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## Domestic Developments in Kyrgyzstan

### *Introduction*

After the “Tulip Revolution” of March 2005, the president of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akaev, and his closest associates escaped the country and found refuge abroad.<sup>1</sup> Power was assumed by the People’s Movement of Kyrgyzstan, with Kurmanbek Bakiev at the helm. The new ruling elite decided to maintain legal continuity of state power, so the state structure remained unreformed. President Akaev was forced to tender his resignation in Moscow; the newly elected President Bakiev kept the political regime de facto unreformed, continuing with neo-patrimonial rule based on nepotism, corruption, and repression.

The events of 6 and 7 April 2010 fatally undermined Bakiev’s political regime, which still seemed to be sufficiently stable and powerful on 5 April. People who were part of the regime were forced to leave the country. On 8 April, an interim government was established.

During 2011, under the leadership of the interim government, the state was re-established on the basis of a new constitution and power was transferred to newly established constitutional institutions: Parliamentary elections were held in October 2010, presidential elections in October 2011, and the formation of a new government ended the transitional period in December 2011. In this way, the transitional period reshaped state institutions and shifted the country from a presidential to a parliamentary-presidential form of government.

This paper will analyse the political process in Kyrgyzstan during the transitional period that began in October 2010 and ended in December 2011. The analysis is focused on the reshaping of state institutions during the transitional period after the collapse of the regime and the period of instability in 2010.

The analysis will go on to ask questions such as these: What are the factors that help prevent the collapse of the state? What is the current condition of the state (weaknesses, strengths, risks)? What are the future perspectives, especially with regard to stability and security?

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1 Cf. Sally N. Cummings (ed.), Domestic and International Perspectives on Kyrgyzstan's “Tulip Revolution”: Motives, Mobilization and Meanings, special issue of *Central Asian Survey* 3-4/2008, at: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~db=all~content=g906687638~tab=toc>.

*Political Events from October 2010 to December 2011*

On 7 April, almost 100 people were killed in clashes with police.<sup>2</sup> Three hundred people who started the protest on the morning of 7 April were joined by several thousand more after police started to shoot civilians. By the evening of 7 April, Bakiev's regime had unexpectedly collapsed, plunging the country into a period of chaos and turmoil.

Taking experience of the previous regime change in 2005 into account, opposition leaders decided to break the legal continuity of power, dissolving parliament, the constitutional court, and the government and forming a new unconstitutional ruling entity – the interim government. Because the state lost its monopoly of violence (twice in five years), organized crime and various interest groups took advantage of the state's weakness and began to mobilize for not just economic but also political goals. The Bakiev brothers and their supporters threatened the newly established interim government with acts of revenge to destabilize the situation in the southern part of the country. Clashes also took place around Bishkek between internal migrants seizing land for housing, and local suburban inhabitants. Latent local conflicts in Chui oblast and the Ferghana Valley started to escalate and culminated in ethnic clashes in the southern cities of Osh and Jalalabad on 11-14 June, which caused 442 deaths.<sup>3</sup> During this period of chaos there was no constitutional power, and the only ruling entity was the unconstitutional interim government. The state-building process that began in 1991 was both practically and legally aborted.

On 27 June 2010, the interim government organized a popular referendum on two questions: the first regarding a new constitution, the second on the presidency of Roza Otunbaeva during the interim period up until 31 December 2011. One of the conditions of her presidency during the transitional period was her commitment to fair elections without any intervention by administrative forces.<sup>4</sup>

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2 According to official sources, 86 people were killed and several hundred injured. Cf. Parliament ustanovil 7 aprelya Dnem aprel'skoj narodnoj revolyutsii [Parliament designates 7 April day of people's April revolution], *K-News*, 17 November 2011, at: [http://www.knews.kg/ru/parlament\\_chro/6263](http://www.knews.kg/ru/parlament_chro/6263).

