990, that range fell far short of supplying the various types of expertise needed by the republic's economy. A large proportion of students in vocational secondary schools had poor skills in basic arithmetic and Russian. Although Tajikistan's population was nearly two-thirds rural, in 1990 only thirty-eight of eighty-five technical schools were located in the countryside, and fifteen of those were in serious disrepair. Many factories failed to provide students vocational training despite agreements to do so.

Higher Education and Research

By the late 1980s, Tajikistan had twenty institutions of higher education. Despite the ample number of such institutions, the proportion of students receiving a higher education (115 per 10,000 inhabitants) was slightly below the average for the Soviet republics in the late 1980s. In scientific and technical fields, Tajikistan ranked near the bottom among Soviet republics in the proportion of residents receiving advanced degrees. During the Soviet era, Russian, rather than Tajik, was the preferred medium of instruction in several fields of higher education.

The first institution of higher education in Tajikistan was the State Pedagogical Institute in Dushanbe, which opened in 1931. Tajikistan State University opened in 1948. By the mid-1980s, about 14,000 students were enrolled in the university's thirteen departments. At that time, admission was highly competitive only for applicants seeking to study history, Oriental studies, Tajik philology, and economic planning. In 1994 the university had 864 faculty in fourteen departments and 6,196 full-time students.

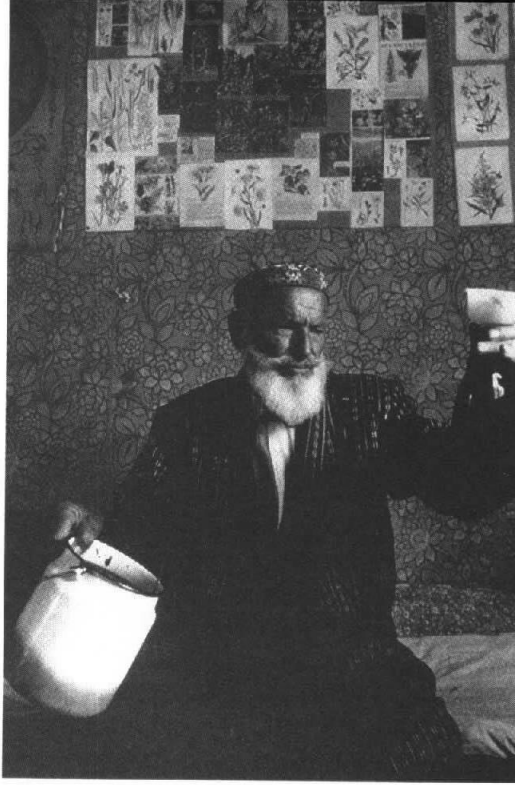
The Tajikistan Polytechnic Institute opened in Dushanbe in 1956, then was reclassified as a university after independence. In 1994 it offered training in energy, construction, mechanical engineering, automobile repair, road building, and architecture. In 1996 preparations began to open a new university for the Pamiri peoples; it was to be located in Khorugh, the capital of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province.

Health

Considering the virtual absence of modern health care in Tajikistan at the start of the Soviet era, the quality of medical services had improved markedly by the close of that era. Statistically, Tajikistan rated at or below the average for Soviet republics for most indicators of health conditions and health care delivery (see table 5, Appendix).

Health Care System

After nearly seventy years of inclusion in the Soviet state, with its avowed aim of modernization, Tajikistan had a level of health care that was low both in absolute terms and by Soviet standards. State spending for health care and medical equipment in Tajikistan was a fraction of the average for the Soviet Union. Tajikistani regimes had long regarded social needs such as medical care as less important than economic development. Admission standards for the republic's best medical school, the Abu Ali ibn Sino Institute of Medicine in Dushanbe, were notoriously lax. In 1986, according to government statistics, Tajikistan had 325 hospitals with a total of 50,115 beds, 697 outpatient clinics, 1,313 paramedic and midwife facilities, and 567 maternity and pediatric clinics and hospitals. In 1994 the Ministry of Health reported 59,000 hospital beds. As in other parts of Central Asia, a large proportion of health care professionals in Tajikistan were members of nonindigenous nationali-



Traditional herb doctor preparing a potion in the Pamir Mountains
Courtesy Stephane Herbert

ties, especially Russians, Ukrainians, and Jews, many of whom emigrated after 1989. Within months of the February 1990 disturbances in Dushanbe, about 1,300 doctors and nurses emigrated from the republic.

In 1994 the republic had 13,000 doctors, one for every 447 inhabitants, by far the worst proportion among the Central Asian republics. The number of other health care workers, 80.3 per 1,000 inhabitants, was also far below the level for other republics. Rural Tajikistan suffered a particular deficiency of health care professionals. Dushanbe felt this scarcity less than the rest of the country.

In the late 1980s, the average number of hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants in the Soviet Union was 130, but Tajikistan's proportion was 104.3 per 10,000. The figure was half that in rural areas. Dushanbe was estimated to have a 5,000-bed shortage, according to Soviet standards, in 1990. In the mid-1990s, there was a great backlog in the construction of new medical facilities. More than 80 percent of Tajikistan's health care facilities were evaluated as substandard, and most lacked running water and central heating. Only one drug treatment center existed in Dushanbe, with twenty to thirty beds, and there was no rehabilitation program (see Internal Security, this ch.).

Acquiring medicines is difficult or impossible for ordinary citizens. In some areas, one drug dispensary serves as many as

20,000 inhabitants, compared with the Soviet standard of one dispensary for every 8,000 people. According to one health organization, when the Soviet distribution system disappeared in 1992, Tajikistan, which had no modern pharmaceutical plants, lost access to 258 different kinds of drugs, including streptomycin and analgesics.

Since independence, steady reductions in the state health budget have further eroded the salaries of medical professionals and the availability of care. (In 1992 the Ministry of Health already had the smallest budget of the state ministries.) For that reason, health planners have considered privatization of the national health system an urgent priority. In the mid-1990s, however, little progress had been made toward that goal.

Health Conditions

The life expectancy of a male born in Tajikistan in 1989 was 66.8 years, and of a female, 71.7 years. In 1989 this was the longest life span projection among the five Central Asian republics, but it was shorter than those of all the other Soviet republics except Moldavia. In Tajikistan, urban women had the longest life expectancy (72.9 years), and urban men had the shortest (65.2 years). According to the 1989 census, the most frequent causes of death in Tajikistan were infections and parasitic diseases, circulatory disorders, respiratory disorders, tumors, and accidents. Those causes accounted for 78 percent of the 33,395 deaths in that year. In the 1970s and the 1980s, Tajikistan's mortality rate rose from 8.5 to 9.8 per 100 male inhabitants and from 6.7 to 7.3 per 100 female inhabitants.

In the mid-1990s, the health of Tajikistan's citizens was threatened increasingly by the condition of the country's water supply, which conveyed disease-causing organisms as well as toxic chemicals from agricultural and industrial origins to the population. By the late Soviet era, cases of typhoid occurred thirteen times more frequently in Tajikistan than in the Soviet Union as a whole. The health of rural inhabitants was jeopardized by inadequate sanitation and improper storage of toxic substances, and by environmental pollution (see Environmental Problems, this ch.).

Maternal and infant mortality remained serious problems in Tajikistan in the 1990s. In 1988 Tajikistani women were 1.6 times more likely to die in childbirth than were women in the Soviet Union as a whole. By 1989, according to official statistics, forty of every 1,000 babies born in Tajikistan did not survive to

the age of one year. In many parts of southern Tajikistan, the rate was more than sixty per thousand. (The rate of infant mortality was higher than indicated by official Soviet statistics, which were underreported in rural areas and often were adjusted downward.) Factors contributing to infant mortality include family poverty; inadequate nutrition for nursing mothers, babies, and schoolchildren (who receive inadequate meals in school); and a lack of safe drinking water. Experts believe that environmental pollution, especially that caused by the agricultural chemicals used in cotton production, plays a major role in the rising rates of maternal and child mortality, as well as in the relatively high incidence of birth defects.

Employment in heavy industry also poses health risks for women and their children. By the late 1980s, some 80 percent of low birth-weight babies were born to women employed in heavy industry at jobs posing the risk of physical injury. Most important of all was the poor quality of health care that mothers and infants received and the inadequacy of the maternal and child care facilities where care was delivered. By Soviet national standards, Tajikistan in the late 1980s lacked 8,000 beds in maternity facilities and 13,000 bed for infants. Problems related to infant and maternal health were more serious in rural areas than in the cities. Soviet studies linked infant death to poor preventive health care, a lack of proper medication, and a lack of professional medical care.

Narcotics use in Tajikistan is rated as a minor health problem; in 1995 there were an estimated 40,000 drug users in the country (see Internal Security, this ch.). Authorities discovered heroin traffic into the country in 1995. As of the end of 1995, Tajikistan had reported no cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) to the World Health Organization, although the Ministry of Health reported that twenty-four AIDS diagnostic laboratories were in operation in 1993.

The Economy

Tajikistan possesses many elements that will be needed to diversify its national economy after decades of specialization within the Soviet system. Significant deposits of gold, iron, lead, mercury, and tin exist, and some coal is present. Some regions have ample water for irrigation, and the country's rivers are a largely untapped source of hydroelectric power generation. The labor supply is sufficient, provided Tajikistan can retain qualified workers in critical fields. The civil war of 1992–

93, the collapse of the integrated Soviet economic system, and the lack of significant economic reform by the post-civil war government all have severely impeded economic performance, however.

Economic problems that had developed in Tajikistan during the Soviet era persisted into the first decade of independence. These included overreliance on production of cotton and raw materials in general, a high level of unemployment, and a low standard of living. Although the old Soviet economic system ceased to exist officially, several aspects of it survived after 1991. The transition to a market economy progressed slowly, and Russia and other former Soviet republics continued to play an important role in Tajikistan's economy. Yet Tajikistan also took the first steps toward developing economic relations with a wide assortment of other countries. Quite apart from the deliberate changes implemented by policy makers, the economy of Tajikistan was profoundly affected in the early stages of its independence by the political turmoil that accompanied the transition.

Agriculture

In the early 1990s, Tajikistan remained primarily an agricultural state. In 1990 agriculture contributed 38 percent of the country's net material product (NMP—see Glossary). Despite development of an extensive irrigation network in the Soviet era, water supply problems combined with Tajikistan's mountainous topography to limit agriculture to 8 percent of the republic's land in 1990. Some 800,000 hectares were under cultivation in 1990, of which about 560,000 hectares were irrigated. The irrigated land was used mostly to grow cotton; potatoes, vegetables, and grains also were cultivated (see table 16, Appendix). In 1994 the republic produced about 490,000 tons of vegetables and about 254,000 tons of cereals. The dominance of cotton combined with the rapidly growing population to render Tajikistan unable to meet domestic consumption requirements for some basic foodstuffs, especially meat and dairy products, in the last years of the Soviet era, even though the republic produced a surplus of fruits, vegetables, and eggs. In the early 1990s, about 98 percent of agricultural labor remained almost entirely unmechanized.

Through the mid-1990s, agricultural output continued to decline precipitously as a consequence of the civil war and the awkward transition to a post-Soviet economy. By 1995 overall

Head accountant of a cotton processing plant, Regar
Courtesy Stephane Herbert

production was estimated at about half the 1990 level, and shortages continued in urban areas. Besides the civil war, low prices for agricultural products and a shortage of animal feed contributed to the decline. Hardly any privatization of collective farms had occurred by the mid-1990s.

Cotton is by far the most important crop in Tajikistan's agrarian economy. In parts of the republic, 85 percent of the land was planted to cotton by the late 1980s, a figure that even republic officials described as excessive. At the same time, the average cotton yield per hectare was about half that achieved in the United States. Cotton production declined in the early 1990s. In 1993 Tajikistan produced about 754,000 tons, a drop of 30 percent from the 1991 figure.

Although cotton is fundamental to Tajikistan's economy, the republic's rewards for cotton production in the Soviet system were disappointing. About 90 percent of the harvest was

shipped elsewhere for processing. Tajikistani factories produced thread from some of the cotton harvest, but, by the end of the Soviet era, more than 90 percent of the cotton thread that was spun went elsewhere to be turned into finished goods. In 1990 the two southern provinces of Qurghonteppa and Kulob produced roughly two-thirds of the republic's cotton, but they processed only 1 percent of the crop locally.

Despite widespread concern about overemphasis on cotton cultivation, the post-civil war government attempted to expand the production of the country's most important cash crop. For example, in 1995 it mandated an increase over the preceding year of 10,000 hectares in land assigned to cotton. However, the cotton output remained far below both the government quota and the production levels of the late Soviet era. Independent Tajikistan continued to send most of its cotton crop elsewhere—mainly to CIS countries—for processing.

Industry

Industrial development in Tajikistan has proceeded slowly and inefficiently, both in the Soviet era and afterward. The civil war and ensuing political turmoil kept production levels low in the mid-1990s.

Historical Background

Tajikistan's industrial development began in earnest in the late 1930s. The early emphasis was on processing cotton and manufacturing construction materials. World War II was a major stimulus to industrial expansion. The output of existing factories was increased to meet wartime demands, and some factories were moved to the republic from the European part of the Soviet Union to safeguard them from the advancing German army.

Skilled workers who relocated to Tajikistan from points west received preferential treatment, including substantially higher wages than those paid to Tajiks; this practice continued long after the war. Such migrants provided the bulk of the labor force in many of the republic's industries through the end of the Soviet era. Cotton textile mills and metallurgy, machine construction, the aluminum smelting plant, and the chemical industry all had disproportionately small percentages of Tajik workers, or none at all.

The Vakhsh River valley in southern Tajikistan became a center of extensive industrial development (see Topography and

Drainage, this ch.). The river was dammed at several points to provide water for agriculture and cheap hydroelectric power, which stimulated construction of factories in the area. Many of the plants in the valley process agricultural products or provide agricultural materials such as fertilizer. A large chemical plant also uses power from the Vakhsh.

Industry in the 1990s

In the early 1990s, the configuration of industry continued to reflect the specialized roles assigned to Tajikistan within the Soviet system, hindering advancement of enterprises that utilized the republic's natural resources most effectively. The civil war also made industrial reorganization problematic.

In 1991 industry and construction contributed 43.5 percent of the country's NMP, of which industry's share was 30.6 percent—but those sectors employed only 20.4 percent of the work force. Tajikistan's only heavy manufacturing industries are aluminum and chemical production and a very small machinery and metalworking industry. The most important light industries are food processing and fabric and carpet weaving. After declining an estimated 40 percent between 1990 and 1993, industrial production dropped another 31 percent in 1994. Declines in the Dushanbe and Khujand regions exceeded that figure. The output of only five industrial products increased in 1994: high-voltage electrical equipment, textile equipment, winding machines, processed cereals, and salt. The most serious declines were in chemicals, engineering, metal processing, building materials, light industry, and food processing. According to government reports, production declines generally were greater in privately owned industries than in state enterprises.

Tajikistan's overall industrial production capacity was underutilized in the first half of the 1990s. The steadily rising cost of raw materials, fuel, and energy combined with the obsolescence of production equipment and the lack of qualified industrial workers to place Tajikistani industrial products, which never had been of especially high quality, at a great disadvantage in foreign markets.

Aluminum

Tajikistan's major industrial enterprise is the aluminum processing plant at Regar in the western part of the republic. When the plant opened in 1975, it included the world's largest

aluminum smelter, with a capacity of 500,000 tons per year. But difficulties arose in the early 1990s because of the civil war and unreliable raw material supply. Aluminum production and quality began to decline in 1992 because Azerbaijan and Russia cut the supply of semiprocessed alumina upon which the plant depended. By 1995 the plant's management was predicting a yearly output of 240,000 tons, still less than half the maximum capacity. The prolonged decline was caused by outmoded equipment, low world prices for aluminum, the emigration of much of the plant's skilled labor force, difficulties in obtaining raw materials, and continued disruption resulting from the civil war.

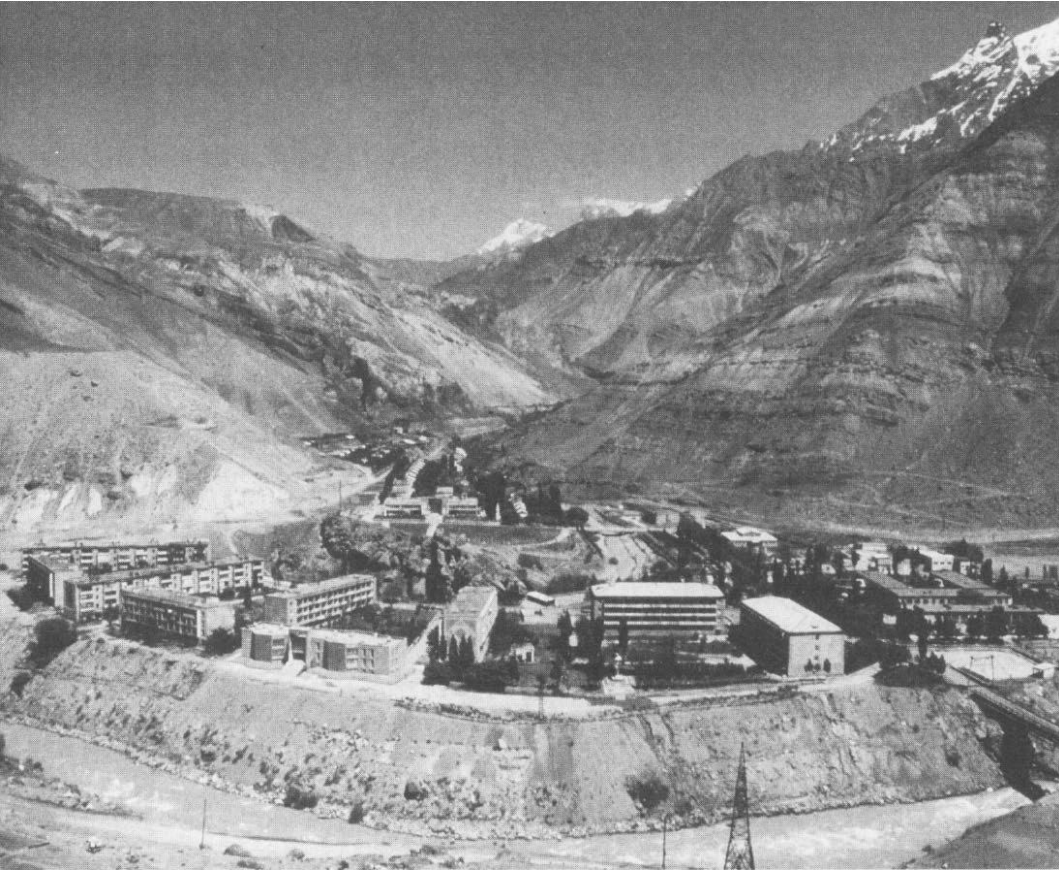
Mining

In the Soviet period, several minerals, including antimony, mercury, molybdenum, and tungsten, were mined in Tajikistan; the Soviet system assigned Tajikistan to supply specific raw or partially processed goods to other parts of the Soviet Union. For example, nearly all of Tajikistan's gold went to Uzbekistan for processing. However, in the 1990s the presence in Tajikistan of a hitherto-secret uranium-mining and preliminary-processing operation became public for the first time. The operation, whose labor force included political prisoners and members of nationalities deported by Stalin from certain autonomous republics of the Russian Republic, may have accounted for almost one-third of total mining in the Soviet Union. According to official Tajikistani reports, the mines were exhausted by 1990.

Energy

Tajikistan's domestic energy supply situation is dominated by hydroelectric power. The nation is an importer of petroleum-based fuels, of which only small domestic deposits are being exploited. Insufficient access to imported oil and natural gas, a persistent problem under the Soviet system, became more acute after 1991.

