

Round-table “How decisions are made in Kyrgyzstan”

Stenogram

On January 30 there was a round-table at the Bishkek Press Club on the topic: “How decisions are made in Kyrgyzstan” Reports by well-known experts, related to problems in various fields of political decision-making, were presented.

Below are the list of speakers and topics of presentations:

1. Valentin Bogatyrev, Director of the Analytical consortium “Perspective”: “The role of the elite in political decision-making”;
2. Muratbek Imanaliev, President of the Institute for Public Policy, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs: “Water and energy relations in Central Asia. A vision from Kyrgyzstan”;
3. Zainidin Kurmanov, a member of parliament: “The role of analytical centers and experts in decision-making”;
4. Tamerlan Ibraimov, Director of the Center of political-legal researches: The role and place of the opposition in political decision-making”;
5. Bazarbay Mambetov, President of Oil-traders association, Kyrgyzstan: “The role of negotiations in the solution of the energy sector’s problems”;
6. Shamaral Maychiev, a media representative: “Mass media reforms: process of decision-making”;
7. Ishenbay Abdurazakov, chair of Supervisory Board of the Public foundation on political research - “Project of the future,” ex-State Secretary: “The process of foreign policy decision-making in Kyrgyzstan”;
8. Erkinbek Alymbekov, a public figure, ex-deputy of the Jogorku Kenesh: “Lobbying in the parliament”;
9. Miroslav Niyazov, a public figure, ex-secretary of the Security Council: “The process of decision-making on security issues”;

Moderator: Gulnura Toralieva

Gulnura Toralieva highlighted the topics of the presentations and gave the floor to the speakers.

Valentin Bogatyrev:

The first question to be answered is the question of elites.

In my view, in its full meaning, only those groups, or people, may be regarded as part of a national elite, if they meet four major requirements:

- To have a vision of problems at a national level;
- To have a vision of the future;
- To have personal responsibility for national development;
- To have activities targeted at the solution of the country’s problems and a realization of a vision of the future.

One has to consider two major conditions.

Firstly, all of these requirements are essential; if one of them is absent, one cannot confer the status of ‘elite’. The second condition is that the fundamental drive for the creation of an elite is the acceptance and responsibility of people’s destiny. The elite is responsible for the future, since they shape it. Thus, the parameters of an elite are taken within the national framework and determined by their activities, but NOT by social status, the nature of their work, ambition level, their political role or at somebody else’s behest. One can be an internationally known writer or academic, a leader of the ruling political party, or the country’s president and still not be a part of the national elite.

According to the national tradition, a good example of this status is the figure of *manap*. In the society where national identity has been formed at the tribal level, the institute of manaps was considered elite from the national viewpoint, not just tribal.

It is understandable that when one relies on such criteria and look at those who position themselves as elite, it is hard to find even ten people who can indeed be considered as the national elite. Sociology and political science do not have high standards in their definition of elites.

As a result, they regard those people as elite who are able somehow to influence decision-making or opinion-formation. This interpretation implies that there are a great number of "elite" groups.

From hereon in I will use this term in quotes. The composition and method of participation of them in decision-making or opinion-formation is quite standardized. It depends on what kind of skills and capacity such people and groups have. In today's Kyrgyzstan, the "elite" cluster may include:

- People who possess enough financial resources to influence decision-making or organize media activities on the national scale;
- People who, as a result of circumstances (formal status, close relations to the clan groups involved in decision-making), are able to regulate or influence the process of regulation of financial and informational resources (all state officials are included);
- People who belong to professional groups relevant to public opinion-formation;
- People who start public actions (including those organized) at the expense of one's own resources, those attendant, or foreign resources;
- Local and regional "elites," formed from people with a high social status and connections to the local and/or the regional identity;
- Ethnic "elites"; leaders of ethnic groups who attained legitimacy in various ways and who are somehow capable of solving problems in their ethnic groups, formally or informally;
- Criminal "elites"; leaders of the organized criminal groups, who influence decision-making because of their connections with law-enforcing structures or people in power;
- And, finally, the main group: people who directly participate in the preparation, discussion and undertaking of socially important decisions because of close relations to the clan groups involved in decision-making. This structure is completely different from the formal structure of state and political institutes stipulated by the Constitution and exist in reality.

Thus, we have governance, and more broadly a social diplast. There are real and quasi-governance systems. In the normative way, it is observed in the simultaneous existence of legal and traditional normative regulation when the unwritten or traditional law dominates. By traditional law, here, we understand not a totality of national traditions and norms, the nation's ethical code and so on, but a system of socially-recognized norms of relations and behavior that have been formed within a certain historical period and within certain historical circumstances.

For Kyrgyz society, this historical period was the last century and a half, with the compelling circumstances of the Russian model of social relations. In such a system, the formal norms or law acts as a quasi-regulator.

The peculiarity of such a system is that the position of certain people in formal power institutes and the governance of political subjects is not a condition that strengthens being "elite," but a condition that formally confirms the already real status of "elite." Power doesn't create the "elite," but the fact of being "elite" creates power; this maxim is true for both the real and quasi-elite.

It is a mistake, and an unaffordable simplification, to argue that the existence of two diametrically opposing social spaces causes the alienation of "elites" from decision-making. The reality is different, and much more complex.

Taking into account that all "elite" groups represent the interests of certain social groups, their activities are characterized as real politics more than formal political relations, which exist among the formal state institutes or officials. The role of "elites" in decision-making thus must not be underestimated and rejected. Another question is that in such systems or regimes (if this word is more favored by the audience) there are specific formats and mechanisms by means of which this role is realized.