3 Cf. Cholpon Sulaimanova, *Nurlanbek Zheenaliev: V Kyrgyzstane vo vremya iyun'skikh sobytii 2010 goda postradalo 6 tysyach 352 cheloveka* [Nurlanbek Zheenaliev: 6,352 people suffered in the June 2010 events in Kyrgyzstan], *Kabar*, Bishkek, 28 February 2012, at: <http://pda.kabar.kg/rus/law-and-order/full/28508?all>.

4 Cf. Temir Sariev: *Pravila igry b Kyrgyzstane uzhe ob'yavleny, i my dolzhny ychit'cya po nim igrat', esli khotim zhit' v tsivilizovannom gosudarstve* [Temir Sariev: The Rules of the game in Kyrgyzstan are already announced and we have to learn to play according to them if we want to live in civilized state], in: *Ata Meken internet gazeta*, 10 August 2010, at: [http://atamekenkg.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=6608:2010-08-10-06-24-35&catid=99:politic&Itemid=29](http://atamekenkg.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6608:2010-08-10-06-24-35&catid=99:politic&Itemid=29).

More than 90 per cent of voters supported a new constitution and the interim presidency of Roza Otunbaeva.<sup>5</sup> The new constitution came into force on 2 July 2010. In this way, Kyrgyzstan gained a new constitution and legally entered an interim period which lasted for one year and eight months until 31 December 2011.

The new constitution gave more power to parliament (*Jogorku Kenesh*), which is elected by means of a proportional party list system. The government is constituted by political parties which form a majority coalition in parliament. The government is accountable to the *Jogorku Kenesh* (Article 85). The president can dissolve parliament only in cases where political parties were unable to form a government three times in succession (Article 84). Experts therefore regard the new political system in Kyrgyzstan as a parliamentary-presidential system.

On 2 July, the constitutional law “On elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and deputies of the *Jogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic” was adopted. On 9 August, the interim president abrogated the curfew in the Osh and Jalalabad oblasts (introduced during the June events), and on 10 August she signed a decree to schedule parliamentary elections for 10 October 2010. 29 political parties participated in the elections. All party lists complied with the gender and national-minority requirements: 33.5 per cent women and 15 per cent national minority candidates.<sup>6</sup> The election result surprisingly gave *Ata-Jurt*, headed by former officials of ousted president Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s government, 266,923 votes or 8.89 per cent. Four other parties entered parliament: the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) with 8.04 per cent, *Ar-Namys* with 7.74 per cent, *Respublika* with 7.24 per cent, and *Ata-Meken* with 5.6 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Although some political parties came very close to entering parliament (*Butun Kyrgyzstan*, for example), they failed to achieve all the requirements.<sup>8</sup> Their low-level, passive protests did not last for long. Moreover, the elections were recognized as transparent

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5 Cf. Central Election Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic, at: [http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/index.php?module=content&page=Postanovlenie\\_Centralnoy\\_komissii\\_po\\_vyboram\\_i\\_provedeniyu\\_referendumov\\_Kyrgyzskoy\\_Respubliki\\_O\\_rezultatah\\_referenduma\\_vsenarodnogo\\_golosovaniya\\_Kyrgyzskoy\\_Respubliki\\_27\\_iyunya\\_2010\\_goda\\_\\_Postanovlenie\\_Centralnoy\\_komissii\\_po\\_vyboram\\_i\\_provedeniyu\\_referendumov\\_Kyrgyzskoy\\_Respubliki\\_O\\_rezultatah\\_referenduma\\_vsenarodnogo\\_golosovaniya\\_Kyrgyzskoy\\_Respubliki\\_27\\_iyunya\\_2010\\_goda&pagelang=ru](http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/index.php?module=content&page=Postanovlenie_Centralnoy_komissii_po_vyboram_i_provedeniyu_referendumov_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_O_rezultatah_referenduma_vsenarodnogo_golosovaniya_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_27_iyunya_2010_goda__Postanovlenie_Centralnoy_komissii_po_vyboram_i_provedeniyu_referendumov_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_O_rezultatah_referenduma_vsenarodnogo_golosovaniya_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_27_iyunya_2010_goda&pagelang=ru).

