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## Is Rahmon the leader of one of the successful world powers?

In recent years, Emomali Rahmon has begun to position Tajikistan as a country with the broad international ties, and himself as a world-class political figure. This is manifested both in Rahmon's completely inappropriate statements on geopolitical topics, and in absolutely meaninglessness, but presented as being significant relations that Tajikistan establishes with various countries.

On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017, for example, at the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York, Rahmon from the UN rostrum made several indiscreet statements about international problems, including the North Korean crisis. **“... Tajikistan sees the solution of the problem of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the continuation of the constructive negotiations, in a peaceful manner and in the framework of the conscientious implementation of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council,”** he stated with a very serious face, as if his opinion played any role on this issue. Also he added: **“In July this year in New York Tajikistan among 43 countries presented its Voluntary National Review within the framework of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. ... Two years ago we adopted the Paris Climate Agreement, the goals and objectives of which are comprehensive and define the main directions of the world community's efforts to adapt to climate change and transition to a “clean” economy. Therefore, it is time for us to move from words to action and contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Paris Agreement. ... The success of joint actions for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the search for peaceful solutions to the crises and existing contradictions is primarily related to the effective use of preventive diplomacy tools and mediation efforts”.** That is, in his speech Rahmon positions himself as if he is the leader of one of the superpowers, whose opinion in international matters is if not decisive, then at least weighty. And this, as we know, is completely wrong.

On 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, the press service of the President of Tajikistan reported on a telephone conversation between Rahmon and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. “When discussing international issues, the heads of the states expressed serious concern over the situation that arose in relation to the Muslim community in Myanmar,” - the report said. So Rahmon decided to keep up with some rulers in Muslim countries and also unexpectedly “got worried” about the situation in Myanmar.

On 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, Rahmon's press service also reported on a number of presidential meetings on the margins of the BRICS summit with the heads of Egypt, Brazil, the United States of Mexico, Guinea, the Republic of South Africa, Thailand and India: **“During these constructive meetings with the heads of the countries mentioned, issues of expanding cooperation in the spheres of politics, various sectors of the economy, trade, culture, science and education, industry, agriculture, tourism, the humanitarian sphere, as well as other issues of common interest”.** After reading such reports, it may be thought that Rahmon is almost the key figure and the most popular head of state at the summit.

In addition, in recent years one can observe how the Tajik authorities establish the absolutely formal ties with various countries, loudly trumpeting about it and presenting it as the development of the country in the sphere of international relations. For example, on 28<sup>th</sup> September, Tajik Interior Minister Ramazon Rahimzoda met with Moldovan Interior Minister Alexander Zhizdan in Beijing, discussing cooperation in “combating terrorism and extremism”. What can be the general affairs of Tajikistan and Moldova “in the field of combating terrorism” – remains a big mystery.

In 2013, the Tajik authorities announced a “historic breakthrough of Tajikistan to Africa”: Emomali Rahmon met with the Prime Minister of Mozambique Alberto Clementino Antonio Vaquin in Dushanbe, after that the diplomatic relations were established between Tajikistan and Mozambique.

In December 2016, Rahmon said in his message to the parliament: “Our foreign partners have supported many of our initiatives. Tajikistan in the world arena is recognized as an active supporter of global initiatives, including on water issues”. “This morning I received a message from the head of

the UN General Assembly Peter Thomson about the support of the UN General Assembly for a new water initiative of Tajikistan, with which I want to congratulate the people of Tajikistan and the entire world community”, - he said.

The question arises whether Rahmon really became an international player? Is Tajikistan, which is the poorest country in the Central Asian region, whose population is mired in poverty, whose national debt is 40% of GDP, a country that receives help from dozens of countries every year, including from the war-torn Afghanistan (!), has risen to the level of a state that is preoccupied with the international problems? If this is not so, then how is Rahmon's behavior explained?

In order to answer this question, one should look at the political and economic situation in Tajikistan:

1. In order to characterize the political status of Tajikistan, it must be classified in terms of its position in international politics. As you know, all countries in the world are divided into:

- a) A leading State (a sovereign state having its own satellites and subordinates);
- b) An independent state (its foreign and domestic policies are completely independent);
- c) The satellite state (whose foreign policy is subject to the influence of the suzerain states, but the domestic policy is independent);
- d) The subordinate state (whose foreign and domestic policies are subordinate to the suzerain).

