

Newsletter of the Institute for Public Policy

KYRGYZSTAN BRIEF



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Gulnara Iskakova:
“The recent changes to the constitution have led to the preservation of the state machine, which has become obsolete, unbalanced and is out of line with the requirements of the time.” - p.6

Bakyt Beshimov:
“Neither power nor opposition can give an answer to a question: what development model for Kyrgyzstan do they see – post-socialistic, nationalistic, liberal or what?” – p. 11

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ABOUT IPP

The Institute for Public Policy (IPP) is an independent, non-partisan research and policy-making institution, based in Bishkek. Its goals are to develop and promote participatory approach in establishing public policy; to strengthen expert analysis in order to promote effective decisionmaking in matters of public policy and to create an independent platform for dialogue on public policy issues. The Institute provides expert consulting, research and surveys on Central Asian affairs, conflict management services as well as implementation of educational and cultural projects aimed at good governance.

Institute for Public Policy
 42/1 Isanov kochosu
 Bishkek 720017
 Kyrgyzstan

Tel/Fax: +996(312) 906240
 Email: office@ipp.kg
 Website: <http://www.ipp.kg>

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CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND POWERS OF THE HIGHEST GOVERNMENT BODIES IN KYRGYZSTAN: A NEW BALANCE?

Gulnara Iskakova, LL.M., Associate Professor of law, American University-Central Asia

The last two (out of six) changes of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic have struck everyone with their unexpectedness and speed of adoption. Perhaps a statement that the main changes in the Constitution took place mainly because of redistribution of power between two popularly elected government bodies- the president and parliament- will not come as a surprise. These two main government bodies receive the most power from the people - all other government bodies consist of one or both of them. Precisely because of their popular election, however, there is a concentration of fundamental contradictions and conflicts with the society, its ethnic, denominational, linguistic, and regional divisions. Two popularly elected bodies find difficulties in reaching compromises, while powers and relations between them are changed in the Constitution. However, both in the Constitution and in practice, responsibility of these popularly elected bodies to the population for the results of their activities remains unchanged.

In this article there is an analysis of the Constitution of November 2006 and what has changed in the Constitution as signed by the president in January 2007, and how this in the end influences the balance of power between the president and parliament and the situation in the country.

The status and prerogatives of the president remained intact both in the 2006 and 2007 Constitutions. The president is the head of state, the highest official of the Kyrgyz Republic, a symbol of the unity of the people and government, guarantor of the Constitution, rights and freedoms of the citizen. He determines the main directions of internal and foreign policy of the state, represents the state, takes measures to guard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kyrgyz Republic, and ensures the unity, coordinated functioning and interaction of state bodies and their responsibility to the people.

About the responsibility of the state before the people: The meaning of any state system is in its responsibility to the population, which forms and maintains it. For the people, the responsibility of the state consists of **accountability for the work of the Cabinet** - so that the people know who to thank, and who to hold accountable, for the work of the Cabinet (the executive body responsible for revenues and expenditures of state budget, providing citizens' security, implementing pricing, tariff, and tax policy).

The significance of the Cabinet is so great that the issue of its longevity and efficiency is critical for any system of state structure. In a parliamentary system, parlia-

ment dismisses the Cabinet and therefore parliament is collectively responsible for the work of the Cabinet. In a presidential system, the president dismisses the Cabinet and is personally responsible for their work. In a premier-presidential system (like in France and Poland) Cabinet depends on the confidence of parliament; if parliament supports the president then the president heads the Cabinet. If parliament does not support the president then the prime minister heads the Cabinet.

In our system (presidential-parliamentary) it is difficult for the layperson and specialist alike to know whom to hold accountable for the work of the Cabinet. If there are petrodollars, like in the similar systems of neighboring Kazakhstan and Russia, then accountability has less importance; there are resources, big markets conducive for business, and the majority of people are satisfied. In Kyrgyzstan, a lack of economic resources and possibilities requires effective organization of government, which is maintained by honest people for their last crumbs. In Kyrgyzstan both president and parliament have powers to dismiss the Cabinet. The president presides over this system but neither the president nor parliament bear responsibility for the work of the Cabinet.

The rule of the 2003 Constitution remained intact in 2006 and 2007 Constitutions. According to this rule,

- As a result of hearing annual report of the prime minister at the initiative of 1/3 of MPs (simple majority in 2003 Constitution), parliament may, by a simple majority (2/3 in 2003 Constitution) cast a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet.
- After the vote of no confidence the president has a right to make a decision on dissolution of the Cabinet or to contest parliament's decision.
- Should parliament choose again within three months to pass a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet then the president announces dissolution of the Cabinet or appoints early elections of parliament (dissolves parliament).

According to **1993** Constitution, the Cabinet was dependent on the confidence of parliament. The president could dismiss only individual Cabinet members. However, in order to dissolve the entire Cabinet the president needed parliament's consent. Parliament by a simple majority could pass a vote of no confidence in the entire Cabinet or individual Cabinet member, and thus the Cabinet was dependent on

the confidence of parliament. So back then a premier-presidential system existed in Kyrgyzstan.

According to Constitutions of **2003**, **2006** and **2007**, the president dissolves the Cabinet if:

- 1) he accepts resignation request of the prime minister or the Cabinet;
- 2) parliament passes a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet and the president agrees with it;
- 3) parliament within three months again passes a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet. In this case the president at his own discretion dissolves either the Cabinet or parliament.

Compared to the 2006 and 2007 Constitutions, in the 2003 Constitution, the Cabinet depended more on the president. The president could personally dismiss the prime minister or the entire Cabinet. Whereas according to Constitutions of 2006 and 2007, the president of his own initiative (or at the suggestion of the prime minister) can dismiss a Cabinet member but cannot dismiss the entire Cabinet of his own initiative. Parliament may also dismiss a Cabinet member by passing a vote of no confidence in him/her again within six months.

Forming of the Cabinet

The constitutions of 1993 and 2007 establish different orders for the forming of the Cabinet. Certain shortcomings of the 2006 Constitution were adjusted in the 2007 Constitution. So, for instance, according to the 2006 Constitution a political party became has the right to form a Cabinet. This means that a voluntary public association that vies for power and not necessarily elected by the majority of the population may participate in forming the top government body - the Cabinet. The president had a right to choose this party at his/her own discretion.

Now according to the 2007 Constitution, MPs elected from party lists have the right to form a Cabinet, which is better since voters elect MPs. But there is no constitution in the world where political parties or MPs elected from party lists are formal and legal holders of the right to form a Cabinet - this is a purely Kyrgyz invention. Besides, the president is placed above parliament in the hierarchy of power due to a provision whereby the president "commissions" MPs from a political party to nominate a prime minister (in 2006 wording the president had a right to commission free public associations of the civil society - parties). Although in principle parliament is independent of the president since the people legitimize it. Therefore, relations between the president and parliament are not relations of authority and subordination, but relations of bodies that are independent of each other, having separate competen-

Thus, according to the 2007 Constitution the president in the end decides whether to dismiss the Cabinet or not. That is, the presidential-parliamentary system established by 2003 Constitution is preserved.

In contrast to the 2003 Constitution, the right of the president to preside over Cabinet meetings and invalidate acts of the Cabinet was excluded in 2006 Constitution.

At the same time, the Constitution of 2007 introduced new provisions according to which the president may set goals and tasks before the Cabinet. That is, at his own discretion the president may interfere in the work of the Cabinet, although the prime minister (who is dependent on the president) is responsible for the work of the Cabinet. The president retained the right to suspend any acts of the Cabinet as it was in the 2003 Constitution.

The powers of the prime minister were listed in detail in the 1993 Constitution, indicative of the prime minister's significance and his personal responsibility for the work of the entire Cabinet. In the 2003, 2006 and 2007 Constitutions powers of the prime minister are not mentioned separately; the prime minister remains a relatively weak figure who at the same time is dependent both on the president and parliament.

cies and powers in checking and influencing each other.

According to the **2003** Constitution, the president:

- had a right to determine the structure of the Cabinet;
- with parliament's consent appointed the prime minister;
- at the prime minister's suggestion and with parliament's consent, appointed Cabinet members.

Whereas parliament:

- approved the structure of the Cabinet proposed by the president;
- gave consent to appointment of the prime minister and Cabinet members.

The prime minister advised the president on candidates for offices of Cabinet members.

According to the **2006** Constitution, the president:

- Approved (now according to the 2007 Constitution the president appoints) the prime minister (nominated by a political party);



- Approved Cabinet members (now according to the 2007 Constitution, the president appoints them);
- gave consent to the prime minister to submit Cabinet structure to parliament.

Candidates for the office of the prime minister are proposed to the president:

- By a party receiving more than 50% of seats in parliament (if there is no such party or MPs will not submit a candidacy for the office of the prime minister or the prime minister does not submit the Cabinet structure and does not submit candidacies for offices of Cabinet members);
- by a party which is commissioned for this by the president (if they fail to accomplish it);
- by the third party which is commissioned for this by the president.

In the wording of the 2007 Constitution MPs representing a party, instead of parties, participate in nomination of the prime minister.

Parliament:

- approves the structure of the Cabinet proposed by the prime minister.

The prime minister, appointed by the president:

- determines the Cabinet structure and submits it to parliament's approval with the president's consent;
- determines candidacies for offices of Cabinet members (except for defense and security) and submits them to president's appointment.

According to the 2007 Constitution, the president appoints the prime minister who is nominated by a political party, not through voting in parliament. If within

the established deadline (five days) the candidate for the office of the prime minister is not submitted to the president then the president dismisses parliament, which for the most part does not even have a right to participate in selection and nomination of a prime minister. Thus, the Constitution illogically punishes the whole parliament and people who elected it because of the failure of several party list MPs to nominate a prime minister. The Constitution inconsistently punishes parliament for what it is not involved in. That is, there is no cause-effect relationship between dissolution of parliament and actions of parliament. In 2005, political life did not flow in a new direction of transfer from regionalism to ideological contest in politics. Conservative thinking, involving retrograded populism and world outlooks, and the political immaturity of political elite hindered the country from progressive development. In many countries, progressive politicians, especially some outstanding leaders who had historically short terms, performed revolutions in the minds of their people and build a new beautiful world for all on that basis. Kyrgyzstan also has a chance, but the country is allowing it to pass. The system of governance remains weak. The political system is in crisis. Confrontation between the executive branch of authority and the parliament have attained a permanent, dead-end character. The condition of the parliament discredits the model of a multiparty system and parliamentary form of ruling in the eyes of the population. Corruption and inefficient management of public affairs has destroyed the remaining hopes of the population after the change of authority. Neither the authority nor the opposition have a competent, consolidated position on any of the principal issue of national or foreign policy. The HIPC program demonstrates this state of affairs best.

People do not have a leader; they have a tandem. There is combative opposition, many-headed and many-voiced, which still does not know what kind of society to build. In short, the historical ancestry and future of the country, the hopes and expectations of people are in the hands of an immature political elite.

Forming of state bodies

Compared to the 1993 Constitution, the Constitution of 2007 preserved significant powers of the president in forming state bodies and appointing officials. The president also dismisses these officials, contradicting the requirement of independence of these bodies and their neutrality in carrying out their powers. These officials must be dismissed only upon expiration of their terms of office or if they commit serious offence.

For instance, the **Accounting Chamber** exercises overseeing the legality of state spending use of gold

reserves and international loans. According to the 1993 Constitution, it was formed by parliament. The constitution of 2006 preserved the approach of the 2003 Constitution, whereby the president, with parliament's consent, appoints the chairman of the Accounting Chamber who alone appoints one half of members of the Accounting Chamber (and dismisses them - in the wording of the 2007 Constitution). The other half of the members of the Accounting Chamber is appointed/elected by parliament.

The Central Commission for Elections and Referenda organizes and conducts elections. According to the 1993 Constitution, parliament formed the Commission. Whereas according to the 2006 Constitution, the president with parliament's consent appoints the chairman of the Commission and on his own appoints one half of the members of the Commission (and dismisses them - in the wording of the 2007 Constitution). Another half of the members of the Commission are elected by parliament.

The process of forming courts, compared to the 2006 Constitution, the Constitution of 2007 excludes the National Council of Justice in proposing the president candidates for offices of justices of the Constitutional and Supreme Courts for their subsequent election in parliament. In other words, the president on his own, without participation of the National Council, selects candidates of justices for these courts.