6 Cf. Constitutional Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and deputies of the *Jogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic”, Chapter 11, Article 60.

7 Cf. Central Election Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, at: [http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/index.php?module=content&page=O\\_rezultatah\\_vyborov\\_deputatov\\_Jogorku\\_Kenasha\\_Kyrgyzskoy\\_Respubliki\\_10\\_oktyabrya\\_2010\\_goda\\_&pagelang=ru](http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/index.php?module=content&page=O_rezultatah_vyborov_deputatov_Jogorku_Kenasha_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_10_oktyabrya_2010_goda_&pagelang=ru). The figures given here correspond to the number of positive votes as a proportion of registered voters, not as a proportion of votes cast.

8 According to the constitution, parties are required to pass the five per cent threshold and win 0.5 per cent of the vote in all nine oblasts, cf. Constitutional Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and deputies of the *Jogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic”, Chapter 11, Article 64.

and fair by international and local observers.<sup>9</sup> In this way, the first political institution was re-established after the collapse of Bakiev's regime. Now the question was about relations between parliamentary parties and their ability to compromise on the issue of coalitions.

The SDPK is one of the oldest and biggest political parties and has supporters in all oblasts of the country. *Ata-Meken* is a socialist party, which has international support from their ideological comrades. *Ar-Namys* is also one of the most experienced political actors; it defends the interests of ethnic minorities and its political orientation is towards the Russian Federation and Putin-style "managed democracy". The two youngest political parties are *Respublika* and *Ata-Jurt*. Both were founded shortly before the elections. *Respublika* is a liberal party which consists mainly of the new business elite. *Ata-Jurt* consists of strong southern leaders who did not welcome the events of 7 April and the post-revolutionary reforms. It has received strong support in southern oblasts because of dissatisfaction among the southern population with the interim government's policy, which they believe caused the events of June 2010. *Ata-Jurt* is regarded by some observers as a nationalist party.

These political parties can be differentiated by their ideological labels. This, however, does not explain much about their platforms and political positions. Some observers believe political parties in Kyrgyzstan can be categorized according to their regional affiliation; however, this is only partly true, because all political parties have some support in each oblast of the Kyrgyz Republic, which means that this aspect is not particularly helpful in understanding the logic of their political interplay. The most important factor during the interim period and also in the current political context is the attitude towards ongoing political reforms in Kyrgyzstan: While the SDPK, *Ata-Meken*, and *Respublika* are ardent defenders of the parliamentary form of government and engines of the current political reforms, *Ar-Namys* and *Ata-Jurt* are advocates of a presidential form of government who explicitly declare that they want to reverse the reforms. Thus, parliamentary political parties can be categorized into two camps: reformists and conservatives.

The new *Jogorku Kenesh* commenced its sessions on 10 November 2010. The first attempt to form a coalition was made by the SDPK, *Respublika*, and *Ata-Meken*. SDPK leader Almazbek Atambaev – who also served as deputy to Roza Otunbaeva in the interim government – was proposed as prime minister. *Respublika's* leader Omurbek Babanov was suggested for the position of deputy prime minister. *Ata-Meken* leader Omurbek Tekebaev was supposed to become the speaker of parliament. The first parliamentary coalition in the history of Kyrgyzstan would be formed on the basis of political loyalty to parliamentarism and reform. The two conservative parties would remain outside the coalition. The logic behind this lay in

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9 Cf. Dil'begim Mavlonii, Vybory v Kyrgyzstane okazalis' svobodnymi i nepredskazyemymi [Elections in Kyrgyzstan were free and unpredictable], *Radio Azattyk*, 13 October 2010, at: [http://rus.azattyq.org/content/Kyrgyzstan\\_parliament\\_/2188322.html](http://rus.azattyq.org/content/Kyrgyzstan_parliament_/2188322.html).

the plans of reformists to implement fast and efficient reforms. A coalition of reformists could promote reform initiatives, while the presence of conservatives was seen as an obstacle to reforms.

