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*Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
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THE CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS ANALYST

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Analytical Articles require a three to four sentence Key Issue introduction to the article based on a news hook. Rather than a general, overarching analysis, the article must offer considered and careful judgment supported with concrete examples. The ideal length of analytical articles is between 1,100 and 1,500 words. The articles are structured as follows:

KEY ISSUE: A short 75-word statement of your conclusions about the issue or news event on which the article focuses.

BACKGROUND: 300-450 words of analysis about what has led up to the event or issue and why this issue is critical to the region. Include background information about the views and experiences of the local population.

IMPLICATIONS: 300-450 words of analysis of the ramifications of this event or issue, including where applicable, implications for the local people's future.

CONCLUSIONS: 100-200 words that strongly state your conclusions about the impact of the event or issue.

Field Reports focus on a particular news event and what local people think about the event. Field Reports address the implications the event or activity analyzed for peoples' lives and their communities. Field Reports do not have the rigid structure of Analytical Articles, and are shorter in length, averaging ca. 700-800 words.

Those interested in joining *The Analyst's* pool of authors to contribute articles, field reports, or contacts of potential writers, please send your CV to: <scornell@jhu.edu> and suggest some topics on which you would like to write.

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THE UNRAVELING OF SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN

Scott Radnitz

Two decades after the notorious Osh riots, large-scale violence has recurred in southern Kyrgyzstan, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, and 400,000 refugees. In the aftermath of April's unexpected change of government, the weak Kyrgyz state proved itself nearly powerless to prevent local clashes from occurring and sometimes escalating. In Jalalabad, sporadic street demonstrations in May turned violent, and in one instance divided along ethnic lines—between Kyrgyz and the Uzbek minority. On June 10, unidentified gunmen sparked a pogrom against the Uzbek minority and the destruction of much of the city's residential and commercial districts. The implications for Osh, Kyrgyzstan, and Central Asia are far-reaching.

BACKGROUND: Unlike the Tulip Revolution 2005, the major events leading to the April 7 overthrow of President Kurmanbek Bakiev took place in Kyrgyzstan's north. However, when Bakiev refused to leave the country and took refuge in his family's village outside Jalalabad, the south became a focal point for political struggles. After a week spent trying to negotiate the terms of his resignation, Bakiev hastily fled the country, but not before sparking violent clashes between his supporters and his detractors.

Bakiev's exile did not herald a restoration of stability. On April 30, a non-political scuffle between Kyrgyz and Uzbek businessmen in Osh (a city with roughly equal numbers of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks) fed rumors of inter-ethnic violence. On May 13, groups of protesters seized control of the government headquarters in the three southern regions and were forced out by larger groups supporting the interim government the next day. Dozens were injured in the process. Following the reestablishment of control of the buildings, some of the pro-government demonstrators — among them, allegedly, ethnic Uzbeks loyal to Jalalabad businessman and politician Kadyrjon Batyrov

— marched to Bakiev's village and burned down several homes belonging to Bakiev's family. On May 19, several thousand people marched on the People's Friendship University — an institute financed and run by Batyrov primarily for Jalalabad's Uzbek community — and demanded Batyrov's arrest. His supporters fired weapons from inside the university building, killing two and injuring dozens, before the police intervened.

It now appears likely that the Jalalabad clashes had two effects. First, they showed that the state could not stop armed mobs from advancing political agendas and destroying property. It was now apparent that law enforcement agencies did not have control in the southern regions, implying that further organized violence could not be prevented, and perpetrators would have little fear of being caught and punished. Meanwhile, a reservoir of potential foot soldiers was available to participate in demonstrations and organized violence: idle young men who do not earn enough money to raise a family and who feel powerless to change their fate.

Second, the dominant narrative explaining political struggles in the south had now turned

from support for Bakiev to ethnic affiliation — whether one is Uzbek or Kyrgyz. Acts of violence in the south would readily be interpreted as “ethnic” violence and rumors of inter-ethnic provocations could be seized upon to mobilize people. It would not be surprising if the perpetrators of the June violence had begun their preparations at this time. This would involve recruiting young men, acquiring and distributing weapons, planning coordinated attacks, and creating a storyline that would take shape through deliberately disseminated malicious rumors.

Five simultaneous attacks by unidentified masked gunmen at crowded points in Osh on the night of June 10 lit the fuse. In the following days, mobs armed with automatic weapons, homemade knives, clubs, and Molotov cocktails marauded throughout the city targeting Uzbek businesses and neighborhoods in what can only be described as a pogrom. Eyewitnesses charged that elements of the Kyrgyz military abetted the marauders — at the very least, for three days they did little to stop them. In the chaos, many non-Uzbek businesses were also destroyed in fires, including the city’s major bazaars, and Kyrgyz people were also killed in the crossfire and reprisal attacks. However, most victims were Uzbeks. By June 16, 400,000 Uzbek refugees—half the Uzbek population of Kyrgyzstan—had fled to the border with Uzbekistan.

IMPLICATIONS: Both inside and outside the region, many have been preoccupied with the question: Why did it happen? In the rush to explain the sudden outbreak of violence, several culprits, including “Russia”, “Tajiks”, and “The Bakievs” were fingered as suspected *agents provocateurs*. There is no credible evidence supporting any of these allegations, and it should be noted that the interim government

has an interest in scapegoating Bakiev and his family — although their involvement should not be ruled out either. Another possible instigator is local criminal figures who would benefit by eliminating competition from Uzbeks in Osh’s (licit and illicit) economy. At a minimum, no one disputes that the outbreak of violence was *not* spontaneous.

However, “provocation” is not the whole story. In interviews with the international media, refugees described wanton killing, rape, and sadistic acts of cruelty, sometimes accompanied by chauvinistic anti-Uzbek and nationalistic slogans. The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that, once violence was set in motion, such acts were carried out in numerous locations by ordinary people, who took advantage of the disorder to settle scores or unleash pent-up resentment and hatred against ethnic Uzbeks. Some of this violence was fed by malicious rumors alleging rapes and other horrific acts perpetrated by one or the other ethnic community. To lay the blame exclusively on external provocateurs is psychologically reassuring because it precludes asking uncomfortable questions about one’s friends and neighbors, but ethnic Kyrgyz citizens will eventually have to reckon with culpability within their own ranks—a small minority to be sure—to make reconciliation possible and prevent future conflict.

By way of explanation, some journalists have described the Fergana Valley as an “ethnic tinderbox” that was destined to “explode”. Yet few anticipated this turn of events, and indeed, observers both inside and outside the country were shocked at the scale and viciousness of the violence. This points to a paradox: by most accounts, inter-ethnic relations prior to this summer had been improving, not deteriorating. While maintaining negative stereotypes about



one another — as is usually the case in areas of mixed ethnicity — Uzbeks and Kyrgyz nonetheless worked side by side, lived in increasingly integrated neighborhoods, and sometimes intermarried. The vast majority of people in both groups were content to leave in peace. Yet a series of incremental steps and a sudden triggering event were enough to shatter this stability. In hindsight, it may appear inevitable—but it was not.

Looking ahead, the security vacuum in Kyrgyzstan is a cause for continuing concern. In 1990, interethnic clashes in Osh ended (after 300 deaths) only when Moscow imposed a curfew and sent tanks into the city. Today, there is no equivalent external source of stability. Both Russia, through the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the U.S./Europe have signaled their reluctance to intervene. This is not surprising, as the U.S.

sees Kyrgyzstan as strategically unimportant — with the exception of its military base at Manas — and Russia seeks to maintain influence but does not want to involve itself in a messy, urban conflict. However, without a state that is strong enough to impose order and trusted by all of its citizens, each community will live in fear of the other and normalcy cannot return to southern Kyrgyzstan.

An aggravating factor is that both sides' fears are exacerbated by mutual misperceptions. As often occurs after cases of intercommunal violence, people on opposing sides have developed contradictory narratives about victimhood and blame, focusing on their own losses and downplaying casualties on the other side. Such diverging perceptions can prevent reconciliation and provoke new violence, as acts of self-defense may be perceived as acts of aggression. The current Kyrgyz government, in

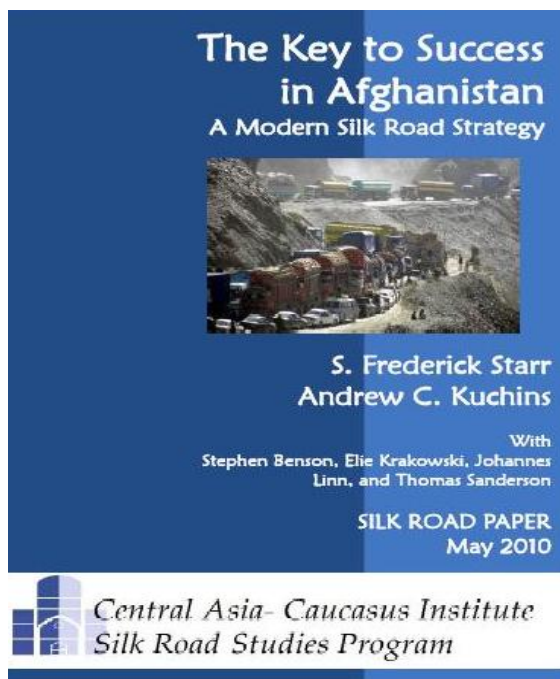
its reluctance to establish and make public facts, whomever they implicate, and its refusal to acknowledge the ethnic character of much of the violence, has inadvertently encouraged the hardening of self-serving — and sometimes apocryphal — competing narratives.

