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**The dialogue between the state and religion:
Tajik experience
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At present relations between the state and the religion remain an important and urgent issue of the public life in the entire region of Central Asia. In the countries of the region, up to date, there is a lack of common understanding of the issue and a single approach to its solution. Moreover, the role and the place of religion in these societies have not completely defined yet. Although at the level of constitutions and other laws of these states religion is separated from the state, everywhere the interference of state bodies into internal affairs of religious organizations is observed (sometimes it acquires coarse and unconcealed forms).

Despite of general problems in the interrelations between the state and religion, each country of the region has its own peculiarities, and taking into account these specific phenomena, the process of defining the role and the place of religion in each individual state develops on its own way.

As for Tajikistan, in contradistinction to other countries of the region, the dialogue between the government and the religion (in this case political Islam is meant) has started in the middle of 90s. Unfortunately, parties needed many victims and much time before they understood the necessity of a dialogue. That dialogue can be addressed as a dialogue of two outlooks (philosophies): secular and religious ones. This constructive dialogue and the compromised approach of both parties resulted in the long-expected peace and stability in Tajikistan.

All important events, taken place in Tajikistan (the civil war, inter-Tajik negotiations, the peace process etc.) were connected with religion and doubtlessly it will play a significant role in the further development of the Tajik state. Whether the factor of

religion will be positive or negative, it depends on continuation and the further development of the dialogue and cooperation between the state and religion.

The unique religious situation in Tajikistan consists of the fact that the only political party of religious character in the region (the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) functions here and that the legal activity of this party became the factor of stability and peace in the country. Despite of the positive role being played by the IRPT in the Tajik society, there are still many opponents of the existence of political parties of a religious character. In their opinion, the activity of a religious party contradicts constitutional norms, i.e. the secular character of the state.

At present a number of key issues in the relations between the state and religion remain open in Tajikistan:

1. Should the religion take part in the public and political life of the country? If yes, in which framework?
2. Is the existence of political parties of a religious character possible in the framework of a secular state?
3. Different understanding and interpretation of terms “secular” and “separation of the religion from the state”...

To receive an answer to these questions and to reach the common understanding of problems it is necessary to continue to promote the dialogue and cooperation, which has lost its intensity in Tajikistan last time. It is not necessary to continue the dialogue in the form it was lead at the first stage of the peace process in the country. It is necessary to look for other forms of a dialogue with the involvement of the broader circle of participants, both on the part of “secular” and on the part of “religious” circles. The dialogue should be organized at different levels:

- within one religion (different streams and schools, conservators-reformers);
- between confessions;
- between the representatives of “secular” and “religious” circles;
- between the authorities and the religion.

The Tajik experience shows, that through the method of a dialogue and mutual compromise it is possible to resolve many urgent issues in the relations between the state and the religion.