However, this attempt was not successful because a majority of MPs did not support the candidature of Tekebaev as speaker of the *Jogorku Kenesh*. A second attempt was made under the *Respublika* party's leadership with the support of the SDPK and *Ata-Jurt*. In contrast to the earlier attempt, the current coalition was formed by reformists but also included a conservative party. That can be explained by the risk of parliament being dissolved in the event of three unsuccessful attempts to form a coalition.<sup>10</sup> A lengthy period without a functioning parliament, followed eventually by new elections in the context of instability, risked promoting further escalations. So the willingness of opposing parties to compromise could be explained first of all by their rational calculations regarding their self-preservation not only as MPs, but also as citizens of Kyrgyz Republic. This accommodating behaviour permitted MPs to share the governmental posts. According to the coalition agreement, the SDPK leader Almazbek Atambaev was elected prime minister; the *Ata-Jurt* MP Akhmatbek Keldibekov became parliamentary speaker; and *Respublika*'s leader Omurbek Babanov was allocated the post of deputy prime minister. Other government posts were shared between parties of the ruling coalition. Thus, at its second attempt, the parliamentary coalition and its government were constituted by parties that have not only different ideological backgrounds, but also contradictory immediate political goals. Nevertheless, Kyrgyzstan finally had a legitimate parliament and government, which, despite many forecasts of impending collapse, lasted for almost a year until the presidential elections in November 2011.

During this year, the coalition government headed by Atambaev made a start with economic and social reforms: Legislation on business was eased, leaders of organized crime groups were imprisoned, social workers' salaries were increased, and anti-corruption trials became regular. These steps generated positive public opinion about the new government and about ongoing changes in general. On the other hand, there were also important problems that still created an atmosphere of instability in the country. For example, the government did not have de facto power over the whole state territory.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the political situation in the country was aggravated by consequences of the Osh clashes in 2010 such as the urgent need for housing and official buildings that had been destroyed to be rebuilt, legal proceedings against participants in violence, and recurring violations of human rights. Various political scandals also worsened the overall situation, the most acute

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10 Cf. Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, Article 84, 1-4, at: <http://www.legislationline.org> (unofficial translation by EU-UNDP Project on Support to the Constitutional and Parliamentary Reforms and OSCE/ODIHR).

11 For example: Osh city mayor Melis Myrzakmatov officially recognized the authority of the new coalition but did not move quickly to implement those of its decisions that he believed might be against the city's interests.

being when leaders of the interim government were blamed for the events in Osh in 2010.

The presidential campaign started on 25 September 2011. According to the new constitution, the president appoints the heads of security forces and the prosecutor general, and dismisses parliament if there have been three unsuccessful attempts to form a coalition. Although the functions of the president have been considerably reduced, this post still remains attractive to those who seek political power. As a result, there were 86 applications, though only 16 of these candidates were admitted to the elections. The most prominent candidates were the incumbent prime minister, Almazbek Atambaev, *Ata-Jurt* MP Kamchybek Tashiev, and Adakhan Madumarov, the leader of the extra-parliamentary opposition party *Butun Kyrgyzstan*. Once again, the candidates in the election campaign were divided between two camps: reformists and conservatives. The first-named was reformist, and the last two were conservative.

On 12 November 2011, the Central Election Commission announced that Almazbek Atambaev was the winner of the elections with 62.52 per cent of the votes. His major opponents Adakhan Madumarov and Kamchybek Tashiev received 14.78 per cent and 14.32 percent, respectively.<sup>12</sup> They protested about the election results, making accusations of vote-rigging and the misuse of state resources. However, international and local observers recognized the elections as fair and transparent for the second time in the history of Kyrgyzstan. Consequently, the protests did not last long.

After being elected president, Atambaev resigned from his post of prime minister of the collapsing parliamentary coalition. The new coalition was formed by four parties: Atambaev's SDPK, *Respublika*, *Ata-Meken*, and *Ar-Namyz* (which joined the reformist camp after several internal conflicts). *Ata-Jurt*, now the only conservative party in the parliament, remained in opposition. Once again, government posts were shared between coalition parties, with the post of prime minister being retained by ex-deputy prime minister Omurbek Babanov. Atambaev was inaugurated as President of the Kyrgyz Republic on 1 December 2011, thus establishing the last missing constitutional institution and ending the interim period. Finally, Kyrgyzstan's state was de jure fully re-established after a period of political turmoil.