A pervasive climate of fear and the outbreak of more violence will make it less likely that refugees will return home (as the perpetrators would no doubt desire). Refugees must weigh the (meager) opportunities that await them as stateless citizens against the risks of returning to their homes in Osh. If the majority of refugees refuse to return to Kyrgyzstan, the demographic landscape of Central Asia will be transformed. Kyrgyzstan, which under President Akayev prided itself on its multinational harmony, was a model for the greater region, especially in contrast to civil conflict in the Caucasus. Now, to the chagrin of Kyrgyz themselves, it represents to much of the world a failure to administer a multiethnic state and serves as a warning to other multiethnic states, in the Fergana Valley and beyond, which

believe they have found the right formula to preserve peace.

CONCLUSIONS: Even if most refugees return to their homes, it is not an exaggeration to say that southern Kyrgyzstan has changed irreparably. The economic foundation of Kyrgyzstan's second city has been completely destroyed. The fragile trust that gradually emerged after the 1990 riots has been shattered for at least a generation. While the state remains weak — perhaps even irrelevant — power now lies with local actors who can assemble groups of armed men, like the ones who precipitated the attacks. Unless a neutral peacekeeping force is dispatched to the region, locals cannot be confident of their physical security, and there is little that stands in the way of further violence.

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KYRGYZSTAN'S TROUBLED PATH TO A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

Erica Marat

Kyrgyzstan is today the only Central Asian state where political forces advocating a parliamentary system still have a strong voice. These forces represent a mixture of political leaders' good will and their pursuit of a share of power in an environment where political competition is robust and memories of the two "revolutions" are still fresh. The recent ethnic violence in Osh and Jalalabad added serious hurdles to Kyrgyzstan's ambition of becoming a parliamentary state. Yet, if enough efforts are invested into rebuilding trust between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in south Kyrgyzstan, a parliamentary system could still be accomplished.

BACKGROUND: While everyday tensions between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations in southern Kyrgyzstan have always existed, there was no apparent reason for inter-ethnic violence to break out at this moment. Both groups had learned ways to peacefully co-exist despite scarce access to water and land for nearly two decades. Inter-ethnic ties between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz were strong enough to keep the peace in the region even though the economic and political cleavages between these groups had widened after the collapse of the Soviet Union: Uzbeks dominate the business sector, but are underrepresented in governmental structures.

Kyrgyzstan's new government, which took power in a violent uprising just two months ago, has made it clear that it intends to treat the Uzbek minority on par with Russians. Thus, the government translated the new constitution into three languages; Kyrgyz, Russian, and Uzbek.

However, despite interim president Roza Otunbayeva's efforts to engage all citizens to vote in the referendum, the violence in southern Kyrgyzstan underscored the weakness of the provisional government and its inability

to quell civic unrest. Reports about the possibility of inter-ethnic provocations were available to the provisional government weeks before the recent unrest, but little was done to address this or prepare for a worst-case scenario. As violence spread across Osh in the morning of June 11, the Kyrgyz military (made up predominantly of ethnic Kyrgyz) acted chaotically, often reacting to rumors spread by provocateurs. The military and police lacked the equipment and communication devices needed to respond quickly and contain the violence. "I am ashamed to confess, but the military lacked the fuel to reach places", one military official said.

The provisional government's weak response to the unraveling crisis was combined with the deposed president Kurmanbek Bakiyev's careless treatment of the Uzbek minority during his five years in power. It took only a few hours for tensions and panic to spread across southern Kyrgyzstan. According to unofficial estimates, the clashes took as many as 2,000 lives, while 400,000 ethnic Uzbeks fled their homes.

IMPLICATIONS: The violence in Osh and Jalalabad has unveiled both the ugly and the



(Reduters)

beautiful in Kyrgyz society. Kyrgyz journalists have been struggling to choose their words while describing atrocities and causalities and yet maintain a balance. Personal memories of what happened during June 10-15 flooded Kyrgyzstan's loosely regulated online forums; apologies, accusations, calls for action, political campaigns, and hate speeches inundated media outlets and everyday conversations. Local leaders of the Uzbek diaspora and Kyrgyz officials have been engaging in peace talks, stating that violence was unexpected by both sides and needs to be prevented. Bishkek residents have been collecting humanitarian aid, while some Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh and Jalalabad are doing what they can to calm tensions on their own. Overall, the Osh and Jalalabad violence is condemned across the country. Local NGO leaders have mostly proven to be ethnicity-blind and have acted to support both ethnic groups.

But the military forces and some political leaders continue to use force to deal with the unrest. On June 21, Kyrgyz forces raided

villages populated by Uzbeks to extract weapons and persecute alleged instigators of inter-ethnic confrontation. Frustrations among both ethnic groups as well as other minority groups over the country's future have been growing.

The Osh and Jalalabad crisis complicated the already uneasy political climate in the country. One week ago, most discussions in the media centered on the question of whether the upcoming elections would be free and fair. Today, the question Kyrgyzstan faces is whether it is possible to restore the inter-ethnic balance that disappeared just days ago.

Interim president Roza Otunbayeva's decision to hold the referendum as planned was criticized by her opponents and some international organizations. Some argue that holding the referendum on time would signify the interim government's disregard for the Uzbek population. Refusing to postpone the referendum "could seriously undermine the referendum's legitimacy in the eyes of the international community and contribute to the

sense of alienation of many southerners”, argues a recent publication of the International Crisis Group.

Proponents of an early referendum, however, argue that if the provoked violence forces the provisional government to postpone the vote, more provocations will follow in order to continue destabilizing the situation in the country. As analysts in Kyrgyzstan assert, Otunbayeva’s government needs to gain legitimacy to move forward with reforms. If parliamentary elections are held in October, Otunbayeva’s government will be compelled to encourage ethnic minorities to enter political competition and elect their own representatives in parliament.

Otunbayeva will continue to be under pressure from her fellow interim government members to prevent ethnic minorities from gaining power. But such politicians will likely attract strong criticism from their opponents, NGO groups, and society at large. No politician, be that the Ata-Meken party leader Omurbek Tekebayev or Social Democratic Party leader Almazbek Atambayev – both struggling to gain a majority in parliament – will be able to sustain a stable political and social environment without the support of ethnic Uzbeks who make up over a million of Kyrgyzstan’s population.

Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from the recent violence is that while it is important for the Uzbek refugees to return to their native cities and villages in Kyrgyzstan, inter-ethnic reconciliation is a necessary precondition for stability across the entire country. If Kyrgyz politicians prove unable to restore inter-ethnic peace, efforts to build a parliamentary system might be equally futile. The violence in Osh and Jalalabad highlighted the significance of the government’s active

promotion of a civic nationalism, which would establish a framework for peaceful interaction between the ethnic majority and minorities. It demonstrated that in the absence of a professional – rather than ethnic – army and police, a parliamentary state is no more than a political slogan.

If Kyrgyz political forces as well as the international community use this moment and emphasize the importance of inter-ethnic peace, Kyrgyzstan’s experiments with a parliamentary system of governance could become a milestone in Central Asia’s post-Soviet history. Kyrgyzstan’s provisional government therefore desperately needs external support to rebuild inter-ethnic trust between the ethnic majority and minority groups in Osh and Jalalabad.

CONCLUSIONS: Overall, there are three primary areas where Kyrgyzstan needs immediate help from the UN and OSCE to stop the violence. First, the leaders of the Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities in the region, as well as local entrepreneurs and religious leaders, must be engaged in a dialogue to build trust. Second, the capacity of the Kyrgyz police and its military to quell inter-ethnic tensions must be enhanced. Third, public debates engaging experts with various backgrounds must be organized in various media channels. Fortunately, Kyrgyzstan has the necessary preconditions for this sort of intervention – despite the recent bloodshed; it is still the only state in Central Asia with a viable and active political opposition, professional NGOs, and independent journalists.