The Soviet central government, which determined energy policy for Tajikistan, saw the republic's rivers as prime locations for hydroelectric dams. However, Tajikistanis raised serious objections to the resettlement of villages, the potential for flooding if an earthquake damaged a dam, and the prospect of pollution from the factories that would be attracted by cheap electrical power. Although damming the rivers would increase



Mining combine in central Tajikistan
Courtesy Stephane Herbert

the supply of water for irrigation, the central government targeted much of the water for neighboring Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan rather than for domestic use. Resistance was especially strong in the case of the Roghun Dam on the Vakhsh River, initiated in 1976 as the largest dam of its kind in Central Asia. By 1992 some 75 percent of the country's electricity came from hydroelectric plants, and in the mid-1990s Russia provided aid for the construction of a new Roghun hydroelectric station.

Deposits of coal, petroleum, and natural gas are known to exist but by the mid-1990s had yet to be developed. In the Soviet era, the unreliability of fuel sources in other republics resulted in frequent power shortages. Fuel supply problems mounted during the transition to a post-Soviet economy, as oil-exporting former Soviet republics often chose not to abide by the delivery agreements upon which Tajikistan had depended.

Furthermore, beginning in 1993, independent Tajikistan's mounting economic problems left it unable to pay more than a small fraction of the cost of importing energy. Energy providers, especially Uzbekistan, responded with periodic interruptions of deliveries. Irregular delivery disrupted industrial production, crop harvests, and the flow of electricity to residential consumers.

Labor

In 1991 some 1.95 million people were regularly employed outside the home in Tajikistan. However, about 2.4 million Tajikistanis were classified as being of working age. Of those who worked outside the home, 22 percent were employed in industry; 43 percent in agriculture; 18 percent in health care and social services; 6 percent in commerce, food services, state procurement, and "material-technical supply and sales"; 5 percent in transportation; 2 percent in the government bureaucracy; and 4 percent in miscellaneous services.

In the 1980s, light industry continued to employ the largest proportion of industrial workers, 38.6 percent. The processing of food and livestock feed employed an additional 11.7 percent. Machine building and metal-working employed 19.7 percent. Three of Tajikistan's main areas of heavy industrial development employed rather small proportions of the industrial work force: chemicals and petrochemicals, 7.4 percent; nonferrous metallurgy, 5.4 percent; and electric power, 2.4 percent.

One of the most serious economic problems in the late 1980s and early 1990s was unemployment. Unemployment and underemployment remained extensive after the civil war, and the republic's high birth rate led observers to predict that the number of unemployed people would continue to grow through 2000. Tajikistan's designation in the Soviet economy as primarily a producer of raw materials meant that until 1992 agriculture was expected to provide the bulk of employment opportunities for the population. However, the limited amount of arable land and the fast growth of the rural population made further absorption of labor impossible by the 1990s (see Agriculture, this ch.). Although Tajikistan had the resources to increase its production of consumer goods, Soviet economic planning did not develop as much light industry in the republic as the human and material resources could have supported. Two of Tajikistan's largest industrial complexes, which pro-

duced chemicals and aluminum, were capital-intensive and provided relatively few jobs.

Unemployment is a particular problem for the republic's young people. Roughly three-quarters of the graduates of general education middle schools (which most students attend) do not go on to further education (see Education, this ch.). Upon entering the job market with such basic qualifications, many cannot find employment. A disproportionate number of young Tajikistanis enter low-paying manual jobs; in 1989 about 40 percent of the agricultural labor force was below age thirty. By the end of the Soviet era, however, a growing number of Tajikistan's young people could not find employment even in agriculture. The paucity and low quality of schools at the vocational level and higher schools prevented those institutions from improving the employment prospects of large numbers of potential workers. In the 1980s, a Soviet campaign to shift labor into "labor deficit" regions in the European republics or in Siberia met with vocal opposition.

With skilled workers leaving the country in the mid-1990s, industrial and professional jobs, most notably in engineering, often go unfilled. Shortages have been especially acute in light industry, construction, health care, transportation, engineering, and education. The exodus of qualified workers intensified in the early 1990s. In 1992 and 1993, an estimated 123,000 specialists with higher education, mostly Russians, left Tajikistan.

Standard of Living

Beginning in the late 1980s, the troubled state of the Soviet economy in general led to shortages of consumer necessities in Tajikistan, including flour, meat, sugar, and soap. In every year from 1986 through 1989, the value of per capita consumption of goods and services was substantially lower there than in any other Soviet republic. The government in Dushanbe began rationing food early in 1991, but Tajikistan's consumption of meat and dairy products already had been the lowest in the Soviet Union for the previous six years. In 1990 annual per capita meat consumption was twenty-six kilograms in Tajikistan, compared with sixty-seven kilograms for the Soviet Union as a whole. In the same year, annual per capita milk consumption was 161 kilograms in Tajikistan, compared with 358 kilograms for the Soviet Union as a whole.

The national consumer price index went up about 6,000 percent in 1993 alone (see table 10, Appendix). In 1994 breadlines began forming at Dushanbe's single bakery at five in the morning, and the demand often exceeded the supply. Meanwhile, most state stores stood empty as bazaars offered food at prohibitively high prices. Such conditions worsened in the mid-1990s. Although at times bread (whose price was still government subsidized), meat, rice, soap, and other commodities were rationed, basic necessities often were difficult to obtain. In 1995 a 150 percent increase in bread prices, meant as a step toward price decontrol, had the side effect of compounding the difficulty of maintaining an adequate diet. Fuel deliveries in Dushanbe were irregular, and city apartments were cold in the winter.

By the end of the Soviet era, the great majority of Tajikistan's citizens had extremely low incomes even by Soviet standards. Industrial wages ranked second lowest among the republics in 1990. The income of peasants on collective farms was the lowest among all republics; for those on state farms, it was the second to lowest. The situation did not improve in the first post-Soviet years. At the end of 1994, the average monthly wage was 25,000 rubles, or US$7.30, and wages often went unpaid for several months. The maximum weekly wage was set at US$19.30 by a government policy that automatically deposited any payment above that level in the recipient's bank savings account.

By the 1980s, housing had become a serious problem, especially in Dushanbe. The "Housing-93" project of that period promised to provide accommodations by 1993 to families that were on the waiting lists in 1988, but construction fell far behind. By 1990, some 150,000 families were waiting to get an apartment in the capital, a situation that contributed to the outbreak of riots there in February of that year. The housing shortage in the northern province of Leninobod was similarly acute.

Economic Conditions in the Early 1990s

At the close of the Soviet phase of Tajikistan's history, the economy deteriorated rapidly, and the level of economic activity declined sharply in the early 1990s. In 1992 the gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) was approximately half of what it had been in 1990. In the first half of 1991, agricultural and industrial output dropped substantially, and construction,

a chronic weak point of the economy, was especially sluggish. The state's revenues for the same period were half as large as its expenses. According to Soviet statistics, the generation of national income in Tajikistan had already declined 7.8 percent from 1988 to 1989 and 8.9 percent from 1989 to 1990. In 1990, the per capita generation of national income was the lowest by far among Soviet republics, and 17 percent below the 1985 level. These figures reflect not only Tajikistan's poverty but also the low prices that were assigned to agricultural products and raw materials, Tajikistan's main products, in the state-run economy. Although Tajikistan was primarily an agricultural republic, in 1989 it imported more agricultural products, including foodstuffs, than it exported.

Political turmoil and the civil war of 1992–93 did enormous damage to Tajikistan's economy. According to an official estimate, that damage extended to 80 percent of the republic's industries. The conflict spurred the departure of large numbers of Russians and Germans who had been key technical personnel in Tajikistan's industries (see Population, this ch.). After independence, the government was very slow to develop an institutional framework to promote movement toward a market economy. Through the mid-1990s, virtually no privatization of industry or agriculture occurred.

The scarcity of reliable statistics makes quantification of Tajikistan's economic situation difficult. In 1994 the total economic loss from the civil war was estimated at 15 trillion rubles (see Glossary for value of ruble)—about US$12 billion at the January 1, 1994, exchange rate. According to Western estimates, by 1994 production in industry had dropped 60 percent, in agriculture 33 percent, and in the transportation enterprises several hundred percent—all in comparison with 1990 levels. The GDP fell an estimated 28 percent in 1993, 12 percent in 1994, and 14 percent in 1995. Inflation soared at a rate of 1,157 percent in 1992; 2,195 percent in 1993; 341 percent in 1994; and 120 percent in 1995. The relatively lower rate in 1995 reflected the government's new anti-inflationary policies launched in the second half of the year.

Transition to a Market Economy

In the last years of the Soviet system, Tajikistan followed the rest of the union in beginning a transition from the conventional Soviet centralized command system to a market economy. Early in 1991, the Dushanbe government legalized the

leasing and privatization of state enterprises (excluding industries deemed critical for national security). However, the transition met firm resistance from individuals who still held positions that gave them access to economic power and technological know-how; political figures with ideological objections to market reforms also voiced opposition. Such influential people insisted that the previous system could be made efficient if Tajikistanis were urged to work harder. This view was made popular by the sharp price increases that followed price decontrol in the initial reform stage. Citizens' hardships, fear, and anger resulting from the initial economic shock greatly slowed the transition to a market economy. For instance, in the first year of independence, only four private farms were established.

The regime of Imomali Rahmonov, who came to power in December 1992, showed little interest in continuing the limited market reforms of 1991 and 1992. At the same time, the new regime declared its support for private enterprise on a small or moderate scale, expressing the hope that foreign investment would help revive the country's shattered economy. By the mid-1990s, about half of all small businesses, especially those in the service sector, were privately owned. In November 1995, the legislature approved a reform plan for the period 1995–2000, but the plan included no specific steps toward the general goals of privatization and the fostering of foreign and domestic investment.

In 1992 Tajikistan acquired its first commercial bank, the Tajikbankbusiness. Established primarily to invest in the republic's economy, the state-owned bank assumed the functions of the former Soviet State Bank (Gosbank); it also sought to develop links with the United States, Iran, China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Britain, among other countries. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan continued to use the old Soviet ruble until Russia replaced that currency with the Russian ruble in 1994. At that time, Tajikistan joined the Russian ruble zone (see Glossary), a move that worked against Tajikistani interests. Russia did not send as many rubles as promised, and many of the new rubles that were sent quickly left Tajikistan as inhabitants bought commodities from other Soviet successor states, especially Uzbekistan and Russia. Thus handicapped, the cash economy often gave way to barter and promissory notes. As a result, the Dushanbe government decided to leave the ruble zone by introducing the Tajikistani ruble in 1995. At the time of its introduction, the new currency

had an exchange rate of fifty per US$1, but its value slipped drastically through 1995, reaching 284 per US$1 in January 1996.

Foreign Economic Relations

As the economic reforms of the Gorbachev regime relaxed restrictions on foreign business activity in the Soviet Union in the last years of the 1980s, Tajikistan began to make economic arrangements with foreign businesses. Despite some interest on the part of the Nabiyev regime in arranging joint ventures with foreign firms, only four such agreements were reached in 1991, and just six more were concluded by 1992. One of the joint-venture agreements of that period brought United States investment in the manufacture of fur and leather products in Tajikistan. Israeli businesses began irrigation projects in Tajikistan in 1992. A deal with two Austrian companies called for construction of a factory to produce prefabricated housing and other buildings to be financed by US$3.5 million raised from cotton export funds. A similar construction agreement was signed in 1992 with Czechoslovakia. In 1995 an Italian company began construction of a textile factory in Tajikistan. One of the most important foreign undertakings in the country was a joint venture with a Canadian firm, the Zarafshon Mining Project, to mine and process gold at three known sites in the Panjakent area of northwestern Tajikistan and to prospect in an area of 3,000 square kilometers for additional deposits. The agreement was concluded in 1994; production began in January 1996.

The post-civil war government has emphasized cultivation of economic relations with a variety of Western and Middle Eastern countries, China, and the other former Soviet republics (see table 17, Appendix). In 1991 an Afghan company opened shops in Dushanbe and the northern city of Uroteppa to sell clothing, textiles, fruits, and nuts that the company shipped into Tajikistan from Afghanistan and other countries. The company also planned to export textiles woven in Tajikistan. In 1992 fourteen people were sent from Tajikistan to Turkey to study banking procedures.

Iran and Pakistan

In the early 1990s, Iran pursued economic cooperation as a means of expanding its regional influence by assuming part of the Soviet Union's role as the major customer for Tajikistani

exports. The first foreign firm registered in Tajikistan was Iranian. In 1992 pacts were signed for cooperation in the spheres of banking and commerce, transportation, and tourism; a joint company, Tajiran, was established to handle bilateral trade. In October 1992, Iran declared its intention to buy 1 million tons of cotton and 400,000 tons of aluminum (a figure that exceeded Tajikistan's entire aluminum production for 1992).

The two countries continued to make economic cooperation agreements into the mid-1990s. Iran loaned Tajikistan US$10 million to be used to stimulate exports and imports while offering assistance in dealing with the costs of imported energy. In 1994, the two countries established a commission to promote bilateral economic and technical relations. In 1995 Iran agreed to pay for Tajikistan's importation of natural gas from Turkmenistan; Tajikistan then was to reimburse Iran in cotton rather than currency.

Pakistan extended US$20 million in credits to Tajikistan in 1994 for the purchase of Pakistani goods. However, the most ambitious parts of the cooperation plans between the two countries, the completion of the Roghun hydroelectric dam and the highway between the two countries, fell through; the reasons included Pakistan's own economic problems, political opposition in Tajikistan to allocating state funds on such a large scale to a foreign country, and the continued turmoil in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

The United States

In 1992 newly independent Tajikistan and the United States expressed an interest in developing trade relations. President Nabiyev made an urgent plea to a delegation from the United States Congress for development assistance, especially in the area of natural resource use. At about the same time, Tajikistan made a barter trade agreement with a United States company to exchange dried fruits from Tajikistan for bricks, greenhouse equipment, and consumer goods from the United States. In 1992 the United States offered Tajikistan credits to use for the purchase of food, and the United States Overseas Private Investment Corporation made an agreement to provide Tajikistan loans and other assistance to promote United States investment. In 1994 the United States established the Central Asian-American Enterprise Fund to provide loans and technical expertise that would promote the growth of the private sector in all the Central Asian states. Generally, however, the level of

United States involvement in Tajikistan has remained very low. The first significant undertaking in Tajikistan by a United States firm was a US$40 million textile mill established in 1995.

Russia and the CIS

After Tajikistan achieved independence, it maintained extensive economic relations with other former Soviet republics individually and with the CIS. Relations with the CIS and the Russian Federation preserved some characteristics of Tajikistan's relationship with the Soviet central authorities. Until 1995 Tajikistan remained in the ruble zone rather than establishing its own national currency, as the other four Central Asian republics had done.

In the meantime, Russia retained the dominant position in the CIS and, hence, in commerce with Tajikistan that the Moscow government had enjoyed in the Soviet period. Russia and Tajikistan undertook to maintain their bilateral exchange of goods at existing levels as the republics made the transition to a market economy. In 1992 some 36 percent of Tajikistan's imports came from Russia, and 21 percent of its exports went to Russia; about 60 percent of total external trade was with CIS countries, and 45 percent of exports went to those countries. In 1992 a bilateral agreement called for Tajikistan to send Russia fruits and vegetables, vegetable oil, silk fabrics, and paint in return for automobiles, televisions, and other consumer and industrial goods.

Post-civil war Tajikistan was heavily dependent on Russia for fuel and other necessities. In 1993 Russia made another barter agreement, by which Tajikistan would send Russia agricultural products, machinery, and other goods in return for Russian oil. Despite the agreements, trade between the two countries encountered serious difficulties. In the 1990s, a sharp drop in independent Tajikistan's cotton production caused it to fall far short of the deliveries promised to Russia. This development impeded Tajikistan's ability to pay for vital fuel imports and disrupted Russia's textile industry. Nevertheless, private bilateral commercial activity expanded to some extent. By 1995 more than twenty Tajikistani businesses had made joint-venture agreements with Russian enterprises.

Membership in the ruble zone required Tajikistan to cede control over its money supply and interest rates to Russia and to comply with the regulations of Russia's central bank. After the civil war, Russia provided a majority of the funds for Tajiki-

stan's budget and had considerable influence over budgetary policy. Russia also sent periodic infusions of cash to the Dushanbe government.

As the old interrepublic delivery system decayed at the end of the Soviet era, Tajikistan, like other republics, reduced sales of some commodities and consumer goods to other republics. At the same time, direct agreements were made with several republics to place commercial relations on a new footing. These pacts included statements of principle on economic cooperation and general promises to deliver products from one republic to the other and to set up joint ventures. In 1992 such agreements were made with Georgia, Armenia, and Belarus, and a separate trade agreement called for Turkmenistan to send Tajikistan natural gas and various other goods in exchange for aluminum, farm machinery, and consumer goods.

One of Tajikistan's most important trading partners among the Soviet successor states is Uzbekistan, the source of most of its natural gas since independence. In 1994 the two countries concluded a barter agreement, which the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary) subsequently criticized as disadvantageous to Tajikistan. According to the agreement, Uzbekistan was to send Tajikistan natural gas, fuel oil, and electricity. In return, Uzbekistan was to have mining rights to various metals in Tajikistan, which also would supply electricity to locations in southern Uzbekistan lacking generating capacity, as well as cotton, construction materials, various metals, and other goods. In 1995 Uzbekistan halted its natural gas deliveries several times, citing nonpayment by Tajikistan.

In the mid-1990s, the uncertain condition of Tajikistan's economy left the country in a weak position to conduct foreign trade. The balance of trade was consistently unfavorable; in 1994 imports exceeded exports by nearly US$116 million, and by 1995 Tajikistan's foreign debt exceeded US$731 million. Imports consisted mostly of food, energy, and medicines. The main exports were aluminum and cotton, with a large share of the production of both commodities earmarked for export. The income derived from cotton and aluminum sales went largely to pay for Tajikistan's energy imports, to repay foreign debts in general, and to cover government expenses.

Transportation and Telecommunications

Topographical barriers between northern and southern

Tajikistan have prevented the effective transportation and communication linkage of the two regions (see Topography and Drainage, this ch.). The most important form of transportation has been the railroad; highways are few and of low quality (see fig. 10). Radio and television systems are limited and government controlled.

Railroads

The north and the south are served by railway networks that link them to neighboring regions of Uzbekistan rather than to each other. Rail traffic between the two regions of Tajikistan must follow a 1,340-kilometer route through Uzbekistan. As is the case with other parts of the economic infrastructure in Central Asia, railway routes reflect the needs of the larger economic system of which Tajikistan was a part until 1991. The railway system in the north was established when that area was part of the Russian Empire's Guberniya of Turkestan. In that era, the railroad from Tashkent, the capital of Turkestan, extended into the agricultural and industrial centers in the Fergana Valley, which includes the far northern part of today's Tajikistan. The railroads in the south were built in the Soviet era, in part to facilitate the shipment of cotton grown in the southernmost parts of Central Asia, not just in Tajikistan, to other parts of the Soviet Union.

In the early 1990s, substandard equipment was the most serious problem of the Tajikistani railroad system. Levels of freight haulage and passenger service declined steadily as railroad cars sat idle, waiting for spare parts and repairs. By 1994 delivery of goods to the more remote regions of the country had become a hazardous and unpredictable operation.

Roads

In 1992 Tajikistan had 32,750 kilometers of roads, of which 18,240 kilometers were classified as main roads. Unlike the railroads, the principal highway connects Dushanbe with the main northern city, Khujand, about 300 kilometers away. However, because the road crosses three chains of mountains, it is blocked by heavy snows, avalanches, and landslides for several months each year. Other main roads connect Dushanbe with Qurghonteppa and Kulob. In 1993 only about 1,500 private automobiles were in use.

Air Travel

Tajikistan's principal airport is located in Dushanbe, the capital. By the mid-1990s, the facility's only runway, which was too short to accommodate large international planes, was in poor condition. In 1995 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) gave Tajikistan a grant of US$4 million to repair and lengthen the runway.