I will mention some such specific forms. One of them is the institute of family. By Family in this case, this includes not only the relatives of powerful people. Family is a special social

conglomeration that has persistent relations based on their common interests and a high level of personal trust. Here, people and groups who are connected with the powerful by personal history are included.

The second form is something that can be characterized as the institute of "advisors." There is a group of people who have somehow happened to achieve the right and opportunity to form the informational space of power and propose governance policies. The composition and stability of this group is defined by the amount of informational trust in them and the effectiveness of those decisions proposed.

The third form is "prophets" from abroad. These are people, states, international and private organizations, which have the "truth effect" and trust potential based on authority or power (military, financial, informational and so on). The fourth form is the public action initiative. The spectrum of tools here is quite wide, from meetings and protests to initiating national programs. The fifth form is the public outbreak of "elites."

Examples of such a format of influence on political decision-making are the methods of Dr. Nazaraliev, or public speeches of Dooronbek Sadyrbaev, or the opposition press. It has to be pointed out that as a result of the low recognition of the role of this "elite," this method is of low effectiveness. All five forms of "elites" in political decision-making I have sequenced according to their impact on the process of decision-making: from the most effective to the least. All "elite" groups that can be distinguished in our country, without exception, use all mechanisms and channels to influence political decision-making.

Muratbek Imanaliev: I will not argue, dear friends that water as an object and subject of the economic life of Central Asia, is a problem of vital importance for Central Asian countries. I would like to talk about how the concept of water has been transformed in all aspects and respects in the process of transition from the Soviet lifestyle to the independent way of life. The concept of water, as an integrator and as a method of taking some political decisions, has radically changed within this period. It has to be said that during Soviet times, water was a political resource in the solution of very important economic and humanitarian problems. However, the decisions were made in Moscow. With the collapse of the USSR, water ceased to be a common value. It is true from the state viewpoint and also in the public perception. Water has become the cause of conflict situations, including the definition of water and two important things have not been clarified. The first, water has a value in all respects for the whole region. Briefly, it is the regional value. I would like to stress its social and political importance in this regard. The second are the principles of interaction on water-energy issues.

I believe that the principles of interaction are the most important condition, since generally a principle is a kind of regulator that is relevant to all forms of interaction of various state structures. It could be during war, peace, conflict, when dealing with certain economic problems. Water remains within the general context. The first thing that comes to mind, and should be applied, are the principles of international law relating to these issues. In general, international law principles that are widely used at present in international practice, unfortunately, are not fully operational in the context of relations among Central Asian countries. For example, the principle of cooperation, the principle of territorial integrity, and many others. Certainly, these principles require some additional work, and it is necessary to try to develop new principles for relations concerning the complex of relationships among Central Asian countries, including water-energy issues.

Quite recently, about 8-9 years ago, Kyrgyzstan proposed a principle that seemed important in our view, - the principle of an inter-sectoral balance of interests on water-energy issues. The idea was that the water-energy complex, including parameters, variants of problem solution must not be excluded from the general context of relationships between Central Asian countries. This was the major point of the principle of interests balancing. Why? As you know, regional countries have been clearly divided into groups: countries which possess the origins or where the basin of water resources is formed; here it relates to rivers and also to various water bodies, glaciers, and countries that are located downstream and use these resources. To have upstream countries supported in the solution of economic, social and humanitarian problems relating to water, downstream countries needed to consider a balance of interests in the context of sectors. In other words, if we make concessions in

water-energy issues, our counterparts should make some concessions while forming transport, infrastructure and many other important sectors for economic development. But unfortunately, the selection of a development model of Central Asian states and forms, the quality and meaning of the acts of these countries at the international stage are personified. Many things depend not on the common formula of foreign policy of a country, but on a position taken by the head during certain negotiations. It relates to the water-energy issues and to such problems as integration. Unfortunately, there is no result from this.

I would like to touch upon one more initiative of our country – the establishment of the water academy. It seems to me that when we talk about the water academy, we forget a very important detail mentioned by our institute 7-8 months ago through messages on our webpage. The point is that the water academy is not simply an institute, which does research and develops recommendations on how to solve the water-energy problem. In my view, it is more important to consider the water academy as a public policy institute to form the politics of water in Central Asia. In this sense, water must not be a subject of conflict, but a stimulus for integration. We must understand that water is of regional value. In this view, I would like to emphasize a very important moment, which may inject new ideas to those who deal with water issues. According to statistics, there is more water per capita in Central Asia than in Western Europe. The problem is that we do not know how to use it rationally, correctly and for our mutual benefit. Therefore, the decision-making on water-energy problems as well as on other issues, is basically about forming the common regional value system and value concepts, one of which is water as a humanitarian, social, economic and political value in the whole region. Until we understand it, it is very difficult to continue our livelihood. It may result in having the Fergana Valley swamped as well as undeveloped economies in almost all countries of the region.

Zainidin Kurmanov: The history of the emergence of analytical centers is about a century long. The first analytical centers, or think-tanks, emerged in the USA and were related to the political activities of the country, its peculiarities. The industry of research currently appearing in Kyrgyzstan is closely related to the political practice of this country. It is within the conditions of established political systems and the system of the functional representation of interests. Most analytical centers were founded in the 60-80s of the 20th century, along the path of development; they underwent evolution, and a stage by stage development.

