

Roundtable: “On the Current Political Situation and its Consequences for Kyrgyzstan.”

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Moderator: Muratbek Imanaliev, President of the IPP

Speakers:

1. Valentin Bogatyrev, Program Director of the Development Programs Support Foundation
2. Tamerlan Ibraimov, the Centre for Political and Legal research
3. Kumar Bekbolotov, Director of the IWPR office in Bishkek
4. Sultan Kanazarov, Radio “Azattyk”
5. Shairbek Djuraev, IPP

Muratbek Imanaliev: Today we have invited you in order to discuss the current situation in our country, which has occurred as a result of an incident that happened in Warsaw. Intrigues were brought from abroad, from rapidly developing democratic Poland. Of course, there are several important issues which need not only comments, but also preliminary analysis.

Even in spring and summer, many experts, politicians, and a number of state officials promised that autumn would be “hot” in terms of politics, and that the political season would be quite rich with various events. The opposition promised to become more active in relations with the current official authority. In its turn, official authorities attempted to appease them, claiming that political scrapes were over, the economy was going uphill, the social situation and social relations were absolutely wonderful, and that there were no problems.

Nevertheless, in some aspects the forecasts of a certain increase in the political temperature are coming true. Let me repeat again: “*touch-string*” was quite uncommon, I would even say – quite non-standard. Everybody expected that something would happen in the country – maybe the government’s activities would be assessed, and then the political season would start. One thing was clear: everything would start in the Parliament. However, this season has started with a very unusual incident.

In my opinion, there was a necessity to strike the keynote of the political season, because none of political parties and public associations were ready, everyone was expecting that events related to the start of new political year would have their origins in the Parliament. In the last three days, the Parliament has been working heavily and actively by creating investigative commissions, political committees, and other structures. Additionally, independent deputies, who belong neither to pro nor to opposition parties, have been taking the floor. In other words, the Parliament has been very provocative. However, I think that today, after the President’s speech, there has been a certain decline in the activities of the MPs. Nobody is able to say exactly what will happen tomorrow, and especially not during Kurultay (National People’s Assembly) on September 17, in which about 30 MPs are planning to participate. Nevertheless, today I have the impression that many MPs have quite rapidly stopped their work and dispersed, depending on their own interests.

I have the following proposal: to look at the current situation in our country from a different perspective: from that of the wider geographical area, beyond the scope of the Parliament and Bishkek, to have a view from above regarding this situation, in other words. We must see the whole country, because we have become witnesses of quite a large conglomeration of events taking place in the capital, in the south, in the north, and in the east of Kyrgyzstan.

On the other hand, the proposal is to see the dynamics of the situation in order to create a chronological retrospective analysis. I would like to hear the opinions of our guests on how the events will develop further in Kyrgyzstan – maybe until the end of the month or until the New Year. In addition, all of us are interested the year of 2007, of course.

Therefore, Valentin Borisovich, I would like to hear your opinion on the current situation in Kyrgyzstan. Perhaps it is not quite correct, but I have the impression that in any event autumn will pass in the light of this quite serious incident which happened with MP Omurbek Tekebaev in Warsaw.

Valentin Bogatyrev: I am exactly one of those analysts who said autumn would be hot in terms of politics. Today, although I did not hear the President's speech, but I could catch his main idea from media information: those who were predicting autumn to be hot politically might be the organizers of it. According to this logic, I am also one of those organizers of these events because I was also predicting it. However, I have written about it to the President while working at the International Institute for Strategic Research, and I also spoke about it publicly. I have even highlighted certain spots which would be attacked: 1) the situation with "Djeruy" – now we can observe how the situation is developing; 2) the President's relatives – we can also see certain actions directly related to them; and 3) an issue connected with the business of the President's family. One does not have to be a genius to understand that these are the issues to be attacked by the opposition.