Tajikistan made two attempts to start its own airline in the 1990s. Tajik Air, a private joint venture with a British company, lasted only a few months in the winter of 1993–94. That airline had only a single airplane, leased from United Airlines, with a crew of former employees of the defunct Pan American Airlines. The venture failed because of increasing debts and lack of support from the government. In 1995 Tajikistan entered into a joint venture with the Portuguese airline Transportes Aereos Portugueses (TAP) to provide two airplanes and personnel to a new national service, Tajikistan International Airlines; maintenance of the aircraft was to be performed by British Airways.

Telecommunications

Television and radio broadcasting is the monopoly of the State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company of Tajikistan, which is controlled by the Ministry of Communications. In 1995 the radio broadcasting system included thirteen AM stations and three FM stations. Several frequencies offer relayed programming from Iran, Russia, and Turkey. Although radio broadcasting is primarily in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek programming also is offered. In 1988 broadcasting began in German, Kyrgyz, and Crimean Tatar as well. In February 1994, the state broadcasting company came under the direct control of head of state Imomali Rahmonov.

Television broadcasts first reached Tajikistan in 1959 from Uzbekistan. Subsequently, Tajikistan established its own broadcasting facilities in Dushanbe, under the direction of the government's Tajikistan Television Administration. Color broadcasts use the European SECAM system. Television programming is relayed from stations in Iran, Russia, and Turkey. In mountainous villages, television viewing is restricted by limited electrical supply and retransmission facilities.

In 1994 Tajikistan's telephone system remained quite limited. It included 259,600 main lines, an average of one line per

twenty-two people—the lowest ratio among former Soviet republics.

Government and Politics

In the first years of independence, politics in Tajikistan were overshadowed by a long struggle for political power among cliques that sought Soviet-style dominance of positions of power and privilege and a collection of opposition forces seeking to establish a new government whose form was defined only vaguely in public statements. The result was a civil war that began in the second half of 1992. A faction favoring a neo-Soviet system took control of the government in December 1992 after winning the civil war with help from Russian and Uzbekistani forces.

Transition to Post-Soviet Government

In the late 1980s, problems in the Soviet system had already provoked open public dissatisfaction with the status quo in Tajikistan. In February 1990, demonstrations against government housing policy precipitated a violent clash in Dushanbe. Soviet army units sent to quell the riots inflicted casualties on demonstrators and bystanders alike. Using the riots as a pretext to repress political dissent, the regime imposed a state of emergency that lasted long after the riots had ended. In this period, criticism of the regime by opposition political leaders was censored from state radio and television broadcasts. The state brought criminal charges against the leaders of the popular front organization Rastokhez (Rebirth) for inciting the riots, although the Supreme Soviet later ruled that Rastokhez was not implicated. Students were expelled from institutions of higher education merely for attending nonviolent political meetings. The events of 1990 made the opposition even more critical of the communist old guard than it had been previously.

In the highly charged political atmosphere after the failure of the August 1991 coup attempt in Moscow, Tajikistan's Supreme Soviet voted for independence for the republic in September 1991. That vote was not intended to signal a break with the Soviet Union, however. It was rather a response to increasingly vociferous opposition demands and to similar declarations by Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a development in which Tajikistan

played no role, the republic joined the CIS when that loose federation of former Soviet republics was established in December 1991.

The political opposition within Tajikistan was composed of a diverse group of individuals and organizations. The three major opposition parties were granted legal standing at various times in 1991. The highest-ranking Islamic figure in the republic, the chief *qadi*, Hajji Akbar Turajonzoda, sided openly with the opposition coalition beginning in late 1991. The opposition's ability to govern and the extent of its public support never were tested because it gained only brief, token representation in a 1992 coalition government that did not exercise effective authority over the entire country.

In the early independence period, the old guard sought to depict itself as the duly elected government of Tajikistan now facing a power grab by Islamic radicals who would bring to Tajikistan fundamentalist repression similar to that occurring in Iran and Afghanistan. Yet both claims were misleading. The elections for the republic's Supreme Soviet and president had been neither free nor truly representative of public opinion. The legislative election was held in February 1990 under the tight constraints of the state of emergency. In the presidential election of 1991, Nabiyev had faced only one opponent, filmmaker and former communist Davlat Khudonazarov, whose message had been stifled by communist control of the news media and the workplace. Despite Nabiyev's advantageous position, Khudonazarov received more than 30 percent of the vote.

In the first half of 1992, the opposition responded to increased repression by organizing ever larger proreform demonstrations. When Nabiyev assembled a national guard force, coalition supporters, who were concentrated in the southern Qurghonteppa Province and the eastern Pamir region, acquired arms and prepared for battle. Meanwhile, opponents of reform brought their own supporters to Dushanbe from nearby Kulob Province to stage counterdemonstrations in April of that year. Tensions mounted, and small-scale clashes occurred. In May 1992, after Nabiyev had broken off negotiations with the oppositionist demonstrators and had gone into hiding, the confrontation came to a head when opposition demonstrators were fired upon and eight were killed. At that point, the commander of the Russian garrison in Dushanbe brokered a compromise. The main result of the agreement was

the formation of a coalition government in which one-third of the cabinet posts would go to members of the opposition.

For most of the rest of 1992, opponents of reform worked hard to overturn the coalition and block implementation of measures such as formation of a new legislature in which the opposition would have a voice. In the summer and fall of 1992, vicious battles resulted in many casualties among civilians and combatants. Qurghonteppa bore the brunt of attacks by antireformist irregular forces during that period. In August 1992, demonstrators in Dushanbe seized Nabiyev and forced him at gunpoint to resign. The speaker of the Supreme Soviet, Akbarsho Iskandarov—a Pamiri closely associated with Nabiyev—became acting president. Iskandarov advocated a negotiated resolution of the conflict, but he had little influence over either side.

The political and military battles for control continued through the fall of 1992. In November the Iskandarov coalition government resigned in the hope of reconciling the contending factions. Later that month, the Supreme Soviet, still dominated by hard-liners, met in emergency session in Khujand, an antireform stronghold, to select a new government favorable to their views. When the office of president was abolished, the speaker of parliament, Imomali Rahmonov, became de facto head of government. A thirty-eight-year-old former collective farm director, Rahmonov had little experience in government. The office of prime minister went to Abdumalik Abdullojanov, a veteran hard-line politician.

Once in possession of Dushanbe, the neo-Soviets stepped up repression. Three leading opposition figures, including Turajonzoda and the deputy prime minister in the coalition government, were charged with treason and forced into exile, and two other prominent opposition supporters were assassinated in December. There were mass arrests on nebulous charges and summary executions of individuals captured without formal arrest. Fighting on a smaller scale between the forces of the old guard and the opposition continued elsewhere in Tajikistan and across the border with Afghanistan into the mid-1990s.

The conflict in Tajikistan often was portrayed in Western news reports as occurring primarily among clans or regional cliques. Many different lines of affiliation shaped the configuration of forces in the conflict, however, and both sides were divided over substantive political issues. The old guard had never reconciled itself to the reforms of the Gorbachev era

(1985–91) or to the subsequent demise of the Soviet regime. Above all, the factions in this camp wanted to ensure for themselves a monopoly of the kinds of benefits enjoyed by the ruling elite under the Soviet system. The opposition coalition factions were divided over what form the new regime in Tajikistan ought to take: secular parliamentary democracy, nationalist reformism, or Islamicization. Proponents of the last option were themselves divided over the form and pace of change.

In April 1994, peace talks arranged by the United Nations (UN) began between the post-civil war government in Dushanbe and members of the exiled opposition. Between that time and early 1996, six major rounds of talks were held in several different cities. Several smaller-scale meetings also occurred directly between representatives of both sides or through Russian, UN, or other intermediaries. Observers at the main rounds of talks included representatives of Russia, other Central Asian states, Iran, Pakistan, the United States, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE—after 1994 the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE—see Glossary), and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In the first two years, these negotiations produced few positive results. The most significant result was a cease-fire agreement that took effect in October 1994. The initial agreement, scheduled to last only for a few weeks, was renewed repeatedly into 1996, albeit with numerous violations by both sides. As a result of the cease fire, the UN established an observer mission in Tajikistan, which had a staff of forty-three in early 1996.

Government Structure

Independent Tajikistan's initial government conformed to the traditional Soviet formula of parliamentary-ministerial governance and complete obeisance to the regime in Moscow. The office of president of the republic was established in 1990, following the example set by the central government in Moscow. Until the establishment of the short-lived coalition government in 1992, virtually all government positions were held by communist party members. After December 1992, power was in the hands of factions opposed to reform. Former allies in that camp then contended among themselves for power.

The 1994 Constitution

In 1994 Tajikistan adopted a new constitution that restored

the office of president, transformed the Soviet-era Supreme Soviet into the Supreme Assembly (Majlisi Oli), recognized civil liberties and property rights, and provided for a judiciary that was not fully independent. Like constitutions of the Soviet era, the document did not necessarily constrain the actual exercise of power. For example, the mechanism by which the constitution was formally adopted was a referendum held in November 1994. Balloting occurred simultaneously with the vote for president, even though that office could not legally exist until and unless the constitution was ratified.

The Executive

The president was first chosen by legislative election in 1990. In the first direct presidential election, held in 1991, former communist party chief Rahmon Nabiyev won in a rigged vote. The office of president was abolished in November 1992, then reestablished de facto in 1994 in advance of the constitutional referendum that legally approved it. In the interim, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Imomali Rahmonov, was nominal chief of state. In the presidential election of November 1994, Rahmonov won a vote that was condemned by opposition parties and Western observers as fraudulent. Rahmonov's only opponent was the antireformist Abdumalik Abdullojanov, who had founded an opposition party after being forced to resign as Rahmonov's prime minister in 1993 under criticism for the country's poor economic situation.

The Council of Ministers is responsible for management of government activities in accordance with laws and decrees of the Supreme Assembly and decrees of the president. The president appoints the prime minister and the other council members, with the nominal approval of the Supreme Assembly. In 1996 the Council of Ministers included fifteen full ministers, plus six deputy prime ministers, the chairmen of five state committees, the presidential adviser on national economic affairs, the secretary of the National Security Council, and the chairman of the National Bank of Tajikistan.

The Legislature

The republic's legislature, the Supreme Assembly, is elected directly for a term of five years. According to the 1994 constitution, any citizen at least twenty-five years of age is eligible for election. The unicameral, 230-seat Supreme Soviet elected in 1990 included 227 communists and three members from other

parties. The constitution approved in November 1994 called for a unicameral, 181-seat parliament to replace the Supreme Soviet. In the first election under those guidelines, 161 deputies were chosen in February 1995 and nineteen of the remaining twenty in a second round one month later. (One constituency elected no deputy, and one elected deputy died shortly after the election.) In the 1995 parliamentary election, an estimated forty seats were uncontested, and many candidates reportedly were former Soviet regional and local officials. The sixty communist deputies who were elected gave Rahmonov solid support in the legislative branch because the majority of deputies had no declared party affiliation. Like the 1994 presidential election, the parliamentary election was not considered free or fair by international authorities.

The Judiciary

The 1994 constitution prescribes an independent judiciary, including at the national level the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court (theoretically, the final arbiter of the constitutionality of government laws and actions), the Supreme Economic Court, and the Military Court. The Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province has a regional court, and subordinate courts exist at the regional, district, and municipal levels. Judges are appointed to five-year terms, but theoretically they are subordinate only to the constitution and are beyond interference from elected officials. However, the president retains the power to dismiss judges, and in practice Tajikistan still lacked an independent judiciary after the adoption of the 1994 constitution. In June 1993, the Supreme Court acted on behalf of the Rahmonov regime in banning all four opposition parties and all organizations connected with the 1992 coalition government. The ban was rationalized on the basis of an accusation of the parties' complicity in attempting a violent overthrow of the government.

As in the Soviet system, the Office of the Procurator General has authority for both investigation and adjudication of crimes within its broad constitutional mandate to ensure compliance with the laws of the republic. Elected to a five-year term, the procurator general of Tajikistan is the superior of similar officials in lower-level jurisdictions throughout the country.

Local Government

Below the republic level, provinces, districts, and cities have

their own elected assemblies. In those jurisdictions, the chief executive is the chairman of a council of people's deputies, whose members are elected to five-year terms. The chairman is appointed by the president of the republic. The Supreme Assembly may dissolve local councils if they fail to uphold the law. For most of the late Soviet and early independence periods, Tajikistan had four provinces: Leninobod in the north, Qurghonteppa and Kulob in the south, and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province in the southeast. The precise status of that region is unclear because separatists have declared it an autonomous republic and even the government does not always call it a province (see fig. 10). Beginning in 1988, Qurghonteppa and Kulob were merged into a single province, called Khatlon. (The two parts were separated again between 1990 and 1992.) A large region stretching from the west-central border through Dushanbe to the north-central border is under direct federal control.

Political Parties

As long as Tajikistan was a Soviet republic, political power resided in the Communist Party of Tajikistan, not in the state. Until 1991 the party was an integral part of the CPSU, subordinate to the central party leadership. In the years before independence, several opposition parties appeared with various agendas. Since the civil war, the opposition's official participation has been limited severely, although some parties remain active abroad.

Communist Party of Tajikistan

During the 1920s, Tajik communist party membership increased substantially. But in the following decades, the percentage of Tajik membership in the Communist Party of Tajikistan rose and fell with the cycle of purges and revitalizations. Throughout the Soviet period, however, Russians retained dominant positions. For example, the top position of party first secretary was reserved for an individual of the titular ethnic group of the republic, but the powerful position of second secretary always belonged to a Russian or a member of another European nationality.

In the mid-1980s, the Communist Party of Tajikistan had nearly 123,000 members, of whom about two-thirds represented urban regions, with subordinate provincial, district, and municipal organizations in all jurisdictions. The Communist

Youth League (Komsomol), which provided most of the future party members, had more than 550,000 members in 1991. The end of the Soviet era witnessed a waning of interest in party membership, however, despite the privileges and opportunities the party could offer. By 1989 many districts were losing members much faster than new members could be recruited.

In August 1991, the failure of the coup by hard-liners in Moscow against President Gorbachev left the Communist Party of Tajikistan even less popular and more vulnerable than it had been before. However, although it was suspended in 1991, the party in Tajikistan was able to retain its property during its suspension. Just before sanctions were imposed, the party changed the adjective in its name from *communist* to *socialist.* In December 1991, the party reassumed its original name and began a vigorous campaign to recapture its earlier monopoly of power.

After the civil war, the communist party remained the country's largest party, although its membership was far smaller than it had been in the late Soviet era. In the early 1990s, the party rebuilt its organizational network, from the primary party organizations in the workplace to the countrywide leadership. Communist candidates did well in the legislative elections of 1995, although they did not win an outright majority.

Opposition Parties

The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s saw the open establishment of opposition parties representing a variety of secular and religious views. In 1991 and 1992, these groups engaged in an increasingly bitter power struggle with those who wanted to preserve the old order in substance, if not in name. By the summer of 1992, the battle had escalated into an open civil war that would claim tens of thousands of lives.

A branch of the Islamic Rebirth Party (IRP) was established in Tajikistan in 1990 with an initial membership of about 10,000. The Tajikikistan IRP was established as an open organization, although it was rumored to have existed underground since the late 1970s. The IRP received legal recognition as a political party in the changed political climate that existed after the 1991 Moscow coup attempt. Despite its links to the party of the same name with branches throughout the Soviet Union, the Tajikistan IRP focused explicitly on republic-level politics and national identity rather than supranational issues. When the antireformists gained power in December 1992, they again

banned the IRP. At that point, the party claimed 20,000 members, but no impartial figures were available for either the size of its membership or the extent of its public support. After the civil war, the party changed its name to the Movement for Islamic Revival.

Two other parties, the Democratic Party and Rastokhez (Rebirth), also were banned, with the result that no opposition party has had official sanction since early 1993. The Democratic Party, which has a secular, nationalist, and generally pro-Western agenda, was founded by intellectuals in 1990 and modeled on the contemporaneous parliamentary democratization movement in Moscow. In 1995 the party moved its headquarters from Tehran to Moscow. Although the government nominally lifted its ban on the Democratic Party in 1995, in practice the party remains powerless inside the republic. In early 1996, it joined several other parties in signing an agreement of reconciliation with the Dushanbe government.

Like the Democratic Party, Rastokhez was founded in 1990 with substantial support from the intellectual community; its visibility as an opposition popular front made Rastokhez a scapegoat for the February 1990 demonstrations and riots in Dushanbe (see Transition to Post-Soviet Government, this ch.). In 1992 Rastokhez, the Democratic Party, and another party, La"li Badakhshon, played an important role in the opposition movement that forced President Nabiyev to resign. The leadership of the much-weakened Rastokhez movement also made peace with the Dushanbe regime early in 1996.

La"li Badakhshon is a secularist, democratic group that was founded in 1991. The chief aim of the party, which represents mainly Pamiris, is greater autonomy for the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province. La"li Badakhshon joined with the other three opposition groups in the demonstrations of spring 1992.

Since the civil war, several new political parties have functioned legally in Tajikistan. Some are organized around interest groups such as businessmen, some around powerful individuals such as former prime minister Abdumalik Abdullojanov. All of these parties lack the means to influence the political process, however. For instance, the most important of them, Abdullojanov's Popular Unity Party, was prevented by the government from mounting an effective campaign in the legislative elections of February 1995.

The Media

At the time of independence, Tajikistan had several long-established official newspapers that had been supported by the communist regime. These included newspapers circulated throughout the republic in Tajik, Russian, and Uzbek, as well as papers on the provincial, district, and city levels. Beginning in 1991, changes in newspapers' names reflected political changes in the republic. For example, the Tajik republican newspaper, long known as *Tojikistoni Soveti* (Soviet Tajikistan), became first *Tojikistoni Shuravi* (using the Persian word for "council" or "soviet") and then *Jumhuriyat* (Republic). The equivalent Russian-language newspaper went from *Kommunist Tadzhikistana* (Tajikistan Communist) to *Narodnaya gazeta* (People's Newspaper). Under the changing political conditions of the late-Soviet and early independence periods, new newspapers appeared, representing such groups as the journalists' union, the Persian-Tajik Language Foundation, cultural and religious groups, and opposition political parties. After antireformists returned to power at the end of 1992, however, the victors cracked down on the press.

In the Soviet era, Tajikistan's magazines included publications specializing in health, educational, rural, and women's issues, as well as communist party affairs. Several were intended especially for children. Literary magazines were published in both Russian and Tajik. The Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan published five scholarly journals. In the postindependence years, however, Tajikistan's poverty forced discontinuation of such items. In the early 1990s, Tajikistan had three main publishing houses. After the civil war, the combination of political repression and acute economic problems disrupted many publication activities. In this period, all of the country's major newspapers were funded fully or in part by the government, and their news coverage followed only the government's line. The only news agency, Khovar, was a government bureau. Tajikistan drew international criticism for the reported killing and jailing of journalists.

Human Rights

Under the extension of emergency powers justified by the government in response to opposition in 1993 and 1994, numerous human rights violations were alleged on both sides of the civil war. A wave of executions and "disappearances" of

opposition figures began after antireformist forces captured Dushanbe in December 1992. The People's Front of Tajikistan, a paramilitary group supported by the government, was responsible in many such cases. In 1993 and 1994, a number of journalists were arrested, and prisoners of conscience were tortured for alleged antigovernment activities. In 1994 some prisoners of conscience and political prisoners were released in prisoner exchanges with opposition forces. The death sentence, applicable by Tajikistani law to eighteen peacetime offenses, was officially applied in six cases in both 1993 and 1994, but only one person, a political prisoner, is known to have been executed in 1994. No state executions were reported in 1995.

Afghanistan-based oppositionist forces, who labeled themselves a government in exile, were accused by the Dushanbe government of killing a large number of civilians and some government soldiers near the Afghan border. These accusations had not been confirmed by impartial observers as of early 1996. Amnesty International appealed to both sides to desist, without apparent effect.

