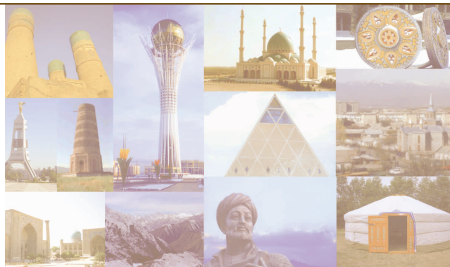


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CASA ASIA



KYRGYZSTAN

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Prof. Cholpon Nogoibaeva*

Highlights

The international independent commission headed by Kimmo Kiljunen completed its investigation of the causes of the events that took place in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010 and publicized a report that was heavily criticized by the Kyrgyz government and general public. Parliament decided to prohibit Kimmo Kiljunen from entering Kyrgyz territory despite the fact that the international commission never confirmed the genocide allegations that seriously undermined Kyrgyzstan's image.

In early June, another report was publicized by a parliamentary commission charged with investigating the circumstances that led to the tragic events of April-June 2010. This commission's report names several leaders of the Uzbek community charged with separatism as the primary organizers and culprits of the June events.

Internal affairs

On 3 May in Bishkek, the international independent commission called a press conference to present its report on the causes of the June 2010 clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan. The commission included experts from several countries including Russia and was headed by Kimmo Kiljunen, a member of the Finnish Parliament and a special representative of the OSCE's parliamentary assembly for Central Asia.

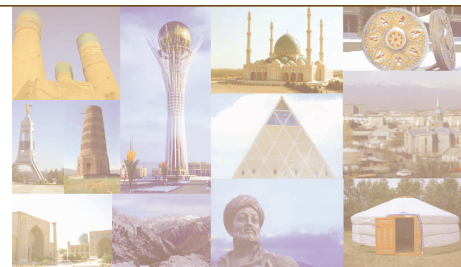
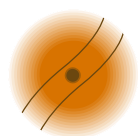
The Commission noted that its work in Kyrgyzstan represented a breakthrough in the Central Asian region since this was the first time the authorities had allowed a major international independent investigation to take place in one of the region's countries. Moreover, the Kyrgyz government made every effort to ensure that the Commission gained

access to all the required information which enabled it to conduct more than 700 interviews, study over 1,000 documents and photographs and open a representative office of the Commission in the country's capital and in the town of Osh where all individuals could visit and share information.

Nevertheless, the Commission is sticking to its conclusion and believes that in June 2010 the country witnessed an ethnic conflict provoked by political forces and sustained by the political vacuum and weakness of the central authorities. Primary causes of the conflict, according to the Commission, include political fanaticism mixed with ethno-nationalism. The Commission rejected the most widespread allegation of genocide of ethnic Uzbeks in the course of the conflict but re-qualified some of the events as crimes against humanity. In addition, the Commission stressed in its report that most of the casualties were representatives of the Uzbek community and that the arrests and trials that ensued focused on Uzbek individuals. According to the Commission, the weakness and frailty of governance following the change of power in April 2010 is not an excuse or explanation for what happened since it is every government's first and foremost duty to ensure every citizen's security. The report pointed at lack of preparedness among law enforcement bodies for such events, the inability of the Kyrgyz armed forces to ensure integrity of weapons, absence of coordination among law enforcement bodies and security forces, and loss of command by central authorities including members of the interim government.

The Commission's report triggered a controversial reaction among the journalists and representatives of public and governmental organizations attending the press conference. Even more discontent was

*President, Institute for Policy Analysis and Research, Bishkek.

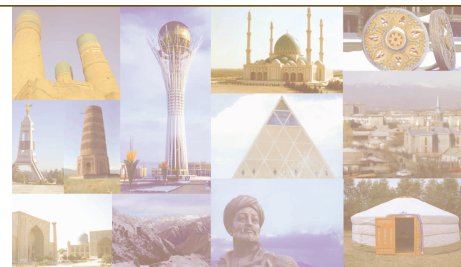
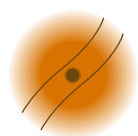


expressed in the course of the discussion of the Commission's work results upon completion of the press conference. The chairman of the council of judges of the Kyrgyz Republic rejected all allegations of a selective approach to trials and called them unfounded. The defence ministry was indignant about the charge of inaction and said the Commission had used unchecked information such as allegations concerning the deputy defence minister's direct involvement in the conflict. Accusations of distributing weapons and failing to take measures against servicemen who had allowed the capture of weaponry were also qualified as unfounded. According to the defence ministry, the military prosecutor's office launched 11 criminal cases against officers, five of whom were relieved of their duties, one having been convicted and another fired. Governmental bodies and the public were particularly angered by the Commission's recommendation to change the name of the country which is not only beyond the government's powers but is also perceived as a threat against Kyrgyzstani sovereignty.

