KYRGYZSTAN'S REVOLUTION: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

APRIL 7, 2005

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

[CSCE 109–1–9]

Available via http://www.csce.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

31–871 PDF WASHINGTON : 2007

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
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CONTENTS

APRIL 7, 2005

COMMISSIONER

WITNESSES

APPENDICES

KYRGYZSTAN'S REVOLUTION: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

APRIL 7, 2005

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 1:15 p.m. in room 428–A Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Commissioner present: Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Witnesses present: Zamira Sadykova, Editor, Res Publica; Dr. Martha Olcott, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Daniel Kimmage, Central Asia Analyst, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; and Yulia Savchenko, Talk Show Host, Pyramid TV, Kyrgyzstan.

HON. SAM BROWNBACK, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. BROWNBACK. Good afternoon. I want to welcome all of you here to this hearing on Kyrgyzstan.

After Georgia's Rose Revolution in 2003 and Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2004, Kyrgyzstan has now followed suit in 2005.

There appears to be some confusion whether these historic events should be categorized as yellow, pink, or tulip revolutions, so I will refrain from assigning them any particular color.

Although the collapse of the regime of President Akaev was stunningly fast, it was not entirely unexpected. Of all the central Asian countries, analysts have singled out Kyrgyzstan as the state most likely to experience the latest surge of people power in the CIS states.

The success of opposition-led efforts to galvanize a popular uprising after the flawed parliamentary elections of February-March has demonstrated that Central Asia, though mired in repression and accustomed to autocratic rule, is no less susceptible to the contagion of democracy than countries in other places around the world, in the Caucasus or Eastern Europe.

We should not be surprised that the people of Kyrgyzstan have finally said "enough" to official corruption, rigged elections and chronically poor governance.

All over the world, including regions long thought to be unsuited for democracy, popular movements have arisen in recent months.

Palestinians and Iraqi elections have shown the clear desire of Arab peoples for clean, accountable, representative government.

I have no doubt that other peoples in the Arab world share that same dream. As soon as the opportunity emerges they will express their longing for the same chance at a better life.

It is regrettable that the revolution in Kyrgyzstan was accompanied by looting and disorder, unlike the Rose and Orange revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. Certainly those who stormed businesses and swiped goods did not varnish Kyrgyzstan's reputation.

Still, I do not agree with those who describe events in Kyrgyzstan as a riot, not a revolution.

For the first time in years, people in a Central Asian country have refused to accept passively another rigged election.

From now on, whoever comes to power in Kyrgyzstan will have to be more accountable to the people, which is an essential prerequisite of democratic governance.

I'm saddened by the fate of President Akaev whom I have met several times. In the context of Central Asia, he struck me as a relatively enlightened man. Ultimately, however, he failed to meet the expectations of his people, who were extremely frustrated by years of official corruption and the prospect of more of the same.

I understand he has publicly voiced regret that he did not use force to keep his job. That view does not speak well of him, and I hope he will rethink his position as time passes.

I also hope that the leaders of other former Soviet republics draw the appropriate lessons from the Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and probably soon-to-follow other names of nations syndrome.

The precedent of mass protest movements is important in itself.

Even if conditions differ significantly in all these states—there will be parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan this November and Kazakhstan is scheduled to hold Presidential elections next year—the leaders of these countries should see the writing on the wall and commit to holding free and fair elections by international standards.

They should do so in practice and not just in rhetoric. Otherwise, we'll be holding hearings in the future on various colored revolutions in those countries as well.

Kyrgyzstan's revolution raises many questions which U.S. policymakers will have to address. Does this revolution auger well for the building of a more democratic, lawful society?

Will Kyrgyzstan's example inspire similar events in neighboring countries?

Could the turmoil in Kyrgyzstan undermine Bishkek's cooperation with the United States in the war on terrorism?

Will Moscow work with Washington in helping Kyrgyzstan's new authorities develop a more democratic, less corrupt state, or see the ouster of its close allies as a threat to its strategic interests?

And what can Washington do beyond what it is already doing to consolidate democracy and respect for human rights, the dignity of the individual, in Kyrgyzstan?

Today's witnesses will examine these and other questions. I'm delighted with the panel that's joining us here today on this very important and certainly timely topic.

Today's witnesses are Zamira Sadykova—I'm apologetic for that, I'm much better with Smith and Johnson and Lee, I apologize—Dr. Martha Olcott, Daniel Kimmage, and Yulia Savchenko.

Unfortunately, the Department of State was unable to provide a witness for this hearing, but we hope to get the official perspective at some point in time in the near future.

I want to thank you all very much for joining us, and the audience as well. And we will begin with the testimony of the first witness.

Ms. Sadykova, thank you for joining us here today.

ZAMIRA SADYKOVA, EDITOR, RES PUBLICA

Ms. SADYKOVA. Thank you very much to inviting me here to this hearing, because it's very important for us, for our country, and for our civil society.

First of all, I would like to express gratitude on behalf of all of civil society in Kyrgyzstan for the attention and sympathy which we have experienced from your country and from the U.S. Congress, in particular from the very outset of gaining our independence and developing democracy.

I will not enumerate all the help which you have rendered to the creation of our civil society institutions and independent mass media. I just want to say that this has greatly contributed to setting up a solid foundation for society based on principles of human rights and freedoms declared by the Helsinki Act of 1975 year.

Initially, this was supported by the first President of Kyrgyzstan, too, but he has forsaken his nation and fled from the country after the 24th of March election, which shocked the international community.

The March events cannot be called unexpected. At least they were not for me, as a journalist who has been for years in the thick of political events, covering the whole spectrum of opinions.

We were strongly impressed by the statement made by President Bush right after his inauguration, that your country will not allow the tyranny of dictators who have emerged especially in the developing countries.

This was a strong message, which gave us confidence that our expectations and rights are being perceived in the right way.

But now, one could not call the intense persecution and prosecutions of civil activists, human rights defenders and independent journalists, anything else but a display of dictatorships on the part of the regime of Akaev.

The President, Akaev, lost his constitutional right to remain at his post as far back as in 2000. However, the octopus of corruption, which his whole family has been caught by, forced him in violation of the constitution to prolong his powers.

All the administrative resources they used in the preparations of the elections. But what roused the indignation of people of our country even more was the fact that we were now perceived as slaves whose votes could be bought.

Money for the election campaign of candidates from the pro-Akaev party, Alga-Kyrgyzstan, was not declared in reports on electoral funds.

Nobody knew that what happened on March 24 would happen so quickly. Although based on the behavior of President Akaev, the fact that he fled so fast, it is possible to suppose that he was probably the only person who understood the situation.

The opposition only intended to start protest actions, so that the authorities would annul the results of the elections. But they did not plan the storming of the government house.

Unlike the opposition, judging by the events of that day, Akaev had at first planned provocations and clashes among the participants of demonstrations, and then deserted his office and abandoned his nation in the hope that after him a civil war would break out.

Attacks against the demonstrators could have grown into armed conflict. Judging by the actions of the law enforcement bodies and soldiers of the armed forces, the firing of weapons and the assembled equipment, anything could have been expected.

But the participants in the protest meetings were forced to plunge inside the building of the government house in order to escape there from possible bullets.

The peaceful nature of this action, which has been called by some, "a the seizure of the government's building," is proven by the fact that all government materials were kept safe and transferred to the appropriate bodies of people's brigades, which were formed right there.

I would like to assure you one more time, as a witness to the events, that nobody has seized power in Kyrgyzstan. It was abandoned and fled from.

Kyrgyzstan, her true revolution, even it some call it the tulip or yellow revolution, was truly a revolution of the people.

We were proud of the people of Georgia and Ukraine, who managed to assert their rights and freedom of choice.

In response, we heard threats about the export of revolutions which were implanted by the authorities in all their recent public speeches. But we saw that these were the peaceful acts of civil participation in the preservation of democratic values declared by these countries.

We wanted the same in spite of the fact that we are a Muslim country. Adherence of the people of Kyrgyzstan to democratic values, which we have managed to prove indeed by having asserted them in March 2005, once again says that democracy can be developed regardless of the religious views of the major part of the population in a country.

In 1998, we were the first to experience the threat emanating from Islamic terrorists and accepted with joy participation in the anti-terrorist coalition by opening the military base of the coalition in Manas.

We felt ourselves protected, but the leaders of the political opposition started being accused of political extremism only for having been organized into a single block on the eve of the parliamentary elections.

All this time, you understand that the Coordination Council of People's Unity controlled the situation in the country and continued its work right after it became known that President Akaev fled out of the country.

A temporary government was formed. It was impossible to delay because disorders could have started in Bishkek. These were proven by the actions of looters who started to attack shops and trade centers.

But these incidents cannot be called mass phenomena. Psychologists affirm that this could have been caused by the stress, panic and chain reaction, but also could possibly have been provoked by somebody knowingly.

I personally feel that this phenomenon was the result of deep poverty into which the corrupted power of Akaev has plunged the major part of the population.

During these days, attention of all leading world channels was riveted to our small country. I was hurt to see how Kyrgyzstan was gaining its fame. But believe me, what happened in Bishkek by no means spread throughout the whole country. Leaders of the Coordination Council of People's Unity managed to redistribute forces in order to restore the management of the country.

On the same day, the old parliament urgently assembled and named the leader of the opposition, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, as the Prime Minister and vested power in him.

The Constitutional Court recognized as legitimate this transfer of power.

A few days ago, you know, our runaway president, hiding in Moscow, finally signed his resignation. New Presidential elections are scheduled on 26th of June this year.

The crisis has been overcome. National government is being restored. But the revolution would not have been a revolution if it would not raise the necessity of constitutional reforms. After all, what happened in Kyrgyzstan was caused by the usurpation of power by Mr. Akaev and his full control over the judiciary.

Now the most important thing is to preserve the trust of people toward the power which came into being on 24th of March. There are major objectives before it: to preserve stability and calm in society, not to allow economic indicators to fall, to create conditions for holding Presidential elections on 26th of June.

For all of this, your strong support is needed.

It has been recently said that the West supported the Kyrgyzstan opposition and that America financed the revolution in Kyrgyzstan. You perfectly know that it is not the case.

It is now that we request your assistance—financial, humanitarian. It is needed by our country, by our government and our society.

It is definite that Kyrgyzstan will now support civil society, freedom of mass media, transparency of state government.

In the light of the forthcoming Presidential elections and discussions of the constitutional reforms, I would like to see a strong role by the OSCE to enabled us to carry out independent and an impartial analysis of what we have and what we still need to be assisted with in the development of democracy.

Up to now, the OSCE mission in Bishkek has been poorly equipped, the work has been carried out without spirit, and the OSCE simply could not realize its mission to the fullest extent in the establishment of dialogue between the authorities and the opposition.

We would like to see expansion of the existing OSCE center in Bishkek into a significantly larger-scale OSCE mission in Kyrgyzstan in order to assist in ensuring a peaceful and orderly transition process and to promote the long-term development of

democratic institutions, good governance and respect for human rights.

The OSCE is uniquely positioned to respond to continuing confusion and turmoil in the wake of the recent popular uprising in Kyrgyzstan.

The OSCE brings the support of 55 countries, including the United States, Russia, European Union, and other Central Asian states, as well as relevant expertise in elections, rule of law, democracy-building and good governance.

Kyrgyzstan has been a leader in Central Asia, in cooperation with the OSCE.

And there are precedents for such a mission, including the establishment of the OSCE presence in Albania in response to unrest in 1997.

The OSCE presence in Albania had some 45 international staff and field offices throughout the country. This would likely be an appropriate size for an enhanced OSCE mission in Kyrgyzstan.

We understand that there may be some reluctance to move forward with such a proposal, considering the impasse in the OSCE over the budget, as well as Russian discontent with OSCE election assistance programs.

However, we are willing to work with Russia and with our neighbors to get a permanent council decision enlarging the staffing, resources and mandate of the current center in Bishkek.