Foreign Relations

Tajikistan had a ministry of foreign affairs for nearly forty years before it became an independent state at the end of 1991. As long as it was part of the Soviet Union, however, the republic had no power to conduct its own diplomacy. The central objective of newly independent Tajikistan's foreign policy was to maximize its opportunities by developing relations with as many states as possible. Particular diplomatic attention went to two groups of countries: the other former Soviet republics and Tajikistan's near neighbors, Iran and Afghanistan, which are inhabited by culturally related peoples. At the same time, Tajikistan pursued contacts with many other countries, including the United States, Turkey, and Pakistan. In 1995 Tajikistan opened its first embassy outside the former Soviet Union, in Turkey. The potential for political support and economic aid is at least as important in shaping Tajikistan's diplomacy as are ideological and cultural ties.

Former Soviet Republics

Like the other Central Asian republics, Tajikistan joined the CIS, which was created in December 1991, three weeks before the Soviet Union collapsed officially. Shortly before opposition

demonstrators forced President Rahmon Nabiyev to resign in August 1992, he asked several presidents of former Soviet republics, including President Boris N. Yeltsin of Russia, to help him stay in power. They refused this request. In the fall of 1992, the increasingly embattled coalition government that succeeded Nabiyev asked the other members of the CIS to intervene to end the civil war. However, such assistance was not provided.

Through the mid-1990s, Russia played a role in independent Tajikistan by its military presence there, in the form of the 201st Motorized Rifle Division and the Border Troops (see Russia's Role in the Early 1990s, this ch.). Russian personnel in Dushanbe acted as advisers to the post-civil war government. Russians also held important positions in the Dushanbe government itself, most notably the Ministry of Defense, which was led from 1992 to 1995 by Aleksandr Shishlyannikov. Yuriy Ponosov, who had a generation of experience as a CPSU official in Tajikistan before the breakup of the Soviet Union, became Tajikistan's first deputy prime minister in March 1996.

The protection of the Russian minority in strife-ridden Tajikistan is a stated foreign policy goal of the Russian government. Russia's concern was eased somewhat by the conclusion of a dual-citizenship agreement between the two countries in 1995. Russia also has justified its active involvement in the affairs of Tajikistan by citing the need to defend the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border—and thus, the CIS—from penetration by Islamic extremism and drug trafficking.

Independent Tajikistan has troubled relations with two neighboring former Soviet republics, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, a situation that began long before independence. In the 1980s, a dispute over two scarce resources in Central Asia, water and arable land, soured relations between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In June 1989, the situation burst into spontaneous, grassroots violence over competing claims to a small parcel of land. That conflict led to mutual recriminations that continued until a settlement was reached in 1993. Tensions were heightened in 1992 by Kyrgyzstan's fear that the Tajikistani civil war would spill over the border, which had never been defined by a bilateral treaty. Despite tense relations between the two republics, Kyrgyzstan attempted to negotiate an end to Tajikistan's civil war, and it sent medicine and other aid to its beleaguered neighbor. After the civil war, Kyrgyzstan sent a contingent of

troops to Tajikistan as part of the joint CIS peacekeeping mission (see The Armed Forces, this ch.).

Tajikistan's relations with Uzbekistan present a contradictory picture. On the one hand, Tajik intellectuals, and at times the Dushanbe government, have criticized Uzbekistan for discrimination against its Tajik minority. In response, citing fears of Islamic radicalism in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan closed its Tajik-language schools in mid-1992. On the other hand, antireformists in both republics have maintained good relations based on the interest they shared in the defeat of reformers in Tajikistan in the early 1990s. Uzbekistan gave military support to the factions that won Tajikistan's civil war and closed its border with Tajikistan in the fall of 1992 to prevent opposition refugees from the civil war from fleeing to Uzbekistan.

After the civil war, Uzbekistan's attitude toward Tajikistan became increasingly ambivalent. One aspect of Uzbekistan's policy continued its earlier effort to prevent the opposition from taking power in Tajikistan; a 1993 cooperation treaty between the two countries, stipulating a role for Uzbekistan's air force in the defense of Tajikistan—which has no air force of its own—manifested that concern. However, the government in Tashkent was increasingly displeased that the dominant factions among the victors in Tajikistan's civil war were much less amenable to Uzbekistan's leadership than were the factions that had controlled Tajikistani politics before the war. By 1995 the Uzbekistani government was urging the government in Dushanbe to be more conciliatory toward the opposition in postwar peace talks.

The leaders of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan repeatedly extolled the value of regional economic and environmental cooperation in the early 1990s. In reality, however, only limited progress was made toward such cooperation. Oil and natural gas producers Kazakstan and Turkmenistan interrupted fuel deliveries to Tajikistan, in the hopes of improving the terms of the sales agreements that had prevailed under the Soviet system. With consumer goods generally in short supply, Tajikistan has taken measures to prevent citizens of the neighboring republics from purchasing such items from Tajikistani stockpiles. Tajikistan also is wary of regional water use plans that might increase the share of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in water emanating from Tajikistan.

Iran

When Tajikistan declared independence, Iran was one of the first countries to extend diplomatic recognition, and the first to establish an embassy in Dushanbe. In 1992 Iran provided training for a group of Tajik diplomats from Tajikistan. After 1991 bilateral contacts in the mass media and in sports increased significantly, and Iran funded construction of several new mosques in Tajikistan. Some of Tajikistan's most important contacts with Iran in the early 1990s were cultural. For example, Tajikistan held an Iranian film festival, an exhibition of Iranian art, and two exhibits of Iranian publications. Dushanbe was the site of international conferences on Persian culture and the Tajik language. In the early 1990s, Iranian books and magazines became increasingly available in Tajikistan, and Dushanbe television carried programs from Iran. The main obstacle to such cultural contact is the fact that only a very small portion of the Tajikistani population can read the Arabic alphabet (see Ethnic Groups and Forces of Nationalism, this ch.).

Despite the obvious ideological differences between the Islamic revolutionary regime in Iran and the secular communist regime in newly independent Tajikistan, Nabiyev actively cultivated relations with Iran. When Nabiyev's position was threatened in 1992, his speeches repeatedly stressed both the cultural and the religious ties between the two countries. He subsequently made a direct request for aid from Iranian president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (see Transition to Post-Soviet Government, this ch.).

The leading figures of the Islamic revival movement in Tajikistan say emphatically that whatever eventual form of Islamic state they advocate for Tajikistan, Iran is not the model to be followed. Part of the reason for this position is that Iran is predominantly Shia Muslim while Tajikistan is mainly Sunni, a distinction with important implications for the organization of the religious leadership and its relationship with the state. An equally important reason is that the social structures of Tajikistan and Iran are considered too different for Iran's linkage of religious and political powers to be adopted in Tajikistan.

In the fall of 1992, Iran repeatedly offered to help mediate Tajikistan's civil war in cooperation with other Central Asian states. Although such offers produced no negotiations, Iran did send food and set up camps for refugees from Tajikistan. After the civil war, relations between Iran and the new govern-

ment in Dushanbe included efforts to develop a modus vivendi as well as periodic recriminations. Iran worked with Russia in attempting to negotiate a peace agreement between the Dushanbe government and the opposition. In July 1995, Tajikistan opened an embassy in Tehran, one of its few outside the former Soviet Union.

Afghanistan

Tajikistan's relations with Afghanistan, the country with which it shares its long southern border, have been affected not only by the cultural and ethnic links between inhabitants of the countries but also by the way the Soviet regime tried to use those links to ensure the survival of a communist government in Kabul after 1979. The Soviets put Tajiks from Tajikistan in positions of power in the Soviet-backed Afghan government and sent propaganda publications from Tajikistan to Afghanistan. Afghans were brought to Tajikistan for education and communist indoctrination, and Tajiks served in the Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan. In 1991 the political climate in Tajikistan allowed some citizens to criticize the war openly, although there was no reliable gauge of how widely this antiwar opinion was shared.

Into the early 1990s, the communist government in Dushanbe and the then-communist government in Kabul favored the development of economic relations and exchanges in the fields of education and publishing. During the civil war, the antireformist side alleged that its opponents relied heavily on the subversive actions of Afghan *mujahidin.* Most neutral observers dismissed the large-scale role of Afghans as a propaganda ploy.

Rugged terrain and poor border enforcement make the Tajikistan- Afghanistan border very permeable. Beginning in 1992, border crossings—for private smuggling, to escape the Tajikistani civil war, or to obtain weapons for one side or the other in that war—became increasingly numerous. By early 1993, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 50,000 to 70,000 refugees had gone from southern Tajikistan to northern Afghanistan. By 1994 many of them had returned home, although the exact number is not available.

Relations between Tajikistan's post-civil war government and Afghanistan often were troubled through the first half of the 1990s. Tajikistan accused Afghanistan of complicity in cross-

border attacks by exiled opposition members based in northern Afghanistan. In turn, Afghanistan accused Russian forces on the Tajikistan side of the border of killing Afghan civilians in reprisal attacks. The situation changed in late 1995 and early 1996, when Russia began to support President Burhanuddin Rabbani's faction in the ongoing Afghan civil war. Rabbani then tried to improve relations with the Dushanbe government and to mediate a settlement between it and the opposition.

The United States

Although the United States was the second country to open an embassy in Dushanbe, that outpost was evacuated in October 1992, at the height of the civil war, and was not reopened until March 1993. Beginning in 1992, antireformists and the opposition both sought support from the United States. Thus, a trip by Secretary of State James Baker to Tajikistan in February 1992 antagonized members of the opposition, who saw the visit as granting tacit approval to Nabiyev's political repression. Relations with the opposition were improved somewhat a few months later, when a human rights delegation from the United States Congress met with several opposition leaders.

During the civil war, the United States provided emergency food supplies and medicines to Tajikistan, and independent Tajikistan continued the cooperative program on earthquake forecasting techniques that had begun with the United States during the Soviet era. By the mid-1990s, United States policy toward Tajikistan centered on support for peace negotiations and on encouraging Tajikistan to develop closer relations with the IMF and other financial organizations that could help in the rebuilding process.

China

The main source of tension between China and Tajikistan is China's claim on part of Tajikistan's far eastern Gorno-Badakhshan region. Between 1992 and 1995, sixteen rounds of negotiations between China and a commission representing Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakstan, and Kyrgyzstan failed to produce a border agreement. An interim agreement, scheduled for signing in April 1996, stipulated that no attacks would be launched across the border in either direction and that both sides would provide ample notice of military exercises in the area. Despite their border dispute, China and the post-civil war government of Tajikistan share a hostility toward reformist

political movements, especially those that could be stigmatized as Islamic fundamentalist. By the mid-1990s, this common ground had become the basis for a working relationship between the two governments.

International Organizations

Tajikistan joined the UN in 1992. In the fall of that year, the Tajikistani coalition government requested UN aid in ending the civil war and supporting political democratization, but only a UN mission and a call for an end to hostilities resulted. Tajikistan joined the CSCE in February 1992. In 1993 and 1994, membership was obtained in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the World Bank (see Glossary), the IMF, and the Economic Cooperation Organization (see Glossary).

National Security

In the years following independence, Tajikistan has made some efforts to establish independent national security institutions and forces. At the same time, in the mid-1990s a contingent of CIS troops remain in place under a Russian-dominated command. At least until resolution of its internal conflict, Tajikistan seems assured that more powerful countries will exert substantial influence on its national security affairs.

Russia's Role in the Early 1990s

Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, Tajikistan had no army of its own. Administratively, the republic was part of the Soviet Union's Turkestan Military District, which was abolished in June 1992. By the end of the Soviet era, the old military system, which commonly (although not exclusively) assigned draftees from Tajikistan to noncombat units in the Soviet army, had begun to break down, and draft evasion became a common occurrence in Tajikistan. Reform plans for Tajikistan's conscription system were overtaken by the breakup of the union.

Following independence, the Nabiyev government made repeated efforts between December 1991 and June 1992 to organize a national guard. Those efforts met strong opposition from factions fearing that an antireformist president would use the guard as a tool of repression. When his national guard plans failed, Nabiyev turned to private armies of his political

supporters to kill or intimidate political opponents. In 1992 additional armed bands were organized in Tajikistan, some associated with opposition political groups and others simply reflecting the breakdown of central authority in the country rather than loyalty to a political faction.

The main regular military force in Tajikistan at independence was the former Soviet 201st Motorized Rifle Division, headquartered in Dushanbe. This division, whose personnel are ethnically heterogeneous, came under jurisdiction of the Russian Federation in 1992 and remained under Russian command in early 1996. Officially neutral in the civil war, Russian and Uzbekistani forces, including armored vehicles of the 201st Division and armored vehicles, jets, and helicopters from Uzbekistan, provided significant assistance in antireformist assaults on the province of Qurghonteppa and on Dushanbe. The 201st Division failed to warn the inhabitants of Dushanbe that neo-Soviet forces had entered the city, nor did it interfere with the victors' wave of violence against opposition supporters in Dushanbe. In the ensuing months, the 201st Division was involved in some battles against opposition holdouts. Russian troops stationed in Tajikistan were a major source of weapons for various factions in the civil war. Combatants on both sides frequently were able to buy or confiscate Russian military hardware, including armored vehicles.

In January 1993, a Russian, Colonel (later Major General) Aleksandr Shishlyannikov, was appointed minister of defense of Tajikistan (a post he held until 1995, when he was replaced by Major General Sherali Khayrulloyev, a Tajik), and many positions in the Tajikistani high command were assumed by Russians in 1993. Meanwhile, in mid-1993 the joint CIS peacekeeping force was created. The force, which remained by far the largest armed presence in Tajikistan through 1995, included elements of the 201st Division, units of Russian border troops, and some Kazakstani, Kyrgyzstani, and Uzbekistani units. By 1995 the officially stated mission of the 201st Division in Tajikistan included artillery and rocket support for the border troops. Included in the division's weaponry in 1995 were 180 M–72 main battle tanks; 185 pieces of artillery, including sixty-five pieces of towed artillery; fifty self-propelled guns; fifteen rocket launchers; and fifty-five mortars.

Border security is a key part of Russia's continued military role in Tajikistan. In June 1992, the formerly Soviet border guards stationed in Tajikistan came under the direct authority

"Kulabi" (Tajikistani communist forces, in black) and Russian soldiers outside the parliament building, Dushanbe
Courtesy Stephane Herbert

of Russia; in 1993 a reorganization put all Russian border troops under the Russian Federal Border Service. By 1995 an estimated 16,500 troops of that force were in Tajikistan, but about 12,500 of the rank-and-file and noncommissioned officers were drawn from the inhabitants of Tajikistan.

The Armed Forces

Tajikistan began assembling its own army in February 1993. The initial units were drawn from Popular Front forces active in the civil war. In the new army, those bands initially kept their distinct identity and their old commanders. This proved to be an impediment to the development of a cohesive military when some units resisted subordination to any higher authority, and casualties resulted from battles among units. Early in 1996, a rebellion by the First Battalion of Tajikistan's army, based in the

Qurghonteppa area, brought about the replacement of the prime minister, a deputy prime minister, and the president's chief of staff to placate the rebel unit.

By the mid-1990s, Tajikistan's army numbered about 3,000 personnel. Russians, many of them veterans of the war in Afghanistan, made up almost three-quarters of the officer corps. The Russian Ministry of Defense continued to provide material assistance to Tajikistan's army. Through the mid-1990s, Tajikistan did not have an air force but relied instead on Russian air power; however, the Dushanbe government voiced the intention of purchasing some helicopters for military use and forming an air force squadron.

Internal Security

Preservation of internal security was impossible during the civil war, whose concomitant disorder promoted the activities of numerous illegal groups. Because of Tajikistan's location, the international narcotics trade found these conditions especially inviting in the early and mid-1990s.

Security Organizations

When Tajikistan was part of the Soviet Union, the republic's Committee for State Security (KGB) was an integral part of the Soviet-wide KGB. Neither the administration nor the majority of personnel were Tajik. When Tajikistan became independent, the organization was renamed the Committee of National Security and a Tajik, Alimjon Solehboyev, was put in charge. In 1995 the committee received full cabinet status as the Ministry of Security.

Police powers are divided between the forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Security. The two most significant characteristics of the current system are the failure to observe the laws that are on the books in political cases and the penetration of the current regime by criminal elements.

Narcotics

In the last years of the Soviet Union and in the Russian Federation of the mid-1990s, the issue of drug trafficking was embroiled in political rhetoric and public prejudices. The Yeltsin administration used the combined threats of narcotics and Islamic fundamentalism to justify Russian military involvement in Tajikistan, and the Rahmonov regime used accusations

Preparing for an antinarcotics expedition supported by United States Drug Enforcement Administration
Courtesy Stephane Herbert

of drug crimes to justify the repression of domestic political opponents.

Despite the presence of Russian border guards, the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan has proved easily penetrable by narcotics smugglers, for whom the lack of stable law enforcement on both sides of the boundary provides great opportunities. For some Central Asians, the opium trade has assumed great economic importance in the difficult times of the post-Soviet era. An established transit line moves opium from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Khorugh in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province, from which it moves to Dushanbe and then to Osh on the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border. The ultimate destination of much of the narcotics passing through Tajikistan is a burgeoning market in Moscow and other Russian cities, as well as some markets in Western

Europe and in other CIS nations. Besides Pakistan and Afghanistan, sources have been identified in Russia, Western Europe, Colombia, and Southeast Asia. A shipment of heroin was confiscated for the first time in 1995; previously, traffic apparently had been limited to opium and hashish.

An organized-crime network reportedly has developed around the Moscow narcotics market; Russian border guards, members of the CIS peacekeeping force, and senior Tajikistani government officials reportedly are involved in this activity. Besides corruption, enforcement has been hampered by antiquated Soviet-era laws and a lack of funding. In 1995 the number of drug arrests increased, but more than two-thirds were for cultivation; only twenty were for the sale of drugs. A national drug-control plan was under government consideration in early 1996. Regional drug-control cooperation broke down after independence. In 1995 the Tajikistani government planned to implement a new regional program, based in the UN Drug Control Program office in Tashkent, for drug interdiction along the Murghob-Osh-Andijon overland route. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the customs authorities, the Ministry of Health, and the procurator general all have responsibilities in drug interdiction, but there are no formal lines of interagency cooperation.

Criminal Justice and the Penal System

Independent Tajikistan's system of courts and police evolved from the institutional framework established in the Soviet era. The judiciary is not fully independent; the 1994 constitution gives the president the power to remove judges from office. In the wake of the victors' wave of violence against actual or potential supporters of the opposition at the end of the civil war, the post-civil war regime continued to ignore due process of law in dealing with opposition supporters. Numerous opposition figures were arrested and held without trial for prolonged periods; representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Helsinki Watch were not permitted to see political prisoners. Extrajudicial killings, disappearances, warrantless searches, the probable planting of incriminating evidence, arrests for conduct that was not illegal, and physical abuse of prisoners were all part of the new regime's treatment of opposition supporters. The regime established its own secret prisons for those held on political charges.

In the new government installed at the end of the civil war, the minister of internal affairs, hence the national head of police, was Yaqub Salimov, who had no law enforcement experience and himself had led a criminal gang. Salimov was an associate of Sangak Safarov, a top antireformist military leader who also had an extensive criminal record. Salimov used his law enforcement position to shield his criminal confederates and to intimidate other members of the cabinet. In 1995 President Rahmonov finally maneuvered Salimov out of power by appointing him ambassador to Turkey. Salimov's successor as minister of internal affairs was Saidomir Zuhurov, a KGB veteran who had been minister of security in the post-civil war government.