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12 Cf. Central Election Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic, at: [http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/index.php?module=content&page=Ob\\_opredelenii\\_rezultatov\\_vyborov\\_Prezidenta\\_Kyrgyzskoy\\_Respubliki\\_30\\_oktyabrya\\_2011\\_goda\\_2011jyldyn\\_30oktyabrynda\\_Kyrgyz\\_Respublikasynyn\\_Prezidentin\\_shayloonun\\_jyyntyktaryn\\_anyktoo\\_jonyndo&pagelang=ru](http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/index.php?module=content&page=Ob_opredelenii_rezultatov_vyborov_Prezidenta_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_30_oktyabrya_2011_goda_2011jyldyn_30oktyabrynda_Kyrgyz_Respublikasynyn_Prezidentin_shayloonun_jyyntyktaryn_anyktoo_jonyndo&pagelang=ru).

### *The Reshaping of State Institutions*

Why did the state not collapse? How and why could the new Kyrgyz elite manage to restore state institutions? There are several factors that should be discussed in answering these questions.

First of all, the role played by patronage networks in the revolution of 2010 was insignificant compared to 2005. The participants in the events of 2010 were mainly an unstructured mass of people who mostly gathered spontaneously after the killing of civilians. In 2005, patronage networks mobilized their resources at local level during parliamentary elections in January 2005 and then united under the common goal to overthrow Akaev. During three months of protests, patronage networks associated with political parties while civil-society organizations occupied various state institutions and administrative territorial units, reducing the area controlled by Akaev's regime to Bishkek. For example, the Jalalabad oblast quickly came under the control of Bakiev's family. Other patronage networks that were mobilized in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan united around Bakiev himself, making him the most prominent political leader. Thus, Bakiev came to power not alone, but with his family and the patrons who helped him to attain power and who were now waiting for their stakeholding in the state. As a hostage of patronage networks, he had to share power with patrons who had already held posts in state institutions or were waiting for an appointment. Thus, right from the start, Bakiev became a hostage of a system that was preparing him for the same fate that had befallen the previous president.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to 2005 when the uprising continued for three months, mobilizing patronage networks at local level through various formal and informal institutions, the events in 2010 endured for only two days, beginning in Talas city and ending the next day in Bishkek. Patronage networks were not so active. Mass mobilization was organized by opposition political parties, who were later spontaneously joined by masses of people mobilized via reports spread on the internet, text messages, and mobile phone of clashes with police and the killing of civilians.<sup>14</sup> In this way, a new elite came to power not as a result of patronage networks but due mainly to the relatively spontaneous mobilization of masses of people. Most of these people did not try to capture state institutions and did not demand appointments. However, a special Ministry for Youth Affairs was created for those who were demanding posts, and they were allocated positions in this new institution. The new rulers were thus relatively free from the influence of local and regional-level patronage networks and their corrupt practices. In order to secure this position, they dissolved all existing governmental institutions and formed an interim government, which took on the responsibility of adopting a new consti-

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13 Cf. Cummings, cited above (Note 1).

14 Cf. Azamat Temirkulov, Kyrgyz "revolutions" in 2005 and 2010: comparative analysis of mass mobilization, in: *Nationalities Papers* 5/2010, pp. 589-600.

tution and reshaping the state. The interim government suspended the legal framework and usurped all political power in the country for several months. That made it possible to implement constitutional reforms without taking the positions and interests of corrupt patrons into account. Hence, the new parliamentary-presidential constitution was virtually imposed by the interim government.