Lawmaking

Executive power is concentrated in the hands of the Cabinet headed by a prime minister, whereas the legislative power rests with parliament. However, different branches of government have powers to influence and check each other. Thus, the president (Cabinet in parliamentary or mixed system) may have certain legislative powers.

The Constitutions of 2003, 2006 and 2007 have assigned the president substantial legislative powers. He has the power to initiate bills, issue decrees, veto a bill passed by parliament and return it with his objections to parliament. If parliament disagrees with the president then during reconsideration of this bill it should approve a bill in the earlier approved wording by a majority of 2/3, and 3/4 regarding certain bills (according to the Constitutions of 2003 and 2007).

Besides this, the president has other legislative powers. For instance, the president at his own discretion can call a referendum, allowing him to pass a decision or law opposed by the legislature. Usually this right is either limited or absent completely. Limitation of the president's right to call a referendum on changing Constitution is the achievement of the 2007 Constitution - the president needs the agreement of 60% of MPs.

Dissolution of parliament is also considered as interference in legislative activity. Usually dissolution occurs as a last resort when parliament unable to work: unable to form a Cabinet or impedes the work of Cabinet by consistently passing a vote of no confidence. As is well known, according to the 2003 Constitution, parliament could be dissolved by the president on unlimited grounds - "in case of other crisis caused by insurmountable conflicts between parliament and other branches of power."

The Constitution of 2006 limited the president's power to dissolve parliament only to two cases:

1. when parliament (within three months again) chooses to pass a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet;
2. MPs elected through a party list within five days fail to submit a candidate for the office of prime minister to the president.

In Kyrgyzstan's history, parliament has never passed a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet (except for 1993 when the president could dissolve parliament only as a result of a referendum), let alone twice within three months. On the one hand, this right simply acts as a constant threat to the Cabinet and the imaginary power of parliament, which will never pass a vote of no confidence threatening its own dissolution. Only if the president needs it, and commands a majority in parliament, the president could cause parliament to self-dissolve (2/3 majority) or pass a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet for the second time.

On the other hand, as mentioned above, there is a paralogism in using the mechanism of dissolution in the Constitution: parliament is dissolved for what it has not done, without right.

The right to decide how to form and spend the budget of country usually belongs to the highest legislative body, which at the same time does not have direct access to budgetary funds. The Cabinet commands the finances of the country. Parliament approves the national budget and a report on its execution, whereas the Cabinet develops the national budget and ensures its execution. The rule of 2003 Constitution, whereby no amendments to the law on national budget, bills on taxes, other bills that increase expenditures of the national budget or reduce state revenues may be submitted to parliament and passed without the consent of the Cabinet, was preserved in the 2006 Constitution.

The Constitution of 2007 introduced a new provision, whereby "bills that entail increasing expenditure of the national budget or reducing state revenues may be passed by parliament provided there is a source of financing." In that way there is a slight but insufficient strengthening of powers of parliament regarding the national budget.

The president's right to issue decrees that carry the force of law is considered a strong interference by the president into parliament's activities. Starting from the 2006 Constitution, the president cannot issue decrees that carry the force of law in the case of parliament's dissolution and parliament no longer delegates its legislative powers to the president up to one year.



As before:

- At his own discretion the president may call a referendum on bills (except for amendments to the Constitution - according to the 2007 Constitution);
- It is difficult to override his veto of a bill;
- Budgetary issues remain under the control of the Cabinet (with the amendment of the 2007 Constitution);

However, the president no longer has such discretionary powers regarding:

- Dissolution of parliament (2006 Constitution) - now it depends on the political influence of the president;
- The president cannot issue decrees that carry the force of law (2006 Constitution);
- Parliament no longer delegates the president its legislative powers (2006 Constitution).

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic frequently changes but all presidents have firmly maintained their dominant status vis-à-vis parliament and Cabinet. At the same time, presidents sought to cover their real powers by "the consent of parliament", "passing

a vote of no confidence on the part of parliament" in the Constitution as well as political responsibility of the prime minister for Cabinet's performance. Namely, the following occurs in the Constitution:

- Variance between large powers of the president, reduced powers of parliament and lack of their accountability to the people for Cabinet's policy;
- A weak prime minister, who is more dependent on the president and to a lesser extent on parliament but at the same time bears great responsibility;
- Weakened parliament due to the significant legislative powers of the president.

The mechanism of forming the Cabinet became tangled and its implementation in practice will depend on the ability of the president to find a common language with parliament, which will remain variegated due to the effect of a mixed electoral system and therefore unpredictable. Changes to the Constitution have led to the preservation of the state machine, which has become obsolete, unbalanced and is out of line with the requirements of the time. Given the lack of natural resources and petrodollars of neighboring states, deficiencies in the system become even more evident and will continue to strongly influence the situation in the country.

"TECHNICAL" CABINET: A TRAP FOR THE PRESIDENT OF KYRGYZSTAN?

Nur Omarov, Professor of Political Science, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University

The dramatically twisted plot of the confrontation between the parliament and Prime Minister has, in the end, resulted in the public "death" of the tandem between Bakiev and Kulov. The role of President Bakiev, who virtually abandoned his partner, was significant in this development, which was followed by the quick confirmation of Azim Isabekov as the new head of the Cabinet. Thus, he became the fourteenth prime minister in the fifteen-year history of "sovereign Kyrgyzstan." The majority of experts have already characterized his role as fitting within the limits of an elementary executor of the President's will.

In this connection, particular attention should be paid to the assessment of the possibilities of the new Cabinet to respond adequately to the challenges generated by the difficult economic and political situation in Kyrgyzstan. Will it be able to respond to the dual tasks demanded of it by President Bakiev and the expectations of ordinary citizens?

When analyzing the possible answers to this question, it is necessary to assess several likely prospects for contemporary Kyrgyzstan. One such prospect

was defined by Felix Kulov, who was bold enough to take responsibility for participation in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Another way is essentially being defined at the moment. Will effective development be promoted in advance of a critical situation, or will there simply be "reactive responses?"

Observation of the initial actions of the Prime Minister, namely his proposed structure of the Cabinet, produce a rather negative response. As MPs have noted, there is an impression that the structure of the Cabinet is made for specific individuals, and therefore knowingly ineffective. Thus, we are getting a "new-old Cabinet," which suffers from systemic flaws that blocked the work of previous Cabinets.

Special attention should be paid to the following systemic flaws. First of all, attention should be paid to the striking complexity and inflation of the new Cabinet structure. Both the former and the present heads of state repeatedly posed the problem of quantitative reduction of bureaucracy and its transfer to a higher quality. In practice, everything is happening the other way around. Instead of eliminating duplicated functions and moving

to a transparent and effective system of decision-making, we are getting a Cabinet where, de facto, no one answers for anything. This situation is caused by the fact that, instead of some ministries absorbing the “borderline functions” of other ministries, there is even greater fragmentation. This certainly makes them incapable.

Another problem which vividly characterizes the new Cabinet is its age structure. As a rule, the average age of previous Cabinet members varied from 55 to 60. Notwithstanding the opinion that exactly these years are the times of the most wisdom and greatest capacity for work, one should not forget about the specific character of our country, due to which the Cabinet suffered from “Soviet conservatism” and only minor capacity for conducting real reforms. Therefore, a barrier has been artificially created that obstructs the way to the instatement of managers of a new generation who are more adapted to present conditions. A direct consequence of this conservatism is an inevitable generation gap instead of full-fledged cooperation. In this regard, Kazakhstan’s example is indicative, where, despite the criticism of President Nazarbaev, there is a purposeful renewal of the management stratum. The average age of Karim Masimov’s Cabinet does not exceed 40-45, which is indicative in itself.

Extremely relevant to this point is the problem of professional competence and the readiness of the Cabinet to execute modern tasks. The system of governance, traditionally built on the basis of the principle of personal loyalty, still rejects everything new, bright and outstanding. In this sense, it is difficult to refer to the new Prime Minister as a reformer who is capable of making innovative decisions. The growing principle of appointments according to kinship and origin complicates this problem even more. As a result, it is difficult to expect that there will be any qualitative changes in the new Cabinet. One may only confidently assume that broadly closed doors for the youth and professionals will remain closed. This barrier inevitably leads to the further stagnation of the quality of decision making and execution.

The abovementioned triad of systemic flaws on the first level gives way to a number of minor ones, themselves no less dangerous. In the aggregate, they produce a healthy scepticism in the ability of the Cabinet not only to develop “preventive” strategies, but also to act during a crisis.

Such are the “internal” diseases of the new Cabinet, which prevent it from achieving the status of an “effective Cabinet.” While assessing the probable results of its activities, it is necessary to consider the “external environment” in which it will act. To a great extent, this external environment defines whether the new Cabinet will be “populist,” promoting impracticable social expectations, or whether it will choose prag-

matic development through cutting back the social package in exchange for investments into the future.

It should be noted that expectations are extremely depressing in this regard as well. This is due to the multilevel causes that were brought about by the “aggressive” political and socio-economic situation.

An obvious recipe for success in the work of any government body is in political stability and predictability, which allow for the elaboration of short and medium-term development strategies for the state. As recent years have demonstrated, this circumstance is absent in Kyrgyzstan. The outward reconciliation of the president with the parliament through the surrender of a “disagreeable” Prime Minister is unlikely to last long.

We could suppose the existence of several lines of tension, due to which “politics will deal with the Prime Minister” in the spring. They could be marked as points of coincidence in the interests of the population and the opposition, which tries to use them. Among these points is the latest wording of the Constitution, which is of a bluntly authoritarian nature, and therefore does not suit the civil society. The “Anti-HIPC” movement, in its different variations, could be added to this list. A likely attempt on the part of Akaev’s supporters to return to the political life of the country creates a particular sub-plot.

The findings of a recent study carried out by the Institute for Strategic Analysis and Forecasting (ISAF) of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University in Bishkek are of considerable interest in the assessment of the conflict-reformative potential of the public. Despite the limited number of respondents, these findings give an interesting insight into the expectations of the population. As noted by ISAF experts, the majority of Bishkek residents (over 60%) feel unstable, insecure and anxious. Such figures are critical and do not rule out possibility of protest actions in 2007 due to a rise in prices for foodstuffs and energy resources, as well as an intensification of the “North vs. South” split.

Analysis of the political moods of Bishkek residents demonstrates that the situation in the city, as well as in the country as a whole, may well lead to a repetition of the events of November 2006 within the next six months, if not the events of March 2005. Under certain conditions, the tension of the protest mood may lead to popular unrest similar to the events of 2005.

The main reasons for this uneasy condition are related to the economic situation (flight of investments, roll-back of large and medium business, and predominance of small business), the internal social and political environment, and the “prohibitive” migration policies of Russia and Kazakhstan. According to the observations



of ISAF experts, a critical perception of recent events is noted among the NGO sector. One hundred percent of respondents noted the "tense" perception of national events. However, by omitting positive changes, the observations of this sector are of an idealized character.

Only a quarter of surveyed respondents noted any improvement of the situation in the political and economic spheres of the country during Bakiev's presidency. The majority of residents suggest that nothing has changed in the country. The responses of civil servants are of particular interest. They are largely pessimistic in their assessment of changes in political and economic spheres. Only ten percent of civil servants suggest that there were more or less positive changes in the political sphere during the last years, while 41.7% of respondents from this group think that nothing has changed. Much of the mood of officials comes down to the condition of uncertainty about their own personal futures.

It is possible to note commonalities in comparing these figures with the findings of public opinion polls conducted within the last three to four months, such as dissatisfaction among the population with the social and economic situation and with their own economic state, with the rampant corruption, and with a lack of transparency in decision-making. The over-inflated level of expectations set by 24 March 2005 has led to a situation whereby the majority of government activities are negatively perceived. Given the continuing systemic stagnation, will Isabekov's Cabinet be able to solve these problems quickly? The answer will be rather negative than positive.

The rate of economic development of the country in 2006 confirms the abovementioned points. Kyrgyzstan's GDP increased by 2.7%. This growth was mainly due to construction and the service sector. In agriculture, growth stood at 1.5%, whereas industrial output decreased by over 10%. When compared against a background of negative results in 2005, one may talk about a certain growth. However, there is no room for particular optimism. For 2006, the President set the task of 8% growth, which was certainly assessed skeptically by many people. Time confirmed their skepticism, since the goal was not accomplished. According to the estimates of independent experts, one may talk about firm economic growth if there is a 5% increase in GDP. Lack of such an increase in GDP means failure of the authorities to understand the causes of the economic crisis.