I would like to turn your attention to the fact that this is already a third wave of opposition. In general, I think that the sources and roots of all things taking place in our country are in the events of March 24. If you remember, Bakiev gained victory very easily; strictly speaking, he has not done anything to become president. This is because votes given "for" the President were in fact votes "against" pogroms. People were voting because they thought there was finally an authority. It was unimportant who that authority was, so long as he could provide order and stability. Unfortunately, Bakiev perceived this mood as people's trust and sympathy for him. Because of this perception perhaps, there was no effort to develop any kind of decent development concept, neither during the election campaign nor afterwards. When people were voting for Bakiev, they did not understand for which development concept they were voting. Furthermore, Muratbek Imanaliev, many people immediately noticed this deficiency, in parliament as well, and started asking, "where is that guiding star, what has the president to tell us in order to move further?" In any case, the absence of initiative, the absence of a sign or leading light comprehensible to society resulted in the fact that the social and political machine did not have a strong ideal magnet. Therefore, society could not align with the logic of movement. As the result, we have this third wave.

The first wave was during the autumn and winter of last year. The Parliament decided that it would play the major role if the President did not know what to say. The Parliament started to follow this course openly, which resulted in conflict with the Speaker – the famous speech of the Speaker and his resignation. This was the first attempt to exercise the power in the country.

The second wave was related to the series of protest meetings in spring: these were attempts to organize a mass movement which could act against Bakiev. Now, there is a third wave. I think there will be also a fourth wave, which will be connected with the up-coming promised referendum on the Constitution in December, and also with such banal issues such as, for instance, economic outcomes over the year. There are many indications that situation in the agrarian sector is not good, and that is why new critical issues will arise by autumn of the next year.

Still, what additional reasons produce these waves, which occur one after another, but without any results? As I have already said, the official authority does not have any development

concept. However, neither does the opposition. All these protest meetings are taking place not because the opposition has better ideas/concepts than Bakiev does, but just because the opposition does not like Bakiev. The same scheme also worked during Akaev's time, when nobody was able to propose something better, but just wanted Akaev to leave. In other words, neither the official authority, nor the opposition has serious ideas/development concepts.

One more reason is that Bakiev has left alive some base of the previous regime and did not take any actions against it. First of all, this factor relates to state totalitarianism or state totality, to its primacy over society and the individual – all these things have existed and continue to exist.

Akaev's democracy was formal: certain arrangements were determined, but they did not have any substance or democratic foundations. Right now we can observe a similar process. Nothing has been done in order to fill democratic forms with real substance.

In addition, another reason for the growth in waves, I think, is the appropriation of property in favor of the "new people in power." It is no secret that the "oppositionness" of political opposition (the current opposition included) is based on redistribution, because their property interests are involved. It is also not a secret that some spheres of activity are under the control of new people in power. Finally, among all these reasons, I would also mention the economic atmosphere, which is also not changing. There are no positive economic expectations, no confidence in business, and no normal business environment for its development.

I think that such a situation will continue for several years. There are two reasons for such an assumption: First, there are no ideas/concepts for development; no political format was established. Second, there are no people who would promote development, i.e. no outstanding politicians with those ideas, so that people would see that exactly these people are ready to work for the idea of development, and not solely for their own interests. These are the two main reasons, on which I have already elaborated in my work "Second President," and which are impossible to correct with changes in the Constitution. As I understand, it is just a question of time. According to our assessment, such people of ideas will not appear before 2009-2012. The point is not that such people do not exist, but the fact that such people do not have a sufficient degree of strength and power to enable them to participate actively in politics and social life. I estimate that such creeping, permanent political instability and political struggle await us in the future; they will continue long enough. For right now, I do not see any new seeds in the form of new movements or parties which would create a new ideology. Even active oppositionists, such as "Ata Meken" and "Arnams," do not propose anything new. Their basic imperative and work is protest: Bakiev is bad, everything is wrong, and everything is based on that.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Valentin Borisovich has raised a very interesting question. This question might be quite abstract from the given topic, but I think that it is very important from the point of view of Kyrgyzstan's prospects for development. Who can be a generator, bearer and implementer of any state or national ideas in this country? The majority of the most active part of the population – people of ages starting from age twenty up to forty or forty-five – are abroad. A tendency towards the formation of conservatism is developing, because a large portion of resident people (I would not say that all of them are old people and children, but nevertheless) is inclined to support conservative ideas. This is quite a complicated human issue, and quite a serious problem for Kyrgyzstan. I do not know what the Government and state committee on migration have to be happy about. The population is beginning to decline: according to forecasts that have been given on this issue, awful future prospects are expected. As I understand, the Government is not ready to face this problem yet.