Secondly, after the collapse of the regime with 86 deaths, nights of looting in Bishkek, clashes between suburban dwellers and internal migrants over land seizure, another attempt to seize power, escalations of ethnic conflicts with 442 deaths, and other manifestations of chaos, the country's population was even more scared than it was fatigued. The people were not passive, however. Based on the previous experience of regime collapse in 2005 in cities and villages, volunteers were recruited into volunteer security brigades, which proved to be surprisingly well-organized and disciplined. They used a range of transport and technologies such as mobile phones, the internet, and radio communications effectively. People of all ages, ethnicities, and genders served in these units, which were later formalized and still exist today. They worked in very close co-operation with the police forces. Those who did not participate in the brigades were highly active in reporting various incidences of violence or looting. This situation continued for several months, making the people long for stability and order.

This mood was caught by the interim government which, a little more than two months after 7 April and not quite a month after the Osh events, announced a referendum on the new constitution and the interim presidency of Roza Otunbaeva. The turnout in the referendum was very high at 72.24 per cent, while 90.55 per cent supported the government's line in the referendum.<sup>15</sup> After a period of chaos and violence, the population wanted stability and order and was relatively united in this goal. Moreover, statements by some politicians and experts from ex-Soviet territories about the disappearance of Kyrgyzstan as a state shocked the population and had a positive impact on the relative unity of its citizens. The population became somewhat less prone to various types of mass mobilization and often revealed inertia in joining mass protests.

The third factor that deserves to be mentioned is path dependency. In fact, what happened in Kyrgyzstan not only in April 2010, but also in 2005 was the collapse not of the state, but of the regime. Most of the state's bureaucratic institutions surprisingly continued or were at least trying to execute their usual everyday functions despite the absence of heads of ministries, the government and the president of the state. The only exceptions were police and security forces, which were demoralized after 7 April and did not perform their functions during the first few days after the uprising, at least in Bishkek, where they were replaced by volunteer security brigades. Two weeks later they started to carry out their functions in civilian clothes instead

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15 Cf. Central Election Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic, cited above (Note 5).



of their possibly provocative uniforms. Other state institutions tried to function as usual.

The same trend of path dependency was observed not only in state institutions, but also in the economy. After several days of shock, small and medium-sized enterprises in Bishkek that had been destroyed and looted started to function again. If they had no goods to sell, their employees were busy with repair work. Big companies stubbornly continued to work even after lootings and during the attacks by looters.

This path dependency had a threefold effect: First, most of the state functioned, and the supply of private goods and services to citizens was interrupted but still continued; second, it stopped state and private employees from becoming demoralized; and third, it gave the citizens hope for order and stability.

An important factor that promoted stability was fair and transparent elections. The mission of the interim government and interim president Roza Otunbaeva comprised the organization of a constitutional referendum to be followed by fair and transparent parliamentary and presidential elections. This was condition sine qua non for further state-building. Rigged elections might have provoked a resumption of political turmoil. This mission was accomplished successfully. "The election process on the referendum was surprisingly smooth taking into account that two weeks ago the situation in the south of Kyrgyzstan was extremely tense" said Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer, spokesman of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).<sup>16</sup> Parliamentary elections in October 2010 were estimated by observers to be the most competitive and transparent not only in Kyrgyzstan but in the region as a whole. The head of the OSCE's election observation mission, Morten Høglund, said: "I was impressed by the political pluralism, the civic responsibility and the spirit of this country. I have observed many elections in Central Asia over the years but this is the first election where I could not predict the outcome."<sup>17</sup> The presidential elections were also recognized as free and fair by international and local observers.

Not least among the factors that prevented the state from collapsing was the willingness for compromise and co-operation on the part of the political elite. After the new constitution came into force on 2 July 2010 there was a need to reshape parliament, government, and the new presidency. These processes concealed important risks. Defeated political parties and presidential candidates could mobilize their supporters and try to destabilize the situation in the country, especially since the potential for this was very evi-

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16 Cited in: Erica Marat, *Mezhdunarodnye nablyudateli o referendumе v Kyrgyzstane* [International Observers of the Referendum in Kyrgyzstan], in: *Golos Ameriki* [Voice of America], Washington, 28 June 2010, at: <http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/kref-2010-06-28-97320829/186097.html> (author's translation).