Unlike the Western European countries and the USA, the formation of analytical centers in the post-Soviet space is taking place simultaneously. To understand it, I perhaps need to say that analytical centers are considered as non-commercial and non-party organizations. It does not mean non-ideological institutes oriented to research. One of their main purposes is to influence public opinion and state policy.

Analytical centers may vary depending on their missions, the quality of their experts, and the problems they deal with. At present, analytical centers may have up to thousand employees and a budget of one million. At the same time, there may be a single expert and small political centers with a small budget and a small number of personnel. But all analytical centers went through several stages of development. The first analytical centers appeared within universities. They were established by leading philanthropists and intellectuals who wanted to create an institute where researchers, state leaders and private sectors could gather to discuss the most important issues. Thus, there are the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, founded by the billionaire Carnegie; the Hoover Institution of war, revolution and peace, founded by the former president Hoover; the Hudson institute and so on. These and other centers focus on applying their expertise to solve different problems. These centers are considered important for conducting high-quality academic research and publishing various books and magazines designed for a variety of readers. Even though experts from such institutes provided advices to politicians, their major goal was not to influence political decision-making directly, but to inform politicians and make them and the public aware of the potential consequences of various political decisions. These institutes stood aside from the political process, and worked on the

principles of intellectual and organizational independence – currently being ignored by many contemporary think-tanks.

The example of Kyrgyzstan is an attempt to create such an institute.

The second generation of think-tanks came when state contractors emerged. As a result of the increased responsibility in the wake of the Second World War, when the world split in two, Washington politicians needed competent think-tanks to help them develop comprehensive and well-grounded policies. During those days, the largest think-tank corporation "RET" emerged, and brought the analytical services of think-tanks to the whole world - a new generation of state contracted political institutes became available on the market. These centers were financed by government structures and departments, and did research targeted at solving concrete political problems. The main guarantee of the qualitative research within this understanding is when a state is interested in tapping the truth from qualified experts with qualifications. In Kyrgyzstan, the International Institute of Strategic Researches is trying to deal with such tasks.

The third generation of analytical centers came with the emergence of think-tanks which protected certain interests and positions. They combine political research with aggressive marketing methods characteristic of many lobbying groups. Being oriented to protecting certain positions, think-tanks have radically changed the role and character of the political community. Unlike previous think-tanks which were reluctant to get involved in political debates, these political institutes are ready to use means to influence politics. The American analytical industry became more competitive; most think-tanks became aware of the importance of public attention and occupying the minds of politicians. We can observe these elements as well; our think-tanks do not stand aside, but actively participate while positioning themselves on a certain side of the political process.

The fourth generation of international centers is not relevant to us. These are think-tanks which aim at leaving a heritage. But that is perhaps our future goal. This is the newest type of think-tank – Carter's center, Nixon's center, Gorbachev foundation which represent analytical structures established by former presidents who wanted to leave a long-term legacy in internal and external politics. They also produce some publications, conduct seminars, symposiums and do research in a number of practical fields.

In view of evaluating the degree of influence that think-tanks have on politics, we are at the beginning of this stage; it has started to develop quickly since 2005, when the idea of a possibly incorporating the proportional representation election system and political and party life was actively discussed.

International analytical centers have started to occupy a special place and position in their countries. They are becoming a global phenomenon, financed by large charity foundations, corporations, and international organizations; and they have a great impact upon the formation of politics. They are noticeable in many respects and important participants of the political process. The think-tanks can and must contribute to national politics. One of the most important tasks of the expert community is to develop alternative ways of solving problems. So far, a state does not express much interest in developing an expert community, however, a result or a product of their activities, they are finally being recognized by the public. For the post-Soviet countries where the system of functional representation of interests is not well institutionalized and where the institutes of civil society are slowly developing; analytical research in most respects is the problem of development of an expert community as such. Other countries' experience shows that the institutional basis for developing an expert community can be government analytical centers, centers at political parties, independent expert associations, education centers, and each of them has its own strengths and weaknesses.

The strength of governmental analytical centers is their closeness to the system of decision-making, hence, they have extensive access to information and possibilities for analysis. On the other side, the weakness is their status which shapes the nature of their activities and limits the list of problems that are within their interests. Such centers usually have a flexible

system of cadres, and the most important is that these centers are perceived by people as promoting positions of state power. The problems of political engagement are characteristic of party analytical centers, which are absent in Kyrgyzstan. The interpretation of results are usually viewed in the context of a represented group, however, this feature can make them useful participants of de-generative analysis. The strength of independent experts and analytical centers is the possibility to do research on a variety of problems, flexibility of the cadres system, and less politicized conclusions. However, they remain distanced from the decision-making process, and it does not allow them to influence the political process.

The state contracts out a lot of market research but the opposition ignores these institutions and hardly ever uses the expert data and research in their own work.

Tamerlan Ibraimov: First of all – what is opposition? Conditionally speaking, it is a group of people who have different views on the political development of a country opposed to those in power. As usual, this group has an alternative program for development and a team willing to realize that program. What is the decision-making process? This is an important element for shaping political demands of various civil groups that will be accepted by public, and the means and methods for regulating social relations. There are two main methods in decision-making: the first – normative method, i.e. there is a process of rational choice in political goals in complex situations. The second method is behavioral, when the process of decision-making is a result of a specific solution to a concrete but momentous situation. Mainly, such a situation impacts the decision-making.