Since we have many young people sitting here, I have a question: what do you think, is our youth ready to find any kind of niche in the political sector and life of Kyrgyzstan in order to start its work?

Another question: one can agree or disagree with the opinion among foreign analysts, but democracy in Kyrgyzstan was not connected that much with the personality of Akaev and his attempts to democratize the country, but with the weakness of central power. The main problem of Akaev was that he could not create a strong central power.

Tamerlan Ibraimov: I agree in many respects with the opinion of Valentin Bogatyrev and Muratbek Imanaliev. The main reasons for our problems, I think, are the absence of values and duties which would be considered fair by the people. There is no perception of power as truth. This circumstance did not start with the events of March 24 or with Bakiev. Askar Akaev presented the same problems: the frustration has been growing gradually, resulting later in the well-known events. The same process is happening right now with Bakiev – he is trying to solve contemporary problems related to the modernization of power via old methods which are learned and perceived as the correct ones. In an interview on the eve of Independence Day on August 30, he described in detail his career path, starting as *akim* of his *rayon* and moving up to the position of minister. In other words, he perceives this as a most correct path for a leader of such rank. Possibly, it was correct for the prior-existing system. However, to address those tasks that face Kyrgyzstan today, it is more important for the leader to have an ability to see contemporary problems, threats and challenges, and most importantly, to have an ability to attract people who are able to propose mechanisms and methods to solve those problems. In this respect, I think, Bakiev is not able to make a decision, and the current social conflicts will continue. Stability, about which he frequently talks, is not in our near future, and the main source of instability will be dissatisfaction with the current power.

Another problem lies with the opposition forces, who are also unable to offer any kind of values or ideas attractive to people. What do we have now? Today, the idea of the necessity to preserve our traditions is propagated strenuously in our society. In other words, the only goal is to preserve the statehood of Kyrgyzstan, which could give an impulse for development. However, I think that we will not be able to create any mechanism to solve our current problems by looking back constantly. In such aspects, there are quite negative prospects for Kyrgyzstan.

Concerning the question of which forces are able to propose ideas and values, thanks to which we could make a break-through, I think that, first of all, we need to define the term “values.” For me personally, such values are liberal values: economic freedom, which could give a fundamental basis for the economic development of a person who is adept at self-organization. Liberalism is quite often criticized, and it is not the only correct approach. Still, in the conditions of Kyrgyzstan, when we have practically no natural resources, when our society has multiple layers, we are unable to develop an idea to unite whole nation, unlike such multinational countries as the U.S.A. Therefore, in my opinion, the only possible way for a break-through is through liberal values. When these liberal values will be accepted by the general population is a serious question, but many things here depend on the political, intellectual, and business elite, who must become the locomotive of our society. Our elite are also in an embryonic condition, and the issue is to what extent and when the elites of Kyrgyzstan will be able to consolidate around these ideas and propose them as values for development.

How it will happen, whether it will be another coup d’etat or clashes, everything depends on political momentum and on who uses his/her opportunities and how. We see that the official authorities are working on quite a primitive level. Perhaps the opposition will be able to do something...

Muratbek Imanaliev: We need to acknowledge that liberal values to a great extent are part of so-called European values. Many countries which are not in the European region, outside of Europe or beyond the influence of so-called civilized Europe, have reached democracy and its values by overcoming very difficult processes – struggles, victories and defeats. The brightest

example is Japan. This country does not use the entire set of classical liberal values, but only certain parts of it, and they have reached democracy only quite recently. They have been moving towards it for one hundred years, through the growth of aggression in Japanese society, the birth of Japanese fascism and nationalism, and defeat in war.

The question to what extent these liberal values will be adapted here is quite complicated. From my point of view, it will not happen soon. If we examine the historical, cultural, and geographical background of the spread of liberal values, then our region is among those that did not feel the effects of the French, English, or American Revolutions. Unfortunately, we did not understand what the October Revolution was. Such kinds of crises, if we take paradoxical theories, result in the development and strengthening of such values.