We would like a significantly enhanced mission that would: assist with dialogue among all political parties and factions; support the technical preparations for and observation of new elections to ensure that there is public confidence in their electoral process; develop programs to fight corruption and promote good governance; assist with legislative and judicial reform; conduct parliamentary capacity-building programs, including through training programs; train law enforcement officials to ensure professional policing and ensure respect for human rights; monitor human rights and issues related to extremism or ethnic tensions, particularly in the Ferghana Valley region; support the further development of civil society and political parties; assist with the development of independent mass media.

Recent events in Kyrgyzstan are only the beginning of the integration of our country into the family of democratic and developed world. The U.S. Congress and administration can do a lot to help us in that journey.

Thank you again for your attention and attention for our country.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Ms. Sadykova.

I wanted to point out—and I didn't at the outset—anybody who has followed Kyrgyz's politics is very well familiar with you and with your work: government opposition and work on independent journalism in Central Asia for the past 15 years.

She's the founder and longtime editor of "Res Publica," an opposition-oriented newspaper, which has been under constant pressure from the Kyrgyz authorities prior to the revolution that took place there.

In 1995, she was banned from journalism for a year, and in 1997, was sentenced to prison for 2½ months. In 2000, she received an

award from the International Fund for Women for courage in journalism, and she has now been named Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador to the United States.

After this hearing she will go to the State Department to begin the formal process of accreditation. She actually appears here today as a private citizen, but one with an incredible story and background.

And I'm delighted to have you here. And I'll look forward to having some exchange in the question and answer in the dialogue that we have.

I'd like to ask the other witnesses, if we could, we will take your full statement into the record. Now, if you could mostly summarize—if we could run this clock at 7 minutes, we'll give you some timeframe to be able to—it's not a hard and fast rule—but I would like to get that so that we can get into some dialogue.

The next person to testify will be Dr. Martha Olcott.

She's very familiar to this Commission, having testified many times on Central Asia.

She is a Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Before that she was for many years a professor of political science at Colgate University and a special consultant to one of my favorite foreign policy experts, former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

She's a leading expert on Central Asia, having authored many books on the topic, including "Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promises."

I look forward to your testimony.

Dr. Olcott?

DR. MARTHA OLCOTT, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Ms. OLCOTT. Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here today.

And it's a pleasure to be sitting next to Zamira under these circumstances after many years of talking about what could or could not or should happen in Kyrgyzstan.

I've put a much longer statement into the—I've submitted a much longer written statement. Now, let me just briefly summarize it.

The mass protest in Kyrgyzstan against Kyrgyzstan's flawed parliamentary elections that led to the ouster of President Akaev were as momentous in their own way as the Rose or Orange revolutions.

They demonstrated that the Central Asian masses have the same aspirations to choose their leaders, as those living in the European parts of the former Soviet empire do, and that Central Asians also expect that the exercise of their right to vote will not be compromised, neither in the nomination process, nor at the ballot box.

It also very importantly demonstrated that long-term U.S. and OSCE investments in projects designed to build citizen participation at the grassroots level are worthwhile, that the presence of deeply rooted nongovernmental organizations, once they reach a critical number, can play a decisive role in political struggles by serving as the instrument to challenging public protests in peaceful ways.

But the conduct of the Tulip Revolution tells us very little about whether the Kyrgyz elite is capable of organizing and sustaining

democratic reforms in their country. As we know, they were unified around a single goal: the ouster of former President Akaev.

The next stage is much more critical. The situation in Kyrgyzstan could still degenerate or disintegrate into something that's little more than a division of spoils between long-competing political groups, some of whom are democratic, some of whom are much more concerned to have access to power rather than how its access to power is obtained.

The Kyrgyz elite has to demonstrate that they have in fact made a revolution. The test of this will not be in the area of international relations. Kyrgyzstan's old friends will remain their new friends. And this is as it should be.

It won't be through the announcement of ambitious new economic reforms. Kyrgyzstan has already gone through a fundamental economic reform program.

A key challenge in the economy will be to attack corruption, corruption in the economy, corruption which often originated with the very officeholders themselves. It will be incumbent with the new group of officeholders to be and example of probity, rather than the example of corruption that their predecessors all to frequently were.

The task before the new elite, I would argue, is strictly political. Their first burden is to demonstrate that they can hold transparent, free and fair Presidential elections, and then move on to necessary constitutional reform, reforms which will hopefully lead at their conclusion, not only to enhance power for a parliament and a balance of power at the national level—a balance of power between center and periphery—and judicial reform, were points that Zamira made, but will also lead to new parliamentary elections, because the current group that was seated out of the necessity of the exigencies of the moment was not elected freely and fairly and will never enjoy legitimacy.

Obviously, U.S.—the OSCE nations—can help the Kyrgyz leaders in this process by providing a great deal of technical assistance. But these are reforms—the reforms that advisers can help them derive—that must be accepted and put into life and be invigorated by the actions of the Kyrgyz themselves, by the Kyrgyz elites themselves.

It is not our assistance that will make them a success or a failure. Whether they succeed or fail, the Kyrgyz, what happens in Kyrgyzstan will have a profound impact on Central Asia.

Certainly, the Kazakh opposition will feel inspired to try harder to oust their president at the next elections. And hopefully this same president will anticipate this and press harder and make himself an example by holding elections that are free and fair, and opening up political space in the advance of the elections.

I'm not even going to talk about Azerbaijan, but I do want to talk some about the influence on Uzbekistan.

The influence on Uzbekistan, tragically, is likely to be just the opposite. The regime could close down further, seeking what they have always termed has to be their own path to change, making it more difficult for what they term foreign forces—or what we term Western-funded NGOs—to act in their country.

This really will create a considerable challenge for the United States, as we have never been able to convince the Uzbek Government what I firmly believe is true, that it is in the interest, not just of the United States, but most importantly, in the interest of the Uzbek Government to allow nongovernmental political groups space in their country.

And I feel that it's incumbent on the Helsinki Commission and on the U.S. policymakers to maintain a stance of keeping pressure on Uzbekistan and other states in the region to allow U.S.-funded NGOs to act in their countries.

At the same time, though, we should be realistic. What Kyrgyzstan shows to us is that it is precisely the long-term effort that has impact.

The critical factor in Kyrgyzstan was that NGO groups were so deeply rooted that there was no prospect of keeping them out of the election campaign, even though their life was made miserable oftentimes.

This same capacity to mobilize, this same being part of the life in the country, does not exist in Uzbekistan. And even if we get the door open to continued funding for these groups, social upheaval in Uzbekistan could well occur before civil society or institutions are sufficiently deeply enough rooted to institutionalize that process in peaceful ways, to lead to peaceful transitions.

I also, as I move to my conclusion, don't rule out the prospect that violence, upheaval could still occur in Kyrgyzstan.

Civil society institutions, even when deeply rooted, cannot ultimately deal with the frustration of demonstrators who believe that their elites have been unresponsive.

In conclusion, the spotlight today is not on the Kyrgyz masses—they've done their job, they've demonstrated that they support democratic goals—it is on the Kyrgyz elite.

While the United States can provide them with humanitarian assistance, technical assistance, it's the Kyrgyz elite that has to make the tough choices; they must demonstrate that they are responsible and democratic partners of the United States. And they can do this by creating the preconditions for democratic Presidential elections, and then moving on to timely constitutional reform.

If they do this, not only will they have the confidence of the United States, but they will actually achieve the goals that President Askar Akaev set for the Kyrgyz nation in his very first years of independence, when he argued that Kyrgyzstan could become a beacon of democracy in Central Asia.

It's tragic that he failed to see through his own early vision, but the people in place now have the responsibility, the burden, and if they succeed, everybody's absolute joy at their success of making these dreams a reality.

Thank you.

Mr. BROWNBACK. That is true.

I look forward to some of the discussion on this.

I've been involved in that country for some time, and it did seem to me that they were on the right track, everybody thought the wind was behind their sails on making reforms, and then it just got off track and didn't complete on through. I want to look at more why.

Daniel Kimmage is a Central Asian analyst for Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty. He has been at that organization since 2002 when he began writing about Russian affairs.

Since December 2003, Mr. Kimmage has been concentrated on Central Asia, editing the Central Asia Report. He also writes about terrorism and the evolving ideology of jihad in Central Asia and the Middle East.

He's widely published; fluent in Arabic, Farsi, French, German, and Uzbek—English, I'm sure, as well. [Laughter.]

Mr. Kimmage, thank you for joining us.

DANIEL KIMMAGE, CENTRAL ASIA ANALYST, RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

Mr. KIMMAGE. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for inviting me to appear before this committee.

I have also submitted a longer statement, and I will summarize my testimony here.

After Dr. Olcott's excellent summary of the political situation, I'm going to take a step back and look at some of the broader implications of events in Georgia, Ukraine, and now Kyrgyzstan.

In May 1993, Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev visited the United States and met with President Clinton, who singled him out for his model leadership and praised him for his government's bold pursuit of economic stabilization and democratic reform.

A little less than 12 years later, President Akaev fled his country as Kyrgyzstan's opposition celebrated the end of what it condemned as a corrupt and undemocratic regime.

The president's optimism in 1993 was not misplaced. It rested on encouraging signs and genuine hopes. But I would argue that the eventual failure of those hopes to come to fruition should warn us today against any irrational exuberance in the face of the latest chances.

We certainly hope that democracy is on the march in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. But for now, we should take a hard look at the one very clear and indisputable lesson from these events, which is that the post-Soviet political systems in each of these countries faced and failed a very crucial test, and that test was a test of fair and free elections.

Now, for those who want more detail, the OSCE provided excellent assessments of elections in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. I will read one brief quote which is from their report on Georgia, it says: "The elections process was characterized by a clear lack of political will by government authorities to organize a genuine and democratic elections process."

You can find similar verdicts in their assessments of Ukrainian and Kyrgyz elections.

The root of this problem is a phenomenon called, "managed democracy." And managed democracy is what happens when a ruling elite feels obligated to hold elections to buttress its legitimacy, but does everything in its power to control their outcomes.

The practice of managed democracy is essentially a grab-bag of dirty tricks. The state-controlled media serves up puff pieces to promote certain candidates and smear campaigns to denigrate other

candidates. Elections commissions ignore gross violations and punish minor ones. The list is very long.

But the purpose is short and sweet, which is to reduce the necessary evil of elections to a predictable exercise. It allows elites to devote their time to more pressing pursuits, such as the exploitation of public office for private gain.

This system is fatally flawed. And the flaw is that it removes accountability and thus the incentive for the political elite to communicate with constituents and base governance on the electorate's real concerns.

Second, as issues that should be treated in the public, political realm are left to fester or are resolved through back-room deals, this inevitably sparks popular dissatisfaction, which then creates an inventive for the elite to intensify its management of the political process. And you get a vicious cycle.

Sooner or later, something has to give, as we saw happen in Georgia, Ukraine, and now Kyrgyzstan. Elections are a flash point because they put the spotlight on the machinery of managed democracy even as they raise the very issues the dysfunctional political system has neglected.

The particular course of events in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan was influenced by local considerations, but this was the common element.

Now the causes of Kyrgyzstan's revolution are not difficult to spot. They include a perception that the Akaev government was massively corrupt, that economic benefits were distributed with gross inequality, that Akaev and the ruling elite were actively manipulating democracy and that the state-controlled media was distorting the real situation in the country.

The outcome of this revolution at this early stage is much less clear.

The interim government has been off to a bit of a slow start. It has been hampered by a less than transparent approach to appointments, infighting, and an ability thus far to articulate policy changes that would mark a clean break with the Akaev era. But the situation is very fluid and it is much too early for any verdict on the post-revolutionary government.

Now, the implications for the rest of the region are also difficult to discern, but we should bear in mind we can't simply extrapolate the Kyrgyz situation to other countries.

Kazakhstan held parliamentary elections in September 2004 that were substantially flawed and evaluated as such by international organizations. Tajikistan recently held parliamentary elections. No upheaval really resulted in either country. And there are specific reasons for this that we could go into.

But I would note that both Kazakhstan and Tajikistan fall under the general rubric of managed democracies and have the same significant state-sponsored stage-managing of the political process and thus, are susceptible to the same outcomes we have seen elsewhere.