In my view, what we have nowadays in Kyrgyzstan is likely to be the behavioral approach to political decision-making rather than normative. There are a number of key factors. The first is lawlessness. It is quite obvious that under such conditions when the law does not function or does not function well; there is no guarantee either for those in power or for the opposition. Decision-making is spontaneous, and since the major center for decision-making is those in power, in our case – the president, the main criteria for decision-making is securing those in power and strengthening their authority. The second is the instability of the social-political situation in the country. It is obvious that the situation we have today is unstable. There were many statements made by the president and others in power after the parliamentary elections which indicated that the country would be stable eventually. In my view, that is completely incorrect, it is an erroneous vision. After conducting referendums, elections and large political reforms and violations of the law, the powerful have stability for the time being and feel that they are protected from the opposition. By violating the law and playing according to the rules written by them (within a short period) but not according to the widely accepted and compulsory rules, those in power encourage the opposition to do the same. One more factor is the lack of resources. Even though this thesis is quite relative. We often talk about lacking means and finances. How do we need to approach this question? Above all, it is important to clarify our goals and tasks, and then look at how they can be achieved. It turns out that in fact there are financial means to achieve those goals and it is possible to find them, but those goals and tasks are identified incorrectly.

Another moment I would like to talk about is the low professional and intellectual level of state officials, which directly impacts the quality of decision-making. In this meaning, there is the fifth point – cadres' policy. Often an appointment takes place, and it is, first of all, unpredicted; secondly, the cadres are shifted around a great deal, and the third is that often the criterion for appointing a high-level state officials is not their professional level, nor their skills to solve certain tasks but other factors which are related to which group they belong to, their loyalty to those in power, their skills to implement any tasks. It is natural that under such conditions, political decisions are only declared on paper. For example, the recently stated declaration about improving the judicial system's independence. A few days after, the head of the Supreme Court was removed, and this decision was taken in a rush. Here, I am not evaluating the activities of the head of the Supreme Court but talking about the process that took place. Or another moment that relates to the democracy in our country: the Bishkek city kenesh made a decision to issuing permits for holding meetings.

If one talks about the role of the opposition in political decision-making, then I would consider this process as chaotic rather than systematic. We can cite an example of 2006, when the main law of the country – the Constitution, was adopted with the direct participation of the opposition. I would say under the pressure of the opposition. When the opposition influenced meetings, there was an attempt to establish the Constituent Council. Under this pressure, the president took the political decision to agree with the opposition and signed the Constitution. Then people saw that there was a drawback. I would characterize the process of participation of the opposition in political decision-making as 'inflows' and 'outflows.' How was the decision made on participation in the HIPC program? First, the Prime-Minister stated that we needed to participate in this program. Then, the president vetoed this decision. I think it was the result of the activities of many public organizations, political parties and citizens who were against our participation in this program. At the same time, no one conducted a detailed analysis, evaluated points "for" and "against" – entering or not entering the program. The decision was taken mostly on an emotional level.

Generally, the relationship between the authorities and the opposition is characterized not by a systematic and constructive cooperation, but mostly by a mutual rejection of each other, and atmosphere of mistrust. It is quite obvious that when one side violates the rule, correspondingly, the other side will do the same.

What can be done in this regard? The major issue here is the process of the opposition's institutionalization, i.e. the creation of a stable system, a stable opposition institute, which would act consistently and within the law and would be able to express its position. If you remember, there was an extensive discussion on this point, but the decision was not taken. It is good that the law was not passed. It would have been a declaration of the opposition's rights, which would not encourage its institutionalization, but would be a kind of declarative façade. In fact, the opposition would have stayed in the yard. The major step towards opposition institutionalization must be an improvement of parliament's role, i.e. parliament's development. This is because the opposition's place, first of all, has to be in parliament. In addition, it is important to develop our election legislature and strictly follow it. When the opposition has the real and legal chances to come to power, they have no guarantees that sooner or later people will support them; they will come to power and be able to advance their ideas, of course, the opposition turns to other methods in order to gain power.

The process of semi-legal and semi-underground solutions and mechanisms to come to power is the real danger present in the country. Many currently criticize the opposition for not having a vision, programs or real politicians who will be able to realize these programs. To a certain extent, I agree with this point, but I think that the same can be said of those in power. The government and the opposition are at a similar level in the country nowadays. I believe that both the power and opposition must develop. Above all, we need to decide what kind of state we want to build. Without a clear understanding of what kind of state we need and what kind of functions it must perform, we cannot know what kind of institutes we need to construct, and hence, what kind of mechanisms we need to apply. When the authorities and opposition decide clearly on this question, then there will be advancement. Although from other hand, the authorities have more or less defined the concept of state-building. This is the model of a state, the so called "sprut" – designed to address questions in all spheres of social life. It seems to me that this is not the right approach given the realities of the country, resources and social-political situation and the extent of public conscious development. The state is doomed to erbulance and perpetual shifts in the ruling regime. I think, a state must be more compact, and take responsibility, first of all, in securing borders and solving the most important questions of market regulations; it must not get involved in the small details of market relations. When the authorities and the opposition agree upon the main issues it will be easier to build relations, including political decision-making. The process of political decision-making is an independent science which implies the application of modern methods, analysis and interaction with different groups. When there are no clear rules, tasks, goals or mechanisms for reaching political purposes and tasks, it is obvious that the process will be chaotic, and there is nothing good about it.