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UZBEKISTAN'S RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE IN KYRGYZSTAN BETWEEN CAUTION, CONCERN, AND CRITICISM

Matteo Fumagalli

Uzbekistan's reaction towards the violence ravaging southern Kyrgyzstan has been consistent with its broader attitude towards neighbors and Uzbek co-ethnics in the region. While condemning the clashes, Tashkent has emphasized that these constitute Kyrgyzstan's domestic affairs and do not reflect the historical spirit of harmonious co-existence that has defined Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations. Rather, it has hinted at the possibility that the events may have been orchestrated, implying that a key role in igniting the Osh and Jalalabad provinces may have been played by factions loyal to the ousted president Bakiyev.

BACKGROUND: Uzbekistan's attitude towards cross-border Uzbek co-ethnics has defied predictions dating back to the early post-independence period that Tashkent would engage in irredentist policies, or at the very least would act as the patron of Uzbeks abroad. Quite to the contrary, Uzbekistan's leadership has made respect for state sovereignty a key dimension of its domestic and foreign policy. Contacts with Uzbeks abroad have been limited, and officialdom has traditionally refrained from commenting on the conditions of the co-ethnics in the neighboring republics, preferring underground operations and contacts.

Not only has Tashkent not intervened but it has also looked at Uzbek co-ethnics with caution and even suspicion. Uzbeks abroad are not seen as Uzbekistan's 'own Uzbeks', and thus are not of Tashkent's concern. When refugees, including some ethnic Uzbeks, escaping from Afghanistan and Tajikistan's civil wars in the 1990s sought a safe haven in Uzbekistan, the latter sought to impose restrictions to the number allowed into the country. Refugees have been construed as posing a challenge to the order the regime seeks

to impose. Afraid of cross-border ties and the free flow of ideas and people that a more open border regime would entail Tashkent insisted on tight border control.

After nearly a decade of friendly bilateral relations during which each country developed its own distinctive path to independence and model of state-building, Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan relations deteriorated in 1999, following the February 16 assassination attempt against President Karimov in Tashkent, which the authorities claimed was perpetrated by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Apart from disputes over land (including border demarcation) and resources (water and gas supplies) Uzbekistan became increasingly exasperated at what it regarded as Kyrgyzstan's inability to control its own porous and poorly patrolled borders. The cross-border incursions by IMU militants over the summers of 1999 and 2000 appeared to provide evidence to Uzbekistan's case. Seemingly more worried about consolidating his own domestic power base than cracking down on militants, former president Askar Akayev became a sort of 'strawman', embodying the weak state that Uzbekistan saw at the origins of its own



(RFE/RL)

problems, namely the spillover of instability from beyond the border (or so the argument went).

Disagreements over how best to fight Islamist extremism aside, Uzbekistan was caught aback by the speed at which the Akaev regime crumbled in 2005. In order to prevent being next in a series of unraveling post-Soviet regimes, Karimov enacted a series of measures further narrowing down the spaces of pluralism within the country. The Andijan events of May 2005 came next, and when Uzbekistan demanded Kyrgyzstan's cooperation by returning those who had found refuge on its territory, Kurmanbek Bakiyev's new regime, seeking international legitimacy, refused. Uzbekistan's secret services were widely reported to tackle such issues unilaterally through undercover operations, and relations between the two neighbors worsened significantly.

Within a couple of years an already weak Bakiyev regime finally gave in to Tashkent's requests, and a number of Uzbek citizens began to return, many as a result of coercion. The atmosphere of cooperation did not last long, as

Bakiyev's plans to seek Russian investment to development the Kambarata hydropower stations elicited immediate and vehement opposition in Tashkent, since these would have a negative impact on the farming and cotton economy in Uzbekistan.

After Bakiyev's overthrow this year, Uzbekistan has been slow and reluctant to engage the new Kyrgyz leadership. Despite explicitly pointing to the domestic nature of the April 2010 events, Uzbekistan has been alarmed by the ease with which regimes collapse and change next

door. Furthermore, Uzbekistan's concern with religious extremism has been the main prism through which its leadership looks at events in the Ferghana valley. Securing borders and ensuring control of population flows are high on Uzbekistan's agenda, where fear of spillover of instability from across the border is a constant nightmare scenario.

IMPLICATIONS: Following the latest 'revolution' in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan kept its border with its neighbor tightly sealed. Thus, when the first reports of the clashes spread during the night between June 10 and 11, 2010, the border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was still shut. It was only on June 12 that Uzbekistan agreed to take refugees in, following increasing domestic and international pressure and facing a situation where thousands of people were seeking to desperately leave Kyrgyzstan. The border stayed open until June 14, when the Uzbek authorities decided to close it again. Officially set at 45,000, the actual number of refugees is thought to be much higher, possibly reaching 75,000. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Aripov justified the decision

to close the border by pointing to the country's inability to cope with such large number of refugees. This has prompted mounting criticism of both its border and refugee policy from both international and domestic humanitarian and human rights organizations. Indeed, official Tashkent has been forced to choose between policy consistency (a tight border regime) and pressure to allow some relief to refugees of predominantly Uzbek ethnicity.

Initially, families fleeing the violence were welcomed in private homes in the Andijan province. This move was soon reversed by the authorities and refugees (only women and children have been allowed into the country) have since been hosted in camps, where severe movement restrictions have been imposed by the Uzbek authorities in an attempt to prevent individuals to move around and possibly become untraceable.

The crisis unfolded while a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was taking place in Tashkent. On that occasion, President Karimov pointed out that Uzbekistan's position on events in Kyrgyzstan is "clearly reflected in the statement of the Uzbek Foreign Ministry made on April 9, 2010". Emphasizing that these are "an internal affair of Kyrgyzstan", Karimov laconically concluded that "that says everything". Apart from President Karimov's brief remarks, the only official statement was delivered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 12. The statement conveyed two main messages. First was the condemnation of "unpunished killings, violence, pogroms", noting that these were primarily perpetrated against members of the Uzbek community. Second was the interpretation of the events. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded that rather than being a spontaneous outbreak of

interethnic violence, the actions have "an organized, manipulated and provocative nature", with the aim to instigate (rather than being driven by) inter-ethnic animosities. The statement emphasized the long tradition of friendly relations between the many ethnic communities living in Kyrgyzstan.

CONCLUSIONS: As the tragic events of June 2010 unfolded, Uzbekistan acted consistently with its prior attitude to questions of territoriality, sovereignty, and citizenship. It has re-affirmed that whatever takes place within the territory of a neighboring country falls within the remit of that state's domestic affairs. Moreover, the wisdom of any type of involvement (military or other) within Kyrgyzstan's territory currently appears questionable in Tashkent. Caution has been accompanied by an uneasy balance between concern over a possibly uncontrolled flow of refugees who would then disperse across the country, and pressure from both international and local humanitarian organizations to provide a more pro-active form of humanitarian relief.

In this regard, a noteworthy debate on how to best deal with the crisis has come to the fore, revealing how Uzbekistan's official stance may not meet everyone's expectations. Local NGOs and human rights organizations have demanded that the authorities take a more open stance to protect Uzbek co-ethnics abroad. However, such a move, apart from contravening two decades of regional policy, would entail a type of involvement that goes beyond humanitarian relief. This would imply the further unraveling of the Kyrgyz state, presumably an issue of even greater concern in Tashkent.

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THE IMPACT OF ENERGY ISSUES ON THE KYRGYZ UPHEAVAL

John C. K. Daly

Though largely overlooked in Western coverage beyond the cozy fuel deals for the Manas Transit Center between the Bakiyev family and the U.S. Department of Defense, energy and water issues figured prominently in the recent unrest in Kyrgyzstan. The corrupt administration of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev stole from both the U.S via fuel sales to Manas, and Russia through the diversion of portions of its \$2.15 billion loan, granted in February 2009. But what brought Kyrgyz demonstrators into the streets were massive utility rate increases. Hindsight made the unrest inevitable, though few saw the “perfect storm” gathering at the time.

BACKGROUND: President Bakiyev’s son Maxim, appointed head of the Kyrgyz Republic’s Agency for Investment and Economic Development last October, quickly moved to extend his control over vast sectors of the Kyrgyz economy, as he promoted the selloff of joint stock energy companies as part of the country’s 2008-2012 privatization program, notably VostokElektro, serving Issyk-kul and Naryn provinces and SeverElektro, servicing Chuy and Talas provinces and Bishkek.

Last April, the Kyrgyz government sold its 80.49 percent share in VostokElektro to Chakan GES Company for \$1.2 million. Bakiyev’s government cut a similar deal with Chakan last November for its 80.49 percent shares in SeverElektro, which sold for \$3 million even as the Slavyansky Vostok holding company estimated the company’s value at \$137 million. Chakan’s chairman of the board, Aleksei Shirshov, was a member of Maxim’s inner circle. The Kyrgyz Attorney General’s Office concluded that the government suffered losses of over \$120 million as a result.