A failure of managed democracy is much less likely in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, because there is much less democracy to fail. That does not mean that we could not see upheaval in Uzbekistan for the reasons that Dr. Olcott noted in her testimony.

In closing, I would like to stress that beyond Central Asia, the proven failure of managed democracy in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan points to an uneasy future for the largest and most important managed democracy of all, which is Russia.

In Russia, we find many of the features of this flawed system: state control over national television, an increasingly virtual political environment that lacks the viable channels for communication between government and governed, and a squabbling elite that uses the mechanisms of the state for its own ends, often rendering them useless for legitimate purposes.

The point is not that Russia or any other country is next in a parade of democratic revolutions. Rather, the cautionary moral of this story is that the ongoing breakdown of managed democracy bodes ill for the stability for all countries, including Russia, where this dubious experiment continues in willful ignorance of the lessons of Georgia, Ukraine, and now Kyrgyzstan.

Thank you.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Very thoughtful.

Well, finally, the final presentation will be Yulia Savchenko. She's a fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington. She's a television anchor and journalist in Kyrgyzstan—has achieved public recognition for hosting the talk show, "No Edits." That's on Pyramid TV.

And Ms. Savchenko began working for Pyramid during her undergraduate years at the Kyrgyz-Russia Slavic University, first as news reporter and then as an investigative journalist, an editor of the news department and now hosts her own show.

Her own show features various perspectives and debates on issues of political and social interest.

Last fall, it was called the best public affairs TV program in Kyrgyzstan, and is a breakthrough in the area of participatory public policymaking in they country.

In March 2004, a crackdown by the Kyrgyz authorities temporarily shut down her show.

I'm delighted that you're here to join us today.

There will be no edits here.

YULIA SAVCHENKO, TALK SHOW HOST,
PYRAMID TV, KYRGYZSTAN

Ms. SAVCHENKO. Thank you so much for having me here. And I'll try to be as brief as possible in assessing the post-revolutionary hardship in Kyrgyzstan.

I would say that the instant analysis by many political observers is to classify Kyrgyzstan as part of the global domino effect of democracy. But the forces at work in Kyrgyzstan are markedly different than those that produced change in both Georgia and Ukraine.

In sharp contrast, change in Kyrgyzstan has been led by a far less disciplined force with no widely recognized leader and no clearly defined program.

It should, thus, not be viewed as another in a string of velvet revolutions. Events in Bishkek are shaping up to be revolutionary in a more classic sense.

Allegations of vote-rigging served as the catalyst for the Kyrgyz revolution, but it was pent-up frustration among the population over persistent poverty and pervasive government corruption that packed the revolution with its explosive power.

Many supporters of the revolution aren't necessarily interested in democracy; they are just preoccupied simply with providing for themselves and their families.

Since this start of the end game for the Akaev administration—when protesters seized government buildings in Jalalabad and Osh in the wake of the second round of parliamentary voting on March 13th—the president's political opponents never demonstrated that they had firm control over the crowds of demonstrators.

Political leaders, including the new interim president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, have admitted that when anti-government protesters gathered on March 24th in Bishkek, they had no idea that the day would end with the collapse of Akaev's administration.

Now, suddenly finding themselves thrust into power, these same political leaders started pulling in different directions.

On the one hand, they need to cooperate in order to foster a sense of order. At the same time, they will doubtless experience competitive pressure in the coming days and months as many of them jockey to position themselves for the presidency.

The most prominent figures of the current revolution and further power contests are Kurmanbek Bakiyev, former Prime Minister of the country, and Felix Kulov, also the Prime Minister and the mayor of Bishkek.

Bakiyev has managed to position himself as the leading figure of the opposition movement. The 56-year-old former Prime Minister has been appointed interim Prime Minister and acting president.

The leader of the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan, Bakiyev also took charge of the Coordinating Council of People's Unity, the body set up to make the disparate regional protests flow up into one.

Bakiyev is a serious contender for the post of president, with an election announced for June. He enjoys widespread support in his home region of Jalalabad in the south of Kyrgyzstan. And the fact that he's married to a Russian will appeal to minorities who feel excluded from Kyrgyz politics.

Yet, there is a downside to his popular image. Until 3 years ago, Bakiyev was an active supporter of Akaev.

In March 2002, while he was Prime Minister, police fired into a crowd of demonstrators in the southern village of Aksy. The resulting deaths caused a furor and sparked mass protests not dissimilar to those seen in recent weeks.

Bakiyev resigned after Aksy, but critics still question his role in the decision to use violence against civilians, a point which may be used against him in the future.

Kulov is a long-standing personal opponent of Akaev's, and his release from prison brings him back to the center of political events.

Now 53, the former general was once Akaev's vice president. He served as interior minister and then mayor of Bishkek and then was imprisoned in the year 2000 on embezzlement charges that are widely perceived in Kyrgyzstan as politically motivated. There was

a sense that as mayor of the capital, Kulov was simply getting too popular and Akaev began to see him as a dangerous rival.

Sprung from prison on the day Akaev fled, Kulov was assigned general responsibility for law enforcement, national security and defense, without being given a particular ministerial post.

Several days after order was restored on the streets of Bishkek, he resigned, unhappy with new official appointments made by Mr. Bakiyev.

Yesterday, Kyrgyzstan's supreme court annulled one of two criminal charges that sent Kulov to jail. After that, he immediately announced about his intentions to run for the presidency.

With this announcement, the Presidential race has come into sharper focus. Kulov's candidacy sets up a regional battle surrounding the looming Presidential race, as he is generally viewed as representing Northern political and economic interests, while Bakiyev is recognized as the candidate of the South.

Today, we have come to the point when it's safe to say that the legislative and power crisis Kyrgyzstan experienced during these latest days has somehow approached its logical conclusion.

Finally, we have one more or less legitimate parliament and Askar Akaev finally agreed to resign after all attempts to denounce the revolution and proclaim it anti-constitutional.

This seemingly put an end to the legislative crisis. Many observers, however, believe that Akaev's resignation may only be a prelude to new problems.

Now that Akaev has resigned, many experts believe that rivalries among political parties and individual politicians are likely to intensify.

The latent problem is a deepening confrontation between Felix Kulov and interim President Kurmanbek Bakiev; besides, there is a confrontation within the new Kyrgyzstan leadership, as several politicians have declared their intentions to run for the presidency.

Western analysts tend to perceive any revolution in the former Soviet Union as something that will create democracy. But in our case, no one among these new leaders is talking about democracy. We have a very colorful opposition, but they are not proclaiming democratic principles as a core of their activity.

What also makes the situation really awkward is the fact that the current parliament, elected with huge violations of all possible norms that finally sparked the revolution, was considered the legitimate one.

So the revolution got half of its wish: Akaev is gone, but the disputed parliament remains. So some observers are asking, "What was the purpose of the so-called revolution in Kyrgyzstan if the parliamentary elections that sparked the unrest are now considered legitimate?"

I would also like to stress that the currently legitimate parliament was elected just as we were changing the structure of our ruling system, moving from a strong Presidential system to a strong parliamentary one.

The current Constitution of the country, amended by the initiative of Askar Akaev 2 years ago, gives more rise to the new unicameral parliament.

According to amendments, the president transferred part of his authority to the legislature. It means whoever is elected as a new president of Kyrgyzstan, he's likely to become a nominal figure that is subordinate to a parliament with a pro-Akaev majority.

So right now this situation is really absurd. After the revolution, we discovered ourselves in the pre-revolution situation, only without Akaev. What happened is imply the redistribution of authority among different influential groups within the elite.

And of course, the lack of unity among leaders of the country endangers the future of legislative changes, because it was supposed to have a constitutional reform in Kyrgyzstan and to hold Presidential and parliamentary elections.

Pulling all in different directions, former allies united in front of one enemy, President Akaev, during the latest days, had been revealing their skyrocketing ambitions—they only desire to beat up their ex-friends and today's rivals.

The date of the upcoming Presidential elections has been several times questioned by those candidates running for presidency.

The formal excuse is not to conduct elections in a rush. The real reason is to gain some time to prepare for the election race personally.

No one in this situation tends to perceive the reality of the country facing the crisis of legitimacy and seeking for one legitimate president who can start working out the complex economic and political situation instead of maneuvering in the corridor of political slogans and competitors eager to tailor the Presidential chair for themselves.

Constitutional reform, I'd like to stress, could be essential for Kyrgyzstan right now. Today we have a unique chance to lay the foundation of a social state system which will be monolithic, stable and independent from leaders' ambitions, and will prevent the return of a personal, authoritarian regime.

But obviously not so many people are willing to shift for the changes.

Thank you so much for your attention.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you. And thank you for the thought that you put forward. Thank you for the entire panel.

I want to have kind of a free-flowing dialogue and discussion, if we could.

I have some familiarity with the country and I've been to Kyrgyzstan twice. I've worked with the leadership, I've put forward a bill, the so-called Silk Road Strategy Act, that was passed by Congress, trying to get some integration and work within the region and working back and forth with us.

Kyrgyzstan, this one really troubles me, is the fact that it shouldn't have ended this way from where it started. I think that, Mr. Kimmage, you were the one that talked about President Clinton's '93 statement to President Akaev and laudatory statements.

When I first got involved in the region, you know, this was clearly the case of the one that was moving forward the fastest, the rhetoric was right, the setting seemed to be right, was sizing up as you said, "You know, this really should be the model country moving toward democratic, open, stable society development." And then it careened off wrong, badly.

When were the decisions made that started taking it the wrong way, first, and what were they?

Mr. Kimmage, do you have a——

Mr. KIMMAGE. I would just contribute the comment that I think the decisions that began to take the country in the wrong direction were likely not public decisions, because I think at the root of this problem lies corruption.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I'm going to just have a dialogue back and forth—in that sense, it is much like Georgia where Shevardnadze was seen as a good president and all, but there was always this underlying corruption issue that was there, and just finally it boils to a certain point that we've had it?

Mr. KIMMAGE. I don't know if there was always the underlying corruption. I think that it certainly ended up in a very similar position where, if you look at statements in the lead-up to the revolutionary events, there's this perception of absolutely total corruption and a perception that had simply gone too far.

So I think you ended up in a similar position, you know.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Dr. Olcott?

Ms. OLCOTT. I think that the mid-'90s were really critical.

I agree with some of what Daniel said, that I think that both the behind-the-scenes always played a more important role than what was going on in front of the scenes. And I think that when somebody finally digs up President Akaev's papers, if they ever do, and bank statements, that it will be clear that there was corruption at the beginning, probably around the gold transactions that was the big part of Kyrgyz economic reform.

But I don't think that President Akaev became terrified by that. I think by the mid-1990s, it was clear that none of the surrounding states were going to become democratic and that there were going to be very high costs to him personally from dissatisfaction within the Kyrgyz elite if——

Mr. BROWNBACK. So he just kind of assumes his surroundings then?

Ms. OLCOTT. I think he did assume his surroundings.

I mean, there's a lot of talk that he was influenced by his wife and stuff—and I talk about this in the testimony—I always see him as a much stronger figure than many others do. I think he made a lot of conscious choices.

But I think it's just as he became aware that economic reform was going to become more difficult than he expected—and I think the economy was a big driver, that when people came in '92 and '93 and he accepted the macroeconomic reforms and he severed Kyrgyzstan's currency from Russia, I think he believed the reformers, both inside Kyrgyzstan and outside, that this is going to work and it was going to work quickly.

And then the regional economy really collapsed. Kyrgyzstan's reforms turned out to be much more complicated than they were presented to him, and even than the advisers themselves, the international advisers, perceived.

And corruption, local-level corruption, just grew worse and worse. And at the same time——

Mr. BROWNBACK. As the economy wasn't growing like it needed to, that the people just kind of—I'm going to get what I can?

Ms. OLCOTT. Exactly. I think that was an important trigger. People just felt it was easier to be dishonest than to be honest, because at least by being dishonest you take care of mine, you take care of me and myself. And by being honest you weren't going to get the outcome you wanted.