However, will such values be adopted here, accepted by our current society and by future generations in particular? I think this question actually has some kind of answer: we will be inclining more towards post-soviet or post-communist guiding values, with a tremendous Islamic influence. However, the Islamic segment will not receive value substance, because Islam as a theology has not been developed in Kyrgyzstan. Currently, there is a process of fermentation within Islam itself, and if we examine its theological part (the highest substance of Islam), then we are exactly beyond the context of the problems happening within. Still, any element of ritual Islam, political Islam, and perhaps some degree holy war, will be actively fostered here, I think.

Therefore, it will be difficult for us to find our values in such a jumble. Do you have any thing to add?

Shairbek Djuraev: Valentin Borisovich has said that there will be a permanent crisis until around 2010-2012. Would the political regime of Kyrgyzstan be able to handle the crisis years? There is an impression among some that by time the authority as an institution will not be able to cope with the internal contradictions that are tearing the country apart, Kyrgyzstan will becoming the object of the interests of powerful external players.

For the youth of Bishkek, liberalism is something comprehensible; many of them run their own businesses. In the rural areas however, many young people grow beards and pray: they do not know what liberalism is with any certainty. Therefore, it is impossible to talk with them on such a theme. How long will the society continue developing in this manner? It is not clear when the young generation will formulate its interests. It seems like today, without a strong external shock, nothing new will appear among the representatives of the young generation. We see young politicians who are trying to integrate into the political elite today, but I do not think that they will become better managers than current ones. This generation is growing on populism without having management skills, whereas the current leaders have at least been students of soviet management schools. After March 24, big changes were expected, but today we talk about the absence of policy and a guiding star. Does this mean we need another shock?

Kumar Bekbolotov: Perhaps the shock will be the change of constitutional system in autumn and winter (if it will indeed bring any successes), because many of the current contradictions were piled into the constitution by the previous regime. The President must be absolutely clean, have great legitimacy, and, as was stated numerous times, must be an orphan. It is absolutely unacceptable to have simultaneously a strong parliament and a strong president given our mentality. We must have either a strong parliament, or a strong president.

Valentin Borisovich has stated that there are no development concepts or implementers. It could be also added that there are no prerequisites for development, and in many areas we are doomed: in business for instance, because of our geographical location. Kyrgyzstan, while being at the

center of Eurasia, is not able to benefit from any economic activities. Besides, we are doomed because of the continual influence of our neighbors. By studying the potential of other countries, we can hardly say that we would be better off than they are. Because of this doom, we will always be little bit behind them. The reason for this doom is the absence of ideas and prerequisites which would push us forward. I would like hope that the states surrounding us – Kazakhstan, China, and Russia – would continue to develop further and would pull us along with them. However, despite the apparent stability, there are problems in Kazakhstan also, which expose the tragedy of the situation: the outbreak of HIV that occurred in the south and land issues that are unpleasant to the government. In other words, they have problems that are even more serious than ours. We need to think about them – how to avoid those pre-conditions of development.

The head of the National Security Service, appointed in May, has resigned. However, he was the person who more or less actively started the anti-terrorism campaign. In my opinion, one could trust the reports describing the success of the campaigns directed at reducing the activities of militants. What I mean to say is that the man who did a bit more than other heads of the NSS has left his position in shame. This occurrence is not only politically threatening, but also threatening for the whole country, which cannot provide security over its territory. Tahir Uldashev has already sent an audio-message with a threat to all presidents of the Central Asian states. Will the National Security Service be able to handle such external threats after losing its political credibility?

I think that only a few politicians would consider some type of external threat to be a good reason to unite; Islamic terrorism might very well be that reason. In contrast, there are more of those who are dissatisfied with the fact that special services are strongly putting the screws to the opposition.

Sultan Kanazarov: Lately, we have all started talking about the necessity of developing some idea. Ideas are generated by people, but our leaders (who ideally must enlighten the rest of population) are not who they pretend to be in reality.