Bazarbay Mambetov: A lot must be done by the people of Kyrgyzstan and first of all by the leadership to recognize the importance of water problems in Central Asian politics. The point is that we can only build our future relations with neighbors as equal partners through water-energy resources. However, the public still lacks a common understanding of the issue. If Kyrgyzstan needs hydrocarbon resources regulated by Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, they need the water resources and electricity that are developed here.

We are interdependent. Therefore, at any inter-state negotiations, we need to stand as equal partners, behave reasonably and operate with sound arguments but not ambitions. Those representing our state during negotiations, should not bow down and show their weakness, surrendering our interests.

It would be really good, when we learn how to develop a strategy of people's behavior during negotiations. When Uzbekistan stops providing gas, it does not mean that we have no choice, and should only talk about this problem and try to please them, accepting their unfair conditions. During negotiations we should make out that this is a small problem concerning the gas industry and that Kyrgyzstan does not suffer much and try to solve it as soon as possible. In 2001 Uzbekistan stopped providing gas for 2, 5 months, but we did not suffer much. Together with Kazakhstan we use the same gas pipeline of 720mm diameter, and it gave us the opportunity to use Kazakh gas from this pipe illegally.

At inter-state negotiations there are no uncomfortable questions, there are only state interests, and supplying water, electricity, gas, oil, coal and coal to one another are the major issues between states, there are no other important issues today.

If these issues are at such a level, then negotiations must be conducted at the level of head of states or head of governments. As usual, they do not say 'no' to each other and they reach a solution quickly. It is not right when the government assigns the head of the Joint-Stock company "Kyrgyzgaz" to negotiate with Uzbekistan at the inter-state level on the issue of gas when he fails to meet the level of Uzbek negotiators by age, competence and status.

It is natural that such an attitude to negotiations resulted in the situation when Uzbekistan raised the price of gas 3 times a year, and it is now 145 US dollars per thousand cubic metres instead of the 55 that it was in 2006. Our representative did not mention at negotiations that many of Uzbekistan's pipelines and regulating gas pipes are within the Kadamjay rayon, and a part of them must be given to us. Moreover, there is the underground gas-storage "Severnyi Soh," which is used by this country, and Uzbekistan continues to extract gas and oil in our Burgandinsky massive, which must be stopped, and the main production foundations given to Kyrgyzstan.

The international community would have highly estimated Kyrgyzstan's actions, if it proposed that Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan do not consider international water flows a separate issue but as a part of the problems that can be jointly addressed. Then all Central Asian countries would have begun to take us seriously. It is a fresh view of the issue, and based on current international law which has some general provisions for regulating trans-boundary waters. In fact, there is no effective international mechanism for conflict resolution regarding the use of international waters. Under such conditions, agreements on using trans-boundary waters depend on the willingness and readiness of states to start constructive negotiations. There is no international rule according to which the upstream country must supply half of its water-flow to downstream neighboring countries. We should not play with our neighbors, and say that it would have been beneficial to use the Toktogul Hydro-electric station in the water regime rather than energy, if our neighbors assisted us with a sufficient supply of hydrocarbons, gas, masout and coal at reasonable prices. If we go this way, then we will lose everything that we have. We will not then think about our future leverage and our power to influence Central Asian politics.

Our electro-energy potential is as such that without the cascade of the Toktogul Hydro-electric stations neither Uzbekistan nor Kazakhstan could exist. The stations function successfully as part of the Central Asian energy system, which provides energy security for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

The same cascade provides the necessary frequency of 50 periods per second in the electric-energy systems of the above states. If this frequency falls down, then the whole industrial and electricity system will not function. Then, upon their request, we will provide sufficient power through our stations. While having such an obvious leverage on electro-energy issues, we do not know how to behave at negotiations with energy experts from neighboring countries. It is humiliating when the heads of electro-energy companies of Kyrgyzstan at any occasion are called and they rush to Tashkent, Almaty and Astana.

The irrigation needs of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in the summer time, from April 1 to October 1, along the dam site of Toktogul water reservoirs on the Naryn River accounts for 6-7 billion cubic metres of water. At the beginning of irrigation, on April 1 this year, the Toktogul water reservoir has 7 billion cubic metres. That is not enough if you consider that 5,5 billion cubic metres of water must stay behind the dead limit and cannot be used. Taking into consideration the inflow of the Naryn River in summer, we can not give our neighbors more than 3 billion cubic metres of water and develop exactly 2,7 kilowatt hours of electricity which will cover our own consumption. It means that in the summer time, we will not be able to provide enough irrigation water to our neighbors and offer to sell buy cheap electricity from the Toktogul stations.

Of course, such a course will make our neighbors negotiate to find ways out of the critical situation. Could we behave decently and show that neighboring countries need our water? To show that our water-energy agreements are possible if our neighbors show good will and guarantee supplies of gas, oil, masout and other energy? This could be the key element of our state water-energy policy in Central Asia.

Even with our difficulty in paying for Uzbek natural gas, we still can benefit economically. Until 1996 we paid for gas with products produced in our country. These are cement, slate, asbestos-cement pipe, glass, wheat, corn and so on, which is in highly demand in Uzbekistan. This payment scheme made many national production units function. But the authorities during Akaev's regime in 1997 agreed to an Uzbek proposal to pay for gas with normal currency without thinking of the ramifications. As a result, what and corn production went backwards and we lost glass and asbestos-cement product market.

Negotiations are a significant part of state policy. This is the position and strategic line of the state, and more importantly, it is the face of the country. Therefore, it requires a very serious approach from everyone involved in the process and a high level of responsibility from state officials.