Reportedly, our rate of economic development turned out to be the lowest in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Even in Ukraine and Georgia, countries that went through "color revolutions," there was a 6.7%-8.6% increase in GDP. This comparison is a direct testimony to existence of other reasons for

low economic growth within Kyrgyzstan. Foremost among these reasons are corruption and lawlessness, which prevent the development of any "rules of the game" that would be universal for everyone. According to experts, this circumstance has been brought about directly by the system, which is built on excessive concentration of authority in one hand.

The year 2007 also does not give any grounds for optimism. Crises forecasted in the political sphere, along with the growing social activity of citizens, are not likely to promote internal consolidation and unity. The expression of concern by businesses with regard to the safety of their property and assets is a disturbing trend. Security is one of the main issues in planning investments. With -36, we are lagging behind other Central Asian states. Members of the International Business Council (IBC) have noted that the country has not achieved the necessary level of stability. According to the IBC, there have been no real reforms in Kyrgyzstan so far.

These problems will be exacerbated by the expected return of at least 100,000 labor migrants from Russia and the closing of internal markets for foreign entrepreneurs. Together, these factors will result in additional difficulties, not only for regular citizens, but for the entire "social economy" of Kyrgyzstan.

The growing activity of radical Islamists should be attributed to a different group of challenges, more or less related to those previously mentioned. According to experts, out of all Central Asian republics, Kyrgyzstan is currently the most favorable site for the activities of radical Islamists. If the state does not come up with an adequate "state-religion strategy," there is a high probability for the radicalization and destabilization of the country as a whole. While assessing the situation, it is necessary to note that a seeming calm masks a loud explosion, since a regrouping and build-up of the strength of Islamists is occurring in reality. Whether the new Cabinet will be able to do anything in this direction given the elapsing time is a matter that directly influences the future of the country.

Summing up, it is important to note the following points: For the success of the reforms declared by the new leadership of Kyrgyzstan, it is vitally important to have several components. These key components include the availability of an "effective Cabinet," autonomous of the president, political stability based on national unity, and an independent judiciary, which precludes corruption. Together, these factors would allow the creation of a basis for the construction of a rationally designed, effective state.

While assessing the possibility of creating an "effective Cabinet" as a derivative of the concept of an "effective

state," it is important to turn to international experience. According to scholars, the main function of an "effective state" should be the promotion, determination and acceleration of those structural changes which are necessary for long-term growth and elevation to a higher level of social development. The state should remain in the center of the economic and social spheres. However, it is important to reevaluate the role of the state. It should not occupy the position of the main actor in making and implementing decisions. On the contrary, it should act as a partner, catalyst and regulator of changes. That is why an "effective Cabinet" must realize what constitutes our "national interests" and motivate the rest of the population towards the attainment of these national interests. Orientation towards ensuring balance between economic growth and social and political stability will facilitate success in reforming the state.

Will Isabekov's Cabinet have such an understanding of its role and be able to implement it in practice? The entire logic of the abovementioned points prompts a negative answer. Virtual subordination to the president and the force majeure conditions of "post-revolutionary development" leave an extremely narrow corridor for the Cabinet's activities. We will most likely not get a full-fledged strategy for the development of a competitive economy

that is able to consistently meet the expectations of ordinary citizens. Most probable is the continuation of previous trends that are based on strengthening the present day "consumption economy," directly benefiting certain groups of politicians and entrepreneurs close to the president. In practice, this situation entails the preservation of the previous diseases of the economy, the gradual expansion of the gap in the incomes and interests of social strata, a high degree of dependence on external investments, and chronically crisis-prone development.

However, there is one very significant difference from the old times in this situation. If it was possible to talk about a "just president" and an "incompetent Cabinet" previously, now, when the Cabinet is completely dependent on the head of the state, such gradations and illusions disappear. This means that the president, having monopolized political and executive powers, will have to assume the main responsibility and criticism for any unpopular and flawed steps made by his protégé Isabekov. Therefore, a "pleasant neighborhood" turns into a trap for the president, which will be increasingly difficult for him to avoid.

SOME POLITICAL OUTCOMES OF 2006

Valentin Bogatyrev, Coordinator of the Analytical Consortium "Perspectiva"

Two parallel processes define today's development of political situation in Kyrgyzstan.

The first one is related with political formation of President Bakiev.

It needs to be recalled that when Bakiev reached power in after March 24, he had a very low level of legitimacy. State authority in general and President's authority in particular lost its sanctity and respect. The authority of the President was very low, and vertical power of the executive branch of the authority ended behind the doors of the Kyrgyz White House.

But this was not the most dangerous thing for Bakiev. A bigger threat to Bakiev's authority was posed by his surrounding, which was created in an urgent mode. Neither Prime Minister nor other high officials were a part of Bakiev's team.

It was some kind of forced political agreement for Bakiev; otherwise he would not be able to keep power in the hands and stabilize the situation in the country. Bakiev understood it perfectly.

But he also realized that such situation cannot last forever. He was ready to strengthen his author-

ity; the only question was to choose the right moment to do it with minimum of political damage.

Seeing how easily and accurately has Bakiev used his chances recently, it is clear that Bakiev turned out to be more subtle and strong politician compared to how he is perceived.

The first opportunity emerged in the spring of the last year when opposition demanded dismissal of several people from the President's surrounding. It was the best situation. The list of dismissed people turned out shorter than what opposition demanded, but those dismissed had ambitions for power, though not all of them.

The second phase of strengthening the presidential authority was related with constitutional reforms. Again, opposition did the whole job, helping the President.

The first edition of the constitution, adopted on November 8, already strengthened President's powers significantly, compared to powers, which he had before. Political skills of Presidential pool in this political operation deserve the highest grade, compared to those who were better on the square.

But this was not a climax yet. The major point was the



December edition of the constitution. The process brought two positive results for Bakiev: strengthening of presidential powers and formation of sustainable pro-presidential majority in the Parliament. The latter was more than surprising after November rebellion of MPs who were previously obedient to the President.

Finally any political technologist can be delighted by how President solved the issue with Kulov.

I do not have doubts that Bakiev sincerely intended to work with Felix Kulov. If it was not so, it cost him nothing not to nominate Kulov at all, or second time.

But again there was an obstacle to the Prime Minister in the form of Parliament opposition. The Parliament did not want to excuse several mistakes of the Prime Minister, first of all, his very strange scornful and condescending attitude to the legislative branch of authority. Everyone remember his words: "MPs are like children..."

Such attitude was particularly strange because Kulov repeatedly posed himself as a supporter of the Parliamentary form of governance and even submitted his own version of the constitution, where the Parliament was given a key role in the system of authority. It could mean only one thing: Kulov supported the Parliamentary form of government only for political purposes, no more than that.

The last drop, of course, was the stance of Prime Minister regarding the issue of the Parliament's dissolution. The problem was not this stance as such (most of presidential surrounding had the same opinion) but the fact that a formally trained lawyer, very experienced political figure, who had been a victim of voluntary treatment of law in past, was so easily able to go against the law for rather psychological than political frustration.

Also, the Prime Minister did not take into account that it was a historically another Parliament, not the same as the one dissolved a decade ago.

Kulov's position on Kyrgyzstan's entrance to the HIPC might not be the reason, but still was an argument. Noteworthy, the fact that he recalled his signature under government's agreement with conditions on joining the HIPC makes one thing of insincerity, some sort of a game of the Prime Minister, just like with the parliamentary form of governance.

Anyway, with resignation of Kulov featured another phase of strengthening the President's powers. One can say that right now Bakiev became the President of the country.

This process was politically logi-

cal enough, and positive for the country.

Firstly, we could not have a President without a full Presidential authority. It was not a normal situation.

Secondly, strengthening of presidential authority will speed up process of state authority restoration in general; the deficit of power is dangerous, especially in our country.

Thirdly, we will more likely get what we need most: a Presidential team, which will work on goals which the President puts forward. And we will have a real opportunity to evaluate the President and his team, without any references to the surrounding of President hindering the work of President. Some three more appointment decisions and no one will be an 'obstacle' to the President.

Many people fear that the process of strengthening the President's powers will turn the country back to authoritarianism.

But, firstly, it would be naive to believe that any President, whatever is his name, would be ready reduce own powers. One comes to power not for that purpose. More than that, recently we can hear from the most committed democrats that what this country needs is a dictator, a strong hand. Well, with one condition: an enlightened dictator.

Secondly, return to authoritarianism is possible only when there is no one to resist. It is not our case. The Kyrgyz society passed a critical point to return to its own traditions of freedom, and people will never let themselves turn into slaves of a system, not mentioning of a ruler.

The second process, which we are witnessing, is related to the formation of a new power status and new role of the Parliament. The process started in last days of March 2005, signifying another revolution, maybe more important that the power change.

Its leader and organizer was another representative of the South - Omurbek Tekebaev. As many other politicians who had been in opposition to Akaev for many years, he could not miss such a chance, provided by departure of the first President. He became the Speaker of the Parliament and literally started living in a Parliamentary republic. His position and opinion on the structure of authority in the country started changing the role of the Parliament in the political system of the country. His personal critical attitude to Bakiev also played role.

Tekebaev started generating a new attitude of the Parliament towards President, government on a daily basis. More than that, he initi-

ated and, initially led, the process of changing the legal foundations, the constitutional reform.

It is understandable that his position and policy collided with the existing system. And it was quite logical that Tekebaev had to pay for his actions by resignation from the Speaker's position and being a victim of blackmailing.

Still, both things had results. The most important one was a formation of de-facto new Parliament. Tekebaev, talking high language, burned a spark, which started flame of November riot of the Parliament against the President and December riot of the Parliament against the government.

Thus, talking about political outcomes of 2006, we should not only see conflicts and mistakes, but also realize that this year brought us serious, in some way, fundamental political changes.

Consequences of last year events will manifest in the nearest future and manifest significantly. In the first place, it will occur in the framework of preparation for Parliamentary elections according to the new system. Significance of the event is hard to overestimate. It is already clear that this issue will be determined not by constitutional terms but by the readiness of main political forces for elections.

Roundtable transcript

KYRGYZSTAN IN 2006: ACHIEVEMENTS, LESSONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Date: January 11, 2007

Location: Institute for Public Policy

Moderator: Muratbek Imanaliev, president of the Institute for Public Policy

Roundtable participants:

1. Ishenbai Abdurazakov – Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic
2. Sultan Mederov – Advisor for the Executive Director of Marka Audit Ltd
3. Valentin Bogatyrev – Coordinator of the Analytical Consortium "Perspectiva"
4. Bakyt Beshimov – Vice-President of the AUCA
5. Erlan Abdylbaev - Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic
6. Zainidin Kurmanov – National Consultant of the Parliamentary Reform Component of the Democratic Governance UNDP Program
7. Nurlan Sadykov – Director of the Institute for Constitutional Policy
8. Elmira Nogoibaeva – senior expert of International Institute for Strategic Research under the President of KR
9. Tamerlan Ibraimov – Director of the Political and Legal Research Center
10. Ulan Sarbanov – former Chair of the KR National Bank

Muratbek Imanaliev: Today we met to discuss the situation in our country. Perhaps your statements today will draw public interest and your words will be taken into consideration. Our country has lived through a very interesting, tumultuous and unpredictable year in 2006. There were plenty of events; I am always surprised at the amount of information produced by such a small country as Kyrgyzstan – more than by India or China. The world looks at us with amazement. My international colleagues approach me with questions trying to understand what is taking place in this country. Frankly speaking, we ourselves can not always answer those questions. Every day new political constructions appear and break within the hour. A big game with the Constitution was initiated. But as in other countries, Constitutional Reform in our country turned into a redistribution of authority. Politicians and all the people working on it forgot that the main purpose of the Constitution was to form a legal framework, wherein the Constitution would be a key and a main ruling element; that the Constitutional Reform did not only foresee the adoption of the Constitution but the creation of corresponding institutes and mechanisms that would turn the Constitution into a main law, defining and regulating the whole legal life of the state.

I picture the current situation as follows: with the efforts of many people we created a space for the absurd. I said before that officials in our country did not have politics but I have recently come to the conclusion that it does exist; it is the politics of the absurd, unfortunately. Therefore, today I would like to discuss this situation. Bakyt Jolchubekovich, what do you think of the events of 2006 and the opportunities and expectations for 2007?