I even think that at some point this happened in his own head, that he felt, by the mid-'90s, that it was just easier to be thug-like like many of his neighbors—soft thug-like, you know. I mean he sent Zamira to jail. But you didn't have the same deaths that you had in other places.

And the countervailing pressure just wasn't so great. Friendship with the United States wasn't producing heaven on earth for Kyrgyzstan. The neighbors were beating on him in private for having gone this way. And the economy was going sour slowly. And it went even more sour after 1998.

But that doesn't make the man not responsible for his own actions. It just makes them comprehensible.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I understand.

Ms. SADYKOVA [through interpreter]. I agree with everything that has been said so far by others here. However, as a journalist who has studied what was happening in Kyrgyzstan for many years, I would like to add a personal note.

He was a man who depended very much on other members of his family.

His family and his clan played a very great role in his decisions. And he himself has deepened the clan competition in the country.

And this is what my colleague, Ms. Savchenko, mentioned, that many of the problems that remain unsolved in Kyrgyzstan are regional—south, north and between clans.

And the new parliament, the one that has just been elected, is a clan parliament.

And therefore, when and if constitutional reforms are instituted, one of our demands or desires is that this clan influence be brought under control by proportional representation of regions and clans and parties—proportional regional and party representation.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I want to move now to the issue of the lessons that other countries in the region will learn from this.

And, Dr. Olcott, I found your analysis of this quite interesting. And as I heard it, OK, that sound pretty logical to me, for the people that I know in the region, of the Kazakhs, the Uzbeks. The Tajiks I know less about, and the Turkemen, I don't know who knows anything about what's going on there.

But it seemed to me on this one, on Kyrgyzstan, with what had just happened in Georgia, what had just happened in Ukraine, what was literally happening in Lebanon, that this should be very clear—if you're going to be a country that's aspiring somewhat on the democracy model, or let's say even you don't, it's pretty clear you've got the civil society that's developing somewhat in your country and you know that this is taking place.

And if you're going to run an election that's not free and fair and open by domestic standards at least, and certainly not by international standards, you're going to have some trouble here—or the potential for trouble would seem to me to be quite high.

I'm just putting myself in the leadership position in Kyrgyzstan. I've seen these things taking place in other countries. I know I have a civil society, at least the early stages of development in Kyrgyzstan. The potential of a revolution taking place would seem to be quite a bit in the cards if I don't hold a free and fair election.

So why isn't that held? Why doesn't that happen?

Mr. Kimmage, or whoever would feel—Dr. Olcott?

Ms. OLCOTT. Yes. I'm going to ask the question I asked myself late into the night this whole last 3 weeks.

Mr. BROWNBACK. This is a bright man. Dr. Akaev is a physicist. He's a bright man.

Ms. OLCOTT. I think I would say three things. I think one thing that we mentioned in our testimonies that didn't come out so much in discussion is that the political crisis of 2002, from the time of the Aksy disturbances, was never resolved.

And this is what drove Bakiyev into opposition.

But Akaev really cheated the elite at that time. There was a whole debate over constitutional reform. He practically was ousted in 2002. And he held onto his job by the skin of his teeth.

And he understood that. He understood that he had pulled a fast one in the process of drafting constitutional reform, substituting a text virtually at the last minute that included changes he wanted, and that nobody in the elite trusted him.

And so what he failed to do, I think, was to convince people, prior to that election, that he really was going to step down in October, 2005. I don't think there was a single, serious political figure in the country that thought that Akaev wasn't going to use that election to somehow remain in power.

And in his mind, he no longer—and I think part of this is that he became much closer to Russia after 2002. And Daniel Kimmage talks this when he talks about managed democracy—that he was sold a bill of goods by advisers from outside the country who didn't understand Kyrgyzstan, that this could work.

I know some of the people that came to advise him—they knew nothing about Kyrgyzstan.

So to the degree to which a leader wants to believe they can get away with what they want, he just was willing to put aside his better intellectual sense and take the only path that he saw that could give him the outcome he wanted, which was being able to either stay in power or dictate the terms of his departure.

And since that was his overwhelming goal, he just blinded himself to the things around him.

But I think most people were shocked that he behaved as stupidly as he did, that he could have done things along the way that would have made that election free enough and fair enough to have gotten through this crisis and found some way to exit with some grace.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Ms. Savchenko?

Ms. SAVCHENKO. I think that at some point we need to remember about this inner circle of our President Akaev.

And, as Zamira already mentioned, after the year 1995, his family acquired this overwhelming authority over our president. And then they just acquired these incredible economic assets in the

country and literally half of the economy or even more were just sold to the Akaev family.

And then it was very dangerous for all of them to lose power at this point.

And that's why Mr. Akaev was reassured by his son-in-law, by his wife—I think by his daughter—to stay in power by any means.

That's why elections were badly rigged even though some real problems with rigging these elections were so easily predicted.

So it wasn't about his personal will, as well. And he can be smart and bright—and he's a scientist. But it was all about this inner circle after the year 1995.

Mr. BROWNBACK. That's sounds like the Eve doctrine to me. [Laughter.]

Ms. SAVCHENKO. Yes.

Mr. BROWNBACK. It was all Eve.

Mr. Kimmage?

Mr. KIMMAGE. I want to return to your question which is, as I understood it, why are these lessons not learned time after time, which I've also asked myself.

And one of the things I would stress is the extremely Soviet understanding of politics that we find among these Soviet elites, which is to say that——

Mr. BROWNBACK. You're using the term "Soviet?"

Mr. KIMMAGE. Soviet understanding of politics. And what I mean by this that they look at all politics, be it through elections or others, as an art of manipulation, not an expression of political will.

Where we see this come out is if you look at the way events in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan are analyzed by critics in post-Soviet countries.

And you can find many articles in the Russian press—you can find it on Russian state television. This is seen as part of a plot. It's seen as a manipulation through these nefarious Western-funded organizations.

So in other words, when leaders or political elites outside of these countries look at what happened in Georgia or in Ukraine or in Kyrgyzstan, they say, "Oh, look, somebody paid. Somebody pulled this off. It's a manipulation. This has nothing to do with political will."

And so the conclusion they draw is: "I simply need to manipulate better."

In other words, I don't actually need to carry out a free election. What I need to do is actually pull off a better sort of art of manipulation.

And I think this is one of the key reasons why this lesson is not learned.

And I'll just close with a little vignette. There was a discussion recently, I believe in a Russian radio station, and a group of experts were discussing—So how do you avoid an Orange revolution in Russia or elsewhere?

And they discussed all of these very complicated schemes of countering the influence of these various, nefarious Western-funded groups. And then one analyst said, "Well, you know, it's actually very simple. Don't falsify elections. Don't lie through state media. And that's how you prevent it."

And, of course, everyone looked at him as a naive fool.

But we should bear in mind that this mentality is very pervasive.

And I think that's one of the reasons why these lessons are not learned.

Mr. BROWNBACK. To me, that just seems to be so fundamental, particularly when you're in a Kyrgyzstan-type of setting. It's a relatively small country and a revolutionary change could get started pretty rapidly and conclude pretty rapidly.

That just still doesn't much sense to me.

But maybe it's generational then, too. When you describe a Soviet leadership—that it just takes some time to take that mental cap off before you engage and say, you know, "Democracy is a good way and it isn't something you manage. It happens. And you put yourself up for it and you win or lose. And that's just the way it goes."

Let me take you to the next question of lessons for others in the region, if I could. And I do want to get some pointedness on this, because my message to the leaders in that region—and I hope and I know through all of OSCE—is: Conduct free and fair elections.

This is not rocket science. This is not a complicated thing. If they want help in conducting free and fair elections, we will gladly provide that.

If they want monitors to be able to tell their people that they're conducting free and fair elections, we will provide monitors.

If they want monitors from other parts of the world than the United States, we will provide monitors from other parts of the world than the United States.

Now we're not going to go to other managed democracies—of your term, Mr. Kimmage. I think you're doing disservice to the term "democracy" by calling it managed.

Maybe you call it managed government. But I wouldn't call it managed democracy.

But we will help. We will do whatever you want.

But if you're not going to conduct free and fair elections, you will see the international community call it for what it is. It's not a free and fair election—period.

And if people are going to start a revolution then because they didn't have a free and fair election, you're the one that made that decision.

We will help to make sure that it's conducted as a free and fair election, as we helped, as others did in Iraq, in Afghanistan—there will be problems with elections. There always are somewhat.

But the international community will help so that if the Kazakhs are concerned about their people not perceiving a free and fair election, we will do so to help, if that's the case. And Azerbaijan, the same way.

What could we do better or more to drive that message to these other countries that will soon be cuing up for elections and this issue come before their country?

Any thoughts from any of you?

Ms. SADYKOVA [through interpreter]. For all these years, we actually had been asking for greater involvement by the OSCE in our electoral process. The problem is that the mission—the OSCE mis-

sion—works more with the governments than with the political parties.

And the main goal should have been to arrange or enhance or contribute to a dialogue between the government and society and the other parties.

This pre-election task, it seems to me, was let go and not accomplished.

The work that needs to be done is to bring to one table a very diverse group of all opinions, all political opinions.

And if you speak of Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan, there is no dialogue whatsoever; nobody even speaks about dialogue.

It is impossible to imagine that opposition members or leaders would sit at the same table with Karimov or Nazabaev.

And right now in Kyrgyzstan, as we prepare for elections again, it is very important, again, to bring all the different factions together for a dialogue so that they can work out some basic common rules of the game that then would preclude that the new elections would again lead to some kind of disturbances.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Is that being done and helped by the OSCE?

Ms. SADYKOVA [through interpreter]. Well, this is one of the things that I mentioned, that the OSCE mission in Bishkek is very small and they have not been able to work in that area.

So this is why one of my requests that I have mentioned is to follow the example of what OSCE did in Albania before the elections there, and maybe temporarily, before our election, have an increase in staff that could work on this problem.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I think that's an excellent thought.

And we just passed yesterday in the state authorization bill an expanded election mission for Kyrgyzstan from here, from the United States' governance or funding approach.

Now, that's report language for now, so we'll have to put more funding behind it. But I think that's a very good suggestion.

Dr. Olcott?

Ms. OLCOTT. I think it's very important in terms of how the United States can maximize its affect on these states to really distinguish one state from another, to look at Kyrgyzstan separate from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

And in Kyrgyzstan, as Zamira was just saying, the real challenge will be whether the international community—whether the OSCE and United States and other Western countries—can deliver enough technical assistance through our own foreign policy allocation machines to get us there fast enough for this election. It's very soon and it's really critical.

This is a receptive audience, and I think we really could get a lot of technical assistance in there if we could agree on what—if all the different foreign actors—and the OSCE certainly is the appropriate umbrella—what kind of assistance should be prioritized and get the donating up fast.

Even in the last election, the Kyrgyz were complaining they didn't get things that were promised to them in time. I mean, it was very slow getting technical assistance then. That wouldn't have changed the outcome, but this is going to be a real burden on the Western nations to do this properly, because we do have a door.

There's a different door, I think, in Kazakhstan. I was really surprised that just recently, again, the OSCE leadership mentioned again the possibility that Kazakhstan was still in the running for the chairmanship in—I think it's 2009 they asked for it and the decision is to be made in 2006.

This really gives the OSCE, in particular, a real bargaining position with the Kazakhs.

I was shocked that this door didn't close after the parliamentary elections, but it doesn't seem to have. Well, these Presidential elections are really his last time to run clean, free and fair elections.

And, again, the technical assistance is one part of the problem. It's really the will that this has been thwarted in Kazakhstan as much by the will as by—near the top and probably at the top—than by their incapacity.

But there at least there is possibility of dialogue between OSCE nations and the Kazakh Government. They can, at least, pretend that they share some of our goals. Many of the organizations we work through are still legal in Kazakhstan.

So that is one strategy and it may not work. I think it's will rather than technical assistance, but technical assistance and the whole move to dialogue, use of the media—his new reform program, his February speech, opens the door for renewed efforts by the United States and by other OSCE actors. He claims that he wants all these reforms and wants them quickly.

