

The United States and Russia's Engagement in Post-Soviet Tajikistan: A Bane than a Boon for Democracy

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Tajikistan, unintentionally and unexpectedly, became independent in 1991 as a result of the breakup of Soviet Union. Having no experience of independence before, Tajikistan lacks almost everything that is needed for effective functioning of independent state. It lacks political, economic and military strengths to function as independent state. Consequently, Tajikistan look forward to foreign countries for assistance to all these requirements. This created a favorable condition for the United States and Russia, among others external powers, to engage in its political process by supporting democracy and authoritarian rule respectively through their political, military and financial assistance.

This paper explains why the engagement of these two external powers favors authoritarian rule in Tajikistan. The reason obviously is that the United States is unsuccessful in its efforts of promoting democracy while Russia is relatively successful in promoting authoritarian rule. Reasons for Russia's success include the presence of strong historical and cultural ties, its readiness to provide protecting to the ruling regime in Tajikistan from internal and external threats, and the openness of the ruling elites on Russia. On the other hand, the failure of the United States is largely due to its lackage of genuine commitment to democracy, its limited capacity to influence the political process, and Tajik ruling elites' suspicions on the role United States in Tajikistan.