Bakyt Beshimov: I am grateful to the Institute for the invitation. Before answering the question, I would like to emphasize that I have read all IPP articles, the articles of Valentin Bogatyrev and I liked all of your ideas, especially the one concerning a two-tiered system of government. In general, ideas about political philosophy and the products of intellectual activities on state development are hardly in demand in Kyrgyzstan. In Russia, Belarus and in Baltic states they are needed during strategic decisions, making processes and implementation of development objectives, but they are absolutely unnecessary for our country. Statements about 2006 being a new start raise doubts with me. I could say something similar about 2005 but that would

wherein the subject is not an individual and his rights, but a clan and family. In my mind, Kyrgyzstan is building this very democracy. I was asked to say more about this democracy in Germany but I think that such democracy as a foundation is possible only for Asian states. But the most important that change of elites did not take place in 2006. These are people with soviet minds not empowered nor willing to master democratic technologies. That is the largest issue at present. But I hope tomorrow or by 2010 this change will occur and then we will be able say that power is listening to us, understanding and has a will.

Sultan Mederov: Consensus-based democracy – is it good or bad?

Valentin Bogatyrev: I think it is neither good nor bad. It is a method of social regulation. 150 years ago we lost it because of a different management system unusual to us, with a different culture, different stereotypes of interaction and different values were introduced, and 150 years ago we received an education strange for us. And consensus-based democracy is a return to old cultural foundations inherent to this society. That is what makes them important. And let them call it tribalism but that is a method that allowed the Kyrgyz people to survive for centuries and to live through this year too. That is so. Particularly in critical situations, clans have negotiated with each other and the situation would be resolved. Whether it is good or bad is another question. I just see that it is a functioning mechanism and it works.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Is there a possibility of “exhumation” of principles and mechanisms of consensus-based democracy that existed in the past? Historical memory stores details but does not store mechanisms as in case with the aksakal courts. I would like to support Valentine Borisovich: consensus-based democracy does not in any way deny the universal principle of democracy because the majority is replaced by public agreements, which, may be more important. And it does not matter which way – more important is that it leads to harmony and agreement, which is a prerequisite for development. And that concerns even such countries as China.

Valentin Bogatyrev: One can say that harmony and agreement are the foundations of development only in China and in no other countries. In my opinion, the driving force of development is conflict.

Muratbek Imanaliev: If conflict is a paradox with inconsistent conditions then yes. But the paradox is that any conflict leads to a search for harmony and agreement. But it may happen that conflict will lead to an absolutely different side and go beyond the limits of harmony.

Elmira Nogoibaeva: I agree with all who have spoken and disagree only with the researchers of the Moscow

State Institute of International Relations that stated that Kyrgyzstan is second place in the list of collapsing states after Chad. It is not clear what indicators were used during the research and why would Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have more capacity? I think that researchers had limited information and based their findings on what Russia currently wanted to see.

The second is lack of elite. All models are viewed from the point of view of values. I think that not values but political sociology and hierarchy should serve as a starting point. If we are to build democracy then one should remember that a democratic state is one of the most hierarchical ones considering democratic procedures that foresee stratification of the society. Our elite are fairly unique. It exists – as intellectual, family, clan and regional types. I agree that the elite in topological terms does not change and development of the elite is behind the development of events. If we are talking about the resolution of crisis situations then we should speak about the creation of a quality elite. Its mechanisms are prescribed – moreover that they are not practiced just as communications. I am not sure about communicational democracy but we, definitely, do not have a communicational elite.

Speaking about events occurring in the country then I do not see them in a negative aspect. It seems to me that an elite hierarchy is forming now that in future will gradually enhance things.

Bakyt Beshimov: I would like to emphasize that in 1989 when we were part of the USSR our GDP per capita was 7.5 thousand dollars. Today we have 480 dollars but each year we make declarations about six and 10 percent economic growth. Look at our results – they are similar to those of Moldova, Armenia and Tajikistan but these states came out of serious and deep crisis, surviving civil wars with losses calculated in thousands and the destruction of infrastructure. I have a feeling that we have also been going through some war for fifteen years. We can talk about anything we want, that we should eat and somehow exist, but meanwhile the average Kyrgyzstani does not have any opportunity and that is why over 20% of citizens have left the country, and continue to leave.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Issue of our development has always been multi faceted. The main mistake during the construction of the state was in my opinion when the cart was put in front of the horse. We were not only supposed to create a democratic but also a legal state. And on our own experience we have learnt that democracy does not produce a rule of law as such. Considering the experiences of other countries as well it is necessary to state that democracy cannot develop simultaneously with the law. A legal state should be created regardless whether it is authoritarian or not.

Tamerlan Ibraimov: The fact that we are talking about



negative aspects now does not mean that we do not believe in our country. We often try to nullify those negative phenomena that exist in a society. Regarding the ratio of democracy and legal status I would like to argue that a totalitarian state and a legal one are not that similar, and the existence of legislature and its implementation does not speak for the presence of a legal state.

One of the negative outcomes of 2006 is that the elites did not manage to find mechanisms for negotiation; the rules have never been created. We observed an attempt to create formal rules in the implementation of the Constitutional Reform. Here we saw that the political elite had neither procedures nor formats, including content, to agree on. The constitutional process is complicated and challenging and most likely the opposition will soon undertake some action.

Now we are not speaking about quality since a political elite exists in any country. We also have our own political elite because we are in the early stages of democracy. There is a different question: to what extent has our political elite grown in a qualitative way since the independence of Kyrgyzstan. The main conflict is that we are building capitalism and trying hard to hold on to collective values. I agree that we should follow social and cultural values but concurrently with the rules of a market economy. Until we resolve issue with property and outline the rules regulating resolution of issue, we will continue foundering. And it would be preferable to document these rules.

I would also like to underline the issue of political persecution of our own opponents upon victory or loss. We are witnessing it now and see that this activity in our country is acquiring criminal forms and it seems to me that a criminal nature will for some time prevail in our politics, which might lead to new conflicts.

The formed or unformed state of Kyrgyzstan is not a political question. I think that Kyrgyzstan has the capacity to resolve the challenging situation. Currently we use a dialectic: we run here and there. We will not stay long in authoritarianism – we do not have those resources that our neighbors have, fortunately. Because of abundant resources, power can easily deal with the opposition. In this respect we have a chance, because being incapable of repressing the opposition our power is forced to seek compromises with it. Let it happen in 2010, where we will be able to solve our issues gradually, not in a revolutionary, but evolutionary manner.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Based on the information I have, the Eastern Asian region is a place of creation of new ideological forms of democracies that are difficult to understand for many. For me the more important issue lies in the efficiency of these mechanisms. Such Eastern Asian states as Japan and China are fast developing

ones. And I think it is worthwhile that our Kyrgyz scientists take a close look at processes occurring there.

Nurlan Sadykov: I would like to continue discussion about a greater priority: rule of law or democracy. All these years we have focused on de-concentration of state power (and that was a fairly deep thought for that time) and we wanted to build our democracy on it. Extensive works have been conducted with local government bodies. Therefore, we forgot about democratic institutes that are self-regulatory, while we should have held deeper reforms. That is vital. Based on the results of those reforms, possibly we will end up with a consensus-based democracy.

There is always a dispute on what is more important: public or private interests. That is also a problem for us because representatives of liberal democracy argue that private interests should be developed. But the key is to strike the balance because public interests also exist. Not all of our citizens can start their own business and besides Asian conditions, there are purely Kyrgyz ones. We cannot automatically project liberal values on to Kyrgyz reality and it should be done with certain limits. Finding those limits is our objective.

Will we survive till 2010 with fall-winter Constitutions? Within only two months we have already stepped twice on the same rakes. With a lack of coordination between parties we rush to make important political decisions. Last year the President has passed a strategy for public policy development. But previous steps demonstrate that public policy technologies are not applied at a high level. Regardless of the content of this Constitution it should go through independent expertise. This year the irresponsible behavior of the Government has shocked everyone which, speaking about successes and achievements, has finally self-dissolved. And I think that the President took a great responsibility upon himself: to remain without the Government or Parliament. Thus, a vacuum is created in which we will not be able to live until 2010.

On the other hand, if legal prerequisites for forming a new Parliament and Government are formed, I am afraid our electoral system, that is an echo of the past, will create a new conflict. When effective and constructive interaction is absent, elections could turn into something even worse than the events of the 2005 elections. The constitution should be directed on building strong power institutions, with a good, open and transparent electoral system.

Muratbek Imanaliev: I do not see attempts to cultivate the concept of power division; there is not even an understanding of what it is. Disagreements between the President and Parliament end up with the redistribution of authority and who will get the most. I call the situation absurd because now the legislative

branch of power does not exist. A strange situation occurred. Based on people's experience and successes we are yet to learn to see differences and distinguish positive from negative. Unfortunately, that is how it is.

Ishenbai Abdurazakov: We easily speak about independence. In the West there are grounds to talk about it but there the judicial branches are under mutual control; and they have public opinion and media. And who should provide evaluation of the judicial power here? Judicial power lives its own life here and the more independent it is – the worse.

Nurlan Sadykov: Yes, that is so. What is the Supreme Court Chair liable for? Nothing. Judges should be trained.

Ishenbai Abdurazakov: In developed countries awards for work, professionalism and public control create incentive. But here they are the weakest aspects. What happens? Professionalism is decreasing, level of training is drastically low, efficient control is absent and moral codes are weakened. Even salary increases will not help. They will continue to take bribes.

Nurlan Sadykov: In comparison with Soviet times our judicial power although independent is irresponsible. The penal session of the Supreme Court is not functioning, there is not a consistent law-enforcement practice and everything comes out of mercantile interests and the subjective approaches of judges.

Zainidin Kurmanov: Let's come back to consensus-based democracy. Maybe it suits some but not us. In the past, efforts were made to put on a French tuxedo on a Kyrgyz nomad. And we unsuccessfully tried to combine classic smocking and the Kyrgyz kolpak, wearing them simultaneously. One cannot expect more from these elites. Only some educated parts of society hold conversations about democracy and democratic values and continues to master this science.

Officials act by principle "rush without hurry" and focus on operational daily issues. Issues usually occur when you do not know what is in the "black box". But there is a well-tested bureaucratic method when the government knows what is in the "box" and deals with ongoing routine activities – what if that takes us somewhere? We have the brightest example of a product of the bureaucratic state. We are not happy with this government because instead of rapidly developing and running reforms we do not see the need for it and handle everyday work.

Fifteen years ago we found ourselves in a strange democratic space and selected democracy as Elmira Nogoibaeva wrote, not because of its values but because we had no other alternative.

But as Bakyt Jolchubekovich stated, in 1991 there was a start but it did not occur on March 24th in 2005. As soon as the new government came it started reverting, trying old clothing on us but society has grown out of this cloth, which led to the permanent crisis that we see now. And officials do not see ways of resolving this crisis. It would be enough for the President to take a step towards the people and say: "Folks, you want democracy? You will get it". Civil Society is not asking more from him. But his vocabulary lacks the word "democracy". He is part of that elite that considers perestroika (reorganization) to be a mistake, views democracy as a mistake and believe that democrats are to blame for the collapse of the USSR, and it is simply impossible to prove him wrong. That makes him very similar to Nazarbaev.

What can we build independently? Only a Khanate. That is how Turkmens have built a khanate without interference and assistance of the international society. Due to the presence of international organizations we are not rolling down to the bottom of a deep abyss. We can only make what we are good at. We are good at making kumys (fermented mare's milk), we are the best in making maksym-shoro (Kyrgyz national drink), we have no competition in horse riding – in other words we should stay as Kyrgyz with our own habits and traditions. Valentin Bogatyrev was right stating that we should go back to cultural roots when we lived by rules that made sense to everyone. Now we live in an agrarian society that cannot produce democracy. Therefore we need some alternative democracy. Consensus-based democracy worked well in the Kyrgyz commune. Forty tribes and families – how did they reach consensus? Only through coordination. Kenesary Kasymov attacked the Kyrgyz land – the Kyrgyz combined their efforts, elected a Khan and fought off the Kazakhs and then broke up; as danger appears – the Kyrgyz combine their efforts again, fight off and break up. And that was an accepted practice – no one felt disadvantaged.