After the insider trading of state energy assets at bargain prices, the government decided to raise utility rates for electricity, gas, heat and water for consumers, arguing that the money

was needed for infrastructure upgrades. On January 1, electricity rates were increased. Before tariffs were raised a kilowatt of electricity cost 0.7 som (1.5¢). The rate subsequently rose to 1.5 som (3.3¢), an increase of 214 percent. Hot water rates, calculated according to the size of a domicile, also more than doubled – in a country where monthly pensions are roughly \$15. Adding insult to injury, on February 4 a meeting of the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) Budget and Finance Committee approved legislation to add VAT and sales tax to electricity and heating bills. Water issues underlay the price increases, as Kyrgyzstan’s 15 hydroelectric stations generate 92.5 percent of domestically consumed electricity.

Quite aside from viewing the Kyrgyz population as sheep to be sheared, Maksim’s Agency for Investment and Economic Development purloined the second \$300 million tranche of the \$2.15 billion credit line that Russia gave Kyrgyzstan in February 2009.

On April 16, Kyrgyzstan’s Prosecutor-General’s Office announced the opening of two criminal cases against Maksim Bakiyev, accusing him of embezzlement and abuse of power, charging that in 2009 Bakiyev illegally transferred at



least \$35 million of a \$300 million Russian loan tranche, intended to construct the Kambarata-1 hydroelectric cascade, to accounts at several banks he controlled while he and business associates allegedly used the remainder of the loan to buy and sell shares on foreign stock exchanges.

The stock market speculation was handled by Evgenii Gurevich, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Kyrgyzstan. Gurevich was former head of the MGN Group, which entered Kyrgyzstan in 2008, acquiring numerous holdings, including banks, on its way to becoming one of Kyrgyzstan's most powerful conglomerates. In 2006-2009 Gurevich served as director of the Asia Universal Bank, under the control of Bakiyev. AUB is Kyrgyzstan's largest commercial bank, handling more than half of the republic's budget, including salaries of

public sector employees, compulsory insurance programs, retirement savings and loans.

Furious about the misuse of the funds, Moscow suspended further payments, at which point Maksim looked for other sponsors to complete the Kambarata-1, in January venturing to China. Bakiyev publicly stated that China could replace Russia's role in the project, but Beijing declined the offer.

On March 9, Italian media reported that Judge Aldo Mordzhini in Rome had issued an arrest warrant for Gurevich on charges of embezzling \$2.7 billion from Telecom Italia and the Fastweb telecom company between 2003 and 2006, money laundering and ties to the Mafia in one of the biggest frauds in Italy's history. It was only after the story broke that the Bakiyev administration cut its ties with Gurevich and the MGN group.

IMPLICATIONS: The price increases and the Bakiyev family's corruption were the last straw for the long suffering Kyrgyz population, and a major factor in turning them against the government. Three days after Bakiyev's ouster the provisional government repealed both the utility tariff increases and the privatization of SeverElektro and VostokElektro. Interim government first deputy head Almazbek Atambayev said in Osh on 18 April that the government would not increase electricity prices during the next two years.

But history may be about to repeat itself in neighboring Tajikistan, where a massive stalled hydroelectric project in the poorest of the

Central Asian post-Soviet states is stirring a similar volatile mix of lingering Soviet mindset and corruption. Tajikistan is seeking to complete its unfinished 3,600-megawatt Vakhsh River Rogun hydroelectric dam, begun in 1976. In December the Tajik government issued Rogun stock and made it compulsory for citizens to purchase nearly \$700 worth of shares, a sum exceeding most Tajiks' annual income, in order to collect \$600 million for construction to continue. After IMF Tajikistan mission head Axel Schimmelpfennig stated that the mandatory forced donations would destabilize the Tajik economy and that returns would be "negligible," Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon suspended the campaign on 12 April as his administration negotiated with the IMF.

Tajikistan's fixation on completing Rogun comes at a time when the UN's World Food Program reports that over one-third of the Tajik population now lacks sufficient food, citing as causes a wintertime reduction in employment, a decline in remittances from Tajiks working abroad, the steady increase in food prices and the cost of acquiring shares in Rogun. Despite the IMF and UN cautions, the Rogun juggernaut rolls on, as of April 24, Tajik deputy Minister of Energy and Industry Pulod Mukhiddinov announced that 10 foreign companies, including firms from the U.S., Britain, Japan, Germany, Turkey, Switzerland, France and Italy would participate in a tender to develop a feasibility study and environmental assessment for Rogun.

As in Kyrgyzstan, massive Tajik corruption continues, with hundreds of millions of dollars

being transferred each year to offshore accounts. According to local media in 2007 alone, corrupt government officials spirited \$372 million out of the country.

In water-rich but energy-poor Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, governments determined to complete massive Soviet-era hydroelectric facilities, are in the absence of significant Western funding squeezing their populations to provide the working capital. The massive corruption in Kyrgyzstan pushed the populace to revolt for the second time in five years, and Rakhmon's attempts to extort a year's salary from his citizens for constructing Rogun is unlikely to endear him to his long suffering people.

CONCLUSIONS: Western interest in Central Asian hydrocarbon resources and military bases left the increasingly decrepit Soviet-era hydroelectric facilities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan starved of capital investment. What money was raised in Kyrgyzstan was diverted by a corrupt administration, while in Tajikistan the populace is being fleeced to provide working capital to complete a soviet-era industrial dinosaur. As recent events in Kyrgyzstan proved, the population's patience has its limits, and if such scenarios are not to be replayed, foreign countries with an interest in Central Asian stability had better develop a new paradigm for underwriting projects directly affecting "quality of life" issues for Central Asians lest in another five years Kyrgyzstan undergoes a third "Tulip Revolution" or Tajikistan slide backwards yet again into civil unrest.

FIELD REPORTS

KYRGYZSTAN FACES INTERETHNIC CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE

Joldosh Osmonov

At midnight on June 10, what started as a conflict between young people in one of the casinos in Osh, the largest city in southern Kyrgyzstan, led to bloody, inter-ethnic clashes between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities. A few days later, mass unrest rapidly spread to the neighboring region of Jalalabad, leading to chaos in the entire southern part of the country. It took more than a week for the authorities to take control of the situation.

According to the most recent official estimates, 208 people died and more than 2,000 were injured. However, independent sources claim that the death toll is significantly higher. Roza Otunbaeva, the head of the Kyrgyz Interim Government, confessed that the number of deaths may be as much as ten times those stated in the official data.

These events resulted in mass flight from the conflict zones to other regions of the country and neighboring Uzbekistan. At least 400,000 internally displaced persons and refugees have left their homes due to the violent conflict, stated Elisabeth Byrs, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. She reported that around 100,000 fled to southern Uzbekistan seeking refuge, where they were housed in 75 refugee camps near Andijan city, whereas others were internally displaced within Kyrgyzstan. Meanwhile, as the deputy head of the Kyrgyz Border Service Cholponbek Turusbekov reported, refugees have started returning to their homes from Uzbekistan. "More than 7,000 refugees have already come back to their homes in the regions of Osh and Jalalabad," he stated in his interview with local "Azzatyk" news agency on June 19.

In response to the turmoil, the Kyrgyz authorities declared a state of emergency in Osh city and two "conflict-infected" rayons, Aravan and Kara Suu, on June 11. Later, the armed tensions spread to other rayons and the neighboring Jalalabad region, and the Interim government was forced to bring army units into the conflict zones. On June 13, the Interim leader signed a decree on partial mobilization throughout the country. Approximately 1,200 men eligible for military service were called up, Otunbaeva stated in an interview with a local news agency. However, as the clashes de-escalated, new conscripts were sent home on the condition that they join the armed forces if conditions necessitate their service.

The day after the conflict erupted, Otunbaeva appealed to Russia to send peacekeeping forces to help settle the conflict. However, Russian authorities refused, saying that the unrest is an "internal issue of the country". Simultaneously, Russian President Medvedev called for "urgent consultations" with the Security Council Secretaries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO) member-states. As a result of the meeting, the CSTO will provide Kyrgyz troops with logistical equipment, including nine military helicopters, Kyrgyz Security Council Secretary Alik Orozov stated. The CSTO is also contemplating sending a group of professionals specializing in conflict prevention and the detection and elimination of armed instigators.

Members of the interim government were quick to announce that the conflict was provoked and planned by former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's

family and his allies. “There is no doubt that Bakiyev’s family has orchestrated these violent events and we have enough evidence to prove it”, Otunbaeva claimed at her recent press conference. The Interim leader claimed the main goal of fanning the inter-ethnic clashes was to undermine the upcoming Constitutional Referendum, which is scheduled for June 27.