I have just understood that some politicians do not have ideas and will never have them. They have gotten involved in political struggle not because their hearts said so or because of some noble ideas and impulses, but because of the necessity. Yet, they are not embarrassed to state that they define the development path of Kyrgyzstan. With these people, we will not be able to create anything.

The youth reacts to everything happening in the country in its own way. One segment of the youth, which lives in the villages, has to leave to Russia or Kazakhstan, because it does not see any guidance in either the political or economic sphere. Another segment, the educated youth, has left to study abroad, and does not have any desire to come back. If there is still a chance and conditions will improve here, migrants working in the construction will come back sometime in the future. However, intellectuals will never come back. There is also a third segment – those young people who have remained here but are very much disaffected – which does not want to get involved in anything. Yet, there is also a certain category of people who have decided that they could win something in this process and have gotten involved around political matters by labeling themselves differently. However, young leaders are not able yet to do anything, because they lack knowledge and experience.

Tamerlan Ibraimov: I think we were lucky when Askar Akaev made attempts to build a democratic state during his first presidential term, despite the scarcity of our resources.

The question is how politics and morality are combined here. In the West, there are also immoral politicians, but the society controls them and keeps them within certain limits. If they go beyond those limits, either they are ousted or they resign. The citizens can easily appeal to the court, asking protection from state authority, or the legislature can appeal to court, asking protection from monarchy or ochlocracy.

As soon as we start changing the system, when well-being depends not only on the administrative system, but also on economic activities, the level of politicization in society will decrease. People think that the Constitution must be written by people; in reality, that idea is nonsense, because even experts struggle with some concepts. We do not have any idea what a constitutional system or separation of powers are, nor why there is need for them. Right now, I have quite a pessimistic expectation concerning the final result. Still, if there is real separation of powers, then there would be a disposition for creating an independent legal system, and it would be quite an advancement. Not only do people form institutions, but institutions also form people, so they would change their world outlook.

Sultan Kanazarov: I think that in the short term the constitutional reform will not change anything, even if it is done correctly, objectively, and well. If the waves of opposition mentioned by Valentin Borisovich do not stop, then there will be an inverse effect. People will just be tired, and start to perceive political apathy positively, and not consider activity. It is quite possible that they will support certain totalitarian tendencies implemented by the executive branch.

Shairbek Djuraev: It seems like absolute pessimism dominates our long-term prospects. There are no pre-conditions for development, liberalism is also not for us, the option of supporting a “father of the nation” is also improbable, because society does not accept anybody. What options are available? Is our path that of African countries – to live in such a situation, in permanent crises, for forty or a hundred years? Or is something different possible?

Valentin Bogatyrev: Concerning this aspect, we have a very unique situation. What is the uniqueness of it? We do not have any resource as our neighbors do. Even in Tajikistan, the drug trade feeds the economy quite strongly. I won't even mention Uzbekistan, which has gas and gold, and Kazakhstan... This situation means we cannot hope on something to happen inside the country which would change our situation.

Therefore, in order to ensure economic development, we must look at the global economic system. We must try to get involved in that system and find there methods to overcome this situation, which in turn means that we can make our country open to the world economy.

I think that there are one or two real ways to overcome this situation. One of them is related to the usage of natural resources (gold, energy, etc). This way is extensive. The second way is in our attempt to get involved in the world economic network and find our niche there. Only in this way can we make a break-through, as all of the Tigers in Southeastern Asia have done, by finding their places in the world economic system. Perhaps this route will reveal itself through a unique commodity or service, but not through the financial system. We need to proceed from what we have – our natural resources.

It is possible to make Kyrgyzstan a select area of Central Asia – a place where pedigree, exclusive commodities are produced. You might remember, during soviet times, specialized farms worked on producing Lucerne's seeds, which were in high demand and were bought by many countries. Horse breeding could also be a specialization – i.e., such commodities that are competitive on world markets. At the same time, these commodities will be traditional items, with which we work and live. These are just examples of what we can find in the world system

as a competitive advantage (specialization). We need to build our own economy, our own commodity production, and make the President hear about this idea. Since we have very small commodity production, it is necessary to create “brand umbrellas,” i.e. to provide a commodity with one label but produced by a thousand farmers. Due to certain standards of a well-known brand, all companies will have to know that they must produce a commodity of a certain quality and standard. In that way, it is possible to ensure marketability and our representativeness on foreign markets. This is one way out (one alternative).