I agree that political philosophy is necessary because digging into the past we will find plenty of values that united the Kyrgyz and distinguished us as an ethnos. Muratbek Sansyzbaevich is right; we should take a closer look at the history of Asian states prospering without democracy. But they had, have and will have a political philosophy and none of them intends to exchange their philosophy for democracy. Instead they are incorporating it into their value system. We have neither values nor democracy. And the President suggests building an economy without all of it. How can you build it without moral values? We will only build a bandit market economy where private property is not protected, human rights are not observed and courts are not liable. And that is what the new or old political elite offer us, but we have already gone through it. One shall not ignore our experience of 15 years. Agreement is a sign of liberalism



that considers the interests of all public groups. Western values that are close and understandable to us should be integrated into our cultural roots. How are power and opposition resolving disagreements? Using force. But before, the Kyrgyz have never solved issues applying force. We did not even practice capital punishment; instead we had a ransom. Resolution of questions and disputes came by common sense because our ancestors understood that the Kyrgyz people might become extinct if people were killed. But our politicians have learnt well the bolshevik principle – to trample down and to destroy. We should just revisit our values according to our national specificities. Now everything is strange: values are western and we are unaccustomed to them. All projects should turn into national ones and we should accumulate our own cultural experience and apply it.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Some say that Kyrgyz people are not ready for what Zainidin Karpekovich is suggesting. But it seems to me that we can start from elections. Let's organize them fairly although fairness is a value and should be supported by legal and humanitarian mechanisms. And I think by saying "we are not ready for democracy" we really mean that we are not ready for fairness. Elections without bribes, massive drink treatments, militia – is it possible?

Zainidin Kurmanov: The term "power" in Eastern peoples was more a moral concept rather than power or a political attribute. The Kyrgyz Code of Honor stated that a person with bad deeds in the past that let his nation run wild cannot become a governor. The head of the Kyrgyz people was always a role model and an ethical leader. And that very tribalism that we are working hard on abolishing is a certain social institute of protection. It would be a question of delegating a representation in a certain body or institute. And the most respectable, the most honorable person from the family would be delegated. Recently conferences have been held that were attended by five Deputies from India. And everyone felt their aristocratic origin, and in India they practice consensus based democracy and each teip had sent his representative. All Deputies are sons of dukes with excellent education, speaking English and Russian and dressed in business suits: The classic example. In other words everything can be changed.

Elmira Nogoibaeva: In my opinion we are idealizing democracy that is in reality a mercantile and individualistic type of society. When we are busy self-reproaching and expressing discontent with our elite it always raises a question with me: comparing the personas of the U.S.A, Israel and Kyrgyzstan, it is hard to say which one of them is of a better "quality". I do not have a feeling that everything is bad, of poor quality and undeveloped here. The more I research our society the more I reaffirm it.

Zainidin Kurmanov: An elite exists but here we represent

more an art, scientific and technical elite. And the matter is of the political elite. We have a regional one, but lack a national one. Whatever we say about Askar Akaev, he was a leader of national scope and all candidates running for President looked immature, and the leaders against him were of a regional but not national scope. Kyrgyz separate power into 'ours and theirs'. And now we need to transform their power into ours and that transformation is failing. Northerners perceive the south as theirs, just as before, Southerners perceived the power of Akaev not to be theirs. Our country does not only have dual, but multi power, especially because the President lacks ideological guiding principles. Our politicians are unpredictable.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Kyrgyzstan does not have an intellectual and political elite because it is not about a group of well-educated and well-dressed people. The elite is represented by generators of constructive nation-wide ideas. The same people that we identify as the political and intellectual elite are apologists of ideas, and the values of others, but that is not liberalism. And a military elite does not even exist. In general all our elites can be hardly called elites in the classic understanding. Intellect and intelligentsia are different things to us.

Bakyt Beshimov: I do not share the opinion that democracy is strange to Kyrgyz people. Kyrgyz and Kazakh people are classic examples of Nomads and they do not have to apply Western models. Askar Akaev was considered to be a person that would bring us to democracy from communism. But he might have led to the creation of a framework for development of the society. His deviation from democracy was intentional and everything was sacrificed for personal self-preservation, instinct took over common sense. I think that if a person with a democratic culture, that understands and recognizes it, will take over the country and then things will start progressing.

Several years ago a group of people who now sit in the "White House" sat at the same round table and said nice things about democracy. We do not have an elite associated with values – ideological or moral ones.

Muratbek Imanaliev: I suggest speaking about economics. What economic successes and failures took place in 2006? What are our opportunities and risks in a new year?

Sultan Mederov: I think that year of 2006 can be called another year of might-have-been hopes that brought nothing positive into economics. That happened because first of all our current power had no goals either in 2005 or 2006. Everything is done as "the road takes us". There are not clearly set objectives. What type of a society are we building: capitalistic, socialistic, and nationalistic or which? We should define what we would like to achieve. What do we want from Kyrgyzstan?

I would not call the resolution of issues in 2006 a consensus. As rude as it sounds everything reminded me more of a dog with its tail between its legs. Let's even take the process of adopting the Constitution of November 9, 2006 when the President only within a week has changed his decision into the opposite one just because they say he had limited information and did not have a proper opinion. This is a method of "hiding your tail between your legs". I personally would classify 2006 as a year of failure. Ok, in 2005 we had revolution but we have lived through one more year and what did we achieve or resolve in 2006? We did not even plant the seeds of what we were declaring. We simply say that Kyrgyzstan should take its place in the region, but do nothing. In the economic slot the year was an even a bigger failure because we had to lay the foundations. For example, indicators in the agricultural industry grew by one percent – what is it about? That says we did nothing in 2006 and that is a long-drawn-out result. Industry was completely interred. Now we are not even considering it as an industrial structure because it is not growing, although in 2004 growth made up 14%, while now we do not have even 6-7%. For the whole year there was 2.7% increase in GDP. But most importantly we have done nothing for development in 2007.

The most horrifying thing is not that power has no goals or is working more on politics, but that it is dealing more with the redistribution of influence zones. Construction was brought out of the economic shade and now everyone has rushed to start building around Issykkul. There was not a single session of the Government about developing small and medium business and agriculture. For a whole year decisions were made only on salary raises and the HIPC. That is all of the Government's activity. This explains inflation rates. Having not laid any foundation in 2006, already today we can say that 2007 will bring nothing. And that is bad. But the Government is not even trying to do anything to change it. One of the results of one and a half years work of the Ministry of Finance was a strategy for the state development that Japarov presented in October 2005, which was approved by the Government only in November and only because it was one of the conditions for entering HIPC. This is a program developed under compulsion and means nothing.

Thus, we have demonstrated that our economics is a bazaar economy because 40% of the GPD is made up by services. Results of research conducted by Moscow State Institute of International Relations are very sad. But if we continue dealing with political discussions ignoring economics then we might not be able to save our state. And even if 2007 shows some growth it will not be a result of government efforts but the influence of the economics of Kazakhstan or something else. Economics in the North is "kazakhed" on 60-70%; most of lands on

Issykkul are bought out by Kazakhs. We should yell "SOS!"

Ulan Sarbanov: Growth of GPD in 2006 – 2.7%, and in 2005 – 0.6%. 8% growth was planned for 2006 but based on the latest data, growth made up 2.7%. And a small growth in 2005 is not a reason to say that 2.7% in 2006 is a significant growth.

In terms of inflations, we planned to stay within 5.7%, and in fact it's 5.1%.

Industry growth is 10%. Statements about Kumtor bring up dual standards. With Kumtor it is "-10%", and without Kumtor it is 4.2%. It turns out that things are better without Kumtor. Growth is 8% in construction, 14% in trade, 18% in investment, 19% in hotel business and all of it is called legalization of money.

Regarding the budget. Salaries on average grew by 18%. State expenses to GPD in the end of 2005 made up 28.2% and 28.1% is expected. What does it mean against 2.7% of growth in economics? Budget is not used as a tool of economic policy. One can say that Government failed to recognize that the budget was the most important economic tool. As a rule, the budget raises many questions and disputes and if everything is calm, then it is not a budget.

Growth of money in 2006 made up 42%. It is a normal figure during stable situation and business development. 42% with consideration of legalization of black economies is not bad but not stable. In terms of on-going operations account of balance of payment. When the country was "accumulating" foreign debt, deficit of the current account reached 18-20% relative to GPD. During a period of 2001-2004 – 1.5%, 5%, 4.1% and 3.4%. That means we started buying more than earning, in other words we continue borrowing. Expected deficit in 2006 might make up 11%. And even without HIPC we are going into the same debt issue.

Growth of export in 2006 made up 16% and in the past it was an average of 15-25% annually; our import usually grows by 30% and it made up 60% last year. We usually export for 719 million U.S. dollars and we import in the amount of 1 billion 685 millions. That's double the difference. And it would be good if we were importing machines, technical equipment and kilns. I am afraid that we are just eating it away, even considering prices for oil and gold...

The most dreadful thing is not the GDP, but budget and foreign relations. A budget is a living organism, legislature allows introducing changes to it only once, and in practice it happens twice. In the beginning of this year neither changes nor budget implementation nor a draft for 2007 were discussed.



Regarding HIPC – conditions discussed by the Government and World Bank are acceptable and realistic including the issue on power energy. But I would recommend not joining the program because in the current situation any agreement can easily turn out that we get into it but receive nothing in exchange.

In other words 2006 is a failed year because no decision on capitalization of our actives was taken and no consensus either internal or external was reached. Everything was done against legalization and that is why neither trust nor support is there.

Bakyt Beshimov: Are state expenses increasing relative to GDP?

Ulan Sarbanov: 2001 год - 26%, 2001 - 28,1%, 2003 - 27%, 2004 - 27,5%, 2004 - 28,2%, 2005 - 28,1%.

Bakyt Beshimov: I suspect that they intentionally increase state expenses to satisfy their personal interests.

Erlan Abdyldaev: Unstable situations in the country impacted foreign policy, demonstrated by the example of foreign policy issues when the leadership could not make decisions. Kyrgyz leadership is moving away from a multivector direction in foreign policy, keeping only to the northern vector – Russia and deterioration of relations with the U.S.A. Neither power nor opposition had a clear position on foreign policy issues. It was announced that a vision of the foreign policy is developed and under consideration of the JK KR but during last year we have not seen a clear program on foreign policy or the position of the leadership. There were issues with the HIPC, and the triangle of Russia, U.S.A and China – the American air base, UN reform, water-power issues with Russian and other neighbors. All of it will impact the economics and politics of 2007 but in more tense forms. Foreign factors for Kyrgyzstan will only increase next year. This year will go under the leadership of Kyrgyzstan in SCO. HIPC issue and issues with the American airbase will only increase: in other words all foreign policy issues in 2007 will influence the international political situation in the country.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Ishenbai Abdurazakovich, what are you expecting from 2007?

Ishenbai Abdurazakov: Frankly speaking, I am not expecting anything radically positive or negative. Sympathetically and empathetically I have listened to your speeches full of pain, vexation and regret. But long ago I came to the conclusion that everything we are facing is a mirror reflection of our own face, a demonstration of today's political, social economic and moral consciousness of society. There is nothing unnatural in the current events. We gained independence without the experience and necessary understanding

of how to build an independent state. A collapsing chaotic transition towards private property relationships reoriented people, including state leaders, to purchasing, appropriation and redistribution of property. The Government did not become the subject of special care which it especially needed during the formation stage, but rather a source of gains. The political philosophy deficit that you spoke about it was put off for later. The moral foundations of state construction were washed out. Democracy was perceived in distorted forms, permissiveness became a norm, while responsibility, rule of law and organization were perceived as remnants of the past. Democracy was basically undermined.

Protest moods, initiated by a thin layer of intelligentsia seeking improvement to the misuse and mistakes committed by previous management, were used by forces seeking absolutely different goals; the transfer of power and redistribution of property. That justifies massive disappointments with the outcome of March 24th events. The youth wing of participants shaped their attitude in the words "our revolution was stolen". That is the cause of the unrest we are witnessing.

The upcoming year will not be easy. The political field is full of traps. Officials are again creating a precedent that might lead to unpredictable events. Even the Constitution is full of flaws and fraught with the possibility of an outburst of new disputes, as it is illegitimate in some sense. Procedures were violated. Besides, the previous Constitution, with all its flaws, has been approved by the people. Today's Constitution despite being a new edition with fundamentally different clauses requiring the agreement of the people has been passed without public participation. If even changes and amendments were taken to a referendum, a new edition certainly requires at least formal public approval. Civil Society is completely out, while the Constitutional Council was not welcomed and absolutely ignored. And finally, a new edition of the Constitution was passed under strong pressure of the Parliament dissolution, although there were no legitimate grounds for it. If officials fall for the temptation to call for early Parliamentary elections, then the political situation might destabilize, but with more dangerous consequences than those of November 2006. The Government has a chance to avoid this scenario of events. Nevertheless recent procedure of adopting Constitution created a dangerous precedent. Such methods impede the creation of a legal state. The economic situation will hardly improve. There are no objective preconditions for it. Additional factors for possible risk is the HIPC issue.