Kubatbek Baibolov, deputy head of the National Security Service and the Jalalabad region commandant, blamed the younger brother of the ousted President, Janysh Bakiyev, who is reportedly hiding in Tajikistan, for igniting the armed tensions using foreign armed militants and local criminals. “Well-trained and equipped mobile groups of 100 to 120 militants are driving around in cars in the conflict zones and shooting at representatives of both ethnic groups”, Baibolov stated. “Some of them are detained and currently are giving testimonies.”

It is interesting to note that Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s younger son Maksim, who is assumed to be sponsoring the bloody events, was detained in an airport in London on June 13. The reason for his detention, as British authorities claim, was that Maksim Bakiev lacked the necessary documents to enter the country. A few days after the incident, he asked the British government for political asylum.

In the meantime, the Kyrgyz Prosecutor General’s office sent an extradition request to their London colleagues.

The ousted Kyrgyz President has denied all allegations, claiming that the Interim government has no evidence to prove its statements. “In light of their incapability to control the situation in the country, it is easy for them to lay the blame at my door”, he stated at a press conference in Minsk, Belarus, on June 14.

Many local political experts agree that the conflict was artificially ignited by Bakiyev’s supporters. However, others claim the scenario was expected to occur sooner or later without “external interference”. Toktogul Kakchekeev, a local security expert, claims these bloody events were the results of the “ill-conceived and half-baked long-term policy of the authorities ... The government could have reduced the conflict potential if it would have constantly monitored the mood of the population in the south,” he concluded.

While the heated debates on the topic of “who is guilty” continue, international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as local NGOs have warned that a severe humanitarian crisis is brewing in southern Kyrgyzstan.

KYRGYZ REFUGEE CAMPS IN UZBEKISTAN

Erkin Akhmadov

As a result of the massive interethnic clashes that started in the south of Kyrgyzstan on June 11, tens of thousands of ethnic Uzbek residents of the Osh and Jalalabad districts of Kyrgyzstan crossed the border to Uzbekistan as refugees. According to UNICEF, about 75 refugee camps were set up near the city of Andijan in Uzbekistan. About 90 percent of these refugees are children, women and elderly people. Some sources report that about 30,000 more are at the border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan,

trying to cross. However, in some border areas, passage is restricted as there is physically no place to house more refugees. Nevertheless, Uzbekistan accepts all the injured and sick without any exceptions. In light of the massive influx of refugees, Uzbek authorities call for humanitarian assistance and support from the international community.

The refugee camps are supplied with all the necessary items. As reported by Izatulla Ibragimov, the deputy head of the Ministry for Emergency Situations in Andijan district, people are housed in special tents and medical care is provided to all in need. The head of the Andijan district administration Shermirza Usmanov stated that refugees are provided with hot meals three times a day and that drinking water, medicine, hygiene and sanitation items are delivered to the camps. About 1,000 patients receive medical care at the healthcare centers of Andijan. Over 100 of these suffer from bullet wounds, while others are pregnant women and people with tuberculosis and oncological diseases, which were evacuated from hospitals in Osh.

According to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Komilov, during the first three days of refugee influx to Uzbekistan, the Uzbek Government rendered assistance amounting to more than 1.5 billion Uzbek Sums (about US\$ 1 million). However, much more help is needed.

On June 16, an official telephone conversation took place between the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, where President Karimov informed the Secretary General on the situation in the south of Kyrgyzstan and in the refugee camps in Uzbekistan. The President emphasized that there is an increased need for humanitarian assistance not only from UN organizations, but also from individual states. The Secretary General stated that he personally coordinates all the work on assistance.

Several international humanitarian and UN organizations are already actively involved in providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees of south Kyrgyzstan. The assistance package provided by UNICEF amounts to several hundred thousand U.S. dollars. In addition, UNHCR will deliver 340 tons of humanitarian assistance; the World Health Organization sent three containers with blankets and will provide medical assistance; while the International Red Cross and the Crescent Committee provided humanitarian assistance to over 20,000 victim families.

The civil society of Uzbekistan is also quite active in mobilizing additional resources. The charity Fund "Mehr Nuri", the Forum of culture and art of Uzbekistan Fund, the Fund in Support of Social Initiatives, and the Republican public association "Jenskoe Sobranie", sent more than 130 tons of humanitarian aid. In Tashkent, several aid receiving points were organized to collect humanitarian assistance from the citizens of Uzbekistan. Volunteers from the youth center "Kelejak Ovozi" actively take part in collecting and distributing products and medicine in the refugee camps.

Meanwhile, the general population of Uzbekistan believes that the tragic events in the south of Kyrgyzstan are not an effect of mutual intolerance between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, but of a thoroughly planned provocation.

A local of Andijan district stated that "Uzbek and Kyrgyz people have lived next to each other for centuries and therefore we cannot stay indifferent to the grief of our neighbors. That is why we welcome them at our place; that is why we provide them with everything necessary". Some local people think that Uzbekistan should have been more active in preventing the bloodshed in the neighboring republic.

The refugee situation in Uzbekistan is relatively under control, with the increased attention and assistance from the government and civil society, and from the international community. However, southern Kyrgyzstan is far from stable and it is unlikely that people who suffered deep psychological and physical shock during the bloody clashes will be ready to return to their homes in the nearest future. Thus, many local and international experts already express concern that a prolonged stay of significant numbers of refugees in the densely populated Andijan district may cause economic difficulties for Uzbekistan.

STRUGGLE FOR ENERGY RESOURCES AT CASPIAN OIL AND GAS CONFERENCE IN BAKU

Inessa Baban

On June 1-4, 2010, Baku hosted the 17th Caspian International Oil and Gas Conference whose practical dimension was highlighted by a Refining and Petrochemicals Exhibition organized at the Baku Expo Centre.

By opening and ending its annual edition with a geopolitical approach to Eurasian energy issues, this event underlined once again the fundamental role of geopolitics in the region's economic affairs. While the conference gathered the biggest European energy companies, several political officials were also present, who spoke on the significance of Azerbaijan and the Caspian region in improving European energy security. As Angus Miller, adviser on Caspian energy issues at the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office said, "Azerbaijan is an inseparable component in ensuring Europe's energy security", while Richard Morningstar, the U.S. Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy Issues stressed that "we support projects to supply Caspian energy resources to Europe since they play an important role in Europe's energy security".

The officials of Azerbaijan and those of regional (Georgia, Turkey) and extra-regional actors (U.S., EU) attended this event with the purpose of openly expressing their support for the construction of the Southern Corridor for transporting Caspian gas to European markets. According to Heinz Hilbrecht, the Director of Security of Supply, Energy markets and networks of the EU Directorate-general for Energy, "European consumers are interested in purchasing gas from Azerbaijan and other countries of the region" guaranteeing that "the EU will pay the highest price for it". Consequently, Brussels strongly favors the Nabucco, Turkey-Greece-Italy and Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline projects, which are considered "mutually complementary systems", and

which were at the core of the discussions at the conference.

Being perfectly aware of the importance of Azerbaijani-Turkish energy dialogue for the accomplishment of these European projects, the U.S. and EU representatives called for a conclusion of an Azerbaijani-Turkish gas agreement (signed on June 7), which is crucial to future energy corridors from the Caspian region to Europe.

Azerbaijani representatives confirmed their political and economic interest in EU energy projects, since these are crucial to Azerbaijan's current aim of diversifying its energy exports. According to Rovnag Abdullayev, the head of Azerbaijan's state Oil Company, SOCAR, "in the near future, Azerbaijan's annual oil production will reach 60 million tonnes and gas production 35-40 billion cubic meters, which will increase Azerbaijan's role as an energy supplier to European and global markets". Azerbaijan is thus "interested in supplying gas to Bulgaria, Greece and Romania through the Southern Corridor, and this explains the importance of the Nabucco project for Azerbaijan", according to Natig Aliyev, the Azerbaijani Minister of Energy and Industry.

In turn, Turkey's deputy Minister of energy and natural resources Yusuf Yazar, underlined that "Turkey is ready to play a leading and constructive role in the supply of Caspian and Central Asian energy sources to Europe", and is ready to participate in Nabucco project which is "one of the most important elements in the provision of energy supplies to Europe".

Russia was absent at the conference, sending neither political, nor economic official representation. While some suggested that the arrogance of Russian oil and gas companies could be the reason for their absence, the competing energy projects promoted by

the Kremlin is probably a better explanation. One of the major Russian projects, the South Stream pipeline, is a rival to the Nabucco pipeline, which was the conference's main topic.

