



**ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN POLICY OF
THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC FOR APRIL-JUNE 2007**

Bishkek, July 2007

Major foreign policy events in the second quarter of 2007

April 4	Meeting of President Bakiev with Robert Dole, former U.S. Senator
April 9	Meeting of President Bakiev with Grigory Rapota, Secretary General of the Eurasian Economic Community
April 13	Meeting of President Bakiev with Miguel Angel Moratinos, OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Foreign Minister of Spain
April 19	Meeting of President Bakiev with Petras Vaitekunas, Foreign Minister of Lithuania
April 24	Meeting of President Bakiev with Lousie Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
April 25-26	State visit of President Nursultan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan to the Kyrgyz Republic
May 23	Meeting of President Bakiev with Nikolay Borduzha, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization
May 24	Meeting of President Bakiev with Senator Gianni Vernetti, Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy
May 25	Meeting of President Bakiev with Secretaries of Security Councils of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
June 5	Meeting of President Bakiev with Robert Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defense
June 7	Meeting of President Bakiev with Abdullah ben Muhammed ben Ibrahim Al Sheikh, Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
June 8	Meeting of President Bakiev with Richard Boucher, Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs
June 9-10	Participation of President Bakiev in the informal meeting of the Council of Heads of States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in St. Petersburg
June 15	Meeting of President Bakiev with Grigory Rapota, Secretary General of the Eurasian Economic Community
June 21	Meeting of President Bakiev with Eneko Landaburu, Director General of European Commission Directorate General for External Relations
June 29	Meeting of President Bakiev with Khurshid Anvar, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization

Foreign policy activity of Kyrgyzstan visibly increased in the second quarter of 2007 compared to the previous period. This was largely determined by certain stabilization of the internal political situation in the country after targeted actions undertaken by the authorities on splitting political opposition and failure of the April rallies led by the United Front. As a result of upheavals in internal political struggle President Bakiev managed to consolidate his positions and acquire necessary maneuver and freedom of actions before the most important foreign policy event of the year – Summit of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Notwithstanding serious concerns in Bishkek and Astana regarding the internal political stability in Kyrgyzstan **President Nursultan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan paid a state visit** to Bishkek on **April 25-26**, right after the opposition rallies. This visit of the head of the neighboring dynamically developing state had an important meaning primarily for President Bakiev because after his election as President of Kyrgyzstan in 2005 no foreign delegation of the highest level – on the level of President or Prime Minister – visited Bishkek. The visit of President Nazarbaev became the first one in this row and thus “foreign policy isolation” of Bakiev was in a certain sense broken through.

During his visit President Nazarbaev held negotiations with President Bakiev as a result of which they signed a Joint Statement of two Presidents. Instead of the scheduled speech in the parliament of Kyrgyzstan President Nazarbaev met with the leadership and several members of parliament. The range of questions discussed during those meetings was quite wide and touched upon not only problems in bilateral Kyrgyz-Kazakh relations, but also issues of cooperation of the two states in regional and international organizations as well as issues of stability and regional integration in Central Asia.

The parties again indicated their positions over the most important bilateral issues, including cooperation in the sphere of water and energy relations, participation of Kazakhstani capital in mining operations, in finance and banking as well as construction and telecommunications sectors of Kyrgyzstan’s economy, property relations dealing with Kazakh resorts on the Lake Issykkul, the situation with Kyrgyz labor migrants in Kazakhstan, promotion of Kyrgyz goods on Kazakhstan’s market and their transit to Russia and a number of other issues. However, they failed to come to one final decision.

In their Joint Statement presidents of the two states instructed their Cabinets to “adopt a Plan of activities on economic integration, which allows maximally disclosing the potential of cooperation between the two states....”

Following negotiations President Nazarbaev confirmed willingness of Kazakhstan to allocate 100 million USD for the development of Kyrgyzstan’s economy and unequivocally stated about the intention of his country to participate in construction of the cascade of Kambarata hydroelectric power stations along with

Russia. President of Kazakhstan also stated that he allots Kyrgyzstan 1.5 thousand tons of bread-grain. The presidents instructed to discuss in detail the existing issues in economic partnership of the two states at a Kyrgyz-Kazakh Business Forum, which was scheduled for July under the chairmanship of Prime Ministers of the two states.