And, you know, it gives us a document that we can go in to Nazabaev with and say, "We're happy to help you. Others are happy to help you."

These two cases are easy. We both know how hard they are.

You open Uzbekistan, that is really an impossible case for this kind of vocabulary, partly, I would argue, because you have this basic tension.

We go in—the OSCE goes in and says that we're interested in giving you technical assistance. We want these elections to be freer and fairer.

You have other democracy activists, some of whom are U.S.-funded, who are now illegal in these countries. And they're illegal in part because some of the people associated with them say it's impossible to work with this regime, that the only hope is to overthrow the regime.

So, in a sense, Congress and the State Department have to work through which message they want to send. Are they sending the message that we want to work with repressive regimes to have them modify their regimes with a template of things, including working with pro-government parties—increasing their skill level—or do we only say we will not deal with anything having to do with these repressive states, but then they're not going to take seriously that they have to have democracy-builders in there?

The one tragedy, and the thing that makes me most frightened about Uzbekistan, is that it's not enough to simply work with parties; you have to have a secular elite competent to take over.

And that's the other area of training, because we haven't been working with pro-government groups in a place like Uzbekistan.

That secular elite, those people who are against Karimov in their hearts but still aren't willing to be against them in their mouths,

that serve the regime they would like to see changed, they're kind of falling out of the loop of democracy-building efforts.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Ms. Savchenko?

Ms. SAVCHENKO. I just wanted to add briefly on the OSCE presence in Kyrgyzstan.

The problem is that before these elections, OSCE was very cautious, in fact, about its position. And what is necessary right now is to claim this position more definitely, because after Mr. Akaev started to crack down on all international organizations and independent media—and he actually accused an American ambassador of supporting directly the opposition in the country—OSCE was very, very cautious. And there weren't any statements, any clear statements.

And they actually preferred to work with our government, and a lot of opposition people who were NGOs representatives accused OSCE of this position and of being extremely loyal to the Kyrgyz government.

And the latest action of the OSCE was actually to arm our military forces with some kind of guns, and it was a governmentally supported program and it was—actually, it was the mission of the OSCE and that's how the image of the organization is created, and the image was actually spoiled.

And right now they need to think it over and probably they need to redefine their positions in terms of a more direct approach of their statements and missions.

Mr. BROWNBACK. That's a very helpful comment, particularly for us in looking at the other countries in the region and what's taking place there as well and in Russia, what's happening in that country.

I do know as I've watched this all evolve and with amazement seen the Soviet Union fall when it did—because I just didn't think that was possible for another 30 years. I thought it was a ways off, a long ways off. And then to see it fall, I'm just astounded.

And it seems like we're in the second wave of revolution through the Soviet Union, that after the Soviet Union fell, a lot of guys fled to disparate parts of the country and set up shop. And these were people that were part of the Politburo at the time, Soviet Union, and they went to places like Kyrgyzstan and Georgia and Kazakhstan. And it started economic reforms and slow democratic reforms and opened the society up.

Relative to what it was during the Soviet Union time period, it was a profound change. But it hasn't moved fast enough.

And so now you move forward to 2000, 2004, 2005, and the people are impatient, saying, "Look, we started here. We've gone a certain distance, but we're not near where we need to get."

And I would hope, really, that the leaders in that region and the leaders in our country and around the world would press them saying, it was great, the fall of the Soviet Union. Things were extraordinarily peaceful overall, given the fall and collapse of an empire that, what, 19 countries come out of.

There's been some fairly good change that's taken place during that time period. It's not near where we need and have to be to satisfy the needs and the will of the people in this region. And it's really got to step up much more aggressively at this point in time.

I'd hope that would be the lesson to all of us, and that hopefully we can see these free, fair elections and transitions to another generation of leaders that are open to, not a managed democracy, but a pure democracy, that here the people rule, not the elite.

Thank you all very much for joining us.

Ms. Ambassador-Designate, I welcome you. I look forward to receiving you in my office as the new Ambassador from Kyrgyzstan. And this has been an excellent hearing.

Do you have a final thought?

Ms. SADYKOVA. We would like to invite you, Mr. Brownback, in Kyrgyzstan near the future.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you for that invitation.

Hearing's adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling these hearings. As you know, the Helsinki Commission last held a hearing on Kyrgyzstan in 2001. At that time, former Kyrgyz Vice-President-turned opposition politician Felix Kulov was in jail on political grounds. His wife came down from New York, where she lived, to make a personal plea on his behalf. I am delighted that as we hold today's hearing, the circumstances in Kyrgyzstan are very different, and Felix Kulov is a free man. Indeed, he has announced his candidacy for the post of president.

Over the last year and a half, I have followed with fascination the progress of revolutionary situations in the former Soviet Union, which I see as an outgrowth of a great, historic wave of freedom that began in the 1980s and continues to this day. After Ukraine's Orange Revolution, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili met with Viktor Yushchenko in January. They jointly issued a Declaration hailing the revolutions and democratic processes in both their countries. That document has not gotten the attention it deserves, except probably from very nervous analysts in Moscow. In their declaration, the two leaders forcefully assert that ". . . freedom and democracy, the will of the people and fair elections are much stronger than the state machine, regardless of how powerful and aggressive it is." Just as important, they categorically deny the view—often heard in Moscow and from Central Asian leaders—"that a peaceful, democratic revolution can be brought about artificially through certain techniques or as a result of outside interference."

Presidents Yushchenko and Saakashvili also expressed their gratitude to democratic states and organizations for supporting the non-violent struggle by the people of Ukraine and Georgia for freedom and democracy. They expressed the hope that such support would continue in the future. In conclusion, they declared that the Ukrainian and Georgian revolutions represent "the new wave of liberation of Europe, which will lead to the final victory of freedom and democracy on the continent of Europe."

I agree with Presidents Yushchenko and Saakashvili on these two critical points. First, the slow, patient work done by NGOs and civil society activists in the former Soviet bloc, with the steady assistance of Western NGOs, has had a powerful impact in liberating the minds of the people in those countries. We should continue those efforts and emphasize democracy-promotion in our assistance programs. And, we should expect to see more "revolutions" in the future.

It is noteworthy that all three revolutions of the last year and a half were sparked by elections. In Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, people refused to accept the latest official attempt to lie about who had earned the right to represent them. I find it inspiring that the trigger for all of these revolutions was the most fundamental expression of democracy. Many analysts and opposition activists all over the former Soviet Union—after fifteen years

of consistent vote fraud—had sadly concluded that many people had lost interest in voting. Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan demonstrate that faith in the ballot persists despite years of disillusionment and apathy.

Precisely for this reason, it is essential that Kyrgyzstan's preterm presidential election now scheduled for June 26 be exemplary and meet all international standards. The country's future head of state must enjoy unquestioned legitimacy inside and outside the country. In fact, although the interim authorities have come to terms with the newly elected lawmakers, perhaps new parliamentary elections should be discussed. After all, it was popular resistance to the official results—which gave the pro-Akaev forces about 90 percent of the legislature—that sparked the events we are investigating today.

I'm sure our witnesses will address this question and other important matters. I look forward to hearing their testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. Chairman, I applaud you for organizing these hearings, especially so soon after the events we will be discussing today in detail.

As is clear from the series of revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and now Kyrgyzstan, the post-Soviet political order is shaking and may be on the brink of total collapse. Most likely, many governments will be calling for stability above all. But the main lesson I draw from these events is that stability is possible only through democracy.

It is striking how quickly the regime of President Askar Akaev collapsed. From one day to the next—when many still doubted that the protests would extend from Kyrgyzstan's southern cities to the north—the country's authorities in the capital Bishkek just melted away. A relatively small group of demonstrators quickly managed to bring down the government, leading Askar Akaev and his family to flee. Almost no one could be found to defend his regime. His officials deserted him and the law enforcement apparatus opted not to take on the demonstrators. We can only conclude that he had lost all support in Kyrgyzstan. Throughout my years of involvement with the Helsinki Process and the work of this Commission, I have paid special attention to the problem of corruption. For that reason, I would like to take note of widely-reported resentment in Kyrgyzstan over the rapacity of the Akaev family. His children and relatives, notably his son-in-law, were notorious in the country for seizing all economically profitable sectors of the economy. Businessmen complained bitterly about their inability to grow beyond a certain level without attracting the acquisitive eye of a member of "The Family," who would appropriate the concern or make the owner an offer he couldn't refuse. It is not surprising that looters reportedly targeted stores they believed were owned by the Akaev family, although this in no way justifies their excesses.

The stunning speed of the government's collapse in Kyrgyzstan raises serious questions about the stability of neighboring regimes, all of which are authoritarian and corrupt. Is it reasonable to assume that they are as fragile as Kyrgyzstan and would topple as quickly if given a push? If so, what are the implications for U.S. policy in the region?

In the meantime, Kyrgyzstan must develop its democratic and economic potential. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses what obstacles must be overcome and how the United States can help.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. MARTHA OLCOTT, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify before you today.

For the third time in 18 months seriously flawed elections have brought down the government in a CIS state, and for the first time this has occurred east of the Urals, demonstrating that popular expectations in the Asian states of the former Soviet Union are not appreciably different from those in the European ones.

Like Georgia's Rose Revolution, the catalyst for Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution was flawed parliamentary elections. This time too, like in Georgia, the elections were more democratic than the previous parliamentary election, but fell short of being "free and fair" and more importantly did not meet local expectations. Poverty, corruption, and the fear that the president would sabotage the succession struggle during the last months of his presidential term, made the opposition and masses take to the street in now familiar fashion.

If it succeeds, the "tulip revolution" could prove to be the most remarkable of all, causing positive reverberations throughout a region that many had written off as lost from the point of view of building democratic societies. It will put all of the other leaders in the region on notice that they too must take seriously the need for popular political enfranchisement or risk that they will be driven from power.

And if it fails, it will not be because the masses in Central Asia failed to meet the test, but because the ruling elite in Kyrgyzstan managed to sabotage the process of political change. For that reason, even the failure of the Kyrgyz revolution will not leave Central Asia's other leaders feeling more secure.

PRESIDENT AKAYEV WAS THE MASTER OF HIS FATE

While Askar Akayev was frequently described as the cause of his the captive of a domineering wife, and rapacious relatives, the former Kyrgyz president was always in control. Although he may not have orchestrated the electoral abuses that occurred, he obviously never tried to stop them.

The preconditions of President Akayev's political demise developed as a result of his poor management of a public protest in spring 2002. The protest was a result of

Azimbek Beknazarov, now interim Prosecutor-General and then chairman of the Jogorku Kenesh (parliament) committee on Judicial and Legal Affairs, called for Akayev's impeachment, after the government decided to cede 125,000 hectares of territory to Chinese control during border negotiations between the two states. Beknazarov claimed that these lands contained valuable water resources, as well as the graves of people who died fleeing to China to avoid arrest by Russian troops in the 1916 uprising.

Shortly afterwards, on January 5, 2002 Beknazarov was arrested, charged with exceeding his official powers as an investigator in the Toktogul regional prosecutor's office, seven years earlier. Beknazarov was put on trial in January 2002 and his sup-

porters began to picket and some even began a hunger strike. When one of the fasting demonstrators died of a stroke, tempers flared even more, and demonstrations in his hometown of Ak-Sui in the province of Jalalabad grew in size, so that by March hundreds, if not more, were participating. Intimidated by the size of the demonstration, on March 17–18, 2002, the local police used force to break them up, leaving seven unarmed people dead. Their deaths quickly became the cause of nation-wide protests leading to calls for President Akayev's resignation.

The deaths in Ak-Sui, and the government's response to them, unified Akayev's political opposition for the first time. The scale of public protests grew, and people from provincial cities started marching to the capital. Advisors close to the president feared that if a way out of the crisis was not found, Akayev would be forced to resign. In May 2002, in an unsuccessful effort to satisfy the opposition Akayev fired his Prime Minister, Kurmanbek Bakiev (now serving as Prime Minister), and named Nikolai Tanayev, a Russian who had long worked in the republic, to replace him.