Along with Russia, other Caspian Sea riparian countries like Iran and Turkmenistan were not politically represented. Iran is isolated because of its nuclear issue and the firm position of the U.S., whose representative emphasized that "the U.S. attitude on this remains unchanged and I do not think that Iran can take part in the Southern Corridor". On the other hand, Turkmenistan chose to isolate itself by missing the conference, in spite of the interests of the conference participants in Turkmen's energy resources. Turkey's representative mentioned the participation of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in the existing Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, hoping for its involvement in future projects and the U.S.

representative said "it would be desirable for Turkmenistan to take part in the Southern Corridor projects". Due to its locked geographical position, Turkmenistan is to an even larger extent than other Caspian states forced to find multiple solutions for the export of its energy resources.

Finally, the need for cooperation in the Caspian Sea region is indispensable to all riparian states, because as Angus Miller stressed "no country could rely only on its own energy resources". However, as long as politics and geopolitical interests prevail over economic gains, the Caspian states will continue to promote their energy agendas individually, not least by organizing conferences such as the present one, with the purpose of attracting attention from extra-regional actors. Such events are organized annually by all Caspian states, and have become an important tool in advancing these agendas.

'WATER FOR LIFE'-CONFERENCE HELD IN TAJIKISTAN

Suhrob Majidov

On June 8, the high-level International Conference "Water for life" was held in Dushanbe. The conference was organized jointly by the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations, and dedicated to the mid-term comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life 2005-2015". The main goal of the conference was a stocktaking of the progress achieved in the implementation and prospects for the fulfillment of international commitments on water and water related issues by 2015.

Representatives of UN member states, UN Institutes, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, business circles, NGOs, civil society as well as scholars and experts participated in the Conference. Overall, the conference brought together high-level representatives from about 77 UN member-states,

64 international and regional organizations, and numerous water experts and scholars from all over the world. The high-level guests included the host of the conference, Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang.

The conference constituted a platform for discussing a large spectrum of development goals related to water, including transboundary water cooperation, water resources, adaptation to climate change and others.

Water issues are a topical problem for Central Asian countries nowadays. Hydro-energy controversies between the regional states divide the region into two opposing camps: The riverhead countries Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on one side, and the downstream states of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the other. Unsurprisingly, all

debates at the conference concentrated on water related conflicts in Central Asia. As was predicted by many experts, the construction of the Rogun hydropower station caused heated discussion between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The Rogun station is an incomplete construction project on the territory of Tajikistan, dating from Soviet times. The project was frozen following the collapse of the Soviet Union, since the construction required large financial resources. The project was recommenced in 2007. According to the original technical plan, Rogun is to become one of the largest plants in the region with a 335 meters high dam. The station will be able to produce 3.6 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.

Polemics between the Uzbek and Tajik delegations were reminiscent of court pleadings. The head of the Uzbek delegation, first deputy Minister of Economy of Uzbekistan Galina Saidova, claimed that the construction of the Rogun station could result in a devastating disaster for the whole region. According to her, the station is situated in a dangerous seismic zone. She presented scientific computation disclosing that in case the dam is destroyed, not only Tajikistan but also half of Uzbekistan will be flooded.

Gul Sherali, the Minister of Industry and Energy of Tajikistan answered the claims of Uzbekistan's delegation, calling their arguments ill-founded. According to the Minister, Tajikistan is now rehabilitating only those areas at the station which were constructed during Soviet times, when 44-50 percent of the station was completed. He claimed that further construction will be implemented only after a feasibility study is completed.

The Tajik delegation also raised the most sensitive issue in the region's hydro-energy disputes, which is

rational water usage. According to experts, more than 80 percent of the water flow originates in the riverhead countries Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, while Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan consume more than 85 percent of all water in the region, mainly for irrigation. At the same time, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan suffer from serious energy shortages during winter, possessing no alternative natural resources like gas or oil. According to Tajikistan, in such a situation water may serve as leverage in relationships between the Central Asian states.

Tajikistan's position was supported by some international experts and delegations. According to Kori Udovichkie, Director of the United Nations Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, "water should not be used as a free resource ... water is much undervalued and should be considered as an invaluable resource which ensures life and development".

Most experts agree that water is becoming a most topical issue on the global agenda. According to UN data, more than 80 countries in the world face water shortages while drought and desertification threaten the livelihoods of more than 1.2 billion people in the world. In the Central Asian region, water has become a subject of political and economic controversies. The Dushanbe conference was intended as a first step toward cooperation on water related problems in the region. However, the parties are far from a compromise.

NEWS DIGEST

KYRGYZ OFFICIALS ESCAPE ATTACK IN BISHKEK

11 June

Two senior Kyrgyz officials were attacked by a crowd of young Kyrgyz in Bishkek today, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. Interim government Deputy Chairman Temir Sariiev and Deputy Interior Minister Kubanychbek Kadyrov were trying to persuade a group of young people not to travel to the southern city of Osh, where at least 37 people were killed in clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbek youths. Several of the group's members then tried to assault the two men. An RFE/RL correspondent who was at the scene reports that security guards and police managed to protect the two officials and helped them to escape into the parliament building. The group of young Kyrgyz men was demanding that the interim government provide them with a bus to travel to Osh. RFE/RL correspondents report that young Kyrgyz from different parts of the country are trying to reach Osh, while the interim government is trying to prevent what leader Roza Otunbaeva called "the flow of people" from reaching the city. (RFE/RL)

UZBEKISTAN CLOSES BORDER WITH KYRGYZSTAN STOPPING THE REFUGEE FLOW

15 June

Uzbekistan on Tuesday stopped the reception of refugees from the south of Kyrgyzstan – ethnic Uzbeks who are fleeing for safety fearing violence. The Uzbekistani authorities have already registered 45,000 refugees (only adults, as there are no exact data on children). "We have no place for them anymore," local media quoted Vice Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov as saying. According to him, Uzbekistan in connection with the inflow of refugees needs help from international organisations. The Kyrgyz-Uzbek border was opened for refugees on June 12. Camps for their temporary accommodation were organised in Uzbekistan. They are supplied with food products,

and medical aid is provided. According to Uzbekistan's Health Minister Adkham Ikramov, the number of wounded and ill refugees from Kyrgyzstan in medical establishments of the Andijan region of the republic has reached 735 people, 134 of them have gunshot wounds. Ikramov also said that 77 female refugees have been taken to a maternity hospital and seven of them have given birth to children. The 2010 south Kyrgyzstan riots are ongoing clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan, primarily in the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad, in the aftermath of the ouster of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Escalating from protests that began as early as April, violence broke out on 9 June in Osh with the majority Kyrgyz rioting through the streets attacking minority Uzbeks and burning property. By 12 June the violence had spread to Jalal-Abad, requiring the Russian-endorsed interim government led by Roza Otunbayeva to declare a state of emergency in an attempt to take control of the situation. So far it is reported that 170 people have been killed, over 1,700 injured and 100,000 displaced, of which at least 45,000 have fled into neighbouring Uzbekistan. (Itar-Tass)

KAZAKH-CHINESE ENERGY TIES DEEPEN

15 June

China and Kazakhstan have reached agreement to build and finance jointly a natural gas pipeline and strengthen atomic energy cooperation. The agreements were reached during a 1-day visit Saturday to Kazakhstan by Chinese President Hu Jintao, his second this year, RTTNews reported Tuesday. Kazakhstan's KazMunaiGas natural gas company and the China National Petroleum Corporation will construct a 870-mile natural gas pipeline spur across Kazakhstan to link with an existing pipeline already running between China and Central Asia, with the two nations equally sharing the spur's \$3.5 billion construction cost. A second agreement, the specifics of which weren't released, provides for the state-run Kazakh

Kazatomprom nuclear firm to supply uranium to China Guangdong Nuclear Power Corporation. Last December, Kazatomprom announced it passed Canada and Australia to become the world's largest miner of uranium in the world, increasing its 2009 output by 63 percent to 13,900 tons, roughly 30 percent of the world's output, with a projected 2010 output of 18,000 tons. (UPI)

TAJIKISTAN ASKS KYRGYZ OFFICIALS TO EXPLAIN 'TAJIK INVOLVEMENT' IN UNREST

17 June

Tajikistan's National Security Committee has sent a letter to the Kyrgyz interim government asking it to explain media reports that say Tajik citizens are involved in the violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports. Tajikistan's parliament tasked the country's National Security Committee with sending the letter.