17 Cited in: Luke Harding, *Kyrgyzstan wins praise for peaceful democratic elections*, in: *The Guardian*, 11 October 2010, at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/11/kyrgyzstan-elections-central-asia-osce>.

dent on the part of revanchists who wanted Bakiev's return to the country and conservatives who advocated a return to the presidential form of government. Nevertheless, almost all the important political forces in the country were represented in parliament, and this fact kept political disputes within the boundaries of that institution. Within parliament, the political elite became fairly keen to engage in dialogue, negotiations, and compromises. In this way, ardent political rivals who seemed to be unlikely partners in dialogue could find common ground for negotiations and compromises, a fact that was particularly obvious during the formation of governing coalitions. On the other hand, the ruling elite, learning from the mistakes of the previous regimes, invited the opposition to negotiations rather than persecuting them, which is another positive sign.

### *State-Rebuilding and Its Future Prospects*

Compared to 2010 and 2011, Kyrgyzstan's state institutions are now reasonably stable: The country has a new constitution, parliament, presidency, and a coalition government. The sequence of political shocks has passed and today rulers can engage in their daily duties. After two revolutions in the past five years, however, an obvious question arises: Might the events of 2005 and 2010 repeat themselves? What are the state's prospects for maintaining stability and order in the country? How will the next parliamentary and presidential elections impact stability?

The usurpation of power by presidents was a principal cause of two violent changes of power in Kyrgyzstan. The new constitution assumes that Kyrgyzstan is a parliamentary-presidential republic. In contrast to the previous system, today's president has no extensive powers, with the majority of power being given to parliament. The parliamentary form of government is new not only for Kyrgyzstan, but also for almost all post-Soviet countries. Dmitry Medvedev, the then president of the Russian Federation, has declared that "parliamentarism for Kyrgyzstan is a catastrophe". However, it seems that the parliamentary form of government suits Kyrgyzstani society better.

Under the presidential form of government, patronage networks found informal methods for influencing the president and his circles in order to achieve their personal goals, thereby generating corruption and nepotism. Moreover, the head of state gave key positions to his relatives and those faithful to him without taking their professional competencies into account. It is no secret that during Akaev and Bakiev's era a major principle of personnel selection was personal loyalty to the president. In return, the president's protégés could then employ their own relatives and friends according to this principle, which constituted the usurpation of power by one elite group. This practice strengthens the authority of the president even more, giving him informal mechanisms of control over state institutions and thus creating the

phenomenon called “state capture”.<sup>18</sup> This situation led to mass protests and a violent change of government on two occasions. Juan Linz states: “The danger that zero-sum presidential elections pose is compounded by the rigidity of the president's fixed term in office. Winners and losers are sharply defined for the entire period of the presidential mandate – losers need to wait four or five years without any access to executive power or patronage. The zero-sum game in presidential regimes raises the stakes of presidential elections and inevitably exacerbates their attendant tension and polarisation.”<sup>19</sup>

Parliament is a place where political forces in Kyrgyzstan had an opportunity not only to compete openly, but also to carry on negotiations and bargain for positions of executive power. That promotes political dialogue and compromise. Today all major political forces are represented in the country's parliament. Patronage networks embodied in the form of political parties are compelled to compete in institutionally established frameworks, thereby constraining and balancing each other in open and legal rivalry. In this way, violent regime change is no longer in the interests of the political forces in question.

Another important factor for a high likelihood of stability is the tendency of the country's basic political forces to compromise. Since the parliamentary elections in October 2010, for example, some political parties that lost the elections have publicly acknowledged their defeat and recognized the results of the elections. The same thing occurred after the results of the presidential elections in November 2011 were announced.<sup>20</sup> In the first half of 2012, moreover, a period of protests and ultimatums under the guidance of opposition politicians Adakhan Madumarov, Kamchybek Tashiev, and Akhmatbek Keldibekov suddenly ended after the authorities offered them open negotiations. The opposition failed to attend the meeting that was scheduled for open negotiations, but surprisingly refrained from protest. Another phenomenon that suggests there is a tendency to compromise is the creation of parliamentary coalitions. Despite all their disagreements, political parties have twice formed coalitions successfully.