In the weeks that followed, Akayev demonstrated his political mastery. He simultaneously promised to with the legislature and threatened to disband the parliament, which would strip the current members of all privilege. It was in this period that Akayev first reached out to Russia's Ministry of Interior for tactical assistance. Meeting halls became impossible to rent and marchers were turned away from Bishkek.

Akayev also sought to open new channels for political dialogue, inviting the whole country to debate what changes to the country's constitution should be made in order to open up the political process. At the president's behest, a committee of jurists, politicians, and political activists was organized, and they recommended restricting the power of the presidency, enhancing the independence of the prime minister and the cabinet, and converting Kyrgyzstan's two house legislature back into a one-chamber body.

But the version of the constitution put to the voters, on February 2, 2003, was not that offered by the committee, but a rewrite done in the office of the president, which left the presidency stronger than the committee of specialists had envisioned and made it almost impossible for the president to be impeached. The referendum, which also included a call for President Akayev to serve out his term of office, passed overwhelmingly. Just to make sure that Akayev would do this without undue public pressure, in the run-up to the referendum the Kyrgyz authorities added a number of constitutional amendments that made it permanently more difficult for opposition groups to get permits for large public meetings.

This experience convinced Kyrgyzstan's opposition—and many people who had previously been politically rather apathetic—that the Kyrygz president was not to be trusted, and that he would always find a way to cheat or outmaneuver his opponents. It explains why they were so fearful that Akayev would use the newly elected parliament to change the constitution.

At the very time that his hold on power was being challenged, Akayev found it easier to behave more like the leaders of neighboring Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and to accept "technical assistance" from Russia designed to help shape Kyrgyzstan into a "guid-

ed" democracy, rather than a society that is recognizably democratic according to western norms. Instructors from special troops of the MVD came to help teach the Kyrgyz to better manage crowd control, while political analysts close to the Kremlin advised President Akayev's staff on how to manipulate parliamentary and presidential elections.

But as we saw in late March, even with help from both these groups President Akayev was unable to maintain control. Akayev received bad political advice, and even with extra training, Kyrgyzstan's security forces proved unreliable in crowd control.

At the center of the election turmoil was the opposition's unshakeable belief that Askar Akayev was determined to elect a pocket parliament in order to change the constitution, which barred him from running for president again in the planned October 2005 presidential elections. And the energy that Akayev and his surrogates extended to affect the parliamentary elections of February 27 and March 13 fed these rumors as well as squandering most of Akayev's remaining political good-will.

While the actual process of voting was judged more transparent than in the previous parliamentary election, the violations of democratic norms were rarely random. Dozens of people who got on the ballot were pressured into withdrawing their candidacy, generally to allow an Akayev supporter an easy election victory. Several prominent critics were denied places on the ballot due to legal loopholes, including a number of popular former ambassadors, who failed to meet the residence requirements for parliamentarians because of their diplomatic service.

Former (and now acting) foreign minister Roza Otunbayeva was one of those barred from running, She returned to the country in 2004, from a U.N. diplomatic post in Sukhumi (Georgia) to try and unify the opposition form the Ata kurt movement and, establishing the United Opposition group. Not only was Otunbayeva denied a place on the ballot, but Akayev's daughter Bermet won the seat in the district the former hoped to contend in.

Political independents and opposition figures were targeted for defeat, and most of the reports of vote buying came from their districts. A half dozen opposition figures, though, received a majority of votes during the first round of balloting; and in all only a third of the 75 seats were filled at this time. But the Akayev machine refused to rest easy. Even more effort was put into defeating opposition candidates than previously. The country's independent media center found its electricity was cut, without explanation, and until they received help in finding generators the country's small opposition press and opposition candidates were without the means to reach readers.

Two key opposition figures—Adakhan Madamarov and Kurmanbek Bakiev, who were expected to be easily reelected, went down to defeat in the second round, each charging fraud. The defeat of Bakiev in particular seems to have been a turning point. This former Prime Minister and declared presidential candidate had strong support from masses and elite alike in the country's densely populated and impoverished south, his home region. After his defeat Bakiev through his support behind the United Opposition, who then sought to wrest control of the southern half of the

country from Akayev, a goal they achieved in only a few days. The speed with which they stabilized their new "popular" or interim executives and legislative councils, undoubtedly gave confidence in the ability of the opposition to make a smooth transfer of power, as thousands of unhappy residents of the capital took to the streets on March 24. The march organizers did not expect that part of the march—mostly young people—would break off and storm the President's office (and seat of government). But when Akayev fled they were only too happy to pick up the pieces, and assume authority.

Askar Akayev, like his colleagues throughout the region, introduced political institutions that were intended to create an illusion of political participation. They were designed to assuage foreign and domestic critics and not to facilitate the sharing of power by the president and his entourage with other groups in society. When demands for real power emerged Akayev's first instinct was to try and stifle protest and when that failed he sought to push the offending groups from political life. But over time the Kyrgyz population and the opposition elite learned to anticipate his behavior, and in March 2005, they simply outsmarted him.

Akayev brought little honor to himself in the way he retreated. He swore in the newly elected parliament, after he had already lost control of the southern half of the country, and then took back his hastily offered resignation as president once he reached safety outside the country. Both actions further exacerbated the country's constitutional crisis and led Kurmanbek Bakiev, who was chosen as Prime Minister and acting president by the old legislature, to recognize the legitimacy of the newly elected parliament (save in 20 disputed districts), which in turn affirmed him as Prime Minister (but not acting president).

To his credit though, Askar Akayev did learn one thing from the events in Aksy, that firing on an unarmed crowd could lead to civil war, and for all his unwillingness to resign, he choose to draw the line at that. However, there is no reason to assume that all of Akayev's Central Asian colleagues would make the same choice.

THE KYRGYZ ELITE MUST STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE

The political elite in Kyrgyztan is a fractious group, which has yet to demonstrate whether it is democratic or as potentially corrupt as the outgoing office-holders. If the latter proves to be true, the population may decide that they have been shortchanged and once again take to the streets in protest.

The "Tulip Revolution" has been suffering a lot of bad press lately, fed in part by the frustration of Kyrgyzstan's young political activists—from student groups and other non-governmental organizations,—who had very idealized versions of what a transfer of power was likely to bring. They looked to Georgia and Ukraine and viewed and—with the distance and some idealization—saw them as much more fundamental and revolutionary then what when on in their own country, when a group of politicians quite familiar to them began dividing power in what many saw as all too familiar ways. But it is not too late for these young people to have at least some of their idealism restored.

Like Ukraine and Georgia, one faction of a split political elite took over from another. But unlike Georgia power was not trans-

ferred from one generation to another, Kurmanbek Bakiev, the acting president is only a few years younger than Askar Akayev, as is his principal rival former vice-president Feliks Kulov. And unlike Ukraine, the worldview of the newcomers doesn't vary differently from the incumbents, the foreign policies that they pursue will be identical.

But it still remains to be seen whether the domestic politics that they pursue will closely resemble that of the Akayev regime. The key now is for the interim authorities to develop public confidence, and to maintain it through the presidential elections. This means concentrating on good government, rather than a division of the spoils. Looked at coldly it is sometimes hard to believe that the running interim government are primarily preoccupied with finding the most qualified person for each job, or keeping talented senior officials and experts in place. It seems instead, that parallel with trying to keep things afloat, there is a desire to reward every major opposition figure with a prominent position to compensate them for their years of sacrifice. One wonders, too, how much of the division of jobs is being made with an eye to building alliances in the upcoming presidential election.

Many observers have always used the clan structure of the Kyrgyz people as the explanation for all that was bad in Kyrgyz political life. But the perpetuation of patrilineal based kin-groups, simply helps give shape to the patronage networks which have become more pervasive since independence. In small countries like Kyrgyzstan, elites sometimes believe that stability can be maintained if all the major interests—or patronage groups—are given a continuing stake in the political system.

In his final few years in power former president Askar Akayev sought to restrict the power of key patronage groups, and as a result drove more and more of the country's leading political figures into opposition. But as this was occurring the country was growing more complex as well. Economic reforms had led to a small group of independent businessmen, who while willing to pay some "tribute" also wanted market conditions to regulate economic opportunities. While they may be happy to benefit from preferential treatment, and trade support (and funding of campaigns) for it, when choices begin to be made among them, those who fall from favor will once again be pressing for a level playing field in the economy.

Similarly, the Kyrgyz population has also changed a lot in recent years, or they wouldn't have believed that it was their right to press for the ouster of a president who was abusing their electoral rights.

For this reason it is really incumbent upon the new Kyrgyz leadership to concentrate on rebuilding public confidence through insuring that the upcoming presidential election meet international norms of competitiveness and the conduct of the balloting be both free and fair. Having never had an election that fully complied with democratic norms this will really be an ambitious task for the Kyrgyz government to organize in under three months. Yet there is very little wiggle room available to them to get it wrong.

Moreover, following the presidential election, the newly elected president should further legitimate his or her authority by sponsoring a national dialogue on to solicit opinions on what key groups

in society see as necessary constitutional changes. The way that the last constitutional modifications were handled left many dissatisfied, and the current balance of power between president and parliament needs to be redressed in a way that provides more constitutional checks on the former's authority. The debate should culminate in a referendum followed by pre-term elections. The current parliament, elected in controversy and sworn into office when the central government had already lost control of half of the country will never enjoy legitimacy, and should be replaced by a democratically elected body. The adjudication of 20 disputed seats is not a sufficient remedy.

The "tulip revolution" has been messier than its Georgian and Ukrainian predecessors. The result is that the interim government in Kyrgyzstan will have an uphill battle to demonstrate their democratic credentials. But while the major tests are yet to come, the Kyrgyz deserve credit for not standing still for an election filled with irregularities, from the time that opposition figures were barred from running on technicalities, to potentially independent candidates intimidated into stepping down, to irregularities at the ballot boxes. The new government in Kyrgyzstan will enjoy a short honeymoon period, and they had better use it wisely.

For the last fifteen years the leaders of all of these Asian states have been warning the west that their populations were not ready for democracy, and that without the guidance of strong authority figures, the situation would degenerate to one of mob rule.

But the mob in Kyrgyzstan was easily quelled, with promises that new office-holders would take their public trust more seriously than their predecessors. But if the Kyrgyz elite degenerate into "business as usual Central Asian style" the hope for democratic reform in the region more generally will be dashed. And if the Kyrgyz masses take to the streets once more—in a year or two, or even sooner—it is unlikely that their protests will be broken up without the use of force, and without considerable bloodshed.

THE IMPACT OF THE TULIP REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL ASIA

The messy exit of President Akayev may not mean that his colleagues in the region will also be pushed from office, but it certainly does increase the likelihood that secular and religious opposition groups will try and oust them. The current presidents may still be strong enough to retain power or stage-manage its passage, but not to create risk-free environments for their successors to try and secure their authority. But throughout the region disgruntled members of the elite, some long-time opponents and others who previously were silent, are likely to try and take advantage of what most view as the growing weakness of each of the region's presidents the inherent weakness of a new president.

Those who seek political power are going to use all the potential tools at their disposal to advance their cause. Many will see these contests as their final chance of a lifetime to take power, which could make substate identities and ethnic loyalties more generally of greater importance than they have been in the past few years. The existence of these loyalties introduces an element of greater volatility into the situation. With the exception of Tajikistan though, the elite in Central Asia have been quite sensitive to the

incendiary capacity of attempting to mobilize populations along ethnic or sub-ethnic lines and there is no evidence to suggest that either today's political elders or the next generation coming up will seek to advance their claims in a dangerous fashion.

This is only one source of potential danger. Throughout Central Asia, there are various "have-not" groups that have been waiting to make their presence felt. These include those from the presidential entourages who will feel slighted and damaged by the choice of a successor, as well as out-groups from among the old-Soviet elites and their children, many of whom have accumulated economic "markers" or levers to use in advancing their cause. Added to this are the remnants of the alternative elite, who had counted on independence providing them with new economic and political opportunities, but who were thwarted in their plans. The alternative elite include both those with secular and religious orientation. The mix of forces, though, varies quite substantially from country to country, as do the tools that are available for them to use in their struggle for power. But most had added to their traditional arsenal of tools—manipulation of political position or of position in ethnic and sub-ethnic communities—new economic and cultural tools of "global outreach."