Shamaral Maychiev: There are many conferences or other events relating to the mass media. Many issues are at the solution stage of. Today I would like to point out those who make decisions in this field as well as problems and opportunities out of this situation. At present there are 7 problems that are politically and normatively defined. They all are under the remit of the state and must be solved via decrees and laws. The first problem is the national TV. The second is the privatization of state-owned mass media. The third is self-regulation of the mass media. The fourth is the transition of our country from analogue to digital coverage. The fifth is the humanization of legislature in respect to slander and humiliation. The sixth is radio frequency. This problem has been debated for for 15 years and cannot be solved. The seventh is the problem of professional education. To implement the decisions that have been taken it is necessary to have will, take action and get results. Often there is great will, but also no will at all. The major problem is the absence of action from those who make decisions and are responsible for the results. In practice, there are no results pertaining to the above mentioned problems. Even when decisions are made, it is necessary to guarantee that they will be carried out.. Those guarantees are political,

economic, financial, technical, legal and social. When there are no such guarantees, the decision simply remains declarative.

At present, there is a specific part of the mass media - people and institutions - that make decisions: the powerful are represented by president, parliament, government and the state structures in charge of monitoring this field. It is quite a complex system. Civil society generally supports the solution of these tasks. The most passive are consumers. There are no public institutes that influence the decision-making process or even have the willingness to come up with a solution to these problems. However, civil society is actively involved in the media market. Media communities and other NGOs can be characterized as units of rapid reaction. For example, if a journalist is arrested; they make a statement right away. Let's say there is a reaction to a presidential decree on national TV – meetings, protests, statements, conferences. But these issues are not only about the mass media, they are short-term questions. There is no strategic direction and when civil society does not know what direction it is going in – what will happen in 15 years. The absence of such parameters or indicators leads to many cases where they react quickly and follow-up events that happen as a result of various political and economic conditions.

As for the national TV, the president issues a decree; there is law, there is even an elected council, but the political will of the president, parliament and the KTR itself is absent. Moreover, it is not only the absence of political will, but today, there are some preparations to make changes in the law which are basically not implemented, and therefore return to the old TV that has nothing to do with national TV standards. The council includes representatives of the president, parliament and civil society. The representatives of state bodies have isolated themselves, but the rest continue to act. They developed a reform project. They prepared a strategic plan for development and KTR reform, but there are no guarantees about the organization or infrastructure. Today they do not even have a place to convene. No place, no solutions.

As for privatization, there is a presidential decree, but no political will.

The question of media self-regulation exists in all democratically developed countries. At present days, those who make decisions are mass media and journalists themselves. At the national convention, such an institute was created. They adopted a provision on the commission of complaints. I hope that they will be functional.

Concerning the question of transition into the digital coverage, it is the large problem. Globalization leads to digital coverage. The period of the transition may be long, or it may be short. But today it is an objective necessity; our country has adopted this idea even though there is no program yet. This problem relates to technical guarantees implemented by the government, - the national agency of communication. Extensive technical operations must be carried out to identify the reasons and conditions for a transition to digital coverage. These issues depend for the most part on the coordinating with the interests of neighboring states. In Russia its conception is 80 pages and so all points are well covered. We have only 7 pages and I am afraid that it will not be implemented.

The problem of radio frequency. Our country has not been given a radio frequency or five years now. If we wait for another 3 years, this problem will be solved automatically. By 2010 there will be central coverage, and each channel on the same diapason will have 765 channels. There will be no mass media that could use the whole volume. But here another problem emerges, the problem of information security. Nowadays, digital coverage brings many other frequencies and channels. If our mass media do not meet international standards, then our information market will be full of Chinese, Uzbek and European channels. Our consumer will receive information mainly through these channels. That includes objective, reliable, non-biased information about events in Kyrgyzstan.

The final problem comes from the latter. It is necessary at the state level to change standards of education in journalism. A journalist must receive international standards of education at universities. This is a great problem not only at the information market. Kyrgyz

citizens must be competitive everywhere. But here in the information sphere is the great problem, because the infrastructure in other states is more developed. And tomorrow, our information market may simply disappoint a neighboring country or it will be full of information from other countries. The typical example is the humanization of criminal legislature on slander and humiliation. During the former and current presidents, parliament received draft bills on removing articles in the Criminal Code. Unfortunately, these articles have been removed.

Is there freedom of speech in Kyrgyzstan? Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are often related to the political struggle. It is the strongest factor, but there are still international criteria and indicators of freedom of speech. The evaluations of "Freedom House" and other organizations are made according to these criteria. In general, an individual can freely express oneself in the press. But there is a problem concerning electronic mass media, the problem is not in having access to existing channels but in not having access to electronic coverage because there are no frequencies. However, in 2010 this problem may disappear with the transition to digital coverage.

Ishenbay Abdurazakov: Based on my own experience and the experience of other countries, I can say: the mechanism of decision-making is complex and difficult. This is because it relates to many aspects of internal politics, the politics of neighboring countries, and the international situation as a whole. ie not to lose 'face' on the international stage, especially when we don't consider foreign policy just as supporting formal relations between countries, but also as a means, i.e. solving issues of national interest through foreign policy. In this meaning, foreign policy is an inherent part of state policy relating to security, economic, social, information and cultural policy as well as other issues.

In my view, there is no such mechanism in our state, for analyzing and then formulating a task - defining strategic goals in all aspects as well as tactical methods. Since there is no such mechanism, there is no such conception. Many things are accomplished but they are not based on succession and consistency. Bazarbay Mambetov talked about how economic issues, particularly, gas-energy questions are addressed, This is a typical example. It is true not only in this sphere but in many other fields as well.