Kubat Baibolov, Kyrgyzstan's deputy security minister and the commandant of the southern city of Jalal-Abad, was quoted by Russia's ITAR-TASS as saying the conflict between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Jalal-Abad and Osh was ignited by a group of Tajiks hired by relatives of ousted President Kurmanbek Bakiev who killed Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in order to provoke the ethnic unrest. But Baibolov told RFE/RL in an interview on June 16 that the ITAR-TASS report is untrue. He said despite some information that citizens of a third country had operated among the gangs that attacked Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, there is no evidence about their nationality. He added that he never said they were Tajiks. Similar to the ITAR-TASS report, Ekho Moskv radio station correspondent Arkady Dubnov reported on June 15 that some former fighters from the 1992-97 Tajik civil war were hired through the Tajik Embassy in Moscow to destabilize the situation in Kyrgyzstan. The Tajik Foreign Ministry issued a statement on June 15 calling the reports about the participation of Tajik citizens in the unrest "baseless," adding that "the people who are involved in these inhuman activities in Osh and Jalal-Abad have no nationality and country of origin." The ministry expressed the hope that Kyrgyz authorities will reject such "unfriendly" statements. (RFE/RL)

U.N.: KYRGYZ REFUGEE COUNT AT 400,000

17 June

A U.N. agency says the Kyrgyz-Uzbek ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan have driven some 400,000

people from their homes, far more than earlier estimates. Quoting governmental and non-governmental organization figures, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said about 300,000 of the refugees fleeing the weeklong clashes in the southern part of the Central Asian nation have been displaced internally, while an estimated 100,000 more have sought refuge in neighboring Uzbekistan. The UNHCR said in a news release Kyrgyz authorities are seeking to restore law and order. The clashes so far have claimed the lives of 180 people and another 1,900 have been injured. The unrest comes after the violent uprising in April that saw the ouster of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. "The situation in Osh and nearby villages appears to be volatile," the agency said, noting many families have left Osh, the country's second largest city, for Bishkek, the capital. The U.N. agency planned to airlift about 80 tons of relief material from Dubai this weekend to aid the refugees. Aid to those in Uzbekistan has already begun. The Washington Post reported the latest U.N. figures, which doubled the previous refugee estimates, come as the Kyrgyz military appeared to face difficulty in restoring order in a region with a population of more than 2 million, even as conditions appeared to be improving. Aid workers distributing food faced sporadic gunfire. The Post said the Uzbeks are particularly critical of the army and police, who are mostly Kyrgyz, accusing them giving free rein to Kyrgyz mobs. The report quoted a Human Rights Watch researcher as saying testimony he has collected thus far indicated Kyrgyz troops at the minimum ignored the attacks on Uzbek neighborhoods. (UPI)

RUSSIAN-LED SECURITY GROUP SAYS NO PEACEKEEPERS IN KYRGYZSTAN

17 June

Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) says it will not deploy peacekeepers to Kyrgyzstan but may send security "specialists." CSTO Secretary-General Nikolai Bordyuzha provided no further details about what he called security "specialists" but suggested they could be used to track down those behind the five days of clashes between majority Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks that has killed a confirmed 191 people and injured many hundreds of others. Kyrgyzstan's interim leader, Roza Otunbaeva, appealed last week to Russia for military assistance to bring the ethnic fighting in the south of the country under control.

The CSTO's members are Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. (RFE/RL)

TURKMENISTAN, CHINA AGREE ON BUILDING SECOND SEGMENT OF GAS PIPELINE

18 June

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow and He Guoqiang, a member of the Chinese Communist Party's Politburo Standing Committee and head of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, have coordinated terms of the construction of the second segment of a transboundary gas pipeline. The gas pipeline between Turkmenistan and China was commissioned in December 2009, and Ashgabat pledged deliveries of up to 40 billion cubic meters of gas to China in the next 30 years. The delivery of six billion cubic meters is planned for this year. (Itar-Tass)

RUSSIA, KAZAKHSTAN NEAR NUCLEAR DEALS

19 June

The head of Russia's atomic energy company said Saturday Russia is close to signing nuclear cooperation agreements with Kazakhstan. "A wide range of documents are on the deciding stage and the 'last leg' of these documents will be finished in a short period of time," Sergei Kiriyyenko, head of Rosatom, said while at the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg. Kiriyyenko was not specific about documents were being finalized, RIA Novosti reported, but he said the areas in which Russia and Kazakhstan are cooperating include the construction of a nuclear power plant and the development of uranium mining. Kiriyyenko was in Kazakhstan Thursday where he discussed the two nations' cooperation in the nuclear sphere. (UPI)

UN OFFICIAL DEPLORES RIGHTS ABUSES IN ARMENIA

19 June

A senior United Nations official accused Armenian authorities of restricting civil liberties and banning dissenting viewpoints from the airwaves as she ended a fact-finding visit to Yerevan on June 18, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. Margaret Sekaggya, the special UN rapporteur on human rights defenders, met senior government and law-

enforcement officials, judges, lawmakers, as well as opposition leaders and civil society representatives during the five-day trip. Speaking at a news conference at the conclusion of her trip, Sekaggya expressed concern about Armenia's human rights record and, in particular, "significant constraints imposed on the exercise of freedom of peaceful assembly in Armenia." Sekaggya went on to deplore periodical physical attacks on journalists and rights activists. "These cases would seem to illustrate an apparent culture of impunity in Armenia which impinges upon the work of human rights defenders," she said. Sekaggya's meetings with opposition representatives in Yerevan focused on the fate of more than a dozen members and supporters of the opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK), who were arrested after the 2008 presidential election and remain in prison. She was careful not to describe the jailed oppositionists as political prisoners. She emphasized to Armenian officials the need for "prompt and transparent investigations" into deadly street violence that was sparked by the 2008 presidential election. Sekaggya further endorsed strong domestic and international criticism of newly enacted amendments to a law on broadcasting. "I would like to add my voice to those who have already expressed serious concerns about the amendments to the Law on Television and Radio," she said. Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian and his loyal parliamentary majority pushed the amendments through the National Assembly last week despite serious objections voiced not only by local media groups but also by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United States, and Human Rights Watch. (RFE/RL)

FIVE TROOPS KILLED IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH CLASH

19 June

Armenia's Defense Ministry says four Armenian soldiers have been killed in fighting in Azerbaijan's breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The ministry said in a statement that the deaths were the "result of fighting with an Azerbaijani armed reconnaissance group." Reports say one Azerbaijani soldier was later found dead on the battlefield. Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian blamed Baku for the overnight action in Nagorno-Karabakh's Martakert region, calling it "a pre-planned action" intended to scuttle peace negotiations. Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry spokesman Elkhan Polukhov, responding to

Nalbandian's statement said, "It was not within the authority of Mr. Nalbandian to comment on matters, the cause of which lies in the continuing occupation of Azerbaijani lands." The fighting follows a meeting between the presidents of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan that took place in St. Petersburg on June 17 on the sidelines of a major economic forum hosted by the Russian city. (RFE/RL)

NEW VIOLENCE ERUPTS IN KYRGYZSTAN **21 June**

New violence in southern Kyrgyzstan left two dead and dozens injured as Kyrgyz armed forces swept through an Uzbek neighborhood, observers said. The bloodshed came a day after Kyrgyz soldiers tore down barricades erected by minority Uzbeks in the ethnically divided southern city of Osh, The New York Times reported Monday. Witnesses say residents of a neighborhood near the border with Uzbekistan were beaten by police demanding information about the assassination of Osh's police chief, the newspaper reported. Authorities said the violence began when someone allegedly opened fire on the troops from within the neighborhood. "The special forces returned fire," a press spokesman said. "This caused the death of one person. There was further resistance and several more shots were exchanged. As a result of this a second person died on the way to the hospital." Residents said the removal of the barricades had left them unprotected from attacks by Kyrgyz mobs. Uzbeks said the Kyrgyz military and police were still maintaining checkpoints in Uzbek neighborhoods around Osh, and that they were being regularly harassed, the Times reported. (UPI)

IRAN WANTS BETTER CASPIAN OIL DEALS **21 June**

Tehran is working to negotiate for better terms for oil swap deals after four measures with Caspian producers weren't renewed, officials said in Iran. Iranian Deputy Oil Minister Hossein Noghrehkar Shirazi said Tehran needed to preserve Iranian national interests when pursuing oil swap deals with producers operating in the Caspian Sea, the semi-official Mehr News Agency reports. His statements come as oil swap deals with Select Energy Trading, Dragon Oil, Vitol and Caspian Oil Development weren't renewed. Swiss oil trading giant Vitol announced in March that it would stop dealing with Iran, presumably because of U.S. pressure over Iran's controversial nuclear activity.