The reason for my optimism is the opportunity for our country to be involved in the world system. I have talked with the Japanese ambassador, who told me, “It would be enough for your whole country to have one medium-sized Japanese company with a turnover of three billion USD. There is only one thing that I do not understand though: what could this company do in your country? We could create an automobile plant for car body production if only you had any kind of metal. There are no opportunities to grab.” Therefore, I think that inclusion into the world economic network is the way out. These are two keys, two instruments, which can help us move forward.

Sultan Kanazarov: Corruption and incompetence kill everything here. For two years, I have worked under the Japanese agrarian project. The project has a timeframe of more than three years and a budget of thirty-two million USD aimed at developing a general development plan for the agricultural sector in the Kyrgyz Republic. When we used to approach the state officials with the ranks of minister, deputy minister, and officials in the presidential administration in order to deal with formal question related to signatures, we used to get requests to buy them Japanese cars....

There is a need for strong will and command at the top not to take bribes (at least for three years) from certain corporations, or to take bribes starting from ranks not lower than deputy minister. The rest must be punished. Then they will develop. For two years, our efforts were spent not on real work, but more on dealing with the bureaucratic formalism of state officials who are not even at the highest level. In such cases, perhaps there is a necessity for very strong directives, a super-project.

Valentin Bogatyrev: I think that the directives just mentioned must proceed from the fact that big companies should come here, not small and medium ones. Big companies approach the President directly with their intentions, and, as a result, all of these state officials are no longer relevant. We have talked with the U.S. Ambassador about the need to attract reliable and respectable companies, companies which are able to overcome these obstacles due to their systemic power and are able to ignore the corruption and bureaucracy.

Muratbek Imanaliev: These are political, legal and cultural traditions. If you do not have traditions that are reinforced by historical practice, the collective memory of a certain group of people, or if you do not have even the traditions of social organization appropriate to a certain stage of human development in general, then there are serious problems. There is a fundamental difference between corruption in Africa and Southeastern Asia. The corruption in the Far East has played and continues to play a positive role (however paradoxical it might sound) in economic development and, to some degree, in social development. Corruption in Africa on the other hand plays an extremely negative role. Hence, the problem in particular is in traditions. In the Far East, inter-elite solidarity is built on a certain idea of national characteristics, which are organizational and social. Solidarity has played quite a stimulating role in state development. In Africa however, there are inter-elite clashes, tensions and contradictions. Corruption has played the worst role there.

That is why, in my opinion, traditions play a very significant role. Traditions connect generations – traditions in values, as well as in cultural and economic aspects. The current generation of politicians does not have anything to pass on to the next generation. Therefore, the young generation only has the opportunity to learn something outside of Kyrgyz society, outside of Kyrgyzstan. There are quite many impeding factors. Traditions of compradorship and a provincial mindset have prevailed during last 150-200 years. That is to say, the elite of the Central Asian nations have served the ideology of Moscow and St.Petersburg. As a result, the local governors who appeared during independence have not been perceived as fully legitimate. This issue also concerns Karimov, although the situation is peculiar there because it is an entirely different nation with respect to social activity, organization, economic activity, and cultural values. The Turkmen also have their peculiarities. Turkmenbashi is not accepted as a fully legitimate governor in terms of the comprador syndrome. It is still quite difficult to overcome this syndrome. In our case, unfortunately, I clearly see the formation of a new political tradition – violent regime change.

Today, although nothing has happened yet, everybody is already talking about impeachment of the President, and some even say that it is necessary to expel him from the White House. Such things are unacceptable in Britain, Germany, and Japan for instance, i.e. in those countries with stable political systems and traditions. Such things are unacceptable in Kazakhstan also, but here it is acceptable. In principle, Akaev is not the first one who left the presidency in such a “delicate” condition. During soviet times, it was but a little different: Usualiev also left, and Masaliev left under very unpleasant conditions. That is why provinciality and compradorship are very important parts of our elite’s outlook. I can hardly refer to Kyrgyz politicians as a political elite. However, they could be included among political elite relatively, and they are formed around the clan system. It is understandable that all of us are looking for heroes. We all want to imitate somebody, but we have no such national heroes. There are mythical heroes as a result of mythologized consciousness, which has predetermined some people’s outlooks about the future.