In each state there is a practice, when there are concrete tasks that foreign policy needs to solve, that take the internal tasks and potential of the country into account: economic power, military, relations with other states and international prestige generally. There are two directions. The first direction is the need to react to external developments. The question of realizing ideas in accordance with national interests requires lots of work. Here it is certainly necessary to not only have experience but an intellectual basis in cadres. When there are no worthy cadres, none of the problems will be solved and the country will be captive and depend on other countries' help. Our elder brothers will take initiative; we will act according to what they say without thinking what kind of consequences it may lead to. Unfortunately, the factor of cadres is not taken seriously or it can be ignored by foreign-policy and diplomatic services. I believe that this is completely the wrong approach, because the solution to many questions is becoming simpler. Sometimes, heads of states make appointments at their discretion irrespective of professionalism.

I know from my experience when Leonid Ilyich appointed his relatives and friends it brought lots of trouble. However, they simply signed telegrams, political letters and reports. The rest was done by diplomats. It was not reflected in the quality of proposals, etc. Secondly, in large countries unlike our country, there was the strict selection and analysis of incoming with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also other agencies – the Defense Ministry, State Security Committee and so on. When all questions are analyzed from different angles, then a reasonable line becomes clearer. When a political decision is made, it has to be followed. This was the power of the strong state, with exceptional cases where the head of state behaved based on the voluntarism: Generally, the foreign policy was quite effective.

The same must be true for us. The analytical potential is unfortunately not yet created. Foreign policy issues are solved at the rhetorical level without detailed analysis. The second problem is that the coordinating role of the MFA is reduced. It should not be the case. The MFA must solve issues, above all, of a political nature. However, even in the economic dimension, major questions must be addressed by the MFA. Nowadays, there is no state line. In addition, when there is no concept of this, the line of a state does not deal clearly with the legal issues. A small state has small advantages, but when it stands on international law, it is already a power. We do not use legal bases that are favorable for us since the collapse of the USSR, or we use them poorly. Of course, the parliament plays an important role, but I have never seen when the parliament was important in formulating tasks in foreign policy. The opposition's influence is more destructive than constructive. This is because the opposition use various moments for their own interests, which do not strengthen our international position, but do the converse: For example, the endless and unjustified discussion of the issue of the state borders with China. We know how the question was answered. It was the right decision. But endless talks shape public opinion as well as encourage distrust between our country and China, and this is undesirable.

In other countries, some private research centers influence political decision-making. They work very effectively. There are many centers in Russia. I do not want to say that they do qualitative research, but they do have alternatives, choices. There are initial efforts at the public level to formulate foreign policy tasks. Today's seminar is a good example. As for the mass media, unfortunately, it is a serious issue. There is no rational and specialized way to deal with foreign policy questions. Here, there are more questions than answers. It is important not to have a mass media that is captive to others' opinions. Unfortunately, we do not educate our own population. It is done by others. People are under the influence of other forces. Of course, it makes people worry. Shamara talked about informational security: If the influence of Chinese or Uzbek is stronger, it is bad. I think that here the balance must be found. Both countries have the right to be present and our specialists must have the opportunity to form their own opinions based on different views.

Erkinbek Alymbekov: Here, the decision-making on important issues of a state and the mechanisms of decision-making were discussed from different angles. One of the institutes is the institute of lobbying that exists in some form in other countries. Under the conditions of globalization and global warming, the economic crisis as a result of the increase in the price of energy-resources, foodstuffs, and the sustainability of a national economy are the most pressing. The major basis for a sustainable national economy is the sustainable system of state power. The sustainability of power is provided by the system of 'checks and balances:' an independent mass media, which secures the transparency of state activities and political competition. I think that one of the most important renewable resources is the institutional intellectual resources, which to a certain extent, and in the context of our social development, are inadequately requested. As we all see, there is a process of personification based on certain historically outdated command-administrative principles instead of state policy institutionalization. Therefore, I believe that until we re-consider the role of the institute in state policy oriented primarily towards securing national interests, based on patriotism, we could face underground trouble. When we try to hide the problem, the economic crisis eventually will show that we ineffectively use the resources of our country and society.

Historically, I think, you know very well that lobbying has existed for about 200 years. In 1808 this term was used for the first time in American congress. In 1846 the process was institutionalized by passing the federal bill. This institute is demanded under the conditions of the parliament's activities. There are positive and negative sides to the lobbying institute. When there is no system of 'checks and balances,' political competition and an effective free mass media, the lobbying institute has more negative sides. The parliament of the third convocation had many positive moments by using some elements of the lobbying institute. Even so, there were enough negative sides as well.

Tamerlan in his speech mentioned the question of the HIPC and how socio-political forces were pressuring the president, government and parliament. Under this pressure, the parliament took the position against the HIPC. This is the legal way of lobbying. Illegal lobbying is the mass media. When some high-level state officials were appointed, banal bribery took place and it turned into a public scandal. The illegal application of the lobbying system in the parliament: there was a team that lobbied illegally for the adoption of certain laws, normative documents by means of using the controlling function. Under pressure from the opposition, this substantial document of the November variant of the Constitution was taken; after the lobbying of some loyal deputies, the December variant was taken along with many normative documents that were adopted in violation of the regulations and other normative rules. It signifies that the power system is moving towards totalitarianism. No authoritarian regimes were viable for a long period and could prove its effectiveness.