Among other issues discussed during the visit of President Nazarbaev to Kyrgyzstan experts pointed out the declared aspiration of the Heads of two states for further political rapprochement. Article three of the Joint Declaration was devoted to this issue, whose author was apparently Nazarbaev: "... Parties expressing further interest in practical realization of the provisions of the Treaty on allied relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Kazakhstan from 25 December 2003, and with a view of institutionalizing bilateral relations set up a **Supreme Intergovernmental Council**, to be headed by the presidents of the two states, to coordinate development of cooperation between the two states in political, economic, scientific and technical as well as human dimensions, in the sphere of ensuring regional and global international security...."

According to a number of experts, through realization of this initiative Astana is trying to gain more effective influence over the processes, which are taking place in the neighboring country and primarily in the spheres of high interest for it – water, power engineering, mining operations, by offering in exchange more open access to increasing financial resources of Kazakhstan.

In the second quarter of 2007 there were important visits to Kyrgyzstan and negotiations within the framework of **Kyrgyz-American relations**, which have been experiencing certain difficulties lately. At the beginning of June U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Assistant U.S. State Secretary Richard Boucher visited Kyrgyzstan one by one. The visit of the high-ranking U.S. diplomat was planned (Richard Boucher visits Kyrgyzstan at least once a year) and had a goal of monitoring the internal political situation in the country after the April rallies of the opposition and plans of the Kyrgyz leadership on advancing democratic reforms as well as foreign policy guiding lines and approaches of Bishkek on the eve of the SCO Summit, whereas the visit of the head of the Pentagon was unplanned and was mainly focused on a single issue – Gansi airbase at Manas airport.

The anti-American campaign launched in April-May for eviction of the Gansi airbase was the occasion of Robert Gates' special visit to Kyrgyzstan. It should be noted that a wide spectrum of the Kyrgyz public, including the national parliament was purposefully involved in this campaign. A lot of anti-airbase round table discussions, parliamentary hearings, rallies and pickets were held. As a result five committees of the national parliament recommended denouncing the agreement on deployment of the airbase of the anti-terrorist coalition at Manas

airport and sent a corresponding appeal to the leadership of parliament and the country.

Despite the unfavorable public and political background the U.S. Defense Secretary Gates managed to convince the Kyrgyz leadership in keeping the Gansi airbase at Manas airport. After the negotiations with his colleague Ismail Isakov, Defense Minister of Kyrgyzstan, the head of the Pentagon told journalists that the agreement between the U.S. and Kyrgyzstan on deployment of the airbase at Manas airport “corresponds to norms according to which other states deployed their troops on the territory of Kyrgyzstan.”

During the meeting with President Bakiev Robert Gates highly appreciated Kyrgyzstan’s contribution to the fight against international terrorism by noting that “Kyrgyzstan plays a very important role in the efforts undertaken by more than 40 states in the fight against international terrorism. And all of these states acknowledge the role of Kyrgyzstan.” U.S. Defense Secretary assured President Bakiev that “the U.S. understands position of Bishkek regarding the incidents that took place at the airbase and will make all efforts to resolve them as soon as possible and exclude such incidents in the future.”

While discussing the situation in Afghanistan Kyrgyz and American sides again stated that “the country continues disturbing the world community” and as President’s Press Service reported following Robert Gates’ visit to Kyrgyzstan “...Bakiev confirms that Kyrgyzstan firmly holds to its commitments in the context of the efforts of the international anti-terrorist coalition....”

After Robert Gates President Bakiev received Richard Boucher, Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs. According to official sources, they discussed issues of bilateral cooperation in the spheres of ensuring security, development of economy and democracy. They also exchanged opinions on the prospects of trade and economic cooperation between the states of the Central Asian region.

President Bakiev informed Richard Boucher about the constitutional reform as well as reforms of the judiciary system and law enforcement bodies of the country. As for the economic reforms in the country the President expressed satisfaction with the level of development of the economy and confirmed invariability of the course for deepening of market reforms. Assistant Secretary of State Boucher noted that the goal of cooperation of the U.S. with Kyrgyzstan is to render assistance in expanding possibilities for the growth of the country and emphasized that the U.S. supports the reforms undertaken in the country and readiness to continue cooperation. Assistant Secretary of State also said that Kyrgyzstan may turn into an educational center in the region and pointed out successful realization of the project on the American University of Central Asia located in Bishkek.