Now let me address aspects outlined by previous speakers. No one argues that we have to find such a development path suitable to the specificities of the current development stage of our society. But it is impossible to agree with the opinion that democracy

does not suit us. If we distort democracy and cannot be creative in applying its principles then it is not about democracy. Yes, democracy is complicated in the first stages and is a painful path requiring patience and flexibility. All countries went through this, not unscathed. But one should not turn away from it and outgrow it.

The objective is to resist those that are ready to proceed to authoritarianism justifying it by challenges to democracy. We are not an exception. To a certain extent we are familiar with the values of the West and the East. We should not copy anyone but apply all that would be useful for our development. Developed or rapidly developing states of the East have achieved amazing results using this very path, they have incorporated the science and technology of the West into their framework of spiritual capacity, thus creating some type of a 'jet engine' of development. We should follow this path, be more educated, and show more initiative and pragmatism. Should we rely upon the recovery of long forgotten policies? Yes, in the path agreement was ensured by representatives of aristocracy clan. And where is it now? "Rich" and "aristocrat" are different concepts. In the past, simply rich people far from honor and dignity of spiritual aristocratic people were called "sasykbai" or stinky rich man! Murders, dissemblers, any type of cheaters, and people breaking promises and oath drew contemptuous despise. Where are these values now? Who is the authority today? If someone is capable of restoring long forgotten virtues then let us wish him a lot of luck.

And, finally I would like to state the following: should we react to various doubtful conclusions regarding the collapse of Kyrgyzstan? Even if that is said in Moscow?

They discuss many things but not always with knowledge of the matter. Informing people about things others say about us is useful. But being pessimistic is silly. Active political life is not a sign of imminent danger; there is no movement without struggle. Neither true democracy, nor freedom nor justice has been ever achieved without struggle. The goal is to lead this struggle in a civilized manner without violence; resolution of disputes should be guided by common sense and compromise for the sake of a worthy future of our country.

Muratbek Imanaliev: In this sense, Turkmenbashi turned out to be the most honest one: he stated what he would do and how he would do it.

Failed state, that is what they write in closed reports in Moscow but that does not mean that the state can collapse, no. It can exist 10, 20 and 30 years. We know plenty of such examples. But I am surprised that people were enraged not with the definition itself but with who wrote it.

It is unlikely that we will see something different in the activities of our Government, Parliament and President. Again everything will come down to the struggle for power. But I hope that we will be able to create what we want. Although it will be challenging because most of the able-bodied part of the population is now living abroad. They are not going to come back to their homeland. And they are the generators of the most progressive ideas. For the Kyrgyz population 500 thousand people is a lot. But the government is continuing to sell its citizens unskillful and short-sighted politics that seek simple solutions.

It was very interesting. Thank you everyone.

CENTRAL ASIA AND THE WORLD

Muratbek Imanaliev, President of the Institute for Public Policy

There are several aspects of Central Asian historical development.

First, Central Asia is the place where several cultural and civilization threads converge: Russian, Chinese, Persian, Arab-Muslim and early Turkic-Mongolian.

Second, the region lies at the crossroads of all four world religions: Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, with the two latter dominating in terms of expansion.

Third, Central Asia is a region of three ethno-linguistic zones: Turkic, Persian and Slavic.

Fourth, Central Asia is the point of confluence between settled agricultural and nomadic horse economies which influences the world-view and behavioral stereotypes of people.

Fifth, Central Asia is the region where commu-

nist ideas of the Bolshevik doctrine and, traditionalist and pagan concepts were spread, with odd juxtapositions with Islam and other religions. Recently, liberal conceptions including democratic ones have been gaining prominence in the region.

Sixth, Central Asia is a territory where social systems are strongly influenced by regional, tribal, and clan conventions.

All those factors have historically and persist in affecting all aspects of life in Central Asian countries, including the system (not the form) of and formation of mechanisms of state management, the judiciary and also intellectual, political and business elites and social relations. It has a direct relationship on the formation and implementation of foreign policy of the region's states.

The historical-geographical, cultural-humanitarian legacy of Central Asian nations is most



likely not an object of interest for other states, but rather a factual and semantic instrument in pursuit of its own goals and objectives.

At the current time, Central Asia is attractive for external players in two capacities: as a military and strategic location and as a source for huge hydrocarbon and water-power resources. One could recall the famous thesis of S. Halford MacKinder: "Who rules Central Asia commands Asia, and who rules Asia commands the world."

Further, the transitional condition of Central Asia as, in my opinion, a concrete definition - post-communism which possesses the following features:

- 1) Excessive personification in choosing a development pathway and the establishment of personal authoritarian regimes;
- 2) Economic development modeling, which is a set of schemes and instruments representing its socialist past, a fragmentally "pre-historic" natural economy and a new market economy. Domination of one or another in this set depends on a ruling group.
- 3) Strong influence of traditional social relations on the first two factors which are, strangely enough, in the process of degradation;
- 4) Unpredictable and often irresponsible foreign policy.

There are also other parameters and characteristics.

The history of Central Asia's modern international structural formation can be conditionally divided into four stages:

First stage: (1991-1994) is characterized by an inert tendency of the region's countries to maintain close economic relations of all types with Russia despite the USSR's collapse and new possibilities. However, Russia, which adhered to the concept of "Russia is a part of the West" in that period, quite openly pushed Central Asian countries away. The efforts of the West found support mainly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Second stage: (1994-1999) Central Asian countries, under political, moral and partly financial support from the West, attempted to construct regional structures, including a Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU), the Aral Fund, and a Central Asian Peacekeeping battalion. There were also attempts to establish a military-political union of Central Asian countries.

Third stage: (1999-2001) is the stage of full disappointment for Central Asian countries by common

CIS, regional structures and the tendency to build relations on a bilateral basis, including its neighbors. The CAEU and Aral Fund gradually collapsed, and the idea of regional integration ceased to be a priority in Central Asian countries' foreign policy.

Fourth stage: (2001-2005) started after September 11 events and the main feature of this stage is the demolition of Central Asian geopolitical boundaries (post soviet) instead moving toward the widening and formation of two-vectored foreign and diplomatic practices in Central Asia. The direct presence of the West, mostly the U.S., in the region is the main actor on the stage.

Fifth stage: (2005 - to present) dominated by mercantilism in foreign policy, inter-related with the tendency of Central Asian leaders to prolong their rule and the beginning of "oil and gas" diplomacy.

During all stages of international network development in Central Asia, at various time sequences, different countries tried to build certain schemes and models of interaction with the region in general and individual countries in particular. This happened along with attempts to form influence zones on internal political life of Central Asian countries, considering above listed factors and features. There are some examples.

Turkey. The most attractive aspects of Turkey's foreign policy in Central Asian direction were: 1) Turkey as a model of development; 2) ethno linguistic solidarity; and 3) common religion. Turkey tried to arrange "Turkic speaking train with Turkish steam" at the first stage, actively promoting all three listed aspects. Turkey tried to back its efforts by financial and investment projects, and some of them were just not successful, some of them were even scandalous. Turkey's goal was to form a lasting "Turkish influence group" in Central Asian countries. In particular, through admitting thousands of students from the region.

However, because of other players lack of acceptance of Turkey's plans and inaccurate estimations made by Turkish politicians, those plans did not properly evolve, including the concerted effort to form "Turkish influence groups" from representatives of art workers, businessmen and others.. Central Asian countries negatively perceived the aspiration of Turkey to play the role of new "big brother". The fact that Turkish projects were financially insufficient also played a key role in the lack strong development.

Cultural aspects and the Islamic religion were at the foundation of Iran's policy for Central Asia although Pakistan's policy relied less on these two factors. However, it was very clear that Iranian Islam and Iranian business were not attractive for

Central Asian countries, except in Tajikistan where it flourished, which is why the dispersion of Iranian influence was limited to separate programs.

One should also take into account that Iranian, Pakistani, Indian experiences of development were outside of Central Asian countries' spheres of research and application and did not spread in so called "interest groups". Quite honestly the experience and opportunities of those countries were not demanded, and more than that, were seen as useless for Central Asian countries. Because of it, the influence of Iran, Pakistan and India on the internal political life of Central Asia is almost nonexistent, except in one-time events. Compared to Turkey these three countries were not considered priority actors at any stage of the development of the international relationship network.

The countries of Western Europe, especially Germany, Great Britain, France, Switzerland and other countries through the EU, OSCE and other bilateral relationships during the first two historical development stages tried to actively influence the democratization of Central Asia's internal political life. Sometimes - connecting financial and economic aid with the democratization issue. In my opinion, the Europeans main objective was to influence leaders directly and form a new structure of relationships through humanitarian and human rights defense activities amongst civil society. However, the personification factor was one of the most difficult obstacles along the way.

During the third and fourth stages, the threat of Islamic extremists becoming stronger, Al-Qaeda's energetic activity and other organizations involved with international terrorism forced both the Europeans and the Americans to focus their attention on cooperation with Central Asian states in the security fields to fight against these evil forces. Often not paying much attention and sometimes even eliminating the critical elements in human rights and other freedoms and hampering democratic processes. It appeared especially at the "oil and gas diplomacy" stage. Germany's new European strategy in Central Asia will be worked out based on access to the hydrocarbon resources of the region's countries, and the focus will most likely be on bilateral relationships.

Japan never had the goal of forming "influence groups" in the countries of the region, democracy strengthening or other goals and tried to reinforce its positions through financial and technical aspects by providing expertise and other aid, as well as spreading Japanese language and culture in several countries of the region. A new "Japan-Central Asia" project correlates with the American "Bigger Central Asia" idea, and could work together with this idea for certain reasons. However, it is only at the stage of diplomatic negotiations now.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that Central Asia is being offered such projects as "Bigger Central Asia", the new European strategy on Central Asia, "Japan-Central Asia", and current EvrAzEC, CSTO (CIS projects) and finally, the SCO as a Chinese project. Plus, let us not forget about Islamic options, including caliphate.

Next, let's examine the main group of players - China, the USA and Russia.

China's leadership in the civilization of Central Asia for two thousand years before the British and Russians arrived was never questioned, and in fact, was considered natural and even as sent from heaven by some. For the last 15 years, China has had to prove its potential leadership in competition with other powers. According to traditional concepts, China usually works with political systems, but not separate individuals. However, the same hyper personification of Central Asian countries' foreign priorities forces Beijing to take it into consideration and work with individual leaders. It seems that China is not trying to influence domestic situations in Central Asian countries, but rather prefers that countries be loyal to China on the most sensitive and complicated issues, including Taiwan, Tibet, Uigur separatists, and confirmation of border documents. Also, China is vitally interested in Central Asian countries not turning their territories into a threat against China.

Along with these issues, the economic, and possibly the cultural presence in Central Asia are important aspects for China in order to solve the political problems of cooperation with Central Asia as a part of a larger scale counter action against the military presence of the U.S in the region.

China has several serious obstacles in its way. These self-reinforcing positions in Central Asia such as problems of ethno-psychological and ethno-cultural compliance and the unresponsiveness of an anti-Chinese mood, which was formulated during the Soviet period, as well as ethnic antagonism.

The U.S actively uses direct influence on the countries' leaders, the opportunities of existing "interest groups", financial and economic schemes, including the world trade situation, to achieve its objectives. In Washington's global strategy, there is a clear tendency for the U.S. to try to establish certain control over the Muslim region starting from Magreb to the Great Wall of China. In this context "Big Central Asia" is a part of the geopolitical region. If they achieve their objective, then it will allow them to solve issues of the fight against international terrorism and gain access to vast main hydrocarbon reserves. However, serious errors by the American administration in the last few years have giv-



en rise to doubts that the project can be implemented.

In comparison, Russia compared to these other two powers not only has justified interests in the region, but also carries a certain historical responsibility over Central Asia's fate. The cultural and humanitarian impact of Russia's position remains a serious enough influence mechanism in the Central Asian countries. From an economic point of view, Russia controls almost all transport and communication networks which connect Central Asia with other parts of the world.

Russia also has a serious advantage in that there is a presence of "pro Russian interest groups" especially in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Plus, there are a number of politicians, scientists, artists and other influential people in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan who cherish positive feelings for Russia for various historical reasons.

It is worth noting that after the September 11th events, an active presence was established for the U.S. and Russian Federation in the region, which is evident not only by the presence of military bases, but also the foreign policy stances of countries in region narrowed only to relations with those two powers. Cooperation with other countries, when the antiterrorist operations in Afghanistan started, moved to the background or lost relevance.

