



A Resolution to Kyrgyz-Tajik Border Problems?

OE Watch Commentary: A number of violent incidents have taken place on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border near Tajikistan's exclave of Vorukh over the past several years, including two recent ones in December 2019 and January 2020. As the accompanying excerpted article reports, the most recent incidents appear to have pushed the governments into taking action. Following the latest conflict, official delegations from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan held negotiations to fully demarcate their borders and reduce the violence.

The article, from Tajikistan's *Asia-Plus*, reports that the Kyrgyz government "offered Tajikistan an exchange of two sections of the border – these sections are Aryk-Asty of the Ak-Sai village, Batken District, and Samarkandyk, in the village of Samarkandyk." The article also mentions the efforts of a working group, which used "134 topographical maps" and

"looked at 120 kilometers of the border and came to the conclusion that 114 kilometers are the same in all the maps." The article does not mention it, but both governments requested maps from Soviet era archives in Moscow a few years ago and the large number of maps used by the working group could have come from that collection. The article also mentions that "only 60 percent" of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border is demarcated and there are "around 70 sections that are not specified, on which there are several settlements."

The article also reports on the creation of "the topographical working group of the Kyrgyz Republic," which worked out the "exchange of land with Tajikistan." Lastly, Kyrgyzstan's Deputy Prime Minister stated that "consultations will be carried out with each resident who lives on these sites" before an official exchange of land takes place. He also mentioned that "there will be no exchange if there is no consent of local resident." While it could be a few months until the Kyrgyz government finalizes a decision on whether or not to exchange the two sections of the border, the most recent incidents might be the catalyst for the Kyrgyz and Tajik governments to finally demarcate sections of the border around Vorukh. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



Enclaves in Kyrgyzstan.

Source: Enclaves_in_Kyrgyzstan_RU.svg via Wikimedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Enclaves_in_Kyrgyzstan_EN.png, CC BY-SA 3.0

“The working groups looked at 120 kilometers of the border and came to the conclusion that 114 kilometers are the same in all the maps.”

Source: “Кыргызстан назвал два села, территорией которых поменяется с Таджикистаном (Kyrgyzstan named two villages, of which whose territory will be exchanged with Tajikistan),” *Asia-Plus*, 21 January 2020. <https://asiaplus.tj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/politics/20200121/kirgizstan-nazval-dva-sela-territoriei-kotorih-pomenyaetsya-s-tadzhikistanom>

Kyrgyzstan offered Tajikistan an exchange of two sections of the border – these sections are Aryk-Asty of the Ak-Sai village, Batken District, and Samarkandyk, in the village of Samarkandyk. Deputy Prime Minister Zhenish Razakov announced this on January 21 at a meeting of the parliamentary committee on international affairs, defense and security...

Based on the results of 6 previous meetings, 134 topographical maps were prepared. The working groups looked at 120 kilometers of the border and came to the conclusion that 114 kilometers are the same in all the maps.

The length of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border is more than 970 km, only 60 percent of which is demarcated. Between the two countries, there remains around 70 sections that are not specified, on which there are several settlements. An undefined border causes conflicts in these border settlements – because of land, water and illegal border crossing issues.

Following the latest conflict, official delegations from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan held negotiations, after which a protocol was adopted. On January 15, of the points of the protocol started work – the topographical working group of the Kyrgyz Republic started to work out issues on the exchange of land with Tajikistan. The delegations agreed to identify areas of the border and prepare a proposal by March 1, 2020...

The deputy prime minister said that prior to the exchange, consultations will be carried out with each resident who lives on these sites... “There will be no exchange if there is no consent of local residents,” he added...