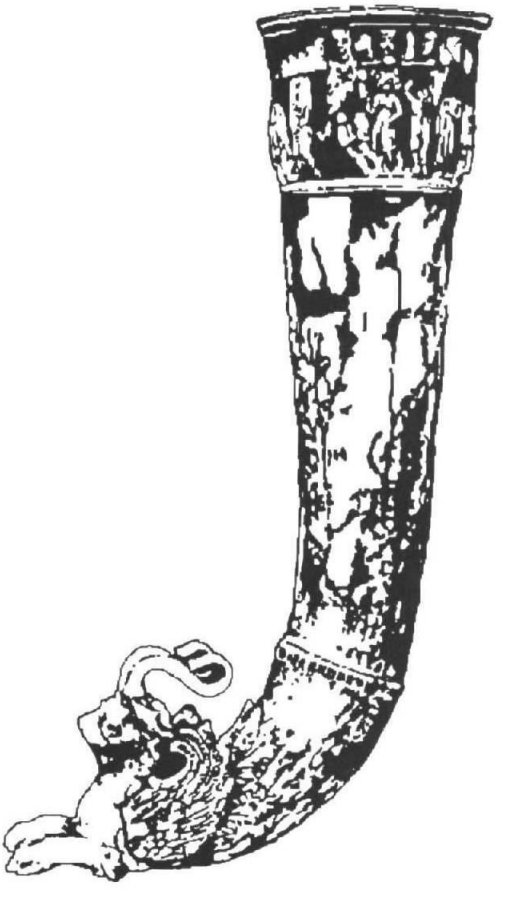
Thus, in the mid-1990s Tajikistan's national security condition was tenuous from both domestic and international standpoints. Internally, the concept of uniform law enforcement for the protection of Tajikistani citizens had not taken hold, in spite of constitutional guarantees. Instead, the republic's law enforcement agencies were at the service of the political goals of those in power. Externally, Tajikistan remained almost completely reliant upon Russia and its Central Asian neighbors for military protection of its borders. By 1996 years of internationally sponsored negotiations had failed to bring about a satisfactory compromise between the government and the opposition, offering little hope that CIS troops could leave but providing the Rahmonov government a pretext for ongoing restraint of civil liberties.

* * *

Relatively little has been written in English about Tajikistan. An important study of the largely Persian civilization and political history of southern Central Asia in the early centuries of the Islamic era is Richard N. Frye's *Bukhara: The Medieval Achievement.* The first three chapters of *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective,* edited by Robert L. Canfield, describe the interaction of Turkic- and Persian-speaking peoples in the region. The Russian scholar Vasilii V. Bartol'd wrote a seminal historical work that has been translated as *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion.* Tajikistan's Persian-language literature is covered in the chapter "Modern Tajik Literature" in *Persian Literature,* edited by Ehsan Yarshater. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone's *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia* describes Tajikistani politics in the

Stalin and Khrushchev eras from the Russian viewpoint. Muriel Atkin's *The Subtlest Battle* and "Islam as Faith, Politics and Bogeyman in Tajikistan" (a chapter in *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia,* edited by Michael Bourdeaux) describe the role of Islam in Soviet and post-Soviet times. A description of events leading to the 1992 civil war is contained in Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh's "The 'Tajik Spring' of 1992." Sergei Gretsky has covered aspects of the civil war in two articles, one appearing in *Critique* (Spring 1995) and the other in *Central Asia Monitor* (No. 1, 1994), and an assessment of Russian-Tajikistani relations in a chapter of *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia,* edited by Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Oles M. Smolansky. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 4. Turkmenistan



Ivory wine vessel excavated at site of Nisa, ancient city near Ashgabat

Country Profile

Country

Formal Name: Republic of Turkmenistan.

Short Form: Turkmenistan.

Term for Citizens: Turkmenistani(s).

Capital: Ashgabat.

Date of Independence: October 27, 1991.

Geography

Size: Approximately 488,100 square kilometers.

Topography: Center of country dominated by Turan Depression and Garagum Desert, flatlands of which occupy nearly 80 percent of country's area; Kopetdag Range along southwestern border reaches 2,912 meters; Balkan Mountains in far west and Kugitang Range in far east only other appreciable elevations.

Climate: Subtropical, desert, and severely continental, with little rainfall; winters mild and dry, most precipitation falling between January and May. Heaviest precipitation in Kopetdag Range.

Society

Population: In 1991, population 3,808,900; 1989 annual growth rate 2.5 percent; 1991 population density 7.8 persons per square kilometer.

Ethnic Groups: In 1991, Turkmen 72 percent, Russians nearly 10 percent, Uzbeks 9 percent, and Kazaks 2 percent.

Languages: Turkmen, official national language, spoken by about 75 percent of population; Russian, replaced as official

language in 1992 constitution, still much used in official communications despite campaigning to limit its influence; English given status behind Turkmen as second official language, 1993.

Religion: Approximately 87 percent Muslim (mainly Sunni), 11 percent Russian Orthodox; many who profess Islam are not active adherents.

Education and Literacy: In 1991, estimated 98 percent of those above age fifteen literate; education compulsory through eighth grade. Much of Soviet education system still in place; substantial modification in progress to raise quality of work force.

Health: Soviet system of free care for all citizens remains in place, but in early 1990s supply shortages and poor medical staff made care inadequate in many areas; infant mortality highest and life expectancy lowest in Central Asia.

Economy

Gross National Product (GNP): 1994 estimate US$4.3 billion, or US$1,049 per capita. Real growth rate estimated at –24 percent, 1994.

Agriculture: Limited, gradual privatization of state-held arable land, with state control of marketing and inputs. Irrigation, a major expense in support of nearly all agricultural areas, hampered by inefficient delivery. Major crops cotton, grains, fodder crops, with wool, meat, and milk from raising of livestock, chiefly sheep.

Industry and Mining: Specialized for oil and gas industry and cotton products, post-Soviet diversification slow; some machine building, production of construction materials, carpet weaving, and food and wine processing. Fuel-related industries slowed in early 1990s by difficulties in fuel sales abroad. Wide variety of mineral deposits, especially sulfur, used in chemical industry.

Energy: Self-sufficient in natural gas and oil, with major untapped deposits expected to sustain supply in foreseeable future. Natural gas dominates domestic energy consumption and energy exports.

Exports: In 1995 worth about US$1.9 billion. Principal items

natural gas, petroleum, cotton, chemicals, processed foods, and minerals. Postcommunist export market in Russia remains steady; markets with other former Soviet republics have declined. Post-1991 expansion of specific products, especially cotton, outside Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Western Europe, Mexico, Far East.

Imports: In 1995 worth about US$1.5 billion. Principal items food and beverages, textiles, and machinery. Principal import suppliers Russia, Ukraine, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Germany.

Balance of Payments: In 1992, estimated as US$108 million deficit.

Exchange Rate: Manat introduced November 1993, replacing Russian ruble. One manat equals 100 tenge. Revaluation late 1995 from US$1=500 manat to US$1=2,100 manat, but wide variation of value in unofficial markets. Official rate January 1996, 200 manat per US$1.

Inflation: In 1995 estimated at more than 1,000 percent, about same rate as previous years. Increased entitlements and loose government lending policy caused repeated increases in early 1990s.

Fiscal Year: Calendar year.

Fiscal Policy: Highly centralized government policy, with no regional authority. Ministry of Economy and Finance has nominal control over public finance, but many extrabudgetary expenditures block effective control, incur deficits. Lack of experience hinders development of commercially oriented banking system.

Transportation and Telecommunications

Highways: In 1990 about 23,000 kilometers of roads, of which 15,300 paved. One major highway connects eastern and western population centers.

Railroads: In 1993, about 2,120 kilometers of track in system inadequate to serve current needs. Major renovation and expansion in planning stage, including 1,000 kilometers of new

track.

Civil Aviation: Seven airports, four with permanent-surface runways. Main international airport at Ashgabat. Turkmenistan Airlines offers connections to some European cities, Middle and Far East, and southern Asia.

Inland Waterways: None.

Ports: Main shipping facility at Turkmenbashy on Caspian Sea; three smaller Caspian ports, undergoing reconstruction 1995.

Pipelines: Critical part of economic infrastructure; in 1994, some 4,400 kilometers in operation, with plans for new natural gas lines westward to Bulgaria (4,000 kilometers) and eastward to China (6,700 kilometers) before 2000.

Telecommunications: In poorly developed telephone system, 28 percent of households with telephones, many villages lacking telephone service entirely, and much outdated equipment; modernization program began early 1990s. Two television broadcasting centers relaying satellite transmissions from Orbita and International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (Intelsat) to all cities and rural centers. All broadcasting controlled by State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting.

Government and Politics

Government: Many Soviet-era officials still in place, 1996; constitution of 1992 stipulates democratic separation of powers, but presidency sole center of actual power under Saparmyrat Niyazov. Legislative branch, fifty-member Milli Mejlis, has same ratification functions as Soviet-era Supreme Soviet. Judiciary very weak—judges appointed by president; Supreme Court reviews constitutionality of legislation. Sixty-member National Council with advisory function, actually subsidiary to presidential power.

Politics: Constitution guarantees political freedom, but former Communist Party, now Democratic Party, dominates and retains same structure and propaganda machine as in Soviet era. Niyazov's cult of personality provides further domination. Small, weak opposition groups concentrate on single issues;

some groups outlawed.

Foreign Relations: Basic policy "positive neutrality"—noninterference and neutrality toward all countries and attempts to establish relations as widely as possible. Marketing and transport of natural gas and oil given priority in foreign economic deals. Remains independent of other Central Asian and CIS countries when possible, but maintains strong bilateral military and economic ties with Russia.

International Agreements and Memberships: Member of United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Islamic Development Bank, and CIS.

National Security

Armed Forces: All personnel except officers conscripts. Turkmenistan army, includes about 11,000 Turkmen personnel (under joint Turkmen-Russian control); 12,000 Russian troops also present, 1995. Air force has 2,000 men, plus substantial Russian force remaining in country pending final distribution. Coastal defense force is included in multinational Caspian Flotilla. Border Guard, under joint Turkmen and Russian command, has 5,000 personnel, mainly on Afghan and Iranian borders.

Major Military Units: Army consists of one corps, including three motorized rifle divisions, one artillery brigade, one multiple rocket launcher regiment, one antitank regiment, three engineer regiments, one helicopter squadron, and signal, reconnaissance, and logistics support units. Air force includes four regiments, 175 combat aircraft; air defense force has two fighter regiments; air and air defense organization contingent on negotiations with Russia on disposition of former Soviet forces.

Military Budget: Estimated 1995, US$61 million.

Internal Security: Committee for National Security continues as main security force similar to Soviet-era Turkmenistan Committee for State Security (KGB). Ministry of Internal Affairs administers regular police, working closely with Committee for National Security in matters of national

security. Criminal investigation under procurator's offices, not regular police, who have only routine functions. As in Soviet system, procurators investigate and prosecute crimes. Rule of law hampered by judiciary's subordinate position to executive branch and lack of independent judicial tradition.

Figure 12. Turkmenistan: Administrative Divisions and Transportation System, 1996

DURING MUCH OF ITS PAST, Turkmenistan has received little attention from the outside world. Apart from its role in establishing the Seljuk dynasty in the Middle East in the Middle Ages, for most of its history this territory was not a coherent nation but a geographically defined region of independent tribal groups and other political entities. Like other republics of the former Soviet Union, Turkmenistan has emerged on the world scene as a newly independent country in need of both national and international acceptance, security, and development.

Turkmenistan's authoritarian regime and regional social structure have produced the most politically and economically stable of the former Soviet republics. Although its leadership has gained a reputation abroad for repression of political opposition, it is perceived at home as promoting the social benefits, national traditions, and security of the Turkmen people. In addition, to ensure its national security and trade prospects, Turkmenistan has charted an independent course in establishing a military alliance with Russia and trade and security agreements with Iran and Central Asian countries. In terms of natural assets, Turkmenistan is a landlocked, desert country beneath whose surface lie substantial deposits of oil and the fifth largest reserves of natural gas in the world. Foreign investors, attracted by the republic's calm and receptive atmosphere, have sidestepped human rights issues on their way to establishing joint exploitation of Turkmenistan's rich energy resources.

Historical Setting

Like the other Central Asian republics, Turkmenistan underwent the intrusion and rule of several foreign powers before falling under first Russian and then Soviet control in the modern era. Most notable were the Mongols and the Uzbek khanates, the latter of which dominated the indigenous Oghuz tribes until Russian incursions began in the late nineteenth century.

Origins and Early History

Sedentary Oghuz tribes from Mongolia moved into present-day Central Asia around the eighth century. Within a few cen-

turies, some of these tribes had become the ethnic basis of the Turkmen population.

The Oghuz and the Turkmen

The origins of the Turkmen may be traced back to the Oghuz confederation of nomadic pastoral tribes of the early Middle Ages, which lived in present-day Mongolia and around Lake Baikal in present-day southern Siberia. Known as the Nine Oghuz, this confederation was composed of Turkic-speaking peoples who formed the basis of powerful steppe empires in Inner Asia. In the second half of the eighth century, components of the Nine Oghuz migrated through Jungaria into Central Asia, and Arabic sources located them under the term *Guzz* in the area of the middle and lower Syrdariya in the eighth century. By the tenth century, the Oghuz had expanded west and north of the Aral Sea and into the steppe of present-day Kazakstan, absorbing not only Iranians but also Turks from the Kipchak and Karluk ethnolinguistic groups. In the eleventh century, the renowned Muslim Turk scholar Mahmud al-Kashgari described the language of the Oghuz and Turkmen as distinct from that of other Turks and identified twenty-two Oghuz clans or sub-tribes, some of which appear in later Turkmen genealogies and legends as the core of the early Turkmen.

Oghuz expansion by means of military campaigns went at least as far as the Volga River and Ural Mountains, but the geographic limits of their dominance fluctuated in the steppe areas extending north and west from the Aral Sea. Accounts of Arab geographers and travelers portray the Oghuz ethnic group as lacking centralized authority and being governed by a number of "kings" and "chieftains." Because of their disparate nature as a polity and the vastness of their domains, Oghuz tribes rarely acted in concert. Hence, by the late tenth century, the bonds of their confederation began to loosen. At that time, a clan leader named Seljuk founded a dynasty and the empire that bore his name on the basis of those Oghuz elements that had migrated southward into present-day Turkmenistan and Iran. The Seljuk Empire was centered in Persia, from which Oghuz groups spread into Azerbaijan and Anatolia.

The name *Turkmen* first appears in written sources of the tenth century to distinguish those Oghuz groups who migrated south into the Seljuk domains and accepted Islam from those that had remained in the steppe. Gradually, the term took on

the properties of an ethnonym and was used exclusively to designate Muslim Oghuz, especially those who migrated away from the Syrdariya Basin. By the thirteenth century, the term *Turkmen* supplanted the designation *Oghuz* altogether. The origin of the word *Turkmen* remains unclear. According to popular etymologies as old as the eleventh century, the word derives from *Turk* plus the Iranian element *manand,* and means "resembling a Turk." Modern scholars, on the other hand, have proposed that the element *man/men* acts as an intensifier and have translated the word as "pure Turk" or "most Turk-like of the Turks."

The Seljuk Period

In the eleventh century, Seljuk domains stretched from the delta of the Amu Darya delta into Iran, Iraq, the Caucasus region, Syria, and Asia Minor. In 1055 Seljuk forces entered Baghdad, becoming masters of the Islamic heartlands and important patrons of Islamic institutions. The last powerful Seljuk ruler, Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157), witnessed the fragmentation and destruction of the empire because of attacks by Turkmen and other tribes.

Until these revolts, Turkmen tribesmen were an integral part of the Seljuk military forces. Turkmen migrated with their families and possessions on Seljuk campaigns into Azerbaijan and Anatolia, a process that began the Turkification of these areas. During this time, Turkmen also began to settle the area of present-day Turkmenistan. Prior to the Turkmen habitation, most of this desert had been uninhabited, while the more habitable areas along the Caspian Sea, Kopetdag Mountains, Amu Darya, and Murgap River (Murgap Deryasy) were populated predominantly by Iranians. The city-state of Merv was an especially large sedentary and agricultural area, important as both a regional economic-cultural center and a transit hub on the famous Silk Road.

Formation of the Turkmen Nation

During the Mongol conquest of Central Asia in the thirteenth century, the Turkmen-Oghuz of the steppe were pushed from the Syrdariya farther into the Garagum (Russian spelling Kara Kum) Desert and along the Caspian Sea. Various components were nominally subject to the Mongol domains in eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Iran. Until the early sixteenth century, they were concentrated in four main regions: along

the southeastern coast of the Caspian Sea, on the Mangyshlak Peninsula (on the northeastern Caspian coast), around the Balkan Mountains, and along the Uzboy River running across north-central Turkmenistan. Many scholars regard the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries as the period of the reformulation of the Turkmen into the tribal groups that exist today. Beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing into the nineteenth century, large tribal conglomerates and individual groups migrated east and southeast.

Historical sources indicate the existence of a large tribal union often referred to as the Salor confederation in the Mangyshlak Peninsula and areas around the Balkan Mountains. The Salor were one of the few original Oghuz tribes to survive to modern times. In the late seventeenth century, the union dissolved and the three senior tribes moved eastward and later southward. The Yomud split into eastern and western groups, while the Teke moved into the Akhal region along the Kopetdag Mountains and gradually into the Murgap River basin. The Salor tribes migrated into the region near the Amu Darya delta in the oasis of Khorazm south of the Aral Sea, the middle course of the Amu Darya southeast of the Aral Sea, the Akhal oasis north of present-day Ashgabat and areas along the Kopetdag bordering Iran, and the Murgap River in present-day southeast Turkmenistan. Salor groups also live in Turkey, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and China.

Much of what we know about the Turkmen from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries comes from Uzbek and Persian chronicles that record Turkmen raids and involvement in the political affairs of their sedentary neighbors. Beginning in the sixteenth century, most of the Turkmen tribes were divided among two Uzbek principalities: the Khanate (or amirate) of Khiva (centered along the lower Amu Darya in Khorazm) and the Khanate of Bukhoro (Bukhara). Uzbek khans and princes of both khanates customarily enlisted Turkmen military support in their intra- and inter-khanate struggles and in campaigns against the Persians. Consequently, many Turkmen tribes migrated closer to the urban centers of the khanates, which came to depend heavily upon the Turkmen for their military forces. The height of Turkmen influence in the affairs of their sedentary neighbors came in the eighteenth century, when on several occasions (1743, 1767–70), the Yomud invaded and controlled Khorazm. From 1855 to 1867, a series of Yomud rebellions again shook the area. These hostilities and

the punitive raids by Uzbek rulers resulted in the wide dispersal of the eastern Yomud group.

Incorporation into Russia

Russian attempts to encroach upon Turkmen territory began in earnest in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Of all the Central Asian peoples, the Turkmen put up the stiffest resistance against Russian expansion. In 1869 the Russian Empire established a foothold in present-day Turkmenistan with the foundation of the Caspian Sea port of Krasnovodsk (now Turkmenbashy). From there and other points, they marched on and subdued the Khiva Khanate in 1873. Because Turkmen tribes, most notably the Yomud, were in the military service of the Khivan khan, Russian forces undertook punitive raids against the Turkmen of Khorazm, in the process slaughtering hundreds and destroying their settlements. In 1881 the Russians under General Mikhail Skobelev besieged and captured Gokdepe, one of the last Turkmen strongholds, northwest of Ashgabat. With the Turkmen defeat (which is now marked by the Turkmen as a national day of mourning and a symbol of national pride), the annexation of what is present-day Turkmenistan met with only weak resistance. Later the same year, the Russians signed an agreement with the Persians and established what essentially remains the current border between Turkmenistan and Iran. In 1897 a similar agreement was signed between the Russians and Afghans.

Following annexation to Russia, the area was administered as the Trans-Caspian District by corrupt and malfeasant military officers and officials appointed by the Guberniya (Governorate General) of Turkestan (see fig. 3). In the 1880s, a railroad line was built from Krasnovodsk to Ashgabat and later extended to Tashkent. Urban areas began to develop along the railway. Although the Trans-Caspian region essentially was a colony of Russia, it remained a backwater, except for Russian concerns with British colonialist intentions in the region and with possible uprisings by the Turkmen.

Soviet Turkmenistan

Because the Turkmen generally were indifferent to the advent of Soviet rule in 1917, little revolutionary activity occurred in the region in the years that followed. However, the years immediately preceding the revolution had been marked by sporadic Turkmen uprisings against Russian rule, most

prominently the anti-tsarist revolt of 1916 that swept through the whole of Turkestan. Their armed resistance to Soviet rule was part of the larger Basmachi Rebellion throughout Central Asia from the 1920s into the early 1930s. Although Soviet sources describe this struggle as a minor chapter in the republic's history, it is clear that opposition was fierce and resulted in the death of large numbers of Turkmen.