There is no clear conflict of interest between the U.S. and Russia in Central Asia. They have a common objective of fighting against international terrorism, and also weakly but still identified "anti-Chinese" sentiments.

However, if a conflict escalates, then almost all Central Asian leaders have to make a choice, which is difficult for them.

"New Great Game" - a definition which is often used by political experts recently regarding the presence of leading powers in Central Asian region.

How is the use of the term justified?

Indeed, is there any reason to think that the convergence of Russian, American and Chinese interests in Central Asia is the "New Great Game"?

Indeed all three powers have objective interests in the region: the U.S. as super power has interests in every region of the world (in any case, Americans announce it themselves), and Russia and China are direct neighbors of Central Asia.

The first and main set of questions: How are the interests of the main players formulated? What is behind these interests? Is there only an issue not to admit or force someone out of the region thus design-

ing a zone and regime of confrontation? All Central Asian states should find answers to these questions. It is also important to solve the following puzzle: How closely do stated principles and undeclared interests of the leading countries of the world coincide?

On the other hand, what Central Asia are we talking about? There are two definitions of the region. The first one - as a part of historical-cultural area, which includes not all post Soviet countries but also Afghanistan, Iran, Mongolia and others. The second one - the region in the boundaries of the former Soviet Central Asia. The latter definition is preferable for CIS countries. States, which are located to the south, south-west, east and west, are no more than possible partners on various issues of cooperation. It is an issue of geopolitics, but depending on which interpretations are transformed into reality, can fundamentally change the future of these countries.

A broad interpretation of Central Asian boundaries can result in an immediate connection with the Middle East. Following the formation of a new geopolitical network and a conglomeration of political, economic and other problems. One cannot say if this directly corresponds to the interests of Western countries and a number of Islamic countries, but it seems that such a construction is preferable for them.

A narrow (post-Soviet or Eurasian) interpretation is probably supported by Russia.

Until the current period neither post-Soviet countries (except Kazakhstan, which started to exclude itself from Central Asian countries) nor their partners and neighbors formulated a geopolitical self-identification in the region and seemingly it will not happen anytime soon. The

Central Asian region possesses a more complicated, possibly unique, feature.

For example, for Baltic countries there is no alternative to European integration: in general it is an enormous advantage for the region which is why there is more or less a clear and logical foreign policy. This foreign policy is generally supported by domestic forces, except fragmentary protests by Russian speaking communities in Latvia and Estonia. Here we talk not about some resistance against "Europeanization" but rather about impact of worldview and interests of ethno-linguistic groups.

Central Asian region is, on the contrary, as if it is being "stretched" into different sides by geopolitical factors: to the West, Russia and Islam. Also let us not forget the growing strength of the Chinese vector.

Internal political allocations in the Central Asia countries are represented by (in fact, in different conditions

and with different forces) bearers and apologists of all three “factions” in emerging political and business elites. Then there is the exclusion of big neighbor China - there are almost no pro-Chinese people in the region. Although China actively demonstrates that it is peaceful, predictable and ready to render any aid.

If talking about the strength of Russian, Western and Islamic positions in the region’s countries, it appears that Russia and Islam receive wide social support (in most cases, the population supports both sides, and there is nothing paradoxical in that). There are also certain “interest groups”.

Certainly each of the three powerful countries, the U.S., Russia and China, have already proposed or will propose an adaptation of its value system. (Under the condition that no country in Central Asia yet formulated its own system of values, not to mention a common regional one. But, it is obvious that when formulating these systems they will incorporate full fragments or elements of values proposed by the leading powers).

Those values are connected with a particular worldview, philosophy of existence, educational, cultural, moral, linguistic corporate systems, building of state and society, social, and economic concepts. There are two important questions in this context. The first one: is it realistic that each of these leading countries proposed or will propose to the Central Asian countries to apply its own system of values, declaring their values as dominant and even the only priority of foreign policy and as a base for mutually beneficial cooperation? Or are some of the values only instruments to reach certain mercantile goals? Is it interest or principle that is the basis of the leading countries’ policies regarding the region? It is obvious that it contains both interest and principle. The issue remains, which one is the priority?. The question should be thoroughly answered by Central Asian countries independently.

It needs to be considered that there are contradictions in the approaches of the leading countries to the issues of globalization and the new world order. It is objective and preconditioned by historical-cultural, political, socio-economic and even ethnic-psychological factors. In particular, we can describe again the problem of uni- or multi-polarity of the world order. However, along with that, all three powers (including India, Israel, and the European Union) face a common enemy - international terrorism or so called international Islamoterrorism.

In this context, there is a question for Central Asian political elites - the position of leading powers toward current Islam, politicized Islam, “majestic” and militant. Formally Islam is not an opponent or the obstacle for

the leading powers to strengthen mutual understanding and further cooperation. The enemy is Islamic religious extremism, which gives rise to radicalism. The issue becomes whether there is any division between Islam and religious radicalism? There are voices of influential politicians in America, Europe and Russia and other countries and regions that think it is all the same.

Secondly, in the context of aforementioned conceptual approaches to the issues of globalization, do the contradictions between value systems of Islam, the West, Russia and China pose a potential basis for permanent hostility and conflict? Those issues are not easy for Central Asian countries; they have very complicated and contradictory form and substance since Central Asian countries, including Kyrgyzstan, are considered Islamic. An objective assessment of the terrorism problem and Kyrgyzstan’s own experience makes Bishkek support the fight against international terrorism. Yet subjective feelings of religious solidarity amongst part of the population give rise to other ideas. These complex issues about Islam have direct bearing on the presence of Russia, the U.S., and China in Kyrgyzstan.

In publications devoted to the issue of the two military bases existence in Kyrgyzstan, there is a high degree of speculation about possible conflicts of interests between these two leading powers.

Currently, one can only talk about competition or concurrence mainly between the U.S. and the Russian Federation. Official representatives of both countries declare positive positions, which are directed to assuage conflict. A wide variety of goals and objectives on fights against international terrorism compose the basis for tight cooperation between the leading countries with the participation of Kyrgyzstan. However, it is obvious that on other foreign policy stages of these countries they think and act according to other schemes and examples? The issue for Central Asian leaders is not to allow themselves to turn into a field for the New Great Game, where the fight against terrorism turns into a power struggle for influence.

And finally, regarding concrete international construction that emerged for Kyrgyzstan. First, Kyrgyzstan’s real foreign policy is narrowed down to the relations with the U.S. and Russia. Second, Kyrgyzstan, with its two military bases, is considered as the territory which poses a threat for countries located to the south and southwest of Kyrgyzstan. Third, there is even an observable disintegration among Central Asian countries which diminishes the possibility of regional integration, which might be the basis for joint development and the common fight against international threats.



THE SCO SUMMIT 2007: OPPORTUNITIES FOR KYRGYZSTAN

Roundtable summary

On February 9, 2007 the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) hosted a roundtable discussion "The SCO Summit 2007: Opportunities for Kyrgyzstan." Attending the closed expert discussion, moderated by Muratbek Imanaliev, IPP President, were Tolondu Makeev, Kyrgyz national coordinator for Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Erlan Abdyldaev, foreign policy expert of IPP, Ishenbai Abdrazakov, chair of Observers board of the Foundation for Political Research «The Project of Future» and Andrey Filatov, deputy of Bishkek city council.

Muratbek Imanaliev, moderating the discussion, opened the floor by summarizing the importance of upcoming SCO Summit for Kyrgyzstan.

According to him, on the one hand, by organizing the event with great care, the country has a unique opportunity to promote its interests within the organization. SCO is such an institution, where decisions are made through consensus, and Kyrgyzstan should take advantage of that. It would be important to see that Kyrgyzstan acts on behalf of the Central Asian region in general and its own interests in particular, said the moderator.

On the other hand, surfacing on the ground recently were the concerns that Kyrgyzstan is not ready to host such a high-profile event, not the least of in terms of sheer logistics and organizational issues. In addition, views were expressed in the city council of Bishkek, where the event will be held, that in preparing for the summit, Kyrgyz government is putting enormous pressure on the city, both in financial and administrative terms.

With this introduction, Tolondu Makeev entered the discussion, by noting that the Kyrgyz side is hastily getting prepared for the event, which is scheduled for July 10 this year. The organizing committee lost 3 months last year due to political instability in autumn 2006 and is now working every day to catch up with all the delays. Unfortunately, construction of new infrastructure in Bishkek has been behind the schedule, despite the involvement of Chinese construction companies. It was agreed now that instead, existing buildings in Bishkek, such as the city Philharmonic and government residences will be renovated on time for the event.

Another important side of the event is that the summit should result in signing of a Declaration, for which the Kyrgyz side is preparing with full force. Regular meetings with SCO apparatus from other member-states will help clarify and prepare the draft of the Declaration. Expert input on main ideas to be included in the Declaration is welcomed, emphasized Makeev.

Erlan Abdyldaev pointed out two issues. One was the issue of security during the event. If the other member-states get concerned about traditional tension in the south and the political situation in Kyrgyzstan, the atmosphere of the Bishkek summit might resemble the Dushanbe summit in 2000, when security concerns featured high during preparation, to a point that participating member states have thought of rescheduling the event in a different setting. It would be a great loss, if a sudden worsening of the political environment in Kyrgyzstan and new rounds of standoff between the government and the opposition altogether precluded the holding of the Summit in Bishkek, Abdyldaev added.

Second issue, more importantly, was that Kyrgyzstan, a country hosting an American military airbase, could use the opportunity to generate discussion within SCO, so that the organization should engage in more contacts and talks with the West, namely NATO and EU, as well as the United States. There was a sense that SCO has recently been too isolated from the global process of interaction among the chief powers and was used only to promote successful military cooperation, along with few declarative statements on economic cooperation.

Ishenbay Abdrazakov said that in hosting the SCO summit Kyrgyzstan should be extremely clear about its own interests. Spending huge funds (by some estimates up to 2 billion soms) and putting in all this efforts and energy, what should the returns be for Kyrgyzstan? Perhaps we should get more practical and use the opportunity to talk about how to lessen the negative impact for smaller states like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan of too close a collaboration with such giants as China and Russia, asked Abdrazakov.

Next speaker Andrey Filatov focused on the way the preparations for the summit are being undermined by financial reform started by the Ministry of finances. According to him, as part of the experimental budget reform, aimed at introducing a two-tier budget system, as of January 2007, more than 50% of Bishkek's revenue was being taken away to state budget, which is a lot more than before. At the same time, Bishkek doesn't see how even part of this money is going towards the needs of the Summit. According to Filatov, as Bishkek municipal authorities realize that the new budgetary regulations will make the city bankrupt in few months, the standoff with the republican government will greatly distract from the important event in July.

Another disturbing tendency is that the organizing committee is using old administrative methods and forcing all government employees, including school teachers and doctors to participate in massive clean-up actions on Bishkek's streets. This is causing a lot of discontent and is not the way

to get the city ready for the SCO summit noted the deputy. In the discussion part, all roundtable speakers made interesting suggestions. Erlan Abdyldaev said that Kyrgyzstan should soon come up with an initiative on several states, that are eager to join SCO, including Sri Lanka, Belarus and Iran. Despite all controversy, surrounding the interest shown for instance from Iran, perhaps a transitional status, something close to that of observer states, should be introduced, to keep the attention of such states. Muratbek Imanaliev suggested that Kyrgyzstan could lobby an SCO project that would focus on decreasing the gaps in development of such big states as Russia and China and smaller members as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Experts recommended following steps to help better organize the Summit:

- 1) Organize a meeting, with participation of the president, prime minister, head of presidential administration, ministers of foreign affairs, finances and economics, and the mayor of Bishkek discussing the financial side of the event
- 2) Prepare project materials that reflect the interests of Kyrgyzstan
- 3) Kyrgyzstan should come up on the SCO summit with an initiative of a program that would replace HIPC and the Millennium Development Goals program
- 4) Hold a presidential conference of member-states, partners, observer states and SCO guests as part of the summit

INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN KYRGYZSTAN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: UNLEARNED LESSONS

Joomart Ormonbekov, Graduate Student, Moscow State Institute of International Relations

The international authority of the European Union (EU) as an influential political, economic, and military actor [1] in international politics is indisputable at the moment. Despite unstable conditions in the current international system, the EU managed to create a competitive institutional monster, which unites 25 (soon 27) states in Europe under the firm protection of a strong Euro and mobile European army. It is not surprising that in conditions of pluralistic unipolarity [2] the European pole has been growing more attractive because of high level of economic component in construction of common foreign policy.