In addition to being acquainted with the contents of the Commission's report, the public heard the Kyrgyz government's comments agreeing with the majority of conclusions and critical comments but at the same time noting serious irregularities in the report preparation, such as limited time which did not enable the Commission to take a balanced approach to the investigation of the facts and causes of the June conflict and provide recommendations aimed at reconciliation and achieving stability in the country. The government therefore believes that the report "may adversely impact the situation in Kyrgyzstan," and that its incompleteness and insufficient objectivity may "provoke grievances of the parties. The Commission's work results will never provide answers to questions that exist (...), will not facilitate the normalization of the situation and the mitigation of the negative consequences of the conflict which is a major contradiction of the

Commission's mandate." In addition, the government qualified as unacceptable the Commission's desire to give greater consideration only to the crimes committed by one of the parties to the conflict, presenting the other side solely as victims. The government says the tragic events of 10-14 June 2010 were provoked by an interethnic conflict in which both the Kyrgyz and Uzbek sides were armed and committed violence against each other, resulting in numerous victims. In addition, the government deemed the facts noted by the Commission insufficient to qualify what had occurred as crimes against humanity. It should be noted that the Kyrgyz authorities never rejected that they were at fault and recognized their responsibility not after the publication of the Commission's report but two days after the mitigation of the conflict on 16 June 2010.

The day before the first anniversary of the tragic events in southern Kyrgyzstan, Parliament published the findings of the commission charged with identifying the causes and investigating the circumstances of the April-June 2010 events. The commission's report named the family- and clan-based Bakiyev regime, Uzbek leaders, interim government and criminal circles as the culprits in the June bloodbath with the four leaders of the Uzbek community named as the primary instigators of the call for separatism. Based on results of the parliamentary commission, Parliament passed a resolution instructing the prosecutor general's office to provide a legal assessment of the activities of the 14 members of the interim government who had failed to prevent the interethnic conflict. The president and prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic were advised to relieve the heads and deputy heads of ministries and agencies responsible for public security and law and order from their duties and fire heads of provincial and municipal state bodies. Members of parliament advised the government to relocate several ministries and agencies to the south of the country and make Osh the place of residence of the Kyrgyz president. Kimmo Kiljunen was denied any



future entry to the Kyrgyz Republic. Overall, the report of the parliamentary commission was obviously rich in populism and was as biased toward the Kyrgyz community as the international independent Commission's report was sympathetic with the Uzbek community.

The main political event of 2011, the presidential elections, began with a serious struggle among the coalition partners over the adoption of the electoral legislation and the election of members of the central election commission (CEC). In mid June, President Otunbayeva submitted her objections to the draft laws on the election of president and the members of the election commissions, and the organization of referendums on the grounds that they run counter to the constitution. Parliament, like the Ata Jurt party, did not react kindly to these objections. Unofficial negotiations finally resulted in President Otunbayeva signing the election law and Parliament approving her two nominees as members of the central election commission. Also in the context of the run-up to the elections, there is call to mention the pressure Parliament is exerting on the management of the country's biggest national television and radio broadcasting company and its attempts to get the second-biggest national TV channel (Pyatya Kanal) nationalized.

The presidential race officially kicked off on 30 June during the last regular session of Parliament with the announcement that the elections would take place on 30 October 2011.