Throughout Central Asia, members of the elite from disfavored clans and families have been sitting by, waiting for the opportunity to grasp more economic and political power. As institutions to ensure a peaceful transfer of power do not exist, there is no foundation on which for them to rest their hopes. The Rose, Orange and Tulip revolutions have changed their perspective, and have given them new incentive to try and plot the downfall of the current regime.

This is particularly true in Kazakhstan. The political system in Kazakhstan most resembles that of Kyrgyzstan, in that in both countries there is already a strong penetration of civil society institutions, the political and economic elite is partially fragmented, and the president has been associated with a pattern of corruption. But there are important differences.

Kazakhstan is a much wealthier society than Kyrgyzstan, with a much larger economy. Both countries have pursued relatively similar policies of economic reform, but in the Kazakhstan attracted vastly greater sums of foreign investment, due to its large oil and gas reserves, which also have allowed the Kazakhs to benefit from high global oil prices. As a result poverty is much less of a problem than in Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan's poor are relatively dispersed across the country's enormous territorial expanse, making them much more difficult to organize.

Kazakhstan is likely to be the next state targeted by its opposition for a democratic revolution. Some might argue that civil society institutions are not as well dispersed in Kazakhstan, but the biggest difference is that the majority of the political elite is still unwilling to break with the country's president.

Things may change between now and the planned presidential elections in 2006, when Nursultan Nazarbayev plans to run for a final, and constitutionally permitted, term in office. Most political opposition groups in the country—who have organized as a bloc For a Just Kazakhstan, have decided to support a single candidate—

former parliamentary speaker Zharmakhan Tuyakbai, in a conference held in Almaty on March 20, 2005.

The opposition—which took a real beating during the 2004 parliamentary elections—hopes to turn the next presidential elections into a Ukrainian style route. It is true that they do engage some degree of popular support, particularly from the population in the country's "second" and former capital of Almaty. They have managed to hold large—upwards of 2000 people—demonstrations, but the police have also easily broken them up, and they have been unable to trigger a series of interrelated public events.

President Nazarbayev has a lot of discretionary power, and a lot of real options. He maintains that he is committed to real, albeit gradual political reform, to be accompanied with concrete steps to improve the social and economic conditions of the Kazakh people.

Uzbekistan is trickiest, because President Islam Karimov squandered the honeymoon offered to him by increased western assistance after September 11 Many observers believe that Uzbekistan is becoming "ripe" for political change, but few feel confident that the country's elite or population is able to sustain a democratic transformation.

Political discourse in Uzbekistan is slowly growing more relaxed. In private and semi-private settings, ordinary Uzbeks have begun to venture to discuss political themes, to speculate on the health of the president and to ponder what may come in the future. They also have begun grumbling publicly, in stores, in markets, and when they are delayed because all traffic is stopped to allow for a passing official. Less common, are formal public protests, but they too are occurring with increasing frequency.

The hand of fate need not endorse the timetable of dictators, and by mid-2002 rumors began spreading about the president's ill-health, and with them came signs of jockeying for position among the putative "godfathers" of Uzbekistan's leading political families. These men had little understanding of how a democratic system operated, and no confidence in it. You cannot manipulate what you do not understand.

The government made some largely symbolic steps to introduce a few of the promised political changes. Karimov supported the gradual transformation of the parliament from a body that provides a rubber-stamp on all decrees and draft laws emanating from the president and his cabinet. However, the absence of formal political institutions to moderate elite competition mean that the period of political transition will be a time of potential instability in Uzbekistan. Excluded political groups seeking to expand their influence are likely to appeal to regional and sub-national groups as they seek ways to expand their potential power bases. For much the same reason, the role of religious opposition groups may well expand as well, particularly, the least radical of them.

Given the hard road Uzbekistan faces, most secular opposition groups, both democratic activists and the largely mute critics of Karimov who consider to serve in his regime, hope that order continues to hold in Kyrgyzstan. But at the same time few have much insight in how to get the Uzbek president to create more public space for civic society institutions.

Tajikistan is also likely to be influenced by events in Kyrgyzstan, but it is hard to decide whether it will serve to increase the chances for democratization in the country, or whether it will exacerbate the countervailing processes of political and social decay.

Tajikistan had parliamentary elections on the same day that the first round of elections were held in Kyrgyzstan , and these were found by the OSCE to fall far short of international norms. The ruling People's democratic Party got 80 percent of the vote, while the Islamic Renaissance and Communist Parties got only 10 percent of the vote collectively, and they will hold only 6 of 63 parliamentary seats. The four opposition parties (the Democratic, Communist, Islamic and Social Democratic parties have strongly protested the election results, and pressed for a new election. But they have not been able to translate these protests into large popular demonstrations against the government of President Imamali Rakhmonov, largely because the population of Tajikistan is still partially traumatized from their own lengthy (1992–1997) civil war.

Rakhmonov, who felt confident enough that he pressed for a constitutional referendum in 2003, that changed the term of office of the president to seven years and made Rakhmonov, also comes up for reelection in 2006. The Tajik leader is eligible to serve two additional terms in office. According to current law Rahmonov would then be forced to retire in 2020, at age 68. The clumsy way the referendum was conducted showed Rakhmonov's relative lack of concern for international opinion. Voters could cast their ballot "yes" or "no" for a group of 56 amendments, and many Russian voters complained that they were handed Tajik language ballots with no translation provided.

The opposition believes that they have a better chance of defeating Rakhmonov in 2006 than in getting the recent parliamentary results overturned. But they may well be discounting continuing Tajik apathy caused by their relief that the long civil war is over. Whatever their discontent many Tajiks will not want to risk starting a new Civil War.

If people hold out some prospect for the slow opening of Uzbek society, virtually no one believes that the same will occur in Turkmenistan. While Niyazov talks of holding presidential elections in 2008–2009, no one believes that there will be competitive elections held in Turkmenistan during Niyazov's lifetime. As long as Niyazov is in power there will be no possibility of building or even "planting the seeds" of any democratic society. But one day someone trusted by Niyazov may move against him, not by taking to the street—Boris Shikhmuradov showed the futility of that approach—but by the more classic and less subtle approach of simply physically eliminating him.

WHAT LESSONS CAN THE U.S. LEARN FROM THE "TULIP REVOLUTION"

U.S. policy makers should be very pleased by the developments in Kyrgyzstan, as they do provide strong evidence that sustained support for grass-roots political organizations can prove effective. Some recently organized student groups may have played a pivotal role in mobilizing the final demonstrations in Bishkek that brought down Akayev. But the more than decade old presence of non-gov-

ernmental independent political groups—human rights groups, independent press and journalists, and political monitors, provided the backbone necessary for their creation. The older groups proved the niche in Kyrgyz public life that made the formation of newer groups possible, as they established the right of Kyrgyz to organize independently of the government.

This sense of "history" or "naturalness" of non-governmental political groups is absent in both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and increased U.S. assistance will not succeed in creating it overnight. In neither country can NGO's be expected to either organize or channel public opposition in peaceful ways. In Uzbekistan in particular, where the risk of anomic violence is already palpable, there is reason to fear that secular groups will have only minimal impact on creating what the U.S. would see as desirable political outcomes. And what is going on underneath the surface in Turkmenistan is largely terra incognito, so impenetrable this society has been to outside influences and observers.

As already noted, Tajikistan is more difficult to predict. Civil society groups have penetrated more deeply in that society than in either Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan, but the population has already paid a huge price in the civil war that developed as part of the aftermath of the political mobilization of the early 1990s, and may choose to remain apathetic in the face of both secular and religious groups seeking to make them more active.

Kazakhstan, is much more of a conundrum. Civil society institutions have penetrated quite deeply in the society, and a vocal opposition (both inside and outside the ruling elite) exists to challenge the power of President Nazarbayev. But it is less clear how much of a priority the U.S. should place on influencing outcomes. Obviously, the U.S. should strongly support the conduct of transparent and competitive elections in Kazakhstan, and offer both government and opposition technical assistance to help make this a reality. But, in sharp contrast to Kyrgyzstan, the Kazakh opposition is much more capable of funding their own activities, and there is no need to potentially discredit them as "the tools of foreign actors" by the U.S. offering much more than seed money and technical assistance.

Moreover, much like the situation in Kyrgyzstan, the introduction of a more democratic government in Kazakhstan is unlikely to produce a regime that is more amenable to U.S. geopolitical interests. Just like in Kyrgyzstan, any successor government is likely to see to sustain close ties with both Russia and China, as well as maintain the support of the U. S. government.

This does give the U.S. a renewed opportunity for influencing developments in Kyrgyzstan. But if the new government in Bishkek is going to try and obtain increased U.S. economic and security assistance, in order to try and get it through an inevitably difficult transition period, it has to demonstrate its worthiness by conducting elections that are demonstrably more democratic than those organized by the regime that they ousted.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL KIMMAGE, CENTRAL ASIA ANALYST, RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

I would like to thank you for inviting me to appear before this Committee. My academic background is primarily in history, but for the past several years I have focused on economic, political, and social developments in Russia and Central Asia. I began to write about Russian affairs for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in 2002. Since December 2003, I have been RFE/RL's Central Asia analyst. Today, I will address recent events in Kyrgyzstan, both in light of events in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003 and 2004, and with an eye to the implications of these developments for other post-Soviet nations. The conclusions here are my own, but I base them to a large extent on material by RFE/RL reporters in the field, and particularly RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service (Radio Azattyk).

KYRGYZSTAN: THE FAILURE OF MANAGED DEMOCRACY

I. Irrational Exuberance

In May, 1993 Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev visited the United States. He met with President Clinton, who promised U.S. assistance to Kyrgyzstan in the nation's transition to a democratic system. A White House spokesperson said at the time that President Clinton and Vice President Albert Gore "singled out Kyrgyzstan as a model for the other new independent states, praising President Akaev for his government's bold pursuit of macroeconomic stabilization and democratic reform."

A little less than 12 years later, on 24 March 2005, President Akaev fled his country amid protests that began over alleged improprieties in parliamentary elections but quickly focused on a single demand—the ouster of President Akaev. As Kyrgyzstan's opposition celebrated the end of what it condemned as a corrupt and un-democratic regime, observers looked to similar events that felled long-ruling regimes in Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine in 2004, and asked: Is a wave of democratic change sweeping through the former Soviet Union?

The White House's optimism about Askar Akaev and Kyrgyzstan in 1993 was not unfounded; it rested on encouraging signs and genuine hopes. But the eventual failure of those hopes to come to fruition—a failure sealed by Akaev's ignominious fall and flight on 24 March—serves to warn us against undue exuberance in the face of the latest changes. Once again, we encounter encouraging signs. But for now we should be wary of concluding that democracy is finally on the march, much as we might hope for that outcome. Instead, we should take a hard look at the one indisputable lesson to be drawn from events in Georgia, Ukraine, and now Kyrgyzstan—the post-Soviet political systems in each of those countries faced and failed a crucial test. What was the test, why did they fail, and what lessons does their failure hold for other countries in the former Soviet Union?

II. Failed Tests

In Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, the test that the existing political system faced and failed was the test of free and fair elec-

tions. In all three countries, allegations of election fraud sparked protests that eventually led to political changes so significant that they call to mind the word "revolutionary."

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights monitored all of the elections in question and produced detailed reports. The OSCE's preliminary report on 2 November 2003 parliamentary elections in Georgia concluded that they "fell short of a number of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections." A subsequent post-election interim report went further, stating that "the election process was characterized by a clear lack of political will by the governmental authorities to organize a genuine and democratic election process . . ." The OSCE's assessment of second-round Ukrainian presidential elections was similarly harsh .

The OSCE's evaluation of 27 February first-round parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan struck similar notes: "The 27 February 2005 parliamentary elections in the Kyrgyz Republic, while more competitive than previous elections, fell short of OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections in a number of important areas. The election displayed some limited improvement, including the fact that voters were offered a real choice among contesting candidates in many constituencies. However, the competitive dynamic was undermined throughout the country by widespread vote buying, de-registration of candidates, interference with independent media, and a low level of confidence in electoral and judicial institutions on the part of candidates and voters."