In October 1924, when Central Asia was divided into distinct political entities, the Trans-Caspian District and Turkmen Oblast of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic became the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic. During the forced collectivization and other extreme socioeconomic changes of the first decades of Soviet rule, pastoral nomadism ceased to be an economic alternative in Turkmenistan, and by the late 1930s the majority of Turkmen had become sedentary. Efforts by the Soviet state to undermine the traditional Turkmen way of life resulted in significant changes in familial and political relationships, religious and cultural observances, and intellectual developments. Significant numbers of Russians and other Slavs, as well as groups from various nationalities mainly from the Caucasus, migrated to urban areas. Modest industrial capabilities were developed, and limited exploitation of Turkmenistan's natural resources was initiated.

Sovereignty and Independence

Beginning in the 1930s, Moscow kept the republic under firm control. The nationalities policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) fostered the development of a Turkmen political elite and promoted Russification. Slavs, both in Moscow and Turkmenistan, closely supervised the national cadre of government officials and bureaucrats; generally, the Turkmen leadership staunchly supported Soviet policies. Moscow initiated nearly all political activity in the republic, and, except for a corruption scandal in the mid-1980s, Turkmenistan remained a quiet Soviet republic. Mikhail S. Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* (see Glossary) and *perestroika* (see Glossary) did not have a significant impact on Turkmenistan. The republic found itself rather unprepared for the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence that followed in 1991.

When other constituent republics of the Soviet Union advanced claims to sovereignty in 1988 and 1989, Turkmenistan's leadership also began to criticize Moscow's economic and political policies as exploitative and detrimental to the

well-being and pride of the Turkmen. By a unanimous vote of its Supreme Soviet, Turkmenistan declared its sovereignty in August 1990. After the August 1991 coup attempt against the Gorbachev regime in Moscow, Turkmenistan's communist leader Saparmyrat Niyazov called for a popular referendum on independence. The official result of the referendum was 94 percent in favor of independence. The republic's Supreme Soviet had little choice other than to declare Turkmenistan's independence from the Soviet Union and the establishment of the Republic of Turkmenistan on October 27, 1991.

Physical Environment

Turkmenistan is the southernmost republic of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS—see Glossary), the loose federation created at the end of 1991 by most of the post-Soviet states. Its longest border is with the Caspian Sea (1,786 kilometers). The other borders are with Iran (to the south, 992 kilometers), Afghanistan (to the south, 744 kilometers), Uzbekistan (to the north and east, 1,621 kilometers) and Kazakstan (to the north, 379 kilometers). Turkmenistan is slightly larger than California in territory, occupying 488,100 square kilometers. That statistic ranks Turkmenistan fourth among the former Soviet republics. The country's greatest extent from west to east is 1,100 kilometers, and its greatest north-to-south distance is 650 kilometers (see fig. 12).

Physical Features

Turkmenistan's average elevation is 100 to 220 meters above sea level, with its highest point being Mount Ayrybaba (3,137 meters) in the Kugitang Range of the Pamir-Alay chain in the far east, and its lowest point in the Transcaspian Depression (100 kilometers below sea level). Nearly 80 percent of the republic lies within the Turon Depression, which slopes from south to north and from east to west.

Turkmenistan's mountains include 600 kilometers of the northern reaches of the Kopetdag Range, which it shares with Iran. The Kopetdag Range is a region characterized by foothills, dry and sandy slopes, mountain plateaus, and steep ravines; Mount Shahshah (2,912 meters), southwest of Ashgabat, is the highest elevation of the range in Turkmenistan. The Kopetdag is undergoing tectonic transformation, meaning that the region is threatened by earthquakes such as the one

that destroyed Ashgabat in 1948 and registered nine on the Richter Scale. The Krasnovodsk and Üstirt plateaus are the prominent topographical features of northwestern Turkmenistan.

A dominant feature of the republic's landscape is the Garagum Desert, which occupies about 350,000 square kilometers (see Environmental Issues, this ch.). Shifting winds create desert mountains that range from two to twenty meters in height and may be several kilometers in length. Chains of such structures are common, as are steep elevations and smooth, concrete-like clay deposits formed by the rapid evaporation of flood waters in the same area for a number of years. Large marshy salt flats, formed by capillary action in the soil, exist in many depressions, including the Kara Shor, which occupies 1,500 square kilometers in the northwest. The Sundukly Desert west of the Amu Darya is the southernmost extremity of the Qizilqum (Russian spelling Kyzyl Kum) Desert, most of which lies in Uzbekistan to the northeast.

Climate

Turkmenistan has a subtropical desert climate that is severely continental. Summers are long (from May through September), hot, and dry, while winters generally are mild and dry, although occasionally cold and damp in the north. Most precipitation falls between January and May; precipitation is slight throughout the country, with annual averages ranging from 300 millimeters in the Kopetdag to eighty millimeters in the northwest. The capital, Ashgabat, close to the Iranian border in south-central Turkmenistan, averages 225 millimeters of rainfall annually. Average annual temperatures range from highs of 16.8°C in Ashgabat to lows of –5.5°C in Dashhowuz, on the Uzbek border in north-central Turkmenistan. The almost constant winds are northerly, northeasterly, or westerly.

Hydrological Conditions

Almost 80 percent of the territory of Turkmenistan lacks a constant source of surface water flow. Its main rivers are located only in the southern and eastern peripheries; a few smaller rivers on the northern slopes of the Kopetdag are diverted entirely to irrigation. The most important river is the Amu Darya, which has a total length of 2,540 kilometers from its farthest tributary, making it the longest river in Central Asia. The Amu Darya flows across northeastern Turkmenistan,

thence eastward to form the southern borders of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Damming and irrigation uses of the Amu Darya have had severe environmental effects on the Aral Sea, into which the river flows (see Environmental Issues, this ch.). The river's average annual flow is 1,940 cubic meters per second. Other major rivers are the Tejen (1,124 kilometers); the Murgap (852 kilometers); and the Atrek (660 kilometers).

Environmental Issues

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, environmental regulation is largely unchanged in Turkmenistan. The new government created the Ministry of Natural Resources Use and Environmental Protection in July 1992, with departments responsible for environmental protection, protection of flora and fauna, forestry, hydrometeorology, and administrative planning. Like other CIS republics, Turkmenistan has established an Environmental Fund based on revenues collected from environmental fines, but the fines generally are too low to accumulate significant revenue. Thanks to the former Soviet system of game preserves and the efforts of the Society for Nature Conservation and the Academy of Sciences, flora and fauna receive some protection in the republic; however, "hard-currency hunts" by wealthy Western and Arab businesspeople already are depleting animals on preserves.

Desertification

According to estimates, as a result of desertification processes and pollution, biological productivity of the ecological systems in Turkmenistan has declined by 30 to 50 percent in recent decades. The Garagum and Qizilqum deserts are expanding at a rate surpassed on a planetary scale only by the desertification process in the Sahara and Sahel regions of Africa. Between 800,000 and 1,000,000 hectares of new desert now appears per year in Central Asia.

The most irreparable type of desertification is the salinization process that forms marshy salt flats. A major factor that contributes to these conditions is inefficient use of water because of weak regulation and failure to charge for water that is used. Efficiency in application of water to the fields is low, but the main problem is leakage in main and secondary canals, especially Turkmenistan's main canal, the Garagum Canal. Nearly half of the canal's water seeps out into lakes and salt swamps along its path. Excessive irrigation brings salts to the

surface, forming salt marshes that dry into unusable clay flats. In 1989 Turkmenistan's Institute for Desert Studies claimed that the area of such flats had reached one million hectares.

The type of desertification caused by year-round pasturing of cattle has been termed the most devastating in Central Asia, with the gravest situations in Turkmenistan and the Kazak steppe along the eastern and northern coasts of the Caspian Sea. Wind erosion and desertification also are severe in settled areas along the Garagum Canal; planted windbreaks have died because of soil waterlogging and/or salinization. Other factors promoting desertification are the inadequacy of the collector-drainage system built in the 1950s and inappropriate application of chemicals.

The Aral Sea

Turkmenistan both contributes to and suffers from the consequences of the desiccation of the Aral Sea. Because of excessive irrigation, Turkmen agriculture contributes to the steady drawdown of sea levels. In turn, the Aral Sea's desiccation, which had shrunk that body of water by an estimated 59,000 square kilometers by 1994, profoundly affects economic productivity and the health of the population of the republic. Besides the cost of ameliorating damaged areas and the loss of at least part of the initial investment in them, salinization and chemicalization of land have reduced agricultural productivity in Central Asia by an estimated 20 to 25 percent. Poor drinking water is the main health risk posed by such environmental degradation. In Dashhowuz Province, which has suffered the greatest ecological damage from the Aral Sea's desiccation, bacteria levels in drinking water exceeded ten times the sanitary level; 70 percent of the population has experienced illnesses, many with hepatitis, and infant mortality is high (see table 5, Appendix; Health Conditions, this ch.). Experts have warned that inhabitants will have to evacuate the province by the end of the century unless a comprehensive cleanup program is undertaken. Turkmenistan has announced plans to clean up some of the Aral Sea fallout with financial support from the World Bank (see Glossary).

Chemical Pollution

The most productive cotton lands in Turkmenistan (the middle and lower Amu Darya and the Murgap oasis) receive as much as 250 kilograms of fertilizer per hectare, compared with

the average application of thirty kilograms per hectare. Furthermore, most fertilizers are so poorly applied that experts have estimated that only 15 to 40 percent of the chemicals can be absorbed by cotton plants, while the remainder washes into the soil and subsequently into the groundwater. Cotton also uses far more pesticides and defoliants than other crops, and application of these chemicals often is mishandled by farmers. For example, local herdsmen, unaware of the danger of DDT, have reportedly mixed the pesticide with water and applied it to their faces to keep away mosquitoes. In the late 1980s, a drive began in Central Asia to reduce agrochemical usage. In Turkmenistan the campaign reduced fertilizer use 30 percent between 1988 and 1989. In the early 1990s, use of some pesticides and defoliants declined drastically because of the country's shortage of hard currency.

Population

Turkmenistan's population is rather stable, with distribution between urban and rural areas and migration trends showing minor changes between censuses (see table 3, Appendix). The annual population growth rate, however, is rather high, and population density has increased significantly in the last forty years.

Size and Distribution

In 1993 Turkmenistan had a population of 4,254,000 people, making it the fifth most sparsely populated former Soviet republic. Of that number, Turkmen comprised about 73 percent, Russians nearly 10 percent, Uzbeks 9 percent, Kazaks 2 percent, and other ethnic groups the remaining 5 percent (see table 4, Appendix). According to the last Soviet census (1989), the total Turkmen population in the Soviet Union was 2,728,965. Of this number, 2,536,606 lived in Turkmenistan and the remainder in the other republics. Outside of the CIS, approximately 1.6 million Turkmen live in Iran, Afghanistan, and China (see The Spoken Language, this ch.).

Population density increased in the republic from one person per square kilometer in 1957 to 9.2 persons per square kilometer in 1995. Density varies drastically between desert areas and oases, where it often exceeds 100 persons per square kilometer. Within Turkmenistan, the population is 50.6 percent female and 49.4 percent male. In 1995 the estimated

annual growth rate was 2.0 percent, and the fertility rate was 3.7 births per woman (a decline of 1.5 births per woman since 1979) (see table 2, Appendix). The population was demographically quite young, with 40 percent aged fourteen or younger and only four percent aged over sixty-four.

Migration Trends

In 1989 about 45 percent of the population was classified as urban, a drop of 3 percent since 1979. Prior to the arrival of Russians in the late nineteenth century, Turkmenistan had very few urban areas, and many of the large towns and cities that exist today were developed after the 1930s. Ashgabat, the capital and largest city in Turkmenistan, has a population of about 420,000. The second-largest city, Chärjew on the Amu Darya, has about 165,000 people. Other major cities are Turkmenbashy on the Caspian seacoast, Mary in the southeast, and Dashhowuz in the northeast. Because much of the Russian population only came to Turkmenistan in the Soviet period, separate Russian quarters or neighborhoods did not develop in Turkmenistan's cities as they did elsewhere in Central Asia. This fact, combined with a relatively small Slavic population, has led to integration of Turkmen and Slavs in neighborhoods and housing projects.

Apart from the outflow of small numbers of Russians immediately following Turkmenistan's independence, neither outmigration nor in-migration is a significant factor for Turkmenistan's population. In 1992 there were 19,035 emigrants from Turkmenistan to the Russian Federation and 7,069 immigrants to Turkmenistan.

Society

Fundamental social institutions generally remained unchanged by the presence of Marxist dogma for over seventy years, although the presence of large numbers of Russians changed the distribution of the classes and the cultural loyalties of the intelligentsia. With some weakening in urban areas in the twentieth century, kinship and tribal affiliation retain a strong influence over the structure of Turkmen society.

National Traditions

Today's Turkmen have fully embraced the concepts of national unity and a strong national consciousness, which had

been elusive through most of their history. The Turkmen have begun to reassess their history and culture, as well as the effects of Soviet rule. Some of the more notable changes since independence have been a shift from open hostility to cautious official sanctioning of Islam, the declaration of Turkmen as the state language, and the state's promotion of national and religious customs and holidays. For example, the vernal equinox, known as Novruz ("New Year's Day"), is now celebrated officially country-wide.

Interest and pride in national traditions were demonstrated openly prior to independence, particularly following the introduction of *glasnost'* by Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev in 1985. Since independence, the government has played a less restrictive and at times actively supportive role in the promotion of national traditions. For example, in a move to replace the Soviet version of Turkmen history with one more in harmony with both traditional and current values, President Niyazov formed a state commission to write the "true history of sunny Turkmenistan."

The Soviet period dampened but did not suppress the expression of prominent Turkmen cultural traditions. Turkmen carpets continue to receive praise and special attention from Western enthusiasts. The high sheepskin hats worn by men, as well as distinctive fabrics and jewelry, also are age-old trademarks of Turkmen material culture. The Ahal-Teke breed of horse, world-renowned for its beauty and swiftness, is particular to the Turkmen. Aside from a rich musical heritage, the Turkmen continue to value oral literature, including such epic tales as *Korkut Ata* and *Gurogly*.

Increased national awareness is reflected in modifications of the school curriculum as well. Among new courses of instruction is a class on *edep*, or proper social behavior and moral conduct according to traditional Turkmen and Islamic values. Officially sanctioned efforts also have been made to contact members of the Turkmen population living outside of Turkmenistan, and several international Turkmen organizations have been established.

Social Structure

Although it is not a basis for political groupings, the rather vague phenomenon of tribal identity is a complex social phenomenon that retains important influence at the end of the twentieth century. The Soviet era added an element of cohe-

sion to a previously loose and unassertive set of social loyalties among Turkmen.

Social Classes

Turkmen society recognizes a class structure, ideologically based on Marxist doctrine, composed of intelligentsia, workers, and peasants. In practical terms, the intelligentsia and peasantry consist of Turkmen, while the worker class is the domain of Russians. Power and some wealth are associated with the Western-oriented intelligentsia, who hold the key positions in government, industry, and education. Most intelligentsia are educated in Russian language schools, often complete higher educational institutions in Russia, speak Russian as their language of choice, and are concentrated in urban centers, especially in Ashgabat.

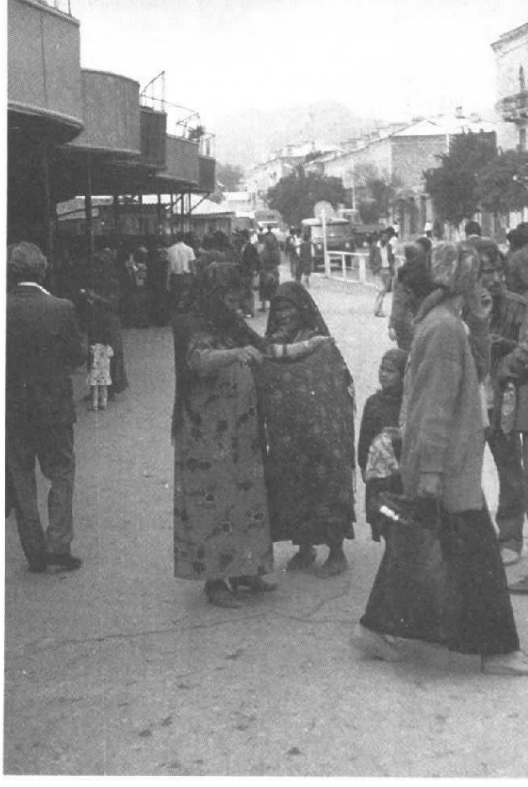
Although many members of the intelligentsia favor cultural revival, more support restricting nationalist manifestations and the role of Islam in society. Many who are atheists and have identified with Soviet ideals harbor anxieties that distance from traditional values and especially from the Turkmen language will limit their career potential in the post-Soviet era.

Kinship

Before the Soviet period, the Turkmen were organized into a segmentary system of territorial groups that Western scholars loosely designate as tribes. These groupings featured little sharp social stratification within or strong unity among them. Tribal structure always has been complex, and the Turkmen-language terminology used to designate lineage affiliation sometimes is confusing. Generally, the largest groupings, which may be equivalent to what Western scholarship labels "tribes," are called *khalk*, *il*, or *taipa* in Turkmen. Smaller lineage groups are equivalent to Western terms like "clans," "subtribes," or "branches." The smallest affiliations are equivalent to subclans or lineages in Western terminology.

In the past, Turkmen tribes remained relatively isolated and politically independent from one another. All tribes possessed specific distinguishing features. Their dialects differed greatly, and in terms of material culture each large tribe had a unique carpet pattern, clothing, headgear, and brand of identification.

Although Soviet nationality policy was somewhat successful in diluting tribal consciousness, tribal identity remains a factor in present-day social relations. Except in such urban areas as



Street scene in Turkmenbashy, formerly Krasnovodsk
Courtesy A. James Firth, United States Department of Agriculture

Chärjew and Ashgabat, virtually all Turkmen have a knowledge of their parents' and consequently their own tribal affiliation. A Turkmen's tribal affiliation still is a reliable indicator of his or her birthplace, for example. Lineage still may play a role in the arranging of marriages in rural areas. In Soviet Turkmenistan, the membership of collective and state farms often was formed according to clan and tribal affiliation. Although kinship undoubtedly retains significance in contemporary Turkmen society, attempts to use tribal affiliation as the determining factor in such realms as current politics usually are not instructive.

Until the Soviet period, the Turkmen lacked paramount leaders and political unity. The Turkmen rarely allied to campaign against sedentary neighbors, nor did they form a unified front against the Russian conquest. Unlike other Central Asian peoples, the Turkmen recognized no charismatic bloodline. Leaders were elected according to consensus, and their authority was based on conduct. Raids and other military pursuits could be organized by almost any male, but the power he exercised lasted only as long as the undertaking. Turkmen tribal structure did include a leader or chief (*beg*), but these positions, too, were mostly honorary and advisory, based on kinship ties and perceived wisdom. Real power was located among the community's older members, whose advice and consent usually were required prior to any significant endeavor.

Although women rarely assumed prominent political rank and power, there were instances of influential female leaders in the nineteenth century.

The Family

Prior to Soviet rule, the extended family was the basic and most important social and economic unit among the Turkmen. Grouped according to clan, small bands of Turkmen families lived as nomads in their traditional regions and consolidated only in time of war or celebration. In most cases, the families were entirely self-sufficient, subsisting on their livestock and at times on modest agricultural production. For some groups, raiding sedentary populations, especially the Iranians to the south, was an important economic activity.