Let’s come back to the main issue regarding the current situation. How it will develop? What vision do you have concerning it? I do not see any opportunity for positive development, because the incident with Tekebaev at some point finalized the description of Bakiev’s character. Now it will be very difficult to improve his character, this president’s portrait. He has to put maximum effort in order to overcome it. In light of this weak point, opposition activities will appear in an outburst manner. Therefore, I see this situation developing in wavy and jumpy dynamics. Maybe I am wrong....

Valentin Bogatyrev: I think this was not the last stroke. In principle, I absolutely agree with Muratbek Sansyzbaevich: irrespective of who is guilty or not, this incident has already played its role – it has drawn a certain portrait of the president, of the authority. I think it is a useful process in redeeming the country from political devaluation. Politics and everything connected to it greatly influence all other spheres of life, which are connected both with the soviet period and with independence. We indeed do not have traditions of power, and everything happening is very significant for us. I see in this process redemption for the country from political devaluation. People will pay less attention to politics, and they will start understanding that their destiny is not determined by the processes happening there. What was unique in the events of March 24? Despite the fact that the authority was crushed and expelled, people nevertheless had hope that a new power would come and improve their lives. The new authority has come, but it has not done anything. It is very good that the majority of people are now thinking: irrespective what kind of authority comes, nothing in their lives will change.

Kumar Bekbolotov: Regarding forecasts... Many analysts are discussing whether the President is guilty in the recent provocation against Tekebaev. If he is guilty, he will be so vulnerable that

he will have to make large trade-offs, and possibly even agree with the draft on a parliamentary republic. The second option is provocation from outside, and possibly even certain third parties are working in the Parliament. If this forecast is correct, everything will end with dissolution of the Parliament. Again, analysts are forecasting that in any case, the presidential majority will come back to the Parliament, and 10-15 oppositionist deputies will not be able to have any influence. What do you think about these prognoses?

Tamerlan Ibraimov: I think that the official authority will find formal justification for the President in any event. In other words, reality is one thing, and what will be presented formally is another. In fact, the people and deputies understand that the official authority is guilty and that political figures were indeed involved. The President also understands. Therefore, he will make trade-offs accordingly. On other hand however, he will try to increase the pro-presidential majority in the Parliament. He will use such methods as pressuring business, proposing certain positions to opposition deputies, i.e. attempts to attract the majority to his side. Depending on how the President is able to use the “the stick and carrot” policy, the political atmosphere will change.

Valentin Bogatyrev: I agree with you. The actions of the opposition after the incident are clear: at minimum, to try put the President under control; at maximum, to get rid of this figure entirely by transferring to a parliamentary republic. They want to jump to a parliamentary model in light of these waves in politics. They wanted to play this scenario. At the same time, two days ago there was a moment when they reached the highest level of accusation – they got scared themselves. Just imagine a situation in which Bakiev resigned and there was a need for new elections. Just imagine the situation. This scared them because they did not want it in reality. They needed the President to come and repent his errors. Then they would put forward various demands to him. Once Roza Otunbaeva said: “Keeping him under constant pressure and telling him what to do must be our strategy.” This is some sort of control. This recent incident gave the Parliament the opportunity for such control, but now we can see the official authority has chosen a different scenario. The day before yesterday, Janybek Bakiev and Nadyr Mamyrov stated that they did not have any relation to this provocation, which means that this provocation was made either by a third party (at minimum), or by Tekebaev himself (at maximum). The scenario has been chosen, and Bakiev will not let those people dictate to him what to do. Right now, it is indeed a question of political struggle. Will be the President able to rehabilitate his political position in terms of votes in the Parliament and public opinion? Undoubtedly, he will not be able to rehabilitate it to the level that it stood at previously. In this situation, there are at minimum two victims: Tekebaev and Bakiev.

Muratbek Imanaliev: Thanks to everybody for your participation and your very interesting comments.