III. MANAGED DEMOCRACY

Managed "democracy" is what happens when a ruling elite feels obligated to hold elections but does everything in its power to control their outcome. In the post-Soviet world, managed democracy is the brainchild of a political elite that grudgingly accepts elections as a precondition for legitimacy, yet retains a Soviet understanding of politics as a dark art of manipulation. The practice of managed democracy amounts to a grab-bag of dirty tricks and a playing field that is anything but level—state-controlled media serve up puff pieces to promote favored candidates and smear campaigns to denigrate undesirable ones, election commissions ignore gross violations and punish minor ones, duplicate candidates confuse voters . . . The list is long and sordid. But its purpose is short and sweet—to reduce the necessary evil of elections to a predictable exercise that allows elites to devote the bulk of their time to more pressing pursuits, mainly the exploitation of public office for private gain.

Though it has its roots in a Soviet idea—that politics is at once material and ethereal, administered with payoffs and adjusted with propaganda—the managed democracy we find in post-Soviet states should not be confused with the system that came before it. Through all its permutations, the Soviet system had a strong totalizing streak that led it to try to control all things in society. Its successors are, in at least one sense, genuinely more democratic, for they focus on the majority. They jealously guard state-run television, with its nationwide reach and demographically average

viewers, but are not overly concerned if the numerically insignificant chattering classes air their discontents in newspapers with limited readership. (Managed democracy comes in a variety of forms, however, and some regimes—in Central Asia, for example—"manage" the political process so closely that they reduce the role of "democracy" to window-dressing, producing systems more accurately described as "authoritarian" or even "dictatorial," although they contain elements of managed democracy.)

But while this system offers undeniable advantages to elites more concerned with the perquisites of power than the perils of accountability, it is fatally flawed. The flaw is twofold—first, the lack of accountability reduces the incentive for the elite to communicate with constituents and base governance on the electorate's real concerns; and second, as issues properly treated in the public political realm are left to fester or are resolved through back-room deals, the inevitable popular dissatisfaction creates an incentive for the elite to intensify its management of the political process. The result is a vicious cycle in which the political process becomes dysfunctional. In other words, managed democracy is not democracy at all.

Sooner or later, something has to give. Elections are a flashpoint because they put the spotlight on the machinery of managed democracy even as they raise the very issues the dysfunctional political system has neglected. The particular course of events in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan was in each case a product of local circumstances, but the unifying thread was that a virtual political system that maintains the appearance of democracy but disdains its essence collided with the real political concerns of millions of citizens. The collision revealed that the emperor had no clothes, and he was soon forced to exit the scene.

IV. KYRGYZSTAN

While the breakdown of managed democracy is the common thread in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, the way it broke down in Kyrgyzstan was a product of local factors. The first election-related protests erupted in Kyrgyzstan a few days before the first round of parliamentary elections on 27 February, when demonstrators blocked roads in a number of districts to protest the removal of candidates from the ballot. Two aspects of these protests were significant. First, they were not limited to the southern part of the country. Mountains divide Kyrgyzstan into north and south, and the south, which is poorer than the north, has traditionally been home to significant anti-government sentiment. President Akaev is a notherner, and the perception that the south languished under his rule contributed to dissatisfaction. Second, the late-February protests did not fit neatly into a divide between "pro-government" and "opposition" candidates. Protestors took to the streets because they felt that "their" candidates, usually prominent local figures, had been removed from the ballot by regional election commissions as a result of manipulation, sometimes by rival local figures with better connections to central authorities.

Kyrgyzstan held first-round parliamentary elections on 27 February and second-round elections on 13 March. Preliminary official results from the two rounds showed a commanding victory for pro-government candidates, with the opposition garnering at best 10

percent of the legislature's 75 seats. As events progressed and protests intensified during and after the election period, they began to conform more to the familiar outline of Kyrgyz politics sketched above, with the largest demonstrations taking place in the south and well-known opposition figures playing an increasingly prominent role. More importantly, local demands such as the reinstatement of a particular candidate or a recount of election results in a particular district gave way to broader political demands, primary among them the resignation of President Askar Akaev. Numerous sources indicate that protestors were driven by a sense that Akaev and his family had "gone too far," plunging the country into a morass of corruption, mismanagement, nepotism, and cronyism. The perception was widespread that Akaev and his family not only controlled substantial business interests, but also maintained a stranglehold on virtually all sources of revenue in the impoverished country. Contributing to this sense that "enough is enough" was the decision by Akaev's son and daughter, as well as the children of other high-ranking officials, to run for parliament.

Akaev and his allies mobilized the resources of the state-controlled media apparatus to depict protests either as insignificant or as the work of dangerous extremists with ties to the outlawed Islamist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir. But these efforts backfired. They angered protestors who felt that their concerns were being deliberately ignored or misrepresented. Further exacerbating the situation, the Kyrgyz authorities had recently taken steps to tighten their control over the media. Although it already controlled nationwide television channels, the government threatened independent newspapers with lawsuits in the lead-up to elections. A printing press funded by Freedom House suffered a mysterious power outage on 22 February, only days before elections. And Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) lost much of its local broadcasting capacity on 24 February when the state-run radio authority announced that it was holding a new tender for the frequencies used by RFE/RL.

By 20 March, anti-government protestors occupied administrative offices in a number of locations, including the key southern city of Osh. On the early morning of 20 March, riot police stormed provincial administrative offices in Osh and Jalal-Abad, another southern city. Large crowds of protestors soon gathered, and by 21 March opposition forces had retaken the government buildings and controlled the two cities. The opposition by now had united behind a demand for President Akaev's resignation. Yet even as the opposition readied itself for a demonstration in the capital of Bishkek, President Akaev continued to claim that his opponents were too fragmented for negotiations. The president also sent contradictory signals, telling the Central Election Commission on 21 March to review certain election results, then calling the new, disputed parliament into session the next day. Akaev's position hardened further on 23 March, when he appointed a new interior minister who promptly announced that police could use "any legal means" to reestablish "constitutional order."

On 24 March, things fell apart. A large opposition demonstration in Bishkek turned violent after pro-government provocateurs incited fights only a few hours after the new interior minister had

vowed that he would not use force against demonstrators. The scuffles produced numerous injuries, but no confirmed fatalities. After brief resistance from riot police, protestors stormed and took the presidential administration. President Akaev fled. The opposition had come to power.

V. Causes and Consequences

The causes of Kyrgyzstan's revolution are not difficult to divine. They include a widespread perception that the Akaev government was massively corrupt, that the distribution of whatever economic benefits had accrued to Kyrgyzstan in the post-Soviet period was grossly inequitable, that the Akaev-led ruling elite was actively manipulating the mechanisms of democracy in order to prolong its rule, and that state-controlled media were distorting the real situation in the country. The specific grievances that gave rise to protests were election-related. But the government's refusal to respond to demonstrators' concerns, and the decision to bring into play progovernment provocateurs, exacerbated an already critical situation and opened the floodgates for an outpouring of popular dissatisfaction that brought down the regime.

The outcome of Kyrgyzstan's revolution is much less clear. While opposition leaders managed to restore order after looting gripped Bishkek on the night of 24 March, they have had more difficulty consolidating and legitimizing their new-found power. After some confusion, the newly elected parliament was sworn in as the legitimate legislature, although alleged violations in elections to that very body had sparked the protests that eventually felled President Akaev. For his part, President Akaev, currently residing in Russia, has signed a resignation petition, but the Kyrgyz parliament has not yet managed to hold a session to approve it. New presidential elections are tentatively set for 26 June 2006, and five candidates have already thrown their hats in the ring. Meanwhile, the interim government of acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev, a former prime minister and prominent opposition leader, has been somewhat slow off the mark, hampered by a less-than-transparent approach to appointments, apparent infighting, and an inability thus far to articulate policy changes that would mark a clean break with the Akaev era. The situation is still fluid, however, and any verdict on the post-revolutionary government would be premature.

It should be noted that events in Kyrgyzstan differ from events in Georgia and Ukraine in several crucial respects. Protestors in Kyrgyzstan united against the figure of President Akaev, but they did not rally behind a single opposition leader, as Georgians rallied behind Mikheil Saakashvili and Ukrainians behind Viktor Yushchenko. Also, Kyrgyzstan's geopolitical orientation was never at issue. President Akaev made efforts to maintain solid relations with both Russia and the United States, and Kyrgyzstan hosts both a Russian and a U.S. military base. One of the Kyrgyz opposition's first statements upon assuming power was that this policy will continue. During events in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly supported presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovych, who made a "pro-Russian orientation" one of the planks of his platform. The Russian position on events in Kyrgyzstan was much more restrained, and key opposition figures such as Kurmanbek Bakiev

and Roza Otunbaeva traveled to Moscow in the lead-up to parliamentary elections for talks with Russian officials.

VI. Regional Implications

With events in Kyrgyzstan still very much in flux, the eventual consequences for the rest of Central Asia will likely take some time to emerge. For now, the fall of Askar Akaev has emboldened domestic opposition movements, especially in Kazakhstan, and unsettled current rulers. Nevertheless, events in Kyrgyzstan cannot simply be extrapolated to the rest of the region. Tajikistan, for example, held parliamentary elections at the same time as Kyrgyzstan, and international observers found those elections to be similarly flawed, yet no protests resulted. Kazakhstan's September 2004 parliamentary elections produced a solidly pro-government majority amid opposition allegations of fraud and guardedly negative assessments by international observers, yet no upheaval resulted. Other factors play a role as well—Tajikistan's bloody civil war in the 1990s continues to exert a sobering influence on domestic politics, and Kazakhstan's far-flung geography and comparative economic prosperity militate against an exact repetition of the Kyrgyz scenario.

Still, both Kazakhstan and, to a lesser extent, Tajikistan fall under the general rubric of managed democracies, with significant state-sponsored stage-managing of the political process and a resulting failure to provide viable venues for the discussion and resolution of pressing problems. The evidence from Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan indicates that when managed democracy fails, its failure can quickly become catastrophic for the existing rulers. The implications could prove especially relevant to Kazakhstan's upcoming presidential elections, for which the opposition has already selected a single candidate to oppose long-ruling President Nursultan Nazarbaev.

A failure of managed democracy is much less likely in Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan, if only because there is much less democracy to fail. Turkmenistan is an isolationist, neo-Stalinist dictatorship that obeys laws peculiar to that political genre, rendering any discussion of life after "president-for-life" Saparmurat Niyazov highly speculative. Uzbek President Islam Karimov maintains a tight hold on power, and reformist initiatives have been few and far between in Uzbekistan. But recent reports from Uzbekistan point to a dangerous combination of rising social tensions as a result of economic hardship and an authoritarian government intent on maintaining the status quo . This comes against a backdrop of rancorous debates over the extent of the Islamist threat in Uzbekistan, with the government and its supporters claiming that a real threat necessitates harsh measures and critics charging that repression is fueling extremism and creating dangers where none need exist. The Uzbek pot has simmered stubbornly for years in the face of predictions that it will soon boil over. But its contents are indeed explosive, and turmoil in Central Asia's most populous country could have grave consequences for the region.

VII. Beyond Central Asia

Beyond Central Asia, the proven failure of managed democracy in three post-Soviet nations could betoken an uneasy future for the largest and most important managed democracy of all—Russia. In Russia we find many of the features of this flawed system in its classic form: state control over national television, a virtual political environment increasingly bereft of viable channels for communication between government and governed, and a squabble-prone elite that bends the mechanisms of the state to its own ends, often rendering them useless for legitimate purposes. The point is not that Russia, or any other country, is "next" in a parade of democratic revolutions. Rather, the cautionary moral of this story is that the ongoing breakdown of managed democracy bodes ill for the stability of all countries, including Russia, where this dubious experiment continues in willful ignorance of the lessons of Georgia, Ukraine, and now Kyrgyzstan.

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