Although Soviet power brought about fundamental changes in the Turkmen family structure, many traditional aspects remain. Families continue to be close-knit and often raise more than five children. Although no longer nomadic, families in rural areas still are grouped according to clan or tribe, and it is the rule rather than the exception for the inhabitants of a village to be of one lineage. Here, also, it is common for sons to remain with their parents after marriage and to live in an extended one-story clay structure with a courtyard and an agricultural plot. In both rural and urban areas, respect for elders is great. Whereas homes for the elderly do exist in Turkmenistan, Turkmen are conspicuously absent from them; it is almost unheard of for a Turkmen to commit his or her parent to such an institution because grandparents are considered integral family members and sources of wisdom and spirituality.

The marriage celebration, together with other life-cycle events, possesses great importance in Turkmen society. In rural areas especially, marriages are often arranged by special matchmakers (*sawcholar*). Aside from finding the right match in terms of social status, education, and other qualities, the matchmakers invariably must find couples of the same clan and locale. Most couples have known each other beforehand and freely consent to the marriage arrangement. Divorce among Turkmen is relatively rare. One important custom still practiced in Turkmenistan is the brideprice (*kalong*). Depending on region and a family's wealth, the bride's family may demand huge sums of money from the groom in return for the bride's hand in marriage.

The role of women in Turkmen society has never conformed to Western stereotypes about "Muslim women." Although a division of labor has existed and women usually were not visible actors in political affairs outside the home, Turkmen women never wore the veil or practiced strict seclusion. They generally possessed a host of highly specialized skills and crafts, especially those connected with the household and its maintenance. During the Soviet period, women assumed responsibility for the observance of some Muslim rites to protect their husbands' careers. Many women entered the work force out of economic necessity, a factor that disrupted some traditional family practices and increased the incidence of divorce. At the same time, educated urban women entered professional services and careers.

The Spoken Language

Turkmen belongs to the family of Turkic languages spoken in Eastern Europe (Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash), the Caucasus (Azeri, Kumik), Siberia (Yakut, Tuva, Khakas), China (Uygur, Kazak), Central Asia (Kazak, Kyrgyz, Uzbek), and the Near East (Turkish, Azeri). Its closest relatives are the languages of the Turks in northeastern Iran and the Khorazm Province of south central Uzbekistan (Khorasani), Azerbaijan (Azeri), and Turkey (Turkish), all of which belong to the Oghuz group of this language family.

In 1989 some 2,537,000 speakers of Turkmen lived in Turkmenistan, with 121,578 in Uzbekistan (the vast majority in the Khorazm region on Turkmenistan's north central border), 39,739 in the Russian Federation (including 12,000 in the Stavropol' region along Russia's southwestern border), 20,487 in Tajikistan, and 3,846 in Kazakstan. A high degree of language loyalty was reflected in the fact that some 99.4 percent of Turkmen in the republic claimed Turkmen as their native language in the 1989 census. At the same time, 28 percent claimed Russian as their second language—a figure that remained constant between the 1979 and 1989 censuses. More than half of the second category were part of the urban population. Only 3 percent of Russians in the republic spoke Turkmen.

The total number of Turkmen speakers in Europe and Asia has been estimated at between 4 and 4.8 million. These figures include the 2,517,000 Turkmen in the republic, 185,000 Turkmen in other Central Asian states and Russia, an estimated 700,000 Turkmen in Afghanistan, and 850,000 Turkmen in

Iran who speak a closely related but distinct language called Khorasanli.

The Written Language

Beginning in the eighteenth century, Turkmen poets and chroniclers used the classical Chaghatai language, which was written in Arabic script and reflected only occasional Turkmen linguistic features. Famous poets who wrote in this language include Mammetveli Kemine (1770–1840), Mollanepes (1810–62), and the most honored literary figure, Magtymguly (1733?–90?), whose legacy helped mold Turkmen national consciousness. In the years 1913–17, periodicals were published in Chaghatai. Two reforms of this script undertaken in 1922 and 1925 were designed to reflect features of the spoken Turkmen language. From 1928 to 1940, early Soviet Turkmen literature was written in a Latin alphabet that accurately reflected most of its features. Since 1940, standard Turkmen has been written in the Cyrillic script.

In the mid-1990s, language policy in independent Turkmenistan has been marked by a determination to establish Turkmen as the official language and to remove the heritage of the Russian-dominated past. The 1992 constitution proclaims Turkmen the "official language of inter-ethnic communication." In 1993 English was moved ahead of Russian as the "second state language," although in practical terms Russian remains a key language in government and other spheres. That same year, President Niyazov issued a decree on the replacement of the Cyrillic-based alphabet with a Latin-based script that would become the "state script" by 1996. Some publications and signs already appear in this Latin script, but its full implementation will not occur until after the year 2000. The new alphabet has several unique letters that distinguish it from those of Turkey's Latin alphabet and the newly adopted Latin scripts of other republics whose dominant language is Turkic.

Other steps were taken to erase the Russian linguistic overlay in the republic. A resolution was adopted in May 1992 to change geographic names and administrative terms from Russian to Turkmen. As a result, the names of many streets, institutions, collective farms, and buildings have been renamed for Turkmen heroes and cultural phenomena, and the terminology for all governmental positions and jurisdictions has been changed from Russian to Turkmen.

Religion

Traditionally, the Turkmen of Turkmenistan, like their kin in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, are Sunni Muslims (see Glossary). Shia Muslims (see Glossary), the other main branch of Islam, are not numerous in Turkmenistan, and the Shia religious practices of the Azerbaijani and Kurdish (see Glossary) minorities are not politicized. Although the great majority of Turkmen readily identify themselves as Muslims and acknowledge Islam as an integral part of their cultural heritage, many are non-believers and support a revival of the religion's status only as an element of national revival. They do not attend mosque services or demonstrate their adherence publicly, except through participation in officially sanctioned national traditions associated with Islam on a popular level, including life-cycle events such as weddings, burials, and pilgrimages.

History and Structure

Islam came to the Turkmen primarily through the activities of Sufi (see Glossary) shaykhs rather than through the mosque and the "high" written tradition of sedentary culture. These shaykhs were holy men critical in the process of reconciling Islamic beliefs with pre-Islamic belief systems; they often were adopted as "patron saints" of particular clans or tribal groups, thereby becoming their "founders." Reformulation of communal identity around such figures accounts for one of the highly localized developments of Islamic practice in Turkmenistan.

Integrated within the Turkmen tribal structure is the "holy" tribe called *övlat.* Ethnographers consider the *övlat,* of which six are active, as a revitalized form of the ancestor cult injected with Sufism. According to their genealogies, each tribe descends from the Prophet Muhammad through one of the Four Caliphs. Because of their belief in the sacred origin and spiritual powers of the *övlat* representatives, Turkmen accord these tribes a special, holy status. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the *övlat* tribes became dispersed in small, compact groups in Turkmenistan. They attended and conferred blessings on all important communal and life-cycle events, and also acted as mediators between clans and tribes. The institution of the *övlat* retains some authority today. Many of the Turkmen who are revered for their spiritual powers trace their lineage to an *övlat,* and it is not uncommon, especially in

rural areas, for such individuals to be present at life-cycle and other communal celebrations.

In the Soviet era, all religious beliefs were attacked by the communist authorities as superstition and "vestiges of the past." Most religious schooling and religious observance were banned, and the vast majority of mosques were closed. An official Muslim Board of Central Asia with a headquarters in Tashkent was established during World War II to supervise Islam in Central Asia. For the most part, the Muslim Board functioned as an instrument of propaganda whose activities did little to enhance the Muslim cause. Atheist indoctrination stifled religious development and contributed to the isolation of the Turkmen from the international Muslim community. Some religious customs, such as Muslim burial and male circumcision, continued to be practiced throughout the Soviet period, but most religious belief, knowledge, and customs were preserved only in rural areas in "folk form" as a kind of unofficial Islam not sanctioned by the state-run Spiritual Directorate.

Religion after Independence

The current government oversees official Islam through a structure inherited from the Soviet period. Turkmenistan's Muslim Religious Board, together with that of Uzbekistan, constitutes the Muslim Religious Board of Mavarannahr. The Mavarannahr board is based in Tashkent and exerts considerable influence in appointments of religious leaders in Turkmenistan. The governing body of Islamic judges (Kaziat) is registered with the Turkmenistan Ministry of Justice, and a council of religious affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers monitors the activities of clergy. Individuals who wish to become members of the official clergy must attend official religious institutions; a few, however, may prove their qualifications simply by taking an examination.

Since 1990, efforts have been made to regain some of the cultural heritage lost under Soviet rule. President Niyazov has ordered that basic Islamic principles be taught in public schools. More religious institutions, including religious schools and mosques, have appeared, many with the support of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Turkey. Religious classes are held in both the schools and the mosques, with instruction in Arabic language, the Koran (Quran) and the hadith, and the history of Islam.

Turkmenistan's government stresses its secular nature and its support of freedom of religious belief, as embodied in the 1991 Law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations in the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic and institutionalized in the 1992 constitution. That document guarantees the separation of church and state; it also removes any legal basis for Islam to play a role in political life by prohibiting proselytizing, the dissemination of "unofficial" religious literature, discrimination based on religion, and the formation of religious political parties. In addition, the government reserves the right to appoint and dismiss anyone who teaches religious matters or who is a member of the clergy. Since independence, the Islamic leadership in Turkmenistan has been more assertive, but in large part it still responds to government control. The official governing body of religious judges gave its official support to President Niyazov in the June 1992 elections.

On the other hand, some Muslim leaders are opposed to the secular concept of government and especially to a government controlled by former communists (see Centers of Political Power, this ch.). Some official leaders and teachers working outside the official structure have vowed to increase the population's knowledge of Islam, increase Islam's role in society, and broaden adherence to its tenets. Alarmed that such activism may aggravate tensions between Sunnis and Shiites and especially alienate Orthodox Slavs, the government has drawn up plans to elevate the council of religious affairs to ministry status in an effort to regulate religious activities more tightly.

Education

According to Soviet government statistics, literacy in Turkmenistan was nearly universal in 1991. Experts considered the overall level of education to be comparable to the average for the Soviet republics. According to the 1989 census, 65.1 percent of the population aged fifteen and older had completed secondary school, compared with 45.6 percent in 1979. In the same period, the percentage of citizens who had completed a higher education rose from 6.4 percent to 8.3 percent.

Education is free of charge, although introduction of fees is being considered by selected institutions. Formal schooling begins with kindergarten (*bagcha*) and primary school (*mekdep*). School attendance is compulsory through the eighth grade. At this point, students are tested and directed into technical, continuing, and discontinuing tracks. Some students

graduate to the workforce after completing the tenth grade, while others leave in the ninth grade to enter a trade or technical school.

Education System

Although the education system in Turkmenistan retains the centralized structural framework of the Soviet system, significant modifications are underway, partly as a response to national redefinition, but mainly as a result of the government's attempts to produce a highly skilled work force to promote Turkmenistan's participation in international commercial activities. Reforms also include cultural goals such as the writing of a new history of Turkmenistan, the training of multilingual cadres able to function in Turkmen, English, and Russian, and the implementation of alphabet reform in schools.

Turkmenistan's educational establishment is funded and administered by the state. The Ministry of Education is responsible for secondary education and oversees about 1,800 schools offering some or all of the secondary grades. Of that number, 43.5 percent are operated on one shift and 56.5 percent on two shifts (primarily in cities). Secondary schools have 66,192 teachers who serve 831,000 students. Thirty-six secondary schools specialize in topics relevant to their ministerial affiliation. The primary and secondary systems are being restructured according to Western models, including shorter curricula, more vocational training, and human resource development.

Curriculum

The curriculum followed by schools is standardized, allowing little variation among the country's school districts. The prescribed humanities curriculum for the ninth and tenth grades places the heaviest emphasis on native language and literature, history, physics, mathematics, Turkmen or Russian language, chemistry, foreign language, world cultures, and physical education. A few elective subjects are available.

Although teaching continues to enjoy respect as a vocation, Turkmenistan's school system suffers from a shortage of qualified teachers. Many obstacles confront a teacher: heavy teaching loads and long hours, including Saturdays and double shifts; wholly inadequate textbooks and instructional materials; serious shortages of paper, supplies, and equipment; low sala-

ries; and, at times, even failure to be paid. An estimated 13 percent of schools have such serious structural defects in their physical plants that they are too dangerous to use for classes.

Instruction in 77 percent of primary and general schools is in Turkmen, although the 16 percent of schools that use Russian as their primary language generally are regarded as providing a better education. Some schools also instruct in the languages of the nation's Uzbek and Kazak minorities. Especially since the adoption of Turkmen as the "state language" and English as the "second state language," the study of these two languages has gained importance in the curriculum, and adults feel pressure to learn Turkmen in special courses offered at schools or at their workplaces.

Higher Education

After completing secondary school, students may continue their education at one of the dozens of specialized institutes or at Turkmenistan State University in Ashgabat. Admittance into higher education institutions often is extremely competitive, and personal connections and bribes may play a role in gaining entry and later advancement. Prospective students must pass a lengthy, pressure-packed entrance examination. Like all the other tests and evaluations in the educational system, this examination consists of both written and oral parts.

Completion of a course of study in higher institutions may take up to five years. Attempts are being made to decrease the number of years one must study so that young women may finish their higher education by their twentieth or twenty-first birthday, by which time they are expected to be married. Graduate study is an option for outstanding students at the university or in one of the Academy of Science's many research institutes.

The recently formed Council of Higher Education supervises Turkmenistan State University, the republic's eight institutes, and its two pedagogical institutes; these institutes are located in Ashgabat, with the exception of a pedagogical institute in Chärjew. These higher education institutions served 41,700 students in 1991, of which 8,000 were enrolled in the state university. Some institutes that train professionals for specific sectors of the national economy fall under the aegis of the relevant ministries. An education committee also functions under the president of the republic.

Health

As under the Soviet system, health care continues to be universally available to all citizens without charge. The health care system that Turkmenistan inherited from the Soviet regime is fraught with deficiencies, however. On the whole, physicians are poorly trained, modern medical technologies are almost unheard of, and many basic medicines are in short supply. Although health care is available to most urban residents, the system is financially bankrupt, and treatment is often primitive. Only recently have some medical professionals been allowed to offer private medical care, and the state maintains a near monopoly of health care.

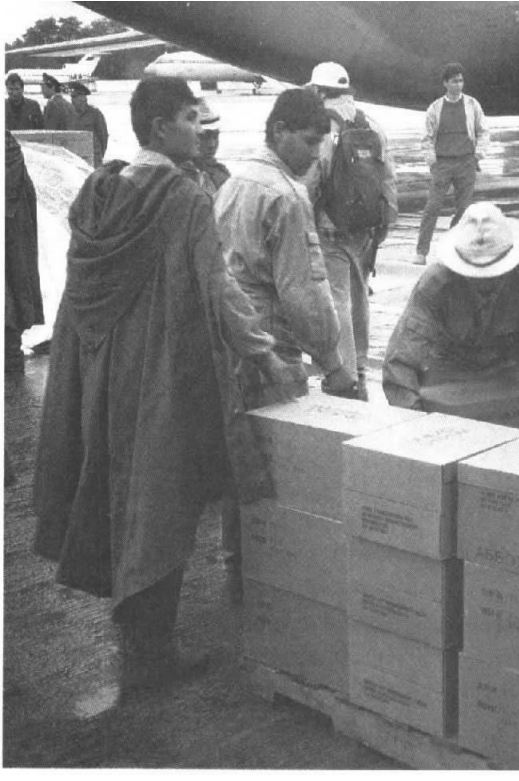
Structure of Health Care

Health and welfare institutions are administered by the ministries of health, culture, education, and social welfare. Various coordination committees also operate under the aegis of presidential advisers. Between 1989 and 1992, health care as a share of the state budget declined from 11.2 to 6.9 percent, leaving inadequate local budgets to bear the brunt of expenditures. The comparison of health care statistics before and after 1991 is somewhat misleading, however, because the statistics do not account for changes in health budgeting at the end of the communist era.

In 1989 the republic had about 13,000 doctors and 298 hospitals, totaling more than 40,000 beds (111 per 10,000 persons). Some industrial enterprises had separate clinics for their workers. The number of doctors reached 13,800 or (36.2 per 10,000 persons) in 1991; at that time, medical personnel numbered 40,600, or 106.9 per 10,000. Until the early 1990s, all health personnel were government employees.

Health Care Conditions

Despite the nominally universal availability of free health care, in the rural areas medical care often is deplorable by Western standards. In both rural and urban areas, undertrained physicians and staff, underequipped facilities, shortages of medicines and supplies, and chronic sanitation problems contribute to the system's inadequacy. For example, one study found that because 70 percent of the obstetricians and gynecologists in Dashhowuz Province lacked adequate surgical training, half of their patients died. A factor in the high



Army conscripts unloading food and medicine donated by United States, Ashgabat airport Courtesy A. James Firth, United States Department of Agriculture

mortality rate is the provision of piped-in water to only 15 percent of maternity clinics in the republic. Because of the disruption of trade at the end of the Soviet period, pharmaceuticals must be obtained with hard currency, making them even more scarce than before. Of particular concern are shortages of oral rehydration salts for children, syringes and needles, and vaccines, which previously had been imported from Russia and Finland. According to experts, current conditions of conventional medical care may prompt many Turkmen to turn once again to "traditional" medicine. Healers employing herbs and prayer are common, and in some rural areas this type of treatment may be the only medical attention that is available.

Health Conditions

According to health statistics, life expectancy in Turkmenistan (62.9 for males, 69.7 for females) is the lowest in the CIS. The relatively high rate of natural population growth (2.0 percent per year), is based on a birth rate of 29.9 per 1,000 persons and a death rate of 7.3 per 1,000 persons. In 1992 cardiovascular disease was the most common cause of death, followed by cancer, respiratory disease, and accidents (see table 5, Appendix). Poor diet, polluted drinking water, and industrial wastes and pesticides cause or exacerbate many medical problems, which are especially acute in the northeastern areas

of the country near the Amu Darya and Aral Sea. Women in their child-bearing years and children appear to be in the poorest health and the most susceptible to disease and sickness. Of CIS countries, in 1991 Turkmenistan ranked first in infant mortality rate, with forty-seven deaths per 1,000 live births, and very high on maternal death rate, with fifty-five deaths per 100,000 births. Some specialists attribute high infant mortality to factors of diet and health care while others relate it to poor hygienic practices and lack of family planning.

Welfare

Under the conditions of independence in the early 1990s, the standard of living in Turkmenistan did not drop as dramatically as it did in other former Soviet republics. Thus, the relatively small population of the nation of Turkmenistan did not require extensive state investment for the basic requirements of survival as the nation attempted the transition to a market economy.

Living Standards

Although living standards have not declined as sharply in Turkmenistan as in many other former Soviet republics, they have dropped in absolute terms for most citizens since 1991. Availability of food and consumer goods also has declined at the same time that prices have generally risen. The difference between living conditions and standards in the city and the village is immense. Aside from material differences such as the prevalence of paved streets, electricity, plumbing, and natural gas in the cities, there are also many disparities in terms of culture and way of life. Thanks to the rebirth of national culture, however, the village has assumed a more prominent role in society as a valuable repository of Turkmen language and traditional culture.

Wages

Most families in Turkmenistan derive the bulk of their income from state employment of some sort. As they were under the Soviet system, wage differences among various types of employment are relatively small. Industry, construction, transportation, and science have offered the highest wages; health, education, and services, the lowest. Since 1990 direct employment in government administration has offered rela-

tively high wages. Agricultural workers, especially those on collective farms, earn very low salaries, and the standard of living in rural areas is far below that in Turkmen cities, contributing to a widening cultural difference between the two segments of the population.

In 1990 nearly half the population earned wages below the official poverty line, which was 100 rubles per month at that time (for value of the ruble—see Glossary). Only 3.4 percent of the population received more than 300 rubles per month in 1990. In the three years after the onset of inflation in 1991, real wages dropped by 47.6 percent, meaning a decline in the standard of living for most citizens (see Labor, this ch.).

