



**ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN POLICY OF
THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC FOR JULY – SEPTEMBER 2007**

Bishkek, October 2007

Major Foreign Policy Events in the third Quarter 2007:

| Дата | Событие |
|--------------|---|
| 7-9 July | Meeting of the President of Kyrgyzstan, K.Bakiev, with the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yan Tsechi |
| 9 July | Meeting of the SCO Ministers of Foreign Affairs |
| 9-10 July | Meeting of the President of Kyrgyzstan, K.Bakiev, with Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, S.Lavrov |
| 15 July | Meeting of the President of Kyrgyzstan, K.Bakiev, with Russian Minister of Internal Affairs, R.Nurgaliev |
| 14-15 August | Official visit of the President of the People's Republic of China Hu Tsintao to Kyrgyzstan |
| 15-16 August | <p>Bilateral sessions of the Kyrgyzstan President, K.Bakiev, with the following Heads of the SCO delegations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the President of Afghanistan, H. Karzai • the UN Deputy of General Secretary, Lynn Pasko • the President of Tajikistan, E. Rakhmon • the President of Mongolia, N. Enchybayar • the Minister of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, H. Kazuri • the Minister of Oil and Gas of India, M. Deora • the President of Iran, M. Ahmadinejad • the President of Russian Federation, V. Putin • the President of Turkmenistan, G. Berdymuhammedov • |
| 16 August | SCO summit |
| 17 August | Official visit of the President of Kyrgyzstan, K.Bakiev, to Chebarkul testing grounds (Chelyabinsk, Russian Federation) to observe the final stage of the SCO antiterrorist military exercise "Peace Mission – 2007" |
| 17 September | Official visit of the President of Tajikistan, E.Rakhmon, to Kyrgyzstan |

The third quarter of 2007 was a very important period for the Kyrgyz government. A number of high level and important international events were held which strengthened the government's position in international affairs and enabled it to develop its foreign policy.

The main event for Kyrgyz foreign policy, not only in the third quarter but also in the whole year, was the SCO summit. The summit was held in Bishkek on 16-17 of August.

The financial and technical support from China of 50 mln Yuan solved the organizational and operational issues, which were initially raised by both the "hosts" and the other participant SCO states. Several Kyrgyz security departments in consultation with Russian security services provided security at the summit. The Russian minister of internal affairs R.Nurgaliev visited Bishkek in July in the run-up to the summit to exchange information and provide support regarding security arrangements.

The several hot political topics in the run up to the summit: the American airbase at Manas Airport, situation in Afganistan, Iranian nuclear dossier, US-Russia chilled relations, etc. failed to cause any controversy at the meeting.

The summit went smoothly without any controversy. The heads of the SCO states chose to take a non-confrontational stance regarding western countries and the US. Many important documents were signed: The President signed the 'Treaty of a Long Term Neighborhood', 'Friendship and Cooperation', 'The Bishkek Declaration', 'Joint Communiqué of Summit' and other documents, including two agreements: cultural cooperation among the SCO states and cooperation between the SCO Business Council and SCO Interbank Association.

The Russian President's proposal to hold a special conference focusing on Afghanistan during the next summit in 2008 was among the new initiatives raised at the summit, which received broad approval from the SCO group.

Many experts commented on the invitation of the President of Turkmenistan, G. Berdymuhammedov by the President of Kyrgyzstan, K. Bakiev- the Head of the SCO summit. This invitation was considered to be connected with the idea to develop and establish an energy club rather than an intention to involve Turkmenistan as a member of the SCO. However, commentators identify a number of important issues and potential problems connected with the development of an energy club, the most significant of which being the involvement in that group of both energy production countries and countries which import a high percentage of their energy.

Important issues which were not solved during the summit include: bilateral relations with non-SCO countries and organizations, the realization of agreed economic projects and the establishment of specific criteria for the SCO members and observers.

A number of differences between the SCO members manifested themselves during the preparation of the summit and during the summit, particularly in regards to problem solving. According to experts the SCO is now at an important and to some would say critical stage of its development. There are still large differences in relations of the main players - Russia and China - towards the Central Asian region, in addition to this there is concealed rivalry between the members. Problems relating to bilateral relations within the SCO such as: borders, water and energy, transport system issues, migration and others not only create tensions between individual countries but also begin to burden the SCO as a whole. For instance, the issue of water in Central Asia was raised by the President of Kazakhstan, N.Nazarbaev, and the President of Uzbekistan, I.Karimov, during the summit in Bishkek.

Commentators and experts emphasized that the constant development of the SCO agenda allows unusual approaches and unrealistic expectations from its members which add to the difficulties of coming up with common solutions to a given problem. It was clear to observers that the summit in Bishkek was not able to hide the complicated problems of the group behind the outward show of unity.

The final decision of the summit was to hold the following summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

On 14-15 August, the eve of the SCO summit, there was an official visit of the President of the People's Republic of China, Hu Tsintao, to Kyrgyzstan, **an important event in Kyrgyz-Chinese relations**. Over these two days this visit was the main news event in Bishkek and was covered in detail by the mass media. Much emphasis was put on the official support from Beijing and Chinese investments.

During the meetings and negotiations the two sides discussed a wide variety of issues. As a result more than ten bilateral documents were signed. During the negotiations the President of Kyrgyzstan, K. Bakiev, stressed that China is an important political and economical partner of Kyrgyzstan and a main priority of Kyrgyz foreign policy is to develop these mutual relations. The Kyrgyz side did not request the reconsideration of any existing treaties or agreements. K.Bakiev expressed interest in the development of trade and economical cooperation and project realization in such areas as water, energy, transport infrastructure, telecommunications and networks, oil and gas industry, natural resources, food, textiles, agriculture and tourism.