Obviously, Tajikistan belongs to the category of subordinate states, in this case, there is dependence on Russia. And not just dependence, it is appropriate to raise the question of whether Tajikistan has a true sovereignty, because Russia retains its major military facilities in Tajikistan, including in Dushanbe, that is, in the capital of the state. Even the Pamir sector of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan, which was guarded by Russian border guards until 2004, although formally transferred to Tajikistan's control, nevertheless in the country there is still an operative group of the FSB's border guard service and there are Russian military advisers at each of the border guard units.

Moreover, Tajikistan is also economically dependent on Russia, as more than a million (12% of the total population of the country) of Tajik citizens are permanently in Russia in labor migration, and this migration is literally a bailout for the people who live off remittances from Russia, which constitute up to half of Tajikistan's GDP. Accordingly, the topic of labor migrants is becoming a very sensitive lever of political pressure on Rahmon, who has driven the resource-rich Tajikistan to the situation when the population has to leave the country and go abroad for work, doing low-skilled work in Russia.

2. In what condition is the economy of Tajikistan? Is it possible to say that Rahmon “put things in order” in the country to the extent that now he is actively engaged in international problems?

Tajikistan is the poorest country among the CIS countries, in 2016, it ranked 153 out of 185 possible in the “Richest Countries in the World” rating, with a GDP per capita slightly more than \$ 2.8 thousand.

In 2017, the US financial magazine Global Finance ranked “The World's Richest and Poorest Countries”, which ranked Tajikistan among the 33 poorest countries in the world, along with the CARs, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi and Burundi.

A World Bank report of 2016 showed that more than 31% of Tajikistan population live below the poverty line.

The average salary in Tajikistan is 85 US dollars, the average pension is 20 dollars.

To date, there is almost no natural gas in the country, there are still many settlements where electricity has not reached, according to the World Bank only 57% of urban households have access to safe water, this aspect for rural households is 31%. During the period 2014 -17 years. The cost of electricity increased by more than 50% from 11 dirams to 16.85 dirams. There is a shortage of teachers, teaching aids and student places in the education system.

When the deplorable situation of Tajikistan became apparent from the economic and political points of view, a quite reasonable question arises: how, then, to explain the behavior of Rahmon, who plays the role of the tycoon of international politics in public? In fact, the answer to this question lies precisely in the deplorable economic and subordinate political position of the country.

The fact is that the economic situation in Tajikistan is getting worse every year, which can not but endanger the very existence of Rahmon's regime. According to the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, the volume of money transfers from Russia to Tajikistan for the year 2015 fell by three times. The National Bank of Tajikistan states that the total amount of money transfers to the republic in dollar terms decreased by 33.3%. **This**, in turn, means that the streams of able-bodied men returning from Russia poured into Tajikistan, the work in which, due to the economic crisis, lost its meaning. And the worse things are in the country, the more people are displeased with the regime. The situation for **Rahmon** is further aggravated by the fact that Tajikistan has the fastest pace of revival of Islamic consciousness among the people of Central Asia, and this also brings with it the growth of political consciousness of the Muslim population, who will not tolerate the secularist-corrupter who sold the country to the colonizers.

In this regard, Rahmon has in recent years shown incredible activity, implementing a set of measures to preserve the regime. Among these measures are the neutralization of the opposition in the face of the IRPT, the general arrests of Islamic preachers and imams, the declaration of war on Islamic attributes, the implantation of patriotism and nationalism, the massive introduction of the Western values, and the propaganda of the president's cult of personality. So, one of the pillars of this policy is the image of "incredible successes" in the international arena. In fact, Rahmon in part only repeats the Soviet experience, when the pseudo achievements of the USSR in international politics, economy and sport were an important tool for fooling the population.

Thus, it becomes clear that the main audience of this spectacle, played by Rahmon and his press office, is the people themselves, who, according to the director's plan, must forget all humiliations and adversities of life, rejoicing over the so-called "successes" of their homeland in the international arena. That is, Rahmon simply distracts the people of Tajikistan from the real problems facing them.

The image of "Rahmon – an international player" is false, in fact all over the world he is viewed only as an elderly usurper-beggar who travels to different countries and begs for money, scaring everyone with an Islamic explosion in Central Asia in the event of the fall of his regime.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by  
Umar Farsi**