Parliament is formed now according to party lists, and when we have basically one-party's monopoly in the parliament, we can again distort the meaning of political parties and party building. This is because when state power is not directed towards structuring political forces, based on political competition, it may lead to leveling of political parties' values, including members of parliament. The regulations that limit the right of a deputy to express themselves, lead to worsening of the image of parliament. At the end of the day, the lobbying institute at the current parliament comes to nothing. It is enough to agree simply with the speaker of the parliament, who represents the leading political party, and in this case without an application of the institute, any decision will be taken. Finally, people involved in the activities of the parliament will come to the conclusion that there is nothing good about the parliament composed of party lists. We may discredit the principle of political structuring based on political parties and political competition. As a result, it will deepen the existing crisis. Therefore, to a certain extent, we will realize that there will be an effective state power when there is a system of 'checks and balances' and political competition. Further, along with the liberalization of economic policy and the improvement of competition, we can aim at a sustainable economy. The sustainable economy is the provision of liberal human rights and human freedoms. Here, I would not agree with Tamerlan that we need a political will to develop economic policy. I think that the purpose of a state is to secure fundamental liberal rights: the right to freedom, to life and economic sufficiency. When these institutes are operational, there is no need for a doctrine.

Miroslav Niyazov: In general, the concept of security has a wide spectrum. It includes internal security, territory, society and citizens' protection; it means food, energy and ecological security. In other words, there are a number of security forms. But it seems to me that our discussion today must have a practical character. Therefore, I will talk about the issues of the internal security, because many are concerned about it today. The task of any power is to remove the reasons and conditions that endanger state security. But if the only purpose was to have a power that takes preventive measures and remove threats with the result that there is security, it does not cover the problem as such. Recently there are a number of revolutions in the post-Soviet space. I would like to stop briefly on the nature of these revolutions.

The nature of all revolutions is the same, starting with the French one. Whether it is king or emperor, president or general secretary, one way or another we consider him as the symbol of the state. When such a living symbol of the country pursues decent policies, then the state is stable. However, when the country is infected by corruption and immorality, marginalization starts at the highest levels of power, from the first leader, and thereby favorable conditions for a revolution emerge. Let's consider the French revolution. It is known that during the rule of Louis XVI there was strong corruption and immorality... Therefore the national symbol was destroyed. It brought about the revolution in France. If one talks about the Russian revolution of 1917, the same reasons were present there. Here, we could observe the symbol's destruction and discrediting of moral foundations. We often say that if there is economic growth in the country, it means stability. But, let's remember: in 1906 there were the Stolypin reforms. By 1913 its results were so effective that foreign experts started predicting that in 1950 Russia would have a great future. It

would be the leader of the world. It was those days when Lenin stated with despair that his generation would not see the revolution. But it was instability at the highest levels of power with immorality and low values that caused the coup d'etat in 1917.

Now, let's look at the recent heritage of the Soviet reality. We all know the nature of the stagnation period. Brejnev in his last years behaved as one having marasmus. His daughter was openly involved in criminal activities, endlessly remarried, and his son received an award as a Hero of socialist work. It was in those days when the internal collapse of the Union started. Later, irrespective of the changes of leaders, the meaning and content of power remained the same. The off-handed interference of Raisa Gorbacheva into politics resulted in the serious disappointment of society. Thus, the Soviet Union and the whole socialist camp were collapsing silently.

Let's consider the Romanian evolution. I worked in 2 months in Romania in 1985 and I know all reasons and circumstances. The reasons were the same. The family of Chaushesky ruled the country. His daughter was making very careless actions. When there was a very difficult situation in the country, she was playing around and losing millions of dollars in foreign countries. It brought such serious disillusionment in the country that in 1989 Chaushesky was shot. Basically, that was the pattern for such a final situation.

It shows that the internal security of a state can be secured as a result of preventive measures and also the state foundations may be destroyed by the highest official or his family. This is because these people are the symbols of the state. People want to have this living symbol to be pure, to symbolize the whole nation. When power becomes parasitic, it annoys people.

I would like to say few words about Kyrgyzstan. The departure of Akaev was caused by the same reasons, wasn't it? If there is no internal security, then we are the most vulnerable state for external threats. At present there are lots of hotspots. They are completely different. It is the absence of social protection of the people, the increase of prices, border conflicts, and religious extremism. We have real threats of terrorism in Kyrgyzstan. All this together with mistrust in the power institutes seriously affects and destroys state foundations, and strongly undermines national security. The biggest problem is that when all these small hotspots of tension gain a systematic character, then it will become a state problem.

Until we make sure that we have internal security, we are an unprotected state, we do not have the system for self-defense, and we do not have immunity. Recent elections and the referendum undermined trust in the power institutes. There is the pattern of physics: to any action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The more one pressures, the more are those displeased. Depending on the extent of the civil and spiritual maturity of the people, we can expect certain ups and downs. Today the situation in the country has been worsened in view of its security. It became worse because there are no civilized forms of struggle. Therefore, it is not chance when Beknazarov states that he intends to conduct underground activities. I can say that under such conditions, the emergence of underground, aggressive, extremist and terrorist forces is quite natural for any country. If we want to have internal security, we should not start it by closing someone's mouth, but conversely, it is relief that makes people express themselves. Sooner or later this boiling kettle will blow up. It is only a matter of time. The tension will increase. And there may be more serious consequences than we imagine.