The President of the People's Republic of China, Hu Tsintao, agreed with K.Bakiev's suggestions but also has mentioned that security must be a top priority in Kyrgyz-Chinese cooperation. Hu Tsintao also expressed his support of Kyrgyzstan's fight with the "three evils" (terrorism, separatism, extremism), and its willingness to establish security in region. "During the SCO summit Kyrgyzstan has done a lot in these areas and now we can see that the President, the government and the nation

have shown responsibility in the organization and coordination and realization of the summit ” he said.

Agreement was not achieved on some projects which are extremely important for Kyrgyzstan. For example, the project proposals for the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway and Energy Export to China projects have been sent back again for revision.

Bishkek officials say that both sides failed to mention the “spy scandal” which occurred just before the visit from the President of the People’s Republic of China.

During the SCO summit K. Bakiev conducted a series of bilateral meetings with the SCO Heads of State. At the **meeting with the Russian President**, K.Bakiev mentioned that the bilateral relations between Kyrgyzstan and Russian Federation are extremely good with no outstanding unresolved problems or issues. Kyrgyzstan is ready to further cooperate with Russia in all areas. During the negotiations the Russian President, V. Putin, highlighted that Kyrgyz-Russian relations are developing very effectively. He also stated that the Russian government intends to invest in \$2bn in the Kyrgyz economy. Both sides agreed to discuss this issue further with government specialists.

Current issues and future cooperation were discussed at the bilateral meetings with the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmon; the President of Iran, Mahmud Ahmadinejan; the President of Mongolia, Nambaryn Enhbayar; the President Turkmenistan, Gulbanguly Berdymammedov and the Heads of the Pakistani and Indian delegations.

At these negotiations and meetings the parties in the most part only indicated their positions on certain issues, due to this approach no significant or groundbreaking agreements were made.

On 17 August K.Bakiev after the summit in Bishkek flew to Chelyabinsk, Russia. At the Chebarkul testing grounds he observed with other SCO Presidents the final stage of **the antiterrorist military exercise** “Peace mission 2007”. This exercise was the biggest SCO event since the creation of the organization: Six thousand SCO military personnel, military planes, helicopters, tanks and about one thousand items of specialized equipment were involved in the military exercise. The Kyrgyz state was represented by a special unit detachment from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Defense.

On 17 September the **President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmon, arrived in Bishkek for an official visit**. During the meetings and negotiations the sides discussed a variety of bilateral, regional and international cooperation issues.

The main focus of the negotiations was on territorial borders and cooperation on water and energy supply between the two countries, experts say. The Presidents of

both states came to a decision to speed up the process of border delimitation and indicated patience and a willingness to compromise.

To this date both sides have agreed only half of Kyrgyz-Tajik border delimitation. The remaining areas are the most complicated and have the most conflict potential as they pass through populated areas. The border issue crucial for both Presidents and is often a main subject of political debate in the domestic arena.

Both Presidents achieved greater mutual understanding during the negotiations regarding water and energy coordination. Both Presidents entrusted their governments not only the development of water usage issues but also the mutual collaboration on both countries' energy systems.

As a result of these negotiations the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed the 'Agreement for Further Development of Friendship between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan'. In addition the following agreements were signed between the governments: 'The Regulation of the Migration Process and its Protection', an agreement on cultural cooperation, an agreement regarding the cooperation between the Kyrgyz Ministry of Culture and State Archive Department under the Tajik government and an agreement on agricultural cooperation.

The official visit of the President of Tajikistan, as a representative of a neighboring country, was broadcast in the mass media as the proof of K. Bakiev as the second and legitimate President of Kyrgyzstan.

In the third quarter 2007 **Kyrgyz-American relations** developed steadily. Although during this period there were no important visits, both sides were working on the agreement, which was achieved in the second quarter during the visit of the US Minister of Defense, R. Gates, and the Deputy of State Secretary, R. Bowcher. Observers state that it is still early to discuss the full potential of Kyrgyz-American relations.

Events within Kyrgyz foreign policy personnel include the refusal of one of the opposition leaders, M. Eshimkanov, to be appointed as the Kyrgyz Ambassador to Switzerland, despite this appointment having been approved by both sides. In the third quarter K. Sarbaev, a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, was appointed as the Kyrgyz Ambassador to China. E. Ibraimov, a former Head of the Foreign Policy Department in President Administration, was appointed as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In general, the third quarter 2007 was the height of Kyrgyz foreign policy affairs during K. Bakiev's two-year presidency. The number of meetings and negotiations at the highest level and the importance of the issues in foreign policy on bilateral, multilateral and regional levels reflected this.

The dynamics of Kyrgyz foreign policy activities and the generally successful organization of the SCO summit, has allowed K.Bakiev to strengthen to extend his position in the domestic arena against the demoralized and fragmented opposition. However, many experts have noted, that the Kyrgyz Republic's foreign policy continues to be "condensed" in a number of other areas, notably towards western countries and the US. The absence of these relations is not only reinforced by other geopolitical factors and the pro-Russian orientation of the Kyrgyz Republic's leadership, but also the Bishkek Administration's recent and increasingly apparent departure from democratic principles.

Analysis of foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic prepared by Erlan Abdyldaev, IPP expert