The two visits of high-ranking American officials to Bishkek in early June in general allowed mitigating anti-American moods in Kyrgyzstan and to a certain extent helped directing them towards constructive dialogue. At the same time according to a number of experts, it is premature to speak of complete restoration of Kyrgyz-American relations. A great deal in Kyrgyz-American relations will depend on the results of the SCO Summit scheduled for August in Bishkek and the position of official Bishkek during the Summit.

In the second quarter of 2007 Kyrgyzstan witnessed a large-scale preparation for the main foreign policy event of the year – **SCO Summit**, which also has a serious internal political implication for President Bakiev. By the end of June fears about the technical aspect of hosting the Summit were dispelled due to considerable financial and material assistance of China. The content part of the Summit was officially discussed during meetings of Secretaries of Security Councils and Defense Ministers of the SCO member states in June in Bishkek as well as during meetings of the Council of National Coordinators of SCO and other structures of the organization. The final development of documents and approval of the agenda of the Summit was entrusted with Foreign Ministers of the SCO member states, who will meet in Bishkek in early July.

At the same time taking into account the previous experience of hosting SCO Summits one can hardly consider the documents prepared and approved by the Council of Foreign Ministers as “final.” They could be subject to any last minute changes of fundamental importance. Taking into account the recent difficulties in Russian-American relations, Iranian factor (President of Iran is invited and he has confirmed his participation in the Summit), certain disagreements between Russia and China over Central Asia, the existing tensions between the states of Central Asia as well as other factors that could emerge on the eve of the Summit, it is quite possible that there will be changes and amendments to already agreed final documents. It is not excluded that the main actors – Russia and China – could prepare surprises and disclose their trumps only during the Summit.

In the second quarter of this year **Kyrgyz-Russian relations** developed evenly, however no significant bilateral visits or signing of breakthrough agreements were observed. Meanwhile many experts note the fact of absence of President Bakiev during the funerals of the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin. Bakiev instead of himself sent Prime Minister Almazbek Atambaev. A number of experts interpret this fact as indicative of certain intergovernmental problems.

The idea of creation of confederation between Kyrgyzstan and Russia proposed during this time by the leader of the United Front Felix Kulov did not meet with approval from Russian or Kyrgyz political circles and general public, who perceived it as an attempt on the part of Kulov to use pro-Russian moods in the internal political struggle and restoration of his shattered image. Resignation of Apas Jumagulov, Kyrgyz Ambassador in Russia, could be referred to as the most significant event in this direction of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy.

Kyrgyz-Chinese relations in the second quarter of the current year were clouded with the “espionage scandal”, which erupted against the background of the preparations for the forthcoming visit to Kyrgyzstan of the Chairman of the People’s Republic of China Hu Xintao planned on the eve of the SCO Summit. The parties undertook efforts to settle the situation and prevent it from exacerbation. The State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic had to make an official statement on non-participation of Chinese special services in this incidence. However, despite that this statement in general satisfied the Chinese side, it also gave way to doubts about real participants and the meaning of this action on the part of Kyrgyz special services.

Among personnel changes in the system of foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan experts point out appointment of Melis Eshimkanov, one of the opposition leaders, as Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Switzerland, as a result of which President Bakiev certainly considerably weakened the opposition camp.

In general the increased foreign policy activity of Kyrgyzstan in the second quarter of 2007 allowed to a certain extent to advance solution of certain issues in a number of directions, open the count of visits on the top level to Kyrgyzstan under Bakiev’s presidency, alleviate to a certain extent the acuteness in American direction of foreign policy, primarily around the U.S. airbase; launch a large scale preparation and conduct a number of serious preparatory meetings in relation to the SCO Summit. At the same time as pointed out by experts, certain positive moments that emerged in the foreign policy activity of Kyrgyzstan are not yet quite sustainable and a great deal will depend on the second half of the year when the most important foreign policy and domestic events will take place.