There are also other arguments that favour a high future probability of stability in state institutions. Usurpation of power and neo-patrimonialism have twice become a tragedy not only for presidents of the Kyrgyz Republic, but also for their families and relatives. Hardly any politician will voluntarily risk a repeat of their predecessors' fate by trying to usurp power and thereby destabilise the situation. The current opposition regard revolutionary members of the interim government as being responsible for deaths of people on 7

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18 Cf. World Bank, *Combating corruption in a transition period. Contribution to a discussion of strategy*, Washington, DC, 2000.

19 Juan J. Linz, The Perils of Presidentialism, in: *Journal of Democracy*, winter 1990, p. 56. See also Juan J. Linz/Arturo Valenzuela (eds), *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*, Baltimore, MD, 1994.

20 Cf. *Zayavlenie politicheskoi partii "Akshumkar"* [Announcement of the political party Akshumkar], 2 November 2011, at: [http://akshumkar.kg/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=287%3A-lr&catid=25%3A2010-09-16-05-38-21&Itemid=2&lang=ru](http://akshumkar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=287%3A-lr&catid=25%3A2010-09-16-05-38-21&Itemid=2&lang=ru).

April and in June 2010, a view shared by some legal experts. Appeals to call them to account could be heard on the streets, in parliament and in the mass media. Members of the interim government declared their recognition of moral and political responsibility for the events on several occasions. The revolutionaries who are currently in power understand perfectly that they bear personal responsibility for the success of all the reforms that have been initiated. Not only the future of Kyrgyzstan but also the personal futures of those who presently wield power depend on the success of these reforms, the efficiency of governance, and the ability of those in power to compromise.

However, stability in the country depends not only on the authorities, the success of their reforms, and the ability to compromise. There are also the events of June 2010. Today, law enforcement bodies and security services are in better shape than in 2010 and are capable of reacting to possible escalations more effectively. In the context of regional security problems, however, it is difficult to speak about stability and safety in Kyrgyzstan in view of not only the authoritarian character of Central Asian regimes, but also the inability of regional security organizations to respond effectively to current challenges.

### *Conclusion*

Kyrgyzstan passed through an interim period which continued from 7 April 2010 until December 2011, when the new coalition government was formed. The role of the interim government was to change the constitution from a presidential to a parliamentary one, and to reshape state institutions in new, fair, and transparent elections based on a new parliamentary constitution.

Despite many problems, the interim government has succeeded in reshaping state institutions according to its timetable while preventing the collapse of the state. Several factors can explain the success of this reshaping: the breach in the legal continuation of power, which helped to neutralize patronage networks to some extent; fatigue and fear of further destabilization, which helped to unite the population; path dependency of both state-run and private institutions, which continued to carry out their usual functions, thus preventing collapse; fair and transparent elections, which permitted all major political forces to be represented in parliament; and a trend towards political dialogue and compromise.

Today, the state has a legitimate constitution, parliament, president, and coalition government. These institutions carry out their proper functions despite struggling to adapt to the new rules of the game. Radical reforms are proceeding at a very fast pace in the country. After a period of chaos and turmoil, Kyrgyzstan has finally achieved its stability. Several factors indicate that this stability of the political regime and state institutions will continue for the near future. These are the parliamentary form of government, which cre-

ates opportunities for different political forces to enter into dialogue and compromise within institutional frameworks; the political trend towards compromises, which allows contradictions to be reconciled without violence; and the personal responsibility of political leaders, which, fortified by the experience of two previous presidents, will prevent leaders from usurping power.

However, Kyrgyzstan's stability is not only a matter of state institutions and the political regime. There are many destabilization factors in the country: ethnic conflict in the south, growing religious extremism, and trans-boundary problems in the Ferghana Valley. These internal problems are aggravated by regional factors such as instability in Afghanistan, drug trafficking, and terrorism. This means that the future stability of Kyrgyzstan still faces serious challenges.