Shirazi added "negotiations are under way to calculate a real formula and fee for oil swaps." Tehran has oil swap deals with its Caspian neighbors Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. "In oil swaps, national interests must be protected," the deputy minister added. (UPI)

KAZAKHSTAN PREPARES FOR MAJOR PRIVATIZATIONS

21 June

Kazakhstan is ready to cut stakes in key companies to modernise the economy, and is looking to sell banks and energy assets in the next five years, the head of the sovereign wealth fund Samruk-Kazyna said. "We are in discussions. A political decision is pending. For many large companies linked to Samruk-Kazyna there is talk of IPOs within 3-5 years," Kairat Kelimbetov, chairman of the fund, whose holdings exceed \$70 billion (47.2 billion pounds), told Reuters in interview. He singled out KazMunaiGas and its subsidiaries as possible privatisation targets, and said the fund was in talks with Russia's BP venture, TNK-BP, regarding a stake in Kazakhstan's largest oil refinery, Pavlodar. Major banks, in which Samruk-Kazyna received stakes in exchange for supporting the battered sector during the recession, are also on the list. These include Kazkommertsbank, Alliance, Halyk and BTA. Talks over the sale of BTA to Russia's biggest lender Sberbank could start after September 5, Kelimbetov said, with the acquisition potentially progressing gradually from a 10 percent holding to the fund's whole stake. (Reuters)

UZBEK REFUGEES HEAD BACK TO KYRGYZSTAN

22 June

Ethnic Uzbeks started leaving refugee camps in Uzbekistan for the restive southern regions of neighboring Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyz officials said. Bektur Asanov, the governor of the southern Kyrgyz city of Jalal-Abad, told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that more than 1,000 ethnic Uzbek refugees have left their camps Tuesday for Kyrgyzstan. Border guards in Kyrgyzstan said more than 35,000 Uzbeks have crossed the border on their way home to Kyrgyzstan. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks has displaced 300,000 people within Kyrgyzstan and forced 100,000 others to flee the country. Interim President Roza Otunbayeva visited the south of the country amid heavy security

last week promising to work hard so people can return home. Otunbayeva took power when an April coup deposed Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. The interim government said there was a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest of Bakiyev and other top government officials. His son, Maksim, was arrested last week on charges he was inciting ethnic clashes in the Kyrgyz south in an effort to return his father to power. At least 250 people have died in ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan. (UPI)

ARMENIAN, AZERBAIJANI CLASHES CONTINUE IN KARABAKH

22 June

Nagorno-Karabakh -- Intense skirmishes between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces around the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh continued on June 21, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. News reports said an Azerbaijani soldier was shot dead early today in what the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said was an Armenian attack on Azerbaijani Army positions in the Fizuli district southeast of Nagorno-Karabakh. "The Armenians retreated, suffering losses," the Azeri-Press Agency said, citing the ministry. Karabakh Armenian military officials insisted their forces suffered no fresh casualties on June 21, in the worst Armenian-Azerbaijani cease-fire violations in over two years. The latest outbreak of violence began late last week. Four Armenian soldiers and one Azerbaijani soldier were killed in what authorities in Stepanakert and Yerevan described as an overnight Azerbaijani assault on a Karabakh Armenian army outpost in the northeastern part of the breakaway Azerbaijani region on the night of June 18-19. Exchanges of automatic and sniper gunfire along the main Armenian-Azerbaijani Line of Contact -- east and north of the disputed region -- appear to have intensified since then. The Defense Army of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) claimed on June 21 that Azerbaijani troops breached the cease-fire regime as many as 284 times since June 20. An army spokesman told RFE/RL that none of its soldiers was hurt as a result of the violations. The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry claimed, however, it was the Armenians who fired at its forces using automatic rifles and machine guns in various sections of the heavily fortified frontline. The Karabakh military has also identified the four Armenian conscripts who were killed on the night of June 18-19. The incident occurred just over a day after the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met

in St. Petersburg for peace talks hosted by their Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev. (RFE/RL)

PAKISTANI TALIBAN WARNS DRIVERS AGAINST CARRYING NATO SUPPLIES

23 June

Taliban in Pakistan's Khyber tribal agency have warned truck drivers against carrying supplies for the U.S.-led NATO forces in Afghanistan, RFE/RL's Radio Mashaal reports. The warnings were contained in posters stuck on the walls of several markets late on June 21. The markets are located on the road passing through the Khyber tribal agency to Afghanistan. The posters warn drivers and truck owners not to ship oil, food, or military materiel to the "foreign troops," locals said. "Truck and tanker drivers or people carrying goods and fuel for NATO forces in Afghanistan or those guarding the freight terminals meant for NATO goods will be targeted," they read. Truck drivers told Radio Mashaal they feel vulnerable after the latest Taliban warning. They said the government should adopt measures to improve security along the road. "The government should deploy troops to ensure our security," one driver who did not want to be identified for security reasons told Radio Mashaal. "[This] trouble is existing on the road. Even yesterday a bomb was planted on a fuel tanker there. [Earlier], a Punjabi was hit with a bullet while sitting atop a fuel tanker and died." The posters carried a warning from Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, an umbrella group including several banned militant groups based in the lawless Pakistani tribal region. Khyber is one of the seven tribal agencies next to Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. It was converted into a safe haven by the Pakistani Taliban and Al-Qaeda elements following the overthrow of the hard-line Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001. The 40-kilometer zigzag transit route, known as the Khyber Pass, crosses through the Khyber agency and is the most utilized route to transport NATO's civilian and military goods to Afghanistan. Taliban fighters usually attack the convoys, mostly fuel tankers, traveling on the road. In one such attack, on November 10, 2008, the Taliban attacked a convoy and seized 12 trucks full of food in addition to two armored vehicles. In another 2008 attack, more than 100 military vehicles destined for NATO forces in Afghanistan were burned when militants attacked a freight terminal in the city of Peshawar near the Khyber agency. (RFE/RL)

GEORGIA'S REBEL REGION PULLS OUT OF SECURITY TALKS

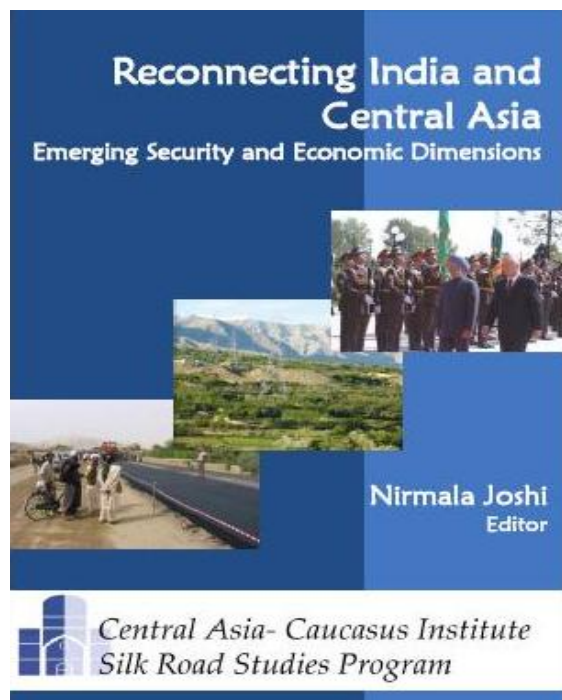
23 June

Georgia's breakaway Abkhazia region said on Wednesday it had withdrawn temporarily from security talks with Tbilisi, saying the negotiations were not producing results and that Western mediators were prejudiced. Georgia has held talks in Geneva with its breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia since Russia recognised both as independent after its war with Georgia in 2008, aiming to prevent armed clashes along the regions' boundaries.

All three sides have complained of slow progress in the talks, which are co-chaired by the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union. "The Republic of Abkhazia has informed the office of the secretariat overseeing the five-party talks ... that it is temporarily withdrawing from future discussions because the sessions have not produced tangible progress," Nadir Bitiyev, the Abkhaz leader's senior aide, said in a statement. "We regret having to make this decision ... We have done so because co-moderators have consistently failed to facilitate the talks in a constructive and impartial manner." Georgian officials said they had not been

officially informed about the decision of the Abkhaz side, but said such a move was unlikely to be taken without Moscow's approval. "We consider the Geneva talks as an important mechanism, despite many problems," Giga Bokeria, the head of the Georgian delegation, told Reuters. "We are interested in the continuation of this process." "Such an important decision (about withdrawal from talks), if confirmed, could be only made in Moscow," said Bokeria, who is Georgia's first deputy foreign minister. In a five-day war in August 2008, Russia crushed a Georgian assault on South Ossetia launched after days of clashes between Georgian and rebel forces and years of growing tensions between Moscow and U.S.-ally Tbilisi. Russian security forces control the de facto borders of both regions, which are dependent on Moscow for state aid and trade. A majority of their people hold Russian passports.

The latest round of the talks on June 8 brought no result as parties failed to compromise on a document on the non-use of force. Delegations of the rebel regions walked out of the negotiating room, saying their opinions had been ignored. The next round of the talks, which are aimed at reducing violent clashes and detentions along the regions' boundaries, is scheduled for July 27. (Reuters)



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