In this context it is no coincidence that Kyrgyzstan has repeatedly declared its orientation toward the EU, which is one of the main donors supporting the transitional econ-

omy and democracy in the country. However, one cannot say for sure that Kyrgyzstan is politically and economically committed toward the European direction. Certainly Kyrgyzstan benefits from the aid it receives, which is provided by the EU within the framework of numerous programs such as TACIS and the Food Security Program.

The status of Kyrgyzstan as a partner of the EU, the universal Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU and its member states, and the extensive European presence in the region provides the foundation for productive and dynamic cooperation in all spheres. However, the achievements in this direction were modest, and one of the most important reasons for that is institutional misunderstanding.

LESSON ONE: THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONAL LABYRINTH

The complex institutional structure of the EU, resulting from more than half a century of integration processes, is a serious obstacle in gaining a full understanding of the peculiarities of the system. A mix of supranational principles and interstate mechanisms further complicates full comprehension of the EU as an international partner. The unorthodox form of decision-making in the EU, which employs different methods depending on the type of the problem, and the hierarchy of decisions also fail to bring clarity in determining an appropriate strategy when dealing with EU.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Council of Europe (an international organization that focuses on human rights and international law) and the European Council (the main legislative body of the EU also known as the Council of the EU) are often confused. The peculiarity of the Council of the EU is in its multiple disciplines. It consists of 9 specialized councils; each of which is headed by a national minister

from an EU member state. The European Council defines the long-term political policy of the whole union and uses the interstate principle in decision-making, i.e. decisions made by the Council reflects a common will of all member states, which is often achieved by consensus.

The executive body of the EU is the European Commission, which follows the principle of supra-nationality that guarantees implementation of policies favoring common European interests over national interests. In relations with partners, including also Kyrgyzstan, first and foremost the Commission represents the face and generous hand of the EU, as it controls the main funds for aid and development support.

At the present moment, the role of the European Parliament is increasing as one of elements in the "European institutional triangle," which consists of the Council, the



Commission and the Parliament. Yet, the importance of the European Parliament has slightly decreased, because EU parliamentarians have a deliberative vote in all spheres except decisions on budget issues. However, a fact that the European Parliament is a parliament in true meaning of the word, which is formed by direct elections and not by representatives of national parliaments, more and more plays important role in the formulation of common European public opinion. This gains special importance in the context of the establishment of common European political parties.

Thus, it is clear that in order to build an effective partnership with the EU, it is necessary to conduct full cooperation in three directions: with the interstate Council, where the national interests of leading countries such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom or the Netherlands can influence the general direction; with the supra-national Commission, which embodies the common European approach and controls considerable financial funds; and the Parliament, which has significant influence on the formulation of public opinion (the recent decision on economic sanctions against Uzbekistan exemplifies this) [3].

LESSON TWO: MECHANISM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES IN DECISION- MAKING PROCESS

As Germany took over the EU chairmanship on January 01, 2007, there have been heated debates about German (and European) foreign policy towards Central Asia. In this light, the recent visit of German Foreign Affairs Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier to the Central Asian states may well trigger some false expectations.

The six-month long chairmanship held by EU member states, which now serves as a litmus test of internal and external policy of the EU, will sink into oblivion when the new European Constitution is adopted. Then there will be one minister serving in a supra-national capacity, who will coordinate all foreign policy of the EU. For the moment, the rotational chairmanship in the EU gives member states an opportunity to draw shades of national interests into the common European policy. For example, Luxemburg prioritized an issue of finalizing a new edition of the Lisbon process, the main economic indicator for the EU. Austria and Finland turned its attention to the somewhat forgotten Balkans. In this regard, the optimistic mood in Central Asian countries about future cooperation with an EU headed by Germany is quite understandable.

However, taking into consideration that half a year is not always sufficient enough term to realize set priorities, it is logical to guess that it is unlikely that Portugal, which will hold the chair in the second half of 2007, will continue Germany's focus on Central Asia. Likely they will prefer to focus instead on relations with the countries of the Mediterranean and Maghreb. In this context it is quite obvious that our expectations are disproportionately high because of the 'ever-changing' policy of the EU chairmanship, balanced by the steady policy of the European institutions.

An example of such balance is the division of the mandate

to conduct common foreign policy of the European Union between the so-called "unofficial three": the EU Chairman; the Higher Representative of the EU on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP); and the EU Commissar on External Affairs, who belongs to various institutions of the EU.

The EU Chairman, at the same time the minister of foreign affairs of the chair state, first of all pursues national interests and tries to use the European mission in order to promote his own initiatives at the international level. Overly ambitious initiatives are often neutralized by the conservative approach of European structures (as in the case with Belgium in 2001) [4].

The EU High Representative for the CFSP is a part of the institutional structure of the European Council, the main coordinating and legislative body of the EU. The position was specially introduced to create balance and secure coordination in conducting foreign policy in the European Council, where chairmanship is transferred every half a year from one member state to another and correspondingly priorities in foreign policy vary according to foreign policy interests of chairman state. The position of the High Representative secures continuity and stability of common foreign policy of the EU.

EU Commissioner on External Affairs is one of 25 member of the Commission, which is main executive body of the EU. Because of the important role of the Commission for the EU in the international arena, the role of the Commissar also increasingly evolves into that of a unified representative and spokesperson for the EU. The Commissar primarily focuses on the common supra-national interests of the EU and builds relationships with other countries on behalf of the EU.

LESSON THREE: AN INSIDE LOOK

Considering the EU is one of the constant elements of its foreign policy, Kyrgyzstan is somewhat irresponsible about its partnership with Europe. The all-inclusive and universal character of the PCA between Kyrgyzstan and the EU [5] means there is almost unlimited potential for Kyrgyz-European cooperation in various spheres including power sector reformation and border control to cooperation in education and culture. The PCA, which is the second highest normative act in the hierarchy of European legislation after agreements on associations, creates much space for cooperation, since it establishes a clear mechanism and institution for cooperation. Meanwhile, short-term action plan agreements and declarative memorandums would presuppose much focus on formal aspects of cooperation.

The partnership between Kyrgyzstan and the EU has lasted more than 15 years. The almost legendary TACIS program,

which terminates in 2007, has also been established for the same amount of time. From now on, technical aid will be provided through the line of special strategy of the European Commission for Central Asia. Despite mutual attempts, they did not manage to move beyond simple aid packages and advance to the next level of developmental support. Kyrgyzstan did not use all the advantages of the PCA and its special partnership with the EU, continuing receiving grants from donors, including the EU, as it has during the past 15 years.

Continuity, stability and consistency are three basic dominant principles in the European system of values. The values unfortunately are not always present in Kyrgyz policy, which is characterized by mismanagement of human resources and political fragmentation. It is hard to talk about real partnership relations without first having mutual understanding and trust, based on work and not just on declarations.

HOMework

The institutional challenges of the EU and its changing geometry must not mislead us, but on the contrary give us opportunity to use the situation for the national interests of our country. Unfortunately, today we do not talk about a higher level of PCA realization. Rather, the following question arises: "Do we want to build cooperation with the EU at all?" If yes, then we have to define what we want from such cooperation. The best solution would be to develop an strategy, which would include a vision of Kyrgyzstan's future cooperation with the EU supported by concrete plans and objectives. The very elaboration of such a document will force us to reevaluate the European direction of our policy in a pragmatic manner.

Cooperation with European institutions is not limited to one or two areas, and it is important to coordinate Kyrgyz policy toward the EU and the material aid received. A wide-ranging coordinated policy for all state structures involved in European issues with special working group on cooperation with the EU guiding interactions might bring positive results for Kyrgyzstan. It would be wise to appoint a special independent representative or coordinator on European policy in response to the appointment of the EU special representative for Central Asia.

In this regard, it is important to train officials with specialized knowledge. It forces us to think that in Kyrgyzstan,

while there are about 40 universities, there is not a single educational program on European research. Knowledge in this area is in high demand around the world.

We continue to say that the European model of integration (especially the institutional aspect) is a model for the same processes in the Central Asia. But while we are engaged in the framework of the so-called "Bishkek's process," the EU tries to arrange negotiations with every Central Asian state in order to find common ground, we say that we are all unique and need different approaches. And when the EU tries to use a differentiated approach, we begin point at each other, demanding similar approach as our neighbors receive. It is a circular argument, but integration, which results from compromises and consensus for the benefit of all, can lead us out of this closed circle. We must learn not only to receive material aid, but also to listen to advice.

The potential for a Kyrgyz (and Central Asian) partnership with the EU is huge, but a narrow Kyrgyz view of the EU being not an equal partner, but rather as a generous donor shifts accent and balance. Only through a reevaluation of such an approach, along with a deeper understanding of European institutions and clear goals dictated only by the national interests of the country can we finally open a window to Europe and build an effective, mutually beneficial relationship.

[1] The Western European Union, established in 1946 as an independent military union, was incorporated into the system of the EU in 2001 as a military component. Now, the EU possesses rapid reaction forces that consist of national military units and perform joint military operations (like in Kosovo).

[2] The term of "Pluralistic unipolarity" was coined by the Russian international relations researcher A.D. Bogaturov in 1996: see A.A. Bogaturov, "Pluralistic unipolarity" and the interests of Russia," in *Svobodnaya mysl*, #2, 1996.

[3] Despite the generally restrained position of the EU regarding the issue, the European MPs adopted relatively strict resolution on situation in Uzbekistan (26/10/2006- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2006-0467+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>)

[4] Very ambitious foreign policy priorities of Belgium (global fight against terrorism, EU's involvement in Afghanistan, etc.) in the second half of 2001 were 'cooled down' by realistic and traditional approaches of European institutions regarding these issues.

[5] The PCA between the EU and the Kyrgyz Republic is valid until 2009.



KYRGYZ FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES IN 2007

Round table summary

The Institute for Public Policy held a round table on the topic: "Kyrgyz foreign policy priorities in 2007". A number of experts on foreign policy, politics and diplomats took part at the round table (list).

The moderator, the President of the Institute for Public Policy Muratbek Imanaliev said in his welcoming speech that in 2007, the country's leadership will undergo several important tests of foreign policy. Firstly, is the SCO summit organization which will be held in Bishkek in 2007. Secondly, this year authorities should normalize Kyrgyz-American relations, which have significantly deteriorated in recent years, and direct relations to a more constructive course. Thirdly, Kyrgyz leadership should work out consistent policy toward Central Asian countries, taking into account current domestic policy developments the respective countries.

If we proceed from the notion that foreign policy is a reflection of domestic policy- an instrument which serves the state's interests- then, according to Ambassador Ishenbai Abdurazakov, the main problem of foreign policy is a lack of domestic policy guidelines, with clearly defined national interests. "Foreign policy right now is felt out, so to speak, and we see international relations through the eyes of other countries, not through our own," he said.

According to all participants, the main tendency in the last year's foreign policy was that Kyrgyzstan put aside a multi vector policy. Experts stated that nowadays it is wrong to think that while worsening relations with one country Kyrgyzstan might improve relations with another.

One of the main priorities of foreign policy should be an improvement of relations with the USA, or at least, preventing them from deteriorating. As participants

said, it is very important that the leadership clearly realizes and evaluates what the contemporary West is exactly. According to the estimation of various financial and political think-tanks, the USA will remain a global force for a long time, and Kyrgyzstan should adequately evaluate it and conduct policy which corresponds to its own long-term interests. Moreover, improvement of relations with the USA will result in qualitative growth in relations with Russia, participants said.

They stressed that the issue of relations with international financial institutions will be also principal in 2007. Refusal to enter the HIPC program was strongly motivated by domestic policy interests, but after refusal some higher officials stated that the country should reconsider and narrow down the relations with international financial institutions. According to the participants, the Foreign Ministry will have to respond to reaction to these statements as financial institutions are represented by donor countries, while the state budget has a huge deficit without any visible alternative sources for economic growth.

Another priority direction in activity of Foreign Affairs Ministry should be development of a consistent position and policy toward neighboring countries, taking into account internal political developments in these countries. Political modernization in Kazakhstan, the ambiguous situation regarding Uzbek President Islam Karimov's term expiry, the upcoming congress of the Communist Party in China – all these factors should be thoroughly analyzed from the point of view of Kyrgyzstan's interests.

In conclusion, the participants stressed that for effective foreign policy making, the country leadership needs first of all to work out a clear state policy and determine national interests.