Foreign and international policy

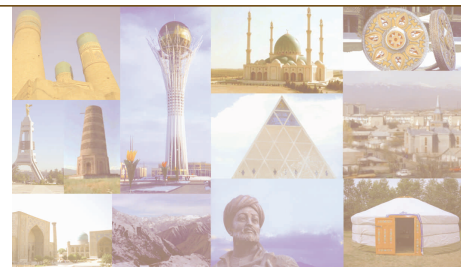
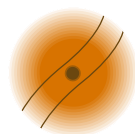
International events in May and June were also associated with the report by the international independent commission on the causes of the interethnic conflict in 2010, although reactions to the report and the events that followed differed. The EU's Special Representative for Central Asia Pierre Morel expressed concern over the fact that the Kyrgyz

Parliament considered the work conducted by the Commission as non-objective and one-sided, and that it had prohibited the Commission head Kimmo Kiljunen from entering Kyrgyzstan. The new U.S. ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic Pamela L. Spratlen gave a speech qualifying the Commission's report as accurate, adding that the U.S. government supports the recommendations made by the Commission. In response to concerns from EU officials, Russia's deputy foreign affairs minister Grigoriy Karasin called for restraint, noting that the Kyrgyz government had said it would take into account recommendations of international experts. Kimmo Kiljunen expressed his gratitude to the U.S. government for its support of the Commission's activities, highlighting the fact that the sole purpose of its work in Kyrgyzstan was to reconcile the parties to the conflict.

In early June, Parliament raised the issue of the OSCE police group, whose entry into Kyrgyzstan in the summer of 2010 triggered a number of protests among youth organizations, political parties and NGOs, who rolled out a wide negative campaign in the local media. The foreign affairs minister informed Parliament that the police advisory group had finally managed to commence its work in southern Kyrgyzstan on 4 November 2010. On the following day, however, the minister tried to distance himself from his own words claiming they had been misinterpreted. Parliament created a special commission to investigate the causes of the entry of the OSCE police group in southern Kyrgyzstan.

On 14 and 15 June, President Otunbayeva held meetings with the heads of SCO member states and heads of diplomatic missions accredited in Kyrgyzstan in the context of the SCO summit in Astana.

In her speech at the SOC meeting, President Otunbayeva stressed issues of cooperation in security, the intensification of the fight against drug



trafficking in general, and the infiltration and invasion of Central Asian countries by militants and religious extremists in particular. In connection with these phenomena, President Otunbayeva noted that the region needed to create an effective system of “security belts” at the region’s borders with Afghanistan and improve interaction and cooperation among security forces and law enforcement bodies of neighbouring states, consistent with UN programmes. She also voiced her support of the idea to create a Border Security Council under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization framework.

Economy and business enterprise

According to data compiled by the National Statistical Committee, Kyrgyzstan’s economy grew 5.5% in the first six months of 2011, this growth mainly being triggered by the increase in volumes of industrial production and the services sector. Annual inflation was registered at 21.4%, 2% higher than in 2010. According to the ministry of economic regulation, inflation was mainly underpinned by hikes in the prices of food, clothing, footwear, natural gas and services.

Forbes has ranked Kyrgyzstan as seventh among the world’s ten worst economies on the basis of GDP growth, inflation, GDP per capita and the current balance of payments. Some consolation can be drawn from the fact that the economies of other post-Soviet countries such as Armenia and Ukraine rank even worse than Kyrgyzstan’s.

Unfortunately, scandals associated with foreign-owned businesses have become an increasingly common phenomenon in Kyrgyzstan. In June, yet another scandal escalated, gaining political overtones, this time in connection with the Turkish “Beta Stores” brand. An employee of this retail chain, a citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic, was beaten by her manager, a Turkish citizen, ending up in a hospital as a result. The Turkish citizen was arrested and

subsequently released on the order of the Bishkek municipal court judges who changed the terms of his pre-trial restriction. Having been released on condition that he would not leave Kyrgyzstan, the retail chain manager hid from law enforcement bodies and fled the country.

This event triggered a major wave of indignation on the part of several youth organizations, which arranged rallies in front of the Turkish retail outlets, demanding their immediate closure. The protestors also demanded that the retail company pay the victim \$50,000 in damages and that the management issue a public apology. They also called for the creation of a trade union to protect the rights of Kyrgyz citizens and facilitate the capture of the offender. The protesters threatened to conduct even larger-scale rallies in front of the Turkish Embassy if the company failed to comply with their demands. Finally, the government intervened, holding special talks with the parties to the conflict and raising the issue of the legitimacy of the municipal court’s ruling with the council of justices of the Kyrgyz Republic. The council conducted its own independent investigation and decide to relieve the three Bishkek municipal court judges who had released the Turkish citizen of their duties. President Otunbayeva subsequently signed a decree upholding the council’s decision.

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