Prices

Prices of all commodities rose sharply in 1991 when the Soviet Union removed the pervasive state controls that had limited inflation in the 1980s. Retail prices rose by an average of 90 percent in 1991, and then they rose by more than 800 percent when the new national government freed most prices completely in 1992. The average rate for the first nine months of 1994 was 605 percent. As world market prices rise and currency fluctuations affect prices and purchasing power, consumer price increases continue to outstrip rises in per capita incomes. In 1989 the average worker spent about two-thirds of his or her salary on food, fuel, clothing, and durable goods, but that ratio increased sharply in the years that followed. As prices rose, the supply of almost all food and many consumer goods was curtailed. The introduction of the manat (see Glossary) as the national currency in November 1993 likely worsened the already deteriorating consumer purchasing power. The prices of forty basic commodities immediately rose 900 percent, and wages were raised only 200 percent to compensate.

Housing

In 1989 the state owned more than 70 percent of urban housing and about 10 percent of rural housing. The remainder of urban housing was owned privately or by housing cooperatives. The average citizen had 11.2 square meters of housing space in urban areas, 10.5 square meters in rural areas. In 1989 some 31 percent of housing (urban and rural areas combined) had running water, 27 percent had central heating, and 20 percent had a sewer line.

In 1991 nearly all families had television sets, refrigerators, and sewing machines, and 84 percent had washing machines. Only 26 percent owned cars, however, and the quality of durable goods was quite low by Western standards.

Government Welfare Programs

In 1992, President Niyazov announced "Ten Years of Prosperity," a government program that provides virtually free natural gas, electricity, and drinking water to all households in the republic; increases minimum wages and other social payments, confirms food subsidies and price liberalizations, and aims at giving families their own house, car, and telephone. In 1993 two-thirds of the state budgetary expenditures went toward such "social needs," and half of that amount for the subsidization of food prices. Social programs also accounted for 60 percent of the 1995 budget.

The pension system has two main types of expenditures: retirement and disability payments and children's payments. Employees pay 1 percent of their wages to their pension fund, and the employer's share totals 80.5 percent of the total payroll contribution. In industries, the payroll contribution is 37 percent of the total pension fund; in agricultural enterprises, it is 26 percent. Because pension fund expenditures always exceed their receipts at this ratio of contribution, additional funds are allotted from the state budget. The normal retirement age is sixty for men and fifty-five for women, but the age is five or ten years less for occupations classified as hazardous. In the early 1990s, the number of pensioners grew at a rate of 17,000 per year; in 1993 some 404,000 individuals were in this category.

In December 1994, President Niyazov issued an edict setting the minimum wage at 1,000 manat per month and the minimum old-age pension at up to 1,000 manat per month. Pensions set at 60 percent of wages will be given to men retiring at the age of sixty and women at the age of fifty-five if they have worked for twenty-five and twenty years, respectively. In 1995 pensions for invalids and war veterans were set at 3,000 manat per month. Pensions are indexed to increases in minimum wages and are funded by payroll taxes. Allowances are granted to households with children under age sixteen. Payments depend on the age of the children and the economic and marital status of their parents. In 1993 such payments ranged from 110 rubles to 270 rubles per month. That year payments were made for about 1.75 million children. Funding is from the gen-

eral budget for children age six and older and from the pension fund for those younger than six.

The Economy

Turkmenistan's economy is predominantly agricultural. Agriculture accounts for almost half of the gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) and more than two-fifths of total employment, whereas industry accounts for about one-fifth of GDP and slightly more than one-tenth of total employment. In 1988 the per capita net material product (NMP—see Glossary) output was 61 percent of the Soviet average, fourth lowest of the Soviet republics. In 1991, 17.2 percent of the work force was engaged in private-sector occupations such as farming, individual endeavors, and employment on agreement; 0.7 percent worked in rented enterprises, and the rest worked for state enterprises, social organizations, and collective farms.

Macroeconomic indicators of the performance of Turkmenistan's national economy have differed widely in the late Soviet and early independence years, making precise assessment difficult. According to one source, the per capita GDP was US$2,509 in 1992, placing it higher than Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but lower than Kazakstan and much lower than some of the other former Soviet republics. Another source lists a 17 percent increase in industrial output between 1991 and 1992. On the other hand, several sources agree that the NMP aggregate figure for 1992 was a 15 percent decline from the previous year (see table 6, Appendix). One source claims that GDP in Turkmenistan increased by 8.5 percent in 1993, while another regards as suspect the statistical methods applied to the data on which this figure is based.

Natural Resources

Turkmenistan has substantial reserves of oil and gas, and geologists have estimated that 99.5 percent of its territory is conducive to prospecting. The republic also has deposits of sulfur, hydrocarbons, iodine, celestine, potassium salt, magnesium salt, sodium chloride, bentonite clays, limestone, gypsum, brown coal, cement, basalt, and dolomite. Its soils, which have been formed under conditions of continental climate, are mostly desert sands, with a variety of other types such as desert loess, meadow clays, and "irrigated" soils, in some regions.

Under those conditions, large-scale agriculture must be supported by irrigation in nearly all areas.

Agriculture

Turkmenistan inherited the system of state and collective farms from the Soviet Union, with its command structure of production quotas, fixed procurement prices, and soft budget constraints. The state still controls marketing and distribution of agricultural produce through the Ministry of Trade in urban areas and the Cooperative Alliance in rural locales; the Ministry of Agriculture's Commercial Center has a monopoly on cotton exports. Turkmenistan is highly dependent upon external sources for its agricultural inputs, the price of which has escalated more that those for agricultural products since independence.

Structure of the Agriculture Sector

Instead of restructuring the agricultural economy, the government's "New Countryside" policy envisions only limited privatization of agricultural enterprises and expansion of grain production to reduce dependence on imports. The development of transportation is critical to agricultural reform in Turkmenistan.

In 1991 field and orchard crops accounted for 70.4 percent of the value of agricultural sales prices (computed in 1983 prices), while livestock raising accounted for the remaining 29.6 percent (see table 18, Appendix). Almost half the cultivated land was under cotton, and 45 percent of the land under grains and fodder crops. Livestock raising centered on sheep, especially for the production of Karakul wool. Whereas production of meat and milk rose substantially in the 1986–91 period (increases of 14,000 and 110,000 tons, respectively), actual production in 1991 of 100,000 tons of meat and 458,000 tons of milk represented a decrease from 1990. Production of meat in 1992 declined 21 percent from that of 1991. Fishing, bee-keeping, and silk-rendering occupy small areas of the agricultural sector.

Irrigation

Under the prevailing climatic conditions, irrigation is a necessary input for agriculture and has been developed extensively throughout Turkmenistan. Irrigation management is divided between the Ministry of Irrigation, which is responsible for

Selling furs at market outside Ashgabat
Courtesy Barry Peterson

operation and maintenance along the Garagum Canal and for interrepublic water management, and the Irrigation Institute, which designs, evaluates, and builds new projects. State farms and collective farms are responsible for operation and maintenance on their own farms, but they have no other autonomy. Because only 55 percent of the water delivered to the fields actually reaches the crops, an average of twelve cubic meters of water is expended annually per hectare of cotton.

As a result of the construction of irrigation structures, and especially of the Garagum Canal, the hydrological balance of the republic has changed, with more water in the canals and adjacent areas and less in the rivers and the Aral Sea. The largest of the republic's eleven reservoirs are the Sary Yazy on the Murgap River, which occupies forty-six square kilometers of surface and has a capacity of 239 million cubic meters, and the Hawuz Khan on the Garagum Canal, which occupies ninety square kilometers of surface and has a capacity of 460 million cubic meters.

In 1983 Turkmenistan had an irrigated area of 1,054,000 hectares. Its most developed systems are along the middle and lower course of the Amu Darya and in the Murgap Basin. The Garagum Canal, which flows 1,100 kilometers with a capacity of 500 cubic meters per second, accounts for almost all irrigation in Ahal and Balkan provinces along the northern reaches of

the Kopetdag Range. The canal also supplies additional water to the Murgap oasis in southeastern Turkmenistan. The main canal was built in sections between 1959 and 1976, initially providing irrigation for about 500,000 hectares. Plans call for construction to continue until the canal reaches a length of 1,435 kilometers and a carrying capacity of 1,000 cubic meters per second, enabling it to irrigate 1,000,000 hectares.

Cotton

At a rate of 300 kilograms per citizen, Turkmenistan produces more cotton per capita than any other country in the world. Among the Soviet republics, Turkmenistan was second only to Uzbekistan in cotton production. In 1983 Turkmenistan contributed 12.7 percent of the cotton produced in the Soviet Union. Four of the republic's five provinces are considered to be "cotton provinces": Ahal, Mary, Chärjew, and Dashhowuz. Convinced that cotton is its most marketable product, the post-Soviet government is committed to maintaining previous levels of cotton production and area under cultivation.

In accordance with the Soviet policy of delegating the Central Asian republics as the nation's cotton belt, the area under cotton climbed rapidly from 150,400 hectares in 1940 to 222,000 hectares in 1960, 508,000 hectares in 1980, and 602,000 hectares in 1991. Because independence brought fuel and spare-parts shortages, the cotton harvest declined in the first half of the 1990s, however.

Industrial inputs for cotton production such as harvesters, sowing machines, mechanized irrigation equipment, fertilizer, pesticides, and defoliants have become less available to cotton farms in Turkmenistan because the other former Soviet republics, which were the chief suppliers of such items, raised their prices sharply in the first years of independence.

For most Turkmen farmers, cotton is the most important source of income, although cotton's potential contribution to the republic's economy was not approached in the Soviet period. Experts predict that by the year 2000, Turkmenistan will process one-third of its raw cotton output in textile mills located within the republic, substantially raising the rate achieved in the Soviet and early post-Soviet periods. In 1993, the state's procurement prices were raised significantly for high-grade raw seeded cotton. State planners envision selling 70 percent of the crop to customers outside the CIS.

Other Crops

Since independence, Turkmenistan's agricultural policy has emphasized grain production in order to increase self-sufficiency in the face of a sharp decline in trade among the former Soviet republics. A 50 percent increase in the grain harvest in 1992 was followed by a rise of 70 percent in 1993, despite unfavorable climatic conditions. Production of vegetables declined in 1992 to 13 percent below the 1991 level, whereas that of potatoes rose by 24 percent. High-quality melons are grown in the lower and middle reaches of the Amu Darya and in the Tejen and Murgap oases. In addition to these crops, subtropical fruits and nuts, especially pomegranates, almonds, figs, and olives, are grown in the Ertek and Sumbar valleys.

Industry

Turkmenistan possesses a formidable resource base for industry, although that base was not utilized to build diversified industry in the Soviet period. In the post-Soviet period, extraction and processing of natural gas and oil remain the country's most important industrial activities.

Structure of Industry

Turkmenistan did not inherit a substantial industrial base from the Soviet Union. Beginning in the 1970s, Moscow made major investments only in the oil and gas production and cotton-processing sectors. As a result, industry is highly specialized and potentially vulnerable to external shocks. Well-developed cotton ginning, natural gas, and cottonseed oil dominate at the expense of other sectors, such as the petrochemical and chemical industries, cotton textile production, food processing, and labor-intensive assemblage, in which Turkmenistan has a comparative advantage (see table 19, Appendix).

The shocks of independence slowed industrial production in the early 1990s. In the first half of 1994, macroeconomic fluctuations caused by the introduction of the manat as the national currency and limitations placed on gas exports caused aggregate industrial production to fall to 68.3 percent compared with the same period in 1993 (see Fiscal and Monetary Conditions, this ch.). The price index for industrial producers was 858 percent, indicating runaway inflation in this sector.

Gas and Oil

Turkmenistan ranks fourth in the world to Russia, the United States, and Canada in natural gas and oil extraction. The Turkmenistan Natural Gas Company (Turkmengaz), under the auspices of the Ministry of Oil and Gas, controls gas extraction in the republic. Gas production is the youngest and most dynamic and promising sector of the national economy. Turkmenistan's gas reserves are estimated at 8.1–8.7 trillion cubic meters and its prospecting potential at 10.5. trillion cubic meters. The Ministry of Oil and Gas oversees exploration of new deposits. Sites under exploration are located in Mary Province, in western and northern Turkmenistan, on the right bank of the Amu Darya, and offshore in the Caspian Sea.

In 1958 Turkmenistan produced only 800,000 cubic meters of natural gas. With the discovery of large deposits of natural gas at Achak, Qizilqum, Mary, and Shatlik, production grew to 1.265 billion cubic meters by 1966, and since then the yield has grown dramatically. In 1992 gas production accounted for about 60 percent of GDP. As a result of a dispute with Ukraine over payments for gas deliveries, in 1992 gas production fell by 20 billion cubic meters to around 60 billion cubic meters. In the first eight months of 1994, transportation restrictions forced Turkmenistan to cut gas production to 26.6 billion cubic meters, only 57 percent of the production for the same period in 1993. An additional factor in this reduction was the failure of CIS partners, to whom Russia distributes Turkmenistan's gas, to pay their bills.

Most of Turkmenistan's oil is extracted from fields at Koturdepe, Nebitdag, and Chekelen near the Caspian Sea, which have a combined estimated reserve of 700 million tons. The oil extraction industry started with the exploitation of the fields in Chekelen in 1909 and Nebitdag in the 1930s, then production leaped ahead with the discovery of the Kumdag field in 1948 and the Koturdepe field in 1959. All the oil produced in Turkmenistan is refined in Turkmenbashy.

Oil production reached peaks of 14,430,000 tons in 1970 and 15,725,000 tons in 1974, compared with 5,400,000 tons in 1991. Since the years of peak production, general neglect of the oil industry in favor of the gas industry has led to equipment depreciation, lack of well repairs, and exhaustion of deposits for which platforms have been drilled.

Other Industries

Besides petrochemical processing at the Turkmenbashy and Chärjew refineries, the chemicals industry is underdeveloped in comparison with the potential provided by the republic's mineral and fuel resources. The industry has specialized in fertilizer for cotton at the Chärjew superphosphate plant and such chemicals as sulfur, iodine, ammonia, mirabilite, salt, and various sulfates at the Turkmenbashy facility.

Because of the ready availability of natural gas, Turkmenistan is a net exporter of electrical power to Central Asian republics and southern neighbors. The most important generating installations are the Hindukush Hydroelectric Station, which has a rated capacity of 350 megawatts, and the Mary Thermoelectric Power Station, which has a rated capacity of 1,370 megawatts. In 1992 electrical power production totaled 14.9 billion kilowatt-hours.

Turkmenistan's machine building capability has not developed significantly since the conversion of agricultural repair installations for that purpose in Ashgabat and Mary in the late 1960s. Goods produced at these plants include dough kneading and confectionery mixing machines, ventilators, centrifugal oil pumps, gas stove pieces, cables, and lighting equipment.

Construction has grown as a result of a shift in state investment toward housing, education, and joint enterprises. Since 1989, construction has accounted for around 10 percent of the GDP. Building materials produced in the republic include lime, cement, brick and wall stone, ferro-concrete structures, asbestos-concrete pipes, silicate concrete, lime, brick, slate, and glass.

Most food processing consists of rendering cottonseed oil and such related products as soap and grease from cotton plants. Because of the distance between plants and farms and an inadequate transportation infrastructure, only 8 percent of the fruits and vegetables grown in the republic are processed. Other processing capabilities include winemaking, brewing, baking, meat packing and processing, and production of table salt.

Turkmenistan's carpets are famous for their density, which reaches 240,000 knots per square meter in some traditional weaves. The Turkmenistan Carpet Production Association supervises ten carpet factories, but home looms account for a substantial share of production. Other traditional crafts include the fashioning of national clothing such as wool caps

and robes, galvanized dishes, and jewelry in forms that state enterprises do not produce or supply. In the mid-1990s, other light industries provided secondary processing of cotton, wool, and silk for yarn, some finished textiles, and wadding.

Labor

The labor force comprised 1,923,000 people in 1991–92, of whom 1,571,000 (almost 46 percent of the population) were employed in the national economy. Over half of this number worked in state enterprises—a number that is expected to decline in general and to vary radically from sector to sector during the transitional phases of privatization.

In 1990, 37 percent of the workforce was in agricultural and 15 percent in industrial employment; however, one-fourth of industrial employment was in industries related to agriculture. Between 1970 and 1990, the percentage of the workforce employed in industry decreased slightly from 23.4 to 20.0 percent. The share of the agricultural sector within the workforce rose slightly in this period from 38.4 to 41.1 percent. In transportation and communications, the percentages were 7.0 and 6.3, respectively, while in the sectors of health, education, social services, arts and sciences, they rose from 16.5 to 18.6 percent. The state apparatus maintained a share ranging from 2.9 percent of the labor force in 1970 to 2.5 in 1989.

In 1989, some 62.5 percent of all workers were employed at state enterprises, 22.3 percent on collective farms, 1.1 percent in cooperatives (up from 0 in 1986), 0.1 percent in individual labor (a constant percentage since 1970), and 14.1 percent in private plots (up from 8.5 percent in 1970, largely at the expense of the collective farm percentage).

Figures from 1989 for the distribution of the populace according to source of sustenance show that of the entire population of Turkmenistan, 40.6 percent worked in the national economy, 1.9 percent held stipends, 10.9 percent were pensioners and others receiving state welfare, 46.5 percent were dependents and those employed only on individual supplemental endeavors, and 0.1 percent had other unspecified means of subsistence.

The percentage of women within the total work force of Turkmenistan was 41.7 in 1989, reflecting a near constant since 1970 (39.5). The percentage of women within the total number of specialists in the work force who have completed middle and upper special education rose from 44.0 in 1970 to 49.4 in

Carpet bazaar outside Ashgabat
Courtesy Barry Peterson

1989. Workers under thirty years of age who have completed a secondary general education accounted for 66.4 percent of Turkmenistan's work force in 1989; those with middle specialized education, 16.0 percent; those with an incomplete higher education, 1.6 percent; and those with a complete higher education, 8.7 percent.

The national minimum wage is a critical component of the macro-level "price-wage feedback" in inflationary processes; this wage is established by presidential decree. The basic wage structure is set by a cross-classification of occupations and physical exertion levels, which determines relative minimum wages for various sectors. After a negotiating process, minimum wages can be set above the national minimum in profitable sectors. Wages in agriculture and industry were similar until 1991, when agricultural wages declined relative to average wage.

Plans call for the Ministry of Labor to be replaced by a State Corporation for Specialist Training, with the bulk of the ministry's nontraining functions to shift to the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Banking. Those functions include oversight of unemployment, salary administration and minimum wage determination, and labor protection. There is no independent labor union movement in Turkmenistan. Trade union leaders are appointed by the president, meaning that no true collective bargaining can occur.

Labor productivity is one of the major concerns of economic planners in Turkmenistan. According to Soviet statistics, for industrial enterprises this indicator grew at a rate of 6.3 percent per year in the period 1971–5; then it declined drastically to 0.1 percent per year in 1976–80 before reaching 3.2 percent in 1989. Similar changes occurred in agricultural labor productivity in the 1970s and the 1980s, moving from 2.6 percent growth in 1971–75 to negative 1.4 percent in 1976–80 and then to 4.0 percent in 1989.

Economic Structure

Although Turkmenistan's economic situation has deteriorated somewhat since 1990, the overall standard of living has not dropped as dramatically as it has in other former Soviet republics (see table 10, Appendix). Economic reforms have been modest, and the majority of businesses remain state-owned. Thanks to government subsidies, basic food products continue to be relatively affordable despite inflation. One of the most important modifications in economic policy took effect in early 1993 when President Niyazov decreed that natural gas, water, and electricity would be supplied virtually free of charge to all homes in Turkmenistan for an indefinite period. Gasoline and other fuels also remain cheap, relative to neighboring republics. Such economic stability has been possible because Turkmenistan has a comparatively small population and it is rich in important resources such as natural gas and oil.

The main blueprint for Turkmenistan's development is the Ten Years of Prosperity program, which was announced in December 1992. It calls for a ten-year transition to a market economy, with a first phase that maintains the Soviet system of planned management accompanied by extensive social protection programs. The program envisages development of Turkmenistan's natural resources and restructuring of industry to provide import substitution.